

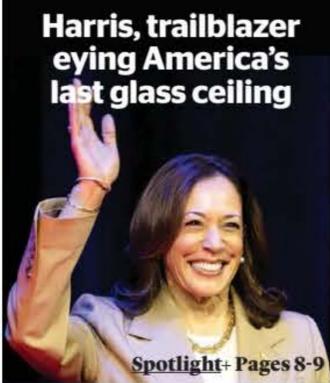


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HACK YOUR WAY TO HEALTH



Cooler water to be used for Sharjah's viral 'rain street' shows

Nation+ Page 5



Harris, trailblazer eyeing America's last glass ceiling

Spotlight+ Pages 8-9



Time for a mid-year financial checkup

Mind Your Money+ Page 13



Athlete influencers compete for likes as well as medals in Paris Olympics

Sports+ Page 14

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HAMDAN VISITS MINISTRY OF DEFENCE



Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the UAE, on Monday visited the Ministry of Defence following his recent Cabinet appointment. Sheikh Hamdan was welcomed, among others, by Lt-Gen Issa bin Ablan Al Mazrouei, Chief of Staff of the UAE Armed Forces. — WAM

Health insurance with tourist visas

Sahim Salim and Nasreen Abdulla
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A new project will soon help tourists to the UAE get health insurance as they apply for their visas, it was announced on Monday. The Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs and Port Security (ICP) said the 'health insurance for tourist visas' is among its 'transformative projects'.

Major-General Suhail Saeed Al Khailei, director-general of the authority, said the project will help tourists get health insurance while applying for their visas online through the ICP website or app.

The project aims to offer health cover in emergency cases. It will automate the process of getting health insurance through an electronic platform that will "manage the pricing and issuance" of packages from all major insurance companies in the UAE.

Ramzi Ghurani, managing partner at Petra Insurance Brokers, welcomed the move and said it would not only benefit the local healthcare system but the visitors as well. "Having insurance cover for all travellers is an assurance that they will be covered for their hospitalisation in case of an unexpected medical emergency. This also ensures that the government and private hospitals in the country don't have to foot the bill for an emergency for visitors."

He also added that it is important for visitors to check what this insurance would cover.

Turn To Page 3

'Unretirement' is catching up here

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As people live longer than ever before, a ripple effect is evident in the workplace. The trend of 'unretirement' is becoming increasingly common, with senior employees choosing to extend their careers and applying their skills in the workforce for a longer period.

According to longevity and ageing researcher Professor Andrew Scott, senior adults do not want to retire and want to continue working as long as they can.

"I have colleagues teaching at the university who are over 80 years old and they want to continue teaching," he said.

The author of *The Longevity Imperative* and a professor of economics at the London Business School, Scott was in Dubai for a talk and said that the world needed to change their views towards older adults.

"Currently, they are viewed as a burden to the medical system," he said. "However, they have so much to contribute to society and their expertise can be utilised."

In the UAE, a retirement visa was introduced in 2021, allowing expats to stay in the country after retiring. Moreover, with the introduction of the Golden Visa, more people who are aged 60 or more are moving to the country, presenting the UAE with a unique opportunity to utilise their expertise.

Turn To Page 3

Workers earn less in tips as payments go digital

Waad Barakat
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Before the widespread adoption of digital payments, service industry workers, such as delivery riders and gas station attendants, could expect to earn up to Dh1,500 per month in tips, even though tipping is not mandatory in the UAE. However, with the transition to cashless transactions, this figure has dropped to as low as Dh200 per month for some workers.

One delivery rider, who has worked in the UAE for seven years, observed a clear change in payment methods and customer interactions. "Nowadays

it's very rare when someone pays with cash; it's often with a card and sometimes I don't even meet the customers as they leave the orders at the door, so interactions with customers have slowed down as well," he told *Khaleej Times*.

"In the first few years, I made a decent amount from tipping, but now it's very rare." The driver further explained that tourists may still tip because they usually have cash on hand.

Amir, a gas station worker, has also experienced a decline over the years. "Back in the day, I would get Dh80 to Dh100 in daily tips, especially during the summer. But nowadays, it's very rare."

He added that customers often search for spare change to tip, but usually without success.

There is no standard amount for tipping in the UAE, nor is there any consensus regarding what the ideal tip is. Some people round off the bill, while others pay 10 to 15 per cent.

Amid digital payments, some residents still take an additional step to continue their tipping habit. Mohammed Bushra, a Sudanese expat working in the food and beverage industry, understands the importance of tips for staff, and tries to always have cash on hand.

Turn To Page 3

Rioters get life in jail, deportation

Bangladeshi protesters in UAE sentenced after urgent trial

Three Bangladeshis were sentenced to life imprisonment and 54 others were ordered to be deported after serving prison terms for rioting and protesting in the UAE, authorities said on Monday.

The three were given life in prison for calling demonstrations and inciting riots in the UAE to put pressure on their government during the recent unrest over job reservation in Bangladesh. The court also sentenced 53 others to 10 years and one defendant to 11 years for entering the country illegally and participating in the protests.

The Abu Dhabi Federal Court of Appeal sentenced these expats on Monday for illegal gathering. The court ordered their deportation at the end of their prison terms and confiscation of all devices seized from them.

The group of Bangladeshis was arrested on Friday for gathering and inciting riots in several streets across the UAE against their home country's government. Chancellor Dr Hamad Saif Al Shamsi, UAE Attorney-General, had ordered an immediate investigation and referred the suspects to an "urgent trial".

The defendants were brought to trial after a probe led by a team of 30 investigators confirmed their involvement in gathering in public, inciting unrest, disrupting public security, and promoting such gatherings and protests, including recording and disseminating audiovisual footage of these actions online.

Turn To Page 3

Bangla missions warn people to respect law

Waheed Abbas
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Bangladeshi missions in the UAE have urged all countrymen to respect local laws and not engage in prohibited activities, which could result in the cancellation of their visas, jail time, fines, and a ban on entering the UAE.

The Bangladesh Embassy in Abu Dhabi and Consulate-General in Dubai asked their citizens not to take videos and photos of such activities and share any rumours and propaganda.

The missions issued the statement on July 20 after many Bangladeshis took to the streets in the UAE on July 19 against their government in Dhaka. On Monday, the UAE convicted 57 Bangladeshis for rioting and inciting demonstrations in the Emirates.

"All expatriate Bangladeshis living in the UAE are requested to respect the laws and regulations of the host country — the UAE. Incidentally, it should be noted that, according to the laws of this country, without the prior permission of the appropriate authorities, any kind of assem-

bly, procession or shouting slogans, indulging in any activity that may create unrest, panic or confusion in the public mind, spreading rumour/propaganda, recording video of it or any such message/image/video on social media are strictly prohibited," the missions said in a statement to *Khaleej Times* on Monday.

"Uploading or sharing, disrupting road traffic etc is strictly prohibited. In case of engaging in such activities, the person concerned is likely to face more severe punishment, including cancellation of visa, jail, fine, repatriation, and ban on entering this country in the future. Therefore, it is requested not to involve yourself in such activities and also to warn your colleagues, friends and known expatriate brothers and sisters about it," said the statement.

On Monday, the Bangladesh Embassy in Abu Dhabi said the unlawful acts that were committed by "only a handful" of people don't represent Bangladesh's one-million-plus "peace-loving and hard-working community".

Turn To Page 3

See Page 7



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Most UAE expats feel better financially in 2024: Survey

Waheed Abbas

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As many as 95 per cent of expats in the UAE feel they're in a better or slightly better financial situation than they were a year ago, according to a recent survey.

More than half - 55 per cent - of expats attribute improvement in their financial health to salary increases, 35 per cent to the performance of their investment portfolios, 30 per cent to property investments, and 20 per cent to their growing pension pot.

These are the top-line findings from the annual 2024 Worldwide Wealth Survey conducted by international financial advisory firm, Hoxton Capital Management, which saw responses from 2000 expats living in the UAE.

According to human capital consultancy Mercer's study released this year, salaries are projected to increase faster than the inflation rate hike on the back of increased demand for talent and overall growth in the economy.

When asked why they had initially moved abroad, 85 per cent of respondents from the UAE cited employment and quality of life as their primary reasons, Hoxton Capital said.

Positive shift

"The survey highlights a positive shift in financial sentiment among our international investor audience and particularly among expats living in the UAE. The fact that 95 per cent of respondents from the UAE feel they are in a better financial position than they were a year ago, reflects their resilience and adaptability in the



Salaries are projected to increase faster than the inflation rate hike on the back of increased demand for talent and overall growth in the economy.

face of economic changes. However, the increased cost of living remains a significant concern for those globally who feel worse off financially," said Chris Ball, managing partner at Hoxton Capital Management.

When asked about their financial priorities, 60 per cent of UAE expats said building up their savings is their priority while 45 per cent want to invest. Meanwhile, 40 per cent of the expats wish to

focus on buying or selling property. In the UAE, it's never too early to plan for one's retirement as 25 per cent of the expats are already planning for it. However, five per cent will prioritise their debt reduction.

The study found that compared to 95 per cent expats in UAE, only 60 per cent of expats living in other territories around the world feel better off.

When asked how often they

reviewed their investment portfolios, nearly half - 45 per cent - said they reviewed them weekly or monthly; 10 per cent once a year, and 15 per cent rarely or never.

In terms of tracking and managing their finances, 60 per cent in the UAE said they used apps compared to 46 per cent globally, 45 per cent used spreadsheets, 10 per cent used pen and paper, whilst 5 per cent said they didn't track or manage their finances at

all. Nearly a third - 30 per cent - of expats in the UAE said they didn't currently have a relationship with a financial adviser or planner.

"But more than half of people surveyed from the UAE said that they still use non-tech solutions for tracking their finances, which was particularly interesting. People haven't been using tech, we suspect, because until now there hasn't been anything out there that does what they need it to," he added.

Dubai unveils new mental health model

Staff Report

reporters@khaleejtimes.com

A mental health framework launched in Dubai Monday aims to develop a comprehensive model of care that includes early detection, intervention, enhancement, and prevention.

The Dh105-million project will have a range of initiatives for the early detection of "any factors that might affect an individual's mental and emotional state or levels of positive energy".

It also aims to provide care, support, and counselling services necessary to enhance psychological and community stability, the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) said.

"Additionally, the framework focuses on the educational environment, and empowering school staff and parents to develop students' psychological capacities. It also seeks to increase levels of satisfaction and happiness among community members," the DHA said in a statement.

A series of studies will be conducted to ensure the "continuous measurement and achievement of psychological and community stability for individuals". These include those prioritised in the framework: The elderly, children, people of determination, and those with chronic diseases.

Awadh Seghayer Al Ketbi, director-general of the DHA, said mental health is an integral part of the health and welfare of the community. It is one of the most important strategic objectives of major cities around the world, especially given the rapid pace of daily life. "Achieving this objective requires scientific and systematic intervention to manage the demands and pressures of everyday life and their potential consequences," he added.

Residents to be 'rewarded' for recycling plastic

Ashwani Kumar

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Now, you can get discounts on air tickets, restaurant bills, and shopping vouchers by recycling plastic bottles through AI-driven reverse vending machines (RVMs) in Abu Dhabi.

To promote sustainable waste practices among UAE residents, Tadweer Group has deployed 25 locally made RVMs in popular places like parks, ministry buildings, and airports, incentivising the community to act.

A spokesperson noted that through such initiatives Tadweer is working towards diverting 80 per cent of Abu Dhabi's waste away from landfill by 2030.

Ollie Lawson, media and communications adviser, said that the community has a major role in achieving Tadweer's ambitious targets.

"RVMs are a convenient way to recycle plastic bottles and aluminium cans. We are also offering incentives," Lawson said while demonstrating the AI-powered RVMs at the group headquarters.

"For every plastic bottle or aluminium can someone returns for recycling, they earn a credit. And those credits can be redeemed for rewards from various partner merchants," Lawson told *Khaleej Times*.

Noon.com, Amazon, Lufthansa, Gourmet Lab, Max, Brands for Less, Filli, Emax, and Dreamworks Spa are among the growing list of partners to get rewards from, including Dh100 discount on airfare, free dessert, shopping vouchers, etc.

"We want to expand that further. We're looking for more partners and reward schemes as part of the Tadweer Rewards app."

Process

After downloading the Tadweer Rewards app, community members need to dispose of items in the RVMs. AI cameras will scan the items. A QR code will be displayed on the screen if it's a plastic bottle or an aluminium can. Scanning the code will result in credit points. Individuals can then redeem those points for vouchers or discounts.

However, advanced machines will not accept products other



"We will continue to leverage expertise and partnerships with like-minded entities to unlock the value of waste and promote the circular economy, contributing to the UAE's sustainability agenda and progressing our ambition of diverting 80 per cent of waste from landfill by 2030."

Ali Al Dhaheeri
Managing director and CEO of Tadweer Group

than plastic bottles and cans. Such items, including shampoo bottles, will get rejected and dumped into another box inside the machine, which the collection staff will clear.

As each individual recycles through the RVMs, they also get to track their impact on the community. The app will show data like landfill space saved from being used as dumping grounds thanks to the deposited recyclables, waste diversion, reduction in carbon emissions, and energy conserved.

Ali Al Dhaheeri, managing director and CEO of Tadweer Group, highlighted the importance of community in maintaining a clean environment.

"We will continue to leverage expertise and partnerships with like-minded entities to unlock the value of waste and promote the circular economy, contributing to the UAE's sustainability agenda and progressing our ambition of diverting 80 per cent of waste from landfill by 2030," Al Dhaheeri noted.

Tadweer Group has worked closely with partners, including shopping malls, hospitals, ministries, and educational institutions, to launch the RVMs. These machines have been placed at Tadweer Group headquarters, Zayed International Airport, the Ministry of Finance, ADNEC, Khalifa Square, UAE University, Abu Dhabi Sports Council, parks including Umm Al Emarat Park, Al Wahah Park and Rabdan Park.

Some UAE residents spend up to Dh500k on gender reveal parties

Nasreen Abdulla

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With gender reveal parties gaining popularity around the world, some UAE residents are spending up to Dh500,000 on such gatherings, according to event planners in the country. From drone shows in the sky and light displays on Burj Khalifa to smoke waterfalls, and colour streamers, people in the UAE are going all out to celebrate the event.

"There has been a large shift towards gender reveals becoming more and more popular not just in the UAE but globally," said Gauri Chadha, creative director of the Big Night Events (BNE).

"We have seen people spending up to Dh500,000 on a gender reveal party. The cost would depend on the creative vision of the party and the number of people attending the event but generally it tends to be above Dh250,000. However, we have had people coming up to us with a smaller budget, and we do our best to give them what is feasible in that budget," she added.

Last week, Dubai-based influencers Nora and Khalid Alherani hosted a gender reveal party with a drone show, believed to be one of the first in the region. In 2020, Syrian influencers Anas and Asala Marwah had conducted their gender reveal as a light display on the Burj Khalifa.

Natasha Hatherall-Shawe, founder of digital marketing agency Tish Tash said social media is partly responsible for the increasing popularity of these parties. "People like to share everything online, in a very visual and creative way," she said. "Even 'normal' non influencers like to share all their moments on social media and this feeds in to that."

According to Natasha, the pandemic has also fed into the popularity of gender reveal parties. "I do feel that since Covid especially, we are all finding more ways to celebrate life," she said. "It's a good thing for us all to cherish the important moments in life more."

Globally, some gender reveal parties have been widely criticised for being destructive and leading to the deaths of people. In 2021, a California couple's gender reveal caused a wildfire that burnt down thousands of acres of land, destroyed five homes and killed a firefighter. However, this has not put a damper on such parties and



As gender reveal trends have become more viral, more brands are willing to collaborate with influencers for such parties.

on the contrary, seems to have made them more popular.

Natasha said that as gender reveal trends have become more viral, more brands are willing to collaborate with influencers for such parties and her agency has dealt with several such requests.

Producing content

Natasha said that producing content for brands can be expensive, and gender reveals - a type of content attractive to brands - are no different. She said that this is one of the reasons why brands are eager to collaborate with influencers for gender reveal parties.

"We are definitely getting a lot more requests to support gender reveals, but to-date it has mainly been with venues, decoration or cakes, even hair and make-up or clothing for reveals," she said.

Natasha emphasised that while it is easier to collaborate with brands for smaller elements, requests will change and become increasingly expensive as the industry grows larger. "It will then be

a bigger consideration to clients," she added.

For many event planners, such parties involve an emotional connect. Kunal Rupani, Managing Director of BNE shared one such event that was close to his heart.

"Our clients landed from Paris that morning, went straight to the doctor and came to meet us and handed over an envelope revealing the gender of the child," he said. "Only one member of our team knew the gender during the time that we were planning the reveal."

The couple wanted to bring the breeze of France to Dubai and according to Kunal, the team went all out to recreate it. "The grand moment was revealed with larger streamer blasts and coloured smoke sets against a balloon-filled backdrop," he said. "The event was set in a lawn and we had customised beverages with candy floss, smoke bubbles, a very special Vespa converted into a live floral bouquet experience and a live drawing experience."

The costs of such parties can vary depending on the couple's

choice. Natasha said a lot of people still preferred to have very simple gender reveal parties. "I think it is important to mention to anyone planning their own gender reveal that it can be done very simply and affordably," she said. "They don't have to cost a lot. Make a cake and buy some balloons and the job is done."

Despite controversies and varying opinions about gender reveals, the trend seems to be here to stay. "I think they are likely to become a more mainstream part of life," said Natasha. "We're seeing this already with the availability of gender reveal decorations in stores and online. There is clearly a demand that will continue to grow and become more commercial."

Gauri agreed. "Be it a drone show, flying skydivers with smoke releases or beautiful balloon pops - gender reveals are here to stay and what better place to do them in than the UAE where your imagination can roam wild and the impossible can be made possible," she said.

Meat-free chicken, fish can feed a billion people



Chef Francisco Araya, the centre director at the International Centre for Culinary Arts, Abu Dhabi, noted that it's a tough call to pick a winner.

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About 300 residents are among the select few to taste-test the next best alternative to chicken and fish protein as part of the XPRIZE 'Feed the Next Billion' global competition in Abu Dhabi. The four-year-long \$15 million challenge launched in December 2020 for teams of innovators to develop chicken and fish alternatives has now reached its final phase. The competition aims to incentivise teams to replicate or outperform conventional chicken and fish in five critical areas — access, environmental sustainability, animal welfare, nutrition, and taste and texture.

From more than 300, about six teams from Argentina, China, Canada, Austria, Estonia, and South Korea are left in the race. They sent their food samples to Abu Dhabi, where the taste testing took place at the International Centre for Culinary Arts.

The insights from about 300 residents, selected by a market research and consulting firm to test

the samples, will help the judging panel of experts in food science, sustainability, and culinary arts pick the winner to be announced here on October 30.

Khaleej Times got a guided tour of the kitchen and behind-the-scenes works to find tomorrow's protein alternatives, which will help people around the world access safe and affordable food. All participating residents were tasked to taste test three different sets of samples with two non-veg and one non-meat alternative.

Maintaining confidentiality, the residents never knew which sample or the team they were testing. All three samples were cut by chefs to look like a non-veg piece. The residents had to check for taste, nutrition analysis, smell, etc., and later answer about 20 questions to help find sustainable and innovative solutions.

CellX, a team from China is the only one competing with a cell-based chicken. Others are Eternal (fermentation-derived chicken team from Argentina), PlantEat (plant-based fish team from South Korea), ProFillet (plant-based fish team from Canada), Revo Foods

(plant-based fish team from Austria), and TFTAK (plant-based fish team from Estonia). They had to ensure their product is scalable for global distribution.

Chef Francisco Araya, the centre director at the International Centre for Culinary Arts, Abu Dhabi, noted that it's a tough call to pick a winner.

"I think that there will be more than one winner. The samples resemble the real product. It's outstanding," Araya told *Khaleej Times*.

Final round

The final round of the competition will look at the structure, preparation, and cookability of the finalists' samples, as well as sensory analysis, including taste, aroma, texture, appearance, and overall similarity to their animal-origin equivalents.

"The gap to the original is becoming smaller. You are moving closer. It's going to be getting that extra one per cent, I think, the effort is going to be quite high. It's going to be an organoleptic mix between texture, and aroma, but some of them are very close," Araya

underlined.

The global competition was launched in partnership with ASPIRE, the UAE's R&D catalyst, and convener of transformative grand challenges, and US-based non-profit organisation Tony Robbins Foundation. With the global population projected to reach 10 billion by 2050, the demand for sustainable and alternative food sources has never been more urgent, making this competition more relevant than ever.

"The global challenge of food security requires urgent and innovative solutions," said Stephane Timpano, CEO of ASPIRE.

Anousheh Ansari, CEO of XPRIZE, noted the competition showcases the incredible potential of innovation to address a pressing issue of global food supply.

"As we approach the final phase of this transformative competition, we are inspired by the dedication and ingenuity of the participating teams. Their breakthroughs in alternative proteins will play a crucial role in shaping a more sustainable and resilient global food system."

Rioters get life in jail, deportation

From Page 1

Several of the defendants confessed to the crimes they were accused of.

During the trial, the Public Prosecution demanded the maximum penalty for the accused.

The court heard a witness who confirmed that the defendants gathered and organised large-scale marches in several streets of the UAE. This led to riots, disruption of public security, obstruction of law enforcement, and endangerment of public and private property. The police had warned the protesters to disperse which they did not heed.

A court-appointed defence lawyer argued that the gathering had no criminal intent and that the evidence was insufficient, demanding the acquittal of the defendants. However, the court found sufficient evidence to convict them. Protests erupted in Bangladesh

against preferential hiring rules that prioritise women, residents of less developed districts, and other disadvantaged sections over merit-based selection.

This includes reservation of 30 per cent of highly sought-after civil service posts for children of freedom fighters who fought in the country's 1971 liberation war against Pakistan.

Amid the unrest, telecommunication lines were disrupted, a nationwide Internet ban was enforced, and a curfew was imposed to quell the growing unrest. The military was called in after police failed to control the protesters.

On Sunday, Bangladesh's Supreme Court scrapped most of the quotas which sparked the student-led protests in which at least 114 people were killed. The court's Appellate Division directed that 93 per cent of government jobs will be open to candidates on merit, without quotas. — WAM

Bangla missions warn people to respect law

From Page 1

"It has come to our attention that a group of non-resident Bangladeshis who were involved in gathering in public places at different spots in the UAE, bringing out processions in protest on issues back in the home country, including recording and disseminating audio-visual footage of these actions online.

"They were arrested by the local law enforcement agencies, and the Abu Dhabi Federal Court of Appeal on Sunday handed down sentences to a group of them. It is very unfortunate and shocking for us as well as for the Bangladeshi community in the UAE," the embassy said in the statement.

The statement added: "One million plus Bangladeshi people are living here in peace and happiness while considering it as their second home. They are fully respectful of the local law, regulations, traditions and customs. The reported acts committed by only a handful number of people do not represent our huge law-abiding, peace-loving and hard-working community who are equally loved and welcomed by the Emirati people and government."

The Bangladeshi missions in UAE said they always encourage its community "to show respect to and abide by the laws and regulations of the host country and to refrain from any kind of activities which are not permissible by the UAE law".

'Unretirement' is catching up here

From Page 1

Scott spent over 10 years researching for his new book and said it was also important for society to realign themselves to suit the needs of a growing older population. "The concept of retirement needs to change," he said. "Yes, older people shouldn't have to work a full time job but they need a more flexible role where they can utilise and share their skills while also coaching the younger generation and mentoring."

Dutch expat Heidi Struikma arrived in the UAE in 1994 and worked as a human resources expert for several decades for some of the top companies in the country before becoming a freelancer here.

"I worked for over 30 years in the UAE, setting up frameworks on how to train local homegrown talent and make sure they are ready to take over leadership positions," she said.

However, as she grew older, she found that she preferred to call her own shots and work only with companies with whom she identified with. That is how she became a freelancer in 2007. Today, the 70-year-old enjoys flexible working hours and finds time to follow several of her passions.

"I am very passionate about coaching, mentoring and training young Emirati talents and being a freelancer gives me the time to do that," she said. "I also only work with

companies with whom my values align. My father always taught me that as an expatriate, my job was to put in place systems so that the locals can continue functioning even after I leave. This is something I have always carried with me."

Heidi is also an active member of the Dubai Natural History Group and enjoys going on challenging treks. Last year, she travelled with a group of wanderlusts on a trek to Antarctica. She also volunteers with Sailability at the Dubai Offshore Sailing Club where she supports children of determination to learn how to sail.

However, Heidi admitted that being a freelancer and having a flexible work schedule as a septuagenarian brings with it its own set of challenges. "I haven't had a client for over a year and that is one of the biggest challenges," she said.

"The financial pressure is always there, and you never know when the next client is coming. Another challenge is the medical insurance. It gets expensive as you get older."

For a premium global insurance cover, Heidi said she pays Dh50,000 per year. Despite these issues, Heidi said she doesn't want to leave the UAE unless she has to. "I love how there are people from all over the world here and you get to learn from so many cultures," she said. "So unless I am financially forced to, I don't want to leave this country that I love so much."

Health insurance with tourist visas

From Page 1

"This is especially great for those travellers who don't know much about health insurance when travelling," he said. "It is surprising how many people don't know about it and don't take insurance when travelling. However, those who are more aware should check what the insurance covers. People who would like a more comprehensive medical cover might need to top up with their own private insurance to make sure they are fully protected in the case of an emergency."

Others in the industry also welcomed the move, saying it will lead to "better experience" for tourists and cement the UAE's position as a top vacation destination.

"This is a progressive move that combines health insurance with tourist visa application," said Akbar Moideen Thumabay, vice-president, Thumabay Healthcare. "For travellers, having health insurance is essential protection against unforeseen medical expenses, particularly for emergency medical care. Travellers to the UAE will be able to enjoy their stay with the support of this service, knowing that their health and safety are given priority from the moment they apply for their visa. The visitors will always have quick access to high-quality medical care in the event of an emergency."

He said this new initiative is also beneficial to tourists as they would get more competitive prices. "The implementation of an automated health insurance procedure that leverages the experience of leading insurance providers to provide competitive coverage alternatives would ensure that the various demands of travelers are satisfied," he said.

"As a result, tourists will have a better overall experience, and the UAE's standing as a top vacation destination that puts safety and wellbeing first will be further strengthened."



Workers earn less in tips as payments go digital

From Page 1

"I always make sure I have cash on me. Tips mean a lot to riders and waiters, so I make it a habit to withdraw some," he said. Bushra believes that even with the rise of digital payments, having cash on hand can be valuable for tipping and other emergencies.

Inas Harbi, a Lebanese resident of Al Ain, shared a similar opinion. "I would not have cash on me for months, and I would always feel guilty when I wanted to tip but could not," she said.

Harbi's perspective has changed. "But I started having small amounts in my wallet because my kids always want to visit the grocery store and buy themselves treats," she said.

This habit of regularly visiting grocery stores has encouraged Harbi to keep some cash in her wallet. "Since then, I've had enough cash to tip the people who deliver food to me and others," Harbi added.

While delivery apps and restaurants have embraced digital payments, some have recognised the need to facilitate tipping through their platforms.

Gyanendra Prasad Kar, founder

“Nowadays, tipping is easier through applications, as it is included in the billing process, unlike cash payments where customers may not have exact change.”

Gyanendra Prasad Kar
Founder and manager of Indian Delights

and manager of Indian Delights, said: "Nowadays, tipping is easier through applications, as it is included in the billing process, unlike cash payments where customers may not have exact change."

He also noted that card swiping machines are equipped with a tipping system, which is conveyed to the customers who dine at the restaurants.

He acknowledged that, however, customers may sometimes forget to tip the waiter, realising only after swiping their card.

To address this issue, Kar suggested that businesses could play a role by ensuring that their pay-

ment systems have clear prompts for tipping. In addition, businesses can mention tipping on their menus or within the restaurant to remind customers to tip their waiters.

Rohit, a waiter at Indian Delights restaurant, noted: "If there is a decrease, it may be because machines prompt the customer to tip right after their bill payment, which may differ from the tip they would have given with cash. Earlier, when a customer paid with cash, the change they received post-billing would often be set aside as a tip," he explained.

Tech outage

Due to a recent technical outage, many UAE residents returned to cash for daily transactions. The massive tech crash that swept the world on July 19 was a wake-up call not only for governments and businesses but for individuals also.

Those who were out shopping, refilling their tanks, or paying bills could not do so because the outage disrupted various sectors. Some residents said that the incident taught them the importance of always keeping cash on hand.

The Real Estate Regulatory Agency
Land Department
Government of Dubai

مؤسسة التنظيم العقاري
دائرة الأراضي والأقاليم
مجلس دبي

Project Name Change Announcement

Dear Clients,

If you have any claims on the developer **SOBHA L.L.C** registered & approved under No. 966 on the following project/s:

Project No.	Project Name (Old)	Project Name (New)	Location	Plot No.
2762	Sobha Seahaven - Tower B	Sobha Seahaven - Tower B & C	Marsa Dubai	3681

We are **SOBHA L.L.C**, Registered and approved under number 966, announce our name change Register in Dubai land as name: "Sobha Seahaven-Tower B" RERA No. 2762 to new name "Sobha Seahaven -Tower B & C" after fulfilling all the requirements for the change.

This notice is published under the responsibility of the advertiser

YOUR UAE GUIDE

LIFE AND LIVING IN THE EMIRATES, EXPLAINED



Don't own a car? From ferry to shuttle, alternate ways to travel between Dubai and Sharjah

Here's your guide to cost-efficient and quick options between the two bustling cities

Laraib Anwer
laraib@khaaleejtimes.com

Looking for a quick and cost-efficient option to travel between Dubai and Sharjah?

Commute without a car and metro between the two cities separated by a sandy border might seem daunting at first, but is actually pretty convenient.

Those looking for comfort have the option of cabs, whereas buses prove to be a more inexpensive mode of transport.

Whether you are hitting Sharjah's bustling markets or looking to get a view of Dubai's scenic skyline — or maybe you are a busy bee travelling for work between the two cities on a daily basis — here is a guide to getting around between the two emirates.

RTA offers many bus routes from different points between the two bustling cities.

The intercity bus options come at different prices and start from various locations in the two cities.

Here is a list of the most common bus services offered:

From Dubai to Sharjah

- » **E301** - From Shabab Al Ahli (U6) to Sharjah, Al Taawun (V5)
- » **E303** - From Union (T4) to Sharjah, Al Jubail (W5)
- » **E303A** - From Al Sabkha (S4) to Sharjah, Al Jubail (W5)
- » **E304** - From Al Satwa (P4) to Sharjah, Al Jubail (W5)
- » **E306** - From Al Ghubaiba (R3) to Sharjah, Al Jubail (W5)
- » **E307** - From Deira City Centre (S5) to Sharjah, Al Jubail (W5)
- » **E307A** - From Abu Hail (T5) to Sharjah, Al Jubail (W5)
- » **E311** - From Rashidiya (T8) to Sharjah, Al Jubail (W5)
- » **E315** - From Etisalat (U8) to Sharjah, Al Muwailah (W8)
- » **E316** - From Rashidiya (T8) to Sharjah Al Noaf (W9)



Routes shown above are as per RTA's S'hail application.

From Sharjah to Dubai (Bus service offered by RTA)

- » **E303** - From Al Jubail to Dubai, Union Square
 - » **E306** - From Al Jubail to Dubai, Al Ghubaiba
 - » **E307** - From Al Jubail to Dubai, Deira City Centre
 - » **E307A** - From Al Jubail to Dubai, Abu Hail Metro Station
 - » **E315** - From Muwailah to Dubai, Etisalat Metro Station
- (Bus service offered by SRTA)**
- » **308** - From Rolla to Dubai, Jabel Ali, Ibn Battuta Bus Station
 - » **309** - From Rolla to Dubai, Interchange 4
 - » **313** - From Rolla to Dubai, Airport Terminal 2
 - » **113** - From Rolla to Dubai, Rashidiya Bus Station

RTA offers its cab service be-

tween the two emirates. An additional cost of Dh20 is charged when crossing between the two cities.

Sharjah's transport authority SRTA offers a similar taxi service to Dubai, with the same additional charge of Dh20.

Cab services like Careem and Uber are great options to consider while commuting, as they offer several options ranging from normal to luxury, suiting the needs of all kinds of travellers.

Looking for a scenic option to reach your destination? RTA's ferry service runs between Dubai and Sharjah from Al Ghubaiba to Sharjah Aquarium (FR5). The service runs back and forth between the two stops.

Cost: Dh15 (silver card) and Dh25 (gold card) for one way travel.

Both Dubai and Sharjah international airports offer shuttle services to each emirate. This bus

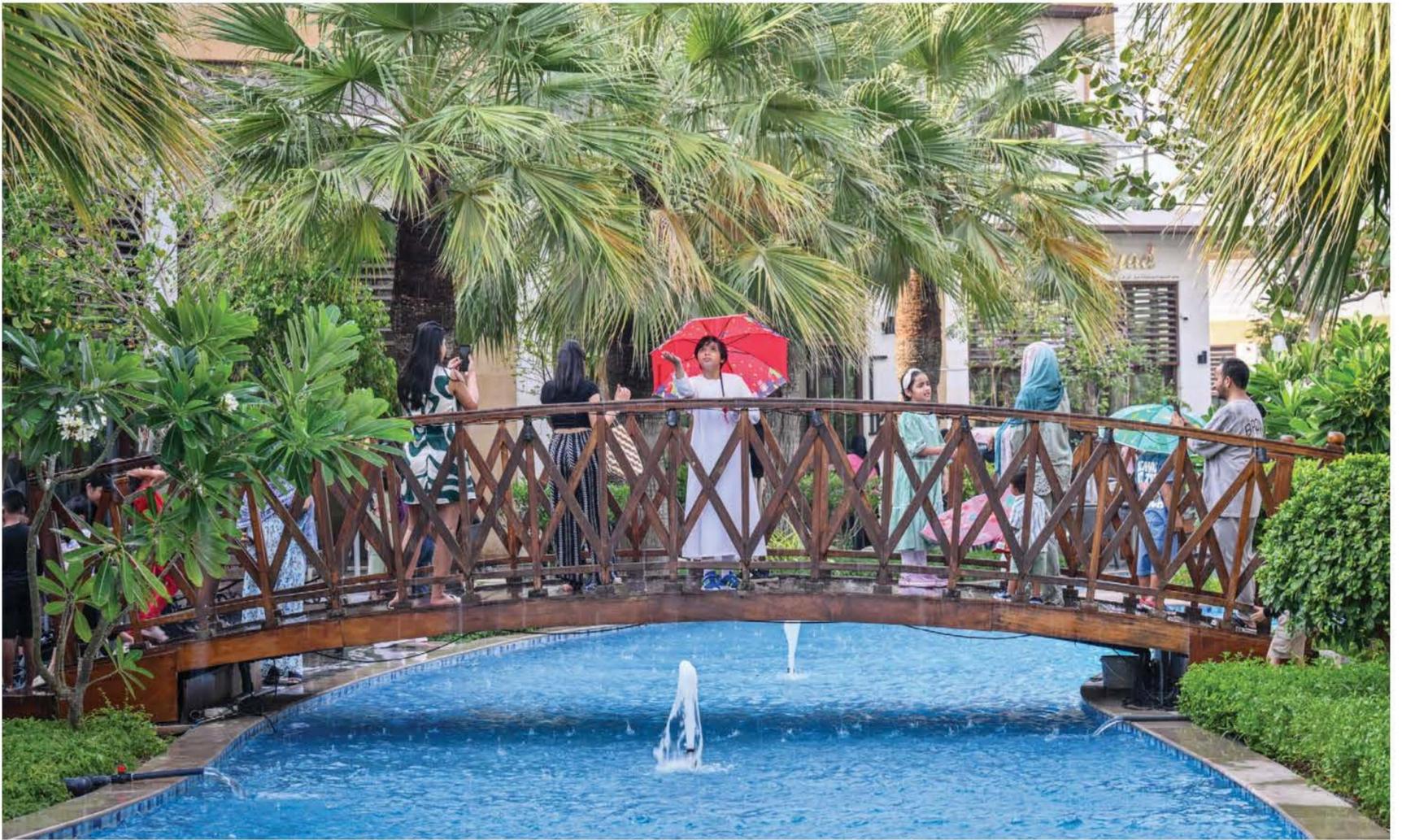
service is a quick and cheap way to reach the other city after landing in or leaving the country.

Air Arabia offers coaches from Sharjah Airport to Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Al Ain and Ras al Khaimah. The bus runs to and from Al Ghurair Centre between Dubai and Sharjah. One trip costs Dh20.

Countless private bus services and tourism agencies offer transport from Dubai airport to Sharjah and vice versa.

There are numerous car rental options across the UAE for tourists as well as residents to dive into. Be it a family-friendly car or a sports car to fulfil your adrenaline rush, rental spots across the Emirates offer it all.

Apart from rental stores, customers also have online options like Udrive and Ekar. Renting cars is just a click away with these two, as they offer a range of vehicles and brands.



PHOTOS BY MUHAMMAD SAJJAD/KHALEEJ TIMES

Residents and families delight in the artificial rain at Zawaya Walk in Sharjah. Rain Street, a popular attraction, features seven daily shows, providing an immersive day and night experience. Each rain show lasts five minutes.

Cooler water to be used for Sharjah's viral 'rain street' shows

Zawaya Walk has become a popular hangout spot for residents not only for the 'rains' but also for an array of retail outlets, shops, restaurants, and cafes

Ruqayya Al Qaydi
ruqaydi@khaaleejtimes.com

Sharjah's 'rain street' at Zawaya Walk is the talk of the town, and it's about to get better. The brain behind this viral city attraction has vowed to use special devices to make hourly downpours cooler. Talking to *Khaaleej Times*, Obaid Al Tunaiji said he and his team noticed that the water used for the artificial rains was warm.

"We will make the rains cooler to further lower the water temperatures and allow people to enjoy it even more," said the Emirati. Al Tunaiji said the water used in the artificial rain is "clean and sterilised".

The palm tree-lined Zawaya Walk in Sharjah has gone viral on social media since it introduced free artificial rain shows for all visitors this summer. This means, in this sweltering heat, you can bring your umbrella (or not) and take a stroll without breaking a sweat.

Featuring thunder-like sound effects to create a realistic experience for visitors, each downpour lasts approximately five minutes. The shows take place every hour from 9am to 12pm, and then from 5pm to 11pm.

The shopping destination has become a popular hangout spot for residents not only because of the free rain shows but also because of an array of retail outlets, shops, restaurants, and cafes. The open complex includes an outdoor walkway,

an artificial lake, and a crossing bridge connecting the two ends of the building. Al Tunaiji along with other developers have noticed that the visitor turnout had been consistently low during the summer months. "We started brainstorming what we could do to attract visitors even during the summer. The first step was planting trees that would provide shade and reduce the heat," said Al Tunaiji.

Tree shade

Over 300 trees have been planted at the site over the past few months to create a cooler atmosphere.

The developers also considered using misting fans that spray water, create a cooling effect. However, Al Tunaiji was concerned that it might make the atmosphere humid and uncomfortable for visitors.

Then, they started discussing about the possibility of having artificial rains since rains usually "cool the atmosphere."

Once the idea was finalised, they decided not to hire specialised companies to implement it. Instead, their team of engineers executed the plan in a manner "that suits the place's requirements".

As summer season peaks in the UAE, temperatures crossed highs of 50°C in the country, prompting most establishments to shift their activities indoors. Fortunately, some outdoor destinations like Zawaya Walk is helping visitors enjoy the sun without them feeling too hot.



Gaza Conflict

Israel issues new evacuation orders in south Gaza

Israeli tank shelling and airstrikes killed at least 37 Palestinians near Khan Younis, Gaza medics said on Monday, after Israel issued new orders to evacuate some neighbourhoods following what it said were renewed attacks from those areas.

The Palestinians were killed by tank salvos in the town of Bani Suhaila and other towns just east of the southern city of Khan Younis, with the area also bombarded by air, they said.

The Gaza health ministry said the dead included several women and children and that dozens of other people had been injured by Israeli fire. The Gaza ministry does not distinguish between militants and civilians in its death tallies.

Around 400,000 people are living in the targeted areas and dozens of families have begun to leave their houses, Palestinian officials said, add-

ing they were not given time to leave before the Israeli strikes began.

Some families fled on donkey carts, others on foot, carrying mattresses and other belongings.

At Nasser Hospital some people stood outside the morgue to bid farewell to dead relatives before burials.

"We are tired, we are tired in Gaza, every day our children are martyred, every day, every moment. This is the blood of our children, it has not yet dried..." said Ahmed Sammour, who lost several relatives in the Israeli bombing of eastern Khan Younis.

"No one told us to evacuate. They brought four floors crashing down on civilians... and the bodies they could reach, they brought to the refrigerator (morgue)," Sammour added.

There was no immediate Israeli comment on the strikes east of Khan Younis.

Earlier, an Israeli military state-

“

We are tired, we are tired in Gaza, every day our children are martyred, every day, every moment. This is the blood of our children, it has not yet dried.”

Ahmed Sammour

Who lost several relatives in the Israeli bombing of eastern Khan Younis

ment said the new evacuation orders were given due to renewed Palestinian militant attacks, including rockets launched from the targeted areas in eastern Khan Younis. The orders did not include health institutions, Palestinians said.

The military said it was adjusting the boundaries of a humanitarian zone in Al Mawasi — to the west of Khan Younis — to keep the civilian

+

Death toll so far

39,006

Number of Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks since October 7

population away from areas of combat with Hamas-led Palestinian militants.

The Palestinians, the United Nations and international relief agencies have said there is no safe place left in Gaza. Earlier in July, dozens of Palestinians were killed in separate Israeli attacks in the humanitarian-designated Al Mawasi area.

Israel said those attacks were aimed at armed militants, including some

top Hamas military commanders. Palestinian officials called those allegations false and said they were used to justify the attacks.

Later on Monday, health officials at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis urged residents to donate blood because of the large number of casualties being rushed into the medical centre. "A family, including children, were all torn to pieces while they were sleeping," said a man who arrived at the hospital in an ambulance bearing the bodies.

Israel has vowed to eradicate Hamas after militants killed 1,200 people and took more than 250 hostages in a cross-border assault on Oct. 7, 2023, according to Israeli tallies.

The death toll among Palestinians in Israel's retaliatory offensive since then had reached at least 39,006 as of Monday, Gaza health authorities said. — REUTERS



A Palestinian pulls a cart with water containers refilled from a nearby supply point in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, on Monday. — REUTERS

Israeli settlers beat foreign volunteers in occupied West Bank

Israeli settlers on Sunday attacked a group of foreign volunteers helping Palestinian farmers in the occupied West Bank, injuring some who needed hospital treatment, the activists and Israeli army said.

Eight mainly American volunteers were working with the farmers in an olive grove near the Palestinian village of Qusra when settlers came after them, said David Hummel, an American-German in the group.

"We were standing there peacefully, not a threat to anyone, when they started coming towards us and pushing us down the path," Hummel said.

"They started attacking and beating us all with sticks and metal pipes and they were throwing rocks as well at us," he said.

"I was attacked on my legs, on my arms and here on my jaw as well and it was ... very violent," added the volunteer, showing

“

They (Israeli settlers) started attacking and beating us all with sticks and metal pipes and they were throwing rocks as well at us. I was attacked on my legs, on my arms and here on my jaw.”

David Hummel

An American-German

bruising to his face. Attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank have increased since the Gaza war erupted on October 7. Tensions have been further fuelled by an International Court of Justice ruling on Friday that Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories since 1967 was illegal.

The volunteers are from the International Solidarity Movement, a group that says it de-



A Palestinian boy carries an empty container as he walks in a rubble-covered alley in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip on Monday. — AFP

loys people to form a "protective presence" for Palestinians at risk of facing violence in the West Bank.

Two women were among four activists treated at Rafidia

hospital in the nearby city of Nablus, according to Qusra's mayor Hani Odeh. A journalist saw at least three being treated in the hospital.

Israeli troops arrived and

fired warning shots in the air to chase away the volunteers and farmers, according to the mayor.

The army said in a statement that "a number of masked Is-

raeli civilians assaulted a group of foreign citizens while they were planting trees in the area of Qusra" and that "several" needed treatment. "Soldiers were dispatched to the scene and fired warning shots into the air, causing the Israeli civilians to flee the area," they added, condemning any "acts of violence".

The volunteers from the ISM, which says it was set up "to resist the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land", have been in Qusra for about a month, according to the mayor.

The farmers wanted to "clear the land after settlers burned it some time ago", said Odeh.

About 10 people from the nearby Esh Kodesh Israeli settlement arrived to confront the farmers and foreign activists, he added.

Hummel said the group of settlers who attacked them included six women. — AFP

Short of female free divers, Japan's sea festival turns to volunteers

Bearing torches that lit up the night as they swam out into the ocean, Japan's storied "ama" prayed for an abundant catch in a ceremony held by these female free divers for decades.

This year, however, most of the 80 white-clad participants in the weekend event in Minamiboso on the Pacific coast were volunteers, as age and disinterest dwindle the number of women willing to make a livelihood out of this type of diving in this fishing community.

Japan is home to the world's oldest population and the number of female ama, a Japanese word meaning sea-diving fisherpeople, fell to just 40 last year in the Shirahama district in Minamiboso, down 70 per cent from 2006, according to a local fisheries cooperative.

Their ages averaged 72 in

"I grew up seeing older women working as ama, and found the smiles on their suntanned faces very attractive and cool. Seeing the number of ama divers dwindling, to be honest, makes me sad."

Ayumi Inoue

A 51-year-old, trained up to become an ama three years ago

2023, compared with 68 in 2006. "Those who still go out to sea are getting rather old. We have managed to keep the festival going by asking people in this area and beyond for cooperation," said Shoichi Iida, who has helped organise

the festival for years. In keeping with their centuries-old practice, the ama still dive without any scuba gear or air tanks. Many divers say it is hard work that doesn't offer much pay, and their numbers continue to dwindle as hardly any young women want to take up the tradition.

"This is not the kind of job on which you can make instant money," said Yoshino Hirano, who has worked as an ama for 16 years.

Despite the drawbacks, Ayumi Inoue, a 51-year-old local resident, trained up to become an ama three years ago.

"I grew up seeing older women working as ama, and found the smiles on their suntanned faces very attractive and cool," Inoue said. "Seeing the number of ama divers dwindling, to be honest, makes me sad." — REUTERS



'Ama' female free divers, who harvest sea life from the ocean, lead volunteers as they swim with torches during Shirahama Ama matsuri in Minamiboso, Chiba Prefecture, Japan, on July 20. — REUTERS

Headquarters of Pakistan ex-PM Imran Khan's party raided

Pakistan police raided the headquarters of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party on Monday, a week after government vowed to ban the political movement.

An AFP journalist at the scene saw the headquarters of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) sealed off by officers, who led a number of party workers into waiting vans.

Pakistani media initially reported party chairman Gohar Ali Khan, a barrister, was among those taken away.

However, an official at Islamabad Police, who asked not to be identified because he was not authorised to speak to the media, told AFP that they had not arrested him.

The official confirmed the arrest of Raouf Hassan, a founding member of the party and head of its press department.

"Raouf Hasan was arrested but the police did not arrest Gohar Ali Khan," the police official said.

A police spokesman said the secretariat's digital media wing had been searched, without giving any further details. He said the police also took away "some officials", without elaborating.

In the past two months at least 10 members of PTI or their relatives have been rounded up, Hasan told AFP on Saturday. He said they had "disappeared" with "no trace".

"Seven of them are from my department alone, which they want to cripple because we refuse to stay silent," he said.

The government's information minister last week said it would ban PTI, just days after the Supreme Court made a crucial ruling in the party's favour that dealt a huge blow to the government.

Khan has been jailed for nearly a year, but this month an Islamabad judge overturned his illegal marriage conviction while the Supreme Court awarded PTI more parliamentary seats — a move set to make them the largest party in the National Assembly.

Khan, who says the many cases against him have been orchestrated to prevent his return to power, remains languishing in jail on fresh charges of inciting protests and graft. — AFP



A Bangladeshi soldier stands guard at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh amid the anti-quota protests in Dhaka on Sunday. — AFP

Bangladesh student group suspends protests for 48 hours over death toll

The Bangladeshi student group leading demonstrations that have spiralled into deadly violence suspended protests on Monday for 48 hours, with its leader saying they had not wanted reform "at the expense of so much blood".

What began as demonstrations against politicised admission quotas for sought-after government jobs snowballed into some of the worst unrest of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's tenure.

A curfew has been imposed and soldiers are patrolling cities across the South Asian country, while a nationwide internet blackout since Thursday has drastically restricted the flow of information to the outside world.

"We are suspending the shutdown protests for 48 hours," Nahid Islam, the top leader of the main protest organiser Students Against Discrimination, told a news agency from his hospital bed.

He was being treated for his injuries after being beaten by people

he accused of being undercover police, he said.

"We demand that during this period the government withdraws the curfew, restores the internet and stops targeting the student protesters."

On Sunday, the Supreme Court pared back the number of reserved jobs for specific groups, including the descendants of "freedom fighters" from Bangladesh's 1971 liberation war against Pakistan.

"We started this movement for reforming the quota," Islam said.

"But we did not want quota reform at the expense of so much blood, so much killing, so much damage to life and property."

At least 163 people have died in clashes, including several police officers, according to a count of victims reported by police and hospitals.

Sporadic violence continued Monday, with four people brought to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital with bullet injuries, a reporter at the scene saw.

"We demand that during this period (48 hours) the government withdraws the curfew, restores the internet and stops targeting the student protesters."

Nahid Islam

Leader of the main protest organiser Students Against Discrimination

Government officials have repeatedly blamed the protesters and opposition for the unrest.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police spokesman Faruk Hossain told AFP that "at least 532" people had been arrested in the capital since protests began, including some leaders of the opposition Bangladesh National Party.

Ali Riaz, a professor of politics and leading Bangladesh expert at Illinois State University, described the violence as "the worst mass-

acre by any regime since independence".

"The atrocities committed in the past days show that the regime is entirely dependent on brute force and has no regard for the lives of the people," he said.

"These indiscriminate killings cannot be washed by a court ruling or a government announcement."

Bangladeshi Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus urged "world leaders and the United Nations to do everything within their powers to end the violence".

"There must be investigations into the killings that have taken place already," the 83-year-old said in a statement, his first public comments since the unrest began.

The respected economist is credited with lifting millions out of poverty with his pioneering micro-finance bank but earned the enmity of Hasina, who has accused him of "sucking blood" from the poor.

"Bangladesh has been engulfed in a crisis that only seems to get worse with each passing day," Yu-

nus said. "High school students have been among the victims."

Diplomats in Dhaka questioned Bangladeshi authorities' deadly response to the protests.

Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud summoned ambassadors for a briefing on Sunday and showed them a 15-minute video that sources said focused on damage caused by protesters.

US ambassador Peter Haas told Mahmud he was presenting a one-sided version of events, according to a senior diplomatic official.

"I am surprised you did not show the footage of police firing at unarmed protesters," the source quoted Haas as telling the minister. A US embassy official speaking on condition of anonymity confirmed the ambassador's comments.

The diplomatic source added that Mahmud did not respond to a question from a UN representative about the alleged use of UN-marked armoured personnel carriers and helicopters to suppress the protests. — AFP

World's first 'Eco-Milk' tests shoppers' thirst for climate-friendly dairy

A small dairy in Tasmania, Australia, is stocking supermarket shelves with what it says is the world's first branded milk produced by cows fed with a seaweed that makes them emit lower levels of environmentally damaging methane gas.

The livestock industry accounts for around 30 per cent of global methane emissions, according to the United Nations. Seaweed and other feed additives for cattle could reduce these greenhouse gas emissions but have yet to be widely adopted due to cost.

Since February, family-owned

Tasmanian dairy producer Ashgrove has been feeding around 500 cows - a fifth of its total - an oil containing a seaweed extract that reduces the methane released by a cow's digestion, said co-owner Richard Bennett.

The cows produce around 10,000 litres of milk a day, a portion of which is bottled as "Eco-Milk" and sold across Tasmania including at Woolworths, Australia's largest supermarket chain.

"We're getting about 25 per cent reduction in methane," Bennett said.

Eco-Milk is a test of whether consumers will pay extra for dairy products that have a lower environmental impact.

A two-litre bottle sells for A\$5.50 (\$3.67), twenty-five cents more than normal full cream milk, Bennett said, adding that sales were going well but the company had yet to decide on whether to expand the project.

Producers of feed additives that inhibit the release of methane by microbes digesting plant matter in cows' stomachs have invested hundreds of millions of dollars to produce enough to feed millions of

animals. French cheese maker Bel Group said last year it would feed an additive to around 10,000 dairy cows in Slovakia. Other firms including JBS, Danone and Fonterra have dabbled with additives but not rolled them out at scale.

The additive used by Ashgrove is supplied by a Tasmanian company called Sea Forest. Its CEO Sam Elsom said he hoped Eco-Milk would be popular.

"If these products aren't supported, things will go back to usual," he said. "And the pace of decarbonisation will be much slower." — REUTERS



A bottle of 'Eco-Milk', produced by cows fed with seaweed that makes them emit less greenhouse gas, sits on a supermarket shelf in Riverside, Tasmania, Australia, on July 19, 2024. — REUTERS

Spotlight



I've known President Biden for years. He's a great man, and everything he does is guided by his love for his country. As President, he is a partner to Canadians – and a true friend. To President Biden and the First Lady: thank you.

Justin Trudeau
Canadian Prime Minister

Thanks to Joe Biden, transatlantic cooperation is close, Nato is strong and the USA is a good and reliable partner for us. His decision not to run again deserves recognition.

Olaf Scholz
German Chancellor

I know that, as he has done throughout his remarkable career, President Biden will have made his decision based on what he believes is in the best interests of the American people.

Keir Starmer
British Prime Minister

All my admiration and recognition for the brave and dignified decision of the president @JoeBiden... A great gesture from a great president who has always fought for democracy and freedom.

Pedro Sanchez
Spanish Prime Minister

Joe Biden, in all the offices he has held, has always been an unwavering voice and passionate worker for peace on the island of Ireland and our country owes him a great debt for this.

Simon Harris
Irish Prime Minister

Anatomy of a fall: Biden passes the torch

Presidents tend to see their party take a beating in congressional elections held half way through their term, but Biden did surprisingly well in 2022

Four years ago, as he ran for the White House, Joe Biden saw himself as a one-term president — a savvy conduit from the chaotic years of Donald Trump to a new generation of Democratic leaders. “Look, I view myself as a bridge, not as anything else,” Biden said at a campaign event in March 2020, with a group of much younger politicians vying to be his running mate — including Kamala Harris, who ultimately got the nod.

“There’s an entire generation of leaders you saw stand behind me. They are the future of this country,” said Biden, who went on to beat Trump, though the Republican never accepted his defeat.

It was widely seen as his main mission — dislodge Trump from the White House, then bow out, with elegance, after one term.

Biden, now 81, will indeed be a one-term president, but under tumultuous, agonising circumstances: long-simmering worries about his age and mental sharpness have exploded to doom him when he decided to go for a second term after all.

On Sunday Biden said he was dropping his bid to run against Trump again in November, yielding to intense and growing pressure as polls showed most people even in his own Democratic Party felt he was too old to run for another term, much less serve four more years.

Presidents tend to see their party take a beating in congressional elections held half way through their term, but Biden and his Democrats did surprisingly well in 2022. A feared hemorrhaging of Democratic seats failed to materialise.

This was due in part to Americans’ anger over the Supreme Court’s ending of the 50-year-old federal right to abortion — the decision of a court with three new conservatives judges appointed by Trump.

Energised by that strong showing,

months later Biden announced that he would seek a second term after all.

“When I ran for president four years ago, I said we are in a battle for the soul of America. And we still are,” Biden said in April 2023.

“The question we are facing is whether in the years ahead we have more freedom or less freedom. More rights or fewer,” Biden said in a video announcing his 2024 run.

Biden and his party went through the motions of the Democratic primary elections with no serious opposition, although some in the party grumbled that Biden was too old to seek a second term.

“No, I’ve been very clear. I’d like to see a generational change,” said Tim Ryan, a Democratic senator from Ohio.

Polls had long shown that many people considered Biden’s age an issue, and for him the beginning of the end came on a debate stage with Trump in Atlanta on June 27.

As 50 million people watched on TV, the president performed dismally, struggling to complete sentences, speaking incoherently at times and looking dazed, his mouth agape.

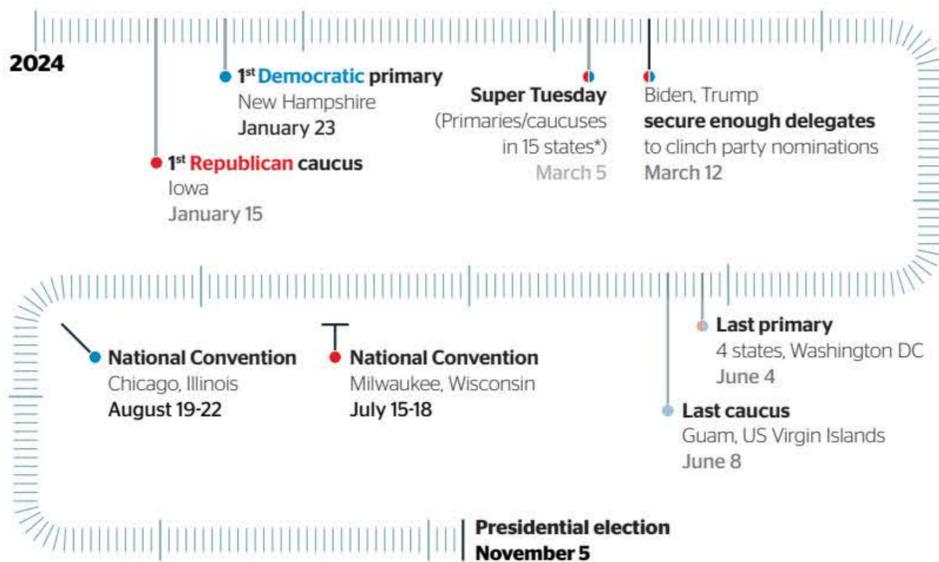
A drum roll of calls for him to bow out began immediately, and grew steadily louder, amid warnings to Biden that he could not beat Trump, might destroy his own legacy if he insisted on running and lost, and could might well drag the Democratic Party down with him in defeat.

To the very end Biden insisted, day after day, he was all in — the only candidate who could beat Trump as he had once before.

As he isolated at his beach house this weekend to recover from a Covid infection, Biden announced he would go back on the campaign trail next week.

Until Sunday’s bomb dropped in a message on X. He said it was in the interest of the country and his party for him to step aside. — AFP

US presidential election calendar



Source: US Federal Election Commission *plus American Samoa

KT GRAPHIC / AFP



The elections are still four months away, and that is a long period of time in which a lot can change. We need to be patient and carefully monitor what happens. The priority for us is the special military operation.

Mitry Peskov
Kremlin spokesperson

I respect President Joe Biden's decision not to run for re-election. He justifies the decision by saying that he wants to put the country before himself. That reasoning commands respect.

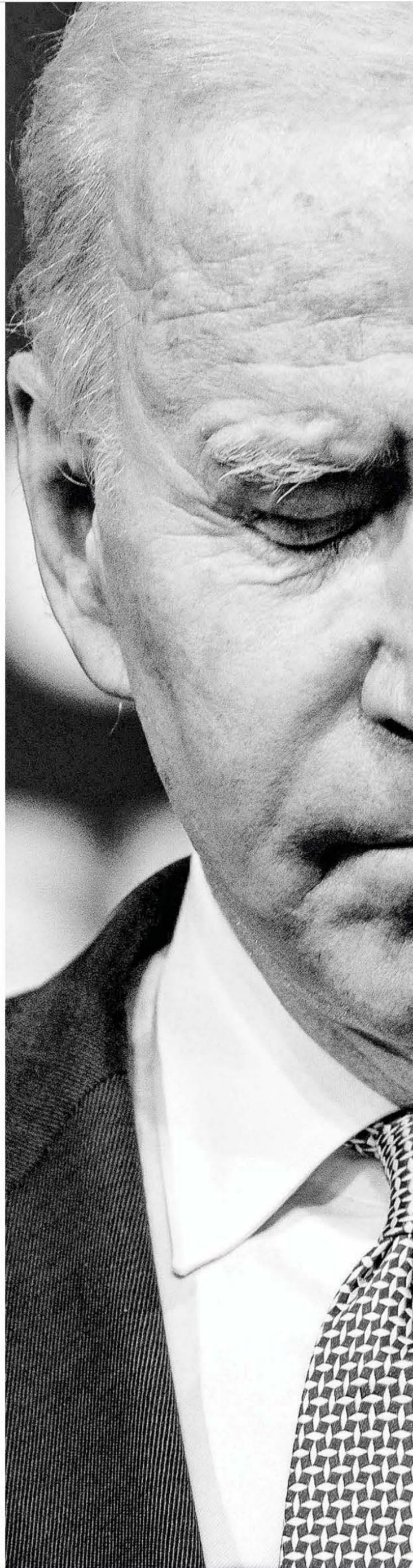
Jonas Gahr Stoere
Norwegian Prime Minister

Mr President @JoeBiden, many times you have made difficult decisions that have made Poland, America, and the world safer, and democracy and freedom stronger.

Donald Tusk
Polish Prime Minister

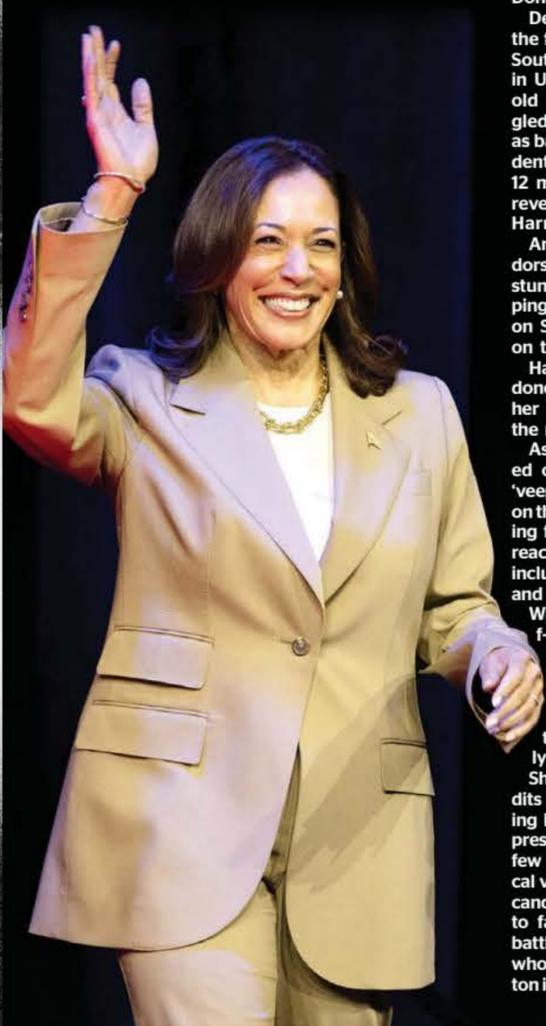
It is undoubtedly the decision of a statesman who has served his country for decades. It is a responsible and personally difficult step, but it is all the more valuable.

Petr Fiala
Czech Prime Minister





Harris, trailblazer eyeing America's last glass ceiling



For years Kamala Harris faced criticism that she was not up to the job of being a heartbeat away from the presidency. Now, she finds herself feted by Democrats as their best hope to stop Donald Trump's comeback.

Despite blazing a trail as the first woman, Black and South Asian vice-president in US history, the 59-year-old Democrat long struggled with approval ratings as bad or worse than President Joe Biden's. The last 12 months, however, have revealed a transformed Harris.

And with Biden's endorsement of Harris after stunning the world by dropping his own reelection bid on Sunday, she's suddenly on the cusp of history.

Harris will hope she has done the hard work to earn her full party's backing in the midst of the crisis.

As the ageing Biden faded over the last year, his 'veep' emerged as a force on the campaign trail, pushing for abortion rights and reaching out to core voters, including suburban women and Black men.

With a fondness for the f-bomb and her family nickname of 'Momala' going viral, she has also finally started to cut through the noise to voters who previously barely paid attention. She has also won plaudits in party circles by staying loyal to the 81-year-old president during the last few weeks, even as political vultures circled over his candidacy. She now is likely to face Trump — a brutal battle against a candidate who defeated Hillary Clinton in her bid to become the first female commander in chief in 2016.

The fact that Harris has blamed much of the criticism of her by Republicans on racism and sexism would likely make a win feel even more vindicating for her.

Trump and other Republicans have notably stepped up their attacks on her as Biden's position weakened and polls showed Harris would fare better against him than Biden.

A child of immigrant parents — her father was from Jamaica and her mother from India — Harris grew up in Oakland, California, in an activist household that saw her attend her first rallies in a stroller. Her focus on rights and justice saw her build an impressive CV, becoming California's first Black attorney-general and the first woman of South Asian heritage elected to the US Senate. Harris then went up against Biden in the 2020 primaries. In one stinging attack, she criticised him for allegedly opposing the bussing of students to segregated schools.

"There was a little girl in California who was part of the second class to integrate her public schools, and she was bussed to school every day. And that little girl was me," she said in a barbed attack on her future boss.

But as his running mate, she consolidated the coalition that helped defeat the incumbent Trump in 2020.

Her transition to the White House, however, proved difficult.

Critics said she was underwhelming and gaffe-prone in a job that has been known to flummox many officeholders. — AFP

Trump campaign switches gears to confront a Harris challenge

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump will try to show swing voters that his likely new rival, Vice-President Kamala Harris, has her fingerprints all over two issues he is counting on for victory in November: Immigration and the cost of living. Sources within the Trump campaign said it will cast Harris, the likely Democratic candidate after President Joe Biden quit the race on Sunday, as the "co-pilot" of administration policies it says are behind both sources of voter discontent.

Sources said that Trump's campaign had for weeks been preparing for Harris should Biden drop out and she win her party's nomination. "Harris will be easier to beat than Joe Biden would have been," Trump told CNN shortly after Biden's announcement on Sunday. Trump's campaign has signalled it will tie her as tightly as possible to Biden's immigration policy, which Republicans say is to blame for a sharp increase in the numbers of people crossing the southern border with Mexico illegally.

The second line of attack will revolve around the economy. Public opinion polls consistently show Americans are unhappy with high food and fuel costs as well as interest rates that have made buying a home less affordable. "She's the co-pilot of the Biden vision," said one Trump adviser, speaking on condition of anonymity during last week's Republican National Convention, where a unified party anointed Trump as its nominee in the White House race.

"If they want to switch to Biden 2.0 and have 'Cackling' Kamala at the top of the ticket, we're good either way," the adviser said, repeating an insult the campaign has been trying out for weeks focused on how the vice-president laughs. Make America Great Again Inc, a super PAC backing Trump, said on Sunday it was pulling anti-Biden television ads that had been set to run in the battleground states of Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and Pennsylvania and replacing them with an ad attacking Harris. The 30-second ad accuses Harris of hiding Biden's infirmity from the public, and it seeks to pin the administration's record solely on her. "Kamala knew Joe couldn't do the job, so she did it. Look what she got done: a border invasion, runaway inflation, the American Dream dead," the narrator says.

Trump, known for using insulting and sometimes offensive language to attack his opponents, gave supporters at a rally in Michigan on Saturday a taste of the insults he is likely to fling at Harris in the coming days.

"I call her laughing Kamala. You ever watch a laugh? She's crazy. You can tell a lot by a laugh. She's crazy. She's nuts," he said. — REUTERS



We thank President Biden for his constant and unwavering support for the Philippines in a delicate and difficult time. We wish him well for the rest of his presidency and for all his future endeavours.

Ferdinand Marcos Jr
Philippine President

I recognise that President Biden made the decision from the standpoint of what was best politically. Needless to say, the Japan-US alliance is the pillar of Japan's diplomacy and security, so we'll closely watch the future developments.

Fumio Kishida
Japanese Prime Minister

President Biden has presided over an economy that has seen jobs grow, that has seen wages increase, and that has seen the transition proceed that is occurring as the world moves towards net zero. As well as he's standing up on issues such as gender equality. President Biden has been a great friend of Australia and that will continue.

Anthony Albanese
Australian Prime Minister

Ukraine is grateful to President Biden for his unwavering support for Ukraine's fight for freedom, which, along with strong bipartisan support in the United States, has been and continues to be critical.

Volodymyr Zelensky
Ukrainian President

Spanish PM to testify in graft probe case against wife

Sanchez has characterised the allegations as an effort to undermine his left-wing govt

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez will testify on July 30 in a preliminary corruption inquiry into his wife Begona Gomez's business ties, a Madrid court said on Monday, an issue that caused him to consider resigning three months ago.

The investigation over alleged corruption and influence peddling has infuriated Sanchez, who has characterised the allegations as an

effort to undermine him and his left-wing government.

Judge Juan Carlos Peinado will hear Sanchez as a "witness" at his official residence at 11am on July 30, a court statement said.

He will be questioned over suspected influence peddling by his wife, the court said.

"Sanchez has given no explanations to parliament or to the media: he has to do so before a judge," said Borja Semper, spokesman for the main opposition People's Party, after the announcement.

"Nobody is above the law, not the prime minister or his entourage, all politicians should understand this," Semper said.

Santiago Abascal, the leader of the far-right Vox party, added: "We have always said that we will use all the means at our disposal to end the most corrupt government in history". Gomez on Friday invoked her right to remain silent under questioning by a judge.

Gomez had briefly appeared before the same judge on July 5, but the hearing was suspended after her lawyer said they had "not been notified" about all the complaints against her and asked for time to study them.

The investigation began on April 16 following a complaint by Manos Limpias (Clean Hands), an anti-graft NGO linked to the far-right,

alleging corruption in the private sector and influence peddling, while admitting its claims were based on media reports.

A second complaint, citing influence peddling, was filed by Hazte Oir (Make Yourself Heard), an ultra-Catholic pressure group with far-right ties. Sanchez has repeatedly insisted his wife has done nothing wrong, with his justice minister, Felix Bolanos, on Friday coming out in her defence.

Gomez, who has worked in fundraising for years, notably for foundations and NGOs, is alleged to have used her husband's position as leverage within her professional circles, notably with a business-

man called Juan Carlos Barrabes who was seeking public funding.

Barrabes — who teaches part of a master's course at Madrid's Complutense University that is run by Gomez — acknowledged meeting her five or six times at Moncloa, the premier's official residence, while testifying.

Sanchez was also present at two of those meetings, he said.

Barrabes — who got two letters of recommendation from Gomez before pitching for a public tender worth several million euros — said they only talked about matters of innovation, judicial sources said.

Sanchez's Socialist party said there was "absolutely nothing" un-

usual in such meetings, which were normal for the prime minister, and police investigators also presented a new report to the court earlier this month saying they found no irregularities on Gomez's part.

The public prosecutor's office also called for the case to be closed for lack of evidence at the end of April. But Peinado refused, insisting there was "sufficient" evidence to continue.

When news of the probe broke in April, Sanchez shocked Spain by saying he was considering resigning over what he described as a campaign of political harassment by the right. He ultimately decided to stay on. — AFP

UK unveils training effort to reduce reliance on migration

Prime Minister Keir Starmer vowed Monday to reduce the UK's "long-term reliance on overseas workers" as he unveiled a new skills training organisation aimed at boosting productivity and economic growth.

Starmer said his government hopes the new body — named Skills England — will transform "not just how we train our young people and adults, but also the relationship between business and education system".

In a speech at the Farnborough International Airshow, the new UK leader added that many young people had been "let down" by a lack of skills training, creating an overreliance on migration within the economy. "I do not criticise businesses who hire overseas workers and I certainly don't diminish the contribution that migration makes to our economy, to our public services and of course to our communities," he told the audience.

"Yet if you stand back, as a system it cannot be right that some people don't get to feel the pride of making a contribution, the dignity of work, just because we can't find a way of creating a coherent skill system."

Starmer said his Labour government, elected on July 4 and facing calls to outline how it will tackle migration, "won't be content just to pull the easy lever of importing skills". "We're turning the page on that," he insisted, pledging to "reduce our long-term reliance on overseas workers".

Skills England will work with another public body, the Migration Advisory Committee, to identify current and future skills gaps and address them.

It will bring together central and local government, businesses, training providers and unions to do that, while providing strategic oversight of the skills system for over-16s, according to the education ministry.

It noted a third of productivity improvement over the last two decades can be explained by improvements to skills levels.

But between 2017 and 2022, UK skills shortages doubled to more than half a million and account for more than a third of job vacancies, the ministry said.

Net migration levels — the difference between those coming to the country and those leaving — have soared in recent years, reaching a record 764,000 in 2022. Last year it was 685,000, driven by non-EU citizens.

"It is right that we get migration down," Starmer said. "It's too high. That's why... Skills England will be working on this issue to make sure that we got the skills in place that bring those levels down." — AFP



Protesters' march to Congress is blocked by police during a demonstration coinciding with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos' State of the Nation Address in Manila on Monday. — AFP

Philippine president bans offshore gaming operators

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos banned offshore gambling operators on Monday, targeting an online industry that the regulator has said is dominated by Chinese firms and includes unlicensed groups that have branched out into crime.

Marcos won a standing ovation in Congress as he announced the order in his State of the Nation address. "The grave abuse and disrespect to our system of laws must stop," Marcos said to loud applause.

"Disguising as legitimate entities, their operations have ventured into illicit areas furthest from gaming such as financial scamming, money laundering, prostitution, human trafficking, kidnapping, brutal torture, even murder," Marcos told the assembly.

The president's order comes at a time of growing tensions with China, particularly over reefs and shoals in the busy waterway of the

South China Sea where both nations have overlapping claims.

There was no immediate comment from the Chinese Embassy in Manila.

Last month, it urged the Philippines to ban online gaming to support China's own crackdown on cross-border gambling.

At the time, Beijing said it opposed what it said were baseless accusations that the Chinese government was linked to the Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators known as POGOs.

Many of the POGOs also target customers in China where gambling is illegal.

Senator Risa Hontiveros, who is leading an investigation in the upper house into alleged links of POGOs to criminal syndicates, called Marcos's move a "victory for the entire nation".

"POGOs have brought innumerable and unspeakable social ills into the country," she said in a statement.

The chief of the gaming regula-

“Disguising as legitimate entities, their operations have ventured into illicit areas furthest from gaming such as financial scamming, money laundering, prostitution, human trafficking, kidnapping, brutal torture, even murder.”

Ferdinand Marcos
Philippine President

tor, Alejandro Tengco, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Tengco told Reuters last month around 250 to 300 offshore gambling firms are operating in the Philippines without a licence, around six times more than the 46 legitimate gaming operators in the country.

The online gaming industry

emerged in the Philippines in 2016, coinciding with the rise of then President Rodrigo Duterte, who backed the gaming regulator's move to license internet gambling companies. The POGO industry employed around 25,000 Filipinos and nearly 23,000 foreigners as of end-2023, government data show.

Philippines cannot yield its South China Sea position

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr said on Monday his country cannot yield or waver on its position in the South China Sea, but will find ways to de-escalate tensions in the contested waters.

In his State of the Nation Address, Marcos said maritime disputes must be settled through diplomatic channels under the rules-based international order.

"In the face of challenges to our territorial sovereignty, we will assert our rights and interests in the same fair and pacific way that we have always done," Marcos said.

Marcos's remarks, which received a standing ovation from Congress, came after the Philippines said on Sunday it reached a "provisional arrangement" about its resupply missions to the contested Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea.

While neither China nor the Philippines provided details of the arrangement, Manila said on Monday it "will not prejudice our respective national positions".

"In our desire to de-escalate the situation in the South China Sea to manage differences in a peaceful manner, we emphasize that the agreement was done in good faith and the Philippines remains ready to implement it," the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

"We urge China to do the same." The Chinese foreign ministry confirmed a "provisional agreement" with the two sides agreeing to jointly manage maritime differences and de-escalate the situation. — REUTERS

UN says 2024 decisive to ending Aids as health threat

Political decisions taken this year will determine whether a target to end Aids as a public health threat by 2030 can be reached, the United Nations said on Monday.

Figures from 2023 show a drop in new infections and fatalities and improvement in access to treatment for HIV-positive patients.

But while those figures look positive, the UNAIDS agency warned that the progress remained fragile.

"Decisions leaders make this year will determine whether (or not) countries can achieve the 2030 target of ending Aids as a public health threat and ensure progress beyond 2030," the report said.

In the over four decades since the Aids epidemic burst onto the global scene, it has killed more than 42 million people.

While Aids-related deaths have been steadily declining, falling from 670,000 in 2022 to 630,000 last year, the number still remains dizzyingly high.

"A person dies from Aids-related causes every minute," UNAIDS chief Winnie Byanyima pointed out in the report, warning the world remains off track to reach ambitious 2030 objectives.

"The inequalities that drive the HIV pandemic are not being addressed sufficiently."

Nearly 40 million people live with HIV, the virus that can cause Aids, the report said.

While Aids-related deaths have been steadily declining, falling from 670,000 in 2022 to 630,000 last year, the number still remains high

Around 1.3 million new infections were recorded last year, a decline of 100,000 compared to 2022 and a dramatic 60-per cent fall since a peak of 3.3 million in 1995.

But the long-term trend is still

way off track to hit the UNAIDS target of just 330,000 new infections in 2025.

Access to anti-retroviral medication has also greatly improved, but remains a major issue.

Last year, a full 30.7 million people received such treatment compared to just 7.7 million in 2010.

But it remains unlikely the world will manage to hit a target of reaching 34 million by next year.

Byanyima stressed the need to dramatically scale up access.

She urged US pharmaceutical giant Gilead to "make history" by allowing generic manufacturing of its new anti-retroviral medication Lenacapavir, which requires just two injections a year.

Bringing down the price, currently expected to be in the tens of thousands annually, to below \$100 could be "a game-changer", she told a news conference on Monday at the start of the 25th International Aids Conference in Munich.

Eastern and southern Africa remain the most-affected regions, with 20.8 million people living with HIV, 450,000 infected last year and 260,000 fatalities.

But the region is also the one that has seen the greatest progress, with a 59-per cent drop in new infections there since 2010, the report said.

In regions like Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Latin America infections are "moving in the wrong

direction and rising", Byanyima warned.

In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, only half of people with HIV are treated, similar to the figure for the Middle East and North Africa.

A major obstacle to progress was a wide and growing funding gap, she said.

In 2023, total resources available for HIV stood at \$19.5 billion — down five per cent from 2022, and \$9.5 billion short of what is needed, UNAIDS said.

UNAIDS highlighted how stigma, discrimination and sometimes criminalisation affects certain groups, resulting in much higher infection rates because people are unable to seek help and treatment without danger. — AFP

STOCK MARKET

(Rates are against Dh)	Buy	Sell
Indian rupee	23.31	22.61
Pakistani rupee	77.16	75.01
Sri Lankan rupee	84.60	82.44
Philippine peso	16.18	15.77
Bangladeshi taka	32.71	31.34

OIL PRICES (\$)

	BRENT	DME OMAN	WTI
Dubai DFM			
	4,179.00		
Abu Dhabi ADX	82.35	82.33	78.43
	9,278.92		

GOLD PRICES

	London \$/oz	1 oz UAE gold bullion coin
	2,391.62	
Mumbai ₹/10gm	72,594	BUY FOR Dh9,664.50*
Dubai Dh/gm	289.75	SELL FOR 9,533.50*

* Indicative retail price provided by DMCC at 7pm as of Friday.



Boeing's short-noticed and frequent delivery schedule revisions have hindered our strategic growth plans resulting in significant disruptions to our published schedules. The reduced capacity will ultimately affect our customers as well as our projected financial performance.

Ghaith Al Ghaith
CEO of flydubai

KU BUSINESS

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Boeing delay hits flydubai's expansion, no new jets in '24

Somshankar Bandyopadhyay
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Flydubai's expansion plans have been significantly impacted by Boeing's latest update regarding ongoing delays in its aircraft delivery schedule, the Dubai-based carrier said on Monday.

Flydubai is currently evaluating its route development plans and potential frequency revision across the network due to a lack of new aircraft deliveries over the next few months.

Ghaith Al Ghaith, chief executive officer at flydubai, said: "We are extremely disappointed to learn that Boeing will not be able to fulfil its commitment to deliver more aircraft for the remainder of the year. Boeing's short-noticed and frequent delivery schedule revisions have hindered our strategic growth plans resulting in significant disruptions to our published schedules. The reduced capacity will ultimately affect our customers as well as our projected financial performance. We urge Boeing to take immediate action and implement measures to stabilise its production and delivery processes to avoid further delays while upholding the highest standards. We look forward to a swift resolution of this issue."

The unpredictability of the aircraft delivery schedules from Boeing over the past few years has put significant pressure on the carrier and its ability to firmly plan for its projected growth, especially as it geared up to meet the strong demand for travel after the pandemic.

Flydubai's plans for this year were initially based on the commitment to receive 14 new aircraft. The carrier continues to explore all possible avenues to mitigate the impact of these delivery delays. The carrier operates a single fleet-type of 88 Boeing 737 aircraft and includes 29 next-generation 737-800, 56 737 MAX 8 and three 737 MAX 9 aircraft.

Ongoing challenges with Boeing's delivery schedule resulted in fewer aircraft being delivered every year for the past three years. Multiple revisions of the delivery schedule for 2024 meant that Boeing will not deliver the 14 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft originally scheduled for the year. The aircraft delivered in the first half of the year were from the backlog of previous years and faced extensive delays. Flydubai has more than 125 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft on order to be delivered over the next decade.

Operational, cost implications

Flydubai's strategic growth plans, which rely heavily on the timely addition of new aircraft to the fleet, have been significantly impacted by ongoing Boeing aircraft delivery delays.

To mitigate the delays in aircraft deliveries and to meet the surge in demand for travel and add capacity, particularly during peak travel periods, flydubai had to enter aircraft, crew, maintenance and insurance (ACMI) agreements.

The carrier has also extended the lease on some of the aircraft which were scheduled to be returned to the lessors under its sale and leaseback agreements, which has led to the airline incurring further costs.

In addition, flydubai has invested in an extensive retrofit pro-



Flydubai operates a single fleet-type of 88 Boeing 737 aircraft and includes 29 next-generation 737-800, 56 737 MAX 8 and three 737 MAX 9 aircraft.

Sliding airline profits, delivery delays cloud air show

A plunge in Ryanair's quarterly profits cast a shadow over the opening of the Farnborough Airshow on Monday, where aviation leaders were already fretting about supply chain snags, aircraft delays and floundering plans to cut emissions.

Boeing announced a bumper order from Korean Air for 20 777X jets and 20 787s, worth \$7 billion according to estimated delivery prices from Cirium Ascend, in a boost for the US planemaker's long-delayed 777X programme.

But many delegates at the July 22-26 gathering of aviation leaders were not expecting the traditional deluge of deals as Airbus struggles to reach output goals and Boeing adopts a low-key posture amid its safety crisis, which was triggered by a panel flying off a 737 MAX jet in January.

Aviation was hit hard by the pandemic which saw air travel collapse only to bounce back sharply. That left many firms scrambling to resolve labour and parts shortages.

The situation has been exacerbated by a spiralling crisis at Boeing, which has had to slow production of its best-selling 737 MAX plane following the panel blowout.

Delays in delivering planes have hampered airlines' efforts to capitalise on the post-pandemic surge in travel and inflated costs, and signs are growing they are struggling to pass those costs on to consumers as demand starts to normalise.

Ryanair, Europe's biggest budget airline, reported on Monday an almost halving in quarterly profit, with fares plunging 15 per cent and management warning of more pressure to come on prices. Separately, the boss of Air India said it was having to rob parts from other aircraft to keep its planes flying amid industry supply chain snags.

"The big question for the airlines here at Farnborough is what has happened to the halo effect of demand after the pandemic - has that recovery stalled?" said veteran aviation journalist Mark Pilling.

gramme for its fleet of next-generation Boeing 737-800 aircraft to ensure a more consistent onboard experience for its passengers and to align the cabin product in the absence of new aircraft joining the fleet for the remainder of the year. Fewer aircraft being delivered

this year has added pressure on flydubai's fleet utilisation. With six new routes scheduled to launch over the next few months, the airline is currently reviewing its schedule and frequency of operations across its network due to restrictions in aircraft availability.



American military aircraft on display on the opening day of the Farnborough International Airshow on Monday. — AFP

Pegasus Airlines CEO Guliz Ozturk told reporters customers were going "back to basics" seeking lower fares. "We have started seeing the normalisation of demand. What does it mean? I mean, the demand is there, but now the travellers are looking for, as before the pandemic, for the most affordable, the lowest, the best price for their travel," she said.

Fixing supply chains

With dealmaking likely to be limited, the focus at the air show is likely to fall on how manufacturers are tackling supply chain blockages. Stephanie Pope, Boeing's new head of commercial aircraft, told a media briefing on Sunday that 737 MAX production was improving and the company was undergoing "transformational change" across safety and corporate culture.

Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury also said on Sunday it was making progress ramping up production of its top passenger jets.

Some deals will get over the line, delegates said. Virgin Atlantic is close to placing a top-up order for Airbus A330neos and Flynas, a Saudi low-cost carrier, is poised to order up to 30 of the same widebody aircraft, industry sources said.

Japan Airlines is expected to firm up recent tentative orders for jets and Boeing is seeing leasing interest for its 737 MAX, while Turkish Airlines is in the midst of negotiations to buy Boeing jets, industry sources said.

The show will be peppered with sustainability panels and workshops as aerospace giants and airlines seek to emphasise their commitment to reducing carbon emissions. — REUTERS

EITC reports 7.3% growth in quarterly revenues

Staff Report
business@khaleejtimes.com

Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company PJSC announced on Monday that its Q2 2024 revenues increased by 7.3 per cent to Dh3.6 billion.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (Ebitda) rose 3.2 per cent to Dh1.6 billion reflecting the top line growth. Net profit reached Dh581 million, a 46.3 per cent increase year over year primarily reflecting the strong Ebitda growth. Capex was at Dh442 million, while Operating Free Cash Flow (Ebitda - Capex) was Dh1.1 billion, a 10.9 per cent increase year over year.

Buoyed by its performance, the EITC Board approved an interim cash dividend of Dh0.20 per share, a 53.8 per cent increase year on year.

The company's mobile customer base grew 2.9 per cent year-over-year to 8.2 million subscribers, while tapering over the quarter, reflecting the typical seasonality impact. The postpaid customer base grew by 11.3 per cent year over year to 1.7 million subscribers. The pre-paid customer base grew by 0.9 per cent to 6.5 million customers with voice and data growth offset by a normalisation of the tourist influx.

The fixed customer base rose by a 12.7 per cent year-over-year to 630,000 subscribers, with net-additions of 15,000 subscribers over the quarter. "Our Home Wireless plans continue to be the main growth driver boosted by new attractive offerings such as the launch of Home Wireless Gaming, while enterprise connectivity also performed strongly during the quarter," EITC said in a statement.

Mobile service revenues grew 6.6 per cent year-over-year to Dh1,612 million primarily driven by robust growth in postpaid revenues, increased demand from the enterprise sector and the success of our innovative offers. The growing subscriber base also positively impacted mobile revenues. Fixed service revenues increased by 3.5 per cent to reach Dh982 million, with the growth primarily attributed to its Home Wireless product and enterprise broadband plans.

Other revenues rose 12.7 per cent to Dh998 million, driven by strong growth in revenues from ICT and wholesale services.

Capex was Dh442 million (Q2 2023: Dh504 million). Capital intensity is moderating at 12.3 per cent (Q2 2023: 15.1 per cent) and reflecting a typical capex phasing pattern. Focus of EITC's investment programme continues to be enhancement of the 5G coverage, fibre deployment and the ongoing transformation of its IT and network infrastructure.

Malek Al Malek, Chairman said: "The company remained at the forefront of technological innovation to offer the best experience to our customers in areas including Fintech and AI. The Company's strategy has resulted in the du brand now being the third strongest in the UAE. The country's macro-economic environment was very supportive and we remain well positioned to support the UAE government digital strategy."

UAE hopes to revive EU trade talks

The UAE hopes to reactivate trade talks with the European Union by the end of the year, the UAE trade minister said on Monday, and is optimistic the talks would be bilateral.

"We initiated the discussion, through both the GCC as well as bilaterally, and we're getting the support from many of the EU

members," Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi told Reuters in an interview. He said either EU-GCC or bilateral EU-UAE talks would be an "added value" but added he was optimistic the talks would be bilateral.

The UAE has long advocated deeper EU involvement in the Gulf region. — REUTERS

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT

LYT Holdings Limited, a Private Company with registered offices at 3521 ResCoWork07, 35th Floor, Al Maqam Tower, ADGM Square, Al Maryah Island, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates and holding Commercial License number 000007337 (the 'Company'), hereby gives notice that the Company's Shareholder passed a resolution on 15 July 2024 for the Company to be wound up through a Creditors' Voluntary Liquidation process and nominated Mr. Hisham Farouk Mohamed, CEO of Grant Thornton Audit and Accounting Limited to be appointed as the Liquidator.

Any queries, claims or objections regarding the proposed winding up and closure of the Private Company are requested to be forwarded to Mr. Hisham Farouk Mohamed by telephone at +971 (4) 388 9925 and in writing to liquidation@ae.gt.com.

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NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT

LYT Technologies Ltd, a Private Company with registered offices at Unit OT 19- 37, Level 19, Central Park Offices, Dubai International Financial Centre, and holding Commercial License number CL3818 (the 'Company'), hereby gives notice that the Company's Shareholder passed a resolution on 15th July 2024 for the Company to be wound up through a Creditors' Voluntary Liquidation process and nominated Mr. Hisham Farouk, CEO of Grant Thornton UAE to be appointed as the Liquidator.

Any queries, claims or objections regarding the proposed winding up and closure of the Private Company are requested to be forwarded to Mr. Hisham Farouk by telephone at +971 (4) 388 9925 and in writing to liquidation@ae.gt.com.

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UAE-Mauritius Cepa to cut 95% of bilateral tariffs

Waheed Abbas
waheedabbas@khaleejtimes.com

The UAE and Mauritius signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (Cepa) on Monday, the first such agreement with the African countries.

The agreement will see more than 95 per cent of tariffs be reduced or eliminated from customs duties, covering trading goods and services.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, said the goal is to promote economic growth and

create more opportunities for the two countries.

"This is the first agreement of its kind with an African country. Our relations with Africa are constantly developing, and we are keen to develop them further," he said.

Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE's minister of state for foreign trade; and Maneesh Gobin, minister of foreign affairs and regional integration and international trade of Mauritius, signed the agreement.

Al Zeyoudi said during a press conference on Monday that \$13 billion worth of investments flowed from UAE to Mauritius and

Boosting trade
\$13B
Planned value of UAE investments in Mauritius

\$2.2 billion vice-versa.
"For Cepa, we focus on countries that can add value to our economy while we add to theirs. Economy model of Mauritius shows the impact of trade will be more than other countries," said Al Zeyoudi.

Maneesh Gobin, minister of foreign affairs, regional integration and international trade in Mauritius, said his country was also the first among African nations to sign a free trade agreement with China.

"Mauritius provides an ideal platform and we take pride in being a gateway to Africa," he added.

The UAE signed Cepa with a number of countries including India, Israel, Indonesia, Georgia, Turkey and Cambodia, removing or reducing tariffs, eliminating barriers to trade and opening up market opportunities for exporters and investors.

Negotiations are also under-

way with several other countries, including Serbia, Ukraine, other countries in Eurasia, Australia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Costa Rica, Kenya, Chile and Vietnam.

New pacts soon

Juma Al Keit, assistant under-secretary for foreign trade affairs at UAE's Ministry of Economy, said more than 14 Cepas have already concluded or are soon to be concluded. "We are in the process of negotiating Cepa with a number of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America countries."

He added that more than 65 per cent of Mauritius' GDP relies

on services so barriers in this sector will be removed to give service providers from UAE and Mauritius more opportunities to explore new opportunities in many sectors such as logistics, aviation, maritime, tourism, financial services and many others.

He added that the agreement will encourage SMEs to move from domestic to international markets.

"It will be easier for SMEs to access international markets due to Cepa agreement as it will smoothen the process of import and export as well as bring transparency in documentation," he said.

India eyes toppling Japan as third-largest economy

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The Indian economy is "on a strong wicket and stable footing" with a projected real GDP growth of 6.5 per cent to seven per cent in 2024-25, according to the Economic Survey unveiled on Monday ahead of Modi 3.0 budget presentation on Tuesday.

The survey, tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, said the third largest Asian economy, which is on track to replace Japan as the third largest global economy before 2030, demonstrates resilience in the face of geopolitical challenges, adding that the headline inflation rate is "largely under control."

It adds that the Reserve Bank of India expects inflation to be 4.5 per cent in FY 25 and 4.1 per cent in FY26.

The survey states that for recovery to be sustained, there has to be "heavy lifting on the domestic front" as the "environment has become extraordinarily difficult to reach agreements on key global issues such as trade, investment and climate."

"Going forward, the government's focus must turn to bottom-up reform and the strengthening of the plumbing of governance so that the structural reforms of the last decade yield strong, sustainable, balanced, and inclusive growth," the survey highlighted.

Key policy focus areas

The survey listed key policy focus areas in the short to medium term, including generating productive employment, addressing the skill gap challenge, tapping the full potential of the agriculture sector through reforms such as land consolidation, addressing MSME bottlenecks, managing India's green transition, dealing deftly with the Chinese conundrum, deepening the corporate bond market, tackling inequality, and improving the quality of health for the young population.

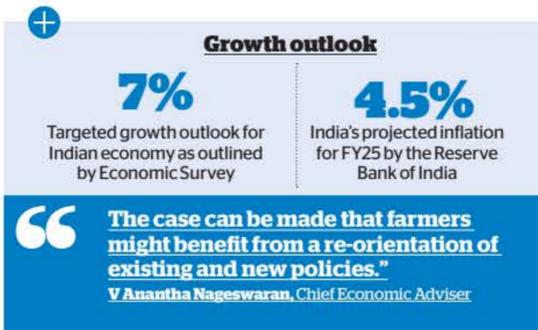
Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran advocated for a nationwide discussion on the agriculture sector, stressing the need for policy re-orientation despite current subsidies and support measures.



Employees working on blades for wind turbines at a factory in India. The survey said India needs to recognise and address challenges posed by its dependence on China for critical minerals. — AFP

Addressing the media, Nageswaran expressed confidence in achieving the 7.0 per cent growth target set in the survey and noted that while meeting this target is attainable, there are several risk factors to consider, such as unpredictable weather patterns, growing financial market uncertainties in developed economies, and geopolitical complexities.

Nageswaran observed that although the government provides extensive support to farmers through subsidies on water, electricity, and fertilisers, as well as income tax exemptions and minimum support prices, there is still room for improvement in policy implementation. "The case can be made that farmers might benefit from a re-orientation of existing and new policies," the CEA stated.



The survey estimated that India will require significant job creation until 2036 to accommodate its growing workforce, emphasising the need for strategic planning in employment generation.

India's trade has stood tall

amidst global turmoil, with a favourable current account balance, according to the survey. It indicates a reduction in the trade deficit compared to previous years.

The survey said India needs to recognise and address challenges

posed by its dependence on China for critical minerals and examine the implications of phasing down coal on bank balance sheets as it accelerates its green transition.

The survey discussed how geopolitical changes and global trade dynamics are affecting India's trade strategies and emphasised the need for diversification of trade partners.

Indian exporters face challenges related to tariff and non-tariff barriers. The survey calls for enhancing competitiveness to navigate these challenges effectively.

The survey emphasised the importance of social welfare programmes aimed at empowering marginalised communities, particularly women and rural populations. Despite progress, the survey identified persistent challenges in ensuring inclusive growth and equitable access to resources.

Additional land allocated for Mena oil Terminal

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The Fujairah Oil Industry Zone (FOIZ) has announced an agreement to allocate additional land for the expansion of the Mena Terminal located in the Port of Fujairah.

The Mena Terminal, which was acquired by the Mercantile & Maritime Group in October 2023, is a major strategic energy trading port and one of the largest bunkering hubs in the world. The allocation of the additional 54,000 sqm of land will enable the construction of a biofuel processing plant, supporting FOIZ's strategy to attract and establish low carbon and green fuel production in the zone. FOIZ's planning and operations are also in line with the Emirate of Fujairah and UAE strategy to lower emissions and increase the share of green fuels in the overall energy mix.

The Mena Terminal is a bulk liquid storage terminal located in the Port of Fujairah. It comprises 14 tanks and 2.2 million barrels, storing 352,000 cubic metres (cbm) of black and white refined petroleum products. The terminal has a capacity of 4,500 cbm/hour and 3,000 cbm/hour flow per line for black and white products, respectively. The terminal has its own power generation system.

Capt. Salem Al Afkham Al Hamoudi, Director of Fujairah Oil Industry Zone (FOIZ), stated: "The Mena Terminal holds significant importance in supporting FOIZ's mission to regulate various aspects of the hydrocarbon industry within the zone. FOIZ is delighted to announce its support on the Mena Project's initiative to expand land dedicated to green fuels."

Murtaza Lakhani, Chairman of Mena Terminals Fujairah FZCO, said: "The Mena Terminal is one of the leading and most innovative terminal assets in the region, which also champions best practice environmental standards in oil storage. This land lease agreement is the next step in the terminal's journey as a supplier of green fuels. We thank FOIZ for their support and commitment to energy transition in the region."

Dubai developer set to invest Dh2.5b by 2027

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Condor Developers, a leading Dubai luxury property provider, announced on Monday the launch of its fourth residential project - Condor Sonate Residences - in Jumeirah Village Triangle (JVT) as part of a portfolio expansion strategy aimed at boosting the group's realty investment value to over Dh2.5 billion by 2027.

The four-decade old Dubai developer said the latest residential landmark and three more upcoming projects to be unveiled before the end of this year, seek to address the demand surge in the premium residential space as Dubai's luxury realty market gains strong momentum on the back of a remarkable jump in investment this year.

Vidhyadharan Sivaprasad, chairman and CEO of Condor Developers, said Dubai's buoyant relay sector is projected to record a 24.6 per cent increase in high-net-worth buyers by 2025, propelling the luxury segment to a higher level.

In the first quarter, Dubai's residential property market surged to new highs boosted by a 55 per cent surge in investment inflows,

with 42 per cent of new investors hailing from international market. In the first half of 2024, total sales transactions have risen by 12.2 per cent compared to the second half of 2023, reflecting strong market demand and confidence.

Condor Sonate Residences, spread over 396,764 sq. ft, will add 213 premium apartments comprising studios, one, two and three bedrooms to Dubai's prime residential real estate inventory.

Condor, which has an impressive track record for delivering projects on time for premium clients in the UAE, said the latest residential landmark and three upcoming developments will help position it as a developer of choice for high-end investors looking for super luxury residences. The three new projects are in Dubai's prime residential districts, including the Dubai Island, Al Majan and Dubai Sports City.

"Condor Sonate Residences comes with first-of-its-kind wellness amenities and is created as a development where luxury meets serenity in the much sought-after JVT community. Investing in JVT offers a guaranteed higher ROI with home values projected to rise on the back of an influx of overseas investors and major develop-



Condor Sonate Residences, spread over 396,764 sq. ft, will add 213 premium apartments comprising studios, one, two and three bedrooms to Dubai's prime residential real estate inventory. — SUPPLIED PHOTO

ments in the pipeline, including the upcoming metro station by 2030," said Sivaprasad.

He said JVT already enjoys a reputation as a value-for-money investment destination in Dubai's residential and commercial realty space thanks to its central location, excellent connectivity to all key nodes of Dubai, superb infrastructure and community amenities.

Condor Sonate Residences will offer 48 studios with an average area of 480 sq. ft, 134 one-beds with an average area of 866 sq. ft, 28 two-beds with an average area of 1,333 sq. ft, and 3 three-beds with an average area of 2,040 sq. ft. Prices will start from Dh721,000.

Strong response

The launch of Sonate Residences comes as Condor's two residential projects in Jumeirah Village Circle (JVC) - Condor Castle and Condor Concept 7 - continue to receive overwhelming response from investors. Condor's showpiece project in Dubai Marina - Condor Marina Star - is almost sold-out.

Condor Sonate Residences will have 31 floors, excluding five podiums and a roof. There will also

be more than 3,220 sq. ft of retail area as well as a leisure and recreation area of 18,500 square feet featuring open cabanas, sun loungers and green jogging pathways.

"For homebuyers and investors, Condor Developer's has been offering an affordable but luxury asset class across residential and commercial properties, ensuring superior ROI and valuations in Dubai's buoyant property market, and as a celebration of the groundbreaking we are offering 4.0 per cent DLD waiver on all units," said Sivaprasad.

Condor Sonate Residences will further enhance the JVT community's appeal to "global and regional investors thronging to Dubai, allured by its vibrant charm, super infrastructure and thriving investment ecosystem and growth prospects, Sivaprasad added.

Condor Sonate Residences' leisure and recreation facilities will feature rest areas, infinity pool, outdoor cinema, separate sauna and steam rooms for men and women, a wellness sanctuary, a landscaped rooftop, fitness studio and a padel tennis court. Kids could enjoy a play area, splash pool and mushroom shower.



Time for a mid-year financial checkup

Financial literacy empowers you to take charge and build a secure future

Sandeep S. Jadwani

Have you ever wondered why, despite booming global economies and record-low unemployment in many regions, so many people still live paycheque to paycheque? The answer lies not in how much you earn, but in how well you manage your money.

Now, as we reflect on the first half of the year and look ahead to the second half, it's a perfect time for a "financial checkup". Despite the positive economic indicators, inflation continues to cause financial stress for many, compounded by a lack of savings and mounting debt. While increasing your income can alleviate some of these pressures, diligently tracking your finances is a straightforward way to improve your financial health. It all starts with a solid budget.

As a financial adviser, I see many young adults feeling stuck in a paycheque-to-paycheque cycle. But here's the good news: it doesn't have to be that way. Consider this a mid-year pit stop to get your financial engine revving again.

The global economy might be

cruising along, but for many young adults, making ends meet can still feel like an uphill battle. That's where financial literacy comes in. It's the knowledge that empowers you to take charge and build a secure future.

Budgeting: Your financial roadmap

Think of a budget as your personalised GPS to your financial goals. Don't be intimidated by the term! To get started, track your income and expenses for the last three months. Budgeting apps or a simple spreadsheet work wonders. Categorise your spending (rent, groceries, entertainment) to pinpoint areas where you can optimise.

Setting SMART Goals: Aim High, Hit the Mark

Vague goals are like driving without a destination. Instead, set SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Swap "save more" for "saving Dh2,000 per month for a down payment on a car in one year". See the difference?

Saving: Your financial lifeline

Building an emergency fund is your financial safety net. Allocate a portion of your income to savings for unexpected costs and irregular expenses. This financial buffer prevents setbacks from derailing your progress.

Budgeting is a continuous journey

Your budget is a living document, not a one-time fix. Regularly review and adjust it as your income, expenses, and financial goals evolve. Remember, life throws curveballs, so be flexible. Don't get discouraged if you need to make mid-course corrections.

Communication is key: Building your financial team

If you share expenses with a partner, open communication is vital. Discuss your financial priorities and goals together. You're a team, working towards a shared future. A collaborative approach strengthens your chances of success.

Financial wellness is achievable. By following these tips, taking control of your budget, and making smart financial moves, you can steer your finances in the right direction. Remember, consistent efforts, no matter how small, lead to significant improvements over time. Consider this mid-year checkup a springboard to launch yourself towards a secure financial future.

Now, go forth and prosper!

A word on interest rates

Central banks might soon reduce interest rates. While borrowing becomes cheaper, it can hurt savers. Here are some tips to navigate this potential shift:

» Lock in high fixed deposit rates for a longer term.

» Consider variable rate debt for new loans. Existing debt repayments could decrease with lower rates.

» Hold off on high-ticket purchases. Lower interest rates might save you money in the long run, but be mindful of potential price increases.

In this edition of "Mind Your Money," we emphasise the importance of financial education and diligent budgeting as crucial tools for achieving financial stability and independence. By implementing these strategies and making smart financial moves in anticipation of changing interest rates, you can take control of your finances and set yourself on the path to long-term success. Remember, it's never too late to start, and small, consistent steps can lead to significant improvements in your financial health.

Sandeep S. Jadwani - ACSI, CIB (Head of Investment Advisory, Habib Investment Limited - Regulated by DFSA) is qualified, experienced and an award-winning financial adviser to High Net-worth Individuals. Been in the UAE for over 15 years, advised more than 1500 individuals and families to manage their finances and achieve their financial goals efficiently and effectively. Connect with him on Instagram @sandeep_investmentadvisor and LinkedIn - www.linkedin.com/in/sandeepjadwanibestadvisoruae/

French failure to accredit some Russian journalists for Paris Games is unacceptable, says Kremlin

The Kremlin said on Monday that a decision by France to refuse to accredit some Russian journalists for the Paris 2024 Olympics over security fears was unacceptable and accused the French authorities of undermining media freedom.

France's caretaker interior minister said on Sunday that French security services had rejected more than 4,000 applications for Olympics accreditations, including over espionage and cyberattack concerns.

Gerald Darmanin, who said

close to one hundred applications had been rejected over espionage fears, said some of those turned down were from Russia and Belarus, a staunch ally of Moscow's.

When asked about the refusal to accredit some Russian journalists for the Olympics, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on a conference call:

"We consider such decisions unacceptable. We believe such decisions undermine the freedom of the media. And they certainly violate all of France's commitments to the OSCE (The Organization for Security

and Cooperation in Europe) and to other organisations," he said. "And of course we would like to see a reaction to such decisions from relevant human rights organisations, from organisations focused on ensuring all the foundations and rules of media freedom."

The West on Friday accused Russia of riding roughshod over media freedom after a court found U.S. reporter Evan Gershkovich guilty of espionage and sentenced him to 16 years in a maximum security penal colony.

His employer, the Wall Street

Journal, called the ruling "a disgraceful sham conviction," saying he had merely been doing his job as a reporter accredited by the Foreign Ministry to work in Russia.

The Kremlin said the case and the trial arrangements were a matter for the court, but stated before the verdict and without publishing evidence that Gershkovich had been caught spying "red-handed".

Relations between Russia and France have sharply deteriorated over the war in Ukraine.

France has supplied military equipment to Kyiv and President



France's President Emmanuel Macron delivers a speech during a reception for international journalists accredited for the Paris Olympics. — REUTERS

Emmanuel Macron had called President Vladimir Putin's Russia an adversary, warning that

Europe's credibility would be reduced to zero if Moscow won the war. — REUTERS

KU SPORTS

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Serbia's centre (15) Nikola Jokic fights for the ball against US guard Anthony Edwards during the Basketball Showcase match in Abu Dhabi. — AFP

Serbia's NBA icon longs for elusive Olympic gold

After winning three MVP titles and one NBA championship, Nikola Jokic stands on the threshold of securing eternal glory in Serbia if he can bring home an Olympic gold medal to the basketball-mad country.

Jokic's return to international competition comes a year after he skipped the Basketball World Cup in the Philippines, where Serbia finished second after a nail-biting 83-77 loss to Germany in the final.

The 29-year-old's absence from that tournament ignited outrage in Serbia just months after being lavished with an outpouring of love when he led the Denver Nuggets to an NBA title win.

Serbian fans took to social media to slam Jokic, with the NBA star centre labelled a "traitor" by many.

"The nation's sentiment is entirely justified in believing that playing for the national team is more of a hobby for him, rather

than an act of patriotism or genuine desire," Serbian sports journalist Vladimir Zivanovic told AFP.

Basketball has long been an obsession in Serbia, with some domestic teams regularly selling out games in Belgrade's 18,000-seat Stark Arena.

Fans are known to wake early in the morning to watch NBA games while also participating in colourful rivalries that make Serbia one of the best places to watch live basketball in the world.

Serbia's performances in France will be among the most closely watched sports involving the country during the Olympics.

Jokic's international career began with promise, after winning a silver medal in Rio during the 2016 Olympics.

But since then, he has been unable to win any major international tournament with Serbia -- a fact he hopes to change in Paris.

Serbian national team coach

Svetislav Pesic said Jokic was one of the team's vital components heading into the Olympics.

"Jokic's participation certainly matters, in every sense. Both from the perspective of individual quality and from the perspective of his personality," said Pesic during an interview in June.

The media-shy MVP has always been upfront about valuing his time away from the game -- a point driven home in media appearances during his NBA title run last year.

"The job is done, we can go home now," he famously said during an on-court interview moments after winning the final.

Off the court, Jokic regularly returns to his native Sombor -- a sleepy northern city near the border with Croatia.

There, the NBA star prefers to keep a low profile and shuns interviews, while spending time with his family and indulging his other passion: horses. When away from

the race track, Jokic regularly drops by his former school in Sombor to talk to young players on a small court.

Videos posted on social media over the years has also seen him dancing to folk music with friends or towering over revellers at Serbia's famed nightclubs.

Back on the court, his playing style is reminiscent of a formula developed in the former Yugoslavia described as "jazz basketball" -- which relies on individual creativity rather than speed and sheer power.

Jokic is known for keeping things simple on the court, mixing light movement and simple tap-ins along with laser-sharp precision -- especially with his passing game, which saw him finish second in the league with overall assists this year.

In May, Jokic was named the NBA's Most Valuable Player (MVP) for the third time in just four sea-

sons. The title followed an all star-run where he averaged 26.4 points, 12.4 rebounds and nine assists to beat Oklahoma City Thunder star Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and Luka Doncic of the Dallas Mavericks in final voting for the award.

But securing the latest MVP title was followed by a disappointing loss during the Western Conference semifinals to the Minnesota Timberwolves.

The early exit in theory has allowed the 6ft 11in (2.11m) centre plenty of time to rest ahead of the Olympics, where Serbia is among the shortlist of favourites to finish in the medals.

Pressure to bring his winning NBA ways to Paris during the Olympics remains high.

"The expectation is certainly that he will make up for all the previous years and be the best player on the team," said Zivanovic. "Otherwise, the question of his future participation will arise." — AFP

Nadal 'not comfortable' ahead of Olympics bid

Rafael Nadal will head to the Paris Olympics chasing a third gold medal but admitted his "level was so far from what it should be" after losing in the Bastad clay-court final on Sunday.

The 38-year-old Spanish legend went down to a straight-sets defeat to Portuguese journeyman Nuno Borges in his first final on Sunday since capturing a 14th French Open in 2022.

"The level was so far from what it should be. Probably the energy too," said Nadal after the match.

"It has been a long week with long matches. Even if my body, I don't have damage, that's important - but mentally and physically, I am not used to playing four days in a row and playing long matches."

Nadal was playing his first tournament since an opening round exit at the French Open in May.

He skipped Wimbledon to focus on his clay-court bag of tricks ahead of the Olympics which are being played at Roland Garros, the site of 14 of his 22 Grand Slam triumphs.

At the Games, Nadal will be looking to add to his singles gold from the 2008 Olympics in Beijing and doubles victory at Rio in 2016.

As well as singles, in Paris he will team up with French Open and Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz.

"I played the final, that's positive. I was able to play long matches without having an injury, that's good," added Nadal of his week in Sweden.

The former world number one has played just six tournaments in 2024 due to injury while his ranking has slumped to 261.

"In some way I felt that I arrived here practising much better than what I played on the tournament during the whole week."

"That's something that I am not satisfied with," he explained.

"I arrived here with the feeling that I was playing a good level and I was not able to show that during the whole week. That is something that I am not happy with."

"Anyway it's a final, so I can't say it's a bad result because it's the first final since a long time ago," he added.

"But I was not able to feel myself comfortable enough during the whole week to be satisfied with the week of tennis that I played." — AFP

Athlete influencers compete for likes as well as medals

Athletes on the hunt for Olympic gold will also be chasing likes and followers on social media in Paris, as a battle for a coveted piece of viral fame kicks off at the Games.

A social media side hustle unlike any other will play out across a frantic 16 days beginning on July 26 with Olympians looking to exploit a narrow window to connect with fans from the Games on platforms like YouTube, Tik Tok and Instagram.

American rugby player Ilona Maher went viral at the Tokyo Olympics and now boasts more than a million followers on Tik Tok, despite her sport having less traction than others in the United States. Her teammate Ariana Ramsey wants to follow a similar path in Paris, hoping the four videos she will be producing each day will build her online persona and help with her ambition to one day start her own athletic apparel brand.

"It is so much pressure because there's only so much you can really plan for," she said.

"I can make a list of content

ideas and try and execute them there, but it's going to be more of a matter of like what is going on in the time? What can I capture? What's relevant?"

Like many other Olympians who work second or even third jobs, Ramsey has used social media to supplement her income, earning one-off deals with brands and charging about \$100 for an Instagram Reel or \$50 for an Instagram story post.

In years past, athletes like Ramsey might have needed a manager to negotiate deals with brands. Now, a company will reach out directly to strike a deal.

"This is a whole second job," said Ramsey, who also competed in Tokyo. Athletes do not have to be among the top echelons of fame to gain traction online, Kate Johnson, Google's global marketing director, sports, entertainment, and content partnerships, told Reuters.

"You don't have to have a big name. You have something unique to tell and to share that brands want access to," she said.



US rugby player Ilona Maher poses for a portrait ahead of the Paris Olympics. Maher has more than a million followers on Tik Tok. — REUTERS

The Women's Sports Foundation trustee won silver as a rower in 2004 and sees extraordinary new opportunities for athletes rapidly unfolding since she stepped onto the Olympic podium in Athens.

YouTube, which is owned by Google's Alphabet Inc., counted 1

billion unique monthly visitors in 2013. That number roughly doubled by 2022.

"I feel like I have to do a public service announcement for Olympic athletes who have been in the zone, competing, focusing, training and haven't necessarily been

paying attention to how to monetize this moment in time for themselves," she said.

For some, a deep-pocketed sponsor can offer a boost.

Visa offered their more than 100 "Team Visa" athletes a masterclass in digital storytelling and engagement ahead of the Paris Games, led by social media creators.

The course, offered for the first time, included practical instruction on how to use platforms like Tik Tok as well as guidance on digital storytelling.

"Helping in how they are going to engage with their fans and be better and more comfortable kind of in this creative space was something that was of value," said Andrea Fairchild, the senior vice president of global sponsorship strategy at Visa. Samsung Electronics is providing every athlete at the Games with the tools for the job, an Olympic Edition of their new flip phone.

The Visa course also educated athletes on how to manage the pitfalls of social media, with online abuse an inevitable reality for athletes.

A Fifa report found that one in five players at the 2023 Women's World Cup were subjected to discriminatory or abusive content and even the most enthusiastic content creators acknowledge too much time online comes at a cost.

Sportswear brand Asics announced ahead of the Games that it was partnering with data science company Signify to shield its athletes from online harassment.

"We are acutely aware of the negative impact of online harassment and cyberbullying on mental health, and so are keen to help protect our athletes from online abuse," Asics' Global Head of Sports Marketing Olivier Mignon said in a statement.

Rugby player Maher, who has more than 590,000 followers on Instagram, has not been immune to the "trolls" of social media and told reporters at a recent Team USA summit that she treats her online presence as a means to an end.

"Do I wish I had to do it? No," she said. "But I love what it's done for me." — REUTERS

Stokes all praise for Bashir after spinner's 5-wicket haul

Ben Stokes said Shoib Bashir had "showed the world" he belonged in international cricket after the 20-year-old off-spinner bowled England to a series-clinching victory over the West Indies in the second Test at Trent Bridge on Sunday.

Bashir took 5-41 as the West Indies collapsed to 143 all out on the fourth evening, with England triumphing by 241 runs to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in a three-match campaign.

It was Bashir's third five-wicket haul in just five Tests but first in England after he twice achieved the feat on spin-friendly Indian pitches earlier this year.

His latest exploits were all the more impressive given Bashir did not bowl a single ball and was out for a duck during England's innings and 114-run thrashing of the West Indies in the first Test at Lord's.

Bashir removed Kirk McKenzie, Kaveem Hodge and Alick Athanaze — all top-order batsmen — in quick succession before bowling Jason Holder and last man Shamar Joseph as West Indies, set 385 to win, slumped to 143 all out.

"I think what Bash has done today is to show the world what he can do," said England captain Stokes.

"That wicket hardly offered anything for a spinner throughout the whole Test match and look at what he was able to do today.

"The way in which he can change his pace, produce over-spin and under-spin...I think he showed his full bag of tricks. He's got so much talent and the ceiling is so, so high. He's got an unbelievable desire and a will to get better and learn."

Stokes added: "It's really good for a young guy to come out and put in a performance that wins England a Test match, it's pretty cool for him."

For all his success in India, rising star Bashir was unable to break into the Somerset side at the start of the season after the side opted for a more experienced England spinner in Jack Leach.

That led Bashir to go on loan to Worcestershire last month, but England kept faith with him all the same.

"The decisions we make are all based around not only how far we think their talent can take them, but whether we think they're good enough for international cricket straight away," explained Stokes.

"I don't want to sound like it's an 'I told you so' kind of thing but it sort of is." — AFP



UAE Team Emirates' Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar celebrates his Tour de France victory with teammates and staff. — AFP

Pogacar hails 'golden age' after glorious triumph

Tadej Pogacar hailed a new "golden age" for cycling after securing a third Tour de France title on Sunday to add to his 2020 and 2021 triumphs.

The 25-year-old won the final day's time-trial with defending champion Jonas Vingegaard coming second at 1 minute 03 seconds on the day to seal second overall ahead of Remco Evenepoel, third on the day and also third overall.

Victory also gave the UAE Team Emirates star the first Giro d'Italia-Tour de France double since Marco Pantani in 1998.

"It was an amazing journey. What a battle with Jonas and Remco. So much happened," said the champion who finished 6mins 17secs ahead of Vingegaard in the final standings. Evenepoel was 9mins 18secs off the pace.

"We are living in the golden age of cycling. The rivalry with Remco (Evenepoel), Jonas (Vingegaard), Primoz (Roglic) is just incredible.

We have to take advantage of this moment."

Astonishingly Pogacar won six stages on this edition of the Tour, just as he did when winning the Giro earlier in the season.

"To achieve the double is incredible," added Pogacar who had been runner-up to Vingegaard for the last two years.

"When I won the Giro, some people said that it would serve as a safety net for me if I didn't win the Tour. Winning the Tour still represents the level above and winning the two is the next level."

The world's greatest bike race, broadcast across the globe, featured a novelty finale on the French Riviera because of the Olympic Games in Paris.

Instead of the last day race around the Champs-Elysees the Tour avoided the Olympic Games sites altogether.

With five stage wins already under his belt, Pogacar stormed out of his adopted hometown of

Monaco and up the coast to Nice where he leapt into the arms of his teammates on the celebrated Promenade des Anglais.

Pogacar took the overall lead on a downhill on day four as the race arrived in France from Italy via the Alps.

By the time the race returned to the Alps, Pogacar was three minutes clear and Vingegaard was starting to flag with the Dane still not fully recovered from a major crash in March.

After winning stage 19 on Friday, Pogacar knew he had won and Vingegaard switched his attention to finishing second.

Vingegaard crashed heavily earlier this year and was praised for even making it to the start line, but ahead of Sunday's time-trial he expressed a desire to win another stage. "Under normal circumstances I would have been disappointed. This is such a wonderful race, the yellow jersey is the most beautiful of all. I'll be back to try for a third one next year," said the

27-year-old. Although he started well, as has often been the case in this Tour, he was a distant second best. He did however beat pre-race favourite Evenepoel, who cried at the finish line.

There are many prizes on offer on the Tour with Pogacar's yellow jersey for overall race leader being the chief amongst them.

Evenepoel may not have won the final day time-trial but he captured the first time-trial in week two.

He also came third in the overall standings and won the white jersey for best young rider.

"Tadej is on another planet, I have a gap to bridge between me, Tadej and Jonas, but this was a good Tour, a good test for me," said the 24-year-old Belgian.

Other stars emerged along the way as Eritrean rider Biniam Girmay won three stages, the sprint points green jersey and national hero status in his homeland.

Riding a green bike and also decked out from head to toe in the

colour, Girmay was seen off by a clutch of his countrymen in Monaco.

"It's astonishing," the Eritrean said. "The feelings, the emotions, I want to share them with the people from my country."

Olympic champion Richard Carapaz won a stage, took the yellow jersey for a day and came close to other victories. He raced on Saturday in the polka dot best climber's jersey.

Mark Cavendish also took the headlines, claiming a record 35th stage win and was given a special podium presentation for his career achievement.

Greeted by his family in Nice there were no tears from the "Manx Missile".

"There are a hundred and seventy odd cyclists in this race, and most of them finish a Tour winning nothing," Cavendish said after his podium award. When asked if this was his last Tour he replied: "Yes 100 percent." — AFP

New India coach Gambhir backs Kohli, Rohit to play 2027 ODI World Cup

India's new head coach Gautam Gambhir believes veteran batsmen Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma can both continue playing until the 2027 World Cup if they remain fit but said on Monday that the decision was entirely up to them.

Rohit, 37, and his opening partner Kohli, 35, quit Twenty20 Internationals last month after the team's victory in the World Cup final against South Africa in Bridgetown but both men will continue to play Test and 50-overs cricket. Speaking

in his first press conference since replacing Rahul Dravid at the helm of the national team this month, Gambhir said the two stalwarts still had plenty to offer.

"I think they've shown what they can deliver on the big stage, whether it's the T20 World Cup or the 50-over World Cup," Gambhir told reporters.

"One thing I can be very clear of is that both those guys have a lot of cricket left in them. More importantly, with the Champions Trophy

(in 2025) and a big tour of Australia (from November 2024), obviously they would be motivated enough.

"Then, hopefully, if they can keep their fitness, the 2027 World Cup as well. But this is a very personal decision. I can't say how much cricket is left in them. Ultimately it's up to the players. How much can they contribute to the team's success.

"Ultimately, it's the team that's important. But looking at what Virat and Rohit can deliver, I think

they still have a lot of cricket. They're world class players and any team would want to have both of them for as long as possible."

Gambhir's tenure officially begins when India play three T20 internationals and three ODIs in Sri Lanka starting on Saturday in Pallekele, with Suryakumar Yadav picked to lead the side in the shorter format ahead of Hardik Pandya.

All-rounder Pandya, 30, was Rohit's deputy during India's T20 World Cup triumph last month but he has suffered from fitness problems and missed the 50-over World Cup last year with an ankle injury.

"Fitness has been something that he's struggled with," chief selector Ajit Agarkar said.

"As selectors, it becomes difficult then. The thought behind it was that we want someone who is likely to be available more."

India begin their Sri Lanka trip with the first of three Twenty20 internationals on Saturday and Pandya has reportedly opted out of the three subsequent one-day internationals.

He was "still a very important player," Agarkar said. "And that's what we want him to be, those skill sets are hard to find."

Agarkar praised Suryakumar's captaincy credentials.

"He is one of the best T20 batsmen in the world," said Agarkar.

"We feel that Surya has all the necessary qualities to be a good captain." — REUTERS



Xander Schauffele of the US celebrates with the trophy after winning The Open Championship. — REUTERS

Open winner Schauffele eyes career slam

Xander Schauffele is dreaming of a career grand slam after claiming the British Open to clinch his second major title just two months after he broke his duck.

Schauffele, 30, won the PGA Championship in May and now requires the Masters and US Open to complete the hallowed quartet of golf's biggest trophies.

Only five players have won all four majors — Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods — but Schauffele hopes he can join that illustrious list.

"Yeah, I mean, before I had any majors, it's something I've always wanted," the American said on Sunday after winning the British Open at Royal Troon on Scotland's west coast by two strokes.

"I'm one step closer and still have a long way to go. But if you

don't see yourself doing it, you're never going to do it."

Schauffele was coolness personified as he put together a flawless final-round score of 65 to finish on nine-under-par, two shots ahead of England's Justin Rose and American Billy Horschel.

Schauffele had been one of six players tied for second going into Sunday's final round, a shot behind overnight leader Horschel, who was seeking his first major title.

He believes his win at the PGA at Valhalla two months ago, when he registered a major record of 21-under-par, paved the way for his latest victory.

"I think winning the first one helped me a lot today on the back nine," said Schauffele. "I had some feeling of calmness come through." — REUTERS



Newly appointed Indian coach Gautam Gambhir and chief selector Ajit Agarkar during a press conference in Mumbai on Monday. — REUTERS



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