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## Kuwait demands action on Gaza

Hamas slams 'biased' Blinken after top US diplomat blames group for truce delay



GAZA: Palestinian boys transport water containers past buildings destroyed in Zionist bombardment in Gaza City on June 10, 2024. — AFP

VIENNA/GAZA: Kuwaiti permanent representative to the United Nations in Geneva Ambassador Nasser Al-Hain called on the international community to take responsibility and stop the Zionist occupation's aggression on Gaza and grant Palestinians their legitimate rights. This came in a speech by Hain at the opening of an event organized by Kuwait along with Belgium and the International Labor Organization (ILO), attended by several donor countries to support the occupied Palestinian territories.

Hain pointed out that everyone agrees that the situation in Gaza is critical, given the terrorist acts committed against the Palestinians in Gaza, the latest being the crime against the Palestinians at Nu-seirat camp. He also said that what is happening in Rafah is strong evidence of the violations of all international conventions by the Zionist occupation, noting the heart-wrenching sight of victims forcefully subjected to this war.

In his speech at the international event, Hain urged the international community to unite and stand against the Zionist occupation's oppression in occupied Palestine against Palestinian workers, and to provide urgent humanitarian aid. Hain stressed in his speech that Kuwait, based on its firm belief in the justice of the Palestinian cause, has not and will not hesitate to extend a helping hand and support them in achieving

the establishment of their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, within the 1967 borders.

Kuwait will continue to ratchet up aid for the Palestinians, which includes an annual sum worth \$500,000 it provides the ILO, Hain said. As per the instructions of HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait-based charities were quick to provide urgent aid for the Palestinians. Kuwait has already provided some \$112 million worth of urgent aid for the Palestinians since the Zionist war in Gaza began, he said, underlining that such assistance will continue unimpeded given the scope of their misery.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken blamed Hamas on Monday for holding up a ceasefire in Gaza, as the top US diplomat conducted a Middle East peace mission to deliver President Joe Biden's latest proposed plan to end the Gaza war. Speaking after meeting Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi in Cairo, Blinken said Hamas was the only side that had yet to agree to Biden's proposal, which Washington says already had the Zionist entity's backing before Biden announced it on May 31.

Washington says its proposal envisions a ceasefire in stages, ultimately leading to a permanent end to the war. But the Zionist entity still says it will agree only to temporary pauses until Hamas is defeated, while Hamas says it will not accept a truce without

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### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Crown Prince to visit Saudi

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah will head to Saudi Arabia on Tuesday on an official visit to the kingdom. — KUNA

#### 10 arrested over exam leaks

KUWAIT: Police arrested 10 people, including four education ministry employees, after investigations revealed their involvement in the recent exam paper leaks, the interior ministry announced on Sunday. Coordination between the education and interior ministries led detectives to identify the suspects, including six suspects who operated social media accounts to spread the leaked tests they obtained from the four education ministry employees, the ministry noted.

#### Pollution linked to 135m deaths

SINGAPORE: Pollution from man-made emissions and other sources like wildfires have been linked to around 135 million premature deaths worldwide between 1980 and 2020, a Singapore university said Monday. Weather phenomena like El Nino and the Indian Ocean Dipole worsened the effects of these pollutants by intensifying their concentration in the air, Singapore's Nanyang Technological University (NTU) said, unveiling the results of a study led by its researchers. — AFP

#### Hezbollah downs Zionist drone

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Hezbollah said it shot down a Zionist drone on Monday, while the Zionist military confirmed a drone had been downed. Hezbollah fighters shot down "a Hermes 900 drone armed with missiles to carry out attacks on our regions" using "air defense weapons", the group said. The Zionist military confirmed that a drone had been shot down, saying: "A surface-to-air missile was launched toward a (Zionist Air Force) UAV that was operating in Lebanese airspace." — AFP

### Macron calls for 'right choice' in election gamble

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron said Monday that he was confident French voters would make the "right choice" in snap elections he called after the far right crushed his centrist alliance in Sunday's EU ballot. His surprise move came after mainstream centrist parties kept an overall majority in the European Parliament in Sunday's elections, but the far right notched up a string of high-profile victories in Italy, Austria and France.

In Germany, where the three gov-

erning coalition parties also performed dismally, center-left Chancellor Olaf Scholz's spokesmen ruled out a snap vote. Analysts say Macron has taken the risky gamble of dissolving the national parliament in a bid to keep the far-right National Rally (RN) out of power when his second term ends in 2027. "I am confident in the capacity of the French people to make the right choice for themselves and for future generations," Macron wrote on X on Monday.

His announcement of elections for a new National Assembly on June 30, with a second round on July 7, has sparked widespread alarm, even from within the ranks of his party. "By playing with fire, the head of state could end up by burning himself and

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LIMOGES, France: French President Emmanuel Macron stands in respect during the departure ceremony for German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier at Bellegarde airport on June 10, 2024. — Reuters

### Tunisia all-women team eye prize for smart wheelchair

TUNIS: A smart wheelchair system built by a team of young Tunisian women engineers has reached the finals for a prestigious European inventors' prize, setting a hopeful precedent in a country embroiled in multiple crises. Their project, Moovobrain, allows wheelchair users to move through a choice of touchpad, voice command, facial gestures or, most impressively, a headset that detects their brain signals. It has been shortlisted from over 550 applicants

for the final round of the Young Inventors Prize, launched by the European Patent Office in 2021. This year marks "the first time a Tunisian and Arab team has reached the final" stage of the international competition, the EPO said in a statement. The all-female team will compete against two other finalists, from the Netherlands and Ukraine, for the top prize on July 9 in Malta.

The inspiration for the Moovobrain app first came from co-founder Souleima Ben Temime, 28, whose uncle was "forced to use a wheelchair to move" after his upper body was paralyzed. "There was a clear and urgent need in front of me," she told AFP. "I talked about it to my friends and we decided to use the digital health technologies ... to make a product that could benefit a lot of people." — AFP (See Page 11)



TUNIS: Tunisian engineers Khaoula Ben Ahmed and Souleima Ben Temime pose with a prototype of their team's new wheelchair system at a laboratory on June 6, 2024. — AFP

### India heatwave longest ever, worse to come

NEW DELHI: India's heatwave is the longest ever to hit the country, the government's top weather expert said Monday as he warned people will face increasingly oppressive temperatures. Parts of northern India have been gripped by a heatwave since mid-May, with temperatures soaring over 45 degrees Celsius. "This has been the longest spell be-

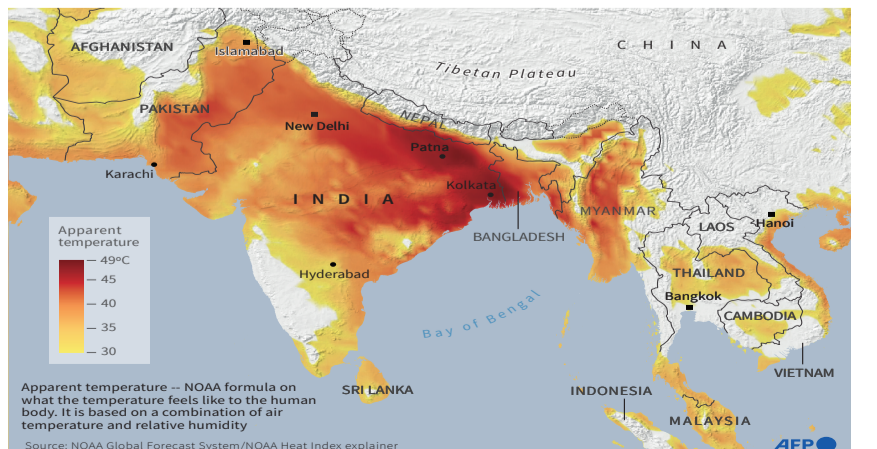
cause it has been experienced for about 24 days in different parts of the country," the head of India's Meteorological Department (IMD), Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, said in an interview with the Indian Express daily. The mercury is expected to fall as the annual monsoon rains move north this month, but Mohapatra cautioned worse will follow. "Heatwaves will be more frequent, durable and intense, if precautionary or preventive measures are not taken," he said.

India is the world's third-biggest emitter of greenhouse gases but has committed to achieve a net zero emissions economy by 2070 — two decades after most of the industrialized West.

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### Heatwave in Asia

Apparent temperature forecast for regions hotter than 30°C on Monday, June 10 at 0600 GMT





## Local

# 'Threats have consequences'

## Are threats part of your teasing style?

By Ghadeer Ghloom

**KUWAIT:** Some individuals may playfully tease others with threats, unaware that it could lead to serious consequences if the teased person reports it, even if there was no harmful intent behind the teasing. To shed light on the legal implications and the importance of caution even in jest, Kuwait Times interviewed Lawyer Shoug Shabkough, who said that the Kuwaiti law strongly condemns and penalizes such threats, as outlined in Article 173 of the Penal Code. This article covers all types of threats made against oneself, property, reputation, or others, regardless of whether they were conveyed verbally, in writing, or through actions causing fear.

Therefore, even if the teaser says that they don't mean any harm, Shabkough explained that the law doesn't excuse their words from punishment. How-

ever, the court will decide the severity of the punishment for the teaser. "Assessing intent in these cases is often intricate," she noted. "But the court has the discretion to consider various factors, such as investigations and witness statements, to determine suitable penalties, ranging from fines to imprisonment."

Furthermore, Shabkough expanded on the fact that family members are not exempted from legal repercussions for making threats. She emphasized that in certain cases, husbands, for instance, may threaten their wives,



Shoug Shabkough

often misunderstanding the distinction between lawful disciplinary actions and threats. "Although the law permits husbands to discipline their wives within certain boundaries, inflicting serious harm, causing permanent disability, or engaging in any criminal behavior is strictly forbidden. Kuwait's legislative framework offers multiple channels to protect family members, especially spouses, from violence and criminal acts," she clarified.

Finally, Shabkough specified on making murder threats. She explains: "As per Article 173, the punishment for threats involves imprisonment for up to two years and a fine not exceeding KD 150, or either of these penalties. However, when it comes to threatening with murder, the consequences are more severe, with imprisonment for up to three years and a fine not exceed-



ing KD 225, or either of these penalties. Murder threat is considered both a misdemeanor under Article 173 and a crime under Law No 16 of 2020, which addresses protection from domestic violence."

In my view

## Don't be a single mom

By Azzah Al-Ghamdi

Local@kuwaittimes.com

**D**ivorce rates are increasing around the world. This issue is not limited to specific societies; rather, divorce cases have become widespread in all societies, posing a potential social crisis for future generations. The phenomenon of single motherhood has also spread. Some view it as a positive development, while others argue that a mother cannot fully compensate for the absence of a father in the home. Traditionally, a healthy family consists of both a mother and a father to ensure children are raised in an appropriate environment, as the absence of a father can affect their psychological health.

The father plays a significant role in the lives of his children, serving as a pillar of the family and helping to regulate children's behavior. While the mother is often associated with tenderness, the father is associated with firmness, contributing to a balanced upbringing. Both parents must fulfill their roles in their children's lives. The stability of the relationship between the mother and father is crucial, as it directly affects the children and helps them grow up in a healthy environment. Many children who are deprived of their fathers feel a sense of loss and inferiority, especially when they see other children with both parents at home.

Blame is often placed on husbands who abandon their children. Unfortunately, many husbands, when they grow to dislike their wives, extend this hatred to their children and neglect them. They may start new lives with other women and forget about their first families. In such cases, the women and children become victims, with the woman becoming a single mother who struggles alone to raise her children.

There are solutions to protect wives and children from such crises. One solution is to postpone childbearing in the early years of marriage until the relationship between the spouses stabilizes. The wife should ensure her husband's commitment and the stability of their relationship before having children. This way, if a divorce occurs without children, there are no significant losses or problems. However, divorce with children entails many challenges.

Women need to be smart and cautious, ensuring they do not have children unless they are confident in their husband's morals, love, and commitment to raising children responsibly. It is essential for the marital relationship to stabilize before having children to prevent the children from becoming victims, as seen in many cases where fathers abandon their children post-divorce.

The family welfare department in the ministry of social affairs should develop solutions to address this problem, including monitoring the families of divorced individuals and encouraging connections between fathers and their children. The disappearance of fathers can significantly harm children, so efforts should be made to provide advice and guidance to maintain these crucial family bonds.

## Kuwait and UAE civil aviation bodies sign security agreement

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and its Emirati counterpart signed on Monday an agreement to put security personnel on civilian aircraft traveling to both countries. The contract was signed by Head of DGCA Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Director General of the General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) Saif Al-Suwaidi. DGCA told KUNA that the agreement will help increase the level of security inside the civilian aircraft to provide more comfort and security for travelers. After the signing, the two sides discussed several common issues, most notably training and development, and matters related to the most important civil aviation events of interest to the two brotherly countries in regional and international forums. — KUNA



## Army Chief of Staff visits defense base

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain on Sunday toured the country's Air Defense base, and praised the level of readiness by its members. A statement by the Ministry of Defense said that Al-Muzain was briefed during the visit. The briefing included a thorough explanation of the procedures followed, along with a comprehensive assessment of the degree of readiness and preparedness enjoyed by Kuwait Air Defense. The statement added that Al-Muzain stressed on the importance of working tirelessly to protect the country.

In another development, Kuwait Army Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain on Monday received Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Kuwait Morino Yasunari. Japanese Defense Attache to Kuwait accompanied the ambassador. They discussed topics of common interest. Lieutenant General Al-Muzain later received the Executive Director of the International Institute



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain receives Japan's Ambassador to Kuwait Morino Yasunari. — KUNA

for Strategic Studies (IISS) in the Middle East, Lieutenant-General Martin Sampson, the army said in a press statement. During the two meetings, friendly conversations were exchanged, and important topics of common interests were discussed, especially in the military aspect, it said. — KUNA



Health Ministry officials inspect Ministry project on Monday. — KUNA

## Specialized Center a qualitative leap in dental healthcare

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Health said that the Nasser Abdul Mohsen Al-Saeed Specialized Center for Pediatric Dental Treatment in the capital governorate is an addition to the quality of health care in the country and reflects the Ministry's firm interest in providing a specialized hospital for oral and dental health care. The assistant undersecretary for dental affairs at the Ministry, Dr Ahmad Asad, said in a press statement after an inspection tour of the project on Monday that the center comes within the framework of the country's development plan and the vision of New Kuwait 2035. It is aimed at promoting community health and providing the highest levels of health care and medical services to citizens.

Asad explained that the center represents a qualitative leap in the field of children's dental health by providing comprehensive services in one place with medically advanced devices and equipment. The center will provide services to children. He said that the Ministry is working to promote early health care for children and develop its services in the field of dentistry in general, praising the efforts of the Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadi and all the departments for their keenness to update future health projects through the action plan in the 100 days program within the government's action plan.

The assistant undersecretary of the Ministry for Engineering and Projects Affairs, Ibrahim Al-Naham, said in a similar statement that during the tour, they were briefed on the engineering works at the site and the extent of applying safety requirements, focusing on the highest quality standards, and making sure the workflow proceeds according to the established schedules. He explained that the center is "the second of its kind after the opening of the Jahra Specialized Center for pediatric dentistry." — KUNA

## Kuwait joins UN talks on anti-corruption

**VIENNA:** United Nations member states, including Kuwait, convened for talks on Monday aiming to review the progress on an international convention against corruption, which includes plans for the proper implementation of the pact. The talks, attended by Kuwaiti ambassador to Austria and permanent delegate to international organizations Talal Al-Fassam, will also look into strategies that seek to push forward sweeping anti-corruption drives in countries across the world, according to a statement by the UN's media office. Approved by the UN General Assembly in October 2003, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption is the only legally established anti-corruption treaty.

In another development, the International Conference on the Management of Spent Fuel from Nuclear Power Plants commenced on Monday at the United Nations' headquarters in Vienna, Austria, under the title "Meeting the Moment." The five-day event will bring experts in nuclear energy from all over the globe to discuss strategies for managing nuclear fuel, also known as spent fuel, and the role of hybrid nuclear power.

In a press statement, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said that the purpose of the conference is to provide a platform for the exchange of ideas and information regarding strategies for managing nuclear power. Some countries, the IAEA continues, have been moving towards nuclear energy to mitigate the effects of climate change, while other countries have expressed their concerns regarding nuclear energy's challenges.

The world has reached a pivotal moment where countries must confront the challenges that are for or against the utilization of nuclear energy, according to the IAEA. Similar to the 2019 conference on nuclear energy, the 2024 conference would underscore the impacts of nuclear energy's technological developments, regulatory requirements, safety and security, and ways to safeguard the economy. The IAEA elaborated on the importance of the Vienna conference, where nuclear fuel management challenges will be evaluated and provided plausible solutions. — KUNA



Talal Al-Fassam

## MoH, Public Authority for Applied Education and Training ink MoU

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Health signed a memorandum of understanding with the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, represented by the Faculty of Health Sciences (Department of Applied Medical Sciences). The Ministry said in a press statement on Monday that the memorandum aims to achieve cooperation in meeting

the needs of technicians in the specialties of the medical profession.

In order to achieve the desired objectives of the memorandum, a joint coordinating committee has been formed between the two parties for each of the specialties in order to apply the best standards necessary for training those who enrolled in those programs.

The memorandum was signed by the undersecretary of the Ministry of Health, Dr Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, and the Director General of the Authority, Dr Hassan Al-Fajjam, in the presence of the Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadi. — KUNA





## Crown Prince's decades of achievements

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah's achievement extends through four decades, during which he managed to strengthen Kuwait's regional position. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah honored his achievements by signing an order on June 1st, nominating His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah as Crown Prince.

His Highness the Amir delivered a speech on the occasion in which he congratulated Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled on becoming the Crown Prince, wishing him success in serving Kuwait and its people and pushing development and progress forward. His Highness the Crown Prince's life witnessed political and diplomatic achievements in Kuwait. Born in 1953, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled got a bachelor degree in political science from Kuwait University in 1977.

He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1978 as a diplomatic attaché, serving in the Arab Affairs Department (1978–1983), and joined the

Kuwait Permanent Mission at the UN (1982–1999). His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled served as Kuwait's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Permanent Representative to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (1995–1998), during which he participated in GCC ministerial meetings. His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled was appointed head of the Kuwait National Security Bureau at the rank of minister in 1998.

He was named Minister of Social Affairs and Labor in July 2006 and in March 2007, and an Information Minister between May 2008 and January 2009. His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled was named Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2011 and named Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs in February 2012. He was named Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in December 2012. In January 2014, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled was named First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister and retained the post in December 2016.

In December 2017, he was named Deputy Prime

Minister and Foreign Minister. On November 19, 2019, His Highness the Amir signed an order appointing His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled as Prime Minister and another order to address him as His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. On December 14, 2020, Kuwait's late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah assigned His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled to form his second government and assigned him to form his third government on March 2, 2021.

The late Amir accepted His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled's resignation on November 18, 2021. The late Amir signed a decree assigning His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled to form the country's 39th government and his fourth. Saudi Arabia's late King Fahad awarded His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled with the King Abdulaziz Order of the First Class in 1998.

Former Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir awarded His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled with the Two Niles Order in 2012. Senegalese President Macky Sall awarded His Highness Sheikh Sabah



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah

Al-Khaled the National Order of the Lion in 2015. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas awarded His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled with the Al-Quds Star Order in 2018. — KUNA

# Iraq urged to respect Kuwait's sovereignty, territorial integrity

## GCC ministers congratulate Crown Prince



DOHA: GCC ministers take a group photo after the joint ministerial meeting in the Qatari capital.



DOHA: Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya and Kuwaiti delegation participate in the joint ministerial meeting for the strategic dialogue between the GCC countries and Turkey in the Qatari capital, Doha. Turkey was represented by Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan. — KUNA photos

**DOHA:** The 160th GCC ministerial council meeting expressed congratulations to His Highness the Crown Prince of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, after an Amiri decree appointing him by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In a statement, the ministerial council expressed its best wishes for Kuwait and continued progress and prosperity.

On another front, the statement, which was issued by the Ministerial Council at its 160th session in Doha, confirmed that the entire Dorra field is located in the marine areas of Kuwait and that ownership of the natural resources is in the divided submerged area adjacent to the Saudi-Kuwaiti divided zone, including the entire Dorra field, which is a joint ownership between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

The statement added that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia alone have full rights to exploit the natural resources in that region in accordance with the provisions of international law and based on the agreements concluded and in force between them, stressing its categorical rejection of any allegations of the existence of rights for any other party in this field or the submerged area adjacent to the area divided by its specific borders between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

The Ministerial Council also asserted the importance of Iraq respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait and adhering to bilateral and international pledges and agreements and all relevant United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council Resolution No 833 of 1993, regarding the demarcation of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi land and sea borders. The Ministerial Council called on Iraq to work hard to complete the demarcation of the maritime borders between Kuwait and Iraq beyond the maritime 162 mark.

The Ministerial Council also called on the government of Iraq to adhere to the "Agreement on the Regulation of Maritime Navigation in Khor Abdullah," which was signed between Kuwait and Iraq on April 29, 2012, entered into force on December 5, 2013, and was jointly put forward to the United Nations on December 18, 2013.

The Council expressed its complete rejection of what was contained in the merits of the ruling of the Federal Supreme Court in Iraq in this regard, and its rejection of the historical fallacies contained in the merits of the ruling, and considered any decisions, practices, or unilateral actions undertaken by the Republic of Iraq related to the Khor Abdullah Agreement as null and void, in addition to its rejection of the unilateral Iraqi action.

It also noted that it has annulled the security exchange protocol signed in 2008 and its approved map in the joint plan to ensure the safety of navigation in Khor Abdullah, signed between the two sides on December 28, 2014, which included a clear and specific mechanism for amendment and cancellation. The Council affirmed its support for Security Council Resolution No. 2732 of 2024 and the importance of ensuring the Security Council's continued follow-up on developments in the humanitarian issue of prisoners and missing persons and the Kuwaiti property issue, including the National Archives, and adhering to the umbrella of the Security Council, as stated in Security Council Resolution No. 2107 of 2013.

The ministers also stressed that the fair and most appropriate alternative after the end of the work



Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya

of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) lies in the UN Secretary-General's appointment of a high-level coordinator to follow up on Kuwait's humanitarian and national documents, similar to what was done before the issuance of Security Council Resolution 2107 of 2013. Considering that it is a mechanism that has previously been tried and proven successful, and calling on the Government of Iraq to cooperate in making progress in this regard and to exert maximum efforts to reach a final solution to these issues.

### Importance of the 160th meeting

Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya has stressed the importance of the 160th Ministerial Council meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in the Qatari capital, Doha. In a statement to KUNA, Minister Al-Yahya added that the ministerial meeting included two meetings on its sidelines, the first a joint ministerial meeting between the GCC countries and the Republic of Yemen, and the other between the GCC countries and Turkey.

Minister Al-Yahya stressed the keenness of the State of Kuwait to enhance cooperation and coordination with the GCC countries in various fields to confront the current global challenges, especially the situation in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories. Al-Yahya expressed deep concern about the humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip and the brutal war carried out by the Zionist occupation, which has claimed the lives of thousands of defenseless Palestinian civilians, including children, women, and the elderly, stressing the need to stop the war in the Gaza Strip.

He also underlined the keenness to support the Republic of Yemen in various political, economic, and humanitarian fields to achieve comprehensive peace and stability for the Yemeni people in accordance with the Gulf Initiative, the outcomes of the Comprehensive National Dialogue Conference, and UN Resolution 2216.

Al-Yahya added that Kuwait is keen to strengthen bilateral relations with Turkey, especially in the economic and investment fields, for further economic and developmental growth, which reflects positively on both sides, indicating that the Gulf countries and Turkey have distinguished relations in various sectors. Lastly, the minister expressed his thanks and appreciation to Qatar for the good reception and organization of these ministerial meetings that would enhance cooperation and integration among GCC members. — KUNA

## GCC ministers call for peace, stability in the region

**DOHA:** The foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries confirmed at the end of their meeting on Sunday in Doha that they would proceed with the completion of the electrical interconnection project to connect Iraq to the electricity grid in the GCC countries. The final statement of the 160th Gulf ministerial meeting praised the positive Gulf partnership.

The electricity interconnection project with Iraq comes "to achieve greater integration and interdependence between Iraq and the GCC countries in order to achieve their common interests and pave the way for further cooperation in the future," the statement added. It stressed support for the existing efforts to achieve security and stability in Iraq, preserve the integrity and unity of its territory, its full sovereignty, its Arab identity, its social fabric, its national unity, and its support to confront terrorist groups and armed militias in dedication to state sovereignty and law enforcement.

### Syrian issue

On the Syrian issue, the Ministerial Council stressed its firm positions towards preserving the territorial integrity of Syria, respecting its independence and sovereignty, and rejecting regional interference in its affairs. The Council supports the efforts of the United Nations to reach a political solution in Syria in line with Security Council Resolution 2254 and the relevant UN resolutions.

It also affirmed support for the efforts of the UN Special Envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, to care for Syrian refugees and displaced people, work on their voluntary and safe return to Syria in accordance with international standards, and reject any attempts to bring about demographic changes in Syria.

The Ministerial Council backed the efforts of the Arab Ministerial Liaison Committee on the Syrian crisis and emphasized the implementation of the commitments contained in the Amman statement dated May 1, 2023, and the Cairo statement on August 15, 2023. The ministers also condemned the repeated Zionist attacks on Syria, which are a violation of international law and a violation of its sovereignty, praising Saudi Arabia's decision to appoint an ambassador to Syria.

### Lebanon issue

On the Lebanese issue, the Council affirmed that the Gulf states stand with the Lebanese people and their continued support for Lebanon's sovereignty, security, and stability and the Lebanese army, stressing the importance of comprehensive political and economic structural reforms that "ensure that Lebanon overcomes its political and economic crisis and does not turn into a springboard for terrorists, drug smuggling, or other criminal activities that threaten the security and stability of the region".

The Council stressed the importance of extend-

ing the control of the Lebanese government over all Lebanese territories, including implementing the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions, in order to "exercise its full sovereignty; there will be no weapons except with the consent of the Lebanese government; and there will be no authority except its authority." The Ministerial Council condemned the repeated Zionist violations against Lebanon and the targeting of civilians, paramedics, and journalists in clear violation of Security Council Resolution 1701.

The statement expressed the Ministerial Council's support for the efforts of the five-party group on Lebanon, which stressed the importance of expediting the holding of presidential elections and implementing the economic reforms necessary to fulfill the Lebanese government's responsibilities towards its citizens, praising the efforts of Lebanon's friends and partners in restoring and strengthening trust and cooperation between Lebanon and the GCC countries and their support for the role of the Lebanese army and internal security forces in maintaining Lebanon's security.

### Sudan crisis

For Sudan, the Council underlined the importance of preserving the sovereignty, security, stability, and territorial integrity of Sudan and supporting Sudan in the face of developments and repercussions of the current crisis, as well as the need to calm down and prevail in the language of dialogue, unite the ranks, and return to the path of the political process leading to civilian authority and alleviating the suffering of the Sudanese people.

It urged the Sudanese government and the Rapid Support forces to engage seriously and effectively with crisis settlement initiatives, stressing the importance of ending the conflict in light of what was agreed in the Jeddah declaration signed on May 11, 2023, and the commitment to protect civilians and the declaration issued on May 20, 2023. The Council stressed the Security Council Resolution No. 2724 issued on March 8, 2024, which called on all parties to ensure the removal of any obstacles, enable full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access, and adhere to the Jeddah declaration, which affirms the protection of all civilians.

### Libyan issue

Regarding Libya, the ministers stressed the GCC's position in support of Libya, the Libyan political solution, and the Security Council resolutions, reiterating its keenness to preserve the interests of the Libyan people, achieve security, stability, and development in Libya, and ensure its sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity.

GCC ministers welcomed the results of the meeting held at the headquarters of the League of Arab States on March 10, 2024, in the presence of the chairman of the Libyan Presidential Council, the speaker of the Libyan House of Representatives, and the chairman of the Supreme Council of State to support the political settlement aimed at holding presidential and parliamentary elections in Libya. They called on all parties in Libya to prevail in wisdom and adopt political dialogue to resolve differences in a way that preserves the supreme interests of the Libyan state and achieves the aspirations of its people. — KUNA



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Email: info@kuwaittimes.com  
Website: www.kuwaittimes.com

## Yemen launches 'Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad college'



Yemen launches community college.

ADEN: Governor of Yemen's Socotra Island, Raafat Al-Thuqli, and Deputy Minister of Technical Education, Abd Rabbu Al-Mahwali, laid the foundation stone for a community college project named after the late Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The college project is being launched under the support, supervision, and implementation of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED).

The Yemeni News Agency (SABA) reported that the project includes a building for classrooms with a conference hall that can accommodate about 700 individuals, administrative and residential buildings, housing for faculty members and students, a restaurant, a mosque, a playground, and other buildings on an area of 45,000 sq m in the city of Hadibu, the center of the governorate.

Al-Thuqli appreciated the efforts of Kuwait and its unlimited support for education in Yemen, adding that proceeding with the project confirms the government's interest in establishing educational institutions that enhance the labor market with qualified and specialized cadres. For his part, Al-Mahwali expressed his happiness for laying the foundation stone of the project, pointing out that this project will contribute to strengthening the specialized scientific aspect of Socotra Island. — KUNA

## Kuwait Heritage



KUWAIT: Two fishermen are pictured along the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# NBK unveils NBK PLUS package with exciting lifestyle benefits

## 0% auto loan financing offer; 20% discount on Platinum Gym

KUWAIT: In keeping with its dedication to offering customers an unmatched banking experience that suits their diverse needs and expectations, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has unveiled its revamped NBK PLUS package, offering an array of exclusive benefits designed to enhance the lifestyle and financial well-being of its valued customers. NBK PLUS package offers new and existing customers a wide range of benefits including a 0 percent auto loan financing offer, making it easier than ever to drive away in their dream car. Customers can also enjoy a 50 percent discount on the WIYAK app rides, and free unlimited delivery for 3 months on the Deliveroo app, adding comfort to their daily routine.

Additionally, NBK PLUS offers a 100 percent cashback on YouTube Premium subscriptions, enhancing the viewing experience with ad-free videos and exclusive content. To support health and fitness goals, the package provides a 20 percent discount on Platinum Gym subscriptions and "Counted" healthy meal subscriptions. Plus customers also have the opportunity to get the prestigious metal finish NBK KWT Visa Infinite Credit Card with a cashback that can go up to 1,000 KD, symbolizing status and offering additional perks and rewards.

Commenting on the revamped package, Ghadeer

Al-Awadhi, AGM - Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait, stated: "The revamped NBK PLUS package is a testament to our commitment to providing innovative and customer-centric solutions. We have curated a range of benefits that cater to the diverse needs of our clients, ensuring they receive the best value and convenience." "We believe these enhancements will significantly add value to our customers' banking experience, aligning with our goal to support their lifestyle and financial aspirations," added Al-Awadhi.

"We always strive to introduce exclusive campaigns and offers based on our monitoring of the ever-changing customer behavior and preferences to keep pace with these changes and ultimately increase customer satisfaction by delivering a comprehensive, exceptional, and highly convenient banking experience that suits their diverse needs and lifestyles," she noted.



Ghadeer Al-Awadhi



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KUWAIT: Participants attend a program at the KUNA Media Development Center. — KUNA photos

## KUNA Media Center, US Embassy launch training program

KUWAIT: KUNA Media Development Center, in cooperation with the Department of Public Diplomacy at the US Embassy, launched on Monday a training program called "Responsible Journalism" with the participation of a number of employees of the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) and local newspapers. The program, presented by American expert Akram Elias, aims to explore the professional aspects of responsible journalism, types and forms of journalism, as well as tools and methods that help journalists accurately report. The program, which runs until Tuesday, deals with the foundations of professional and responsible journalism and its basic elements, as well as types and forms of journalism.

It includes a theoretical curriculum and deals with training on research processes such as misinformation, technology, artificial intelligence, and media education. The KUNA Media Development Center, which was established in December 1995, is one of the most



important media training centers. It has provided hundreds of training programs in various media fields and aims to develop personal media capabilities and upgrade professional media work. — KUNA





Modi unveils BJP-dominated cabinet

## Gaza war shatters pilgrimage dream for Palestinian couple

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BERLIN: Co-leaders of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party Alice Weidel (center) and Tino Chrupalla (right) cheer after first exit polls of the European Parliament elections on June 9, 2024. — AFP photos

# Far-right surges in EU Parliament

## Elections offer mixed picture, as support for centrists holds in some countries

**BRUSSELS:** Gains by the far-right in voting for the European Parliament on Sunday prompted are adding uncertainty to Europe's future political direction. While the center, liberal and Socialist parties were set to retain a majority in the 720-seat parliament, the vote dealt a domestic blow to the leaders of both France and Germany, raising questions about how the European Union's major powers can drive policy in the bloc.

Making a risky gamble to try to reestablish his authority, a bruised French President Emmanuel Macron called a parliamentary election, with the first round on June 30. Like Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz also endured a painful night where his Social Democrats scored their worst result ever, suffering at the hands of the mainstream conservatives and hard-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). Meanwhile, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni saw her position strengthened by her arch-conservative Brothers of Italy group winning the most votes, exit polls showed.

A rightwards shift inside the European Parliament may make it tougher to pass new legislation that might be needed to respond to security challenges, the impact of climate change or industrial competition from China and the United States.

However, exactly how much clout the euro-skeptical nationalist parties will wield will depend on their ability to overcome their differences and work together. They are currently split between two different families, and some parties and lawmakers for now lie outside these groupings.

### 'Anchor of stability'

The center-right European People's Party (EPP) will be the biggest political family in the new legislature with 186 lawmakers, results have shown so far.

## Nordics against far-right current in surprise results

**STOCKHOLM:** Left-wing parties across the Nordics gained ground in the EU election, going against the trend of right-wing advances across Europe, with experts saying Monday that right-wing issues were lower on voters' agenda. Centrist mainstream parties kept an overall majority in the European Parliament, but extreme-right parties scored several high-profile wins in the bloc.

They finished first in France, Italy and Austria and came second in Germany and the Netherlands, according to preliminary results. But in Sweden and Finland the trend was the reverse. In Sweden, the anti-immigration Sweden Democrats, which props up Ulf Kristersson's center-right government, made history by losing ground in an election for the first time since its founding in the late 1980s.

"It's spectacular that the spell has been broken," Henrik Ekengren Oscarsson, professor of political science at Gothenburg University, told AFP. The Sweden Democrats became the country's second-largest party behind the Social Democrats in Sweden's 2022 general election.

### Fight about agenda

It was hoping to repeat this feat in Sunday's EU election but instead up in fourth place with 13.2 percent of the votes, down 2.1 percentage points from the 2019 election, with over 90 percent of votes counted.

In Poland, Prime Minister Donald Tusk's centrist Civic Coalition, a member of the EPP, was set to win the European vote. In Spain as well, the center-right People's Party, also part of the EPP, came out on top, outperforming Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

Such results were good news for EPP member Ursula von der Leyen who seeks a second five-year term at the helm of the powerful EU executive arm. And she was quick to present herself as a shield against extremes. "No majority can be formed without the EPP and together ... We will build a bastion against the extremes from the left and from the right," she told supporters at the EPP's election night event in Brussels. She added, later in the evening: "But it is also true that extremes and on the left and the right have gained support and this is why the result comes with great responsibility for the parties in the center."

Von der Leyen may still need support from some right-wing nationalists, such as Meloni's Brothers of Italy to secure a parliamentary majority, giving Meloni and her European Conservative and Reformists (ECR) allies more leverage — which could upset other potential allies.

### Voters' worries

The center-left Socialists and Democrats are poised to be the second biggest political family, even as they lost four lawmakers to end up with 135, results have shown so far. Political observers attribute the shift to the right to the rise in the cost of living, concerns about migration and the cost of the green transition as well as the war in Ukraine — worries that nationalist and populist parties have seized on. "I think a lot of people felt that Europe is doing things not with people, but just doing it on top of people," Greens' lead candidate Bas Eickhout told

Oscarsson said that issues that normally favor the Sweden Democrats, such as migration, were not in focus in Sweden's EU election campaign, giving way to climate and the war in Ukraine. "Modern political campaigns are very much a fight about the agenda, and the Sweden Democrats lost that fight," the researcher said.

Instead, the Green Party made gains and emerged as the country's third largest with 13.8 percent of the vote, an increase of 2.3 percentage points compared to the 2019 election. The Left Party also saw a boost of 4.2 percentage points, reaching 11 percent. In Finland, opinion polls had predicted the far-right Finns Party becoming the third biggest party with 16.5 percent of the vote. Instead, the party ended up with only 7.6 percent of the vote.

"There was a quite steady trend in opinion polls for the populist Finns Party before the elections ... and nothing was indicating that there would be such a dramatic loss in voter support on election day," Kimmo Elo, a senior research fellow at the University of Turku, told AFP. Elo noted that the Finns Party had been struggling "to mobilize their voters in the European elections." The big surprise in Finland was the socialist Left Alliance, which got 17.3 percent of the vote — an increase of 10.4 percentage points.

### 'Ideological winds'

Denmark's Green Left, also known as the Socialist People's Party (SF), also surprised, becoming the largest party with 17.4 percent of the vote, up 4.2 percentage points compared to the 2019 result. The anti-immigration Danish People's Party and recently-founded Denmark Democrats managed to each grab one of Denmark's 15 seats in the European parliament, with 6.4 and 7.4 percent of the vote respectively. While this represented an increase of one seat



ROME: Italy's Prime Minister and leader of the far-right party Brothers of Italy Giorgia Meloni gestures during a press conference following the results of the elections on June 10, 2024.

Reuters in an interview, asked why the far right was doing so well. "And I think here we need to come up with a credible answer, otherwise, we're only getting further to the far right," he said, after the Greens and liberals lost ground in the election.

According to AFP numbers Monday, Eurosceptic nationalist groups ECR and Identity and Democracy (ID) and hard-right lawmakers not yet affiliated to an EU political family from Germany's AfD secured together 231 seats, a gain of 51.

Pro-European center-right, center-left, liberal and Green parties will retain a majority of 489 seats, according to AFP. Europe's Green parties in particular suffered heavy losses, subsiding to 53 deputies from 71 in the outgoing parliament.

The European Parliament co-decides with the intergovernmental European Council on laws governing the 27-nation bloc of 450 million people.

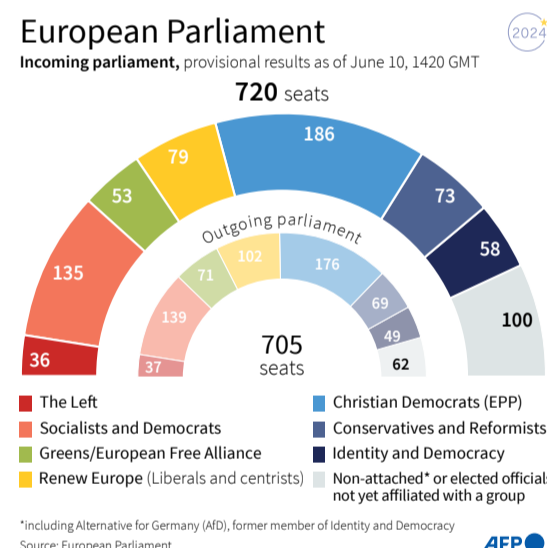


COPENHAGEN: Attendees react to the exit poll during an election party of the Socialist People's Party on June 9, 2024. — Reuters

for Denmark's far-right, the Danish People's Party got four of the seats in 2014.

Christine Nissen, chief analyst at the think-tank Europa, said that across the Nordics there was more agreement on having stricter migration laws. This can help explain why the Nordics saw different results to the rest of Europe. "If you look at the most important issues for voters, it's always security, then climate," Nissen told a press briefing for foreign media.

That was "not the case in some of the countries that have seen this surge in far-right parties, where it's more issues such as migration that are important to voters." Oscarsson stressed that it was often difficult to pinpoint exactly why "ideological winds" were blowing in different directions across Europe. He noted that there are no "Europe-wide political campaigns." "Elections campaigns look very different in the 27 countries," Oscarsson said. — AFP



AFP gave the ECR four more deputies than in the last parliament for a total of 73 and the far-right ID group nine more seats for a total of 58. The number of non-affiliated deputies who may choose to join other groups, including the euro-sceptics, jumped by 38 to 100, AFP numbers show.

In Austria, the count of votes cast in polling stations on Sunday plus a projection for postal ballots confirmed the far-right Freedom Party won but by a smaller margin than had been forecast, national broadcaster ORF said.

In the Netherlands, Geert Wilders' far-right party was second behind a Left-Green alliance, falling short of expectations. The Freedom party took 17 percent of the vote, while the Left-Green alliance, led by the former EU Commission vice-president Frans Timmermans, was on 21 percent. — Agencies

## EU's von der Leyen sets sights on centrist majority

**BERLIN:** European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen will turn to the social democrats and liberals in Brussels, with whom she has worked in the past, to form a majority following elections to the European Parliament, she said in Berlin on Monday.

"Throughout my election campaign, I worked hard to build a broad and effective majority in favor of a strong Europe. For this reason, we will now approach the large political families who also worked well with us in the last mandate," von der Leyen said at a conference of Germany's conservative CDU party.

German conservative von der Leyen, 65, appeared among the other main winners election night. She saw her center-right European People's Party (EPP) strengthen its grip on first place in the European Parliament — as centrist forces maintained an overall majority. "We won the European elections," a smiling von der Leyen told her groupings as the results were announced.

In theory that looks like opening up the road for the former defense minister to win another five years at the helm of the EU's powerful executive. But she still faces a nail-biting push to win over EU leaders and shore up enough support in the new parliament with the rise of euro-sceptics after the election. — Agencies



## International

# Gaza war shatters pilgrimage dream for Palestinian couple

## Closure of Rafah border compounds misery for Khan Younis couple who lost home

**KHAN YOUNIS:** Palestinian couple Mahmoud and Fatima Jarghoun sold their jewelry so they could perform the hajj pilgrimage to Makkah - a journey they have been yearning to make for years. But with no way out of the Gaza Strip, their dream has been dashed. "We are living inside a prison. Without the Rafah border, there is no way in and no way out," said Mahmoud Jarghoun, 67, referring to the crossing to Egypt that has been shut since the Zionist entity seized it in May during its Gaza offensive.

Jarghoun said the deep disappointment of being unable to make the pilgrimage had compounded the pain inflicted by the war, speaking at his shattered home in Khan Younis, where the floor was strewn with rubble and masonry.

"Unfortunately, we lost our house," he said, estimating repair costs at some \$20,000. "Then came the closure of the border and we can't go to hajj, we can't go to it. It was two blows at once," he said. "The pain of the war, the pain of the destruction, the pain of the siege and the pain of not being able to go to hajj."

The hajj is one of the five basic obligations of a Muslim and every believer who has the means should perform the pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime. It begins on Friday. Palestinians typically wait years for their turn after registering their names with the Palestinian authorities. Jarghoun said they had been waiting almost 18 years.

He said they had "sold everything in our possession, so that we can perform this duty. We are at the end of our lifetime. Unfortunately, the border was closed, closing with it all our hopes to perform this duty". Fatima Jarghoun, 65, said the couple had been very happy when their names were approved for the hajj. But "at the end, all our dreams were gone. We were very, very upset", she said.

The Zionist entity has besieged and laid waste to much of the Gaza Strip since launching an offensive in retaliation for the Oct 7 Hamas-led attack that killed some 1,200 people in the Zionist entity, according to Zionist tallies. The Zionist offensive has killed more than 37,000 people in Gaza, according to the Palestinian territory's health ministry. — Reuters



**KHAN YOUNIS:** Palestinian couple Mahmoud and Fatima Jarghoun sit inside their damaged home on June 3, 2024. — Reuters

## Zionist entity intensifies Syria campaign, eyeing showdown with Hezb

**AMMAN:** The Zionist entity has intensified covert strikes in Syria against weapons sites, supply routes and Iranian-linked commanders, seven regional officials and diplomats said, ahead of a threatened full-scale assault on Tehran's key ally Hezbollah in Lebanon.

A June 2 air raid that killed 18 people, including an adviser with Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards, targeted a clandestine, fortified weapons site near Aleppo, three of the sources said. In May, an air strike hit a convoy of trucks headed to Lebanon carrying missile parts and another raid killed Hezbollah operatives, four said. The Zionist entity has for years struck militant groups backed by arch-foe Iran in Syria and elsewhere, in a low-level campaign that burst into open confrontation after the entity and Palestinian group Hamas went to war in Gaza on Oct 7.

The Zionist entity has since killed dozens of Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) and Hezbollah officers in Syria, from just two last year before the Oct 7 attack, according to a tally by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a think tank.

The battle hit fever pitch in April when the entity bombed the Iranian consulate in Damascus, killing the top IRGC commander for operations in the Levant. In retaliation, Iran fired some 300 missiles and drones at the Zionist entity, almost all of which were shot down. The entity then attacked Iranian territory with drones.

This direct confrontation, a first for the two countries, stopped there. The Zionist entity also briefly

reduced the number of strikes it was carrying out against Iranian proxies, said Selin Uysal, a French diplomat seconded to the Washington Institute, citing the tally, which counted publicly-known attacks in the weeks immediately before and after.

"There was a slowdown" after the face-off in April, she said. "But they are picking up again because of suspected Iranian weapons transfers to Lebanon. There is a kinetic effort in Syria and Lebanon to disrupt the supply chain between Iran and Hezbollah."

Reuters interviewed three Syrian officials, a Zionist government official and three Western diplomats about the entity's Syria campaign. The officials asked not to be named to talk freely about sensitive matters.

All those interviewed said the entity's moves suggested it was gearing up for a full-scale war against Hezbollah in Lebanon, which borders Syria, that could begin when the entity dials down its campaign in Gaza. "The statements of our leaders have been clear that escalation could be imminent in Lebanon," the Zionist government official said.

The Zionist entity has also indicated openness to diplomatic efforts being brokered by Washington and France. The Zionist government official said the campaign in Syria was also aimed at weakening Hezbollah and thus discouraging it from a war with the entity.

### Killing commanders

Syria, a longtime Iranian ally, became the key conduit for Tehran's arms supplies to Hezbollah after Iran deployed military personnel and thousands of allied paramilitaries from around 2013 to help President Bashar Al-Assad during his country's ongoing civil war. Some weapons parts are smuggled into Syria while others are assembled there, the three

Syrian officials said. The Zionist Syria campaign aims to make sure Hezbollah, Iran's most loyal ally and the linchpin of Tehran's projection of regional power through militant proxies, is as weak as possible before any kind of fight begins, the Syrian officials and Zionist official said.

The June 2 killing of Saeed Abyar, described by Iranian state media as an IRGC adviser, showed the entity's reach in taking out key personnel and targeting equipment even when Iran has tried new methods of protecting weapons and parts bound for Hezbollah, the Syrian officials said.

Abyar was visiting a manufacturing plant for missiles for Hezbollah that was hidden inside a stone quarry east of the city of Aleppo when he was hit, the Syrian officials said. "The facility was in an area designed to be hard to find and hard to hit," said one of the officials, an intelligence officer.

Iran blamed the June 2 strike on the entity and the head of the IRGC has vowed to retaliate.

The strike was the first targeting of an IRGC official since the entity bombed the Iranian consulate, they said. But it is not the only attack it has carried out since then. An air strike near the Syrian city of Homs on May 29 targeted a vehicle carrying parts for guided missiles from Syria to Lebanon, the Syrian intelligence officer said. Another strike on May 20 targeted members of Hezbollah, the officer said.

Before the Iran consulate attack, a series of air strikes in late March around Aleppo hit warehouses storing high explosives for missile warheads, the officer said.

"In some cases (the Zionist entity) is hitting even before we install our equipment," the official said. The Zionist government official said the entity's targets were advanced anti-aircraft weapons, heavy rockets and precision-guidance systems for missiles.



**DAMASCUS:** People gather near the damaged site after what Syrian and Iranian media described as a Zionist air strike on Iran's consulate in the Syrian capital Damascus in April. — Reuters

### Tipping the balance

The Zionist entity carried out 50 air strikes in Syria in the six months after the Gaza war began, said the Washington Institute's Uysal. The strikes have included the killing of some 20 IRGC officials and more than 30 Hezbollah commanders, she said. Between January and October of 2023, two IRGC officials and no Hezbollah commanders were killed by Zionist strikes in Syria, Uysal said.

Farzan Sabet, a senior researcher at the Geneva Graduate Institute who specializes in Iranian foreign policy, said attacks on the Zionist entity by Hezbollah and Iran's allies in Iraq and Yemen during the Gaza war had taken a toll on the entity.

"But it has killed many more Hezbollah operatives and senior figures including IRGC personnel in Syria, so on balance it's a bigger loss" for Iran's allies, Sabet said. — Reuters



**GAZA:** A woman sits next to a wounded Palestinian boy injured in a Zionist strike as Gaza's overwhelmed Al-Aqsa Hospital struggles to treat the wounded, in Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza on June 9, 2024. — Reuters

## Kuwait demands action on Gaza...

Continued from Page 1

guarantees that the war will end. "My message to governments throughout the region, to people throughout the region, is — if you want a ceasefire, press Hamas to say 'yes'," Blinken told reporters before departing Egypt to visit the Zionist entity where he was due to meet Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "If you want to alleviate the terrible suffering of Palestinians in Gaza, press Hamas to say 'yes'. If you want to get all the hostages home, press Hamas to say 'yes'. If you want to put (Zionists) and Palestinians alike on the path to more durable peace and security, press Hamas to say 'yes'," he said.

Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters Blinken's comments were "an example of bias toward (the Zionist entity) and it offers American cover to the holocaust conducted by the occupation in Gaza". Hamas and its allies Islamic Jihad said in a joint statement: "Any agreement must ensure a permanent end to the aggression and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, reconstruction, lifting the blockade and a serious swap deal."

Witnesses in north and central Gaza reported helicopter gunfire and naval shelling hitting Gaza City, and air strikes on Deir al-Balah during the latest fighting. Street battles raged in the southern areas of Rafah and Khan Younis, where bodies were seen lying in the streets and Palestinian civilians were fleeing, an AFP correspondent said.

Outside the European Hospital in Khan Younis, a grief-stricken man lay down among white-shrouded bodies to hug one of them after they were loaded onto a truck. Other men had to pull him from the body bag. The latest clashes follow major combat and heavy airstrikes during Saturday's hostage rescue mission in the Nuseirat camp.

While Zionists celebrated the return of the four captives

in good physical health, Palestinians condemned a death toll that left 274 people killed and almost 700 injured, many of them women and children. In the aftermath of the battle, Palestinians searched for survivors and bodies in the rubble of collapsed buildings. Charred cars and debris littered a devastated neighborhood coated in concrete dust.

"We are exhausted and helpless, enough is enough," said Jehad, who fled under fire from Saturday's assault in Nuseirat with his family and was now in Deir al-Balah, speaking by text message. The family had already been displaced from Gaza City to Nuseirat, to Khan Younis, to Rafah and back to Nuseirat before their latest flight.

In video obtained by Reuters from Nuseirat, resident Anas Alyan, standing outside the ruins of his home, described how Zionist commandos wearing shorts had appeared in the streets, firing wildly while F-16s and quadcopters fired from the air. "Anyone moving in the street was killed - anyone moving, or walking, was killed immediately," he said. "There are still children under this building. We don't know how to pull them out," he said, pointing to one ruin. "Today we found children martyred in that building," he said, pointing to another.

The Zionist military offensive has killed at least 37,124 people in Gaza, mostly women and children. The toll includes at least 40 deaths over the past 24 hours, the ministry said on Monday. The war has brought widespread devastation to Gaza and displaced most of its 2.4 million inhabitants, many of whom United Nations agencies warn are on the brink of starvation.

In Rafah, the city on the southern edge of Gaza where the Zionist entity launched an offensive last month, residents said on Monday tanks had been thrusting deeper towards the north in the early hours of the morning. They were on the edge of Shaboura, one of the most densely populated neighborhoods at the heart of the city. Around half of the Gaza Strip's 2.3 million people had been sheltering in Rafah before last month's assault, and a million have since fled again. — Agencies

## Macron calls for 'right choice' in...

Continued from Page 1

dragging the entire country into the fire," Le Monde wrote in an editorial. Despite the storm of criticism, Macron appeared unfazed Monday as he visited the site of a massacre by Nazi soldiers during World War II together with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. He was seen shaking hands with Karin Eideloth, a descendant of Adolf Heinrich, one of the perpetrators of the massacre at the southwestern French village of Oradour-sur-Glane. "In a place like here, we are aware of the danger of far-right ideology," she said. Steinmeier said: "Let us never forget the damage done in Europe by nationalism and hate."

Back in Paris, even some Macron allies expressed dissent over his latest announcement. Lower-house speaker Yael Braun-Pivet, a senior figure within Macron's party, indicated that forming a coalition with other parties could have been a better "path". "The president believed that this path did not exist," she told television channel France 2.

Meanwhile, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, a Socialist, described the prospect of elections just weeks before the start of the Paris Olympics as "extremely unsettling". But International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach played down any direct impact on the event. In a televised address late Sunday, Macron warned of the danger of "the rise of nationalists and demagogues" for France and its place in Europe. He noted that, including the RN, far-right parties in France had managed to take almost 40 percent of the EU Parliament vote.

Macron hopes to win back the majority he lost in France's lower house in 2022 legislative elections af-

ter winning a second term. But some fear the anti-immigration RN could instead win, forcing Macron to work in an uncomfortable coalition with a far-right prime minister. RN vice-president Sebastien Chenu said the party's 28-year-old leader Jordan Bardella would be its contender for the post.

Bardella's mentor Marine Le Pen, who was runner-up in the last two presidential elections, has remained party leader in parliament and is largely expected to tilt for the top job again in 2027. The far right came out on top in France, Italy and Austria, and second in Germany and the Netherlands.

The Kremlin, which hopes the far right would take a softer line on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, said it was "attentively observing" the gains. The RN came in first with more than 31 percent of votes in France — its score was more than double that of Macron's list with 14 percent. The Socialists and hard-left France Unbowed trailed behind with 13 and nine percent each.

Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire warned the election results would have "consequences of unprecedented seriousness for our nation". The team of Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne, who is also secretary-general of Macron's Renaissance party, told RTL radio he would be "fully engaged" in the battle for parliament seats as well as his job as minister. Socialist party chief Olivier Faure called for setting up "a popular front against the far right".

On the far right, Marion Marechal, deputy head of the Reconquest party founded by pundit Eric Zemmour and seen as even further to the right of the RN, was meeting Marine Le Pen — who is her aunt — and Bardella at the RN headquarters. Mujtaba Rahman, managing director for Europe at Eurasia Group, said Macron appeared to believe he could defy the polls by confronting France with a choice between the pro-European status quo and a far right that has "a history of admiration for — and funding by — Vladimir Putin". — AFP

## India heatwave longest ever...

Continued from Page 1

For now, it is overwhelmingly reliant on coal for power generation. "Human activities, increasing population, industrialization and transport mechanisms are leading to increased concentration of carbon monoxide, methane and chlorocarbons," Mohapatra said. "We are endangering not only ourselves, but also our future generations."

Scientific research shows climate change is causing heatwaves to become longer, more frequent and more intense. The latest heatwave has seen temperatures in New Delhi match the capital's previous re-

cord high: 49.2C (120.5F) clocked in 2022. As people sought relief from the scorching temperatures, the electricity grid groaned under a record peak power demand of 8,302 megawatts.

On May 29, an automatic weather station in the Delhi suburb of Mungeshpur recorded a high of 52.9C, but the temperature was the result of a faulty sensor. Elsewhere in Delhi, 17 other city stations hit a maximum of 49C the same day. "We constituted an expert committee, which observed readings for the next two days and found there were problems with the sensor," Mohapatra said.

While the IMB had raised its concerns about the recording within hours, Mohapatra confirmed for the first time that the sensor was faulty. "We inspect the AWS (automatic weather stations) every six months," he said. "But in between a bird or a monkey can disturb it". — AFP



## International



NEW DELHI: India's newly sworn-in Prime Minister Narendra Modi (center) stands for a group photograph with newly sworn-in cabinet ministers after the oath-taking ceremony on June 9, 2024. — AFP

# Modi unveils BJP-dominated cabinet

## Key posts remain unchanged, signaling broad policy continuity

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled Monday his coalition government after a surprise election setback lost his Hindu-nationalist party an overall majority. The 71 members of his government took the oath of office after Modi on Sunday, with 11 posts going to coalition allies who extracted them in exchange for their support — including five in the top 30 cabinet posts.

But Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) old guard dominate the list, with key posts unchanged — signaling broad policy continuity. That includes BJP loyalists Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman and S Jaishankar — the defense, interior, transport, finance and foreign ministers respectively, staying on in their jobs.

Powerful BJP president Jagat Prakash Nadda was named as health minister. Posts given to co-

alition leaders include civil aviation, to Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), the BJP's biggest ally. Other coalition posts include smaller ministries such as heavy industry, food processing and fisheries.

There are no Muslim lawmakers among his third-term lineup, unlike his past two governments, both formed after his right-wing BJP won a majority. Modi's decade as premier has seen him cultivate an image as an aggressive champion of the country's majority Hindu faith, worrying minorities including the country's 200-million-plus Muslim community. "Honored to serve Bharat", Modi wrote after he was sworn into office, using the country's name in Sanskrit, a word dating back to ancient Hindu scriptures.

He held his first cabinet meeting Monday evening, where plans were approved for assistance

for 30 million new homes for poor families. Modi had been forced into quick-fire talks with coalition partners in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), whose 293 seats guaranteed him the parliamentary numbers to govern.

### Old guard dominate

Earlier on Monday, Modi took his first action, approving the latest tranche of a cash handout for 93 million farmers. Two-thirds of India's 1.4 billion people draw their livelihood from agriculture, which accounts for nearly a fifth of the country's gross domestic product.

Despite the BJP dominance in the cabinet, the coalition means Modi must seek greater consensus in his parliament. The TDP from Andhra Pradesh is led by veteran politician Chandrababu Naidu, who

began his political career with Congress, the biggest opposition party to the BJP. The next biggest, the Janata Dal (United) party of Bihar, is headed by Nitish Kumar, who has a history of frequently changing his allegiance to and from the BJP to suit his interests. He was one of the founding members of the opposition alliance that competed against Modi in this year's election — but switched sides just weeks before the vote began.

Seven of the 71 ministers are women, with two in the top cabinet. Modi's chief rival Rahul Gandhi was nominated on Saturday to lead India's opposition in parliament, after he defied forecasts to help the Congress party nearly double its seats. No date has been set for the opening of parliament, but Indian media have reported the new session is expected to begin next week, when the speaker will be elected. — AFP



KHARKIV: Rescuers work at a site of a residential building hit by a Russian missile strike in Kharkiv on May 31, 2024. — Reuters

## Russia reports gains ahead of Ukraine summit

KYIV: Russia on Monday claimed the capture of another village in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, the latest in a string of gains ahead of a major Ukraine summit in Switzerland. Dozens of world leaders and top diplomats are to convene for a meeting at the weekend that President Volodymyr Zelensky hopes will rally global support behind Kyiv as it struggles more than two years into Russia's invasion.

Zelensky has ruled out direct talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin and is keen to win over more non-Western countries, including those who maintain close ties with Moscow. After almost a year of stalemate, Ukraine has been forced to abandon dozens of front-line settlements this spring, with Russian troops holding a significant advantage in manpower and resources. Russia's defense ministry said Monday that its forces "continued to advance into the depths of the enemy's defense and liberated the settlement of Staromaiorske", located southwest of the Russian-held city of Donetsk. The loss of the village is a symbolic blow to Kyiv, as it is one of the few Ukraine managed to recapture last year in a largely lackluster counter-offensive.

Staromaiorske is on the southern front of the Donetsk region, one of the four regions Moscow claimed to have annexed in 2022 and where some of the fiercest fighting is now taking place. Putin told an economic forum last week that Russia had seized 47 Ukrainian towns and villages so far this year.

That includes gains in the northeastern Kharkiv region where Moscow launched a major ground assault last month, causing thousands of Ukrainians to evacuate and further stretching Kyiv's forces. US President Joe Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said Sunday that Russia's advance on the Kharkiv border region had "stalled out" after Washington partially lifted restrictions on using US-donated weapons to strike inside Russia.

### 90 countries

In a diplomatic setback for Kyiv, Biden confirmed last week that he would not be attending the June 15-16 summit at the Burgenstock Resort, which overlooks Lake Lucerne in central Switzerland. Vice President Kamala Harris will instead represent Ukraine's most important military and financial backer.

Zelensky had also hoped to secure high-level attendance from some of Moscow's allies, principally China. Beijing has criticized the gathering and said it would be "difficult" to attend without Russia's participation.

The Swiss presidency said Monday that 90 countries had confirmed their attendance at the summit, which would follow a G7 summit in Italy. The initiative is unlikely to produce a significant breakthrough, but Ukraine hopes it will build international support for its position that Russia should not be able to crystallize territorial gains through its invasion.

The gathering will also allow Kyiv to lobby for more military, financial and diplomatic aid. The Kremlin has blasted any talks about the conflict without its participation as "absurd".

### 'Obsession'

On the battlefield, Russia has now shifted its focus to two strategic towns in the Donetsk region, Ukrainian soldiers fighting there told AFP at the weekend. "The fiercest fighting is taking place in this area: Pokrovsk and Chasiv Yar. This is the sector they really want. This is their obsession," said Oleksandr, a 36-year-old tank crew member. Russian forces have been attacking the hilltop town of Chasiv Yar for months. Its capture would be a strategic blow to Ukraine and could leave it vulnerable to further Russian advances. Another Ukrainian soldier, Danylo Madiar, 33, said it "had become very difficult to hold this front line" with many losses.

Zelensky said Monday that the situation in the Donetsk region was "the most difficult" across the entire front line. Russia also continued a campaign of aerial attacks on Kharkiv city, Ukraine's second largest, on Monday with a strike that injured at least seven people, officials said. "There were three attacks on the city with guided aerial bombs," Mayor Igor Terekhov said in a post on Telegram.

Earlier in the day one person was reported killed and two wounded by Russian fire on the village of Dergachi, to the northwest of the city. Ukrainian forces separately claimed to have struck an advanced Russian air defense system overnight on the Crimean peninsula, which Moscow annexed in 2014.

The general staff said Ukraine had hit an S-400 air defense system near the town of Dzhankov and also targeted two S-300 systems near Chornomorske and Yevpatoriya. There was no immediate comment from Moscow on the alleged strikes and AFP could not independently verify the claims. Seven people were also injured in Russia's Belgorod border region, four after a mine blast and three by a Ukrainian aerial attack, the governor said. — AFP

## Unrivalled for a decade, Modi must now share power

NEW DELHI: Flying back from a meditation break at the end of India's grueling election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrote in a column that he felt a "boundless flow of energy" within himself. He might need the energy as he gets ready to start a rare third straight term with a heavy reliance on fickle allies.

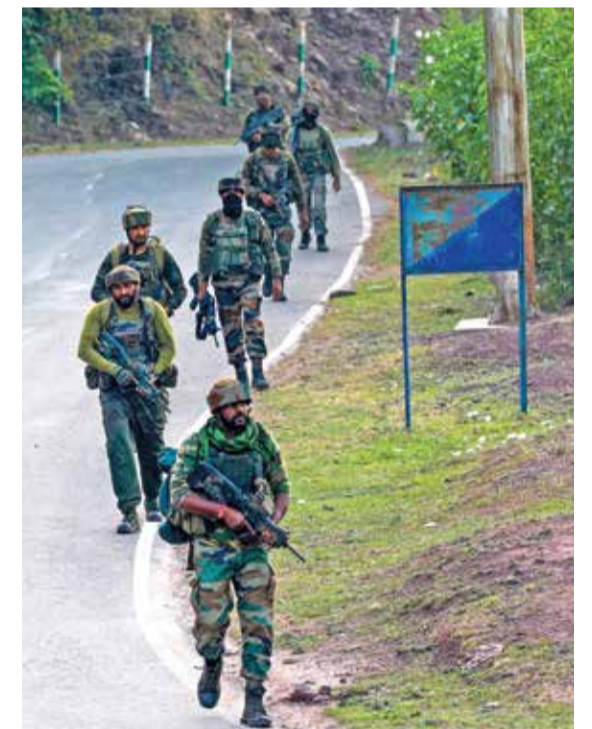
For the first time in his high-flying political career, which began in 2001 when he became the chief minister of his home state of Gujarat, Modi, 73, must accommodate the pulls and pressures of a coalition government after his party surprisingly failed to get a majority on its own. One of Modi's two main allies was with the opposition as recently as January, while the other is a regional leader who helped build the coalition that tried to unseat Modi at the last election in 2019.

"Modi has always functioned as a lone wolf, doing exactly what he wants to," said political commentator Arati Jerath. "It's going to be a very new role for him. And it's something he will have to adjust to and adapt to." Addressing leaders of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition on Friday, Modi struck a conciliatory note, saying that for him all its constituents were equal, irrespective of the number of parliamentarians they had. "It's an experienced team and they will advise me well," Modi said, pointing to the chiefs of more than half a dozen NDA parties seated together. "Together, the team will take the right decisions."

"We have won the majority and it is needed to run a government. But to run the country, unanimity is crucial. We will strive for unanimity and leave no stone unturned in taking the country forward on the path of progress." Modi's approval ratings have been among the highest among world leaders and, as he ran a presidential-style campaign for his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the loss of majority is likely to rankle with him, analysts said. Since he became prime minister a decade ago, riding his Hindu nationalist base, Modi has been the ruling alliance's unquestioned leader, with concerns growing about what his opponents see as India's slide towards authoritarianism.

The man who as a boy sold tea in his home state has dominated India's politics so completely in the last decade that few in his party or even the parent ideological group, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, dare stand up to him. Indeed, throughout the campaign in scorching heat, it was Modi with his thinning white hair, neatly trimmed white beard and immaculate Indian attire who towered over everyone else. Giant cutouts of him were everywhere and his face was on television screens every day as he courted India's 968 million voters with a personal "Modi guarantee" to change their lives.

"He has become larger than the party itself," said Surendra Kumar Dwivedi, a former head of the Department of Political Science at Lucknow University. Modi, the first Indian leader to win a third straight term since founding prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, has promised a transformative next five years. Under him, India has become the world's fastest growing major economy and he has said he wants to make it the world's third largest in three years, behind the United States and China. "My every moment is for the country, my every moment is for you," Modi said in his address to the alliance. "Together, we have to take the country forward. What we have done in the last 10 years is only a preview, a trailer." The BJP has dismissed opposition speculation that Modi might hang up his boots once he reaches 75, as some other party leaders have done in recent years. But Modi has said he wants to lay the groundwork for India to become a fully developed nation by 2047, the 100th year of independence from British colonial rule. — Reuters



JAMMU: Indian army personnel patrol during a search operation in Reasi on June 10, 2024. — AFP

## India hunts Kashmir militants after Hindu pilgrim attack

SRINAGAR: Soldiers in India-administered Kashmir carried out a large-scale manhunt on Monday, the government said, a day after nine Hindu pilgrims were killed in one of the deadliest attacks on civilians for years. Around an hour before Hindu-nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi was sworn in for a third term in the capital New Delhi on Sunday evening, gunmen in Kashmir ambushed the bus packed with Hindu pilgrims celebrating after visiting a popular shrine.

Police said Monday the attackers fired on the bus hitting the driver and three others, before it swerved off the mountain road into a ravine, killing nine including a child. Dozens were also wounded. "Three of those injured and the driver who died had bullet injuries," police officer Mohita Sharma told AFP, adding investigations continued.

Special forces and police officers were searching the Reasi area in the south of the disputed territory, deploying drones to scan the forested area from above. Officials said India's anti-terrorism task force, the National Investigation Agency, has also started probing the incident. Kashmir's top political official Manoj Sinha said a joint operation was "in progress to neutralize the perpetrators" who carried out the attack, announcing \$12,000 in compensation for each of the families of those killed. Interior minister Amit Shah warned that the gunmen would "face the wrath of the law". "The culprits of this dastardly attack will not be spared," Shah said on social media late Sunday.

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since their independence in 1947, and both claim the high-altitude territory in full. Rebel groups have waged an insurgency since 1989, demanding independence or a merger with Pakistan. The conflict has left tens of thousands of civilians, soldiers, and rebels dead. Violence and anti-India protests have drastically fallen since 2019, when Modi's government cancelled the region's limited autonomy. But since then rebel groups have targeted Indians from outside the disputed territory and killed several. — AFP



TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2024

# Boursa Kuwait welcomes listing of BIG Holding Company in its 'Premier' Market

## Company's shares to commence trading on June 11, 2024 under 'Beyout' symbol

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait announced the listing of Beyout Investment Group (BIG) Holding Company in its "Premier" Market, where the trading of the company's shares are set to commence from the opening trade session of June 11, 2024 under the ticker symbol 'Beyout'. The company will be included under the 'Financial Services' sector, bringing the total count of companies listed on the exchange to 146, with 34 in the "Premier" Market alone.

BIG Holding Company's strategic decision to list 30 percent of its shares aims to diversify its shareholder base, strengthen the company's governance structures, and broaden its network and visibility among its principal investors. This listing is also anticipated to yield substantial benefits for the Kuwaiti capital market by expanding the roster of listed companies, enhancing investment prospects, and encouraging further listings, which will reflect positively on the market and ultimately accrue benefits to investors.

Commenting on the listing, Boursa Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Mohammed Saud Al-Osaimi said: "Boursa Kuwait consistently seeks to attract substantive listings that enhance the stock market's value, an effort that aligns with our strategic aim to cultivate a robust financial market renowned for its liquidity and integrity. Over the past few years, the exchange has worked closely with prospective listed companies, elevating our listing standards and criteria to suit a diverse range of businesses from multiple industries, with a particular focus on family-owned and public-private enterprises."

"Boursa Kuwait is dedicated to reinforcing the strengths of the Kuwaiti capital market as a globally attractive investment destination while elevating its profile as a leading stock exchange in the region. These endeavors are instrumental in realizing the national vision of establishing Kuwait as a premier financial and investment hub in the Middle East," Al-Osaimi added.

Founded in 2006, BIG Holding Company is a leading regional investment company that provides integrated human resources solutions in addition to support services for real estate sector projects, including property management, build-operate-transfer services and enhancing public-private partnerships.

The company has appointed the National Investments Company and EFG Hermes Emirates Limited (in cooperation with EFG Hermes Emirates LLC) as Joint Global Coordinators and Joint Bookrunners as well as appointing the National Investments Company as its listing and financial advisor.



Boursa Kuwait CEO  
Mohammed Saud Al-Osaimi



BIG Holding Group CEO  
Abdulrahman Mohammed Al-Khanna



NIC Board Member and CEO  
Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Mukhaizim

- Beyout Investment Group will be included under the 'Financial Services' sector
- Total count of companies listed on Boursa Kuwait rises to 146 with 34 in "Premier" Market alone
- NIC served as joint global coordinator and subscription manager for the private placement

Commenting on the listing, BIG Holding's Group Chief Executive Officer Eng Abdulrahman Mohammed Al-Khanna said: "The listing of Beyout Investment Group Holding Company is the culmination of our efforts to strengthen our position as a leading Kuwaiti company in the region. Over the past years, we have focused our efforts on developing our operations, improving efficiency and upgrading our practices in line with international standards with the aim of consolidating our position as a trusted partner for government agencies and global brands across various sectors."

He added, "This achievement provides new opportunities to create value for all stakeholders, supports our goals of continuing to innovate in our service package, and achieve expansion in the region. We extend our sincere thanks to our partners for their trust and continuous support, as we record a new chapter of success to be added to our legacy and confirm our commitment to continue our path towards sustainable growth."

The National Investments Company led the private subscription for the secondary offering of 30 percent of BIG Holding Company's currently issued shares, initiated from May 19 to June 2, 2024, and met with great demand by local and international investors on both the retail and institutional level.

The order amount exceeded the value of the offering during the initial allocation period by more than 17 times, with an initial coverage of KD 771 million that was in line with the subscription's target to offer 90 million shares of the company at 500 fils per share for a total value of more than KD 45 million for qualified investors, which reflects the great confidence in the company's quality and performance in addition to the high professionalism demonstrated by NIC in managing the subscription.

NIC Board Member and Chief Executive Officer Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Mukhaizim commented on the listing, saying: "The National Investments Company is proud to play a pivotal role in the private placement of Beyout Investment Group Holding Company, handling the necessary arrangements for the listing process on Boursa Kuwait's "Premier" Market within the targeted timeframe. NIC served as the joint global coordinator and subscription manager for the private placement process of Beyout Investment Group Holding Company, in addition to its role as the exclusive financial advisor for the listing process."

Al-Mukhaizim highlighted the successful role played by the National Investments Company in managing the listing, which enhances NIC's strength and its position as one of the largest investment en-

titles locally and regionally with several decades of experience in managing IPOs and distinctive listings, praising the capabilities of the company's highly experienced and professional team.

Boursa Kuwait recently conducted a specialized awareness session on the post-listing ongoing obligations within the 'Premier' Market, which was attended by several members of BIG Holding Company's executive management. This educational initiative is a cornerstone of Boursa Kuwait's strategic efforts to elevate the understanding and adherence to the ongoing obligations required from companies preparing to list, efforts that are integral to the exchange's mission to continually enhance the capital market and its participants. Participants gained insights into their responsibilities following listing, encompassing both the Capital Markets Authority's executive regulations and the ongoing obligations dictated by the exchange's rules. The session also provided a practical demonstration of the automated disclosure system used by listed companies along with a discussion on the schedule of stock entitlements and requisite corporate actions.

Boursa Kuwait has been a key driver in the development of the Kuwaiti capital market and the diversification of the national economy, in line with the goals of the "New Kuwait" vision. Since its inception, the company has worked diligently to create a thriving capital market that attracts local and foreign investors through a broad spectrum of new products and services, infrastructure upgrades, and market reform initiatives, as part of its multi-phase market development plans.

Boursa Kuwait was fully privatized in 2019, the first government entity in the country to successfully undergo the process, bringing about greater levels of efficiency. It has also been self-listed since September 2020 and has made great strides in sustaining its operations and business continuity in the face of uncertainties and challenges.

The company has rolled out numerous market reforms and new initiatives as part of its comprehensive multi-phase market development (MD) plans and showcases some of the standout listed companies and the investment opportunities that reside in the Kuwaiti capital market through its series of Roadshows and Corporate Days, putting these companies in touch with some of the world's leading investment firms and financial institutions and highlighting their financial health and business strategies and outlooks, to help investors gain an in-depth understanding of the benefits and opportunities of investing in Kuwaiti companies.

## How US is daring the world to find a dollar alternative

WASHINGTON: The United States is merrily chipping away at the pillars that hold up the dollar as the world's reserve currency, with the latest blows coming from some powerful Americans questioning the rule of law following the conviction of Donald Trump. In doing so, it is effectively daring the rest of the world to find an alternative - and so far, it appears to be winning.

The attacks on the legal system in the aftermath of former President Trump's conviction follow other moves that are seen by some as the United States throwing down the gauntlet to the rest of the world.

The country has radically increased the use of sanctions as a punitive foreign policy tool. And it is adding on an immense amount of debt, leaving hapless foreigners who seek the safety and depth of its markets to fund its excesses. Over the past three weeks, Reuters has been asking financial services executives, global investors and other experts in Asia and the United States how long they think the Americans can keep at it without meaningful blowback. Several of the sources requested anonymity to speak candidly about the situation. These conversations showed consternation is growing, both at home and abroad, about the consequences of US hubris. But despite trying, no one so far has been able to find a credible alternative or expects one to emerge anytime soon, and they have partly themselves to blame. In Asia, for example, people are asking with increasing urgency what's their 'America plus 1', as they search for ways to reduce their U.S. exposure and boost non-dollar trade flows.

But attempts to build such systems are slow-going or haven't gotten traction. And rising authoritarianism, threats to individual and property rights and geopolitical tensions have meant that even if US assets are less attractive than they were before, other options are worse.

A recent survey, for example, shows central bank reserve managers plan to increase their dollar holdings over the next 12-24 months as the rise in global geopolitical tensions and need for liquidity draw them to the currency. "Perhaps ironically, the US dollar's strength is, in part, due to its near-unchallenged safe-haven status," said Steve H Hanke, a professor of applied economics at Johns Hopkins University, who served on former President Ronald Reagan's Council of Economic Advisers. "That said, most investors don't understand geopolitics and the dangers that lurk below the surface - until it's too late." — Reuters



Gulf Bank's annual Kids Day activities.



Photo of kids with NEO Account mascot.

## Gulf Bank hosts annual Kids Day

KUWAIT: Continuing its commitment to promote social sustainability, Gulf Bank recently organized its annual Kids Day, inviting over 150 children of its employees to join them at work. The event attracted participation from various organizations in strategic partnership with Gulf Bank, including Elevation Burger, Royale Hayat Hospital, Fantasy World, and Basta (a non-governmental organization).

This annual event allows employees to have their children accompany them to work for a day, showcasing Gulf Bank's commitment to fostering a positive work environment and promoting work-life balance. The aim

## EU targets UAE telecoms firm in new anti-subsidy probe

BRUSSELS: The European Union on Monday announced a formal anti-subsidy probe targeting an Emirati telecoms company, the first action under new rules to focus on a foreign bid to buy EU assets. Brussels has ramped up its scrutiny of foreign investment into the bloc in a bid to defend European industry, usually from rising threats from China and the United States.

The latest probe is the first against a non-Chinese company under new EU rules. Telecoms group e&, whose majority stakeholder is the United Arab

Emirates government, signed a 2.15-billion-euro (\$2.3-billion) agreement in August 2023 to purchase Czech PPF telecoms group's assets in Bulgaria, Hungary, Serbia and Slovakia.

The European Commission said a preliminary probe "indicates that there are sufficient indications that e& has received foreign subsidies distorting the EU internal market". The alleged subsidies "notably take the form of an unlimited guarantee from the UAE and a loan from UAE-controlled banks directly facilitating the transaction", it added.

The commission said it will investigate whether the subsidies lead to "actual or potential negative effects" on the bid's process or the EU's internal market. It will specifically look at whether the "support" allowed the UAE company "to deter or outbid other parties interested in the acquisition". The probe was launched under new rules known as the Foreign Sub-

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

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## Business

# Burgan Bank sponsors and participates in 'Bonds, Loans & Sukuk 2024' conference

## Participation cements bank's active role in bolstering economies across the region

KUWAIT: As part of its efforts to play an active role in shaping the regional investments market, Burgan Bank recently attended the Middle East's largest corporate and investment banking event, Bonds, Loans & Sukuk Middle East 2024, as a silver sponsor and participant. The two-day event, which recently took place in Dubai, saw the participation of more than 1,400 representatives of governments, corporates, investors, banks, law firms, regulators, and service providers, including 80 percent of all regional issuers in 2023/2024. Burgan Bank's sponsorship of and participation in this regionally notable conference confirms its commitment to enhancing its growing investment portfolio, contributing to building a local diversified economy as well as supporting regional businesses and multinational corporations.

Commenting on Burgan Bank's role in the Bonds, Loans & Sukuk conference, Abdullah Abdulmajeed Marafie, General Manager – Treasury at Burgan Bank, stated that Burgan's participation in and sponsorship of the conference echoes its steadfast strategy for expanding its network of leading institutions in the banking and finance sector, as well as strengthening its ties with its existing corporate customers while



Abdullah Abdulmajeed Marafie

Mohamed Najeeb Al-Zanki

building bridges to connect with potential ones.

He further noted that Burgan Bank plays a vital role in financing government and government-related entities as well as banks and financial institutions, both domestically and internationally, through bilateral and joint financing deals in addition to trade finance. These efforts unfold under the umbrella of Burgan's

commitment to supporting the domestic, regional, and international development goals.

Marafie also confirmed that, through its participation in the conference, Burgan Bank seeks to connect with and attract investors to help boost its capital and liquidity, ultimately serving Burgan's funding strategy of developing a diversified funding base to achieve sustainable growth and, in turn, help realize the "New Kuwait 2035" development plan.

On his part, Mohamed Najeeb Al-Zanki, General Manager – Corporate Banking at Burgan Bank, said: "Burgan Bank is committed to expanding its participation in the loans and debt capital markets by actively seeking opportunities to support multinational corporates and regional businesses through bilateral funding and syndications. The Bonds, Loans & Sukuk conference presents a valuable platform to connect with key decision makers and market leaders and explore new avenues for collaboration. Moving forward, we are dedicated to further expanding our portfolio as well as enhancing our global partnerships by diversifying our offerings to meet the needs of our local and international clients."

With notable participants such as Moody's Ratings,

S&P Global, Dubai Financial Market, J P Morgan, and many more, the conference marked a valuable opportunity to share knowledge, build new bridges, and tap into the latest market trends and insights. This was facilitated through the event's prearranged business meetings as well as panel discussions, which featured more than 75 expert speakers. Throughout the event, several vital topics were thoroughly discussed, including: "Unraveling liquidity, competition, risk appetite and the impact on the loan market," "Building a credible plan for the energy transition: Balancing sustainability, energy security, and affordability," and "How should institutions measure, disclose, and align their ESG credentials to secure greater international investment?" among other topics.

Burgan Bank's participation in this market-shaping conference is an extension of its unwavering efforts to leave a positive mark on the domestic and regional investment markets. Previous efforts include the Bank's participation in the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Annual Meetings in Marrakech and its role as a co-host of the 2024 Investment Conference, which it hosted alongside Kamco Invest earlier this year.

## Pakistan's central bank cuts key rate to boost economy

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's central bank cut its key interest rate by 150 basis points on Monday in a widely expected move, marking its first rate reduction in nearly four years in its effort to boost growth amid a sharp decline in retail inflation. The decision to cut the key rate to 20.5 percent comes two days ahead of Pakistan's annual budget and a week after data showed inflation slowed to a 30-month low of 11.8 percent in May.



WASHINGTON: Pakistan's Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb speaks during the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' Meeting at the IMF and World Bank's 2024 annual Spring Meetings in Washington.—Reuters

"The significant decline in inflation since February was broadly in line with expectations, (but) the May outturn was better than anticipated earlier," the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said in a statement. The SBP last changed rates in an emergency meeting in late June last year, when it raised rates by 100 basis points to a record high of 22 percent. Economic activity slowed over the last two years in Pakistan as it implemented tough reforms under an International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout in a bid to stabilize its crashing economy.

Pakistan's Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, speaking at a business conference in China last week, said he expected rates to come down in the face of falling inflation. However, bank's monetary policy committee meeting said in Monday's statement that there were upside risks to the near-term inflation outlook associated with the upcoming budgetary measures and uncertainty regarding future energy price adjustments. The SBP had raised rates by a total of 1,500 basis points

between September 2021 and June 2023 to rein in high inflation. The last hike in rates to a record 22 percent came as the country looked to secure a short term \$3 billion bailout from the International Monetary Fund in a bid to stave off an imminent default.

The global lender had stressed the importance of keeping a tight monetary policy to control inflation, which had stayed above 20 percent since May 2022 and hit a record high of 38 percent last year.

High rates, however, have kept government's borrowing costs elevated and with the new government looking to tighten its purse strings, lower rates will be critical in helping it reduce domestic borrowing costs. "As anticipated, SBP has taken a step towards narrowing the real interest rate gap to stimulate the economy and reduce its debt servicing burden," Muhammad Ali, market analyst at AKD Securities, said. GDP growth in the current financial year to June 30 is expected to be between 2-3 percent after posting a de-growth of 0.17 percent in FY23. The government is targeting achieving 3.6 percent growth in the year starting July amid an uptick in economic activity.

The government is also in talks with the IMF for a longer-term bailout of around \$6 billion to \$8 billion for which it is expected to formally apply after the budget is passed by parliament.

The coalition government is expected to lay out ambitious fiscal targets in the 2024/2025 (July-June) budget on Wednesday that will help strengthen its case for a new bailout deal with the International Monetary Fund, officials and analysts said. Pakistan is in talks with the IMF for a loan estimated to be anything between \$6 billion to \$8 billion to avert a default for an economy that is growing at the slowest pace in the region.

"The budget holds critical significance for Pakistan's IMF program and must close the gap between our revenue collection and total expenditure; it is thus likely to be contractionary," said Ali Hasanain, associate professor of economics at the Lahore University of Management Sciences. Pakistan narrowly averted a default last summer thanks to a short-term IMF bailout of \$3 billion over nine months.

While its fiscal and external deficits have been brought under control, it came at the expense of a sharp drop in growth and industrial activity as well as high inflation, which averaged close to 30 percent in the last financial year and 24.52 percent over the last 11 months.

The growth target for the upcoming year is expected to be higher at 3.6 percent compared to 2 percent this year and economic contraction last year. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed public commitment to tough reforms since being elected in February elections, but high prices, unemployment and a lack of new job opportunities have piled political pressure on his coalition government. Standard Chartered said in a note on the budget last month that fully implementing all the measures that the IMF is likely prescribing, such as increasing revenue through widening the tax base and power tariff hikes, will be tough for Sharif's government.—Reuters



TOKYO: Bank of Japan Deputy Governor Ryozi Himino speaks during an interview with Reuters in Tokyo, Japan.—Reuters

timing of further rate hikes by the central bank, which raised rates in March for the first time since 2007 in a landmark shift away from ultra-loose monetary policy.

"We can say capital spending picked up in the latter half of the fiscal year-end in March 2024...current capex conditions are a relief but we must be cautious about the outlook," Okazaki said. "We can also maintain the view that consumption is on track for recovery due to hefty pay raise agreed at annual labor talks and income tax cuts that kicked in from June." Private consumption, which accounts for more than half of the Japanese economy, fell 0.7 percent in the first quarter, unchanged from the preliminary estimate as rising living costs squeezed household finances. It was a fourth straight quarter of decline. External demand, or exports minus imports, shaved 0.4 of a percentage point off overall GDP, while domestic demand knocked off 0.1 point, the data showed.—Reuters

## Argentina economy minister forecasts inflation below 5%

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina's economy minister expects May inflation below 5 percent, he said on Sunday, slightly lower than analyst estimates, and noted that the government sees signs of recovery in several sectors. A recent survey of analysts by the central bank projected inflation of 5.2 percent in May and 5.5 percent for June.

"We believe that inflation in May will be below 5 percent," Minister of Economy Luis Caputo said in an interview with local television outlet La Nacion. "Lower inflation is essential for recovery."

Inflation has decelerated in Argentina since the December inauguration of ultra-liberal President Javier Milei, but his austerity measures have caused the economy to shrink and forced more people into poverty. Caputo said the economy showed signs of recovery in May. He also called for passing a reform package, ranging from plans to privatize state bodies to measures to encourage investment, which the Senate will debate next week. "There were signs of recovery in May in several sectors. Income and retirements are also recovering... The economy has turned around," Caputo said.—Reuters



A Chipotle restaurant advertises it is hiring in Cambridge, Massachusetts, US.—Reuters

## The 'good' and 'bad' news inside the US jobs report

WASHINGTON: The latest US payrolls report did little to settle the debate about where the job market is headed, with ample fodder for both "soft-landing" believers and doubters over whether the Federal Reserve can tame inflation without sending millions of workers onto the jobless rolls. True, the "blowout" gain of 272,000 jobs in May exceeded every single estimate among 77 economists polled by Reuters ahead of the release of the report on Friday, and the breadth of hiring was the widest in 16 months. But also true is that the increase in the unemployment rate to 4 percent snapped a run of more than two full years below that benchmark. Moreover, that rise happened for the "wrong" reasons: People left the workforce on balance, while more reported as unemployed and far fewer as having a job. Here are some of the numbers that have economists jawboning.

The employment gain last month was almost exactly in line with the 12-month trailing average of nearly 276,000 jobs and exceeded the average of 188,000 over the 10 years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic by 84,000. On top of that, hiring was broad. In fact, it was the most widespread among all 250 industries tracked by the Bureau of Labor Statistics since January 2023. For the 72 manufacturing industries tracked by the BLS diffusion index, hiring was the broadest since October 2022, signaling perhaps a turnaround for a sector where employment growth has lagged for roughly a year and a half.

All the major industry groups are now back above their pre-pandemic employment levels, with a revision to the numbers in April lifting the lone laggard - leisure and hospitality - back above its high-water mark from before the onset of the health crisis in early 2020. That group also suffered the largest losses during the pandemic.

The unemployment rate rose to the highest level since January 2022, snapping a streak of 27 straight months below 4 percent, the longest sub-4 percent run since the 1960s and a bragging point for Democratic President Joe Biden's administration. But 4 percent is still a historically low level of joblessness and just six of the 14 presidents in the post-World War Two era have governed during such a stretch, including the two most recent, Biden and his predecessor, Republican Donald Trump. It's a figure to watch as the two rivals face off again in the Nov 5 presidential election.

While the overall number of people in the workforce shrank by 250,000 in May and the labor force participation rate fell, a key demographic held its ground: prime-aged workers between 25 and 54 years old. The participation rate for this group - the largest slice of the U.S. workforce - rose to a record 83.6 percent.

Women have led the charge. Not only is the prime-aged female participation rate of 78.1 percent a record high, it's just 11.1 percentage points below the rate for prime-aged males - the smallest gap ever. The rate for men edged up but, at 89.2 percent, is below where it was before the pandemic and is well below the over-90 percent range that prevailed prior to the 2007-2009 financial crisis.

The immigration wave is still leaving its imprint on the US job market, as foreign-born workers continue to account for the largest share of job gains and workforce growth. That could change in the months ahead, however, with the Biden administration clamping down on crossings at the southern border. Beneath the data on changes in the overall level of the workforce are figures on the flows driving those changes. Every month the workforce status of millions of people changes among the three broad categories: Employed (with a job); unemployed (no job but actively seeking one); and not-in-labor-force (no job and not looking for one).

For example, did a person graduate from high school or college and land a job (not-in-labor-force to employed), get fired from a job and start looking for a new one (employed to unemployed), start a job search after months or years on the sidelines (not-in-labor-force to unemployed), land a job after a period of actively seeking a job (unemployed to employed), or retire from a job or quit to take care of a child or relative (employed to not-in-labor-force)? Through much of the last two years, more people on balance have flowed into the workforce, either as job recipients or job seekers, than have flowed out of it. That has begun to change, and over the last six months more people on average have flowed out of the workforce altogether than have flowed in. And the share of those quickly landing a job as new members of the labor force is declining.

While the establishment survey of the latest employment report showed payroll job gains of 272,000, the household survey side showed employment dropped precipitously, by more than 400,000. The two frequently do not agree on size or even direction of monthly changes, but over time do track each other. The household measure of employment has been flat for roughly a year - with declines seen in five of the last eight months - while the establishment survey has shown more than a quarter of a million new jobs a month on average. Economists say that at some point one or the other must give. Which will it be? —Reuters

## Japan's Q1 GDP fell less than first reported

TOKYO: Japan's economy contracted less than initially reported in January-March on upward revisions to capital spending and inventory data, lending modest support to the central bank's plans to raise interest rates again this year. Analysts expect the Japanese economy to have bottomed out in the first three months of the year, although a stubbornly weak yen and disruptions at major automaker plants continue to cloud the outlook for the current quarter. Still, "the revised GDP results made it easier for the Bank of Japan (BOJ) to feel encouraged about future rate hikes as it can assess capital investment is picking up even by a little bit," said Kohei Okazaki, senior economist at Nomura Securities.

Japan's GDP shrank a revised 1.8 percent annually in the first quarter from the previous three months, Cabinet Office data showed on Monday, a smaller decline than economists' median forecast for a 1.9 percent contraction and a 2.0 percent decline in the preliminary estimate. The revised figure translates into a quarter-on-quarter contraction of 0.5 percent in price-adjusted terms, unchanged from the initial reading issued last month. The revised GDP data comes on speculation the BOJ may discuss cuts in its Japanese government bond (JGB) purchases at its policy review this week as part of efforts to unwind monetary stimulus to curb yen weakening. Investors are looking for clues on the



## Business

## NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

# Oil prices fall amid demand concerns; OPEC+ to unwind supply cuts from Q4

## IEA revised down oil demand growth estimates in May

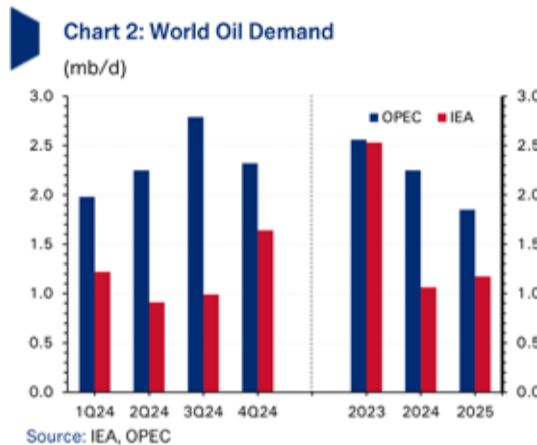
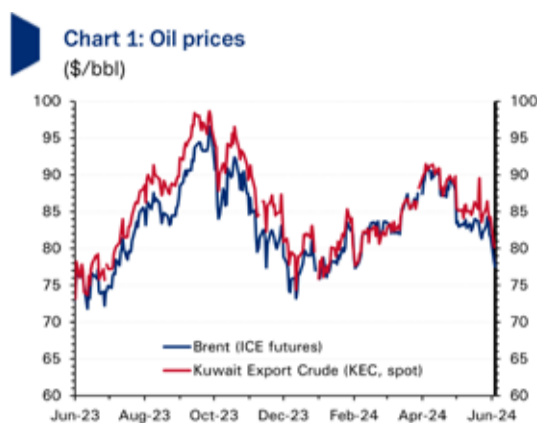
**KUWAIT:** Oil markets sold off heavily in May amid easing geopolitical risk premiums and intensifying concerns about the impact on oil demand of higher-for-longer interest rates. Brent futures closed the month down 7.1 percent m/m at \$81.6/bbl (+5.9 percent ytd).

The positive spread between the front month and third month contract, a structure known as backwardation (prices for prompt delivery being higher than prices for delivery in the future), narrowed to a multi-month-low of just \$0.28/bbl as May drew to a close, a sign of more ample near-term supplies and a looser market. Meanwhile, local market Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) ended the month at \$83.9/bbl (-5.5 percent m/m; +5.5 percent ytd).

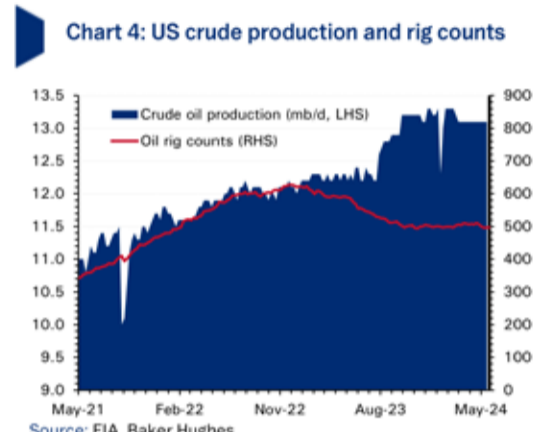
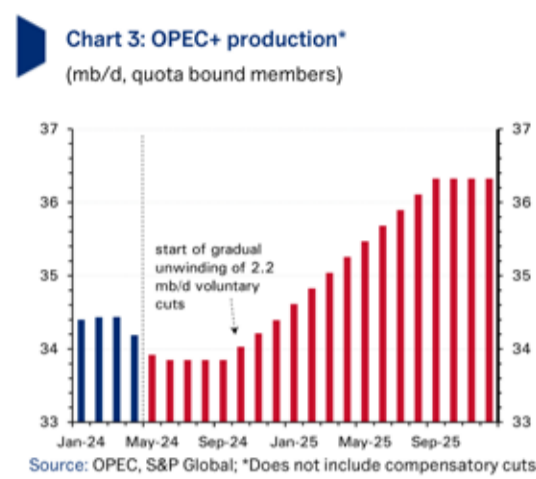
Moving into early June, Brent dropped below \$80, weighed down by an increasingly bearish interpretation of OPEC+'s decision at the 2 June ministerial meeting to begin unwinding the 2.2 mb/d of voluntary supply cuts (announced in November 2023) from October this year. The announcement took the market by surprise as the consensus was that with the price of Brent ranging in the low 80s amid concerns of potential oversupply OPEC+ would likely roll over their production cuts through to the end of the year. The eight OPEC+ members taking part in 2024's additional voluntary cuts including Kuwait (-135 kb/d), Saudi (-1,000 kb/d), the UAE (-163 kb/d) and Oman (-42 kb/d) will begin re-supplying the market over a period of twelve months ending September 2025. Existing group-wide production cuts from November 2022 and voluntary cuts from April 2023 totaling around 3.60 mb/d were extended through to the end of 2025.

Moreover, the UAE secured another quota increase, this time of 300 kb/d, to add to the 200 kb/d it negotiated for 2024, arguing successfully that its output should be higher to reflect its increased production capacity. This increase will take effect gradually starting January 2025, with the full 300 kb/d output gain reflected in September of that year. For the rest of the group, the deadline for capacity assessments to determine baseline production levels by the three independent agencies has been pushed back by almost a year to November 2025.

Oil demand growth estimates for 2024 and 2025



by energy forecasting agencies the International Energy Agency (IEA) and OPEC continue to show wide variation. OPEC, with its forecast that oil demand would grow by 2.25 mb/d this year to 104.5 mb/d and by 1.85 mb/d to 106.3 mb/d in 2025 is the outlier by far in relation to consensus forecasts. The IEA, in contrast, sees demand growing by a downwardly revised 1.1 mb/d (-140 kb/d) in 2024—the second downgrade in a row—amid continued weakness in OECD consumption and especially in Europe, where gasoil/diesel consumption has been hard hit by weak industrial activity and rising EV use. For 2025, the IEA sees oil demand growth accelerating slightly to



1.2 mb/d, driven by non-OECD growth.

On the supply side, OPEC+ production (quota members only) fell by 250 kb/d in April to 34.2 mb/d, according to OPEC secondary source data. The decline was led by Russia, which reduced output by 154 kb/d to 9.3 mb/d, in line with plans outlined in March to switch from basing its voluntary supply cuts on exports to production during Q2. Serial overproducers Kazakhstan and Iraq also reduced output, by 50 kb/d and 31 kb/d, respectively, but the cuts were only small and both producers continue to pump above their quotas—Iraq by 181 kb/d. Indeed, both producers attended a workshop in May with

the OPEC secretariat to thrash out a plan of compensatory production cuts to be implemented and concluded by year-end. For Iraq, which overproduced by as much as 602 kb/d cumulative up to the end of March, the plan would see monthly compensatory cuts (output reduced below quota) starting at 50 kb/d in May and ending at 152 kb/d in December.

Among OPEC's quota-exempt members, Iran's production hit a new post-Trump sanctions high of 3.2 mb/d in April. Furthermore, amid fresh US sanctions targeting the country's exports, the country plans to increase production capacity to 4.0 mb/d from the current 3.6 mb/d, though Iran's official press agency was opaque about a timeframe.

In the US, crude production continued to range at near record levels of 13.1 mb/d, just a little below the US Energy Information Administration's (EIA) forecast of 13.2 mb/d (avg.) for this year. For 2025, the EIA expects output to increase by a further 500 kb/d to 13.7 mb/d, though this figure could be ambitious given expectations of a likely slowdown in oil investment from US firms amid high labor and equipment costs. Oil rig counts, an indicator of future output, dropped to 496 by the end of May, down 10.6 percent y/y, according to Baker Hughes.

Oil market fundamentals should continue to point to stock drawdowns in 2024, though after the OPEC+ decision to begin restoring withheld voluntary supply to the market from Q4 onwards, balances should start to loosen. The IEA sees the 'call' on OPEC+ crude (the volume of OPEC+ oil required to balance the market factoring in demand and non-OPEC supply) at around 42 mb/d in the second half of the year, more than 900 kb/d higher than aggregate OPEC+ production in April. Even with volumes returning in Q4, OPEC+ will still be significantly underproducing given this arithmetic. That said, OPEC+ looks to have expressed its intention to the markets (and for US shale companies, too) that, for the next year and a half, supplies will be returning. The pace will be gradual and subject to constant OPEC+ reassessment of market conditions; a pause or reversal in production policy remains a strong possibility. But the onus will increasingly fall on oil demand growth to perform well to help keep prices within ranges acceptable to the oil producers.

## EU set to disclose tariff rates for Chinese EVs

**BRUSSELS:** The European Commission this week expected to disclose the tariffs it plans to impose on Chinese electric vehicles (EVs) due to what it says are excessive subsidies, a move likely to prompt stern words and possible retaliation from Beijing.

Less than a month after Washington quadrupled duties for Chinese EVs to 100 percent, Brussels will set almost certainly far lower tariffs for imports from Chinese makers such as BYD and Geely as well as western producers such as Tesla that export cars from China to Europe. The move comes as European automakers are being challenged by an influx of lower-cost EVs from Chinese rivals. Still, there is virtually no support for tariffs from the continent's auto industry.

German automakers in particular are heavily dependent on sales in China - and thus fear retribution from Beijing - and European auto firms also import their own Chinese-made vehicles.

But European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has repeatedly said Europe needs to act to prevent China from flooding the bloc's market with subsidized EVs. "If provoked, the reaction and repercussions could lead to a trade war which would be devastating for a region that is still heavily dependent on Chinese dominated supply chains in order to achieve its lofty climate goals," said Will Roberts, head of automotive research at Rho Motion. China has rebuked the EU over the anti-subsidy investigation, urged cooperation and lobbied individual EU countries, but not fully spelled out what its response to tariffs would be. Beijing has already launched an anti-dumping investigation into mostly French-made imports of brandy. It also passed a law in April to strengthen its ability to hit back should the United States or EU impose tariffs on exports of the world's No 2 economy.

The EU's pre-disclosure notice comes a few weeks before the July 4 deadline for imposing provisional measures. They could though apply retroactively for the prior 90 days. Interested parties will be given three working days to comment on the accuracy of the Commission's calculations. The investigation will continue until late October, when a decision on whether to impose definitive duties, typically for five years, will be taken. Proposed duties would apply unless EU governments overwhelmingly oppose them.

That leaves time for a potential deal to be struck between Brussels and Beijing. Chinese executives hope such talks will soften the blow. Analysts expect tariffs of between 10 percent and 25 percent.

Every additional 10 percent on top of the existing 10 percent levy would cost EU importers of Chinese EVs about \$1 billion, based on 2023 trade data, another blow for a sector struggling with slowing demand and falling prices at home. That cost will grow this year as Chinese EV makers expand exports to Europe. Imports of China-made EVs have been dominated by western carmakers Tesla, Renault's Dacia and BMW but the Commission has forecast that Chinese brands' share of EVs sold in the EU has risen to 8 percent from below 1 percent in 2019 and could reach 15 percent in 2025. It says prices are typically 20 percent below those of EU-made models. — Reuters

## Tesla turns to Musk's small shareholder fans to back \$56bn payday

**WASHINGTON:** With major Tesla shareholders appearing divided over whether to endorse Elon Musk's \$56 billion pay package, the company also is looking for support from retail investors who make up an unusually high percentage of the electric carmaker's ownership base.

Small investors tend to favor management, but they often don't bother to vote, experts said. The company's June 13 annual meeting is shaping up as a referendum on Musk's leadership, following a Delaware court's ruling striking down the hefty pay package. The company has asked investors to vote to reaffirm it and Musk stands to control more than 20 percent of the company if he gets it. A 'no' vote would be a rebuke with unknown consequences.

Tesla also proposes reincorporating in Texas instead of Delaware and re-electing two directors, including Musk's brother, Kimbal. While there are a dozen items up for a vote, Tesla is focused on the pay vote and the move to Texas in an ongoing outreach campaign to small shareholders that includes a website, engagement with online influencers, and factory tours for a few of those who vote.

Big investors have sent mixed signals. T Rowe Price has said the package showed "strong alignment" with investor interests. But the California Public Employees' Retirement System meanwhile has said it will likely oppose Musk's pay as not commensurate with Tesla's performance, and Norway's sovereign wealth fund came out against the pay package on Saturday.

Although small investors have an array of opinions, experts in corporate vote campaigns say the size and CEO-friendly nature of many individual investors at Tesla make them an obvious target.

"The man ends up 10x-ing my investment and he's given nothing? It doesn't seem right or fair," said Andrew Theyken Bench, a lawyer in Allentown, Pennsylvania with fewer than 5,000 Tesla shares, who



voted by proxy with management on all items at the meeting, including Musk's pay.

In a post on his social media platform X on Saturday Musk wrote: "So far, roughly 90 percent of retail shareholders who have voted have voted in favor of both resolutions," apparently including the one on his pay. Bruce Goldfarb, president of Okapi Partners, a proxy solicitor not involved in this vote, said 90 percent support from retail investors would be "about normal" since the category generally favors management. But such investors usually don't vote, posing a challenge for Tesla.

"Retail shareholders are wildly apathetic even if they're supportive," Goldfarb said. Mom-and-pop investors only voted about 30 percent of their shares in 2023, according to vote-processing company Broadridge, compared to 80 percent for institutional investors. The theme of fairness to Musk is the heart of Tesla's campaign. Chair Robyn Denholm described the vote as being about "fairness, respect and the future of Tesla." She also warned Musk has limited time and a variety of interests.

"We want those ideas, that energy and that time to be at Tesla, for the benefit of you, our owners. But that requires reciprocal respect," she wrote in a June 5 letter. A Tesla representative declined to comment.

Data and research firm S&P Global Market Intelligence found that as of June 5, about 43 percent of Tesla's common stock is held by the "public and other" category of shareholders that includes retail investors and others outside of the main categories

comment on the search process or on rumors.

SNB Vice Chairman Martin Schlegel is seen as the most likely successor, with 16 out of 18 economists polled by Reuters expecting the 47-year-old to get the job. "Schlegel is seen as the leading candidate. Having deep knowledge of the SNB and Swiss financial markets is clearly an advantage," said Stefan Gerlach, chief economist at EFG Bank and a former deputy governor of the Central Bank of Ireland.

Schlegel started his SNB career in 2003 and worked in the research department, which was then headed by Jordan, who under the rules has no role in choosing his successor. "I was Thomas Jordan's intern," Schlegel told the Neue Zürcher Zeitung newspaper in 2019. "And somehow I still am."

Schlegel has consistently declined to comment on speculation linking him to the job.

Analysts expect no change to the SNB's monetary policy, which targets inflation at 0-2 percent, and preventing large fluctuations in the franc's value.

But the newcomer will not have an easy time, having to reduce the big payments the SNB is making to commercial banks - 7.4 billion francs last year - after interest rates turned positive.

They will also have to decide what to do with the SNB's

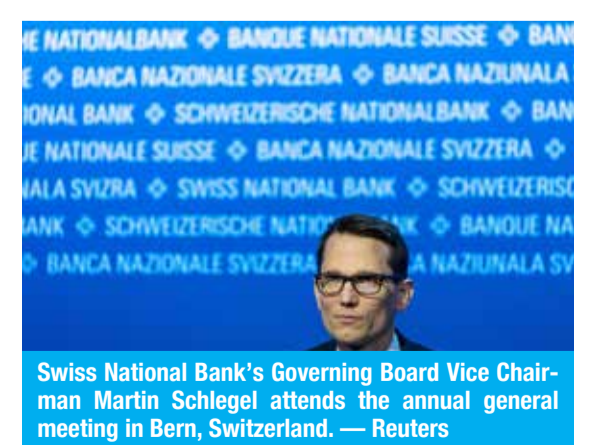
of institutional investors and company insiders.

That is the most of any of the 15 largest companies in the S&P 500. Musk's own stake in the company is around 13 percent. Among top outside investors, Vanguard has 7.2 percent of the shares and BlackRock has 5.9 percent, according to Tesla's proxy. Neither would comment about their voting intentions.

Both major proxy advisers, Institutional Shareholder Services and Glass Lewis, have recommended investors vote against ratification of the pay package, calling it excessive. That's a bad sign for Tesla. Among Russell 3,000 companies from 2010 to 2020, only 66 percent of "say on pay" resolutions passed when both proxy advisers recommended votes against them, compared with 99 percent when both supported the pay, said University of Utah finance professor Chong Shu. Omar Qazi, an X.com user with 475,300 followers who posts using the handle @WholeMarsBlog and often gets public replies from Musk on the platform, said his "gut assessment" was there is only a 50 percent chance that a majority of Tesla investors back the re-ratification of Musk's pay. "Many support Musk and see the importance of compensating him but many are also upset about a variety of factors: politics, slowing sales, stock price etc," Qazi said by direct message on X. Shares at Tesla closed Friday at \$177.48, well below the \$248.48 where they ended trading in 2023, as the company faces growing competition and questions about its plans for new models.

Nonetheless Musk still enjoys support online from influential users. In addition to Qazi these include Alexandra Merz, who posts as @TeslaBoomerMama on X.com and has had several posts reposted by Musk to call attention to voting. Those posts urged non-US banks and brokerages to allow Tesla investors to vote, something the companies' systems did not previously allow. Several subsequently did so including Sweden's Nordnet.

"I've been invested in other companies before and I've never seen the amount of effort by an informal community to get out the vote like there is on this one," said Troy Dillon, a retired US Air Force officer in Florida and Tesla shareholder. As for the pay package, "The deal was the deal," Dillon said. He is voting for it. — Reuters



huge balance sheet, which caused a 133 billion franc loss in 2022. "A central bank cannot go bankrupt but big losses could have a negative effect on the SNB's credibility, which is the most important asset for a central bank," said Sarah Lein, an economist at the University of Basel. "It is going to be a challenging legacy for whoever takes over." — Reuters



TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2024



Employees release a Przewalski horse from a container into the wild outside the town of Arqalyk.—AFP photos



A container with a Przewalski horse is unloaded from a truck outside the town of Arqalyk.

## Wild horse species returns to the Kazakh steppes

After a few hesitant steps following a long flight from Prague, three Przewalski horses galloped off for the first time into the Kazakh steppe -- the native habitat of this endangered species. The horses emerged after being locked in containers for 20 hours and are the first of 40 which are to be released into the wild in this vast Central Asian country over the next five years.

"We have been waiting for this moment for a very long time," Albert Salemgareyev from the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan told AFP. "A lot of work has been carried out in recent months in order for the Przewalski horses to come to Kazakhstan." The project run by the Prague and Berlin zoo is aimed at preserving this species of stockily built horse with large heads which share a common ancestry



A Przewalski horse looks out of a container before being released into the wild outside the town of Arqalyk.

with modern domestic horses but are genetically different. Przewalski horses are commonly referred to as one of the world's last breeds of wild horse. "We know that the Przewalski horses are suited to this steppe," said Salemgareyev. The horses are capable of resisting

harsh winters like the ones in Kazakhstan where temperatures can drop below minus 30 degrees Celsius (minus 22 Fahrenheit) and food runs scarce.

The three first specimens -- Zorro, Ypsilon and Zeta II -- arrived earlier this month. Four more landed in Kazakhstan from Berlin on Thursday morning and were released in the afternoon. They will initially be under observation in the Golden Steppe nature reserve before being left in the wild. "This year we will follow their health and see how they acclimatize," Salemgareyev said.

### Perilous journey

The 5,000 kilometre (3,000-mile) journey -- first by plane to the town of Arqalyk and then by truck along bumpy roads into the heart of the steppe -- was not without risks.

Despite monitoring by experts, one of the horses sat down in his container even before taking off, raising the risk of stopping the blood flow to his legs.

"The journey could have been dangerous so we decided to leave him alone," said Miroslav Bobek, the director of Prague Zoo. First documented by Russian scientist Nikolai Przhevsky in 1881, the species was nearly extinct in the 1960s and is still listed as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Prague Zoo, which has bred the horses since 1932 and keeps the world genealogy book for the species tracking all new births, launched a project to reintroduce them to Mongolia in 2011.

It transported 34 horses on Czech army planes there between 2011 and 2019, before the pandemic halted the

project co-funded by zoos from across the globe. There are now 2,000 Przewalski horses around the world, mainly in China and Mongolia but also in France, Russia and even living in the wild in the Chernobyl exclusion zone between Belarus and Ukraine.

Following the April 1986 Chernobyl disaster, 30 specimens were introduced there in 1998. The population has flourished and is now at 210. In Kazakhstan, the Przewalski horse is not the only endangered species to have received special attention. The round-snouted Saiga antelope, once on the brink of extinction, has also seen its population grow to about two million thanks to conservation policies by Kazakh authorities and non-governmental organizations.—AFP



Employees unload containers with Przewalski horses from the trucks outside the town of Arqalyk.

## Tunisian all-women's team eye inventors' prize for smart wheelchair

A smart wheelchair system built by a team of young Tunisian women engineers has reached the finals for a prestigious European inventors' prize, setting a hopeful precedent in a country embroiled in multiple crises.

Their project, Moovobrain, allows wheelchair users to move through a choice of touchpad, voice command, facial gestures or, most impressively, a headset that detects their brain signals.

It has been shortlisted from over 550 applicants for the final round of the Young Inventors Prize, launched by the European Patent Office in 2021.

This year marks "the first time a Tunisian and Arab team has reached the final" stage of the international competition, the EPO said in a statement. The all-female team will compete against two other final-

ists, from the Netherlands and Ukraine, for the top prize on July 9 in Malta.

The inspiration for the Moovobrain app first came from co-founder Souleima Ben Temime, 28, whose uncle was "forced to use a wheelchair to move" after his upper body was paralyzed. "There was a clear and urgent need in front of me," she told AFP. "I talked about it to my friends and we decided to use the digital health technologies ... to make a product that could benefit a lot of people."

### Success against odds

The four inventors met at the Higher Institute of Medical Sciences in Tunis, where they began developing the Moovobrain prototype in 2017, before creating health-tech start-up Gewinner two years later. The team's international success comes despite Tunisia's growing economic and political turmoil in recent years that has pushed thousands of Tunisians to seek a better life in Europe through perilous overseas journeys.

President Kais Saied, elected in October 2019, has launched a sweeping power grab since he sacked parliament in July 2021. The political crisis has been compounded by a biting economic meltdown -- but that has not dampened the young women's spirits.



Two Tunisian engineers Khaoula Ben Ahmed (left) and Souleima Ben Tamime pose for a picture with a prototype of their team's new wheelchair system.

Rather, co-founder Khaoula Ben Ahmed, 28, is hopeful that reaching the finals in the Young Inventors competition will bring the team "visibility and credibility". "It's not always easy to convince investors or wheelchair manufacturers that our solution is truly innovative and useful for people with reduced mobility," she said. For them, even "asking to be turned towards the television", when they "cannot speak, no longer have any autonomy, can become very trying on a psycholog-

ical level", added Ben Ahmed. Alongside Ben Ahmed and Ben Temime, the other team members are Sirine Ayari, 28, and Ghofrane Ayari, 27, who are not related.

### 'Favorable ecosystem'

The Young Inventors Prize -- which rewards "exceptional inventors under the age of 30" -- awards a first prize of 20,000 euros (\$21,600), a second of 10,000 euros and a third of 5,000 euros. The team says being women was "an advantage"

because they were able to take part in competitions for female engineers and receive specialized funding.

More than 44 percent of engineers in Tunisia are women, according to the United Nations, and Ben Ahmed says the country has "a favorable ecosystem" for start-ups despite its challenges.

Their start-up Gewinner will very soon deliver the first four wheelchairs equipped with the new technology to an organization for disabled people in Sousse, eastern Tunisia. They hope for feedback to improve the product.

Internationally, Gewinner is focusing on Europe and has already established a partnership with an Italian manufacturer in the short term. The inventors say that even though each smart chair costs around 2,000 euros, they hope to ensure the technology is accessible to as many people as possible, including those in less well-off countries. "In Tunisia, we have prepared 30 units, not with the idea that it will be the end user who will pay, but organizations supporting associations which will be able to sponsor the purchase of chairs or adaptation of our technology," said Ben Ahmed.—AFP



Tunisian engineer Khaoula Ben Ahmed tests a prototype of her team's new wheelchair system at a laboratory in Tunis.



Tunisian engineer Khaoula Ben Ahmed adjusts a prototype of her team's new wheelchair system.



Tunisian engineer Khaoula Ben Ahmed holds an electronic daughterboard chip next to the joystick remote control of her team's new wheelchair system.





Tatiana Orrego poses in front of the scale copies of the MUSZIF underwater museum figures in Isla Fuerte, Bolivar department, Colombia. — AFP photos



Coral grows in a sculpture in the MUSZIF underwater museum in Isla Fuerte.



Potter Hugo Osorio digs for clay to make pre-Columbian style pottery in the Ciénaga Grande de Momil.



Potter Hugo Osorio shows clay used to make pre-Columbian style pottery.

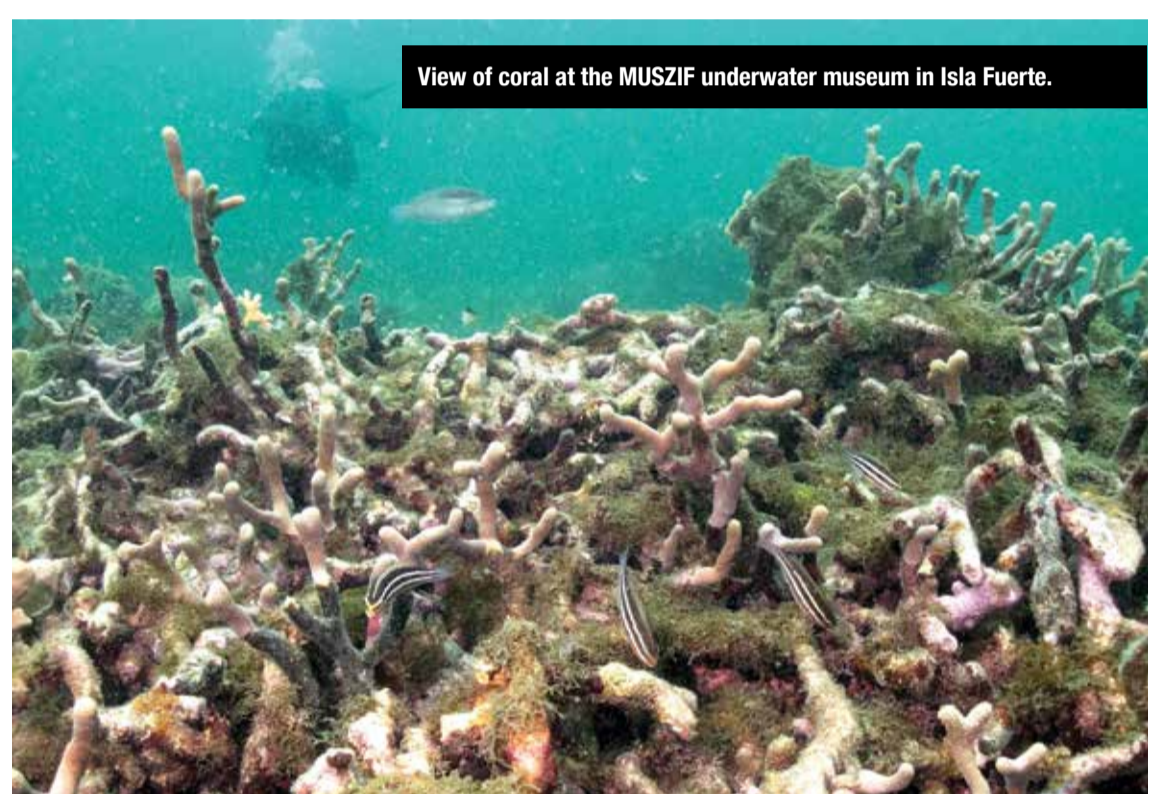
# COLOMBIAN UNDERWATER 'ART GALLERY' SERVES AS CORAL HOME

**O**n the Caribbean seafloor, an unusual sculpture gallery is taking shape with an equally unusual purpose: to provide homes for corals under threat from tourism and climate change. Created by potters Hugo Osorio and Pedro Fuentes, 25 figures so far form a sort of artificial reef in the blue waters around the paradisiacal Isla

fashion designer and island resident. The plan is for another 25 to follow. "When I discovered the deterioration of the island's natural reefs, I saw in the art project a possibility to protect and enhance the life of corals," Orrego told AFP. Orrego had seeded the clay sculptures with baby corals, and watched as they took off. The statues are the "ideal substrate" for the marine invertebrates to grow on, added the creator of Colombia's first underwater art gallery.

### Coral bleaching

Since the beginning of the year, the world has witnessed a massive coral bleaching episode in both the northern and southern hemispheres - the fourth such global event on record and the second in 10 years, according to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). These events cause corals to die off, affecting the ecosystems that rely on them as well as tourism and food security. The culprit, according to the NOAA: warming oceans. Colombia's corals are spread over a zone equivalent to 100,000 football fields, but more than two-thirds have already suffered from bleaching, according to the environment ministry. Other problems include damage to reefs by divers and tourists directly. Tourists have been known to break off pieces of coral to bring to the surface, while others cause damage by walking on the structures.



View of coral at the MUSZIF underwater museum in Isla Fuerte.

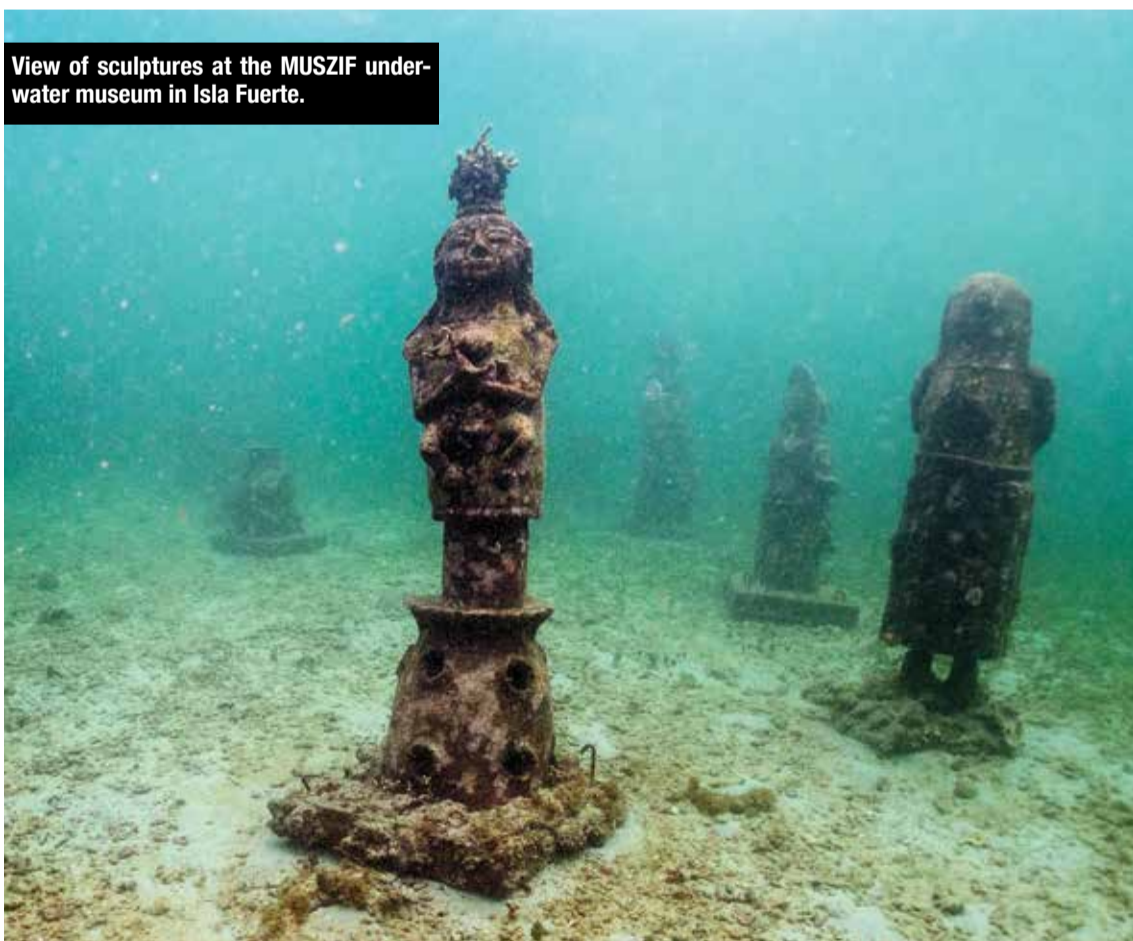


Coral grows on a sculpture in the MUSZIF underwater museum in Isla Fuerte.

Fuerte, off the coast of Colombia. They stand 1.5 meters (almost five feet) tall, scattered at a depth of about six meters around the seafloor, attracting visitors - mostly fish, but also divers. The statues have been placed there since 2018 under an initiative named MUSZIF, started by Tatiana Orrego, a

"People don't understand that coral is a living being," said Orrego. The Isla Fuerte gallery receives about 2,000 human visitors a year. It offers an "alternative space to take tourists without overloading the natural reefs," Orrego added. Osorio and Fuentes, who create the coral-housing statues on Orrego's commission, base their designs on the

ancestral creations of the Zenu people, who inhabited the Colombian Caribbean before the Spanish arrived. "All this comes from our roots," Fuentes, 48, told AFP. "We continue with the culture so that it does not get lost," added Osorio, 59. — AFP



View of sculptures at the MUSZIF underwater museum in Isla Fuerte.



Potter Hugo Osorio shows the clay he uses to make pre-Columbian style pottery.



Potter Pedro Fuentes shows a pre-Columbian style clay handicraft in Momil.



Tatiana Orrego restores a clay sculpture before being submerged in the sea in Isla Fuerte.



Guide Ortis dives in the MUSZIF underwater museum.



A fish swims next to coral in the MUSZIF underwater museum.



Lifestyle



Tourist guide Orlis Navas in the MUSZIF underwater museum in Isla Fuerte.



Tatiana Orrego in the MUSZIF underwater museum in Isla Fuerte.



Potters Hugo Osorio (left) and Pedro Fuentes work on pre-Columbian style clay handicrafts in Momil, department of Cordoba, Colombia.



Potter Hugo Osorio shows a pre-Columbian style clay handicraft in Momil.

Moby: My job now is animal rights, not music

Moby is touring Europe for the first time in more than a decade and donating all the proceeds from his concerts to animal rights, which he says has become his real job. There is no doubting the electro star's commitment - the words "ANIMAL" and "RIGHTS" are tattooed in huge letters up his arms and "Vegan for Life" on the side of his neck. "I've been vegan for 37 years," he told AFP. "Working on behalf of animal rights is my life's purpose. 'I don't think of music as my job any more. Music has become a joyful, calm refuge.'"

Moby, real name Richard Melville Hall, made an era-defining record 25 years ago in "Play" and has sold more than 20 million records worldwide.

Now 58, he is returning to Europe for seven dates, with the money divided between eight or nine animal rights and climate organizations. The names are due to be announced in the coming weeks. Moby says he is dedicated to playing the hits - mostly from "Play" and "18". "It's what the audience is paying to hear. When I go see my favorite bands, it's very sad when they don't play the songs I know and love. It seems selfish to me," he said. He takes issue with Radiohead, who famously refuse to play their biggest hit, "Creep". "That's a great song. People like it. If you can make someone happy, why not play it?"

That attitude comes from clear memories of his scrappy start in punk bands around New York. "I remember one show in a Chinese restaurant and there were four people in the band and two people in the audience... I never expected to have music that people knew or liked."

lobbying politicians on behalf of animals. There are many well-intentioned people in the current government in Washington, he said, but in an election year they are terrified of doing anything that can help Donald Trump win.

"Donald Trump is a true sociopath. He famously hates animals. His ex-wife says she brought home a dog and he threatened to kill it. 'He hates animals because they can't do anything for him,' he said. Moby dates his veganism back to his troubled childhood - his father's drink-driving death, being sexually abused as a young child, his shame at growing up poor. 'I learned from an early age not to trust humans, whereas animals were very predictable,' he said.



American singer-songwriter Moby attends the grand opening of 'Sage Culver City' in Culver City, California on September 13, 2013. — AFP

There was a time when he would get even more directly involved, visiting animals as they were being taken to the slaughterhouse - "bearing witness", offering moments of kindness before their deaths. He says the meat companies got round them by shifting their animal deliveries to the middle of the night. "Very few people are willing to get up at 2:30 am to drive across town and be one of three people standing in the freezing cold. They won that round." — AFP

'Trump hates animals'

Most of his time these days is spent

'Call of Duty' leads packed Xbox video game lineup

Microsoft's Xbox team on Sunday showcased action-packed coming video games and a new digital-only version of its console to launch by the end of this year. Hundreds of thousands of fans who tuned into the streamed event got a look at titles, including an eagerly-awaited "Call of Duty: Black Ops 6" set for release on October 25.

The latest installment to the blockbuster first-person military shooter video game franchise is set in the 1990s after the fall of the Soviet Union where "the truth isn't what it seems," Xbox gaming boss Phil Spencer said after giving the first glimpse of a campaign in the title.

Spencer highlighted that the new "Call of Duty" and many other games will be available from launch day on the Xbox Game Pass subscription service.

He noted that more than 100 million people play Call of Duty monthly, and added that Xbox is looking to boost those ranks with Game Pass cloud play availability of "Black Ops 6" out of the gate. Xbox also showed off a "Gears of War: E-Day" addition to that stalwart military shooter title and a "Indiana Jones and the Great Circle" game coming later this year that pits a Harrison Ford-style character against Nazi enemies.

Xbox also showed new installments of "Doom", "Dragon Age", and a "Life is Strange" sequel promising a supernatural murder mystery to solve.

The video game titan also teased expansion packs for popular games including "World of Warcraft" as well as fresh "Fallout" content that will include a playable ghoul character in a nod to the hit Amazon Prime television series based on the franchise from Bethesda Studio, now owned by Xbox.

"It's our mission to make Xbox the best place for you to play by including the titles from our own studios and Game Pass at launch," Xbox president Sarah Bond said as she unveiled new Xbox consoles including a digital-only model to be released later this year.

She contended that Xbox is working on future hardware with a goal of "em-

games that are exclusive to one piece of hardware are going to be a smaller and smaller part of the game industry," Spencer said in a podcast at the time.

But Xbox is not changing its "fundamental exclusive strategy," with "no promise" of more games to follow, he said. Microsoft is keen to boost Xbox sales that have lagged those of Sony



powering you to play your games anywhere you want on Xbox consoles, personal computers, and cloud."

Pricing for the new Xbox consoles was not disclosed. The streamed showcase is part of a week of presentations from game makers taking the place of E3, a long-running videogame trade show that ended a 20-year run in 2023.

Microsoft early this year shook up the video game world with word it is making some once-exclusive Xbox video games available for play on rival consoles.

"Over the next five or 10 years,

PlayStation consoles, and to ramp up revenue from subscriptions to its cloud gaming service.

By putting its weight behind software and subscriptions, Xbox could be trying to match the success of TV streaming giant Netflix. Xbox, PlayStation and Nintendo have long competed to be the console of choice, with exclusive blockbuster titles from their own studios or in deals with other game makers. — AFP

Thieves ram-raid Chanel store in Paris



A man removes a burned-out vehicle that was used as a ram car by a team of escaped robbers, police sources said, to attack a Chanel boutique near the Champs-Elysees avenue in Paris. — AFP photos

Several thieves used a car early Monday morning to ram-raid a Chanel store near the Champs-Elysees avenue in Paris before setting it on fire and fleeing in another vehicle, a police source said. The smash-and-grab took place at around 5:15 am on Avenue Montaigne, according to the police source, who added that the extent of the damage had yet to be determined.

"The individuals used a first vehicle to enter the establishment, smashing the window, before fleeing in a second vehicle, taking some of the shop's merchandise with them," the source added.

The criminals set fire to the ram car before fleeing, but firefighters brought the blaze under control, the police source said. According to a source close to the case, four people are suspected of having taken part in the attack.

The value of damage and losses was being assessed, the public prosecutor said. In May, robbers armed with a long weapon snatched jewels from the Harry Winston shop near the Champs-Elysees before making their escape on motorbikes.

The suspects are still at large, and the loss is estimated at between six million and 10 million euros (\$6.5 million and \$10.8 million), according to a source close to the investigation. In the northern French city of Lille, thieves repeatedly ram-raided luxury stores to steal handbags and other valuables last year. — AFP

A man stands at the entrance of a Chanel boutique near the Champs-Elysees avenue in Paris.





## Sports

# Bumrah delivers as India beat Pakistan in low-scoring thriller

## For Pakistan, their loss leaves them without a point

**NEW YORK:** Jasprit Bumrah was the hero as India beat Pakistan by six runs in a low-scoring T20 World Cup thriller in New York on Sunday. India were bowled out by Pakistan for 119 in 19 overs but while Mohammad Rizwan made 31 for Pakistan, in a well-paced innings, Bumrah delivered crucial wickets and his 3-14 in four overs proved decisive as Pakistan fell just short ending on 113-7.

Despite a tricky surface that made batting difficult, a crowd of 34,028, a record attendance for an international cricket match in the USA, were given a tight contest that ebbed and flowed. Pakistan needed exactly a run a ball and they approached their innings accordingly - they engineered themselves into a position where they needed 40 to win off the last six overs but then were unable to deliver in the face of Bumrah's brilliance.

"Bumrah is going from strength to strength. I'm not going to talk too much about him, we want him to be in that kind of mindset till the end of this World Cup, he's a genius with the ball," said India captain Rohit Sharma, who praised his team's fans, who had travelled from far and wide to back them. "The crowd was superb, they never disappoint, wherever we play in the world, they come out in huge numbers and support us. They'll be going home with a big smile on their face as well. Just the start of the tournament, we have a long way to go," he said.

Bumrah had picked up the vital wicket of Pakistan captain Babar Azam (13) early and then the breakthrough dismissal of Mohammad Rizwan (31) in the 15th over when Pakistan were 80-4. Then, handed the ball for the penultimate over, with Pakistan needing 21 to win, Bumrah conceded just three runs and removed Iftekhar Ahmed with his final delivery.

That left Pakistan needing 18 from the final

over, a steep task on a difficult batting surface and it got more tricky when Arshdeep Singh trapped Imad Wasim lbw with the first ball. Naseem Shah made a valiant effort, hitting the fourth and fifth balls of the over for fours but India avoided any late drama to secure their second win of the tournament.

For Pakistan, their loss, coming after the shock defeat to the USA, leaves them without a point and with a lot of work to do against Canada and Ireland if they are to fight their way into the Super Eight stage.

"We've still got a chance in the tournament, we get two wins, we've still got a chance to go through, so we're still hopeful that things can play in our hands, obviously we've got to play a lot better cricket than what we are playing," said Pakistan coach Gary Kirsten. "We had that game for 35 of the 40 overs, we played good cricket, we did everything that we needed to, so it's a disappointing loss," he added. Earlier, Pakistan's bowlers had given their team a fighting chance with Naseem and Haris Rauf claiming three wickets each as India were dismissed with a full over remaining of their allotted 20.

But Rishabh Pant's 42 from 31 balls gave the Indians something to work with after they lost openers Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli cheaply following a rain-delayed start. Pakistan captain Babar won the toss and opted to bowl and their was a huge roar when Rohit clipped Shaheen Shah Afridi's third ball of the day over mid-wicket for six.

But after just one over, the rain returned forcing a 36-minute delay and when play resumed Pakistan's attack got the start they had dreamt of. Naseem Shah removed Kohli with the third ball back, the Indian opener reaching at a wide delivery and finding Usman Khan at point.



**EAST MEADOW:** India's Jasprit Bumrah (L) celebrates after dismissing Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan during the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup 2024 group A cricket match between India and Pakistan at Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in East Meadow, New York. — AFP

Rohit tried to put Afridi off the midwicket boundary again but this time he was caught by Rauf in the deep to leave India at 19-2 with both star openers gone. But only 24 runs were added for the last five

wickets and India lost their final wicket to a run out with six balls remaining. That could have proved costly but Bumrah delivered when it mattered for a big win for the tournament favorites. — AFP



**TOKYO:** Retired multiple world boxing champion Manny Pacquiao of the Philippines (L) and Japanese mixed martial artist (MMA) Chihiro Suzuki pose during a photo session at the end of a press conference at a hotel in Tokyo on June 10, 2024. — AFP

## Pacquiao in talks over comeback

**TOKYO:** Boxing great Manny Pacquiao said Monday that he is in negotiations to make a comeback but cautioned that a potential world title fight against Mario Barrios was "far away". The 45-year-old multiple world champion from the Philippines quit the sport in 2021 and made a failed tilt at his country's presidency.

He has signed up to fight a three-round exhibition bout against Japanese mixed martial artist Chihiro Suzuki next month in Saitama, north of Tokyo. Pacquiao said he was in talks to face the American Barrios for the WBC welterweight world title but said the potential fight was still "far away".

"We're still in negotiations and we're talking about that. The fight has not materialized yet," Pacquiao, who has hinted at comebacks before, said in Tokyo. "That negotiation is ongoing. It's going to be by December - November or December."

"There's still a lot of things to discuss and talk about," Pacquiao in February admitted defeat in his bid to fight at next month's Paris Olympics when the International Olympic Committee rejected a special request for him to take part.

The IOC has an age limit of 40 for Olympic boxers. Pacquiao retired weeks after losing to Cuban Yordenis Ugas in Las Vegas in his final professional fight. He ran for the Philippines presidency but lost the May 2022 election by a huge margin. — AFP

## Nepal's Lamichhane to join T20 squad in West Indies

**KATHMANDU:** Sandeep Lamichhane will join Nepal's T20 World Cup squad in the West Indies after missing matches in the United States because his visa was denied, the cricket association said Monday. Nepal had originally wanted to select former skipper Lamichhane, who had an eight-year sentence for rape quashed on appeal, but his US visa was denied twice despite intense lobbying.

The T20 World Cup is being co-hosted by the United States and West Indies. "Nepali player Sandeep Lamichhane will leave for the West Indies for the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup and join the Nepali national cricket team," association secretary Paras Khadka said in a statement.

Spin bowler Lamichhane, 23, was once the poster boy for cricket in Nepal, but was convicted for raping a young woman in a Kathmandu hotel in 2022. That was quashed last month. "I am now joining the national team for the last two matches in the West Indies and looking forward to fulfilling my dreams and the dream of all cricket lovers," Lamichhane posted on X, formerly Twitter. — AFP

## Behbehani wins gold, bronze in Slovenia rhythmic gymnastics

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's National Gymnastics team member Abdullah Miqdad Behbehani had an outstanding performance in Salmanov International Championship that concluded Sunday in Maribor City, Slovenia, as he won a gold medal in the vault event and a bronze medal in the bar event.

Head of Kuwait delegation, member of the board of Kuwait Gymnastics Federation Mohammad Al-Daihani said the excellent achievement by Behbehani was after competing with 22 players from (7) developed countries in this game. They are: Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Serbia and Sierra Leone. He said Abdullah Behbehani proved himself strongly in this championship that is sanctioned by the International Federation of the game. He also commended Behbehani for his commitment and his keenness on developing his talent and skills.

Al-Daihani congratulated Abdullah and his family for this win, he also congratulated chairman and board members of the Gymnastics Federation for this new achievement by Kuwait Gymnastics, and appreciated the support of Public Authority for Sport and Kuwait Olympic Committee in all the team's competitions abroad.

Al-Daihani lauded the positive participation and good performance of Mousa Al-Sahaf, Saud Al-Rudaini, Hussein Dashti and Saud Al-Sinnawi, adding that Salmanov Championship was a suitable opportunity for the players to check their abilities and gain the necessary technical experience.

He said Rhythmic Gymnast Fatima Al-Nama

## Fencing offers teens hope in Nairobi slum

**NAIROBI:** Along the muddy tracks of a sprawling slum in Kenya's capital Nairobi, scores of teenagers learn how to fence each weekend under Mburu Wanyoike, whose initiative offers hope in a place bedeviled by crime and lack of opportunity.

Several hundred thousand people live in closely packed poverty in Mathare, many born there like 27-year-old Wanyoike, who a decade ago was on a very different path. "I was in crime, I was a gangster," he said bluntly, describing how he was shot and lost two friends, before getting a second chance.

Spotted by a fencing coach while working out, he quickly became hooked on a sport that he had never heard of before. Later, Wanyoike won a scholarship to South Africa and qualified as a teacher before returning to found Tsavora Fencing Mtaani in 2021, determined to help young people.

"The only thing they can do is... crime, doing drugs, for the ladies do prostitution," he said. His story is one that Dixon Mumia, tracing a path up a narrow dirt track dressed in the traditional all-white fencing ensemble, can understand.

"I was stealing things, I was not a nice boy," said the 17-year-old. "My coach came to my house, and he told my father to let me do this because when I am with this thing I change my life," he said. "I decided that this was the place I was supposed to be. I found myself changing," he said.

Still, it was not easy. "First, when my friends see, they laugh. They say that it is a waste of time, this game is played by the richest people," Mumia said. The average daily income in Mathare is around \$2, according to an education charity working in the slum, EduKenya.

According to Wanyoike, annual fencing training and competing costs around \$2,500 which is unaf-



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's National Gymnastics team member Abdullah Miqdad Behbehani with other participants and officials.

fordable for the community - even with his efforts to fundraise. Still, Mumia is determined to make it out: "I was born here, but I don't want to stay here."

Mohammad Al-Daihani thanked the players and their parents, coaches Vitali and Mustafa Al-Shafei, administrator Khalid Al-Mithin and commended the efforts of judges Bader Hassan, Salah Askar and Rabab Al-Haris in this championship.



**NAIROBI:** Tsavora Fencing Mtaani Club members take part in a fencing bout during a 'fencing mtaani', meaning 'fencing in the streets' in Swahili, training session in the Mathare informal settlement of Nairobi, on June 9, 2024. — AFP

fordable for the community - even with his efforts to fundraise. Still, Mumia is determined to make it out: "I was born here, but I don't want to stay here."

### 'My brothers'

One of the group's stars is softly spoken Eline Marendes, whose past as a dancer comes into focus when she picks up her epee - even Wanyoike has a fight on his hands. Ratting rapiers, the pair parry back-and-forth, the group cheering when the 16-year-old Marendes elegantly scores.

"At first I thought it was a very dangerous sport, because I thought we would hurt each other," she

said. Two years of training have changed her mind. "I see myself as a very big fencer," said Marendes, who grew up in Mathare. "Maybe in two years, I will be earning from fencing." After warming up in a community centre - recent floods in Kenya destroyed their usual training grounds - they hit the streets, with curious onlookers and captivated children following the clashes.

The boys tussle over a point until Wanyoike steps in, as behind them packed matatu minibuses taxis screech past and touts scream for business. Marendes watches the chaos and smiles. "They are like children, but they are like my brothers." — AFP



Sports

# Angels rally, walk off Astros

## Diamondbacks bang out 15 hits, split series with Padres

**ANAHEIM:** Logan O'Hoppe's two-run home run in the bottom of the ninth inning lifted the Los Angeles Angels to a 9-7 victory over the Houston Astros on Sunday afternoon in Anaheim, Calif. The Angels rallied from a 7-5 deficit with two runs in the eighth inning to tie the game, setting up O'Hoppe's dramatic finish in the ninth. Kevin Pillar singled with one out against Astros closer Josh Hader, bringing up O'Hoppe, who turned on the first pitch he saw.

Astros left fielder Trey Cabbage appeared initially to make a leaping catch at the short wall just inside the foul pole. But the ball popped out of his glove as it hit the top of the wall when he landed. It was the fourth hit of the game for O'Hoppe, who also doubled and singled twice. Houston's Jose Altuve had a career high-tying four hits, including a two-run homer in the sixth inning that gave the Astros a 7-4 lead. Jose Abreu, Chas McCormick and Jake Meyers each had two hits for the Astros, who outhit the Angels 14-12.

### Diamondbacks 9, Padres 3

Jake McCarthy rapped out three hits, including a two-run homer that capped a six-run second inning, as visiting Arizona salvaged a split of their four-game series with San Diego.

Arizona finished with 15 hits and did all its scoring in the first four innings. Kevin Newman also delivered three hits for the Diamondbacks. Joc Pederson snapped a 1-1 tie in the second by grounding a two-run single to right. Lourdes Gurriel Jr. followed with a two-run double to left and McCarthy finished the outburst by lining his third homer of the year into the right field seats.

Rookie Adam Mazur (0-1) was roughed up in his second MLB start, allowing eight hits and eight runs in three-plus innings after limiting the Los Angeles Angels to a run and two hits on Tuesday night. Mazur walked three and struck out two.

### Yankees 6, Dodgers 4

Trent Grisham hit a go-ahead three-run home run in the sixth inning. Aaron Judge hit his major-league-leading 24th homer and New York averted a three-game sweep by beating visiting Los Angeles. Juan Soto missed his third straight game with left forearm inflammation, and the crowd was chanting for him before



**ANAHEIM:** Houston Astros second baseman Jose Altuve (27) hits an RBI single during the third inning against the Los Angeles Angels at Angel Stadium. — Reuters

Grisham turned a 3-2 deficit into a 5-3 lead against Los Angeles starter Tyler Glasnow (6-5). Oswaldo Cabrera also homered and Judge hit an RBI double.

Caleb Ferguson (1-3) picked up the win in relief, and Clay Holmes secured his 19th save in 22 chances. Teoscar Hernandez hit his third homer of the series, and Mookie Betts drove in two runs for the Dodgers.

### Mets 6, Phillies 5

Pete Alonso was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded in the top of the ninth inning as New York took advantage of an erratic outing from closer Jose Alvarado to edge Philadelphia and split the two-game series in London. Alvarado had a chance to lock down his 12th save of the season after pinch hitter David Dahl smacked a solo shot in the seventh to put the Phillies

up 4-3. But in the ninth, Alvarado allowed a walk and two singles for a 4-4 game, then another walk to load the bases before hitting Alonso to bring in the go-ahead run. The Mets added an insurance run thanks to a passed ball charged to J.T. Realmuto.

The Phillies had a chance to pull out a win in the bottom of the ninth. With the bases loaded and one out, Drew Smith walked Alec Bohm, making the score 6-5. However, catcher Luis Torrens then fielded Nick Castellanos' swinging bunt, stepped on the plate and fired to first for an impressive 2-3, game-ending double play.

### Rangers 7, Giants 2

Marcus Semien homered and drove in two runs and Wyatt Langford tripled and had two hits and two RBIs as Texas salvaged the final game of its three-game se-

ries with San Francisco in Arlington, Texas.

Semien, hit in the helmet by a 94.5 mph fastball by Giants starter Keaton Winn leading off the bottom of the first, scored twice for Texas. Josh Smith singled, walked twice and scored two runs, Ezequiel Duran had two RBIs and Adolis Garcia stole home for the Rangers, who finished with four stolen bases. Winning pitcher Nathan Eovaldi (3-2) allowed two runs on five hits over seven innings. He walked one and struck out five.

Mike Yastrzemski homered for San Francisco, which had a three-game winning streak snapped. Winn (3-7), activated off the 15-day injured list earlier Sunday after missing almost a month with a right forearm strain, suffered the loss by allowing seven runs on six hits over 4 1/3 innings. He walked two and struck out a season-high seven batters.

### Tigers 10, Brewers 2

Jake Rogers blasted a three-run homer as host Detroit scored eight runs in the fifth inning and romped past Milwaukee. Gio Urshela and Zach McKinstry drove in two runs apiece, while Riley Greene had two doubles and an RBI as Detroit ended a three-game losing streak. Tigers starter Tarik Skubal (8-1) allowed one run and five hits while striking out 10 in 6 2/3 innings. Brewers starter Bryse Wilson (3-3) was charged with seven runs in 4 1/3 innings. Milwaukee's William Contreras had his streak of 101 consecutive games played snapped. Contreras, who is batting .309 for the season, got the day off after hitting .200 (6-for-30) this month.

### Nationals 8, Braves 5

Keibert Ruiz hit a three-run homer to highlight a seven-run outburst in the fourth inning as host Washington won to take the final three games in the four-game weekend series and lead the season series 6-2. The Nationals returned the major league debut of Hurston Waldrep, Atlanta's No. 1 draft pick in 2023. In 3 2/3 innings, Waldrep (0-1) allowed seven runs on four hits, four walks and one strikeout. Washington starter DJ Herz, who was making his second major league start, worked 4 1/3 innings and allowed two runs on four hits, three walks and five strikeouts. Jacob Barnes (3-2) got the final two outs and pitched one total inning to earn the win. — Reuters

## Verstappen wins 'crazy' rain-hit Canadian Grand Prix

**MONTREAL:** Max Verstappen returned to form and completed a hat-trick of Canadian Grand Prix wins on Sunday when he triumphed over Red Bull in a thrilling, tactical and incident-filled race at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve. "Pretty crazy race," said the Dutchman at the finish. "A lot happening. We stayed calm." The series leader and three-time champion rode his luck through changing wet and dry conditions and two safety car interventions to win by 3.879 seconds ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris and Mercedes' George Russell.

Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton came home fourth, after being passed by Russell in the closing laps. Oscar Piastri was fourth in the second McLaren ahead of two-time champion Fernando Alonso of Aston Martin.

It was a 60th career victory for Verstappen and his 50th from the last 75 races. Local hope Lance Stroll was seventh in the second Aston Martin ahead of RB's Daniel Ricciardo and the two Alpines of Pierre Gasly and Esteban Ocon.

"What a race guys," Verstappen told his team on the radio. "Not easy, but we did it! A great job by everyone. We made all the right calls. I enjoyed that one." "A lot of fun," said Norris, whose result together with Piastri, brought McLaren their first points in Canada since 2014 on the 56th anniversary of the team's first win, with Bruce McLaren, at the 1968 Belgian Grand Prix.

"An ugly race on my behalf and I am sorry for that," Russell said, conceding he was disappointed not to convert his pole position into victory. Five cars, including both Ferraris and both Williams, failed to finish. On a day of showers, only the two Haas cars chose full wet tyres to start as Russell, on intermediates, pulled clear of Verstappen. The entire field slithered through the opening laps. Hamilton passed Ricciardo to sixth. When the sun returned, a dry line emerged and lap times tumbled. Russell and Verstappen swapping fastest laps at the front, nearly eight seconds clear of Norris.

### 'That's racing'

Russell resisted Verstappen before the champion ran wide at turn two and fell within Norris' reach, the McLaren man passing on lap 20, using Drag Re-



**MONTREAL:** Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen celebrates on the podium after winning the 2024 Canada Formula One Grand Prix at Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve in Montreal, Canada. — AFP

duction System (DRS) to sweep by. He then passed Russell on lap 21. Behind the top four, Alonso in fifth resisted Hamilton before Sargeant crashed his Williams, prompting a safety car intervention. Norris stayed out, but Verstappen, Russell and Piastri pitted for inters, as did Alonso and Hamilton.

As the marshals struggled to remove Sargeant's car, Norris pitted from the lead and re-joined third behind Verstappen and Russell, a harsh setback for the McLaren man. "The safety car helped me in Miami but now it held me. It happens that's racing," Norris who enjoyed good fortune on the way to his maiden win in May, said after the race.

The race resumed on lap 30 with Leclerc gambling on hard tyres, but as rain arrived again he dropped to 19th. Alonso then ran off and Hamilton surged to fifth, just behind Piastri. As the track dried, Leclerc pitted again, before retiring.

As the other leaders pitted, Norris staying out to pad his lead and build an 'over-cut' before pitting on lap 47. He took mediums, but as he re-joined, Verstappen speared through. "The ride is bad, like a locked suspension," grumbled the Dutchman with 20 laps to go in dry conditions. "I can't touch any kerbs, it almost knocks me out."

Another crash on lap 54 brought out a second safety car, Albon and a spinning Carlos Sainz tangling after Perez had smashed into the barriers and broken his rear wing. Mercedes promptly pitted both cars, Russell for mediums and Hamilton for hards. They were fourth and fifth behind Verstappen and the two McLarens when racing resumed and the late drama unfolded. — AFP

## Afghanistan chase football milestone on road to WCup

**HONG KONG:** Afghanistan hope to achieve a footballing milestone on Tuesday by snatching a spot in the third and final phase of Asian qualifying for the 2026 World Cup. The team ranked 151 in the world are on the brink of history and a place at the 2027 Asian Cup under their English coach Ashley Westwood. Once on the books of Manchester United, he took over the Afghan team seven months ago and has masterminded a significant upturn in fortunes for the footballing minnows. They play away at Kuwait on Tuesday in the final round of games in the second qualifying stage knowing they need to better India's result at Qatar to progress further.

Afghanistan held already qualified Qatar, the Asian champions, to a precious 0-0 draw on Thursday in a "home" game for the Afghans that was played in Saudi Arabia. "When we took over in November just before the first game against Qatar, which we lost 8-1, (if) you told us that we'll be giving ourselves a chance of qualifying with one game to go, we wouldn't have believed it," Westwood said afterwards. "The players are excited and we believe that we have a genuine chance of making history for Afghanistan in reaching the Asian Cup and third round of the World Cup qualifiers." India are also trying to reach the final stage of World Cup qualifying for the first time.

Igor Stimac's side currently occupy the second qualifying berth from Group A on goal difference from the Afghans. Just to complicate things, Kuwait are also in with a shot of progressing, with the group going right down to the wire. After Stimac saw his men held to a goalless home draw against Kuwait on Thursday, the coach said: "We don't have time to feel sorry for ourselves because our chances are still alive. "I need to do everything in the next five days to make the boys believe they will take us into the challenge against the Asian champions."

Elsewhere, it is a straight shootout between China and Thailand for the second qualifying berth out of Group C. China are in the driving seat in second place and needing only a point from their final game to guarantee advancement. However, they must travel to Son Heung-min's table-topping South Korea while Thailand have a far easier task when they host basement side Singapore in Bangkok. — AFP



William Still

## Still named as coach of Ligue 1 side Lens

**LENS:** William Still has been appointed coach of Lens until 2027, replacing Franck Haise who has left for Nice, the Ligue 1 club announced on Monday. Still, 31, born in Belgium to English parents, was sacked as coach at Reims just before the end of last season and had been linked in the past with a move to England, with Championship club Sunderland a reported possible destination.

Instead he joins a Lens side that were runner-ups to PSG in the 2022-2023 season before finishing seventh last term. "Will was our top priority to take over as coach and start the new cycle at the club," said Pierre Dreossi, who has taken over as managing director from Arnaud Pouille in an extensive reorganization of the club. "Will is not only a promising coach, he is also a unifying personality obsessed with winning." Still took over at Reims, initially on an interim basis, in October 2022, and led them to an 11th-place finish. He was the youngest head coach in Europe's top five leagues when he was appointed.

"A true enthusiast, a conqueror and a fine tactician, Will Still has left his mark on Reims, where he has achieved convincing results, including an historic 19-game unbeaten run," said Dreossi. "We're delighted to welcome Will, his leadership and his infectious energy."

With Haise already departed for Nice there will be no official handover but it appears Still already has the stamp of approval from the older coach. "I really like the way he looks," said Haise, 53, at the beginning of February ahead of a match between Lens and Reims.

"He's a genuine person, and in this business, it's not always easy to be. You're always under so much scrutiny that sometimes you're forced to change, to protect yourself. "Over and above his personality, I think that what he does with his team gives off a real sense of risk-taking and movement." — AFP

# Classifieds

### Clinics & Hospitals

#### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752

Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

#### Hospitals

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

### Change of Name

**I, SUBHASHINI JAGU**, holder of Indian Passport No. N8634257, having permanent address Dno 7 340 Krishna Nagar Rly Koduru Kadapa Dist, 516101, Andhra Pradesh India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) SUBHASHINI and (surname) KOLAVALA. (#5621, 09/06/2024)

**I, RAJA GOPAL REDDY JAGU**, holder of Indian Passport No. R2317277, having permanent address 7 340 Krishana Nagar Rly Kodur Kadapa Andhra Pradesh, 516101, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) MAHESWAR REDDY and (surname) KOLAVALA. (#5620, 09/06/2024)

**I, MAHALAKSHMI NIDIGINTI**, holder of Indian Passport No. U0192368, having permanent address 00, Chitvel Main Road, Chitvel, Annamayya District, Andhra Pradesh - 516104, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) MEHREEN SHAIK and (surname) SHAIK. (#5619, 09/06/2024)

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## Celtics beat Mavericks 105-98 for 2-0 NBA Finals lead

Holiday credits Tatum for keeping the Celtics offense firing



BOSTON: Luka Doncic #77 of the Dallas Mavericks drives to the basket against Kristaps Porzingis #8 of the Boston Celtics during the third quarter in Game Two of the 2024 NBA Finals at TD Garden. — AFP

**NEW YORK:** The Boston Celtics, fueled by 26 points from Jrue Holiday, thwarted a desperate Dallas rally in the final minutes to beat the Mavericks 105-98 on Sunday and take a 2-0 lead in the NBA Finals. On a night when early struggles from three-point range bedeviled the Celtics, their all-around effort on both ends of the floor saw them notch a second straight win at home.

They head to Dallas for game three on Wednesday with a commanding lead. Jaylen Brown scored 21 points and Jayson Tatum added 18 points, nine rebounds and 12 assists. Holiday credited Tatum for keeping the Celtics offense firing despite a rough shooting night that saw Tatum make just six of 22 shots with just one three-pointer.

"I would say a lot of it was JT," Holiday said. "They were double-teaming him and he was making the right play. The way that he played tonight, the way that he led us, getting into the paint, making plays, finding me wide open—it was all about him," Holiday added.

Hurting Mavericks star Luka Doncic—now nursing a chest contusion in addition to the right knee sprain and sore left ankle that have troubled him throughout the playoffs—delivered a triple-double of 32 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists.

But he didn't get enough help from his supporting cast. PJ Washington scored 17 points and eight-time All-Star Kyrie Irving had 16 -- connecting on seven of 18 shots and missing all three of his three-point attempts.

Doncic said turnovers and missed free-throws were also key. He had eight of the Mavericks' 15 turnovers and Dallas made just 16 of their 24 free-throws. The Celtics made 19 of their 20 from the foul line.

"At the end of the day we've got to make some more shots," Doncic said. "I think my turnovers and my missed free-throws cost us the game, so I've got to do way better in those two categories. "But at the end of the day, we've got to make shots to win the game."

The pressure will be on back in Dallas, with Boston unbeaten on the road this post-season. "At the end of the day it's basketball, away or home,"

Doncic said. "We've just got to play better basketball to win." The Mavericks, trailing by 14 with less than four minutes remaining, made a final push and sliced the deficit to five with 1:15 to play, Doncic driving for a layup and converting the free-throw when he was fouled.

Boston's Derrick White came up with a monster block on Washington and Brown made a layup as the Celtics closed it out. Dallas, who absorbed a roundhouse punch from the Celtics in the first quarter of game one and could never recover, came out with energy and determination on the defensive end. Doncic scored 13 points in the first frame and Irving scored eight.

### Boston pride

The Celtics, who had seven three-pointers in the first quarter on Thursday, didn't hit from long range until Al Horford connected in the waning seconds of the period and Dallas led 28-25 after one. Tatum got untracked with a layup early in the second, then

found Kristaps Porzingis for a pull-up jumper and fed Derrick White for a three-pointer that gave the Celtics their first lead of the game, 36-35, with 8:01 left in the second quarter. Boston came out of the back-and-forth battle with a 54-51 halftime lead.

A 10-0 run saw the Celtics take control in the third and with everyone involved they calmly built on their advantage. "Very, very proud of our group," Celtics veteran Horford said. "We understood that we had to protect home court. We knew they were going to come out and be more aggressive. We were able to withstand their runs and protect home."

The only bad news on the night for Boston was an apparent injury to center Porzingis, who starred in game one in his return from a 38-day layoff with a calf injury. Porzingis appeared to hurt his leg midway through the fourth quarter and departed after limping through a few more minutes.

However, Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said he had "zero" concern that Porzingis had suffered a serious setback. —AFP

## Titmus, McKeown challenge records in Olympic swims

**BRISBANE:** Olympic champion Ariarne Titmus fired a warning shot to rivals Katie Ledecky and Summer McIntosh Monday with the second fastest women's 400m freestyle in history, while backstroke star Kaylee McKeown narrowly missed the 200m medley world record.

The 23-year-old Titmus is unbeaten over the distance since 2019 and will head to Paris in red-hot form after hitting the wall in 3mins 55.44secs at the Australian Olympic trials in Brisbane. She was under her own world record pace until the final 30 metres, missing out by just 0.06sec.

"I knew if I did my job tonight, I'd be going to Paris. Pressure's kind of off as well," said Titmus, who owns five of the seven quickest times ever. "It was more of a chance for me to practice a race plan and see how I would go. "Doesn't matter about what happens here, it's about what happens in six weeks' time."

Lani Pallister (4:02.27) also qualified for a showdown that is one of the Olympics' most anticipated, with Titmus set to be pitted against Ledecky and Canadian sensation McIntosh. Titmus beat Ledecky in a thrilling final at the Tokyo Olympics, then broke the American's long-standing world record in 2022.

McIntosh bettered the mark last year before the Australian hit back to reclaim the world record months later. The Canadian swam 3:59.06 in May to ensure she will be in France, with Ledecky looking to make a statement at the US trials later this month. Titmus will also attempt to qualify for the 200m and 800m freestyle. She won gold over 200 and 400 in To-

kyo and silver behind Ledecky in the 800. All-conquering backstroke queen McKeown also set the pool alight, clocking the world's fastest 200m medley since the 2016 Rio Olympics and the fourth quickest ever. She touched in 2:06.63 to miss Hungarian Katinka Hosszu's 2015 world record by a fraction, with fast-rising teenager Ella Ramsay (2:09.32) also punching her Paris ticket.

"It's a bit of fun for me, I'm glad it's on the first night, kind of just get in the groove and get it out of the way," said McKeown, the defending 100m and 200m Olympic backstroke champion. McKeown swam the fourth fastest 400m medley of all-time earlier this year, but has dropped the distance to focus on her other races. Australia's most decorated Olympian Emma McKeon, who won seven medals in Tokyo, including four gold, won the 100m butterfly in 56.85 to join them at her third Games. "I'm stoked," said 30-year-old McKeon, who claimed butterfly bronze in Japan.

"I chose to keep swimming after Tokyo because I felt like I had more to give, but also I wanted to see what I was capable of both physically and mentally." But reigning Olympic 200m breaststroke champion Zac Stubblety-Cook missed out on qualifying for the 100m, with Sam Williamson (58.80) and Joshua Yong (59.48) instead making the grade.

Elijah Winnington, the 2022 world champion, touched first in the men's 400m freestyle in 3:43.26 ahead of last year's world champion Sam Short (3:43.90), with both heading to Paris with medal expectations. —AFP

## Duplantis leads raft of stars into Euro finals

**ROME:** Swedish pole vault world record holder Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis led a raft of stand-out athletes safely through qualifiers into finals at the European championships in Rome on Monday. The morning session at the Stadio Olimpico featured a host of global stars, with France's world decathlon record holder Kevin Mayer also competing in the hope of accruing the points needed to ensure qualification for the Paris Olympics that begin next month.

Mayer timed 10.72 seconds for the opening 100m before going out to 7.37 metres in the long jump. Duplantis, the Olympic and two-time world champion, is bidding for a third successive European title and it would take a brave punter to bet against the US-born Swede.

He currently dominates the pole vault. This season alone, he has already won a second world indoor title and bettered his own world record to 6.24m. No other vaulters come close. The 24-year-old only vaulted once, clearing 5.60m to ensure his place in Wednesday's final.

"My first aim here is to win the gold medal and of course, I am trying to jump high," said Duplantis. "I was very focused on today's qualification. "And then it is about jumping as high as possible. My big focus, of course, is on the Olympic Games. I always want to jump high so we will try to do something good on Wednesday."

Norway's Karsten Warholm, a three-time world 400m hurdles champion and two-time European gold medalist, coasted through his heat in 48.75sec, easing up a full 50 metres from the line in front of a sparse crowd.

"I love athletics. And to do it in one of the most beautiful cities in the world, that is a privilege," said Warholm. "I just want to



ROME: Sweden's Armand Duplantis competes in the men's pole vault qualification during the European Athletics Championships at the Olympic stadium in Rome on June 10, 2024. —AFP

make sure that the crowds will make some noise for the final."

The women's 400m hurdles saw defending champion Femke Bol, who won bronze as part of the Dutch mixed 4x400m relay team on Friday, also comfortably win her heat in 54.16sec. Both hurdles finals will be held on Tuesday evening, with Warholm and Bol clear favourites to win as they fine-tune preparations for the Paris Olympics.

Warholm's teammate Jakob Ingebrigtsen made equally light work of his heat in the 1500m, reeling in the field from 300 metres in indomitable style to win in 3:37.65. The Norwegian, already winner of Saturday's 5,000m, will line up in Wednesday's 1500m final as hot favourite to land gold, which would represent a triple double having already won both events in Berlin and Munich in 2018 and 2022.

"If you watched the race, you could see that I really did not do much," said Ingebrigtsen, twice

beaten to gold at the last two world championships by Britons Jake Wightman and Josh Kerr—both absent from this championships.

"It was all about keeping the composure and I tried to stay out of trouble. "I could test my fitness and my legs felt pretty good in the last lap. So it was a good race and I am ready for the final." It was a similar tale for defending champion Keely Hodgkinson of Britain in the women's 800m as the world and Olympic silver medalist safely negotiated her heat to advance to Wednesday's final.

"Heats are always a bit of a reality check to be honest, because you never really feel that great," said Hodgkinson. "It is just hard because some people are trying to run their best race ever and you are trying to conserve the energy."

"So it is just a case of do not get complacent, do not get caught out at the wrong moment, do not get tripped up and also try and save as much energy for the next round." —AFP