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### 2 Kuwait seeks to boost energy output to meet rising demand

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# Global IT crash wrecks havoc

## Kuwaiti airlines, oil sector, banks mostly unaffected • Kuwait sets up emergency team

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Army chief urges vigilance

KUWAIT: Chief of General Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces Lt Gen Bander Al-Muzain stressed Saturday the need to maintain the highest degree of combat readiness and high vigilance. While inspecting some military units and sites, Muzain said it is imperative to keep up serious action to maintain the country's security and safety, the General Staff said in a press release. — KUNA

#### Family of four perishes in fire

KUWAIT: An Indian family of four from Kerala lost their lives in a tragic fire accident in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh on Friday. Mathews (Jijo) Mulackal, his wife Lini Abraham and their two children, Isaac and Irene, had returned from vacation in India hours before the incident. The fire, which is believed to have started from a short circuit in the air conditioner, broke out around 8 pm while the family was asleep. The bodies will be flown back to Kerala for burial on Sunday.

#### MoH denies bilharzia outbreak

KUWAIT: The health ministry Saturday denied rumors on social media about the outbreak of cases of schistosomiasis (bilharzia) at some restaurants in the country. In a press release, the ministry confirmed that no cases have been reported in the country, explaining schistosomiasis is a parasitic disease transmitted through swimming in polluted freshwater. Meanwhile, the ministry said a restaurant has been closed due to a number of food poisoning cases, reassuring that those affected have already recovered, while some are still recovering. — KUNA

#### Adidas slammed for axing Hadid

BERLIN: Adidas said Friday it had dropped vocal pro-Palestinian model Bella Hadid from an advertising campaign for retro sneakers referencing the 1972 Munich Olympics, which were overshadowed by a massacre of Zionist athletes. A flood of social media posts expressed support for Hadid, criticized Adidas for axing the model, and called for a boycott of the company. — AFP

#### UAE arrests protesting Bangladeshis

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates said Saturday it arrested several Bangladeshi expatriates for protesting against their government on UAE soil, where demonstrations are banned. "The public prosecution has ordered their pre-trial detention pending further investigations," a statement said, accusing the suspects of endangering the interests and security of the UAE and disrupting public order. — AFP

#### Brazil halts some poultry exports

SAO PAULO: The world's top chicken exporter Brazil has voluntarily halted poultry exports to some countries after a case of Newcastle disease was detected in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, its agriculture ministry said on Friday. Newcastle causes respiratory problems in birds and sometimes leads to death. The restrictions affect sales to 44 nations including China, Argentina, the European Union, Japan and Saudi Arabia, the ministry said. — Reuters

#### KUWAIT/PARIS: Planes were gradually taking off again Saturday and services from healthcare to shipping and finance were coming back online after global airlines, banks and media were thrown into turmoil by one of the biggest IT crashes in recent years, caused by an update to an antivirus program. Passenger crowds had swelled at airports on Friday as dozens of flights were canceled after an update to a program operating on Microsoft Windows crashed systems worldwide.

By Saturday, officials said the situation had returned virtually to normal in airports across Germany and France, as Paris prepared to welcome millions for the Olympic Games starting on Friday. Multiple US airlines and airports across Asia said they had resumed operations, with check-in services restored in Hong Kong, South Korea and Thailand, and mostly back to normal in India, Indonesia and at Singapore's Changi Airport as of Saturday afternoon.

Microsoft said the issue began at 1900 GMT on Thursday, affecting Windows users running the

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#### Zionist occupation of Palestinian territories illegal: UN top court

THE HAGUE: The UN's top court, in a sweeping opinion on Friday, said the Zionist entity's decades-long occupation of Palestinian territories and settlements was "illegal" and needed to end as soon as possible. The advisory opinion by The Hague-based International Court of Justice was welcomed by the Palestinian presidency, which called it "historic".

The ICJ's statement, called an "advisory opinion", is not binding, but it comes amid mounting concern over the death toll and destruction in the Zionist entity's war against Hamas. It is also likely to increase diplomatic pressure on the Zionist entity, whose

#### Zionists strike after Houthis attack Tel Aviv

DUBAI: The Zionist military said on Saturday fighter jets had struck Houthi military targets in the area of Hodeida port in Yemen in response to hundreds of attacks carried out against the Zionist entity in recent months. The strikes against oil facilities in the port caused fatalities, the Houthis' Al-Masirah TV said, citing the health ministry. "The Zionist entity will pay the price for targeting civilian facilities, and we will meet escalation with escalation," Houthi politburo member Mohammed Al-Bukhaiti said in a post on social media.

The Iran-backed Houthi rebels had claimed a drone attack on Tel Aviv on Friday that left one person dead, saying it marked a "new phase" in its operations against the Zionist entity. The rebels fired a "new drone called 'Yafa', which is capable of bypassing the enemy's interception systems," their spokesman, Yahya Saree, said on social media. It struck "one of the important targets in the occupied Jaffa region, what is now called...Tel Aviv," he said, adding "the operation has achieved its goals successfully".

Zionist authorities said an explosion hit an apartment building in Tel Aviv at 3:12 am (0012 GMT), killing one person and wounding four. The Zionist army said the blast was "caused by the falling of an aerial target", based on an initial inquiry. Chief spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said the military assessed that the drone, which hit the building near the beachfront close to US Embassy premises in Tel Aviv, was an upgraded Iranian-made Samad-3 model. "Our estimation is that it arrived from Yemen to Tel Aviv," he told a press briefing.

The explosion, which footage shared on social media suggested came from the sea and did not trigger

WASHINGTON: A traveler checks flight information at Ronald Regan Washington National Airport on July 19, 2024 after a global computer outage impacted flights worldwide, along with disrupting broadcasters and banking services. — AFP

lawmakers on Thursday voted to oppose a Palestinian state, calling it an "existential threat". In The Hague, ICJ presiding judge Nawaf Salam said: "The court has found... that (the Zionist entity's) continued presence in the Palestinian Territories is illegal." The Zionist entity is "under the obligation to bring to an end its unlawful presence as rapidly as possible," the judge said in its finding, read at the Peace Palace, seat of the ICJ.

The ICJ added the Zionist entity was "under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities and to evacuate all settlers" from occupied land. The Zionist entity's policies and practices, including the maintenance of a wall between the territories, "amount to annexation of large parts" of the occupied territory, the court said.

Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu slammed the ICJ's opinion as a "decision of lies". "The Jewish people are not occupiers in their own

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TEL AVIV: A Zionist policeman collects glass shrapnel from the window of a building damaged in a Houthi drone attack on July 19, 2024. — AFP

air raid alarms, occurred hours after the Zionist military confirmed it had killed a senior commander of the Iran-backed Hezbollah militia in southern Lebanon. A Zionist official said the military was still investigating why the drone did not trigger the alarm, but initial reports suggested the aircraft was identified but the sirens were not sounded due to "human error". "We're talking about a large UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) that can fly large distances," the military official told journalists after the strike.

The Houthis pledged to turn Tel Aviv into a "primary target" after months of drone and missile attacks targeting shipping in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden in response to the Gaza war. A member of the rebel movement's politburo, Hezam Al-Asad, called the strike "unprecedented". In an interview with the pro-Iranian channel Al-Mayadeen, he said the attack marked a "new phase" of operations against the Zionist entity which would increase in the coming period.

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THE HAGUE: Judge and President of the International Court of Justice Nawaf Salam delivers a ruling on the legal consequences of the Zionist occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem on July 19, 2024. — AFP

#### Kazma duped into facing amateur team in friendly

ALEXANDRIA: Kuwaiti Premier League club Kazma were delighted to get a 7-1 friendly victory over Egyptian opponents Telephonat Beni Suef — until they discovered that their rivals in the match were a group of amateur players unconnected with the Egyptian side. Organizers of the game at Kazma's training camp in the Egyptian city of Alexandria apologized, saying they had been deceived into thinking the rival team represented the Beni Suef side, who play in Egypt's third tier.

Egyptian media reported that Kazma had instead faced a group of amateur players and that Telephonat Beni Suef had denied any knowledge of Thursday's game, triggering a war of words on social media. The Kuwaiti club put out a statement holding the organizers responsible and demanding an apology.

StarMaker Football, the company organizing the camp, issued a statement, which the Kuwaiti club reposted on the X social media platform, apologizing for what it called an "unintentional mistake". "Unfortunately, the company was deceived by the representative of the Telephonat Beni Suef club, who later turned out to have no connection to the club," the statement read. "He also falsely claimed that the competing team represented Telephonat Beni Suef."

Egypt's Football Association pledged to work with their Kuwaiti counterparts to investigate the incident and said no more friendlies with foreign teams would be allowed without its permission. — Reuters





Group photo of the participants, organizers and partners.

# Zain continues support for KON Social Entrepreneurship Program

## In its ninth edition under strategic partnership with LOYAC

KUWAIT: Zain announces the continuation of its support for the KON Social Entrepreneurship Program, now in its ninth edition. This step is part of the strategic partnership with the leading non-profit organization LOYAC, a collaboration that spans 20 years and has empowered thousands of ambitious young people in Kuwait.

The KON program, which comes in collaboration with Babson College, a leading US academic institution for business and entrepreneurship, targets young individuals aged 12-16. The program is designed to equip aspiring entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge needed to launch and manage their own businesses in the future. It also aims to enhance the local innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems, aligning perfectly with Zain's commitment to investing in youth and fostering an encouraging environment that grows their passions.

Zain recently participated in the program's launch ceremony and orientation session at the American University of Kuwait. During this event, the 53 participants were introduced to KON's objectives and the schedule for upcoming workshops and training sessions. Zain took the opportunity to engage with the participants up close and share its expertise to enrich their learning experience.

The KON program features interactive workshops, field trips, training, mentoring sessions, and more. These activities provide the students

with a hands-on understanding of business and entrepreneurship, while also deepening their awareness of social and environmental challenges. Under the guidance of experienced entrepreneurs, activists, and industry professionals, the students develop innovative solutions to these challenges.

Throughout the program, participants will work in teams to plan and develop a business idea, identify their target audience, conduct market research, and present a business pitch to a panel of judges. This panel includes experts and executives from Zain and other private sector companies across various industries. The program aims to cultivate a mindset that views challenges as opportunities, while also enhancing leadership, critical thinking, and communication skills.

These skills are invaluable not only for high school and university but also for other areas of life. Additionally, KON helps students better understand local issues related to human rights, the environment, arts and culture, and health and fitness. Zain continues to support this unique educational program, recognizing the significant value it offers to the local entrepreneurial community. Each year, the program attracts many enthusiastic young people who use their summer vacation to learn new business skills, develop their talents, and pursue their dreams.

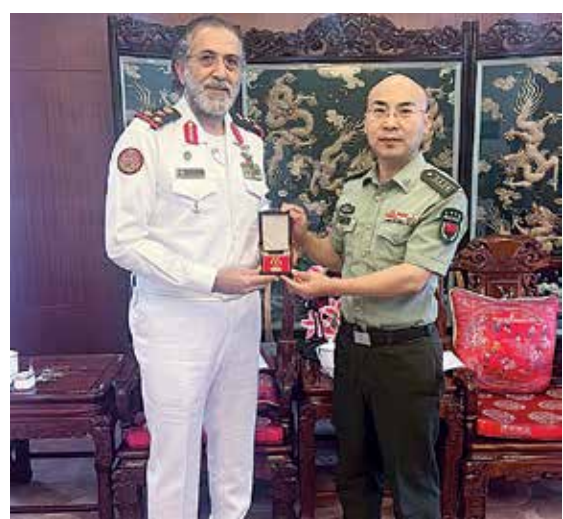
The strategic partnership between Zain and



Zain strives to empower Kuwait's future entrepreneurs.

LOYAC has resulted in numerous successful programs and initiatives over the past 20 years, empowering thousands of Kuwaiti youth in business, volunteering, and academic projects. Zain considers

this collaboration a testament to the strength and resilience of the ecosystem between the private sector and non-profit organizations in fostering youth empowerment in Kuwait.



## Kuwait's military attache awarded China's highest military medal

KUWAIT: The Chinese Ministry of Defense's international military cooperation office has granted Kuwait's military attaché in Beijing Real Admiral Nuaman Al-Rashid People's Liberation Army's medal - the 'August 1 Medal'. The honoring took place during a ceremony where Colonel Chen Li, head of the West Asia office at the ministry, received Al-Rashid to grant him the medal in recognition of his endeavors during his tenure at Kuwait's Embassy in China, Kuwait's Ministry of Defense said in a statement received by KUNA.

Al-Rashid expressed appreciation for this medal, extolling the deep-rooted and distinguished relations between the two countries in all fields, mainly military, it added. The "August 1 Medal" is the highest honoring of China's army given to Al-Rashid in recognition of his efforts aimed at boosting military cooperation between the two countries. It is also awarded to military men who made outstanding contributions to the protection of national sovereignty, security, and development interests. — KUNA

## Kuwait seeks to enhance energy output to cope with soaring demand

KUWAIT: Kuwait is diligently seeking to enhance its energy output and withstand forecast power outages resulting from soaring demand for electricity. The need to boost the energy capacities has crystallized since June 20, when the authorities had to execute programmed power outages for a few days, in line with the approach to rationalize the electricity consumption.

The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy had begun to act in parallel approaches to avert a future power crisis, namely speeding up the energy ventures and making use of international partnerships and accords, as well as examining

## Minister, US ambassador discuss economic issues

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Finance Minister and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf discussed with US Ambassador Karen Sasahara several financial and economic issues of common interest. In a press statement, Al-Mudhaf stated that Kuwait is keen on establishing distinguished strategic relations in

light of the available investment and economic opportunities.

He unveiled that Kuwait intends to execute several mega projects in line with its vision to become a regional and international financial and commercial hub that attracts foreign investments. He reiterated strong commitment to improving Kuwait's position on global financial and economic indicators through implementing the best practices. Kuwait is also paying due attention to the development and advancement of national cadres to qualify them for serving the state's future development plans, he said. — KUNA

## Kuwait, China discuss renewable energy, ties

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Finance Minister and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf, discussed on Friday enhancing cooperation in electricity and renewable energy with the commissioner-general of China's representative office in the Middle East and North Africa. In a press statement, the Ministry of Finance said during the meeting, held at its headquarters, the two officials discussed joint efforts and bilateral work to implement the agreements and memorandums of understanding signed during the visit of the Amir His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Republic of China in September 2023.

The statement highlighted several energy projects, including the key project to operate and manage the Al-Shagaya renewable energy station (Area 3 + 4), which will be executed by Chinese companies according to the latest standards and technical specifications. Al-Mudhaf emphasized Kuwait's government commitment,

feasible plans to enhance the electricity production for the summer of 2025. Kuwait is also seeking to activate the strategic memorandum of understanding, inked by the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and the China National Energy Administration, to overhaul the renewable energy sector in particular and the energy field in general.

Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Housing Dr Mahmoud Boushehri, during a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer of the Investment Company (SPIC) and China's representative in the Middle East and North Africa, Ma Shao, on July 15, examined means of developing the bilateral energy cooperation, namely planned enterprises with Beijing in this sector. A report released by the Energy Institute of Energy Review revealed that the consumption per capita in Kuwait grew by four percent in 2023, reaching 365.9 gigajoules compared



KUWAIT: Finance Minister and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf receives Chinese official. — KUNA

represented by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, to remove all obstacles and support efforts to implement the signed agreements swiftly.

The meeting was attended by Kuwait's Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and

Minister of State for Housing Dr Mahmoud Boushehri, the Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait, Zhang Jianwei, the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Asian Affairs, Ambassador Samih Hayat, and a number of officials in the ministries of electricity and water and foreign affairs. — KUNA

to 364.4 gigajoules in 2022, placing Kuwait third in energy consumption among the Gulf States.

Power generation in Kuwait rose by 5.7 percent from 83.5 terawatts in 2022 to 88.3 terawatts in 2023, while Kuwait planned to secure 15 percent of the forecast power demand in 2030 from renewable energy resources. The forecasts show that the maximum load will hit 20,905 megawatts in 2030 and the expected electricity output will be 155,783 megawatts. On July 11, the load was registered (at 2:30 pm) at 17,120 megawatts.

The Ministry has set up 11 ventures to boost energy security in the coming two decades, with a capacity amounting to 22,100 megawatts, including 15,000 megawatts with conventional technology and 7,500 megawatts with renewable technology. The ministry launched in 2021 the "hafez" program to encourage citizens to rationalize electricity consumption, offering discounts on the bills. Up to 4,000 na-

tional joined the program in the first week of March. According to the program, a client that rationalizes consumption by less than 20 percent earns a double proportion in the form of sums in his/her account.

The offer reaches 40 percent of the bill value if the save reaches 30 percent and above. As to the water bill, the rationing at 25 percent is rewarded with double the percentage and 50 percent if it reaches 25 percent and higher. The value of the sums paid to the clients who benefited from "hafez" in February 2004 reached KD 121,000 (\$400,000). Moreover, the ministry signed last Tuesday a deal to buy 500,000 digital meters from the telecommunications company, etc. at a value of KD 9.979 million (\$32 million). The establishment of the smart meters will enable the ministry to enhance the level of rationing and have a clear and more specific reading of consumption. — KUNA



## Local

# Kuwait's agencies reassure nationals on global IT glitch

## KBA reassures about sustainable business plans, programs

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait IT and cyber security watchdogs have reassured the public they are doing their best to deal with the global IT disruption that hit globally earlier in the day. This came in a joint statement by the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA), the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT), and the National Cyber Security Center (NCSC) on Friday.

"We are constantly working, in coordination with local and international agencies, to understand the effect of this disruption and take the required measures to decrease its impact on digital infrastructure," the statement said. "We assure people that our technical teams are working around the clock to follow up on developments and resume services as soon as possible," it added. They urged the public to get adequate updates from official media sources and platforms and to avoid rumors and/or false information.

### KBA reassures

Kuwaiti local banks have business sustainability plans for crisis response and recovery to curtail adverse impacts on digital infrastructure and banking services, reassured the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) on Friday. In a press release, the KBA said that the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) was working closely with the KBA and local banks in a bid to address the aftershocks of the information technology outage that hit the world earlier in the day.

Earlier in the day, Microsoft Corp. announced that there was a glitch in its global public system, which led to technical problems at several airports in the United States and around the world. Microsoft said in a statement that this sudden glitch affected many applications and services, including operating systems such as Windows, disrupting operations in various sectors involving airlines, banks, and several media outlets.

### DGCA's plans and actions

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Friday said that plans and actions are in motion to handle the global outage of Microsoft services that affected airports globally, including Kuwait International Airport. DGCA official spokesperson Abdullah Al-Rajhi told KUNA that the outage had affected several flights worldwide. He indicated that there was coordination with Kuwait Airways, Jazeera Airways, and



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Airways planes are seen pictured at the airport. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Friday said that plans and actions are in motion to handle the global outage of Microsoft services that affected airports globally, including Kuwait International Airport. — KUNA

other companies operating at the international airport to manage the situation.

### GCC concerted response

Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi said Friday it is essential for the GCC member countries to exert joint efforts to address information technology challenges. Al-Budaiwi said in an X post that the Gulf bloc's cybersecurity, e-government, and technical committees were working closely to defeat such challenges and ensure joint Gulf cooperation in order to keep Gulf digital assets intact.

The GCC chief underscored that technology is of paramount significance in all walks of life and at all levels amid the world's ongoing major IT outage that has negatively affected public and private facilities across the world. Microsoft Corp. announced that there was a glitch in its global public system, which led to technical problems at several airports in the United States and around the world. Microsoft said in a statement that this sudden glitch affected many applications and services, including operating systems such as Windows, disrupting operations in various sectors

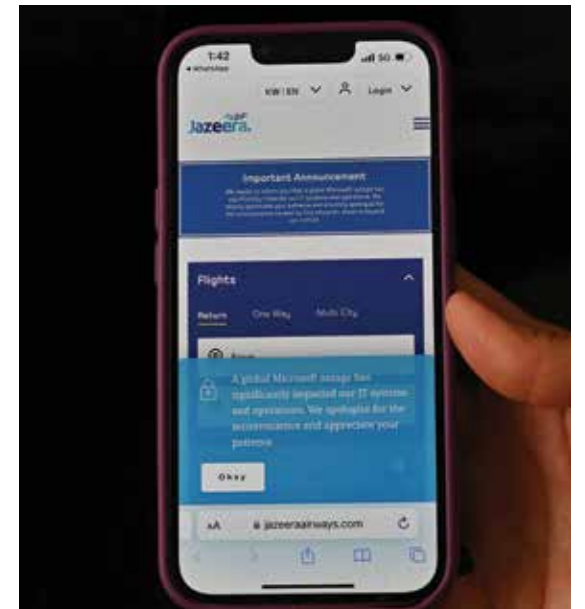
involving airlines, banks, and several media outlets.

### IT glitch impacts globally

The global IT glitch has thrown airlines, hospitals, banks, exchanges, and even emergency services offline in the United States. Moreover, over 1,400 flights into, out of, or within the United States had been canceled. The Federal Aviation Administration said it is closely monitoring a technical issue impacting IT systems at US airlines. "Several airlines have requested FAA assistance with ground stops until the issue is resolved," it added.

CrowdStrike, the global technology firm, said a Microsoft update triggered the tech collapse. It assured that it was not a cyberattack but rather a glitch, and a fix was deployed. "CrowdStrike is actively working with customers impacted by a defect found in a single content update for Windows hosts. Mac and Linux hosts are not impacted," CrowdStrike CEO George Kurtz wrote on his X account. "This is not a security incident or cyberattack."

The issue has been identified, isolated, and a fix has been deployed," Kurtz referred customers to the support portal for the latest updates, adding



**KUWAIT:** A man holds a mobile phone with a notification of a technical failure from the Kuwaiti low-cost airline Jazeera, as he tries to check a flight, in Kuwait City on July 19, 2024. Airlines, banks, TV channels and other businesses across the globe were scrambling to deal with one of the biggest IT crashes in recent years on July 19, 2024, apparently caused by an update to an antivirus program. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

that his company will continue to provide complete and continuous updates on its website. "We further recommend organizations ensure they're communicating with CrowdStrike representatives through official channels. Our team is fully mobilized to ensure the security and stability of CrowdStrike customers."

Microsoft Corp. announced that there was a glitch in its global public system, which led to technical problems at several airports in the United States and around the world. Microsoft said in a statement that this sudden glitch affected many applications and services, including operating systems such as Windows, disrupting operations in various sectors involving airlines, banks, and several media outlets. — KUNA



**Officials and representatives take a group photo. Kuwait's Jenan Al-Sharif chaired the 4th Arab child parliament session. — KUNA**

## Kuwaiti girl presides over 4th Arab child parliament session

**ABU DHABI:** Kuwait's Jenan Al-Sharif presided over the fourth session of the Arab Child Parliament in the UAE's Sharjah during the Kuwaiti delegation's participation in the session titled "Social Responsibility of MPs." During the session, the conferees discussed societal responsibility and MPs' key role in raising awareness about the needs of Arab children and offering initiatives required for sustainable development and social justice.

Fifty-four children from 16 Arab countries took part in the session and spoke about their experiments and views on how to enhance the role of MPs in boosting social rights and duties of children. Speaking to KUNA, Bader Al-Enezi, head of the Ministry of Education's psychological and social service department and delegation's supervisor, said Kuwait's participation was effective through launching initiatives related to the session's topic. The Arab child parliament is an Arab League institution in which four male and female children of each member country take part. In 2023, Al-Sharif was elected as the parliament's president of the third session for two years.

Kuwait's Consul General in Dubai and the Northern Emirates, Ambassador Ali Al-Thaidi, expressed pride in Jenan Al-Sharif's assumption

of the presidency of the fourth session of the Arab Children's Parliament on Saturday. "This important step reflects the commitment of Kuwait to support and empower young people to be pioneers in building a better future for Arab and global societies," Ambassador Al-Thaidi told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

He expressed deep gratitude for the valuable efforts made by the Kuwaiti delegation led by Sharif and their constant commitment to promoting the values of cooperation, tolerance, and understanding among Arab children. Kuwait was represented at the session by student Jenan Al-Sharif, the president of the Arab Parliament for Children, and student members of Parliament Anwar Al-Jaafar, Saud Al-Mutotah, and Abdullah Al-Mansouri. — KUNA

## Kuwait 'attaches due attention' to Arab causes

**CAIRO:** Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the Arab League, Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi, said Saturday that Kuwait pays due heed to Arab issues. The Kuwaiti diplomat made the statement to KUNA to mark 63 years since Kuwait joined the Arab League on July 20, 1961. On this occasion, Al-Mutairi highly commended the Cairo-based Arab bloc as one of the most prestigious regional and international organizations and as a pioneering agency that diligently seeks to fulfill the Arab people's expectations for development and prosperity.

He underlined that the State of Kuwait has always been eager to promote its presence in regional and international multilateral action while attaching much attention to cultural and geopolitical parameters. The Kuwaiti diplomat added that in the context of promoting Arab cooperation with regional and international organizations and blocs during its non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council (2018-2019), Kuwait had adopted a statement welcoming an annual briefing to be presented by the Arab League's Secretary-General.

He also stressed the significance of collaboration between the league and the United Nations (UN) in addressing the current crises in the Arab region. He concluded by speaking highly of Kuwait's constructive diplomatic role in bridge-building through mediation, focusing on peaceful solutions and negotiations. — KUNA



**Talal Al-Mutairi**

## Ministry of Education opens registration for new academic year

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Higher Education announced the opening of registration for the year 2024/2025 for graduates of secondary school (unified system) or its equivalent in high school. The students can apply through the ministry's website from Saturday evening until the 22nd of this month. Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education Lamia Al-Melhem said in a statement that based on the directives of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Adel Al-Adwani, the program was approved.

Registrations opened for Kuwaiti students on Saturday from 6 pm until the same time on Monday in order to give the greatest possible opportunity to all students. To register for medical



**KUWAIT:** A view of the central administration building at Sabah Al-Salem Kuwait University City in Shadadiyah area. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

courses, students are required to submit an IELTS test certificate with a minimum score of 5.6 or its equivalent total score in the TOEFL test. The screening criteria for admission are carried out according to the equivalent rate for medical and engineering specialties. — KUNA

## EPA, UN-Habitat seek to preserve ecosystem

**KUWAIT:** The deputy director general for technical affairs at the Environment Public Authority (EPA), Dr Abdullah Al-Zaidan, discussed with the head of the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) mission to Kuwait and Arab Gulf countries, Dr Amira Al-Hassan, ways to mitigate the effects of human activities related to climate change so as to preserve ecosystems in urban areas.

Al-Zaidan said in a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Saturday that the meeting touched on ways to enhance cooperation between the two sides to reach carbon neutrality, combat climate change, and implement Kuwait's plan to achieve the Sustainable Development

Goals and the new urban plan of the United Nations Human Settlements Program.

He added that the two sides will cooperate on the implementation of a number of joint activities on land and at sea in the urban areas of Kuwait through innovative ways distributed over the months and seasons of the year. The cooperation methods are also based on solutions and take into account nature and protection of the ecosystem. Al-Zaidan stressed that EPA is keen on continuous communication with international organizations to find appropriate alternatives to address climate change, promote biodiversity, and provide benefits to society.

He added that one of the most important goals for preserving the environment and human health and safety are nature-based solutions that help communities adapt and create healthy ecosystems for future generations. The United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) is working towards a better urban future, and its mission is to promote the sustainable development of human settlements in social and environmental areas. — KUNA



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## Naval exercise aims to fight piracy and drug smuggling

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior has announced the conclusion of the naval exercise between the state of Kuwait, the United States of America, and the Republic of Iraq, which aims to strengthen military cooperation between friendly countries and fight piracy and drug smuggling. The General Directorate of Security Relations and Media at the Ministry of Interior said in a statement that the military exercise was attended by Kuwait's Coast Guard General Directorate, the police aviation wing, and the Naval Force of the army general staff with the US Coast Guard and the Iraqi Naval Force. The statement added that the tripartite exercise aims to combat piracy and drug smuggling operations and test the readiness of maritime communications. The implementation of field naval exercises and formations, inspections of naval vessels, and protection of territorial and economic waters. — KUNA

## Kuwaiti ambassador submits his credentials to Nigerian president

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ambassador to Nigeria Salem Al-Muzain has submitted a copy of his credentials to Nigerian President Bola Tinubu during a ceremony that was held in the capital Abuja. Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) received a statement from Kuwait's Embassy in Abuja saying that Ambassador Al-Muzain delivered the kindest regards of the Amir His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, wishing Nigeria further prosperity. On his part, President Tinubu expressed his utmost respects to His

# Burgan Bank launches 2024 edition of flagship development program Ro'ya

## Part of bank's committed human capital development strategy

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank recently launched the 2024 edition of its flagship development program Ro'ya, which 50 select Burgan talents will be attending this year. The launch ceremony was held at "The Rock", the iconic recreational space of Burgan's head office, in the presence of the Bank's top management as well as supporting colleagues who came together to cheer their peers on.

The program aims to support Burgan's top-performing employees' and new hires' professional and personal growth across various departments and employment grades through tailored development plans that respond to the ever-evolving market and the industry's new-emerging technologies. Ro'ya marks a notable milestone in the Bank's dedicated human capital development strategy and its committed adherence to the Central Bank of Kuwait's (CBK) mandates and recommendations for developing and advancing Kuwait's aspiring talents and professional calibers.

As part of the ceremony, Bashar Al-Qattan, Acting Executive Manager – Learning and Talent Development at Burgan Bank, said: "In every successful organization, there are driven and innovative talents who continue to show up with an unrelenting eagerness to grow, learn, and find innovative solutions to everyday challenges. Following the great success that our Ro'ya cohorts have achieved in the first two rounds of the program, we are very proud to announce that 50 exceptional talents were finely selected to enroll in the latest edition of Ro'ya."

Judging by their unwavering dedication and sense of ownership, I am certain that our newest Ro'ya talents will excel throughout the program and emerge from this experience with an even stronger drive to contribute to Burgan's steadfast growth and lead their teams toward bigger achievements. On behalf of Burgan's Executive Management and all staff, congratulations to our new Ro'ya talents, and good luck on this exciting journey of growth and development."

Al-Qattan noted that Burgan Bank has revamped its Ro'ya program, which now presents a new curriculum and features new talent streams, such as the "Future



Bashar Al-Qattan



Ro'ya graduates

Leaders" stream, dedicated to the Bank's fresh graduate hires, as part of the Bank's long-term plan of developing their skills and preparing them for bigger, more strategic responsibilities.

The 50 talents, selected for their high potential for growth and success, will be enrolled in one of four Ro'ya streams – Future Leaders, Rising Leaders, Transformational Leaders, or Visionary Leaders – depending on their level of experience and development needs. In addition to the program's goal to equip its aspiring talents with the necessary knowledge and skills to remain abreast of the banking sector's fast-paced development, it also focuses on creating a steady growth trajectory for its cohorts, enabling them to take on new and bigger responsibilities and preparing them to be Burgan's upcoming leaders.

Similar to the first two rounds, the latest edition of Ro'ya is designed with precision in response to the Bank's dedicated human capital development strategy

and the latest technologies shaping the banking and financial industry, the market's evolving needs, and the employees' aspirations for professional advancement and personal growth. To guarantee the utmost benefit for the talents, Ro'ya continues to be developed in collaboration with prestigious international and local educational institutions.

Ro'ya continues to be a hallmark of Burgan Bank's robust human capital development strategy, which centers on numerous programs and channels of growth that cater to the employees' varying needs and learning styles. This comes as part of the Bank's mission to attract and retain the best talents in Kuwait's banking and financial market by offering them several opportunities for personal and professional development. These efforts, among others, have earned Burgan Bank the Great Place to Work certification and a place on the Best Workplaces in Asia list – a Great Place to Work Middle East recognition.



Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince. The ambassador praised the bilateral relations between the two friendly nations, affirming the Kuwaiti leadership's keenness on developing and bolstering bilateral cooperation across all fields. — KUNA



GAZA: Palestinians walk between two pools of stagnant water and on the rubble of buildings destroyed in Zionist bombardment in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. — AFP

## Kuwait condemns Zionist atrocities, welcomes ICJ's advisory opinion

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Friday welcomed the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) concerning the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Zionist occupation in the occupied Palestinian territory. In a press release, the ministry said the move reflects the occupation's illegitimate and unlawful practices that aim at maintaining matters that violate all international legitimacy resolutions, which confirm the Palestinian people's legal rights, including an independent statehood on the 1967 border with East Jerusalem being its capital.

It added that as the ICJ's declaration marks a new term of reference added to earlier references that recognize the brotherly Palestinian people's legitimate rights, the State of Kuwait calls on the international community to take on its legal, political, and moral duties to fulfill the Palestinian people's expectations of an independent state and ceasefire.

### Zionist presence unlawful

The ICJ ruled on Friday that the Zionist occupation's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territory is "unlawful" and that it should come to an end "as rapidly as possible." This came in an advisory opinion issued by the ICJ with respect to the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of the occupation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

Based in The Hague, the ICJ said the Zionist occupation should put an end to its unlawful presence in Palestine as soon as possible, halt all new settlement activities immediately, and, thence, deport all settlers from occupied Palestinian territories. The

ICJ added that the occupation's obligations include paying restitution for harm and "the evacuation of all settlers from existing settlements." It further called on all countries not to recognize the unlawful status arising from the occupation of Palestinian territories.

### Storming into mosque

In another development, the Foreign Ministry voiced Kuwait's strong commendation and denunciation of the Zionist National Security Minister's storming into Al-Aqsa Mosque and preventing Muslims from getting into it. In a statement, the ministry also condemned the Knesset's resolution rejecting setting up a Palestinian state, saying that the move is a blatant violation of international legitimacy resolutions.

The step also undermines efforts made by the international community to revive the peace process in the Middle East and implement the two-state solution, it stated. The ministry warned against such steps made by Zionists that undermine chances for peace, increase violence, and aggravate the crisis. The ministry called on the international community to take action to put an end to this chain of violations and war crimes committed by Zionists against Palestinian people and compel it to comply with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, the statement concluded.

### New health crisis looms

Meanwhile, poliovirus has been detected in samples of sewage water in the war-ravaged Gaza Strip, raising alarms of a potential health catastrophe, Gaza health authorities warned. In a press statement, the health authorities said the tests on sewage samples were conducted in collaboration with UNICEF. Authorities stressed that the presence of this virus poses a significant health threat, endangering thousands of people, especially children. The risk of polio infection is heightened due to extensive infrastructure damage, lack of hygiene, and sanitation facilities in residential areas and makeshift shelters, they argued. — KUNA



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Bangladesh army out in force as police fire on demonstrators



Smoke rises from a building hit by a Zionist strike in Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip on July 20, 2024. — AFP

## Zionist entity kills dozens as it steps up Gaza bombardment

Journalist Jasser, his wife and two children among 37 killed in strikes

CAIRO: Zionist forces pounded several areas across the Gaza Strip on Saturday, killing at least 30 Palestinians, according to health officials, as tanks advanced deeper into western and northern Rafah. Among those killed on Saturday were local journalist Mohammad Abu Jasser, his wife, and two children, in a Zionist strike on their house in the northern Gaza Strip, a medic said. Gaza's Hamas-run government media office said Abu Jasser's death raised to 161 the number of Palestinian media personnel killed by Zionist fire since Oct 7.

Zionist military strikes across Gaza killed 37 Palestinians in the past 24 hours and destroyed several houses. In Al-Nuseirat camp in central Gaza Strip, an air strike on a multi-floor building, wounded several people, including two local journalists, rescue workers said. In Rafah, where the Zionist entity said it aimed to dismantle the last battalions of Hamas' armed wing, residents said tanks advanced deeper into northern areas of the city and took control of a hilltop in the west, amid fierce gun battles with Hamas-led fighters.

The army said troops continued operations in Rafah, eliminating many gunmen over the past day in the area of Tel-Al-Sultan on the western side of the city. In Central Gaza, the military said it conducted raids on militants' infrastructure. The military also said it hit a structure used by Palestinian militants in Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza Strip, saying gunmen were operating from a humanitarian area, and accused Gaza militants of exploiting civilian structure and population for military purposes, an allegation Hamas and other groups reject as false to justify such at-

tacks. A ceasefire effort led by Qatar and Egypt and backed by the United States has so far failed due to disputes between the combatants, who blame each other for the impasse. At least 38,919 Palestinians have been killed in the Zionist entity's retaliatory offensive since then, Gaza health authorities say. On Tuesday, the Zionist entity said it had eliminated half the leadership of Hamas' military wing and killed or captured about 14,000 fighters since the start of the war. The Zionist entity says 326 of its soldiers have been killed in Gaza. — Reuters

### Outspoken US congresswoman Jackson Lee dies

WASHINGTON: Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, a Democrat and outspoken advocate for racial justice and minorities' rights, has died, her family said on Friday. She was 74. Lee, a black representative from Texas who served in Congress for nearly three decades, revealed last month that she had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.



Sheila Jackson Lee

"Today, with incredible grief for our loss yet deep gratitude for the life she shared with us, we announce the passing of Representative Sheila Jackson Lee," her family said in a statement posted on social platform X. The family described her as "a fierce champion of the people" and a "humanitarian".

Calling Jackson Lee a "towering figure in our politics," US President Joe Biden wrote in a statement Saturday that "she spoke truth to power and represented the power of the people of her district in Houston with dignity and grace". The Congressional Black Caucus paid tribute to the "titan and stalwart member of Congress" and "a fierce advocate for social and economic justice, national and homeland security, energy independence, and children and working families."

During her tenure she served, among other things, on the Judiciary Subcommittee for Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security and on the Homeland Security, Judiciary and Budget committees. She also led some key legislative initiatives, including authoring the Violence Against Women's Act and the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act.

Former president Bill Clinton in a statement called her "a fearless fighter for the people" and "one of our country's most effective leaders". Last year Jackson Lee showed up at a protest in Houston against anti-Asian hate, bringing several Asian children on stage to declare "Stop the Asian hate, stand for the American flag."

There were also tributes for Jackson Lee from some politicians at the other end of the political spectrum. "While we rarely agreed on policy, I always enjoyed our spirited debates about law and policy, and I counted her as a friend," US House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson, a Republican who served with her on the judiciary committee for seven years, said in a statement. — Agencies

### Gaza hospital says newborn saved from dead mother's womb

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES: A Gaza hospital said Saturday it saved a baby boy from his mother's womb after she died from wounds sustained in a Zionist strike. Ola Adnan Harb al-Kurd, who was nine months pregnant, barely survived a punishing night of missile strikes that rescue services across the Hamas-run territory said killed more than 24 people, including six members of the same family. But by the time Kurd reached Al-Awda Hospital, she was "almost dead", according to surgeon Akram Hussein.

Doctors were unable to save the mother, but performed an ultrasound that detected the baby's heartbeat. They quickly staged an emergency cesarean section "and extracted the fetus," the surgeon told AFP.

The newborn was initially in critical condition, but after receiving oxygen and medical attention was stabilized, said Raed Al-Saudi, head of the hospital's obstetrics and gynaecology department.

He was placed in an incubator and transferred to Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir el-Balah. Kurd was among three women and a child killed by a Zionist missile fired on the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, according to a medical official at Al-Awda Hospital. Her husband was also wounded in the strike on the family home. The Zionist entity has not confirmed individual strikes, but a military statement said troops were "conducting targeted raids on terrorist infrastructure sites" in central Gaza.

The Zionist entity's military statement said "troops eliminated a number of terrorists in sev-



Baby Malek, who was reportedly delivered by Cesarean section after his 9-month pregnant mother succumbed to her injuries sustained during an overnight Zionist strike on Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip, is caressed by his grandfather as he lies in an incubator at the Al-Aqsa Martyr's hospital in Deir el-Balah on July 20, 2024. — AFP

eral different encounters" and had launched an operation on the Tal al-Sultan refugee camp near the southern city of Rafah. The war in Gaza has made childbirth increasingly perilous, with pregnant women facing not only near-daily strikes that hamper access to health facilities, but also widespread food insecurity, degrading sanitary

conditions and water scarcity.

The few hospitals that are still working have been stretched to breaking point, according to humanitarian groups. Pre-term deliveries and maternal complications, including eclampsia, haemorrhage and sepsis, have been rising, Doctors Without Borders said this week. — AFP

On Wednesday the Indian navy rescued nine crew members and recovered one body from the Comorian-flagged MV Prestige Falcon oil tanker that had capsized off the coast of Oman earlier this week. — AFP

### Indian coast guard battling fire aboard vessel in Arabian Sea

NEW DELHI: Three Indian Coast Guard ships were battling a major fire Saturday aboard a cargo vessel in the Arabian Sea after it picked up a distress call, the organization said.

The vessel MV Maersk Frankfurt reported explo-

sions on its front deck on Friday, 6.5 nautical miles (12 kilometers) south of Karwar while sailing from India's Gujarat state to Colombo in Sri Lanka. "Ships Sujeet, Sachet and Samrat have been fighting the fire for over 12 hours, preventing its spread," the India Coast Guard said in a statement Saturday posted on social media platform X.

It posted images and videos showing the firefighting effort. No casualties were reported from the merchant vessel. The coast guard said a Donier aircraft was conducting aerial assessments and that an additional plane was also in position for search and rescue. It said another

ship was also dispatched from Mumbai and likely to join the effort by Sunday. The Indian Express newspaper reported the MV Maersk Frankfurt was carrying International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) cargo, quoting an unnamed coast guard spokesperson. It said the firefighting operation was being carried out "amid rough seas and inclement weather conditions".



## International

# Resurgent Trump reclaiming campaign stage after shooting

## Most polls show Trump on course for an Oval Office return

**GRAND RAPIDS, US:** Riding high after a triumphant convention that formalized Donald Trump as the Republican Party's White House nominee, the ex-president returns to the campaign trail Saturday for his first rally since narrowly escaping assassination.

As Trump descends on battleground Michigan to stump in public with his vice presidential running mate J D Vance for the first time, Joe Biden's campaign is grappling with an internal Democratic Party revolt from senior lawmakers and donors calling on the 81-year-old president to quit the race. Biden has paused campaigning to nurse a case of COVID, while he and his inner circle engage in political firefighting as party stalwarts warn that by remaining on the ticket Biden could lead Democrats to defeat of the White House and both chambers of Congress. Team Trump for its part is effervescent. This week's four-day Republican National Convention went off without a hitch, and the 78-year-old candidate's mission of demonstrating absolute control over the party and firing up his base appears accomplished. Dozens of the most ardent supporters were already lined up late Friday outside Van Andel Arena to be the first allowed through the doors.

"I'm going in and seeing one of the strongest SOB's there is, plain and simple," Sherri Bonoite, a 75-year-old grandmother from Michigan attending her first Trump rally, told AFP. "Even a speeding bullet couldn't stop him. And he's what this country needs." With Saturday's 5 pm (2100 GMT) indoor assemblage in downtown Grand Rapids, Trump embraces a moment remarkable by any measure: striding back on stage exactly one week since a 20-year-old gunman on a rooftop sprayed an outdoor Pennsylvania rally with bullets, killing one attendee and wounding Trump.

"I had God on my side," he told the convention Thursday, as he described how a bullet narrowly missed his head and grazed his ear.

### Eyes on security

Trump may not discuss details of last week's trauma, as he told the recent convention: "You'll never hear it



**MILWAUKEE, US:** Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump (center) stands onstage alongside his family, Melania Trump, Republican vice presidential candidate J D Vance (third right) and his wife Usha Vance, during the last day of the 2024 Republican National Convention at the Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on July 18, 2024. — AFP

from me a second time because it's actually too painful to tell." Instead he would flaunt his new status as the party's flagbearer after officially accepting the nomination at the convention—and bask in the adoring reception in store for when he walks out to a partisan crowd.

All eyes however are on the security posture, especially given how major questions remain over Secret Service lapses at the Pennsylvania event. Trump would speak inside an enclosed 12,000-capacity sports facility that allows more complete control of a prime-

ter. Security nevertheless is expected to be extra tight around Trump in the wake of the most egregious Secret Service failure in decades.

He also makes his debut campaign appearance with vice presidential pick Vance, a US senator from Ohio who at age 39 could appeal to younger voters.

And Vance's blue-collar connection could help Trump, a billionaire businessman, win over critical swing states like Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Meanwhile Biden's campaign is lurching from cri-

sis to crisis. A disastrous debate performance against Trump three weeks ago sparked panic about his age and health, and whether the veteran politician has the capacity to stave off a resurgent Trump in November. Most polls show Trump on course for an Oval Office return. More than 30 House Democrats and four senators have now called on Biden to drop out, and several party luminaries including Barack Obama have reportedly urged the president to reconsider his decision to stay in the race. — AFP

## Stark divide on show as Cyprus marks 50 years since invasion

**NICOSIA:** Cyprus on Saturday marked 50 years since Turkish troops invaded the Mediterranean island, with comments from the Turkish and Cypriot leaders demonstrating the stark divide that remains. The Greek-Cypriot president of Cyprus, who seeks a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation under a UN framework, said there was no other option but reunification.

But in an address at about the same time on the other side of a UN-patrolled buffer zone, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan rejected a federal solution and said he saw no point in continuing UN-led negotiations on the island's future. As dawn broke in the internationally recognized south of the island, sirens wailed at 5:30 am (0230 GMT), the time that Operation Atilla began in 1974. The invasion led to the conquering of one-third of Cyprus and displacement of about 40 percent of the population. The buffer zone, where abandoned buildings crumble, cuts across the island with border controls separating Greek Cypriots in the south from Turkish Cypriots in the north.

The United Nations says around 40,000 Turkish soldiers also remain in the north. Decades of UN-backed talks have failed to reunify the island, and the last round collapsed in 2017 after meetings in Crans-Montana, Switzerland. "We believe that a federal solution is not possible in Cyprus. It is of no benefit to anyone to say let's continue negotiations where we left off in Switzerland years ago," Erdogan said in the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which is



**NORTH NICOSIA, Cyprus:** Turkish-Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar (third right) and his wife Sibel listen to Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (second left) during a military parade, as Cyprus marks 50 years since Turkish troops invaded the Mediterranean island, in the northern part of Cyprus' divided capital Nicosia on July 20, 2024. — AFP

only recognized by Ankara. "The Turkish Cypriot side should sit at the table as equals with the Greek Cypriot side. We are ready to negotiate and achieve lasting peace and a solution," he said before watching a parade that included marching bands and armored military vehicles.

Turkish and TRNC flags flew side-by-side. On the other side of Nicosia, the world's last divided capital, President Nikos Christodoulides unveiled busts of officers killed in the fighting. He also laid a wreath at a war memorial where ceremonial gunfire sounded. "Whatever Mr Erdogan and his representatives in the occupied areas do or say, Turkey, 50 years later, continues to be responsible for the violation of human rights of the entire Cypriot people and for the violation of international law," Christodoulides told reporters. Decades on, fresh tears flowed for those who died during the invasion.

Under a hot sun at the war memorial, a mother clad in black cried over the tomb of her son. She ran her hand gently over a photo of the young man attached to a marble cross. Other women wiped their eyes nearby. Greek flags waved on graves that stretched out in rows around them as mourners placed flowers and incense. More than 750 Greek Cypriots and almost 200 Turkish Cypriots remain missing, says the bi-communal Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus which tries to find and return their remains to loved ones.

Before the anniversary, some Greek Cypriot veterans of the fight against the invasion told AFP they saw no hope for reunification. "Perhaps, what was completely broken in 1974, cannot be fixed," the English-language Cyprus Mail newspaper wrote in an editorial Saturday. "They probably consider reunification too big a risk to take," it said, and most people on both side "have no experience other than that of a divided country." — AFP

## Air India ferry flight picks up passengers

**NEW DELHI:** Air India said on Friday a plane sent to pick up passengers stranded in Russia has departed for San Francisco after the previous day's flight made an emergency landing there. An Air India airplane flying from Delhi to the West Coast city made an emergency landing in Russia after the crew detected a potential issue in the cargo hold area, its second such incident on the route in just over a year.

In a statement, Air India said a team, including crew and security personnel, were on board the ferry flight and that it had set up a dedicated hotline for anyone wanting to reach out to passengers. Many carriers, including US and European Union airlines, avoid Russian airspace following the war in Ukraine, but Air India uses that route, giving it a flying time and cost advantage on US-bound flights. The Indian embassy in Russia said on social media platform X that a team of three senior officials and an interpreter have reached Krasnoyarsk airport to assist the passengers. A US State Department spokesperson said in an emailed statement that about one-third of the passengers are US citizens, adding that it has been in contact with a number of passengers and their family members. The Boeing 777 aircraft, carrying 225 passengers and 19 flight crew, made a precautionary landing safely in the Russian region of Siberia at the Krasnoyarsk International Airport, the airline said in a statement. The airport said the flight's crew had been moved to hotels, and passengers were in the international departure area, which angered some of those stranded, according to social media posts. Mayank Gupta, whose mother was on the flight, wrote on X he was "sad and angry" that her medicines and luggage remained on the airplane. — Reuters

## Global IT crash wrecks havoc...

### Continued from Page 1

CrowdStrike Falcon cybersecurity software. In a Saturday blog post, CrowdStrike said it had released an update on Thursday night that caused a system crash and the infamous "blue screen of death" fatal error message. CrowdStrike said it had rolled out a fix for the problem and the company's boss, George Kurtz, told US news channel CNBC he wanted to "personally apologize to every organization, every group and every person who has been impacted".

Kuwait Airways' systems are working normally round the clock and its communications with passengers, foreign stations and security sectors are going on uninterrupted, said its CEO Ahmad Al-Kreebani Friday. The Kuwaiti national airline's cybersecurity and information technology teams have immediately taken the required procedures of isolating the affected systems to ensure the safety of passengers and aircraft, he said in a press statement. Kuwait-based Jazeera Airways however that its operating systems were affected by the technical glitch. The low-cost airline indicated its IT operations were heavily impacted.

Production and export operations of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) are going on normally, the company's spokesman Eisa Al-Maraghi said Friday. Maraghi, who doubles as KOC's Deputy CEO for Planning and Innovation, said the company does not use the CrowdStrike system and that its systems are working normally. He pointed out KOC's technical teams are on high alert to deal with any emergency as per relevant procedures.

Acting CEO of Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) Sheikh Khaled Al-Sabah assured the company's tankers have not been affected by the global IT glitch. Sheikh

Khaled affirmed the company's fleet is proceeding normally, adding the company has a series of measures to be applied in cases of emergency.

Services provided by the Central Bank of Kuwait are uninterrupted, the bank affirmed on Friday. In a press release, the Central Bank revealed that the national banking sector was resilient in response despite the outage affecting Internet services on a global scale. The Central Bank instructed all entities under its supervision to implement its emergency plans to ensure the banking sector would continue to provide services and not affect the financial stability in Kuwait.

Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and Industry Omar Al-Omar said Friday that CrowdStrike fully backs the Kuwaiti government's response to the global IT outage. He said in a press statement that he had received a phone call from CrowdStrike's Regional Director Ibrahim Badawi, who quoted the company's CEO Kurtz as supporting Kuwait's response to the incident.

He added that Badawi had briefed him on the latest developments of the glitch and confirmed the company's backing to Kuwaiti government departments that use the company's software out of its belief in necessary cooperation with its partners to overcome such challenges. The minister added that the company had apologized for the IT outage and affirmed that work was going on to fix any technical consequences.

Kuwait has established an operation room and hotline to monitor and counter cyberattacks or threats caused by a malfunction in the CrowdStrike update system, Omar said on Friday. The minister revealed the step to establish the emergency team came on directives from HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah.

The team, comprising of several state entities including the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA), is tasked to monitor the situation connected with the CrowdStrike issue and would take necessary measures to prevent attacks and safeguard digital infrastructure. — Agencies

## Zionists strike after Houthis...

### Continued from Page 1

Politburo member Bukhaiti said the attacks would not stop until a Gaza ceasefire was reached. "Our demand is fair: Stop the genocide in Gaza, lift the siege on its residents, and we will stop our military operations," he said on social media platform X, sharing footage of the aftermath of the drone strike. Top Houthi official Mohamed Ali Al-Houthi said the "first operation" to strike Tel

## Zionist occupation of Palestinian...

### Continued from Page 1

land — not in our eternal capital Jerusalem, nor in our ancestral heritage of Judea and Samaria" (the occupied West Bank), Netanyahu said in a statement. Palestinian foreign minister Riyad Al-Maliki called it a "watershed moment", while Hamas called for "immediate" international action to end the Zionist entity's occupation of the Palestinian territories.

A separate, high-profile case that South Africa has brought before the court alleges that the Zionist entity has committed genocidal acts during its Gaza offensive. South Africa, in a statement, called upon the international community "to bring an immediate end to the occupation and the gross violations of international humanitarian and human rights law being perpetrated by (the Zionist entity) against the Palestinian people".

In late 2022, the UN's General Assembly asked the ICJ to give an "advisory opinion" on the "legal conse-

quences arising from the policies and practices of (the Zionist entity) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem". The ICJ held a week-long session in February to hear submissions from countries following the request — supported by most countries within the Assembly.

During the hearings, most speakers called on the Zionist entity to end its 57-year occupation. They warned a prolonged occupation posed an "extreme danger" to stability in the Middle East and beyond. But the United States said the Zionist entity should not be legally obliged to withdraw without taking its "very real security needs" into account. The Zionist entity did not take part in the oral hearings.

The General Assembly asked the ICJ to consider two questions. Firstly, the court should examine the legal consequences of what the UN called "the ongoing violation by (the Zionist entity) of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination". In its answer, the ICJ's judges said the Zionist entity's "unlawful policies and practices are in breach" of its "obligation to respect the rights of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination". — AFP



## International

# Bangladesh army out in force as police fire on demonstrators

## Violence claims over 115 lives, poses challenge to Hasina

DHAKA: Soldiers were patrolling Bangladeshi cities on Saturday to quell growing civil unrest sparked by student demonstrations, with riot police firing on protesters who defied a government curfew.

This week's violence has killed at least 115 people so far, according to an AFP count of victims reported by police and hospitals, and poses a monumental challenge to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's autocratic government after 15 years in office. A government curfew went into effect at midnight and the premier's office asked the military to deploy troops after police again failed to subdue widespread mayhem.

"The army has been deployed nationwide to control the law and order situation," armed forces spokesman Shahdat Hossain told AFP. The curfew will remain in effect until at least 10 am (0400 GMT) Sunday, private broadcaster Channel 24 reported. Streets of the capital Dhaka were almost deserted at daybreak, with troops on foot and in armored personnel carriers patrolling the sprawling megacity of 20 million.

Thousands returned to the streets later in the day in the residential neighborhood of Rampura, with police firing live rounds at the crowd and wounding at least one person. "Our backs are to the wall," protester Nazrul Islam, 52, told AFP at the scene. "There's anarchy going on in the country... They are shooting at people like birds."

Hospitals have reported a growing number of gunshot deaths to AFP since Thursday. "Hundreds of thousands of people" had battled police across the capital on Friday, police spokesman Faruk Hossain told AFP. "At least 150 police officers were admitted to hospital. Another 150 were given first aid treatment," he said, adding that two officers had been beaten to death.

"The protesters torched many police booths... Many government offices were torched and vandal-

ized." A spokesman for Students Against Discrimination, the main group organizing the protests, told AFP that two of its leaders had been arrested since Friday. A second senior official from the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was arrested in the early hours of Saturday, party spokesman Sairul Islam Khan told AFP.

Hasina had been due to leave the country on Sunday for a planned diplomatic tour but abandoned her plans after a week of escalating violence. "She has cancelled her Spain and Brazil tours due to the prevailing situation, her press secretary Nayeemul Islam Khan told AFP.

Near-daily marches this month have called for an end to a quota system that reserves more than half of civil service posts for specific groups, including children of veterans from the country's 1971 liberation war against Pakistan. Critics say the scheme benefits children of pro-government groups that back Hasina, 76, who has ruled the country since 2009 and won her fourth consecutive election in January after a vote without genuine opposition.

Hasina's government is accused by rights groups of misusing state institutions to entrench its hold on power and stamp out dissent, including by the extra-judicial killing of opposition activists. Since the first deaths on Tuesday, protesters have begun demanding Hasina leave office.

"It's not about the rights of the students anymore," business owner Hasibul Sheikh, 24, told AFP at the scene of the Rampura protest. "We are here as the general public now," he added. "Our demand is one point now, and that's the resignation of the government."

Pierre Prakash of Crisis Group told AFP the lack of competitive elections since Hasina took office had led to mounting public frustration. "With no real alterna-

"Trong was a very enthusiastic patriot in his own manner," blogger DzungArt Nguyen wrote in a Facebook post.

"(We) acknowledge his passion... may he rest in peace." The profile pictures of social media accounts for Vietnamese state media agencies were also changed to black, with companies and NGOs in the country following suit.

In Beijing, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited the Vietnamese embassy "to mourn the passing" of his fellow communist party general secretary, state news outlet Xinhua reported. Trong's death was announced a day after Vietnam's Communist Party said he would hand the reins of power to the country's president and former public security minister To Lam.

At the time, the party said Trong would be focusing on treatment for an undisclosed medical condition, the first time it had addressed long-standing speculation about the ageing leader's health.

There were no further details about Trong's illness, and the party said it would later make "a special statement on the organization of the funeral at the national level". After arrangements for Trong's funeral are announced, an official period of mourning will begin, with flags flown at half mast and all cultural and art activities cancelled. Entertainment and

proached the bridge but that other drivers started "yelling at me to brake and stop the car".

"A truck in front of me didn't stop" and fell into the water, the witness, surnamed Meng, said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has urged "all-out rescue and relief efforts" to find those still missing, Xinhua said. In the southwestern province of Sichuan, more than 30 people were reported missing on Saturday after a violent thunderstorm caused flash flooding in the town of Ya'an, according to state broadcaster CCTV. On Friday, state media reported at least five people dead and eight missing after the rains sparked flooding and mudslides in Shaanxi's Baoji city.

State television broadcast images of neighborhoods completely flooded by muddy water, with excavators and residents attempting to clear the damage. The semi-desert province of Gansu, which neighbors Shaanxi, and Henan in central China were also hit by heavy rains this week.

In Henan's Nanyang city, the equivalent of a year's worth of rain fell at the start of the week, CCTV said.

And in Sichuan province, two people were reported killed and seven others missing Friday after heavy rain triggered landslides, Xinhua said. China is

the building," a spokesperson for the city's municipal body told AFP.

The spokesperson did not confirm whether any residents of the building were missing or had been trapped under the rubble. Images posted on social media showed rescuers clearing the rubble in the rain. Monsoon rains lash much of India from June to September and are vital to replenishing rivers and groundwater in the country but the deluge also causes widespread destruction.

Building collapses are common during this period, with old and rickety structures buckling under days of non-stop rain. In 2021, in the western state of Maharashtra, of which Mumbai is the capital, 200 people were killed by monsoon-triggered floods and landslides that also forced a quarter of a million to evacuate their homes. — AFP

countries over a vast area of northern Australia.

The exercises are consuming a million liters of aviation fuel a day, as fighter jets from the United States, Britain, Australia, Singapore, Japan and South Korea, among others, test war tactics and skills, organizers said. The Philippines brought four of its 12 South Korean-built FA-50 fighter jets to the games and is assessing the capabilities of more advanced jets for its modernization program, the contingent's commander, Colonel Randy Pascua, told Reuters in Darwin. The Philippine military chief Romeo Brawner said this month the government had approved a decision to buy "faster and more lethal" multi role jet fighters because the FA-50 was "not enough to defend our country", although no decision had been



DHAKA: Anti-quota protesters clash with the police in Dhaka on July 19, 2024. — AFP

made on the type or how many. Pascua said the air force needs to close a "big technological gap" as it modernizes its fighter jets, including lifting pilot skills. "If we have to acquire more than 20 multi-role fighters, we really need to step up," he said. "We are here to train and enhance our operational capability because we had lost capability for air defense for decades." Participation in Pitch Black would strengthen the Philippines' international partnerships and "enforce our commitment to regional security and stability", he said.

The Philippines Air Force is focused on maritime domain awareness in joint operations with the navy, and Manila is building its air defenses amid tensions with Beijing. — Reuters



HANOI, Vietnam: A man reads a newspaper reporting on the death of Nguyen Phu Trong, the general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, in Hanoi on July 20, 2024. — AFP

sporting event organizers have already suspended activities. Trong is the first party general secretary to die in office since the death in 1986 of Le Duan, a brother-in-arms of Ho Chi Minh.

He is also the first leader to have held three consecutive mandates as the head of the party, after the liberalization of the economy in 1986. — AFP



The site of a bridge collapse in Zhashui County in Shangluo City, northwest China's Shaanxi Province. — AFP

enduring a summer of extreme weather, with heavy rains across the east and south coming as much of the north has sweltered in successive heatwaves.

Climate change, which scientists say is exacerbated by greenhouse gas emissions, is making these types of extreme weather phenomena more frequent and more intense. In May, a highway in southern China collapsed after days of rain, leaving 48 dead. This month, a tornado passed through a town in eastern China killing one, injuring 79 and causing major damage. — AFP



Rescue personnel gather outside the partially collapsed Rubinissa Manzil, a residential building in Mumbai on July 20, 2024. — AFP

## Vietnam social media users black out profile pics to mourn leader

HANOI: Vietnamese social media users changed their profile pictures to black on Saturday in a show of mourning for the country's late leader Nguyen Phu Trong, whose death was announced the previous day.

Users on Facebook, X and Threads also posted photos and eulogies of the former Communist Party general secretary after Vietnam's state media announced on Friday that the 80-year-old had died at a military hospital in Hanoi "due to old age and serious illness". Vietnam has one of the most heavily restricted media environments in the world and citizens are often hesitant to express their views online.

"A great heart has stopped," Hoang Quoc Ky wrote on his Facebook page after changing his cover photo to a picture of Vietnam's flag flying at half-mast. "He was a bright and perfect communist, a sharp politician... who devoted his whole life for socialism and the happiness of the people," Ky added.

## China bridge collapse kills 12, leaves more than 30 missing

BEIJING: A bridge collapse caused by torrential rains in northern China killed 12 people and left more than 30 missing, state media said Saturday.

Large parts of northern and central China have been battered in recent days by rains that have caused flooding and significant damage. The bridge in the northwestern Shaanxi province buckled "due to a sudden downpour and flash floods" Friday night, according to state news agency Xinhua.

All 12 victims in the city of Shangluo were found inside five vehicles that were recovered from the river below the bridge, Xinhua said. At least 31 people remained missing and initial investigations indicated that 17 cars and eight trucks had fallen into the river, it added.

Images on state television showed a partially submerged section of the bridge with the river rushing over it. One witness told local media that he had ap-

## Monsoon rains pound India's financial hub

MUMBAI: Monsoon rains pounded India's financial hub of Mumbai on Saturday, causing the partial collapse of a residential building that killed at least one person, a municipal official said. A woman died and four others were injured after sections of a four-storey building came crashing down in Grant Road, an affluent suburb in the south of the city.

"The woman who died was not a resident of

## Philippines eyes faster, more lethal fighter jets

DARWIN: The Philippine Air Force must ramp up pilot training if it is to buy 20 or more multi-role fighter jets as it modernizes and expands joint operations with its navy, a commander said on Saturday.

Philippine pilots are taking part for the first time in multinational war games overseas, the Pitch Black war games involving 20 Indo-Pacific and European

### News in Brief

#### Police injured in Dublin riot

LONDON: Three police officers were injured and one man was arrested late Friday in the latest anti-immigration protests at a site earmarked for housing asylum seekers in Dublin, authorities said. It was the latest in a series of clashes at the site in a deprived northern suburb of the Irish capital over the past week. Police said a planned public gathering at the site on Friday initially "passed off peacefully" before turning into an "incident of public disorder". A fire broke out at the building site, with police subjected to "both verbal and physical abuse including rocks, concrete bricks and other objects being thrown at them", they said in a statement. — AFP

#### Spain detains 3 over cyberattacks

MADRID: Spanish police said Saturday that they had arrested three people accused of taking part in cyberattacks by a pro-Russian group targeting public institutions and strategic sectors in Spain and other NATO countries. The attacks targeted countries that have supported Ukraine in its struggle against the Russian invasion. Two of the suspects were arrested in Huelva and Seville in southern Spain, while the third was detained in the Balearic Islands, a Guardia Civil police statement said. — AFP

#### Rights defender killed in Mexico

MEXICO CITY: A Mexican Indigenous rights defender was killed alongside his wife and daughter when unknown assailants riddled their car with bullets and set it ablaze, a prosecutor's office said Friday. Lorenzo Santos Torres, 53, and his family were traveling in a pickup truck along a highway in the southern state of Oaxaca when they were intercepted and shot on Thursday. The attackers then set fire to the vehicle with the passengers inside, the state prosecutor's office said. — AFP

#### Senegal detains migrant boat

DAKAR: Senegal's army said Saturday that it had intercepted a boat carrying over 200 migrants trying to reach Europe, after nearly 90 died when attempting the dangerous Atlantic crossing earlier this month. The boat intercepted by the patrol boat in fishing waters near Lompoul in northwest Senegal on Friday was carrying 202 people, including five women and a minor, the army posted on X. In early July, a boat carrying around 170 people who set off from Senegal capsized off the coast of Mauritania, killing nearly 90 people. — AFP

#### France blasts Russia's verdict

PARIS: France on Saturday condemned Russia's conviction of American reporter Evan Gershkovich to 16 years in jail for "espionage", with the foreign ministry calling it "appalling". Paris "calls on Russian authorities to free Evan Gershkovich as well as all political prisoners, Russian or foreign," ministry spokesman Christophe Lemoine said in a statement. France "condemns (his) appalling conviction to 16 years in a penal colony," he said, charging that "Russia's authoritarian drift continues to intensify". Wall Street Journal correspondent Gershkovich, who pleaded not guilty, became the first journalist in Russia to be charged with spying since the Cold War when he was detained in 2023. — AFP



SUNDAY, JULY 21, 2024

# Computer outages expose dangers of global technological dependence

'So much of economy is now resting on just a handful of big cloud companies'

**WASHINGTON:** Catastrophic computer outages caused by a software update from one company have once again exposed the dangers of global technological dependence on a handful of players, experts warned on Friday.

A flawed update sent out by the little-known security firm CrowdStrike brought airlines, TV stations, and myriad other aspects of daily life to a standstill. The outages affected companies or individuals that use CrowdStrike on the Microsoft Windows platform: when they applied the update, the incompatible software crashed computers into a frozen state known as the "Blue Screen of Death."

"Today CrowdStrike has become a household name, but not in a good way, and this will take time to settle down," said Dan Ives of Wedbush Securities. The breakdown quickly fueled discussions about internet giants' power over the increasingly digital world economy, with more activity now taking place in the computing "cloud" or on a few apps or platforms.

When those platforms have flaws—or are deliberately attacked—the world seems to collapse. In recent months, entire healthcare systems and industries have been paralyzed after hackers infiltrated their systems, leaving consumers at their wits' end and companies at a loss. "I think we're just getting a taste of some potential effects of real reliance by the financial sector and sectors across the economy on a handful of cloud companies and other key systems," Rohit Chopra, director of the US Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, told CNBC.

"There are just a handful of big cloud companies where so much of the economy is now resting." The world has seen a major shift to cloud computing, where companies use servers offered by big tech giants for their computing needs instead of their own infrastructure. Amazon, through its AWS company, is the world leader, followed by Microsoft's Azure and Google Cloud. Friday's breakdown was caused by a malfunctioning software update fed to Microsoft Windows users by CrowdStrike, which



Passengers arrive in the check-in area of Gatwick Airport as some flights are cancelled or delayed, in Horley, south of London on July 20, 2024. — AFP

specializes in cybersecurity for cloud-based companies. "We're deeply sorry for the impact we've caused to customers, travelers, and anyone affected by this," CrowdStrike CEO Kurtz said in an interview on NBC's "Today" show.

Microsoft blamed the problems on CrowdStrike, but industry insiders warned that the issue stems from entrusting the digital world to just a few key companies. "It's going to continue to raise issues for systems or businesses wholly dependent on Microsoft—this issue of concentration risk," Michael Daniel, former

White House cybersecurity coordinator and current head of the Cyber Threat Alliance told AFP. "How do you balance the benefits of having everybody on the same operating system with the concentration risk that poses?"

Callie Guenther, senior manager of cyber threat research at Critical Start, warned that the shift to big players amplifies the impact of any system failure or vulnerability. One error, like CrowdStrike's on Friday, threatens society's smooth functioning worldwide, she said. Andrius Minkevicius, co-founder of Cyber Up-

grade, a cybersecurity company, said that businesses must fight the complacency often associated with outsourcing technology to the big vendors. "Today, we're seeing an example of those who relied mostly on vendor-offered cyber protection without additional contingency plans and are now suffering reputational and financial damage," he said. Experts warn that this incident will likely invite scrutiny from regulators and officials. "CrowdStrike will probably have to let some outside people come in and examine how this happened," said Cyber Threat Alliance's Daniel. — AFP

## At Seattle-area plant, Boeing 777X eyes 2025 commercial launch

**EVERETT:** In a mammoth factory that a Boeing manager calls the largest "on the planet" by volume, the aviation company is assembling the world's biggest double-engine aircraft: the 777X. The Seattle-area plant is filled with several of the flying behemoths at various stages of production, with the snow-capped mountains of Washington state peeking out from behind an open hangar door.

Boeing's Everett plant will be tasked with assembling three versions of the jet: the 777-200 cargo plane, which is based on a 777 model already in service; the next-generation 777-9 which is still being certified; and the 777-8, another new model that is slightly smaller than the 777-9. The company has been under heavy scrutiny following a near-catastrophic January incident on a 737 MAX aircraft operated by Alaska Airlines, which saw a door plug blown out mid-flight.

Several other high-profile mishaps involving its aircraft—although none on 777s—have upped the pressure on the manufacturer, with the company announcing steps to enhance safety and quality control in response. Company officials insist Boeing's long-term prospects remain bright, however, due in part to the new 777X. The 777 -- a stalwart of long-haul commercial aviation—is "the most successful twin aisle airplane of all times," Brad Till, a managing director at Boeing, told journalists during a factory tour held late last month.

Boeing has received more than 2,250 orders for 777 models since the plane family was launched 30 years ago, and 777s have flown roughly 3.9 billion passengers on 15.9 million flights. Boeing unveiled the most recent incarnation of the jet, the 777X in 2013. Deliveries were originally targeted for 2020, but the



EVERETT, US: Monitors and test stations onboard a 777X test aircraft at the Boeing Everett Production Facility on June 26, 2024, in Everett, Washington. — AFP

company hit obstacles during the certification process, with orders now expected to be fulfilled starting in 2025. Boeing recently cleared a key regulatory hurdle on the 777-9, garnering Type Inspection Authorization (TIA) from the US Federal Aviation Administration. "We began certification flight testing with FAA personnel on board the aircraft," Boeing said on July 13. The designation represents a milestone in the aviation certification process and follows extensive agency review of technical data. Boeing's announcement on TIA lent the embattled plane maker some momentum heading into next week's Farnborough air show in Britain, where the company will showcase the 777. The company's display will highlight the 777X's more roomy cabin compared with its predecessor the 777-300 ER, thanks to a thinner fuselage.

Features include more spacious baggage compartments and a sophisticated LED lighting upgrade for

cease the exploitation of Nigerian consumers and their market abuse". It ordered the company to "desist from future similar or other conduct/practices that do not meet nationally applicable standards." Meta did not immediately respond to a request for a response to the fine. But the FCCPC said the company was aware of its 38-month investigation.

About three quarters of the 200 million people in Africa's most populous country are younger than 24 -- a generation that is also hyper-connected to social media. The country had some 164.3 million internet subscriptions as of March, according to the figures published by the National Communication Commission (NCC) on its website. Meta's platforms — WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram — are among the most popular social media in the country.

The minister for communication and the digital economy, Bosun Tijani, said in December that there were "over 51 million WhatsApp users in Nigeria". The European Union (EU) accused Meta at the beginning of July of breaching the bloc's digital rules, paving the way for potential fines worth billions of euros. The EU said Meta's new ad-free subscription model for Facebook and Instagram "forced millions of users" in the bloc to pay to avoid data collection or agree to share their data with Facebook and Instagram to keep using the platforms for free. — AFP

## Mobile millionaires threaten to desert Britain over tax

**LONDON:** For ultra-wealthy entrepreneur Bassim Haidar, living in London has become an expensive indulgence he can no longer justify. While new British Prime Minister Keir Starmer settles into No 10 Downing St, Haidar is searching for homes in Greece and Monaco, because a proposed inheritance tax revamp will make Britain a 'no go' zone for the rich, he says.

Starmer says the overhaul will make Britain's tax system fairer and raise funds for stretched public services. While supportive of some reform, Haidar says the proposed changes could harm the economy if international business owners choose to quit Britain, or avoid moving here, undermining its reputation as an incubator for fledgling firms. The recently ousted Conservative government outlined surprise plans in March to phase out Britain's centuries-old 'non dom' tax regime, which spares wealthy individuals from paying tax on income earned overseas.

But in the run-up to its July 4 election win, Starmer's left-leaning Labour party pledged to also scrap permanent reliefs 'non doms' born outside the UK could obtain if they put non-UK assets into a trust within 15 years of moving to Britain. Now the dust has settled on Labour's return to power, Haidar wants Starmer and finance minister Rachel Reeves to rethink these plans, and to replace them with a new six-figure annual tax on people with net worth in excess of 5 million pounds (\$6.52 million).

Haidar estimates a 150,000 pound levy could raise an additional 4 billion pounds a year for the government, boosting state coffers without triggering an exodus of the non-dom wealthy. "The notion that the UK is simply too good to leave is incorrect," the 53-year-old Nigerian-born, Lebanese citizen told Reuters. "To be taxed so heavily on wealth generated outside Britain, perhaps years before people even moved to the UK, is unfair," he said, urging the government to sit down with globally-mobile millionaires and discuss tax reforms that he said may put UK jobs at risk.

Organizations like Patriotic Millionaires UK are also campaigning to introduce annual wealth levies on the super-rich. Setting a 2 percent tax at a threshold of 10 million pounds a year would impact around 20,000 people, but raise up to 24 billion pounds a year, the group estimates. Investment firms, wealth managers and private bankers who provide financial services to around 70,000 UK-based individuals with 'non-dom' status are on high alert for when the historic tax overhaul might begin. The Labour government reckons it can raise an extra 5 billion pounds a year by tackling domestic tax avoidance. Assessing how much more could be raised by changing tax perks on offshore trusts is more difficult. "It is not possible to directly measure how much foreign income non-doms using the remittance basis have, and therefore what the potential tax base is," the independent Institute for Fiscal Studies said in a report published in March. Inheritance tax raised 2.1 billion pounds between April and June, 83 million pounds more than the same period a year earlier, UK tax authority data published this week showed. Britain has around 37,000 non-doms who opt to be taxed on a 'remittance basis'. — Reuters

## Nigeria fines Meta \$220m for violations

**LAGOS:** Nigeria has issued a \$220 million fine against Meta, the parent company of Facebook and WhatsApp, for "multiple and repeated" violations. The country's Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) on Friday accused Meta of violating the country's data protection and consumer rights laws on Facebook and WhatsApp.

The FCCPC's chief executive officer Adamu Abdullahi said the investigations the commission carried out in conjunction with the Nigeria Data Protection Commission between May 2021 and December 2023 showed that it engaged in "invasive practices against data subjects/consumers in Nigeria". Abdullahi accused Meta of discriminatory practices, abuse of market dominance, sharing Nigerians' personal data without authorization and denying Nigerians the right to determine how their data are used.

Apart from the hefty fine, the FCCPC boss insisted that Meta must "comply with prevailing law and

## Moody's lifts credit rating of Turkey

**WASHINGTON:** Moody's said Friday that it has upgraded Turkey's credit rating on improved governance and progress on inflation, while maintaining the country's outlook as "positive." The shift came as Turkey battles a cost-of-living crisis that prompted President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to drop his opposition to interest rate hikes as a means of tackling inflation.

In June, the country's annual inflation rate stood at 71.6 percent—with consumer price hikes easing after hitting a peak of 75.45 percent in May. Turkey's sovereign credit rating was lifted from B3 to B1, Moody's said on Friday. This was largely due to "improvements in governance, more specifically the decisive and increasingly well-established return to orthodox monetary policy," the agency added. "Inflation and domestic demand have started to moderate, giving us greater confidence that inflationary pressures will ease significantly over the coming months and into 2025," Moody's Ratings said. It noted that Turkey's central bank has been boosting the credibility of monetary policy, and this has been restoring confidence in the Turkish lira. But it warned that "political risk remains a rating constraint." —AFP





Gulf Bank holds AIDanah account's 22nd millionaire semi-annual draw.



Mohammed Al-Qattan (second right) and Najla Al-Eisa (right) during the draw.



Mohammed Al-Qattan signs the cheque of KD 1 million.

# Mohammad Saleh Marafie wins KD 1 million from Gulf Bank

## Gulf Bank holds AIDanah account's 22nd millionaire semi-annual draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is thrilled to announce that Mohammad Saleh Marafie has won a grand prize of KD 1,000,000 in the major AIDanah semi-annual draw, held last Thursday at the Avenues Mall. The event was supervised by representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young, marking the 22nd millionaire in the history of the AIDanah account draws.

The atmosphere was filled with anticipation and excitement as AIDanah Millionaire account customers eagerly awaited the announcement of the lucky winner. During the grand ceremony attended by a large audience, the winner's name was revealed. They were then contacted and informed of their entry into the exclusive group of millionaires, expressing immense happiness and gratitude to Gulf Bank for this life-changing prize.

In his speech at the ceremony, Mohammed Al-Qattan, General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, welcomed the attendees and congratulated the winner. He extended his best wishes to the other AIDanah Millionaire account customers for future draws, emphasizing that those who did not win the KD 1,000,000 prize still have many opportunities ahead. He highlighted the upcoming grand prize of KD 2,000,000 which will be drawn on January 30, 2025.

Al-Qattan also highlighted the significant advancements in Gulf Bank's banking services, including enhancements to the Gulf Bank mobile application, the introduction of quality products, and the expansion of electronic services. He noted improvements to branches, ATMs, and the Call Center. These innovations make Gulf Bank's services the most efficient, fast, and customer-friendly in the banking sector, utilizing advanced technology that surpasses customer expectations.

He added that alongside these service developments, Gulf Bank is implementing a comprehensive plan to convert its branch network into environmentally-friendly facilities. This initiative aims to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions, with a focus on promoting self-service options. The bank has already opened its first eco-friendly branch in the Sabah Al-Ahmad residential area and plans to soon reopen the renovated Jabriya and Abdullah Al-Salem branches.

Al-Qattan concluded his speech by affirming Gulf Bank's commitment to investing generously to provide an extraordinary customer experience. This commitment is part of Gulf Bank's 2025 strategy, which aims to solidify its position as the bank of the future by building advanced digital capabilities and enhancing employee skills.

**Promoting savings culture**  
Najla Al-Eisa, Chief Marketing Officer

### Mohammed Al-Qattan

- Congratulations to the winner and best of luck to all AIDanah Millionaire account holders in future draws.
- The bank has achieved significant advancements and unprecedented breakthroughs in various banking services provided to customers.
- We will continue to generously invest to provide an exceptional customer experience and further simplify our user-friendly services.

at Gulf Bank, expressed Gulf Bank's commitment to creating a joyful atmosphere for customers and attendees at the semi-annual draw. This was achieved through a variety of activities and the distribution of cash prizes, aiming to inspire the audience to embrace a culture of saving.

She elaborated, "For over a quarter-century, the AIDanah Millionaire account has helped us build strong customer relationships. We have achieved significant milestones in promoting sustainability and organizing impactful initiatives and events that benefit the community."

Al-Eisa concluded, "We look forward to continuing to reward our customers for saving through the AIDanah Millionaire account. We encourage everyone to keep depositing into their accounts to increase their chances of winning the grand prize of KD 2 million in the annual draw."

### Numerous prizes

Moreover, Gulf Bank recently decided to distribute the quarterly draw prize of KD 100,000 among 100 winners, each receiving KD 1,000, instead of one winner receiving the full prize amount. This decision is part of the bank's ongoing efforts to reward its customers and promote a savings culture in the community. This initiative has been recognized by the Guinness World Records as the largest cash prize associated with a bank account worldwide.

As a result, the schedule of draws for the AIDanah Millionaire account, which started in 1998 and continues for the 26th consecutive year, has been adjusted. It will now declare two millionaires annually in



Mohammed Al-Qattan and Najla Al-Eisa (right) during the draw.

### Najla Al-Eisa

- We are excited to continue rewarding our customers and encouraging them to save through the AIDanah Millionaire account.
- The bank has achieved many milestones in fulfilling our role in embedding sustainability principles in the community.

### Loyalty rewards and winning opportunities

major draws, with the grand prize for the annual draw being KD 2,000,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 1,000,000.

Furthermore, there will be 10 monthly draw winners receiving KD 1,000 each, in addition to a quarterly draw prize of KD 100,000. The latest draw winner was announced on April 18, 2024, and 100 winners will be announced in the upcoming draw on October 17, 2024, each receiving a prize of KD 1,000. This makes the AIDanah Millionaire account one of the best savings accounts in Kuwait.

One of the many advantages of the AIDanah account, is being the only account in Kuwait that transfers the customers' chances of winning from the previous year to the next, as part of a program that rewards customers for their loyalty to Gulf Bank. In order to increase one's chances of winning, customers must maintain a minimum of KD 200 in their accounts, or deposit continuously to increase their chances of winning.

ning. AIDanah account holders are eligible to win Gulf Bank's monthly, quarterly, and annual AIDanah draws. Gulf Bank's vision is to lead in Kuwait by fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment to deliver exceptional customer service, while sustainably serving the community. With a wide network of branches and innovative digital services, the bank empowers customers to choose how and where they conduct their banking transactions, ensuring a seamless and efficient banking experience.

Aligned with Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait," Gulf Bank collaborates with various stakeholders to achieve sustainable developments across environmental, social, and governance levels through strategically selected initiatives both within and outside the bank.

### Would you like to be the next millionaire?

To enhance your chances of becoming the 23rd millionaire in the AIDanah Millionaire draws, consider increasing your deposits. The deadline for deposits to qualify for the grand annual draw, offering a prize of KD 2 million, is Nov 30, 2024. To participate in future monthly, quarterly, and annual AIDanah draws, customers must maintain a minimum balance of KD 200.

### Empowering Kuwaiti youth talents

As part of its commitment to supporting Kuwaiti youth talents and its continuous efforts to empower women, Gulf Bank enlisted calligrapher Shaima Al-Azmi to inscribe the name of the grand prize winner on the cheque.



People through the Avenues Mall to attend the semi-annual draw on Thursday.



A group photo taken during the ceremony.



# Chinese officials expect bumpy ride for economy after meeting

## Analysts say promises point to continuity, not structural shifts

BEIJING: Chinese officials acknowledged on Friday the sweeping list of economic goals re-emphasized at the end of a key Communist Party meeting this week contained "many complex contradictions," pointing to a bumpy road ahead for policy implementation. Pressure for deep changes in how the world's second-largest economy functions has risen this year, with consumer and business sentiment near record lows domestically, and global leaders increasingly concerned with China's export dominance.

Following a four-day, closed-doors meeting led by President Xi Jinping, which takes place once in roughly five years, officials made a raft of seemingly contradictory pledges, from modernizing the industrial complex while also expanding domestic demand to stimulating growth and simultaneously curbing debt risks. The initial summary of the meeting, known as plenum, did not contain details on how Beijing plans to resolve the tensions between policy goals, such as how to get consumers to spend more while resources flow primarily to producers and infrastructure.

Concerns are growing that without a structural shift that gives consumers a greater role in the economy, debt will continue to outpace growth in order to finance Beijing's industrial modernization and global prominence goals. That raises the stakes. Some analysts warn the current path fuels risks of a prolonged period of near-stagnation and persistent deflation threats as seen in Japan since the 1990s. "High debt levels plus increasing deflationary pressures eventually could result in a Japan-style ... low growth and very low inflation," said Julian Evans-Pritchard, head of China economics at Capital Economics.

"That, I think, would force them to change course on their current policies. But that might not happen straight away. That might only happen in a few years' time." Contradictions in Chinese policy efforts have been present for decades, as were goals to increase manufacturing value added, enhance social security, liberalize land use and improve local government tax revenues.

But making tough choices is an increasingly urgent task. China grew at a slower than expected pace in the second quarter, leaning hard on industrial output and external demand, but showing persistent domestic weakness. Speaking at a media briefing on Friday along with other Party officials, Tang Fangyu, deputy director of the central committee's policy research office, acknowledged the challenges. "The deeper the reform goes, the more complex and acute the conflicts of interest it touches," Tang said.

"Pushing forward Chinese-style modernization faces many complex conflicts and problems, and we must overcome multiple difficulties and obstructions." The European Union Chamber of Commerce in China said it was "positive that China's leadership has again acknowledged many of the headwinds facing the country's economy," but noted the outcome was largely "a reiteration of points." "There appears to be no deviation from (China's) immediate priority, which is to balance its economic recovery against national security concerns, while maintaining social stability."

China is expected to publish a document with more detailed policy plans in the coming days. But the fact that the initial post-plenum announcement borrowed heavily from China's existing playbook disappointed some economists. "Nothing new under the sun: the same industrial policies, the same sense of things," said Alicia Garcia Herrero, chief economist Asia-Pacific at Natixis.

"Really no change in direction, no consumption-led growth, nothing. No sentence on the power of market forces, nothing. So, it's really disappointing." Chinese stocks, not far above the five-year lows hit at the start of 2024, were flat on Friday, suggesting the plenum did little to improve sentiment.

After a similar plenum in 2013, Beijing launched a policy agenda that included most of the goals announced on Thursday, but also ambitions to liberalize financial markets and make domestic consumption a more prominent driver of growth. A capital outflows scare in 2015 halted many of these plans.



Women drink as a delivery man carries packages of food in Beijing on July 18, 2024. — AFP

Many analysts argue that national security considerations have pushed China in the opposite direction in recent years, tightening control over swathes of the economy with regulatory crackdowns on industries including tech and finance.

Instead of leaning on household demand, Beijing had poured resources into infrastructure and real estate, which led many local governments across the country to accumulate debt at an unsustainable pace. Beijing has recently highlighted advanced manufacturing as a new growth driver, again side-stepping consumers, with leaders hoping an industrial leap could save China from the middle-income

trap and stabilize the job market in the process. The plenum reasserted China's quest for "new productive forces", a term coined by Xi last year that envisions scientific research and technological breakthroughs for industrial expansion. "There is still tension between expanding the supply side of the economy and boosting household spending," said Harry Murphy Cruise, an economist at Moody's Analytics. "The communique mostly focused on 'new productive forces', 'the scientific and technological revolution', and 'industrial transformation. Mention of support to household wellbeing didn't come until the tail end." — Reuters

## Spectrum of PPP agreements

By Hassan Abdulrahim

In the context of PPPs, technical acronyms like BOT, PFI, DBFM, DB-FOM and so on are usually present. These terms may be confusing for those who are not fairly acquainted with PPP terminology. Thus, we will give in this section a brief highlight of these types of contacts. In addition, we will focus on two principal issues which need to be investigated at the outset, i.e. the objectives to be achieved from a particular contract and the extent of responsibilities that are allocated to the private sector.

A thorough examination of these two issues would make it much easier to choose the appropriate structure of any project development and whether that project fits into the PPP criteria. The figure above shows the spectrum of PPP agreements in terms of public and private partners involvement, with the extreme left of the figure shows a high degree of public sector involvement and low degree of private sector involvement, while the extreme right side of the figure depicts the opposite situation, i.e. low public sector involvement and high private sector involvement. In between these two extremes and as we go through the figure, from left to right, we notice that public sector gives up more involvement to private sector and hence bears less responsibilities and risks and at the same time we notice more responsibilities and risks are shifted to the private sector.

Lets start from the left side of the figure (public owns and operates assets) with models that feature more government control and where risks, obligations, and investments are mainly borne by the public sector, while at the same time the partnership itself is of a relatively short-term nature. We then move gradually towards the right with progressively more involvement from the private sector, this is where PPPs lie.

Now, to decide which PPP model to use, the authority has first to clarify whether or not they expect the private sector to make capital investments to build or expand public infrastructure. Even if the authority is not seeking private capital investments, they might still want to employ a PPP model to achieve other objectives such as improving the performance of a public Asset. In one variation of a PPP model, the authority might consider assigning the operation and maintenance of a public asset to a private partner and linking payments to the private partner to specific key performance indicators (KPIs). Such association between performance and payments creates an incentive for the private operator to achieve higher efficiency. In the water sector for example, the management of water utilities can be contracted out to private operators to encourage efficiency gains.

The private operators' payments are tied to specific targets such as the volume of water saved through leakage reduction. In this model, there is no transfer of commercial risk as payments to the private operator do not depend on utility tariffs or the number of users. However, the absence of commercial risk for the private partner can make this model less challenging to implement. Another example of linking private partner's payments to performance is the performance-based road maintenance contract. This type of contract differs from the traditional price-per-unit contract, where fees are paid in accordance with agreed-upon rates for maintenance, eg a fixed fee per pothole filled in a road. The performance-based contract, on the other hand, is based on agreed-upon standards that a contractor must maintain, eg all potholes bigger than a certain dimension must be filled within a certain length of time.

In this case, if the standards are met, the contractor can collect the full fees, otherwise penalties are applied. Thus, the private operator is incentivized to maintain the asset in

a good condition. Navigating the maze a look at various PPP models as we have mentioned previously, PPPs have become a popular strategy for governments to leverage private sector expertise and resources for infrastructure development and service delivery. However, with a variety of models available, choosing the right one can be crucial for project success.

We explore in this section some of the most common PPP models, highlighting their key features and considerations.

### Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT)

A popular model for developing new infrastructure assets like toll roads or bridges. The private partner finances, builds, and operates the project for a set period, recouping their investment through user fees (user-pays PPPs) or government payments (government-pays PPPs). After the concession period, ownership transfers back to the public sector. This model offers the private sector high control over design and construction, but also carries significant risk.

### Build-Own-Operate (BOO)

Similar to BOT, but the private partner retains ownership of the asset throughout the concession period. Revenue generation typically comes from user fees. This model incentivizes the private sector to focus on long-term efficiency and maintenance, but requires strong user demand to ensure profitability.

### Build-Operate-Lease-Transfer (BOLT)

A variation of BOT where the public sector leases the completed infrastructure from the private partner for a period before taking ownership. This model allows the public sector to spread out its financial commitment while benefiting from private sector expertise in construction and initial operation.

### Design-Build-Finance-Operate (DBFO)

The private partner takes on a broader role, encompassing design, financing, construction, and operation of the project. This offers a more streamlined approach for the public sector, but also transfers a significant amount of risk to the private partner.

### Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain (DBFOM)

This model extends DBFO by including the long-term maintenance responsibilities of the infrastructure. The private sector partner finances, designs, builds, operates, and maintains the project for the entire concession period. This offers the public sector a single point of contact and incentivizes the private sector to ensure long-term asset quality. However, DBFOM places the greatest burden of risk and responsibility on the private partner.

### Operation and Maintenance (O&M)

O&M focuses on existing infrastructure. The private sector takes over the operation and maintenance responsibilities for a set period, often with performance-based incentives. This model allows the public sector to tap into private sector expertise for improving efficiency and service delivery in existing assets. Choosing the Right Model (the optimal PPP model) depends on several factors, including:

**Project type:** Greenfield projects (entirely new) may be suited for BOT, DBFO, or DBFOM, while brownfield projects (existing) might benefit from O&M.

**Risk allocation:** The level of risk transferred to the private sector should be balanced with potential rewards. DBFOM involves the highest level of risk for the private partner.

**Financial viability:** User demand and revenue generation potential are crucial for models relying on user fees.

**Government capacity:** The public sector needs the capability to manage and oversee complex PPP arrangements. We may say that PPPs offer a valuable tool for infrastructure development, but success hinges on selecting the right model. By understanding the different options, including DBFOM, and carefully considering project specifics, governments can leverage private sector expertise while mitigating risks and ensuring project success.

Note: Hassan Abdulrahim is Senior Instructor, Economics & Finance, Canadian College Kuwait and Deputy CEO, Visionary Consulting.

## NBK Wealth Thought Leadership

## Private equity investing

KUWAIT: Private Equity (PE) is an illiquid alternative asset class that involves investing in privately held companies. When investors pool their capital into a fund, the goal is to enhance the companies' value and realize profits when exiting investments. This can be achieved through methods like initial public offerings (IPOs) or mergers and acquisitions (M&A).

The funds are managed by PE firms that structure them as Limited Partnerships, with General Partners raising capital from Limited Partners. Private equity investments are illiquid and require several years before yielding positive returns, following what is known as the J-curve effect.

Private equity firms are actively engaged in acquiring companies, improving their performance, and delivering returns to investors. They use various strategies such as buyouts, venture capital, and growth equity to target companies at different development stages. Through close collaboration with management teams, these firms implement initiatives to enhance the value of the invested companies over time, distinguishing private equity from other investment vehicles and positively impacting job creation and economic growth.

The industry has evolved significantly, attracting a wider range of investors seeking diversification and market opportunities. The combination of smart acquisitions and liquid credit markets fueled private equity successes in the early 2000s. Following the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), the recovery of private equity funds was swift, solidifying the industry as a popular choice among investors. Private equity investments are critical in injecting capital into private companies or converting public entities into private entities. Primary investments involve capital infusion at various development stages, while secondary investments entail purchasing existing stakes in private equity funds. Co-investments allow investors to participate alongside private equity firms in specific deals, providing lower fees and greater control over investment decisions.

Private equity fee structures include management fees, calculated as a percentage of committed capital, and performance fees, aligning LPs and GPs interests by sharing profits after achieving specific return levels. Investors should assess their risk tolerance, financial obligations, and expected returns before investing in PE funds.

## Mineral-rich DRC province suspends mining activities

BUKAVU, DR Congo: Authorities in one of the most mineral-rich provinces in east DR Congo announced on Friday the suspension of all mining activities to "restore order" in the sector. South Kivu is rich in minerals including gold, cassiterite and coltan that is mined by foreign companies, notably Chinese ones. Mining in this part of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has long been plagued by violence from armed groups and mineral trafficking to neighboring countries, such as Rwanda.

Authorities have previously taken steps to counter the problem, but with little effect. The governor of the province Jean-Jacques Purusi "wants to restore order in the exploitation of minerals", a member of the governorate's



Private equity investments typically aim to provide higher risk-adjusted returns but require a long-term (10-15 years) commitment due to the illiquid nature of the investments, thus investors in PE funds typically expect potential higher enhanced returns or "illiquidity premium", to compensate for the risk profile, illiquidity, and long duration of such investments. There are various private equity strategies, such as venture capital, growth capital, leveraged buyouts, and distressed funds, each targeting companies at different lifecycle stages.

Private equity performance is evaluated using metrics like Internal Rate of Return (IRR) and investment multiples to measure the fund's success. The Net Asset Value (NAV) plays a crucial role in valuing private equity funds, as they are not publicly traded, relying on estimates made by general partners. Private equity investments offer attractive returns, create long-term value, and contribute to portfolio diversification. They demonstrate resilience against market cycles, with historical data showing positive performance over the years. By including private equity in a diversified portfolio, investors can potentially enhance returns and reduce risk. Ultimately, private equity presents opportunities for investors to participate in the transformative journey of companies across various industries and sectors.

Private equity involves investing in private companies to enhance their value and realize profits.

It is managed by firms as limited partnerships, utilizing strategies such as buyouts and venture capital. Before committing to illiquid PE investments, investors should assess their risk tolerance and expected returns.

The performance of PE investments is evaluated using metrics like Internal Rate of Return (IRR) and investment multiples.

- PE offers attractive returns, long-term value creation, and diversification benefits.
- The evolving industry attracts diverse investors seeking market opportunities.
- Net Asset Value (NAV) is crucial for valuing PE funds due to the lack of public trading.
- PE investments display consistent positive performance and are resilient to market cycles.

communications unit, Danny Bashige, told AFP. Purusi—who has been in his role since June—hopes this will improve "the traceability" of production and "maximize revenues" from the province. "The state services authorized to operate in mining sites no longer know how to properly carry out their missions following the disorder caused by operators," a provincial decree dated July 18 and released on Friday said. "All activities related to mining are suspended throughout the province," it read.

The decree added that all companies, businesses and cooperatives "are required to leave the sites and places of operation within 72 hours." In a separate statement provincial authorities said they would convene a meeting with mining companies and "their partner cooperatives" on July 30 at the governor's office. The meeting would discuss "inventory of the mining in the province" and "modalities of regularization of mining." "Given the urgency and importance of the meeting, no absence will be tolerated," the statement read. "We welcome the decision of the provincial governor and invite him to go all the way (to restore order)," said Tibere Kajemba from the Governance and Peace Observatory (GOP), an organization specializing in mining issues. — AFP



# Lifestyle

SUNDAY, JULY 21, 2024



(From left) Casey Bloys, Chairman & CEO, HBO and HBO Max Content, Issa López, Jodie Foster, Kali Reis and Francesca Orsi, EVP, Head of Drama, HBO Programming attend the Los Angeles premiere of Warner Bros.' "True Detective: Night Country" at Paramount Theatre on January 9, 2024 in Los Angeles, California.



(From left) Justin Marks, Hiroyuki Sanada, Anna Sawai, Tadanobu Asano, Rachel Kondo, Eriko Miyagawa and Michaela Clavell attend FX's "Shogun" FYC event during Disney FYC Fest at the DGA Theater on June 11, 2024 in Los Angeles, California.

## 'SHOGUN' TOPS TELEVISION'S EMMY NOMINATIONS WITH 25

Hit drama series "Shogun," which transported viewers to early 17th-century Japan, topped television's Emmy nominations on Wednesday, earning 25 nods. "The Bear" broke the comedy record for most nominations in a single year, with 23, ahead of "Only Murders in the Building" which landed on 21. "True Detective: Night Country," starring Jodie Foster, topped the limited or anthology series section, scoring 19 nominations.

Nominees were announced in a live-streamed ceremony from Los Angeles, with final-round voting for the 76th Emmy Awards scheduled for next month, ahead of the September 15 ceremony. "Shogun" - adapted from James Clavell's historical fiction novel - portrays the intricate and deadly court politics of feudal Japan. Television Academy voters were not put off by the show's heavy use of subtitles, showering nominations on its remarkable cast of Japanese heroes and villains.

Among those were lead actress Anna Sawai and lead actor Hiroyuki Sanada, who told AFP the nomination was "truly humbling." "It was a great opportunity to share our culture with the world. I hope this will be a stepping stone for the next generation," Sanada said in an e-mailed statement. With another two seasons already in the works, "Shogun" is a hot favorite across this year's drama categories.

But surprisingly, there was no nomination for Cosmo Jarvis for his portrayal of the marooned English sailor who frames the show's narrative for audiences. "Shogun" faces competition in drama categories from the final season of Netflix's British royal saga "The Crown," and Apple's "The Morning Show," starring Jennifer Aniston.

### 'The Bear'

Meanwhile, "The Bear" topped the comedy categories, making history with its 23 nominations. The previous record set in 2009 was held by Alec Baldwin's "30 Rock." Set in a chaotic Chicago restaurant run by a group of close-knit but abrasive and occasionally abusive

chefs, "The Bear," was a big winner for its debut season at the last Emmys. It returned with an even more ambitious and experimental second run. Sumptuous montages of Michelin star-level dishes were paired with extraordinary episodes like "Fishes" - an hour-long portrait of a dysfunctional family tearing itself apart over one excruciating dinner.

Bizarrely entered in the comedy categories, despite dealing with hard-hitting issues like grief and addiction, "The Bear" is up against shows including "Hacks,"

Oscar-winner Foster was among the Emmy nominees as lead actress. Among the category's other contenders was Netflix's "Baby Reindeer," adapted from Scottish comedian Richard Gadd's pitch-black one-man show about his encounters with a female stalker.

The global phenomenon, which has suffered controversy after a woman claiming to be its real-life inspiration sued the streamer, earned 11 nods, including one for Gadd. Other widely nominated shows in the limited series section



(From left) Producer Javier Winnik, producer Tom Broecker, producer Caroline Maroney, Canadian-US producer Lorne Michaels, producer Erin Doyle, producer Steve Higgins, producer Erik Kenward, and producer Lindsay Shookus pose with the Emmy for Outstanding Variety Sketch Series for "Saturday Night Live" during the 74th Emmy Awards.

"Abbott Elementary," "Only Murders in the Building" and "Curb Your Enthusiasm." Both "Shogun" and "The Bear" come from FX, a Disney-owned channel that enjoyed a stellar day Wednesday with further multiple nominations for "Fargo," "Feud: Capote vs The Swans," "Welcome to Wrexham" and "What We Do in the Shadows."

### 'True Detective'

The categories for limited or anthology series are always packed with water-cooler hits. "True Detective: Night Country" - the fourth installment of the dark crime anthology series, which this time shifted the action to Alaska - scored the most nominations this year. Double

included "Fargo," "Ripley" and "Lessons in Chemistry." There were surprising snubs for Kate Winslet ("The Regime") and Emma Stone ("The Curse"). The 76th Emmy Awards will be the second to take place in 2024, after last year's ceremony was postponed to January due to Hollywood strikes. It will honor television series that were broadcast between June 2023 and May 2024. Tony Hale ("Veep") and Sheryl Lee Ralph ("Abbott Elementary") unveiled the nominations. Voting members of the US-based Television Academy have a month to catch up on their viewing, before final-round voting takes place in mid-August. — AFP



(From left) Jose M. Cervantes, Corey Hendrix, Edwin Lee Gibson, Nick Grad, Co-President, FX Entertainment, Courtney Storer, Cooper Wehde, Matty Matheson, Jeremy Allen White, Ebon Moss-Bachrach, Ayo Edebiri, Abby Elliott, Liza Colon-Zayas, Lionel Boyce, Sarah Ramos, Gillian Jacobs and Chris Witaske attend the premiere for season three of FX's "The Bear" at the El Capitan Theatre in Hollywood, California, June 25, 2024.



(From left) Elizabeth Debicki, Martin Phipps, Robert Sterne, Cate Hall, Alison Harvey and Peter Morgan attend the photo call for Netflix's "The Crown" at FYSEE at Sunset Las Palmas Studios on May 17, 2024 in Los Angeles, California.



(From left) Jess Rosenthal, Karey Burke, President, 20th Television, Martin Short, Selena Gomez, Steve Martin, Craig Erwich, President, Hulu Originals & ABC Entertainment, John Hoffman and Dan Fogelman attend the Los Angeles premiere of "Only Murders in the Building" Season 2 at DGA Theater Complex on June 27, 2022 in Los Angeles, California.—AFP photos

## Emmy nominees in key categories

### Outstanding Drama Series

"The Crown"  
"Fallout"  
"The Gilded Age"  
"The Morning Show"  
"Mr & Mrs Smith"  
"Shogun"  
"Slow Horses"  
"3 Body Problem"

### Outstanding Comedy Series

"Abbott Elementary"  
"The Bear"  
"Curb Your Enthusiasm"  
"Hacks"  
"Only Murders in the Building"  
"Palm Royale"  
"Reservation Dogs"  
"What We Do in the Shadows"

### Outstanding Limited or Anthology Series

"Baby Reindeer"  
"Fargo"  
"Lessons in Chemistry"  
"Ripley"  
"True Detective: Night Country"

### Lead Actor, Drama

Idris Elba, "Hijack"  
Donald Glover, "Mr & Mrs Smith"  
Walton Goggins, "Fallout"  
Gary Oldman, "Slow Horses"  
Hiroyuki Sanada, "Shogun"  
Dominic West, "The Crown"

### Lead Actress, Drama

Jennifer Aniston, "The Morning Show"  
Carrie Coon, "The Gilded Age"  
Maya Erskine, "Mr & Mrs Smith"  
Anna Sawai, "Shogun"  
Imelda Staunton, "The Crown"  
Reese Witherspoon, "The Morning Show"

### Lead Actor, Comedy

Matt Berry, "What We Do in the Shadows"  
Larry David, "Curb Your Enthusiasm"  
Steve Martin, "Only Murders in the Building"  
Martin Short, "Only Murders in the Building"  
Jeremy Allen White, "The Bear"  
D'Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai, "Reservation Dogs"

### Lead Actress, Comedy

Quinta Brunson, "Abbott Elementary"  
Ayo Edebiri, "The Bear"  
Selena Gomez, "Only Murders in the Building"  
Maya Rudolph, "Loot"  
Jean Smart, "Hacks"  
Kristen Wiig, "Palm Royale"

### Lead Actor, Limited Series or Movie

Matt Bomer, "Fellow Travelers"  
Richard Gadd, "Baby Reindeer"  
Jon Hamm, "Fargo"  
Tom Hollander, "Feud: Capote vs the Swans"  
Andrew Scott, "Ripley"

### Lead Actress, Limited Series or Movie

Jodie Foster, "True Detective: Night Country"  
Brie Larson, "Lessons in Chemistry"  
Juno Temple, "Fargo"  
Sofia Vergara, "Griselda"  
Naomi Watts, "Feud: Capote vs the Swans"

### Supporting Actor, Drama

Tadanobu Asano, "Shogun"  
Billy Crudup, "The Morning Show"  
Mark Duplass, "The Morning Show"  
Jon Hamm, "The Morning Show"  
Takehiro Hira, "Shogun"  
Jack Lowden, "Slow Horses"  
Jonathan Pryce, "The Crown"

### Supporting Actress, Drama

Christine Baranski, "The Gilded Age"  
Nicole Beharie, "The Morning Show"  
Elizabeth Debicki, "The Crown"  
Greta Lee, "The Morning Show"  
Lesley Manville, "The Crown"  
Karen Pittman, "The Morning Show"  
Holland Taylor, "The Morning Show"

### Supporting Actor, Comedy

Lionel Boyce, "The Bear"  
Paul W. Downs, "Hacks"  
Ebon Moss-Bachrach, "The Bear"  
Paul Rudd, "Only Murders in the Building"  
Tyler James Williams, "Abbott Elementary"  
Bowen Yang, "Saturday Night Live"

### Supporting Actress, Comedy

Carol Burnett, "Palm Royale"  
Liza Colon-Zayas, "The Bear"  
Hannah Einbinder, "Hacks"  
Janelle James, "Abbott Elementary"  
Sheryl Lee Ralph, "Abbott Elementary"  
Meryl Streep, "Only Murders in the Building"

### Supporting Actor, Limited Series or Movie

Jonathan Bailey, "Fellow Travelers"  
Robert Downey Jr., "The Sympathizer"  
Tom Goodman-Hill, "Baby Reindeer"  
John Hawkes, "True Detective: Night Country"  
Lamorne Morris, "Fargo"  
Lewis Pullman, "Lessons in Chemistry"  
Treat Williams, "Feud: Capote vs the Swans"

### Supporting Actress, Limited Series or Movie

Dakota Fanning, "Ripley"  
Lily Gladstone, "Under the Bridge"  
Jessica Gunning, "Baby Reindeer"  
Aja Naomi King, "Lessons in Chemistry"  
Diane Lane, "Feud: Capote vs the Swans"  
Nava Mau, "Baby Reindeer"  
Kali Reis, "True Detective: Night Country"



## Lifestyle



Visitors walk past shops displaying items said to be from 'luxury' brands at historical Grand Bazaar in Istanbul.--AFP photos



A shop displaying items said to be from 'luxury' brands at historical Grand Bazaar.

## Fake luxuries supplant tradition in Istanbul's Grand Bazaar



Hasim Gureli, vice-president of the bazaar merchants' association and member of its board of directors, poses at his carpet shop.



A shoe salesman Rafael Rifat Dana poses in his shop at historical Grand Bazaar.



Shoe salesman Rafael Rifat Dana poses at historical Grand Bazaar.



Visitors walk past a shop displaying items said to be from 'luxury' brands at historical Grand Bazaar.

Cut-price branded perfumes and fake high-end handbags line the ornate alleys of Istanbul's Grand Bazaar, with traditional merchants saying the luxury counterfeits are stripping the marketplace of its character. Where heritage Turkish crafts once flourished under the Ottoman-era marketplace's painted ceilings, the elegant carpet store run by Hasim Gureli is now surrounded by shops selling designer dupes. "Back in the day, imitations were rare," said Gureli, who is vice-president of the bazaar's traders' association and a member of its board of directors.

"When some people started selling fake bags, they kept themselves hidden. They were afraid of the state," the carpet-seller added. Many others among the bazaar's old-timers, who have fond memories of the small workshops that used to fill its labyrinthine alleyways, despair at seeing it overrun by fraudulent facsimiles. Two aisles down, tea set-seller Gazi Uludag lamented that the Grand Bazaar has "lost its unique character." "There is nothing but imported or counterfeit goods left and it's getting worse every year," he said. In her handmade carpet store, Florence Heilbronn-Ogutgen bemoaned the fact that an artisan friend "who used to make real, beautiful bags in very good leather" had to shutter his shop, unable to make a living.

For the shopkeeper, who has been at the bazaar since 1998, artisans "can no longer survive" in the face of competition from the dubious dupes. "These days, the finest boutiques are the counterfeit ones!" she said. "They're the only ones left who can afford the \$10,000 to \$15,000 a month rent on the main alley. The bazaar has lost its soul."

### Cheap luxury

One of the world's largest covered markets, the almost six-centuries-old Grand Bazaar attracts millions of tourists every year—many of them lured by the promise of cheap luxury. "All of Europe comes here! I've even had footballer's wives," beamed 36-year-old Kemal, reluctant to give his surname for fear of checks on his merchandise. Kemal made his living selling "made in Turkey" counterfeits for 15 years, before luxury fakes

began taking over each of the bazaar's hallowed shop windows one by one. His imitation Celine calfskin and Saint Laurent quilted leather handbags "are of the same quality as the originals, but five to 10 times cheaper", the vendor promised. Whatever the bag, a knock-off can be found at the Grand Bazaar. "If you can find it on the Champs-Elysees, then you can find it here," he said.

### 'I have no choice'

Turkish law firms hired by the luxury behemoths are trying to clamp down on the counterfeiters, but that task is easier said than done. "The problem is that you need to get search warrants for every address. There are thousands of shops in the Grand Bazaar so you need to get thousands of seizure orders," lawyer Sena Yasaroglu told AFP. He said that



Visitors walk at the historical Grand Bazaar in Istanbul.

### 'Very high profits'

As one of the main countries for the production and transit of counterfeit goods, along with China and Hong Kong, knock-offs are ubiquitous in Turkey. The trade supports a whole economy of its own, from the small retailers to the manufacturers who also export their counterfeits to the European Union. "They make very high profits. You can see handbags being sold for thousands of dollars in the Grand Bazaar," said Dilara Bural, a criminologist at the UK's University of Bath.

Organized crime may be at work, "but we can't generalize and say that every single counterfeiting scheme in Turkey is linked to organized crime. That's not true," she underlined. For Bural, the trade is enabled by a "widespread cultural acceptance of counterfeiting" in Turkey which "in some cases extends to key enforcers, including the police and the judiciary".

even with 20 people dealing with intellectual property cases at the Moroglu Arseven law firm where he works, the challenge was formidable.

A spokesman for the Grand Bazaar's board of directors insisted that "the Istanbul police carry out frequent inspections" on the shops. Standing in front of his minuscule shop of 2.5 square meters (three square yards), which he rents for \$1,000 a month, Murat said he worries about the inspections "every day". In 2018, he and his brother saw the police swoop in on their business. The bill was hefty: 800 fake bags seized and 40,000 euros (\$43,500) in fines and legal fees. Yet the 27-year-old shopkeeper from the southeastern agricultural province of Sanliurfa resumed trading straight away. "I have no choice," he said. "Otherwise, what would I do? Go back to be a shepherd in my village? I don't want to do that."—AFP



Tourists shop for imitation perfumes at a shop displaying items said to be from 'luxury' brands.

## Police nab Taylor Swift 'stalker' at first Germany gig

A 34-year-old US citizen was detained on suspicion of stalking Taylor Swift ahead of the first German concert of her record-breaking Eras Tour, police said. The man was taken into custody on Wednesday evening before the show at the Veltins-Arena in Gelsenkirchen, police in the western city said in a statement. The alleged stalker had come to the attention of police after making threats against the singer and her boyfriend Travis Kelce on social media, the statement said.

"As initial investigations could not completely rule out the possibility of danger, the suspect was identified and taken into custody at the admission control before the concert, for which he had a ticket," the police said. American football star Kelce has attended several concerts during the Eras Tour and was in the arena at Gelsenkirchen on Wednesday night.

The suspect will be detained until Saturday, the police said, adding that there had been no danger to Swift or her

fans. Around 60,000 people attended the first of three sold-out Eras Tour concerts in Gelsenkirchen on Wednesday. Swift and her entourage will also stop off in Hamburg and Munich before next heading to Poland and Austria. The Eras Tour began its European leg at the La Defense Arena in Paris in May after first working its way across North and South America and Asia starting in March 2023. By the end of the year, it had already become the first tour to sell more than \$1 billion in tickets and is on track to more than double that by the time it concludes in Vancouver this December. —AFP



US singer and songwriter Taylor Swift performs on stage at the Groupama Stadium as part of The Eras Tour, in Decines-Charpieu, eastern France, on June 2, 2024. --AFP

## 'Twisters' director swaps arthouse for '90s blockbuster reboot

"Twisters," Hollywood's latest attempt to reboot nostalgic blockbusters for modern audiences, might seem an unlikely next career step for director Lee Isaac Chung. His previous film, "Minari," was a sweet, quiet, semi-autobiographical tale of Korean immigrants struggling to adapt to life in rural 1980s Arkansas. It earned the US director arthouse acclaim, and two Oscar nominations. But even if it drew on nostalgia for the Deep South, it was a long way from "Twister" -- the big, brash 1996 blockbuster that terrified audiences with devastating Oklahoma tornadoes, brought to life with nascent computer-generated effects.

Even so, giant Hollywood studio Universal tapped Chung for "Twisters," out in US theaters on Friday -- and he jumped at the opportunity. "I was really wanting to make a movie like this for quite a long time," he told AFP at the film's Los Angeles premiere last week. "In my mind, it was never a stretch." Part of that appeal was the chance to play with the latest computer-generated visual effects, known in the industry as VFX.

The film employed the talents of George Lucas's Industrial Light and Mag-

ic, to generate "really epic" effects, said Chung. "In terms of VFX, there's just so much more that can be done to the environment around a tornado," he said. "In that first film, you just see the tornado itself. But really what makes a tornado powerful is the effect that it has on nature and the surroundings." "Twisters" has not escaped controversy.

The LA premiere was interrupted by animal rights activists, protesting the film's use of live animals for a rodeo scene. But so far, the gamble looks to be paying off. The film, made for around \$200 million and distributed overseas by fellow Hollywood titan Warner Bros, is reportedly on track to make around \$50 million on its first weekend in North American theaters alone.

It stars Daisy Edgar-Jones ("Normal People") as a meteorologist forced to team up with a daredevil storm chaser, played by Glen Powell ("Top Gun: Maverick"). "I think that the first movie was a spectacle. It was beautiful and big," said their co-star Paul Scheer. "This movie has got heart, humor, comedy. It actually takes the blueprint and plusses it up."—AFP

## Richemont: Luxury group in sights of LVMH's Arnault?

The Swiss luxury group Richemont, which owns Cartier and other jewelry brands, is regularly the subject of takeover rumors which its founder, the South African billionaire Johann Rupert, always dismisses. But Bernard Arnault, chief executive of rival LVMH, the number one in the field, is building up a stake in Richemont -- a move which so far has triggered more questions than answers. In May, Richemont announced that Rupert, 74, would hand off some of his responsibilities to a new CEO, Nicolas Bos. What makes Richemont a prize asset? The answer is in the figures.

### Jewel in the crown

Based in Geneva, Richemont's turnover was 20.6 billion euros (\$22.5 billion) during its 2023/2024 financial year to the end of March. It is the world number two or three in the sector, along with the Gucci-owning French luxury group Kering, depending on annual sales figures. Jewelry makes up 69 percent of Richemont's turnover thanks to Cartier, its flagship brand nicknamed the "jeweler of kings and the king of jewelers" for its links with royalty.

The group does not disclose its sales by brand, but according to Jean-Philippe Bertschy, an analyst at Swiss investment managers Vontobel, Cartier's turnover was around 11 billion euros during the past financial year. Richemont also owns the Van Cleef & Arpels luxury brand, which has experienced "exceptional" growth in recent years, Bertschy said. By anchoring in jewelry, considered the group's strong suit, Richemont has greater resilience in the event of an economic slowdown, with fine jewelry aimed at a clientele that is far less sensitive to the ups and downs of the economy.



A picture taken on November 5, 2020 in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, shows a production facility of watchmaker Cartier owned by Swiss luxury group Richemont. --AFP

### Watches, fashion and pens

Richemont owns eight watch brands, which make up 18.2 percent of its turnover. Its portfolio includes Baume & Mercier, IWC Schaffhausen and Piaget. US investment bank Morgan Stanley and the Swiss firm LuxeConsult estimate that sales of its largest watch brand, Vacheron Constantin, reached 1.09 billion Swiss francs in 2023, becoming one of eight Swiss brands with a turnover exceeding one billion francs.

In 1997, its Montblanc pen brand diversified into watches, but it remains part of the division that brings together around 10 brands in accessories and fashion (including Chloe and Alaïa), including Gianvito Rossi shoes, in which Richemont took a majority stake last year. This division is the group's weakest, according to analysts, including "several brands which have underperformed for years", Bertschy said. However, this division represents just 12.6 percent of Richemont's annual turnover.

### 10% of shares, 51% voting rights

Rupert, 74, created Richemont in 1988 to bring together the international assets of the South African Rembrandt group, including the tobacco activities with which his father Anton made his fortune. Through acquisitions, the group gradually withdrew from tobacco to refocus on luxury, including Jaeger-LeCoultre, IWC and A. Lange & Sohne watches. Rupert holds 10 percent of the capital but 51 percent of the voting rights through a dual structure of class A and B shares. The structure offers protection against unsolicited bids, but in 2022 also helped it thwart an activist fund's attempt to impose changes to the board.

This protection only amplifies questions about the intentions of Arnault, one of the world's wealthiest people. At the end of June, Bloomberg News reported that the LVMH boss had taken a stake in Richemont, the amount of which has not been revealed. —AFP



Lifestyle

# Bruce Springsteen is officially a billionaire

The Boss is officially a billionaire, Forbes said Friday, estimating that Bruce Springsteen is conservatively worth \$1.1 billion.

The guitar hero bard behind hits including "The River" has solidified much of his wealth in recent years, the financial outlet indicated, in no small part due to a blockbuster sale in 2021 of his music catalog to Sony for an estimated half-a-billion dollars.

The deal followed his wildly suc-

cessful Broadway show run. Now, Springsteen is on a global tour currently set to run through 2025.

According to industry tracker Pollstar, in 2023 Springsteen sold more than 1.6 million concert tickets, raking in \$380 million in revenue. And the 74-year-old "Dancing in the Dark" singer shows no signs of slowing down.

For decades the "Jungleland" songwriter has penned music that focuses a sentimental lens on un-

derdogs and the working class - and he's sold 140 million albums globally, placing him among the all-time best-selling musicians ever.

A Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee with 20 Grammys and an Oscar to his name, Springsteen is also set to be the subject of a forthcoming biopic, with Jeremy Allen White of "The Bear" fame slated to play him. His marathon shows are the stuff of legend, with the longest clocking in at more than four

hours, a performance he pulled off in Helsinki in 2012.

Other industry heavyweights who have hit the billionaire mark include Rihanna, Jay-Z and Taylor Swift. — AFP



Musician Bruce Springsteen performs during the 37th Annual Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony at the Microsoft Theatre on November 5, 2022, in Los Angeles, California. — AFP



A hatching baby Siamese crocodile in Cardamom National Park, Koh Kong province. — AFP photos



Newly hatched baby Siamese crocodiles in Cardamom National Park, Koh Kong province.



Wardens from the crocodile conservation team next to baby Siamese crocodiles eggs in Cardamom National Park, Koh Kong province.

## 'Hope' as 60 rare Siamese crocodiles hatch in Cambodia

A group of 60 rare Siamese crocodiles have hatched in Cambodia, boosting hopes for one of the world's most endangered reptiles, conservationists said. Five Siamese crocodile nests were discovered in Cambodia's Cardamom National Park in mid-May, the country's environment and agriculture ministry said in a joint statement with conservation group Fauna and Flora. The nests contained 106 eggs, of which 66 were fertilized, and a total of 60 Siamese crocodile eggs successfully hatched between June 27 and 30, the ministry said. "This discovery indicates that the area is a key habitat for natural crocodiles, providing hope for the species' recovery," they said in the statement.

Researchers say there are approximately 1,000 Siamese crocodiles worldwide, including around 300 individuals in the wild in Cambodia. Their survival is threatened by poachers who supply eggs and adult reptiles to croc-

odile farms around the region, where their skins are turned into luxury belts, shoes and handbags. Cambodian environment minister Eang Sophalleth said it was a source of "pride" that the country is home to some of the world's rarest species, pledging continued efforts to "preserve biodiversity." Deforestation and poaching have devastated many species in Cambodia, one of Asia's poorest and most corrupt nations.

In its haste to develop, the government has been criticized for allowing firms to clear hundreds of thousands of hectares of forest land - including in protected zones - for everything from rubber and sugar cane plantations to hydropower dams. The successful mass hatching shows the vital importance of protecting the Cardamom National Park, said Pablo Sinovas, country director of Fauna & Flora Cambodia program. — AFP

# Disneyland workers vote in favor of strike authorization

Disneyland employees in California authorized a strike in a union-wide vote Friday, opening the door to withhold their labor from "the happiest place on Earth", the theme park's unions announced. The unions, which represent some 14,000 Disneyland Resort employees, have been in negotiations with Disney over wage increases and other benefits since April.

Talks have stalled and tensions have grown as some employees contend Disney has engaged in anti-union practices. Ninety-nine percent of members voted in favor of the strike authorization, according to a union statement.

It allows union leaders to decide when to call the strike, as well as its duration and terms. This week, Disney said it was "committed" to continuing negotiations scheduled for Monday and Tuesday. If the talks go ahead as planned, the strike authorization vote gives union members new leverage in negotiations.

"A strike is always a last resort for workers, but this strong vote shows that cast members across Disneyland are ready and willing to do what it takes to stand up to Disney's unfair labor practices and get the contract they deserve," the Disney Workers Rising Bargaining Committee said in the statement.

"Today's overwhelming unfair labor practice strike authorization vote sends a clear message to the company: we are stronger together and will not be divided by scare tactics". After last year's writers

and actors strike paralyzed Hollywood, another major labor movement within Disney would be historic. Employees at its California theme parks have not gone on strike since 1984, according to the Los Angeles Times. On Wednesday, hundreds of Disneyland employees, also known as "cast members," gathered for

a protest in a parking lot outside the park in Anaheim, a suburb of Los Angeles.

"Last week, I saw a manager telling one of the cast members to remove her badge," Disneyland employee Ginny Cristales, 44, told AFP over the phone. "He told her that it will be on her record card... She was stressed and scared." Cristales has worked at Disneyland



and actors strike paralyzed Hollywood, another major labor movement within Disney would be historic. Employees at its California theme parks have not gone on strike since 1984, according to the Los Angeles Times. On Wednesday, hundreds of Disneyland employees, also known as "cast members," gathered for

a protest in a parking lot outside the park in Anaheim, a suburb of Los Angeles. The employees complained of low wages and intimidation used by managers, prompting a complaint filed with the National Labor Relations Board. The union claims that over 500 employees have been reprimanded, threatened or warned about disciplinary action for wearing a union pin, which depicts a Mickey Mouse glove raised in the shape

of a fist. "We deserve fair wages," Cristales said. "A strike is our last resort, that we're not wanting to do. But if Disney doesn't comply and give us what we need, then we're all ready." — AFP



Disney employees rally outside the main entrance of Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, California, on July 17, 2024, ahead of a planned strike authorization vote. — AFP



# Coppola, Grateful Dead, Apollo among Kennedy Center honorees

Filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola and rockers the Grateful Dead are among this year's Kennedy Center Honors inductees, along with beloved blues singer Bonnie Raitt and jazz artist Arturo Sandoval. The Apollo - the globally celebrated Harlem music venue that launched myriad careers and bore witness to sociocultural revolution - will receive a special honor as an iconic US institution, organizers announced. The annual Kennedy Center Honors, among the highest American arts honors, see Washington's political elite rub shoulders with the cream of the cultural crop as entertainment A-listers descend on the seat of American political power.

The gala is a fundraiser for the performing arts center in Washington that serves as a living monument to



US singer Bonnie Raitt arrives for the 2022 Billboard Women in Music award at the YouTube theatre at SoFi stadium in Inglewood, California, March 2, 2022. — AFP photos

the late president John F. Kennedy. This year the celebration is scheduled for December 8. Coppola - the esteemed filmmaker behind classics

including "The Godfather" and "Apocalypse Now" - said in a statement he considers himself "very fortunate to have been able to collaborate with great artist and wonderful people." "I have never stopped learning," he continued. "There is no greater honor than to be included along with those who inspired me, who I looked up to, and who gave me encouragement when times were dim."

Band members Mickey Hart, Bill Kreutzmann, Phil Lesh and Bobby Weir will receive the prize for The Grateful Dead, an American treasure of a band famous for eclectic live improv and connections to psychedelia. Jerry Garcia, the beloved lead guitarist, band co-founder, songwriter and singer widely considered the leader of the Grateful Dead, died in 1995 at age 53.

He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame the year before.

"Our music has always been about exploration and breaking through or finding our way around barriers, not just musically but also in bringing people together," the band said in a statement. "The energy, the love, the connection and sharing - once again, that's what it's all about." "As we enter our 60th year of the Grateful Dead's journey in 2025, we're beyond grateful for this recognition and for the journey we are on together." And The Apollo - which turns 90 this year - is the first organization ever honored at the Kennedy Center Awards, a marker of its influence on contemporary culture. — AFP

## New York judge sets tentative November date for Weinstein retrial

A New York judge on Friday set a tentative November date for the retrial of disgraced movie producer Harvey Weinstein on sexual assault charges. Weinstein, 72, was convicted in New York in 2020 of the rape and sexual assault of actress Jessica Mann and of forcibly performing oral sex on a production assistant. A New York appeals court overturned his conviction in April in a shock reversal in one of the defining cases of the #MeToo movement.

The court ruled that the trial judge had erred by allowing testimony from accusers who Weinstein was not formally charged with assaulting. Judge Curtis Farber, at a brief hearing in a Manhattan courtroom on Friday, set a tentative start date of November 12 for Weinstein's retrial. The judge said more details for the trial would be discussed at a hearing on September 12. Weinstein, who has health problems, appeared in court in a dark blue suit with a sort of disinterested look on his face.

Prosecutors have said Mann is prepared to testify against Weinstein again and they may bring additional sexual assault charges against the once-powerful film producer. Although Weinstein's New York conviction was overturned, he has remained behind bars because of a conviction for rape in California for which he received a sentence of 16 years.

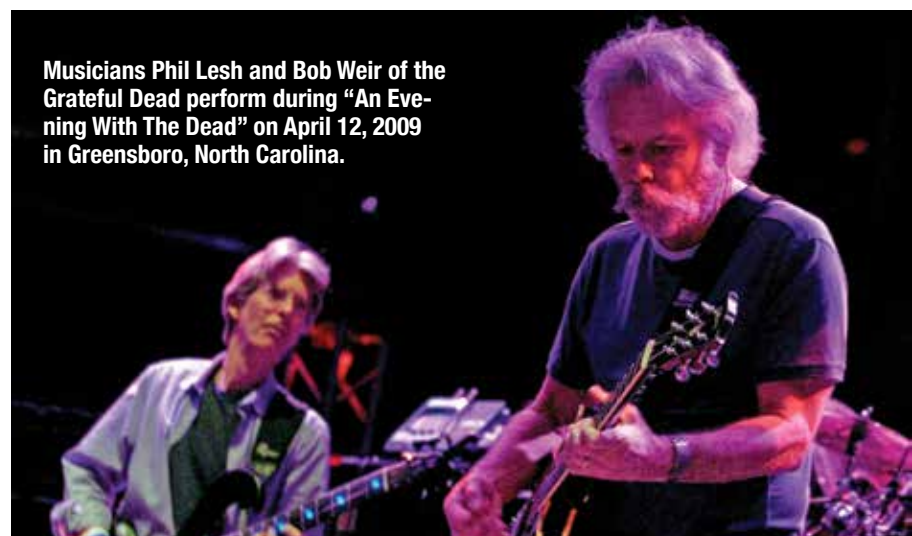
His lawyers filed an appeal last month, arguing for a retrial in that case as well. Bombshell allegations broke against the Oscar-winning Weinstein in 2017, launching the #MeToo movement, a watershed moment for women fighting sexual misconduct. — AFP



US director Francis Ford Coppola arrives for the screening of the film "Megalopolis" at the 77th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France, on May 16, 2024.



Cuban-US trumpeter Arturo Sandoval attends the Recording Academy Los Angeles Chapter Grammy nominees celebration at Spring Place in Beverly Hills, California, on January 28, 2023.



Musicians Phil Lesh and Bob Weir of the Grateful Dead perform during "An Evening With The Dead" on April 12, 2009 in Greensboro, North Carolina.



## Sports

# Lowry leans on experience as Scheffler eyes British Open charge

## Scheffler has already won six times this year, including his second Masters

**TROON:** Shane Lowry is hoping to lean on his experience of winning the Claret Jug in 2019 as he holds a two-shot overnight lead heading into Saturday's third round of the British Open.

The Irishman claimed his sole major victory at Portrush five years ago and should relish more wet and windy weather to come on the west coast of Scotland. Lowry overcame a dramatic double bogey on the 11th on Friday to move to seven under par, two clear of Englishmen Justin Rose and Daniel Brown.

A former US Open and Olympic champion, Rose had to go through qualifying to secure his place in Troon but produced a stellar round of 68 in the worst of Friday's blustery weather conditions. Brown, by contrast, is taking part in his first ever major and the world number 272 showed remarkable poise to handle the spotlight in his second round after a six-under round on Thursday took him to the top of the leaderboard.

"I don't know what I'm going to reach in and grab in the memory bank but it will be very beneficial that I've done this before," said Lowry. The biggest threat to Lowry's dream of winning the event for a second time could well come from world number one Scottie Scheffler, who sits five shots back in a share of fourth.

Scheffler has already won six times this year, including his second Masters in April. But he is yet to transfer that form across the Atlantic with his best British Open showing so far a tie for eighth in

2021. "I'm not sure Scottie Scheffler is too worried about anyone with the form he's in," added Lowry. "He's obviously on the leaderboard, and he's one person that people are going to be talking about."

### Missing McIlroy backs Lowry

World number three Xander Schauffele is also among the chasing pack at one under par. But the wild Ayrshire winds blew a host of star names off course in the opening two days, causing them to miss the cut. Rory McIlroy was among seven of the world's top 12 who failed to make the weekend.

Instead, the world number two is resigned to a supporting role for the final two rounds as he cheers on close friend and Ryder Cup team-mate Lowry. "He relishes these conditions," said McIlroy. "The Open Championship is his favorite tournament in the world. He gets more up for this than anything else."

"I'm looking forward to cheering him on and hopefully him getting his second (Claret) Jug." US Open champion Bryson DeChambeau and world number four Ludvig Aberg were among the others to miss out to leave the leaderboard wide open for the final two rounds.

Patrick Cantlay is among the small pool of 10 players to so far break par, at one under. Joaquin Niemann, who has been in fine form on the break-away LIV circuit, is at level par despite dropping five shots at the par-three eighth on Friday.



**TROON:** Ireland's Shane Lowry watches his drive from the 4th tee during his second round, on day two of the 152nd British Open Golf Championship at Royal Troon on the south west coast of Scotland. — AFP

The Chilean found three different bunkers around the famous Postage Stamp green to ruin his chances of starting Saturday in the final group.

Two other experienced major winners now on the LIV Tour, Brooks Koepka and Jon Rahm, are a further shot back at one over. — AFP



**SYLVANIA:** Chanelle Wannasaen of Thailand plays her shot from the fifth tee during the second round of the Dana Open at Highland Meadows Golf Club in Sylvania, Ohio. — AFP

## Chanelle leads at LPGA Dana Open

**WASHINGTON:** Thailand's Chanelle Wannasaen managed a birdie-eagle finish to grab a one-stroke lead after Friday's second round of the LPGA Dana Open.

Chanelle fired a six-under par 65 to stand on 11-under 131 after 36 holes at Highland Meadows in Sylvania, Ohio. That was enough to lift her ahead of defending champion Linn Grant of Sweden and China's Lin Xiyu with China's Mary Liu fourth on 133.

Chanelle, ranked 43rd, won her only LPGA title at last September's Portland Classic as a Monday qualifier. This year, she was third at the Americas Open in May and shared eighth at last month's Dow Championship.

"Actually I'm really nervous right now, so I think on the weekend I will do my best," she said. "I don't want to like get stressed for the weekend." The 20-year-old Thai standout birdied the par-3 second hole and answered her lone bogey at four with a birdie at the par-3 eighth.

After birdies at the 11th and par-3 14th, Chanelle closed with a birdie at 17 and eagled the last to grab the lead. "The back nine I played really good," Chanelle said. "The putter was really good on the back nine."

Grant birdied five of the first seven holes and sank a 10-foot birdie putt at the 17th on her way to a 65 in her last tuneup for the Paris Olympics. "I really had some good game going and hit some great shots," Grant said. "Felt like I could really go out and be aggressive. I feel like my game is really good."

Lin, the highest-ranked player in the field at 15 in the world, seeks her first LPGA crown in her last Olympic tuneup. Lin birdied three of the last four holes on the front nine, followed her lone bogey at 11 with a birdie at 12 and closed with a birdie to shoot 67 and match Grant for second.

"This course overall, it really suits my eyes and it's all about putting for me," Lin said. "I just need to get on the fairway and be smart and then I'll have plenty of opportunity." Sharing fifth on 135 were South Korea's Ryu Hae-ran and Choi Hye-jin, South African Paula Reto, Japan's Mao Saigo and Australian Sarah Kemp. — AFP

## Wallabies edge Georgia to continue winning streak

**SYDNEY:** A new-look Wallabies side continued their rejuvenation under coach Joe Schmidt Saturday to overcome Georgia 40-29 in an entertaining one-off Test in Sydney. Australia crossed over three times in an electric opening 20-minute burst and held a decisive 26-10 half-time lead on a clear, but windy afternoon.

They had to fend off a determined rally from Georgia in the second-half before easing to victory in a high-octane match featuring 10 tries. It continued a perfect start to the tenure of New Zealander Schmidt after Australia won back-to-back Tests earlier this month against Wales.

## Da Silva, Joseph hit out as West Indies lead in second Test

**NOTTINGHAM:** Joshua Da Silva and Shamar Joseph frustrated England with a dashing last-wicket stand at Trent Bridge on Saturday as West Indies compiled their first total of 450 or more in a Test for nearly a decade.

The pair shared a partnership of 71 in 13 overs that took West Indies to 457 all out, 41 runs ahead of England's first-innings 416, on the third day of the second Test. This was West Indies' highest Test total since their 484-7 declared against Bangladesh at Kingstown in September 2014.

Da Silva was left on 82 not out after Shamar Joseph was dismissed for 33 off just 27 balls, including five fours and two spectacular sixes. It had looked as if Saturday morning would belong to England paceman Chris Woakes, who took two wickets in two balls to leave West Indies 386-9 - still 30 runs behind.

But Shamar Joseph pulled fast bowler Gus Atkinson for six to level the scores and, two balls later, hoisted him behind square with another six that knocked tiles off the roof of the Larwood and Voce Tavern.

West Indies' performance in Nottingham, which on Friday featured Kaveem Hodge's maiden Test century, was all the more creditable given they had been dismissed for just 121 and 136 during an innings and 114-run defeat by England at Lord's.

That left them 1-0 down in this three-match series. West Indies resumed on 351-5, 65 runs behind, after Hodge (120) and Alick Athanaze (82) shared a stand of 175 that revived them from 84-3.

England, in their first home Test since 2012 without retired duo James Anderson or Stuart Broad -

## Injury-hit Crouser sees light at end of tunnel

**LONDON:** Ryan Crouser says he can see the light at the end of the tunnel as he readies his bid for a third successive Olympic shot put title off the back of three injury setbacks. The American won the world indoor title in Glasgow in March, but since then has suffered two debilitating elbow injuries either side of tearing a pectoral muscle.

Hardly the lead-in to the Paris Games the stand-out shot putter in the world would have wanted. "It's easy to press the panic button," Crouser said ahead of Saturday's Diamond League meet in London, the final outing before travelling to France for the Olympics.

"This year has been limited but I'm rounding into shape. I'm happy with how things are progressing, with the ultimate goal being the Paris Olympics. There's been a general upward trend since the trials

"The boys are very happy. We probably didn't help ourselves with discipline, but we dug deep," said Allan Alaalatoa, who became the Wallabies' third captain in as many matches. "You have to give Georgia credit. They never went away and we knew it was going to be a tough physical game."

Underdogs Georgia, ranked 12th in the world, were fresh off a narrow win against Japan in Sendai. But they rued a slow start and struggled to cope with Australia's speed as scrum-half Tate McDermott repeatedly dashed past Georgia's ragged defence. "Little mistakes in the first-half cost us, but the second-half was better," said Georgia fly-half Tedo Abzhandadze.

"We tried our best to show the world we can play against a tier-one team. We had opportunities to win, but we didn't take them." It was just the third time the teams squared off and the first outside a World Cup.

Schmidt continued to experiment for Australia's final match before the Rugby Championship in August, where they will start with back-to-back games against world champions South Africa. Winger Dar-



**NOTTINGHAM:** England's captain Ben Stokes (front) and England's Gus Atkinson miss an opportunity to catch on the third day of the second Test cricket match between England and West Indies at Trent Bridge in Nottingham on July 20, 2024. — AFP

who between them took 1,308 wickets at this level - struggled on a hot day. An overcast Saturday morning promised to aid England's pacemen, armed with the new ball, as Jason Holder (23 not out) and Da Silva (32 not out) looked to narrow the deficit.

Holder was out for 27, caught behind off Woakes. The all-rounder later had Alzarri Joseph caught behind and next ball Woakes bowled Jayden Seales before Shamar Joseph survived the hat-trick. But Da Silva completed an 87-ball 50 in

so I'm excited about that."

Those trials, Crouser admitted, had been "very stressful" as he battled injury concerns to qualify for Paris, while acknowledging he only had himself to blame. "It's been a frustrating year, to say the least," said the two-time outdoor world champion.

"As an athlete, you dream about your preparation for the Olympics going perfectly, all the work that's going to go in, all the work that's going to pay off. "I probably did a little bit of over training. I write my own programmes - I'm my own coach."

"And at 31 years of age, I probably didn't want to admit that I have to slow things down a little bit from when I was 25 or 26. "So all of it's on me! I'm my own coach, I can't blame him for anything! It's been a learning process."

### Back from ground zero

Crouser, who comes from a family of throwers, added: "Measuring my progress coming back from what felt like nearly ground zero was not optimal. "But it takes a certain mindset to realize I am progressing, I am moving in the right direction and I'm taking that as the small win it is."

Crouser previously won Olympic golds in Rio

spectacular style when he launched Mark Wood high over extra-cover for six.

And the wicketkeeper then took West Indies past 400 with another impressive six, an extravagant uppercut off Wood. England captain Ben Stokes turned to Joe Root to break the stand but Da Silva clubbed the part-time spinner for three fours and a six off successive deliveries. Wood eventually ended the run spree when Shamar Joseph chipped him to mid-on. — AFP

in 2016 and the Covid-delayed 2021 Tokyo Games, but said he was looking forward to Paris. "I'd like to think I've grown a lot as an individual and an athlete since my first Games," he said, having skipped graduation to make the trip to Rio for just his third professional meet."

He added: "Tokyo felt like a bit of a pressure cooker. There was the situation mentally of just working around the pandemic, COVID testing every morning and hoping you didn't get the call, as (US pole vaulter) Sam Kendrick did and he was in my same suite."

"This is one I'm excited for simply because the crowd is back and we're back to the spirit of the Olympics." Crouser said he was "old enough to know I won't be doing this forever." "It gives me a moment to stop and appreciate the opportunities I've had and will have."

"Every four years the world comes together and puts aside its differences and I think we didn't have that in Tokyo. I'm excited to see that Olympic spirit return in Paris." First up, however, is London. "I expect tomorrow to be a very good competition," Crouser predicted. "There's myself coming into shape, Joe Kovacs in exceptional shape and Leonardo Fabbri as well." — AFP



**SYDNEY:** Australia's Ben Donaldson runs for the ball during the rugby union Test match between Australia and Georgia at Allianz Stadium in Sydney on July 20, 2024. — AFP

the second-half after Filippo Daugunu's yellow card for a clumsy charge was upgraded to red at the interval. — AFP



Sports

# Preparations for Paris Olympics move up a gear

## N Korean athletes leave for Paris, arrivals delayed by Friday's global IT crash

PARIS: Preparations for the Paris Olympics stepped up a gear on Saturday as security teams scoured the banks of the Seine ahead of Friday's opening ceremony and top International Olympic Committee officials met in the French capital. Police with sniffer dogs checked the six-kilometre (four-mile) route along the Seine for the ceremony in which around 6,000-7,000 athletes will sail on nearly a hundred barges and river boats in front of 300,000 spectators.

French police will be bolstered by colleagues from several countries, including Spain, Britain and Qatar. Early on Saturday, a rehearsal for the ceremony was held on the river but security barriers and police screened it from the eyes of residents and media.

The stakes are high for the waterborne parade; the first time the opening ceremony of a Summer Games will take place outside a stadium. The preparations for the ceremony have caused extensive disruption to residents of central Paris, who must have a pass with a special QR code to cross the Seine.

"We've had far fewer customers than usual for the last two weeks. There aren't many tourists and lots of Parisians have left town. All our local clientele has gone," said Behi Samadian, 69, in a boutique in Saint-Germain-des-Près. Team delegations have started to check into the athletes' village but some arrivals were delayed by Friday's global IT crash. "Like a lot of organizations, we suffered this global Microsoft outage," the Games chief organizer Tony Estanguet told reporters on Friday.

"All of our servers were affected this morning." However the accreditation systems were working again by Friday evening. In better news for organizers, the ticketing systems were not affected.

Organizers say 8.7 million tickets have already

been sold, beating the record from the 1996 Atlanta Olympics and that figure will rise because tickets are still on sale for some of the 45 sports.

Some of the athletes expected to be the biggest stars of the Games, including American sprinter Noah Lyles, will compete for a final time before the Olympics at the Diamond League meeting in London on Saturday.

### Friction over 2030 Olympics

The IOC's top brass, led by President Thomas Bach, will meet on Saturday to prepare for the larger IOC Session later this week. Behind the scenes, the allocation of the 2030 Winter Olympics to the French Alps - they are the only candidates - risks being delayed by a row over the French government's reluctance to give funding guarantees.

Russia will be the big absentee from the Paris Games, with just 15 Russians and 16 Belarusians accredited as most sports have turned their backs on the Russians after the invasion of Ukraine.

Those allowed to compete at the Games have had to meet strict criteria on neutrality, but Global Rights Compliance, a Hague-based human rights foundation, said two thirds of the Russians selected had expressed support for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine or have links to the military. In a statement to AFP, the IOC said Friday it would not comment on individual cases. Meanwhile, North Korean athletes left for the Paris Olympics on Saturday, AFP reporters saw, as they prepared to take part in the summer Games for the first time in eight years.

The athletes posed for photos at Pyongyang airport, wearing white blazers adorned with their national flag and badges featuring their former leaders.



PYONGYANG: North Korea players leave to take part in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, at the Pyongyang International Airport in Pyongyang on July 20, 2024. - AFP

Around 16 North Korean athletes are expected to compete in around seven Olympic events in Paris, including boxing and table tennis, according to the South Korean news agency Yonhap. North Korea's culture and sports minister Kim Il Guk was part of the delegation heading to Paris on Saturday.

Thousands of athletes have begun flying into the French capital ahead of the July 26-August 11 event. The nuclear-armed North did not send a delegation

to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics - which were delayed to 2021 because of the coronavirus - due to concerns over the pandemic. The country was banned from the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, after it failed to take part in Tokyo in 2021. North Korea won two gold medals at the Rio Olympics in 2016 - the last time it participated in the summer Games. Rim Jong Sim won in women's weightlifting and Ri Se Gwang scored gold in men's vault. - AFP

## Seoul complains to FIFA over racist abuse

SEOUL: South Korea's football association has officially complained to the world body about an alleged racist remark directed at Wolverhampton Wanderers forward Hwang Hee-chan despite Italian club Como denying the accusations. An unnamed Como player was accused of referring to Hwang as "Jackie Chan", a popular Hong Kong movie star known for his mar-

tial arts films, during a pre-season match in Spain on Monday. On Tuesday, Como insisted its player "did not say anything in a derogatory manner" and "the reaction of certain Wolves players has seen the incident blown out of proportion".

The Korea Football Association (KFA) said it sent an official letter to the world body FIFA on Thursday expressing "serious concern about the racist acts suffered by Hwang Hee-chan". The letter asked FIFA to take action and "eradicate racism on the soccer field", the association said on its official X account Thursday. Earlier this week Hwang said on Instagram that the coaching staff and his teammates said they would leave the field with him "if needed" after the

alleged abuse. "Racism is intolerable in sports and in all aspects of life," he added, with his post attracting more than 143,500 likes.

According to Como, its unnamed player said "ignore him, he thinks he's Jackie Chan". The Italian club insisted the remark was in "reference to the player's name, and to the constant references of 'Channy' made by his own teammates on the pitch". Wolves head coach Gary O'Neil said Hwang had the full support of the Wolves group. Hwang is not the first South Korean player to experience racist attacks while playing in European leagues. In 2021, eight men suspected of tweeting racist abuse at Tottenham Hotspur star Son Heung-min were arrested across England and Wales. - AFP



Bob Baffert

## Churchill Downs lifts suspension of trainer Baffert

LOS ANGELES: Churchill Downs lifted its suspension of star trainer Bob Baffert on Friday, opening the door for Baffert's return at the 2025 Kentucky Derby. "We are satisfied that Mr. Baffert has taken responsibility for his actions, completed a substantial penalty and is committed to running in full compliance with the rules and regulations going forward," Churchill Downs Incorporated chief executive Bill Carstanjen said in a statement. "All parties agree that it is time to bring this chapter to a close and focus on the future. Mr. Baffert is welcome to return to any of CDI's racetracks, including our flagship Churchill Downs Racetrack, and we wish him and his connections good luck in their future competitive endeavors." The Louisville track's reinstatement of Baffert brings to a close a years-long saga that began when Baffert was suspended for two years in 2021 after Medina Spirit failed a post-race drug test after winning the Kentucky Derby.

The Baffert-trained horse was disqualified and died later in 2021. Baffert initially denied giving the banned steroid betamethasone to Medina Spirit, eventually saying he had found it was an ingredient used in a cream to treat a rash on the horse.

Baffert's initial ban had been scheduled to end in 2023, but in July of that year, Churchill Downs accused him of continuing "to peddle a false narrative concerning the failed drug test of Medina Spirit." That case was among five drug-related violations in a 12-month span for Baffert, and Churchill Downs said in 2021 it was extending the suspension due to "continued concerns regarding the threat to the safety and integrity of racing he poses." That meant the Baffert-trained Muth, owned by Saudi Arabia's Amr Zedan, wasn't allowed to enter the Kentucky Derby last May despite a legal fight. Baffert has trained six Kentucky Derby winners, including Triple Crown winners American Pharoah and Justify.

Baffert issued a statement accepting responsibility for Medina Spirit's positive drug test. "I understand and appreciate that Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission took steps to enforce the rules that they believed were necessary to protect the safety and integrity of horse racing and the reputation of the Kentucky Derby," Baffert said in a statement posted on X, formerly Twitter. - AFP



MOGYOROD: McLaren's British driver Lando Norris drives during the second practice session at the Hungaroring race track in Mogyorod near Budapest, ahead of the Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix. McLaren's British driver Lando Norris reaches first place during the second practice. - AFP

## Norris on top as McLaren dominate Hungarian practice

BUDAPEST: Lando Norris topped the times ahead of Oscar Piastri as the two McLaren drivers dominated Saturday's third and final practice for this weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix. The 24-year-old Briton, who had bossed Friday's two practice sessions, demonstrated his pace and potential with a fastest lap in one minute and 16.098 seconds to outpace his team-mate by 0.044 seconds in a convincing one-two for the McLaren team.

Three-time world champion and series leader Max Verstappen, who leads Norris by 84 points in the drivers' title race, was third for Red Bull ahead of George Russell of Mercedes, Carlos Sainz of Ferrari and RB's Daniel Ricciardo. In a session of some surprises, Williams' Alex Albon was seventh ahead of Nico Hulkenberg of Haas and Yuki Tsunoda of RB with seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton, who is seeking a record-in-

creasing ninth Hungarian victory, tenth in the second Mercedes. Charles Leclerc was 11th for Ferrari and Sergio Perez 13th in the second Red Bull. On a significantly cooler day, with an ambient temperature of only 27 degrees Celsius, the session began in desultory fashion with few drivers making an early start and, after five minutes only one time on the board, from Perez.

Verstappen joined him and began a series of ever-faster laps to go top and trim his best time down to 1:17.938 when, with 15 minutes gone, he was the only man on track. It was hardly boisterous entertainment for a big crowd around the Hungaroring. Others began to join the fray with Lance Stroll of Aston Martin and Sauber's Valtteri Bottas clocking times before Alex Albon went top for Williams, only to be rapidly replaced by Norris and Russell. The Briton's lap in 1:16.826 suggested Mercedes were happier in the cooler conditions than those of a sweltering Friday. Hamilton, who had seemed ill at ease as he slithered in pursuit, then went second, within two-tenths of his team-mate. The Silver Arrows joy was short-lived, however, as McLaren then came and showed their potential, Norris clocked a lap in 1:16.098 followed by Piastri, just four-hundredths of a second adrift, ahead of Verstappen. - AFP

## Sprinting phenom Wilson heads for Paris relay spot

MIAMI: Quincy Wilson, the 16-year-old sensation who is headed to the Olympics as part of the US 4x400m relay pool made his case to compete in Paris with a sizzling 44.20sec at a meet in Gainesville, Florida, on Friday. Wilson broke the under-18 world record, taking control before the final straight and holding off reigning Olympic 4x400m relay gold medalist Bryce Deadmon - who finished second in 44.23. It was another impressive performance from Wilson, who finished sixth in the 400m final at the US Olympic athletics trials to earn a chance at a Paris relay berth.

If put on the relay, he could become the youngest US male athletics competitor to appear at an Olympics, surpassing Jim Ryun who was 17 when he ran in Tokyo in 1964. In other events in the Holloway Pro Classic, part of the American Track League series, 2023 world championships silver medalist Eriyon Knighton tuned up for the Olympics with a 200m victory in 19.92sec. Liberia's Emmanuel Matadi won the 100m in a career best 9.91sec while Nigeria's won both the women's 100m and 200m.

### Christian Taylor's farewell

The night saw triple jump great Christian Taylor, Olympic gold medalist in 2012 and 2016 and a four-time World Champion, say farewell, having announced the meeting would be his last. Taylor went out to a massive ovation at the University of Florida stadium, where he was a student and is now considered a legend.

In the women's 800m, reigning Olympic champion Athing Mu missed out in the event won by Kenyan Dorcus Ewoi in 1min 58.19sec. It was more disappointment for Mu, who fell at the US trials last month and lost a chance to defend the gold she won in Tokyo. - AFP

# Classifieds

### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707	Qadsiya	22515088
Rawda	22517733	Dasmah	22532265
Adaliya	22517144	Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Khaldiya	24848075	Shaab	22518752
Kaifan	24849807	Qibla	22459381
Shamiya	24848913	Ayoum Al-Qibla	22451082
Shuwaikh	24814507	Mirqab	22456536
Abdullah Salem	22549134	Sharq	22465401
Nuzha	22526804	Salmiya	25746401
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764		

### Change of Name

I, Javed Abdul Kader Khan, holder of Passport No. M8451426, do hereby change my name to Javed Abdul Kadar (as given name) Khan (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Javed Abdul Kadar Khan and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all documents.

(21/07/2024)

I, PATHAN MOHAMMAD HASIM KHAN MUSTUFA KHAN, holder of Indian Passport No. V3757349 having permanent address Darugalla Mohalla Lunawada, Mahisagar Pin: 389230, Gujarat, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given name) MOHAMMADHASIMKHAN MUSTUFAKHAN and (surname) PATHAN.

(#5634, 21/07/2024)

I, MOHAMMED MOTACIN, holder of Indian Passport No. M7062858 having permanent address ward No 7, Dabaka Town, PS Daboka Sub Divn Hojal Dist, Nagaon, Assam, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: given name Matsin Ali.

(#5633, 19/07/2024)



## Lyles fires Olympic 100m broadside

I am excited for Paris and of course to put on my best race there: Femke Bol



LONDON: (L-R) Britain's Louie Hinchliffe, USA's Noah Lyles, Botswana's Letsile Tebogo and Britain's Zharnel Hughes compete in the Men's 100m event during the IAAF Diamond League athletics meeting at the London stadium on July 20, 2024. — AFP

LONDON: US sprint star Noah Lyles fired out a timely broadside at pretenders to the Olympic 100m crown at Saturday's Diamond League meeting where Femke Bol again shone in the hurdles.

Lyles, who won the world 100-200m titles in Budapest last year, clocked a personal best of 9.81 seconds in the blue riband event at London Stadium. It could not have been better timed, with the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics just five days away.

"I'm going to win, it's what I always do. I'm getting faster every week," Lyles said. In her own fine-tuning, world champion Bol set a new meet record of 51.30sec as she cruised to victory in the women's 400m hurdles. "I am excited for Paris and of course

to put on my best race there," she said, with world record holder and Olympic champion Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone in her crosshairs.

"I am looking forward to racing Sydney—that will push us both. I will be ready for it and the relay as well of course." There was a fantastic send-off to a raft of Paris-bound British athletes in front of a near sell-out crowd of 58,000 at London Stadium, the venue for the 2012 Olympics and home to English Premier League club West Ham United.

World and Olympic silver medalist Keely Hodgkinson just missed out on Caster Semenya's Diamond League record by blasting to a stunning victory in 1:54.61 in the women's 800m. Perfectly led out by pacemaker Erin Wallace, the

European champion was in total control of the race and came flying through the line in a meet record that improved her own British record.

"I just wanted to go for it and see what was there," Hodgkinson said. "It was a little bit of bravery and fearlessness with a great atmosphere like this, I didn't want to waste the opportunity."

"I'm feeling really good and confident ahead of Paris," Hodgkinson's British teammate Matthew Hudson-Smith might have sat out the European championships in Rome, but that didn't show as he bettered his own European record to 43.74sec in a scintillating 400m.

It didn't all go totally to plan for home favorites as Dina Asher-Smith and Daryll Neita could only finish third and fourth in the 200m behind American winner

Gabrielle Thomas—in a meet record of 21.82sec—and second-placed St Lucian Julien Alfred (21.86).

### Aussies impress

There were three individual Australian winners at London Stadium: world champion Nina Kennedy claimed victory in the women's pole vault with 4.85m; Oliver Hoare claimed the men's mile in 3:49.03; and Mackenzie Little won the women's javelin in a personal best of 66.27m.

There was a surprise in the men's shot put, however, as Italy's European champion Leonardo Fabbri snatched a late victory with his fifth effort of 22.52 meters. American favorite Ryan Crouser, who will seek a third successive Olympic title in Paris, finished second with 22.37sec.

"Overall I was pretty happy with today,

obviously I would have liked to win but I was pretty consistent out there so overall it wasn't a bad day," Crouser contended. "It was a good step in getting ready for Paris. I've got a couple more weeks but I can see myself rapidly improving after injury."

Nickisha Pryce of Jamaica proved her form with an impressive world lead of 48.57sec in the women's 400m, a personal best and meet record. There was a further meet record in the non-Olympic distance of 3,000m, Switzerland's Dominic Lokinyomo Lobalu winning in 7:27.68.

With one eye on the Paris Games, Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim, who famously shared Tokyo gold with Italian Gianmarco Tamberi, was a late withdrawal from the men's high jump. That was won by New Zealand's Hamish Kerr with a best of 2.30m. — AFP

## Kuwait judo team back from Amman with 32 medals

KUWAIT: Kuwait judo national team arrived back in Kuwait on Friday after winning first place in juniors singles and teams, second place in the youth singles and first place of the youth teams with a total of 32 various medals from West Asia Championship that was held in Amman.

Treasurer of Judo Federation Faisal Al-Hamad said, following the reception of the delegation at Kuwait International Airport "this achievement was made because of the plan of players' preparation and the strategy that was prepared for the national teams in order to make such results".

Al-Hamad added that the federation looks forward for more foreign participations to ensure Kuwait's status in the judo sport, affirming the fed-

eration's interest in polishing the player's talents and develop their abilities by the best coaches in the region.

He lauded the performance of the players and their fighting spirit in the name of Kuwait in international competitions.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chairman of the Federation, Head of the delegation Minwer Al-Enezi said there was strong competition in singles and doubles and lauded the ideal performance by Kuwaiti players. He said this positive participation impressed participating teams and placed the name of the country among the strong teams of Asia.

He said the federation will continue development of the game to keep Kuwait flag in prominence in all regional and international events. The team collected 24 gold, two silver and six bronze.

This took place after the team took first place in the juniors singles by winning 4 gold, 2 silver and 3 bronze, second place in the youth singles by winning 2 gold and 3 bronze, reaching a total of 14 before the number of gold medals alone reaching (18). — KUNA



AMMAN: Kuwait's handball team.

## Kuwait beat Jordan at Asian Junior Handball tourney

AMMAN: Kuwait's team defeated on Thursday Jordan 29-26 at the 18th Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship currently held in Jordan.

## Former world snooker champion Reardon dies at 91

LONDON: Former world champion Ray Reardon, the coal miner who dominated snooker in the 1970s, has died at the age of 91. Welshman Reardon had previously been diagnosed with cancer and passed away on Friday night, his wife Carol confirmed on Saturday.

"Ray Reardon, widely regarded as one of the

The first half ended 15-11 in favor of Kuwait which could add 14 more to win the game. Speaking to KUNA, head of Kuwait's delegation Qaid al-Adwani said Kuwaiti players made a big technical performance.

He hoped that Kuwait could win the coming match against Bahrain to ensure qualification for the 25th IHF Men's Junior (U21) Handball World Championship in Poland 2025. Kuwaitis came second in the group, which includes Iran, China and Bahrain. — KUNA

greatest snooker players ever and a six-time world champion, has died at the age of 91," a World Snooker Tour statement said. Jimmy White, one of snooker's most popular players, said on X: "Gutted to hear my very good friend Ray Reardon has passed away."

"A total class act and very kind to me when I was making my way in the game. A giant of the game. Rest in Peace mate," Reardon won six world titles between 1970 and 1978, earning an MBE in the 1985 Queen's Birthday honors.

Nicknamed 'Dracula' after playing a session of the 1974 World Championship final in a cape, top hat and scarlet silk jacket, Reardon rose to prominence as snooker became a popular sport in Britain thanks to the Pot Black television program. — AFP



KUWAIT: Triumphant judo team back home with officials.