

News in brief

◆ US President Donald

Trump suggested on Tuesday Vice President JD Vance is “most likely” to secure the Republican party nomination for president in 2028. Trump has avoided naming a preferred successor and said in February that, while Vance was “very capable,” it was too soon to make such calls. Asked on Tuesday whether Vance was the heir-apparent to his Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement, Trump told reporters: “Well, I think most likely.” “In all fairness, he’s the vice president,” he said. The remarks followed speculation that Trump might attempt to defy constitutional limits and seek a third term. “It’s too early, obviously, to talk about it, but certainly he’s doing a great job,” Trump said. “And he would be probably favored at this point.” Trump also floated the idea of Vance teaming up with Secretary of State Marco Rubio to create a formidable Republican ticket.



Trump suggests Vance ‘most likely’ Republican pick for 2028

Prince Harry cleared of ‘bullying’ in African charity row

◆ The UK charity watchdog Wednesday cleared Prince Harry of accusations of bullying in a row with an African charity he founded, but deplored that the bitter internal dispute was played out in public. The charity Sentebele was at the centre of an explosive boardroom dispute in March and April when chairperson Sophie Chandauka publicly accused Harry, the youngest son of King Charles III, of “bullying”. Days earlier, Harry and co-founder Prince Seeiso of Lesotho had announced they were resigning from the charity they established in 2006, after the trustees quit when Chandauka refused their demand to step down. Harry, also known as the Duke of Sussex, launched the charity in honour of his mother, Princess Diana, to help young people with HIV and AIDS in Lesotho and later Botswana. After a months-long inquiry, the Charity Commission “found no evidence of widespread or systemic bullying or harassment, including misogyny or misogynoir at the charity,” it said in its conclusions published Wednesday.

◆ Israeli authorities have banned Jerusalem’s top Muslim cleric from entering the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound for six months over a recent sermon, his attorney told AFP yesterday. Muhammad Ahmad Hussein, the grand mufti of Jerusalem, will be prevented from entering the holy site in the Israeli-annexed Old City until January 2026, according to lawyer Khalidoun Najem. Najem said Israeli police “did not interrogate” or held a hearing for the mufti prior to their decision. Hussein’s lawyer said that the ban was due to a Friday sermon the mufti gave at Al-Aqsa -- Islam’s third-holiest site and a Palestinian national symbol -- in late July, “which contained nothing inappropriate”.

Israel bars Jerusalem’s top Muslim cleric from Al-Aqsa: lawyer



SPOTLIGHT

Egypt sets opening of \$1 bn Pyramids museum for Nov 1



Cairo, Egypt

Egypt said yesterday that its much-anticipated new \$1-billion archaeological museum near the Pyramids of Giza will officially open on November 1 after several delays. Authorities hope that the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM), which boasts the treasures of Tutankhamun among its collection of more than 100,000 ancient Egyptian artefacts, will attract visitors from around the world. Official say that at 50 hectares (124 acres), the museum will be the largest in the world dedicated to a single civilisation. Prime Minister Moustafa Madbouly told a cabinet meeting that President Abdel Fat-

tah al-Sisi had approved the new opening date. He said the opening would “an exceptional event” that would showcase Egypt’s cultural heritage and attract visitors from around the world. It had been set for July 3 but was postponed when Israel attacked Iranian nuclear facilities on June 13 sparking a 12-day war that closed airspace across much of the Middle East. The project has faced a series of setbacks, including political unrest and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Authorities anticipate that the museum will draw five million visitors per year in a major boost to the tourism industry, which is a key foreign exchange earner for Egypt.

Israel army directed to execute govt orders on Gaza

The Army Chief of Staff reportedly expressed dissent over the full occupation of Gaza

● Netanyahu held a restricted three-hour meeting with security chiefs

● The army chief suggested alternatives to a full occupation

● Defence Minister Israel Katz hit back with a clear message

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

The Israeli military will have to execute any government decisions on Gaza, the defence minister said yesterday after reported disagreements over the prospect of a full occupation of the Palestinian territory. Signs of a rift over strategy emerged as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu prepared to announce a new phase in the war, after he said Israel must “complete” the defeat of Hamas in order to secure the release of hostages still held in Gaza. The Israeli press, citing officials speaking on condition of anonymity, has predicted an escalation of operations, including in densely populated areas where hostages are believed to be held, such as Gaza City and refugee camps. The reports also said Netanyahu and his cabinet would order a full military occupation of Gaza, sparking dissension from the army’s Chief of Staff, Eyal Zamir. On Tuesday, Netanyahu held a restricted three-hour meeting with security chiefs to discuss options for the continuation of the war, his office said in a statement. At the meeting, Zamir reportedly warned that a full occupation would be like “walking into a trap,” according to public broadcaster KAN.



Palestinians inspect the damage after an overnight strike on the Sheikh Radwan Health Centre run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in the north of Gaza City

The army chief suggested alternatives to a full occupation, such as an encirclement of specific areas where Hamas is believed to be hunkering down, according to the Channel 12 broadcaster. But Defence Minister Israel Katz hit back with a clear message. “It is the right and duty of the Chief of Staff to express his position in the appropriate forums,” he wrote on X. “But once decisions are made by the political echelon, the IDF will execute them with determination and professionalism... until the objectives of the war are achieved,” he added, using an acronym for the Israeli military. Trump says ‘up to Israel’ Netanyahu is expected to convene the security cabinet on Thursday to finalise a decision on the expansion of the offensive, local media reported.

US President Donald Trump told reporters on Tuesday he was not aware of reported plans to occupy the entire Gaza Strip, but said that such a decision would be “up to Israel”. At war with Hamas since the unprecedented attack by the Palestinian Islamist movement on Israel on October 7, 2023, the Israeli government is under growing pressure to bring the conflict to an end. Israelis are increasingly alarmed about the fate of the 49 hostages still held in Gaza, of whom 20 are believed to be alive. The UN Security Council held a special session on Tuesday to discuss Israeli hostages in Gaza, as the country seeks to keep the issue on top of the global agenda. On Tuesday, Trump described a recent video released by Hamas of emaciated Israeli hostage Evyatar David purportedly digging his own grave as “horrible.”



The October 7, 2023, attack led to the death of 1,219 people on the Israeli side, the majority of them civilians. The Israeli offensive launched in retaliation has killed at least 61,020 people in Gaza, mostly civilians.

In parallel, international criticism has surged over the suffering of over two million Palestinians, who the UN warns are at risk of widespread famine.

Excessive screen time raises heart disease risk: study

● The study tracked the screen consumption and sleep habits of more than 1,000 10-year and 18-year-olds

AFP | Copenhagen, Denmark

Children who spend too much time in front of screens, whether phones or TVs, have an increased risk of heart and metabolic disease, according to a Danish study published yesterday. The study tracked the screen consumption and sleep habits of more than 1,000 10-year and 18-year-olds, with researchers examining the relationship between screen time and cardiometabolic risk factors. “Children and young adults who spend excessive hours glued



Representative picture

to screens and electronic devices may have higher risks for cardiometabolic diseases, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol

and insulin resistance,” said the study published in the Journal of the American Heart Association. Subsequently they face a higher

risk of developing cardiovascular diseases or diabetes, the researchers found. The analysis revealed that each additional hour of daily screen time increases the risk of disease. “This means a child with three extra hours of screen time a day would have roughly a quarter to half a standard-deviation higher risk than their peers,” lead author David Horner, a researcher at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, said in a statement. “Multiply that across a whole population of children, and you’re looking at a meaningful shift in early cardiometabolic risk that could carry into adulthood,” Horner added. Researchers are divided on the potential harmful effects of screens on children and adolescents, but the majority agree that younger populations are more at risk compared to adults.