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## BIDEN DROPS OUT OF RACE

Embattled US leader endorses Harris as Democratic presidential nominee

### Amir invited to ACD summit



**KUWAIT:** HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a letter from Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani on July 21, 2024, inviting him to participate in the third Asia Cooperation Dialogue summit on sports diplomacy. Qatari Ambassador to Kuwait Ali bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud handed HH the Amir the invitation to the summit, slated to be held in October in Doha. — KUNA

**REHOBOTH BEACH, Delaware:** US President Joe Biden ended his reelection campaign on Sunday after fellow Democrats lost faith in his mental acuity and ability to beat Donald Trump while endorsing Vice President Kamal Harris to replace him as the party's candidate. Biden, 81, in a post on X, said he will remain in his role as president and commander-in-chief until his term ends in January 2025 and will address the nation this week.

"It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve as your President. And while it has been my intention to seek reelection, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term," Biden wrote.

His initial statement had not included an endorsement of Harris, but he followed up a few minutes later with an expression of support. "Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year," Biden said on X. Harris, 59, would become the first black woman to run at the top of a major-party ticket in the country's history. Trump told CNN on Sunday that he thinks Harris will be easier to defeat in November's election than Biden. A CNN reporter said on X that Trump made the comments to the network shortly after Biden announced his decision.

It was unclear whether other senior Dem-



US President Joe Biden

ocrats would challenge Harris for the party's nomination - she was widely seen as the pick for many party officials - or whether the party itself would choose to open the field for nominations. Biden's announcement follows a wave of public and private pressure from Democratic lawmakers and party officials to

quit the race after his shockingly poor performance in a June 27 televised debate last month against Republican rival Trump, 78.

Biden's failure at times to complete clear sentences took the public spotlight away

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### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Kuwait concerned over Yemen

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait is following with great concern the unprecedented Zionist attacks on Yemen, the resulting deterioration of the security situation in the region, and the undermining of international efforts aimed at ending the cycle of violence, the ministry of foreign affairs said on Sunday. The ministry emphasized Kuwait's continued support for efforts aimed at establishing security and stability in Yemen and sparing its people further harm and suffering. — KUNA (See Page 3)

#### Amir names new KPA board

**KUWAIT:** An Amiri decree has been issued appointing a new board of directors of Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) for a three-year term of office. The newly named board comprises Alya Aryan, Bashaer Al-Ghanim, Yousef Al-Eseri, Amer Al-Bader, director general of the General Administration of Customs, Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for Ports and Border Security and Assistant Director General of the General Directorate of Coast Guard. Under the decree, each board member will be paid KD 5,000 per annum. — KUNA

#### Baidan reinstated as PAS chief

**KUWAIT:** Yusuf Al-Baidan returned to his post as Director General of Public Authority for Sport after being reinstated by Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs and State Minister for Youth Affairs Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah. Baidan was previously suspended by former minister Dawood Maarafi. Baidan was received by Deputy Director General for the Financial and Administrative sector Faisal Al-Yateem and Deputy Director General for Competitive Sport Bashar Abdullah.

### Smooth flow of information, traffic eyed

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi revealed on Sunday the Kuwaiti media regulation law, aimed at providing more space for responsible freedoms, is in its final stages and will be announced soon. Speaking during a press conference, Mutairi also announced the new "Al-Akhbar" news channel will be launched on July 28.

Over the past three years, the ministry has launched 99 electronic systems, boosting revenues in various sectors, including a 65 percent rise in government printing press revenues and a 97 percent increase in licensing application fees. The ministry conducted 83,000 inspection tours, improving the case-winning rate from 22 percent to 83 percent, and earning 40 local and regional awards. Initiatives like "Platform 51," institutional volunteering, and efforts to develop an audiovisual identity were also launched. An electronic commercial advertising platform was also introduced. (See Page 2)

### Houthis vow to hit Zionists amid Gaza massacres

**HODEIDA, Yemen:** Yemen's Houthi rebels on Sunday promised a "huge" retaliation against the Zionist entity following a deadly strike on the port of Hodeida, as regional fallout widens from months of war in Gaza. The Zionist strike, the first claimed by the Zionist entity in Yemen, came a day after the first fatal attack by the Houthis in the Zionist entity. On Sunday, the Zionist entity said it intercepted a missile fired from Yemen and struck targets in southern Lebanon. Residents of southern Gaza reported combat in the Rafah area.

The fighting across the region comes as Washington, the Zionist entity's chief military supplier, says a deal to end more than nine months of war between the Zionist entity and Palestinian group Hamas is near the "goal line". But Saudi Arabia's foreign



Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi speaks during a press conference on the ministry's strategy. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah chairs a meeting of the Supreme Traffic Council. — KUNA

Separately, Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah said Kuwait's security leadership has committed to enhancing cooperation and coordination among public and private bodies to improve nationwide traffic management, following a meeting of the Supreme Traffic Council.

Sheikh Salem highlighted proposals that include

innovative engineering solutions for roads and inter-sections, public awareness and education, and strict penalties. He urged the council to find scientific and practical solutions to traffic issues. The meeting also discussed the reasons behind the deterioration of public transportation services in Kuwait, including public buses, and explored recommendations for overhauling public transport services.



**GAZA:** Relatives surround the corpses of members of the Qadih family in front of the morgue of the Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis following an overnight Zionist strike that hit their house in Bani Suheila, killing two children, their father, uncle, paternal grandparents and severely injuring their mother, on July 21, 2024. — AFP



Continued on Page 6

## Local



Minister of Information discusses with the media. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Local media representatives attend the event.

# News channel 'Al-Akhbar' to be launched on July 28

## Info Ministry inaugurates creative initiatives to boost productivity

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Culture, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, announced that the new Kuwait news channel, "Al-Akhbar," will be launched on July 28. During his presentation on the latest outputs of the Ministry of Information strategy, reviewing the Ministry's achievements until the end of the third year of work on the strategy 2021/2025, the minister stated that the Ministry has been emphasizing transparency as a core principle in its approach over the past three years.

He stressed the importance of the participatory approach with civil society institutions using a globally approved scientific methodology for sustainable development through experience, noting that the Ministry will have a direct approach to the operational plans to raise productivity and quality. Regarding the Ministry strategy's achievements during the past three years, Minister Al-Mutairi announced the launch of 99 online systems, making

the Ministry's services accessible to all partners to boost productivity.

He stated that this led to a significant increase in the Ministry's revenues, revealing "There was a rise with 65 percent in the printing press revenues, in addition to an increase in official Gazette revenues by 30 percent," adding that the Ministry also launched four studios and four administrative stations as well as developed new technologies. He stated that a quality control process was implemented through the issuance of numerous ministerial decisions, the most significant being the establishment of inspection teams to ensure that the control process is thorough, strict, and legal.

He disclosed that 83,000 inspection tours had been conducted across all media activities, emphasizing that the case-winning rate had reached 83 percent. The minister highlighted that the Ministry of Information won 40 local and regional awards due to its quality control and raising productivity, pointing to the launch of creative

initiatives, including the "51 digital platform".

He pointed out that the Ministry also launched the institutional volunteer initiative with 45 training courses, which are specialized courses for all employees of the Ministry of Information, revealing the launch of the new visual identity for Kuwait TV programs marks a significant milestone in the channel's evolution, with a primary focus on content that authentically conveys the Kuwaiti identity and heritage.

"There was also significant initiative, including the Kuwaiti media regulation law, which provides more space for responsible freedoms," stressing that the law is in its final stages and will be announced as soon as it is approved. He concluded, "We sat with representatives from the private sector and various companies and successfully launched the electronic commercial advertising platform a week ago," explaining that this collaborative effort underscores the ministry's commitment to innovation and partnership, providing businesses with a modern, efficient avenue.



Minister of Information and Culture, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi speaks at the event.

## FM receives envoys



Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs met with the newly appointed Bangladeshi Ambassador to Kuwait Sayed Tariq Hussain, and received his appointment credentials.



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya on Sunday received credentials of the newly assigned South Korean Ambassador to Kuwait at the Foreign Ministry Diwan. The minister wished the new ambassador success in his endeavor and hoped that the bilateral relations between the two friendly countries would be enhanced further. — KUNA photos



Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs received the credentials of the new Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to the country.

## Sabah Al-Ahmad's Creativity supports Kuwaiti students

KUWAIT: Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC), a branch of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), is committed to supporting its students participating in the International Chemistry Olympiad (ICHO), hosted by Saudi Arabia from July 21-30, and the International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) in Iran from July 20-30, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE).

Director General Neda Al-Daihani stated to KUNA on Sunday that the center's support for students in global scientific competitions aligns with its strategy and the directives of its board to develop students' skills and abilities, contributing to the vision of New Kuwait 2035. Al-Daihani appreciated MoE's cooperation, which involved forming a coordination committee between both sides to arrange student participation in the 2024 Chemistry and Physics Olympiads, highlighting a short-term training plan supervised by the center to prepare students for these competitions.

He mentioned that students were well-prepared for the Olympiads with



Students pose for a group photo.

the help of Dr. Peter Bogard from the University of Cambridge and University College London and a former member of ICHO's committee. Additionally, Hussein Al-Rashid, a physics trainer from Swansea University in the UK, was brought in to provide necessary training for Kuwaiti students, he pointed out.

The center is keen on involving both international and local experts to develop long-term professional training plans to enhance Kuwait's participation in international Olympiads, beginning with the 2025 competitions. Students participating in the ICHO in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, include Mohammad Al-Najem, Ali Behbehani, Taiba Al-Damkhi,



and Faisal Mohammad, while the IPhO students in Isfahan, Iran, are Ahmad Hassan, Hussein Al-Awadi, Salem Al-Ajmi, Salman Hussein, and Jasem Jasem — KUNA



KUWAIT: Governor of Kuwait's capital, Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah visits the medical emergency department in the Shuwaikh residential area. — KUNA photos



## Government enhances health care, services

KUWAIT: The Governor of Kuwait's capital, Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, has praised the great efforts of the state in providing the necessary services and integrated health care to patients and visitors, the active role of the Ministry of Health, and the continuous work of medical and administrative staff in hospitals and specialized centers.

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah stressed during his visit to one of the ambulance cen-

ters of the medical emergency department in the Shuwaikh residential area the importance of exerting more efforts in order to achieve the required workflow and ensure integrated equipment in anticipation of any medical emergency and to take security and safety measures and deal with accidents, crises, and emergencies in the country.

He praised the efforts of the center's technicians, employees, and paramedics, calling on everyone to cooperate in order to overcome all obstacles. He praised the vital role played by the emergency medical management center and its contribution to saving lives and preserving property, in addition to providing health care to patients and the injured in emergency cases and providing all the health and safety requirements for citizens and residents.

He called for raising the level and efficiency of paramedics, technicians, and all medical staff, developing the necessary plans and preparations to deal with any emergency situations, as well as encouraging the public to acquire the skill of first aid through the launch of specialized professionals and training.

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah stressed on harnessing all the frameworks of cooperation and coordination between the Capital Governorate and the medical emergency department to continue working to serve the nation: "We are working together to provide safety for all." For his part, the director of the medical emergency department at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Shatti, expressed appreciation for the governor's visit. — KUNA

## Local

# People call for transparency as concerns mount over food poisoning and safety

## Officials close some restaurants • Ministry refutes rumors

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: People in Kuwait have called the government on social media to disclose the names of restaurants involved in recent food safety violations across the country. This followed several official announcements of closing local and international restaurants for selling food unfit for human consumption, leading to cases of food poisoning.

The Kuwaiti Ministry of Health has stated that these cases have been addressed, with nearly all affected individuals recovering. Additionally, the Ministry has refuted rumors of schistosomiasis disease spreading in the country, confirming no reported cases. It clarified that schistosomiasis, a parasite, is typically transmitted through swimming in contaminated freshwater. However, the Ministry has not yet announced the specific causes behind the recent contamination incidents.

Alaa Abdallah, a Kuwaiti citizen, has echoed the public calling of disclosing restaurants' names, perceiving public health as more important than the restaurants' reputation. Last week, Abdullah was diagnosed with food poisoning and gastroenteritis after consuming dessert and Arabic coffee at one of the recently closed international restaurant chains.

### 'Tasted like plastic'

She described her experience, saying, "the coffee tasted like plastic and had a stale taste, possibly from

being stored for too long and boiled multiple times to mask the flavor." When she went to the clinic to take a drip, the nurse told her that she met several similar cases on that day approaching from the same restaurant. Similarly, a British expat recently diagnosed with gastroenteritis, shared with Kuwait Times his experience of eating a meat burger at another international fast-food chain under scrutiny for food contamination. He said, "I had to leave work early the next day because of vomiting and diarrhea." His experience was followed up by visiting a hospital and receiving the necessary treatment.

During the same period, more restaurants were also under scrutiny. The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition has shut down multiple restaurants in Al-Mubarakiya due to 20 violations of food standards, including the discovery of 1,275 rotten eggs. These violations also included selling spoiled food, altering its natural properties in terms of color, shape, and smell, and selling food unfit for human consumption containing worms and larvae. Additionally, workers were found handling food without valid health certificates, non-compliance with the rules and requirements of general hygiene during work.

### How to file a complaint

Abdulaziz Alkhubaizi, a nutrition expert and research associate at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, explained that failure to adhere to neces-



Haya AlMaqroun

sary hygiene standards could result in food-borne pathogens being transmitted from food handlers to the food itself, and subsequently to customers. He added that among the reasons could be restaurants' failure to properly manage food storage or transportation, potentially not adhering to regulations that ensure food safety, especially under extreme heat conditions. Haya AlMaqroun, head of PR and communication of Consumer Protection Association in Kuwait encouraged consumers facing any food poisoning incidents in restaurants to file a complaint through the authority's WhatsApp at 1807770.



The authority then follows it up until it reaches court, aiming to obtain financial compensation for the individuals affected, along with penalties on restaurants that may lead to closure. She stated that the association is continuously monitoring product qualities to ensure that all items available on shelves meet the highest standards of quality and safety to avoid any health risks that may arise from consuming expired or unfit products. She added that the association collaborates with suppliers and restaurants to ensure that fresh products reach consumers.

## Kuwait expresses concern as Zionists attack Yemen

KUWAIT: Kuwait is following with great concern the unprecedented Zionist attacks on the territory of the Republic of Yemen, the resulting deterioration of the security situation in the region, and the undermining of international efforts aimed at ending the cycle of violence, said Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday. In a statement, the ministry stressed Kuwait's position on the need to distance the region and its people from the dangers of violence and destruction, urging the international community and the Security Council to assuming its responsibilities in ending all conflicts. The ministry emphasized Kuwait's continued support for efforts aimed at establishing security and stability in Yemen, and sparing its people further harm and suffering.

### 'Maximum restraint'

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia, a major foreign player in Yemen's nearly decade-long civil war, urged restraint on Sunday in the wake of Zionist strike that the Houthi rebels said killed 6 people. The attack which hit the Houthi-controlled city of Hodeida, "aggravates the current tension in the region and halts the ongoing efforts to end the war in Gaza," the Saudi foreign ministry said in a statement.



HODEIDA: This handout satellite image shows a view of burning oil tanks in the port of Yemen's Houthi-held city of Hodeida on July 21, 2024, a day after Zionist airstrikes. — AFP

It "called on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and to distance the region and its people from the dangers of war." Saudi Arabia mobilized an international military coalition against the Houthis in 2015, although a truce has largely held for the past two years. Efforts by the kingdom to broker a Yemen peace deal have faltered in the wake of an anti-shipping campaign by the Houthi rebels in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

The rebels have targeted nearly 90 ships since November which they say is to signal

their solidarity with Palestinians in the Gaza war. Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, has engaged in a delicate balancing act as the world's biggest oil exporter tries to extricate itself from the war on its doorstep. It has not joined a US-led naval coalition to deter Houthi attacks or participated in strikes on Yemen carried out by the US and Britain since January. Sunday's foreign ministry statement affirmed the kingdom's "continuous support for peace efforts in Yemen to spare its people more suffering." — Agencies

## Prime Minister hosts Qatari Ambassador



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received, at Seif Palace on Sunday, the Qatari Ambassador to Kuwait, Ali Abdullah Al-Mahmoud. The head of the Prime Minister's Diwan, Abdulaziz Dekheel Al-Dekheel, attended the meeting. — KUNA

## Charity organization sponsors students in Malaysia

KUWAIT: The International Islamic Charity Organization announced on Sunday that it has sponsored 100 students in seven Arab schools in Malaysia in order to provide educational opportunities for students in need in cooperation with the Insan Foundation for Relief and Development. Ibrahim Al-Bader, Deputy Director General for Corporate Communications at the Authority, said that the International Islamic Charity has been paying tuition fees for the students in need as well as sponsoring educational and recreational programs to contribute to their rehabilitation.

The project targeted Arab students in Malaysia as a result of the conflicts to help them complete their educational studies and reduce

their financial burdens. He explained that the program came under the slogan (our life with values is more beautiful) and is aimed at promoting Islamic and moral values among Arabic school students in a motivating, interactive, and competitive manner.

The program also protects them from intellectual and ideological deviations, and more than 3,300 students participated in the events. He stated that the Authority pays great attention to brilliant students based on its strategic vision 2022-2026, which aims to build the human being culturally and educationally by providing educational and rehabilitation opportunities to be able to make a positive impact in his society.

He pointed out that the charity organization implements many educational projects, including building and equipping schools, constructing university facilities, establishing academies for the gifted, teacher training courses, sponsoring remedial programs for learning difficulties, and projects to care for the gifted to



الهيئة الخيرية الإسلامية العالمية  
International Islamic Charity Organization

complete postgraduate studies, among others. It is noteworthy that the International Islamic Charity Organization is one of the largest institutions working in the humanitarian field, and it is independent and multi-active and provides humanitarian services to the needy in the world. It was established in 1984, based on the humanitarian orientations of Kuwait. — KUNA

## Awqaf announces winners in braille competition

KUWAIT: The General Secretariat of Awqaf has named two volumes for winning braille stories for blind children in the Kuwait International Children's Stories Competition for the third and fourth seasons in cooperation with the Kuwait Blind Association. Deputy Secretary-General for Administration and Support Services at the Awqaf Secretariat Amal Al-Dalal said on Sunday that the two volumes were issued for the project 'Qutoof Al-Khair Series', which targets children in the Arab and Islamic world.



Amal Al-Dalal

Al-Dalal stated that these stories dealt with various topics in the field of endowment and charitable and voluntary works to constitute an important addition to the libraries of the blind in Kuwait and abroad. "It raises awareness of the concept of charitable endowment and its role in solidarity and community development," she said.

Al-Dalal added that the Qutoof Al-Khair Series project provides printed and animated cartoon stories, electronic educational stories, and purposeful educational games through the use of applications, multimedia, and interactive games according to approved educational standards. The public can request free copies of the two volumes from the Waqf Sciences Library at the General Secretariat of Endowments in Dasma. — KUNA

## New officers selected

KUWAIT: The First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah on Sunday witnessed the draw for the selection of officers, non-commissioned officers, and individuals applying for supervisory positions at the Unified Military Command. Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf stressed that the application of the lottery system to choose the applicants is to promote transparency, justice and equity. The First Deputy PM blessed his fellow officers, non-commissioned officers, and individuals who were selected and urged them to do their best to represent and defend their Kuwait and the army, wishing them success in their new work tasks. — KUNA



## Housing Authority provides 328,037 e-services

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare announced that it provided 328,037 services to citizens through electronic channels and reception centers during the first half of this

year. The Deputy Director General for Public Relations and Development and official spokesman for the Foundation, Omar Al-Ruwaieh, said that the rate of citizens' demand for the use of electronic services provided by the Corporation through its channels (Sahel, chatbot service, or the website) reached 93.8 percent during the first six months of 2024.

Al-Ruwaieh added that the institution received 152,838 transactions through the government's Sahel application and reviewed them from spe-

cialized employees, representing 46.5 percent of the total transactions during the first half. He pointed to the success of the Chatbot service provided by the Foundation via the application WhatsApp, through which 154,906 services were provided during the first six months of this year. He stated that the employees of the Citizen Service Department answered 14,193 inquiries during the same period through the telephone service, in addition to providing 5,947 services through reception centers.

## In my view

## Labor and exploitation



Dr. Khalid A Al-Saleh

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It is time to establish a government company for home maintenance. The Kuwait's public is complaining about the maintenance costs, and this complaint is now common. They don't have many choices as the prices vary. If an air condition breaks down during this scorching heat, technicians charge so much money for repairs and maintenance. The costs of fixing household items, electric systems, damaged floors, etc are soaring higher.

Some cooperative societies have attempted to solve the problem by bringing in workers and setting the prices. We appreciate and thank them for that, but still, many technicians try to find a way to still exploit people. What is the solution? There are many laborers in Kuwait, and they compete as they place advertisements showcasing their services.

These technicians and workers face a lot of challenges and problems too. They must save a huge sum of money to pay their sponsors so as to renew their papers. These workers will also pay their bills and take care of themselves and their families back home. Kuwaitis and residents have to bear the brunt of these problems as usual. This prompted the need for a lasting solution. Many families are now spending more than their budgets as the cost of maintenance soars amid the high cost of living.

To prevent sponsors' exploitation, the government should provide trained laborers through a shareholding company, provide accommodation and transportation for the workers, and set up price lists for services and repairs. This will safeguard the dignity of labor and will prevent exploitation. Are we able to do that? In new Kuwait, the exploitation columns no longer attract readers. We need to stop these bogus companies, establishments, and individuals who exploit expats and charge them huge sums of money without providing them adequate jobs and accommodations.

## Photo of the day



KUWAIT: A lionfish and jellyfish swim in an aquarium at the Scientific Center on July 21, 2024. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Positive and the negative impacts of social media

By Abdullah Sabih

KUWAIT: Social media has had an undoubtful impact on society in the past few decades. The lives of many people revolve around it and have been affected by it in one way or another. Without a doubt, it is a boon to mankind, without which the prospect of a modern world would have been left unfulfilled. But as the saying goes: "There are always two sides to the same coin." Social media has also proven to be a bane to society in quite a few ways. It was created solely for the purpose of serving as a platform for people to connect with each other. But as we know, in today's world it has outlived this purpose and acts as an epitome of confinement and entertainment for many people as well.

Keeping up with our loved ones and with the rest of the world used to be quite a challenge before. But this void has been filled by social media platforms. "Social media made it possible for me to reconnect with friends from my childhood days. We reunited after 25 years through Facebook and refreshed our memories by reminiscing the good old days," said Mujeeb Akhtar, an engineer working at KNPC.

He also believes that many creative people, like himself, are given a platform to share their skills and interests with the rest of the world through social media. It has also become an educational tool as it gives institutions

and students a wide range of educational resources and courses to expand their knowledge and accessibility to learning. A student, Raeha Nigar Kidwai, had this to say: "Social media educates people on certain topics by watching things on their feed which can benefit them - for example, politics or just the economy in general." These are just a few of the many benefits of social media that are often overlooked when we focus only on the negative aspect of it.

On the other hand, social media brought in its wake many undesired consequences as well. According to Yousuf Khan, a student studying in Kuwait, social media is a thing meant for adults as the younger generation can get addicted to it quite easily. "It does have a lot of positives, but the negatives usually tend to outweigh the positives. Also, there are people who are doing all kinds of things, such as cyberbullying, to make it unsafe, which makes it look like more of a villain than a hero," he argued.

Cyberbullying is an issue of great concern that is being overlooked by many. Meanwhile, another student in Kuwait spoke about the negative impacts of social media: "A lot of youngsters are exposed to 18+ content or end up talking to someone not near their age, which is inappropriate. Also, a lot of stuff on social media isn't real; it only shows what people want you to see, not what's



actually going on behind the screen, which can have negative effects on others wanting to 'perfect' themselves because of what they're being influenced by."

According to a new study by Harvard University, self-disclosure on social media platforms lights up the same part of the brain that also ignites when taking an addictive substance. "Without a doubt, social media is addictive and people now live more of a virtual life," said Akhtar. "Also, a lot of unverified information is available, which is not healthy for the human mind to process, causing social chaos. The best way to utilize it is by maintaining a healthy balance between its pros and cons."

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## Al-Najat Charity assists 1,450 refugee orphans

KUWAIT: The Al-Najat Charity Association said on Sunday that it assisted 1,450 refugee orphans in Jordan in cooperation and coordination with the authorized bodies. The acting director general of the association, Abdullah Al-Shihab, told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the association has implemented many humanitarian projects in Jordan to promote social solidarity and strengthen brotherly ties.

Al-Shihab stressed that the association is making strenuous efforts in caring for orphans, and its role is not limited to distributing materials in need. "In addition to supporting the Al-Najat orphanage in Jordan, which includes 54 orphans, the association has paid university fees for 42 outstanding university science students in Jordan from various nationalities." He added that the association is keen to take care of the patients. It has paid for the treatment of 20 Syrian refugees who are kidney patients.

The association's delegations distributed food baskets and financial assistance to poor families, provided assistance to 66 Syrian refugee families, and provided all their basic needs like medicine and food in addition to supporting production projects and providing safe drinking water. He thanked the charity's supporters for their contributions in alleviating the suffering of those in need. — KUNA



Al-Najat Charity Association assists 1,450 refugee orphans in Jordan. — KUNA photos



Turkey-Syria rapprochement likely to be gradual: Analysts

## Relatives grieve victims of Bangladesh unrest



KHAN YUNIS: Girls walk with water containers past destroyed buildings and a puddle of sewage water erupting from collapsed underground pipes in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on July 8, 2024. — AFP

# Polio fears push Zionist army to vaccinate troops

## Region could soon confront grave ecosystem and public health problems: Activists

**JERUSALEM:** The Zionist military said on Sunday it will start offering the polio vaccine to soldiers serving in the Gaza Strip after remnants of the contagious polio virus were found in test samples in areas of the coastal enclave.

Soldiers will be vaccinated during routine troop turnover, though it is not mandatory, the military said. There are about 170,000 full-time soldiers and another 300,000 reservists in the Zionist army.

UN agencies said last week that the Global Polio Laboratory Network found type-2 poliovirus in six environmental samples collected on June 23. The Zionist entity's health ministry said it had made similar findings. No human cases have been reported.

Much of Gaza's health infrastructure has been destroyed during the Zionist entity's nine-month military offensive on the territory. Public health officials and aid groups have warned that without proper health services the population is particularly vulnerable to disease outbreaks.

The highly contagious virus is caught by drinking contaminated water or through oral contact. It can cause paralysis and in extreme cases death. Waste water now runs in between tents in many camps for the displaced and

fresh water is increasingly scarce. With fuel limited, aid agencies rarely send out trucks with water and pumps at wells cannot be used. Many people walk long distances to get safe water from points set up by volunteers.

### 'Always ill'

Northern Gaza is suffering particularly badly from food and water shortages after major Zionist offensives. Ahmed Al-Shanbari, a father living in a camp in Jabalia said the water his family has "is not suitable for drinking or cooking." "My children suffer from kidney disease, jaundice, itching and coughing. There is no treatment in northern Gaza," he said. Shanbari said the family spends four hours each day searching for a source of water.

In Deir el-Balah, central Gaza, Umm Nahed Abu Shar is already living a health nightmare in her family's tent. City authorities said last week that waste water treatment stations had been turned off due to a lack of fuel. "The heat, the diseases, the flies, the mosquitoes and their hissing, it all hurts us," the 45-year-old mother told AFP. "We don't sleep at night because of the smell of sewage. My children do not

sleep because they are always ill with something spread by the waste."

On top of hunger that UN agencies say has gripped Gaza since the Zionist offensive, doctors say scabies, chicken pox, skin rashes and lice are spreading fast. UN agencies have repeatedly warned of the risk of cholera and other more serious diseases becoming epidemics.

### No access to landfills

Umm Yusef Abu al-Qumsan, 60, has also had to leave her home and move to Deir el-Balah where she said it was "a miserable life among rubbish and insects". Nearly every day she accompanies her children or grandchildren to queue for a nurse to help for diseases or mosquito bites.

"We buy many treatments. But we don't know if it is safe to eat or drink. Whether we can sit or sleep," she said. Deir el-Balah city authorities last week predicted that "roads will be flooded by wastewater" and "diseases will spread" after it turned off sewage water pumping and treatment stations. It said 700,000 people who have descended on the city in search of safety from fighting and air strikes are at risk.

A fire has burned on one dump at Al-

Mawasi, a giant tent city near Khan Yunis in the south, for the past week, according to 35-year-old Muhammad Al-Kahlol. The under-equipped emergency services have been unable to stop it.

The Zionist entity has bombed Al-Mawasi several times and Kahlol said the waste is an added threat. "We are suffocating from the foul smell of waste, the smoke and the heat," he said.

Pax, a Dutch activist group, said in a new study that "months of continuous bombing and the entity's fuel blockade have decimated" Gaza's outdated waste collection system. "Local authorities report that the (IDF) are preventing access to Gaza's three official landfills."

Pax said it has studied satellite imagery showing 225 growing waste dumps across Gaza. The group said a "chemical soup" of matter and heavy metals could contaminate water supplies and farmland and "eventually toxic substances penetrate the food chain and find their way back to humans".

Pax warned that as water can "migrate over long distances" the danger could spread beyond the war zone. "While the danger for Gaza is imminent, the overall region could soon confront grave ecosystem and public health problems." — Agencies



NABLUS: A member of a group of foreign volunteers, some from the US, receives treatment at Nablus' Rafidia Hospital. — AFP

## Zionist settlers beat foreign volunteers in occupied West Bank

**NABLUS:** Zionist settlers on Sunday attacked a group of foreign volunteers helping Palestinian farmers in the occupied West Bank, injuring some who needed hospital treatment, the activists and Zionist army said. Eight mainly American volunteers were working with the farmers in an olive grove near the Palestinian village of Qusra when settlers came after them, said David Hummel, an American-German in the group. "We were standing there peacefully, not a threat to anyone, when they started coming towards us and pushing us down the path," Hummel told AFP. "They started attacking and beating us all with sticks and metal pipes and they were throwing rocks as well at us," he said. "I was attacked on my legs, on my arms and here on my jaw as well and it was ... very violent," added the volunteer, showing bruising to his face.

The volunteers are from the International Solidarity Movement, a group that says it deploys people to form a "protective presence" for Palestinians at risk of facing violence in the West Bank. Two women were among four activists treated at Rafidia hospital in the nearby city of Nablus, according to Qusra's mayor Hani Odeh. An AFP journalist saw at least three being treated in the hospital. Zionist troops arrived and fired warning shots in the air to chase away the volunteers and farmers, according to the mayor.

The army said in a statement that "a number of masked (Zionist) civilians assaulted a group of foreign citizens while they were planting trees in the area of Qusra" and that "several" needed treatment. "Soldiers were dispatched to the scene and fired warning shots into the air, causing the (Zionist) civilians to flee the area," they added, condemning any "acts of violence".

The volunteers from the ISM, which says it was set up "to resist the (Zionist) occupation of Palestinian land", have been in Qusra for about a month, according to the mayor. The farmers wanted to "clear the land after settlers burned it some time ago", said Odeh. — AFP

## Settlers lobby religious Republicans to reject two-state solution

**WEST BANK:** Ruth Lieberman, a Jewish settler in the Zionist occupied West Bank, is determined to thwart international pressure for a sovereign Palestinian state. And her friendships with prominent US Republicans from the party's religious right are helping, she says. Weeks after the October 7 attack by Palestinian group Hamas, Lieberman hosted pro-Zionist, conservative Senator Mike Lee, a Mormon, for a Shabbat meal in her family home, Senate records show.

The conversation turned to Palestinian statehood, and Lieberman told Lee the attack had hardened Zionist opposition to the idea, she said in an interview from her home near Bethlehem, in Alon Shvut, within one of the West Bank's largest clusters of settlements, known as Gush Etzion, which are deemed illegal by international law. Lee did not respond to requests for comment.

Such visits are helping align the views of senior Republican Party officials with settlers and the government of Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the wake of October 7, said Lieberman, a political consultant who often hosts US delegations visiting settlements.

"Having friends and voices like that in very high places in the US helps us," she said of Lee and US House Speaker Mike Johnson, an evangelical Christian who visited her family in February 2020 during the presidency of Donald Trump, long before becoming speaker. Johnson did not respond to requests for comment.

### Like Puerto Rico

Ever since October 7, Lieberman and others have intensified their efforts, hoping to influence the Republican Party's position ahead of the November US election that could return Trump to office. Lieberman and a delegation of settler officials pressed the case at meetings with Johnson and Lee, among others, in Washington last month, according to a statement from the delegation.

Reuters visited two Gush Etzion settlements and spoke to two dozen Zionists and Palestinians in the West Bank and the Zionist entity, three current and former Trump aides and three evangelical leaders between March and July. The people Reuters spoke to described grassroots groups of settlers, members of the Zionist entity's religious right and conservative Christians working to convince Trump and the Republican Party to drop longstanding US support for a Palestinian state, arguing it rewarded the October 7 Hamas attack. While Trump has suggested US policy could change, neither he nor the party have been explicit about their position towards a Palestinian state if they win the election.

Campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt did not reply to questions about Trump's views on settlements and the future for Palestinians. She said the Zionist entity had never had a better friend in the White House than Trump.

David Friedman, who as ambassador to the Zionist entity in 2020 developed Trump's plan for a limited Palestinian state, now advocates for a single, expanded entity without full citizenship for Palestinians, an arrangement he likened in an interview to Puerto Rico. He said he had not discussed the plan with Trump. Residents of Puerto Rico, a poor US territory, are considered US citizens but cannot vote in presidential elections.

Within the Zionist entity itself, two states remain

the most popular way to peace, a May poll by Tel Aviv University showed, though support fell to only 33 percent of respondents, from 43 percent before October 7. However, annexation of the West Bank by the entity and limiting rights for Palestinians living there, an option favored by some settlers, had the support of 32 percent of Zionists, from 27 percent before October 7. It is seen as an increasingly likely outcome, the poll showed.

Ohad Tal, a lawmaker with the hardline Religious Zionism party who lives in Gush Etzion, said settler leaders who seek to annex West Bank lands permanently were increasingly looking to Trump and his evangelical allies for support. "It's one of our main goals right now to strengthen connections with these groups," Tal said of evangelical Christians. "We are fighting the same battle."

### 'Keep God's land'

Zionist Rabbi Pesach Wolicki has long advocated for cooperation between the Zionist entity's religious right and what he calls America's Christian Zionists, evangelicals who see prophecy being fulfilled with the return of Jews to the biblical Judea and Samaria, much of which lies in the West Bank and was captured and occupied by the Zionist entity in the 1967 Middle East war. Wolicki began gathering similar-minded leaders together in a campaign they called "Keep God's Land" that aims to influence Trump and the Republican Party to reject a two-state solution, using US religious media outlets and conferences to lobby against Biden's argument for a Palestinian state. Keep God's Land says it has grown into a coalition of more than 1,000 Jewish and Christian faith leaders. The conservatism and size of the US evangelical community, which numbers in the tens of millions, makes it an appealing ally for the Zionist right, said Rachel Moore, who has also received delegations of US Congress members and lives in the Gush Etzion settlement of Neve Daniel. — Reuters

## International

# Bangladesh court winds back job quotas that sparked unrest

## Supreme court also asks protesting students 'to return to class'

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh's top court on Sunday pined back contentious civil service hiring rules but failed to mollify university student leaders, whose demonstrations against the scheme sparked nationwide clashes that have killed 155 people. What began as a protest against politicized admission quotas for sought-after government jobs snowballed this week into some of the worst unrest of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's tenure. Soldiers are patrolling cities across Bangladesh after riot police failed to restore order, while a nationwide Internet blackout since Thursday has drastically restricted the flow of information to the outside world. The Supreme Court was due to decide next month on the legality of the recently reintroduced scheme that reserves more than half of government jobs for select applicants, but brought forward its verdict as the civil strife intensified.

It decided that a lower bench's order last month to reintroduce the scheme was "illegal", Bangladesh Attorney General A M Amin Uddin told AFP. Shah Monjurul Hoque, a lawyer involved in the case, told AFP that the court had also asked protesting students "to return to class" after issuing its verdict. The ruling curtailed the number of reserved jobs, from 56 percent of all positions to seven percent, but fell short of meeting protester demands.

It reserved five percent of all government jobs for the children of "freedom fighters" from Bangladesh's 1971 liberation war against Pakistan, down from 30 percent. One percent were reserved for tribal communities, and another one percent for people with disabilities or identifying as third gender under Bangladeshi law. The remaining 93 percent of positions would be decided on merit, the court ruled.

The "freedom fighter" category in particular is a point of resentment for young graduates, with critics saying it is used to stack public jobs with loyalists to Hasina's ruling Awami League. Students had called for the complete abolition of that category, along with other quotas for women and specific districts of the country. "We welcome the Supreme Court verdict," a spokesman for Students Against Discrimination, the main group responsible for organizing the protests,



**DHAKA:** An unidentified man bleeds after being shot during a clash between police and anti-quota protesters on July 19, 2024. — AFP

told AFP on condition of anonymity. "But we won't call off our protests until the government issues an order reflecting our demands."

Opponents accuse Hasina's government of bending the judiciary to its will, and the premier had already hinted to the public this week that the court would issue a ruling favorable to student demands. Hasina, 76, has ruled the country since 2009 and won her fourth consecutive election in January after a vote without genuine opposition. Her government is accused by rights groups of misusing state institutions to entrench its hold on power and stamp out dissent, including by the extrajudicial killing of opposition activists.

"It's not about the rights of the students anymore," business owner Hasibul Sheikh, 24, told AFP at the scene of a Saturday street protest, held in the capital Dhaka in defiance of a nationwide curfew. "Our demand is one point now, and that's the resignation of

the government."

With around 18 million young people in Bangladesh out of work, according to government figures, the quota scheme's reintroduction deeply upset graduates facing an acute jobs crisis. Hasina inflamed tensions this month by likening protesters to the Bangladeshis who had collaborated with Pakistan during the country's independence war.

"Rather than try to address the protesters' grievances, the government's actions have made the situation worse," Crisis Group's Asia director Pierre Prakash told AFP. Since Tuesday, at least 155 people, including several police officers, have been killed in clashes around the country, according to an AFP count of victims reported by police and hospitals. Police have arrested several members of the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Students Against Discrimination. — AFP

trail exactly one week since the assassination attempt. He wore a new, smaller, flesh-colored bandage over his right ear, grazed in the attack by a 20-year-old gunman who also killed one bystander. But Trump, after his near-death experience, ignored his self-declared pivot to unity and launched into the divisive rhetoric that has marked his political career.

He hurled insults and invective, calling Biden "stupid" and a "feeble old" man, branding Harris "crazy" and "nuts", and comparing former Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to a "dog" and "bedbug". The Biden-Harris campaign dismissed the speech as Trump "peddling the same lies (and) running the same campaign of revenge and retribution." Security was tight inside Van Andel Arena, amid questions over Secret Service lapses at the Pennsylvania rally — though there were few visible signs of enhanced law enforcement in Grand Rapids. Saturday was Trump's debut campaign appearance with running mate J.D. Vance, a 39-year-old US senator with blue-collar roots who could help win over critical Rust Belt battlegrounds like Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Vance warmed up the crowd, taking a swipe at Harris. "I did serve in the United States Marine Corps and build a business. What the hell have you done, other than collect a cheque?" he said of the former US senator and California attorney general. Trump supporters had begun lining up in their dozens in Grand Rapids a day before the rally began. Edward Young, 64, was wearing a T-shirt showing the already iconic photo of Trump pumping his fist moments after being shot. "They have turned him into a martyr and left him alive," he said. "Now he's more powerful than ever." — Agencies



**GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan:** Former US President Donald Trump greets US Senator and vice presidential nominee J.D. Vance as they attend their first campaign rally together at Van Andel Arena on July 20, 2024. — AFP

And he evoked the seconds after a gunman tried to kill him at a rally in Pennsylvania, when, bloodied and surrounded by Secret Service agents, he raised a fist and yelled for his supporters to "fight!" The crowd in Grand Rapids chanted the word back to him multiple times Saturday, though some appeared to tire of the lengthy address after 90 minutes and began heading to the exits. The rally represented a moment remarkable by any measure, with Trump back on the campaign

his sights on a second term in the belief that he was the only Democrat who could beat Trump again amid questions about Harris' experience and popularity. In recent times, though, his advanced age began to show through more. His gait became stilted and his childhood stutter occasionally returned. His team had hoped a strong performance at the June 27 debate would ease concerns over his age. It did the opposite: a Reuters/Ipsos poll after the debate showed that about 40 percent of Democrats thought he should quit the race. Donors began to revolt and supporters of Harris began to coalesce around her. Top Democrats, including former House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a longtime ally, told Biden he cannot win the election.

Biden initially resisted pressure to step aside. He held damage-control calls and meetings with lawmakers and state governors, and sat for rare television interviews. But it was not enough. Polls showed Trump's lead in key battleground states widening, and Democrats began to fear a wipeout in the House and Senate. On July 17, California's Rep Adam Schiff called on him to exit the race.

Biden's departure sets up a stark new contrast, between the Democrats' presumptive new nominee, Harris, a former prosecutor, and Trump who at 78 is two decades her senior and faces two outstanding criminal prosecutions related to his attempts to overturn the 2020 election result. He is due to be sentenced in New York in September on a conviction for trying to cover up a hush-money payment to a porn star.

Earlier this year, facing little opposition, Biden easily won the Democratic Party's primary race to pick its presidential candidate, despite voter concerns about his age. However, his staunch support for the Zionist entity's military campaign in Gaza eroded support among some in his own party, particularly young, progressive Democrats and voters of color. Many black voters say Biden has not done enough for them, and enthusiasm among Democrats overall for a second Biden term had been low. — Agencies

## Trump rallies with Vance, mocks Dems

**GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan:** Donald Trump, holding his first campaign rally Saturday since surviving an assassination attempt, rejected concerns that he is a threat to America's democratic system, triumphantly telling the crowd: "I took a bullet for democracy." "I'm not an extremist at all," the newly-crowned Republican presidential nominee continued at the rally in swing state Michigan, dismissing his reported links to Project 2025, a shadow manifesto from figures close to him that has been characterized by opponents as an authoritarian, rightwing wish list.

And he mocked the rival Democratic Party, roiled by unprecedented pressure for President Joe Biden to abandon his reelection bid amid concerns over his age and fitness to serve. Biden dropped out of the race on Sunday. "They have no idea who their candidate is... This guy goes and he gets the votes, and now they want to take it away. That's democracy," Trump told the 12,000-strong crowd of passionate supporters.

In the fiery but typically rambling speech, the Republican riffed on his hardline immigration views, espoused falsehoods about migrant crime, and repeated his baseless claim that Democrats "rigged" the 2020 election. He expressed admiration for foreign autocrats including China's "brilliant" Xi Jinping, whom he praised for controlling "1.4 billion people with an iron fist".

## BIDEN DROPS OUT OF RACE...

Continued from Page 1

from Trump's performance, in which he made a string of false statements, and trained it instead on questions surrounding Biden's fitness for another 4-year term. Days later he raised fresh concerns in an interview, shrugging off Democrats' worries and a widening gap in opinion polls, and saying he would be fine losing to Trump if he knew he'd "gave it my all."

His gaffes at a NATO summit — invoking Russian President Vladimir Putin's name when he meant Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and calling Harris "Vice President Trump" — further stoked anxieties. Only four days before Sunday's announcement, Biden was diagnosed with COVID-19 for a third time, forcing him to cut short a campaign trip to Las Vegas. More than one in 10 congressional Democrats had called publicly for him to quit the race.

Biden's historic move — the first sitting president to give up his party's nomination for reelection since President Lyndon Johnson in March 1968 — leaves his replacement with less than four months to wage a campaign. If Harris emerges as the nominee, the move would represent an unprecedented gamble by the Democratic Party: its first black and Asian American woman to run for the White House in a country that has elected one black president and never a woman president in more than two centuries of democracy.

Biden was the oldest US president ever elected when he beat Trump in 2020. During that campaign, Biden described himself as a bridge to the next generation of Democratic leaders. Some interpreted that to mean he would serve one term, a transitional figure who beat Trump and brought his party back to power. But he set

## Relatives grieve victims in Bangladesh

**DHAKA:** Grief-stricken widow Fatema Begum wept when hospital staff said her husband had been killed in the unrest that has roiled Bangladesh for nearly a week. She wept again when they refused to hand over his body. Islam is the majority religion in the south Asian country, where 155 people have died since Tuesday in clashes between student protesters and police over contentious civil service hiring rules. The faith's customs dictate that anyone who dies must be given a prompt burial.

But staff at one of the biggest hospitals in the capital Dhaka has a longstanding requirement to only release bodies to relatives with police permission, and that is no longer easily forthcoming. "Where is my husband?" Begum, 40, shouted at staffers outside the hospital's morgue, tears streaming down her cheeks. "Give me his body."

Begum's husband Kamal Mia, 45, eked out a tough living as a pedal-rickshaw driver, transporting people around the sprawling megacity of 20 million people for the equivalent of a dollar per fare. The family says he was not taking part in any of the clashes that have wrought widespread destruction around the city but was killed by stray police fire. Begum and her two daughters were told to go to a nearby police station for clearance. When her eldest daughter Anika went there, it was barricaded shut. Officers had closed the station after arson attacks on dozens of police posts by protesters.



**DHAKA:** A relative of a person who was killed during the clash between police and anti-quota protesters mourns at Dhaka Medical College Hospital in Dhaka on July 20, 2024. — AFP

Anika was then sent to another police station farther away — a 10-kilometre (six-mile) round trip from the hospital — despite a nationwide government-imposed curfew. Police there refused to give the necessary permission for the release of the body. "My father was not a protester," Anika said. "Why did my father have to die?"

Mia was among more than 60 people whose deaths in the unrest were recorded at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, the country's largest healthcare facility in the heart of the capital. The relentless influx of patients since the start of the police crackdown on protesters has stretched the hospital to its limits.

Ambulances, private cars and rickshaws carrying the wounded were at one point arriving an average of once per minute, an AFP correspondent at the scene saw. The entry gate of the emergency department, guarded by paramilitary Ansar forces, was blood-stained. — AFP

## Houthis vow to hit Zionists amid...

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ministry warned the Zionist entity's attack on Hodeida "aggravates the current tension in the region and halts the ongoing efforts to end the war in Gaza."

Dozens have been killed since Saturday across Gaza, the civil defense agency in the Hamas-run territory said, including in strikes on homes in the central Nuseirat and Bureij areas and near southern Khan Yunis. Residents said a major operation was underway in a district west of Rafah, where they reported heavy artillery and clashes.

On Sunday, Abdul Malik Al-Houthi, chief of the Iran-backed group, said the strikes on Hodeida would lead to "further escalation and more attacks targeting (the Zionist entity)" after the deadly Houthi drone strike on Tel Aviv changed the rules of engagement and opened "a new phase" in operations. Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree said earlier that the rebels' "response to the (Zionist) aggression against our country is inevitably coming and will be huge."

Zionist Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said the fire left raging by the strikes on rebel-held Hodeida port "is seen across the Middle East and the significance is clear". Gallant warned of further operations if the Houthis "dare to attack us" after the Houthi drone strike hit Tel Aviv, at least 1,800 km from Yemen. It appeared to be the first to pierce the Zionist entity's intricate air defenses.

The Houthis control swathes of Yemen, including much of its Red Sea coast. In Hodeida, six people were killed and 83 wounded, health officials said in an updated statement carried by Houthi media. Firefighters struggled to contain the massive blaze caused by the

strike. A port employee said fuel storage tanks and a power plant were still burning on Sunday.

Analysts say the strike on Hodeida will likely only embolden the Houthis. Since January the rebels have already withstood repeated United States and British strikes aimed at deterring repeated Houthi attacks on shipping. Nearly a decade of war against forces backing Yemen's internationally-recognized government has also failed to weaken the rebels' hold, even though they were hit by thousands of air raids.

On Sunday, the Zionist military said it had intercepted a missile fired from Yemen towards the Red Sea resort town of Eilat. The rebel spokesman said ballistic missiles were fired towards the port. In Lebanon, Iran-backed and Hamas allied Hezbollah said it fired Katyusha rockets at the Zionist entity after Zionist strikes hit a weapons depot and wounded six civilians. Hezbollah said the Zionist entity's strikes on its Yemeni allies marked "a new, dangerous phase".

The Zionist entity has killed at least 38,983 people in Gaza, mostly women and children. The war has left most of Gaza's population displaced, much of the infrastructure including housing destroyed, and essential goods in short supply. The Zionist entity has started vaccinating its troops in Gaza against polio and supplying vaccines for the Palestinian population after health agencies said the virus has been found in the territory, the military said on Sunday. Many more diseases are "spreading out of control" inside Gaza, a World Health Organization spokesman said on Friday.

The war has brought Zionists to the streets, sometimes in their tens of thousands, demanding a deal to free remaining hostages. "Bring them home," demonstrator Ofira Azrieli said Saturday in Tel Aviv, appealing to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu is due to address US lawmakers Wednesday in Washington, where he will under pressure to reach a ceasefire with Hamas. He will meet President Joe Biden on Tuesday, his office said. — Agencies

## International

# Turkey-Syria rapprochement likely to be gradual: Analysts

## '(Erdogan's) dance partner is a murderer who hates him'

**BEIRUT:** After a long estrangement, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Syrian counterpart Bashar Al-Assad may be edging towards a meeting, but analysts say normalization will likely be gradual due to thorny issues. Ankara initially sought to topple Damascus after the Syrian conflict erupted in 2011 with the repression of anti-government protests, and Erdogan branded Assad a "murderer".

As Damascus regained territory, however, Erdogan reversed course. Since 2022, top Syrian and Turkish officials have met for Russia-mediated talks, with Moscow pushing for a detente. Erdogan said this month he could invite Assad to Turkey "at any moment", while Assad said any meeting would depend on the "content". Mona Yacoubian, vice president of the Middle East and North Africa center at the United States Institute of Peace, said any normalization "is not going to happen overnight ... even if there's an Assad-Erdogan meeting". Given the complexities, she said, "this will be a very gradual and drawn-out process". But "even the semblance" of normalization "is something that Erdogan is looking for", she added.

Since the war began, Syrians including opposition figures have flooded into Turkey, which now hosts about 3.2 million refugees. Anti-Syrian sentiment and economic woes have piled pressure on Erdogan for their return. "Syria and the Syrian refugees have become a massive liability for Erdogan," said Aaron Stein, president of the US-based Foreign Policy Research Institute. "Ankara's investment in the Syrian opposition, from a military standpoint, is a complete failure," he added.

### 'Takes two to tango'

A Turkish defense ministry source said Thursday that "Turkey is in Syria to eliminate terrorist attacks and threats against its territory ... and to prevent the establishment of a terrorist corridor in northern Syria as a fait accompli", referring to Kurdish forces. Turkish troops and Turkey-backed rebel factions control swathes of northern Syria, and Ankara has launched successive cross-border offensives since 2016, mainly to clear the area of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Assad said this week he was open to meeting Erdogan but noted "support for terrorism, and the withdrawal from Syrian territory" of Turkish troops were the "essence of the problem". According to Stein, if Erdogan says an encounter with Assad is possible, it may happen. "But in this process, it takes two to tango, and his dance partner is a murderer who hates him," he said.

The US-backed, Kurdish-led SDF spearheaded the battle that dislodged Islamic State group jihadists from their last scraps of Syrian territory in 2019. The Kurds have established a semi-autonomous administration spanning swathes of the north and northeast. Assad accuses the Kurdish administration of "separatism" and views US forces in SDF-held territory as an "occupation". Turkey sees the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), which dominate the SDF, as an offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which it considers a "terrorist" group. Any Syria-Turkey rapprochement raises serious concerns for the Kurds, who risk seeing hard-fought gains during years of war wiped out.

Soner Cagaptay, director of the Turkish Research

Program at The Washington Institute, said Ankara "wants Assad to snuff out the PKK so the organization will go dormant". This would start "the real normalization in the northwest, with Turkey gradually committing to withdraw troops", he said.

### 'Tricky part'

A transitional arrangement could see Erdogan recognize Assad's authority in northern Syria while keeping security "in Ankara's hands", with Turkey's eventual goal being to repatriate Syrian refugees there, he said. But "the tricky part" is that many civilians in Turkish-controlled areas of Syria do not want to live under Assad and could turn against Ankara, Cagaptay added. North and northwest Syria have seen anti-Turkish protests in recent weeks and witnessed demonstrations in 2022 when ties began to thaw. In the Kurdish-controlled northeast, Stein noted the US presence would make any Syrian-enabled Turkish offensive against PKK-linked groups more challenging. "The one tool available is the Adana Agreement... which sanctions Turkish operations within a few kilometers of the border," Stein said.

Under the 1998 accord, Damascus agreed to withhold support for the PKK and to expel its fighters from Syrian soil after Turkey threatened military action. Yacoubian said it remained to be seen whether the Adana agreement could be "repurposed" now, with the Kurds controlling large swathes of territory. Moves towards normalization could "be in anticipation of a potential shift in American policy" concerning Syria and troops there, she noted, with US elections on the horizon. — AFP

## Dublin unrest exposes rising anti-immigrant sentiment

**DUBLIN:** Eight months after Ireland's worst riot in decades, fresh anti-immigrant clashes in Dublin have shone a spotlight on rising far-right sentiment amid a deepening asylum-seeker accommodation crisis. "Mob fury" read one headline in an Irish tabloid newspaper on last week after street violence rarely seen in the European Union member state.

Unrest in Coolock, a deprived outer district of the capital, erupted at the site of a planned accommodation facility for some 500 asylum seekers. Police cars were attacked, machinery set on fire and bricks and fireworks were thrown at riot police by hundreds of protesters, some carrying "Irish Lives Matter" placards, during tense stand-offs lasting hours.

At least 21 people have been charged with public order offences. Prime Minister Simon Harris described the clashes as "reprehensible" and said "thugs" hijacked the protest. "These actions are criminal and are designed to sow fear and division. We should not accept them being legitimized in any way by describing them as 'protest'," he said.

### Surge in arrivals

The latest violence comes as the government grapples with accommodating a surge in asylum-seeker arrivals and a wider housing shortage. The number of people seeking asylum in Ireland rose to over 10,500 in the first six months of 2024, nearly double the rate at the same period last year, according to government data.

Migrant tent encampments have been increasingly popping up in Dublin, quickly reappearing in nearby locations once they are dismantled by authorities. Harris has admitted the asylum system is ill-equipped to process the surge in applications and has moved to harden migration policy while vowing to adopt a "common sense" approach.

But "while the government has changed its rhetoric and tone, no one has actually set out a strategy on migration", politics professor Eoin O'Malley from Dublin City University told AFP. David Quinn, a commentator at the Sunday Independent newspaper, said "unless the government gets its act together, we can expect public unease to continue". "It doesn't have enough people processing claims, almost no one is being deported after a failed asylum application, and lots of people coming in are really economic migrants in disguise," he added.

### 'Ethnonationalism'

Overnight Monday to Tuesday, protective concrete slabs were installed around the building site in Coolock with the top of a digger just visible above, as a small group holding Irish flags protested outside. Justice Minister Helen McEntee condemned the violence and insisted "plans will continue as set out" to complete the disputed facility, "in consultation with the communities". "We have an obligation to provide international protection," she added.

But some locals criticized officials for a lack of communication. "You have a vacuum that allows misinformation to spread," John Lyons, an independent councillor for the area, told public broadcaster RTE on Tuesday.

Last November, central Dublin was engulfed by riots after far-right social media accounts incited protests following a knife attack on schoolchildren by an Irish citizen from an immigrant background. Arson attacks have also increased on buildings around Ireland planned for accommodating asylum seekers, with several dozen fires at such properties since 2023.

"The rhetoric and tactics around these efforts by groups and individuals opposed to the housing of asylum seekers in their area has shifted significantly in the last 18 months," said Aoife Gallagher, an analyst with the Institute of Strategic Dialogue think tank. "While in the early days, genuine issues around housing supply and lack of services were used to get people onto the streets, those leading the charge now are motivated by racist tropes about 'unvetted men' committing swathes of crimes, and 'replacement' of the native population. "Ethnonationalism is now at the center of this movement, there are people more than willing to commit violence in the name of this ideology."

### 'Ingredients on the table'

Unlike elsewhere in Europe, Ireland has not yet seen a successful far-right movement, but polls show a rise in hardline anti-immigration attitudes. At recent European elections no extremist candidates were elected, but on the same day candidates from a range of small new ultra-nationalist parties won seats at local council ballots for the first time.

"What's exceptional about Ireland is not the level of support for the underlying far-right beliefs," Irish Times commentator Fintan O'Toole wrote on Tuesday. "It is merely that no one has yet been able to funnel those beliefs into a serious political force, the ingredients are on the table — what's missing is a competent chef." — AFP



**ALEPPO:** People gather to protest Turkey's rapprochement with the Damascus-based Syrian government led by President Bashar Al-Assad in the city of Azaz in the rebel-held north of Syria's Aleppo province, close to the Turkish border, on July 12, 2024. — AFP

## Unregistered Senegal youth struggle for legal status

**DAKAR:** It was only when 12-year-old Senegalese schoolboy Lassou Samb prepared to sit his end-of-year exams that his lack of any legal documentation finally caught up with him. Like many young people in the West African country, Samb was never registered at birth, an oversight with potentially profound consequences for his education. Hundreds of thousands of Senegalese pupils are sitting exams until Wednesday to mark the end of their school year. But Samb almost did not take the test needed to move onto the next grade because he lacked the required birth certificate. Every year, the exam period highlights a major failure to register births, not just in Senegal but across Africa.

Of the more than 300,000 students registered for the end of elementary school exams, almost 70,000 had no civil status documents, the examinations department said. The issue has potentially serious consequences ranging from the protection of rights, access to public services and government policy planning.

Samb, one of six children born in a village in central Senegal, was the only one in his family not to be registered. "Our (school) director often calls me into his office to remind me that I haven't brought my birth certificate yet, but I don't know what to tell him," he said. Samb "was born with a fractured hand at a time when things were hard for us," said his father Malick, a factory worker. "The priority then was to treat him". Like previous administrations, Senegal's new government this year ignored the rule requiring a birth certificate for exams and allowed children to sit them without.

### Unregistered children

"There is no question of sacrificing these children twice," said Moussa Bala Fofana, Minister for Local and Regional Authorities. "Firstly by not declaring them at birth, and secondly by preventing them from sitting their exams because they have no papers, even though they have nothing to do with it," he said.

While 98 percent of births are registered in Europe, the number stands at just 44 percent in Africa, according to a 2024 WHO report. More than half of the world's unregistered children live in Africa, totaling around 91 million, the UN children's agency UNICEF

said in 2022. Birth registration is a critical first step in access to healthcare, education and justice, and is also an essential tool in government planning for public health and development. But long distances to registry offices, a lack of knowledge, local customs and, in some countries, discriminatory practices and fees can prevent parents from registering a birth, UNICEF said.

Some parents neglect or ignore the importance of birth certificates even though they have up to a year to register their child free of charge, said Aliou Ousmane Sall, Director of Senegal's national civil status agency. After this deadline, a court has to authorize the registration and parents must pay a fee of 4,000 CFA francs (\$7).

Obtaining a birth certificate can take several years due to the difficulty of accessing the necessary services, obsolete equipment and poorly trained officials. "For most of our African countries, we had to make a transition from the colonial state to the post-colonial state," said Oumar Ba, president of the country's mayors' association. "As a result, many measures were not taken in time. Our states inherited a civil registry that was not well structured", he added. The shortfalls are conducive to fraud, with concerns about identification number trafficking widespread in Senegal.

Seydina Aidara, 23, said he was about to sit his final high school exams when he discovered that his civil registration number had been stolen, preventing him from taking the test. For Lassou Samb, a birth certificate would later allow him to get an identity card, passport or driving license. — AFP



**DAKAR:** A municipal official, works on the digital civil registry at the archive storage of the Parcelles Assainies town hall in Dakar on July 19, 2024. — AFP

## Toddler, father killed after pram rolls in front of Sydney train

**SYDNEY:** A pram carrying twin two-year-old girls rolled into the path of an oncoming train in Sydney on Sunday, police said, in an accident that killed one of the children and the "heroic" father who dashed to their rescue. One of the little girls survived only "through good luck" after she landed between the rails when the pram fell off a platform at southern Sydney's Carlton railway station, police said. She was "largely untouched" by the train that apparently passed above her on its way to central Sydney in the early afternoon, police said.

The parents had taken a lift down to the station platform and as they exited, they took "their hands off the pram for a very, very short period of time", New South Wales police superintendent Paul Dunstan said. "Whether it's a gust of wind or — we're not quite sure — but it appears that the pram has instantly started to roll in the direction of the train lines," he told a news conference. Police and emergency services arrived within a few minutes of being alerted and were able to see the pram under the train, which had slowed on approach but was not scheduled to stop at the station. "You could hear crying coming from underneath the train," the police superintendent said.

Though one of the children was unharmed, the other girl and her 40-year-old father had been killed. The father had "just gone into parent mode" and tried to save his daughters, Dunstan said. "In doing so it's cost him his life, but it's an incredibly brave and heroic act by the dad." The mother and her surviving daughter were taken to the local St. George Hospital, and were said to be in a stable condition. The 39-year-old mother was "in a state of shock and struggling with what's happened" while being supported by family and friends in their local Indian community, Dunstan said.

New South Wales Premier Chris Minns said the local community would be pained by the accident. "I hope over time they can gain some small solace knowing that the father died from an extraordinary, instinctive act of bravery," Minns said. "In the face of a terrible, terrible accident, he gave his own life to try and save his children." — AFP

MONDAY, JULY 22, 2024

# India's economy booms but young hanker for govt jobs

## 220 million people applied for federal jobs between 2014-2022

**PRAYAGARAJ, India/MUMBAI:** Sunil Kumar, a 30-year-old, has spent the last 9 years of his life chasing a job in the Indian government. Packed with scores of others in makeshift classrooms under tin roofs with barely enough light and air, Kumar has spent years cramming for a variety of tests, including the prestigious civil services exam needed to get a job as a federal government bureaucrat. He has also tried for a provincial civil services post and two other tests for lower level government positions.

He has been unsuccessful in 13 attempts to get a job. A resident of Uttar Pradesh, the country's most populous state, Kumar says he will continue to try for a government job until he turns 32, three years short of the cut-off for him to appear in a civil services exam. "There is more security in government jobs," said Kumar. "If it happens in 2-3 years, the struggle of 10 years will be worth it."

According to government figures, 220 million people applied for federal jobs between 2014-2022, of whom 722,000 were selected. Many of those would have been repeat attempts, but still, tens of millions of young Indians chase government jobs every year even though the economy is booming and the private sector is expanding. The trend underscores cultural and economic anxieties facing many Indians. Despite living in the world's fastest-growing major economy, many are grappling with an uncertain employment market where job opportunities, let alone job security, are hard to come by. Many see government employment as more secure than private-sector jobs in the world's most populous nation. "If one person in the family gets a government job, the family believes they are settled for life," said Zafar Baksh, who runs a training institute for those appearing in tests for such jobs.

In neighboring Bangladesh, student protests against reserved quotas in government jobs killed more than 100 people last week. Since 2014, India's GDP has grown from \$2 trillion to near \$3.5 trillion in fiscal 2023-24 (April-March) and is expected to expand 7.2 percent in the current year.

The aspirants say the government offers life-



Job seekers wait to attend a walk-in-interview during a state-level job fair organized by India's Karnataka state government at the Palace Grounds in Bengaluru on February 26, 2024. — AFP

long security, health benefits, pensions and housing, which they may not get in private employment. Few will admit to it, but many of the government jobs also offer the prospect of money under the table.

Growing demand for the cram school classes has attracted large players and lessons have moved online too, said Baksh, who sees it as a lucrative and perennial business.

**"There will always be demand."**

Discontent over employment opportunities was cited by analysts as a key reason for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party failing to win a majority on its own in the April-May general election, and returning

to power only with the support of allies. Government data released this month showed 20 million new employment opportunities were generated in India each year since 2017/18 but private economists said much of this was self-employment and temporary farm hiring rather than formal positions with regular wages.

The government, which presents the first budget since the election next week, is likely to push job creation by giving tax incentives for new manufacturing facilities as well as by encouraging local procurement across sectors like defense, Nomura said in a note this month. But these will take time to yield jobs. "It's not just that there aren't enough jobs out there, it's also that there are not enough jobs that pay well

and give you security of tenure and other benefits," said Rosa Abraham, assistant professor at the Centre for Sustainable Employment at Azim Premji University in Bengaluru city.

For 22-year old Pradeep Gupta, who hopes to land a government job, working in the private sector is the "last option". "There is honor, job security and less pressure" in a government job, he said, speaking in the Uttar Pradesh city of Prayagraj, a booming centre of cram schools. Nearly 5 million students applied for 60,000 vacancies in the Uttar Pradesh police force earlier this year and an exam for the post of constable in central government security agencies saw 4.7 million applicants for 26,000 posts.

Another giving applicants a shot at positions such as office boys and drivers in government departments, drew close to 2.6 million applicants in 2023 for about 7,500 jobs. Across all levels of government, including armed forces, schools, health services and the military, nearly 6 million jobs remain unfilled, India's main opposition party, the Indian National Congress, has estimated.

An email to the federal government seeking data on government employment and vacancies was not answered.

For Maroof Ahmed, who has been running a cram school in Prayagraj since 2014, this has meant good business. Currently, he says, his academy has five branches, tutoring close to 25,000 - 30,000 students a year through physical and online classes.

Success rates, or those who procure jobs, are low at about 5-10 percent, but demand remains high, he said. No data was available on the number of such coaching institutes across the country since much of the industry is informal and unorganized. The clamour for government jobs is as much about attitudes toward work as it is about the state of India's job market, said Rituparna Chakraborty, co-founder of staffing firm TeamLease Services. "The private sector is based on meritocracy and responds to economic ups and downs," she said. "In the government sector, once you get a job, mostly irrespective of your performance, your future is secure." — Reuters



NEW YORK: People stand inside the Microsoft store on Fifth Avenue in New York City. — AFP

## Microsoft says about 8.5m of its devices affected by outage

**WASHINGTON:** A global tech outage that was related to a software update by cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike affected nearly 8.5 million Microsoft devices, Microsoft said in a blog post on Saturday.

"We currently estimate that CrowdStrike's update affected 8.5 million Windows devices, or less than one percent of all Windows machines," it said in the blog. A software update by global cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike, one of the largest operators in the industry, triggered system problems that grounded flights, forced broadcasters off air and left customers without access to services such as healthcare or banking. "While the percentage was small, the broad economic and societal impacts reflect the use of CrowdStrike by enterprises that run many critical services," Microsoft said in its blog post. CrowdStrike has helped develop a solution that will help Microsoft's Azure infrastructure accelerate a fix, Microsoft said, adding that it was working with Amazon Web Services and Google Cloud Platform, sharing information about the effects Microsoft was seeing across the industry.

The air travel industry was recovering on Saturday from the outage that caused thousands of flights to be cancelled, leaving passengers stranded or grappling with hours of delays as airports and airlines were caught up in the IT outage. Delta Air Lines, one of the hardest-hit airlines, said that as of 10 am EDT (1400 GMT) on Saturday, more than 600 flights had been canceled, adding that additional cancellations were expected. "Friday's global tech outage is an example of an unforeseen event that market participants always fear, but don't frequently think about," said Glen Smith, chief investment officer at GDS Wealth Management.

By the start of US business, normality was returning. The New York Stock Exchange and Nasdaq said markets were operational and working normally. Major US banks including Bank of America and Goldman Sachs said they had not seen any major impact on their systems or operations. — Reuters

## UK's Reeves hints at above-inflation pay rises for workers

**LONDON:** Britain's new finance minister Rachel Reeves said she will consider giving inflation-busting pay increases for almost two million government employees later this month to avoid crippling public sector strikes. Two pay review bodies who advise the government have recommended a 5.5 percent wage rise for 460,000 teachers and 1.4 million staff in the state-run National Health Service, according to media reports. Asked if the government would approve those pay rises, Reeves said she valued public service workers and warned there is a "cost" to long battles with unions that undermined the last government's efforts to improve public services.

"I really value public service workers, in our schools, in our hospitals, in our police as well," Reeves told the BBC. "There is a cost to not settling, a cost of further industrial action, and a cost in terms of the challenge we face recruiting."

The Labour Party won a commanding majority at a general election earlier this month promising a de-

## All eyes on AI to drive Big Tech earnings

**NEW YORK:** Over the next two weeks, the quarterly results of Big Tech giants will offer a glimpse on the bankability of artificial intelligence and whether the major investments AI requires are sustainable for the long haul. Analysts at Wedbush Securities, one of Wall Street's biggest believers in AI's potential, expect "growth and earnings to accelerate with the AI revolution and the wave of transformation" it is causing.

The market generally agrees with this rosy AI narrative. Analysts forecast double-digit growth for heavyweights Microsoft and Google, in contrast to Apple, a latecomer to the AI party, with only three percent growth expected. The iPhone maker, which releases its results on August 1, unveiled its new Apple Intelligence system only last month and plans to roll it out gradually over the next months, and only on the latest models. CFRA analyst Angelo Zino believes that the impact of these new features will not be felt until the iPhone 16 launches in September, the first to feature the new AI powers built-in across all options.

But he expects Apple's upcoming earnings to show improvement in China sales, a black spot since last year. "Apple's forecasts for the current quarter will be important" in assessing the company's momentum, said Zino. But "if there's one that we were maybe a little bit more concerned about, versus the others, it would be Meta," he said. He pointed out that Mark Zuckerberg's company raised its investment projections last April as it devoted a few billion dollars more on the chips, servers and data centers needed to develop generative AI. CFRA expects Meta's growth to decelerate through the end of the year. Combined with



LONDON: Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves (center left) and Britain's Deputy Prime Minister and Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Secretary Angela Rayner (center right) visit the Oval Village project in London. — AFP

case of "national renewal" after 14 years of Conservative-led governments. In the run up to the election, Labour ruled out increases in the rates of income tax, corporation tax and value-added tax, leaving little room to increase spending. The estimated cost of pay rises of 5.5 percent for teachers and certain National Health Service staff could be about 3 billion pounds (\$3.88 billion), according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies. Inflation in Britain is currently around 2 per-

cent. Reeves, Britain's first female finance minister, said the government will "make sure the sums add up" if public sector workers are given above inflation pay rises. If the government wants to approve the pay raises it would need to raise taxes, increase borrowing or cut government spending in other areas, the IFS said.

Reeves said she would set out her plans for public sector pay deals and announce the date of next budget before the end of this month. — Reuters

the expected increase in spending on AI, that should put earnings under pressure. As for the earnings of cloud giants Microsoft (July 30) and Amazon (August 1), "we expect them to continue to report very good results, in line with or better than market expectations," said Zino.

Microsoft is among the best positioned to monetize generative AI, having moved the fastest to implement it across all its products, and pouring \$13 billion into OpenAI, the startup stalwart behind ChatGPT. Winning the big bet on AI is "crucial" for the group, said Jeremy Goldman of Emarketer, "but the market is willing to give them a level of patience."

The AI frenzy has helped Microsoft's cloud computing business grow in the double digits, something that analysts said could be hard to sustain. "This type of growth cannot hold forever, but the synergies between cloud and AI make it more likely that Microsoft holds onto reliable cloud growth for some time to come," Goldman said. As for Amazon, "investors will want to see that the reacceleration of growth over the first quarter wasn't a one-off" at AWS, the company's world-leading cloud business, said Matt Britzman of Hargreaves Lansdown.

Since AWS leads "in everything data-related, it should be well placed to capture a huge chunk of the demand coming from the AI wave," he added. The picture "might be a little less clear" for Google parent Alphabet, which will be the first to publish results on Tuesday, "because of their search business" online, warned Zino. "Skepticism around AI Overviews," introduced by Google in mid-May, "is certainly justified," said Emarketer analyst Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf.

This new feature, which offers a written text at the top of results in a Google search, ahead of the traditional links to sites, got off to a rocky start. Internet users were quick to report strange, or potentially dangerous, answers proposed by the feature that had been touted by Google executives as the future direction of search. — AFP

## Embraer's Eve rolls out flying taxi prototype

**GAVIAO PEIXOTO, Brazil:** Electric aircraft maker Eve has showcased for the first time the full-scale prototype of its "flying taxi," achieving a milestone as the company aims to obtain certification and enter service in 2026. Eve, controlled by Embraer, rolled out its electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft prototype at an event with investors and clients at the Brazilian planemaker's Gavião Peixoto plant on July 3. The company is one of a bevy of startups worldwide developing battery-powered aircraft that can take off and land vertically to ferry travelers on short city trips, allowing them to beat traffic.

Eve expects to fly the prototype by the end of this year or early 2025. CEO Johann Bordaïs told Reuters at the event, after starting ground tests in July. The first non-conforming prototype is equipped with electric engines but does not have a cabin or pilot. The final aircraft will seat four passengers and a pilot. "This prototype is completely remote so we can test aerodynamics, start flying and then make what we call transition flight from vertical to horizontal flight," Bordaïs said.

He said having the full-scale prototype ready for tests is another step toward certifying the aircraft, which Eve expects to achieve by 2026. Eve applied for certification in 2022 to Brazil's civil aviation regulator. Eve will have five conforming prototypes ready next year and a pre-series eVTOL by 2026 as part of the certification process, Bordaïs said. "This is a foundation stone so we can learn and keep going," he added. "Challenges exist. It's not something trivial. We are at the limits of technology and aeronautics, and this moment of testing is fundamental." — Reuters



# Burgan Bank hosts winner of Kanz semiannual draw prize KD 500,000

## Bank confirms its steadfast commitment to rewarding its loyal customers

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank recently welcomed Mohammad Hassan Zeinalpour, who was announced the winner of the KD 500,000 Kanz semi-annual draw, at its head office where he met with Burgan Bank's management. This follows the Bank's event that was held at 360 Mall where Zeinalpour was announced the winner, under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Burgan Bank's invitation for the winner is a testament to its commitment to its loyal customers as it continues to play an active role in providing them with opportunities to enhance their quality of life and take active steps toward realizing their dreams.

In light of Zeinalpour's visit, Yousef Al-Ali, Manager – Products and Segments at Burgan Bank, said: "We are delighted to welcome Mohammad Zeinalpour at our head office and we renew our congratulations to him on his life-changing triumph. Even though winning any of the Kanz draws holds an element of luck, it is also indicative of the winner's commitment to saving and managing their spending in a sound and responsible manner. We hope this prize will be a turning point for Mr. Zeinalpour and we wish all of our Kanz draw partic-

ipants luck in the upcoming draws." On his part, Zeinalpour said: "I would like to thank Burgan Bank for the invitation and the hospitality they showed me today. Winning the Kanz semi-annual draw is truly life-changing and I am simply overjoyed. The chance to save your money in an account that is rewarding and secure is reason enough to open a Kanz account, but its prizes and their dream-making potential make Kanz a must." It serves to note that Kanz remains Burgan Bank's flagship saving draw account, thanks to its regular year-long cash prizes, whether the monthly KD 2,000 prize awarded to 20 winners, the semi-annual KD 500,000 prize granted to one customer, or the annual KD 1,500,000 prize allocated to a single lucky winner. In addition, the Kanz account also serves as one of Burgan Bank's engaging tools for raising awareness about financial literacy and instilling a savings culture among its customers, as part of its active participation in the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) banking awareness and financial literacy campaign – launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), with the support of local banks in Kuwait.

Interested Kanz account customers still have an opportunity to participate in the monthly draws and the end-of-year mega annual draw. To enter the Kanz draws, existing or new customers must have a Kanz account with a minimum balance of KD 200 – or the equivalent in USD, GBP, or EUR. Upon meeting the entry requirements, every KD 25 counts as a draw entry.



KUWAIT: Burgan Bank management with Mohammad Hassan Zeinalpour, the winner of the KD 500,000 Kanz semi-annual draw at its head office.

## Saudi mining minister to visit Brazil and Chile

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's mining minister will visit Brazil and Chile over the coming two weeks, the ministry said on Sunday, as the world's leading oil exporter seeks to expand its international presence in mining. In Brazil, talks will cover mining, food

processing, and aviation, while in Chile the focus is on lithium, needed for electric vehicle batteries.

"This aligns with the Kingdom's direction towards expanding the production of EVs," a Saudi government statement said. Saudi Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources Bandar Alkhorayaf will land in Brazil on Monday and leave for Chile, the world's second largest producer of lithium, next Sunday.


First in Brazil, Alkhorayaf will meet agricultural and industrial groups, including Minerva Foods, JBS, and BRF SA, as well as the Brazilian Mining Association (IBRAM) and mining company Vale.

In Chile, Alkhorayaf will meet his counterpart Aurora Williams, as well as mining companies Antofagasta, and Codelco, a state-run company tasked with bringing the Chilean government into the lithium industry. Codelco has been seeking private sector partners to launch lithium projects.

A potential candidate is Saudi Arabia's Almar Water Solutions, whose chief executive said in June the company sought a partnership with Codelco in its planned Maricunga lithium mining project. Long dependent on oil, Saudi Arabia hopes to use lithium to help diversify its economy and turn itself into a hub for EV manufacturing.

The diversification strategy includes plans to expand into international mining to secure access to minerals including copper, cobalt, and nickel as well as lithium.

Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, the Public Investment Fund (PIF), and the Kingdom's Mining Company, known as Ma'aden, which is 67 percent owned by the PIF, formed a joint venture called Manara Minerals to invest in mining assets abroad. Brazil's minister for energy Alexandre Silveira said last month the PIF plans to invest \$15 billion in Brazil in areas such as green hydrogen, infrastructure, and renewable energy. – Reuters



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار  
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

# KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 18 JULY 2024

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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	35,662	7,758.71	0.1%	2.4%	3.8%	387,772,510	136,906,092	28,717	17.7	1.3	82.5%
Main Market	7,546	5,919.43	-0.1%	-0.3%	6.3%	325,124,995	41,035,588	19,551	11.6	0.9	17.5%
All Share	43,209	7,102.18	0.1%	1.9%	4.2%	712,897,505	177,941,680	48,268	13.5	0.9	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	26,426	1,755.42	0.2%	1.8%	6.6%	164,741,572	76,639,221	12,083	18.2	1.3	61.16%
Basic Materials	427	752.74	-0.2%	-1.0%	0.9%	2,965,653	1,733,298	697	9.4	1.5	0.99%
Consumer Discretionary	1,121	1,624.04	2.3%	3.7%	1.3%	75,338,942	11,069,770	5,426	11.5	1.3	2.60%
Consumer Staples	274	895.65	-0.4%	9.2%	36.0%	2,507,243	1,930,517	235	26.7	1.4	0.63%
Energy	218	1,069.40	-1.2%	2.6%	12.7%	2,390,642	302,745	228	10.4	0.9	0.51%
Financial Services	4,738	1,349.02	-0.2%	3.0%	11.3%	276,166,467	43,761,951	12,804	12.1	0.9	10.96%
Health Care	226	468.00	0.4%	6.0%	-2.9%	42,084	33,461	4	14.3	1.6	0.52%
Industrials	2,693	791.33	-0.3%	3.7%	-12.8%	42,720,150	13,927,310	5,586	13.7	0.9	6.23%
Insurance	896	2,170.54	-3.0%	-15.7%	-5.3%	794,839	139,174	318	9.5	1.2	2.07%
Real Estate	2,927	1,370.49	0.4%	5.8%	13.0%	132,067,574	22,515,549	8,067	13.8	0.7	6.77%
Technology	23	1,665.97	-0.4%	-12.6%	188.1%	10,030	2,217.87	4	275.9	1.9	0.05%
Telecommunications	3,053	993.76	-0.5%	1.2%	-10.1%	11,526,003	5,615,153	2,636	16.5	1.3	7.07%
Utilities	186	442.11	0.6%	5.7%	-2.9%	1,626,306	271,313	180	14.3	1.4	0.43%

**Top Gainers**

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
JIYAD	17.8	9.88%	39,253,620	659,970.084	1,345
ACICO	80.9	9.32%	8,865,577	691,799	560
IFAHR	1,110	6.83%	1,611,590	1,662,771	795
GIH	443	6.75%	2,831,248	1,221,573	275
MRC	95.4	6.24%	335,694	33,619	97

**Top Losers**

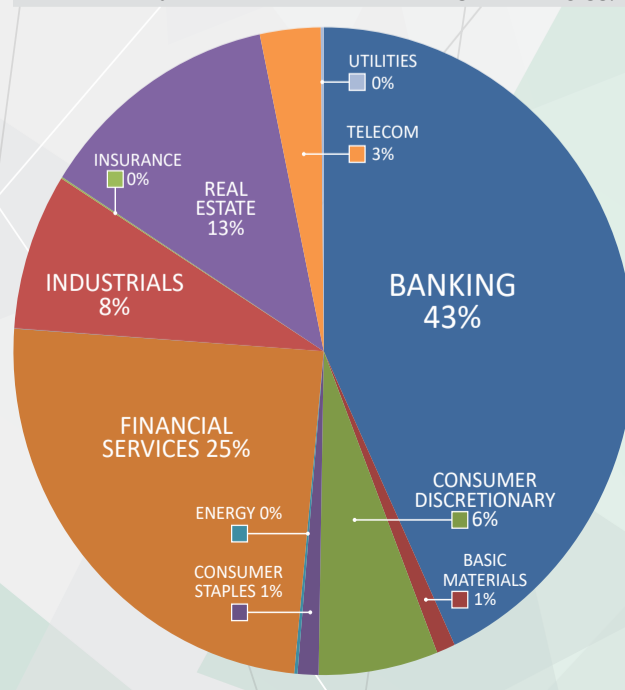
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
ALDEERA	360	-10.00%	90,720	32,769	95
AGHC	350	-7.16%	3,042,013	1,104,943	468
GINS	1,380	-6.76%	6,027	8,888	38
THURAYA	95.2	-5.74%	65,002	6,229	34
TAHSSILAT	40.8	-5.12%	402,078	15,743	40


**Top Volume**

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
GBK	274	-1.44%	47,883,646	13,151,883	1,143
KRE	234	-0.85%	46,886,583	11,111,468	2,542
KFH	725	-0.28%	44,236,119	32,303,551	4,846
IFA	300	1.35%	40,488,350	12,182,351	1,912
JIYAD	17.8	9.88%	39,253,620	659,970	1,345

**Top Value**

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	725	-0.28%	44,236,119	32,303,551	4,846
NBK	871	1.40%	21,045,276	18,251,507	2,665
GBK	274	-1.44%	47,883,646	13,151,883	1,143
IFA	300	1.35%	40,488,350	12,182,351	1,912
KRE	234	-0.85%	46,886,583	11,111,468	2,542





**Market Summary:**

- Premier and Main Markets volume and value dropped by 30%, 22%, 23%, and 25%, respectively.
- The Premier index retreated from a resistance level, while the Main index is unstable due to high volatility.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 7102, with support levels at 7085, 7041, and 7000, and resistance at 7105. The Premier index closed at 7758, with support levels at 7716, 7685, and 7650, and resistance at 7767. The Main index closed at 5919, with 5902, 5881, and 5845 support levels while resistance was 5925.

# Al-Sager: Spearheading the financing of national megaprojects is NBK's top priority

## NBK Group Vice Chairman and CEO on the sidelines of analyst conference for H1 2024

### Isam Al-Sager:

- We continue implementing our diversification strategy and utilizing our adaptable business model against the volatile macroeconomic environment
- We continued to leverage our strong fundamentals and strategic investments in technology and innovation to maximize returns and optimize costs
- We strengthened our market position in key sectors, expanding our customer base with digital products, and offering excellent customer service

KUWAIT: Isam Al-Sager, the Vice Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), said, "We continue implementing our diversification strategy and utilizing our adaptable business model against the volatile macroeconomic environment to maintain our strong performance."

On the sidelines of the Analyst Conference for the results of H1 2024, Al-Sager added, "We reported net profits of KD 292.4 million in the first half of the year, growing by 6.2 percent. As for the three months ended-June 2024; NBK posted year-on-year growth of 3.3 percent in net profits to reach KD 145.8 million. Moreover, NBK's Board of Directors has approved its third semi-annual cash dividend distribution of 10 fils per share."

"Growth in core banking income continues to boost our performance and is well diversified across our business segments. Our diversification strategy continues to prove its success and effectiveness in mitigating risks and maximizing efficiency. We achieved a growth of 8.2 percent year-on-year in net operating income to reach KD 612.4 million," Al-Sager highlighted.

"As we continue to steadfast our commitment towards long-term value creation for stakeholders and tailored customer experience to our clients, we continued to leverage our strong fundamentals and strategic investments in technology and innovation to maximize returns and optimize costs. Our return on average assets for the reporting period reached 1.55 percent whereas our return on average equity reached 15.0 percent," he remarked.

### Local market

Speaking on NBK's performance in the local market, Al-Sager stated, "In Kuwait, we continue to focus on optimizing our market position in key sectors, expanding our customer base with digital products, and offering excellent customer service. Spearheading Kuwait's infrastructure program is our top priority as we expect financing national mega-projects."

"Moreover, our Islamic banking arm, Boubyan Bank, along with our international operations both continue to support our diversification strategy with their growing contributions to the Group. Additionally, our wealth management business continued expanding globally to position itself as a major player in the wealth management industry."

"Our leadership in the ESG space was further strengthened with the recently issued \$500 million green bonds, the first green bond issuance from a Kuwaiti financial institution. We will continue contributing to the sustainable development



NBK Group Vice Chairman and CEO Isam Al-Sager

of our communities and providing the support for our clients' sustainable and transition finance initiatives," he emphasized.

### International expansion

On foreseeing more active international expansion, Al-Sager mentioned, "NBK will continue to be competitive in the domestic market. On the international scene outside Kuwait, MENA and specifically the GCC remain our focus markets, especially Saudi Arabia. We are tapping the Saudi market at all fronts as we complement our growing operations with the opportunities that align with our strategic goals."

"Similarly, the wealth management business is of great importance for our strategic ambitions as we continue to expand with the launch of 'NBK Wealth' brand."

### Inflation and project awards

Commenting on the conditions of local economy, Al-Sager stated, "In Kuwait, inflation remains stable as consumer spending, business credit and project activity recorded moderate growth. We forecast a modest deceleration of inflation to 3.0 percent on average for the year as inflexibility in some price areas persists. GDP growth on the other hand is to witness muted growth on the back of oil production cut mandates by OPEC+ members while improvement thus far in consumer spending, business credit, real estate and project activity may provide grounds for optimism to non-oil growth ahead."

"Furthermore, project activity rebounded significantly in the second quarter, growing at 5-fold quarter-on-quarter. This is driven mainly by activity related to infrastructure works in the construction, transport and power & water sectors."

"The project awards outlook for the remainder of 2024 is promising with projects valued at around KD 7 billion in the pipeline for the year. We believe that the rebound in project awards will continue in 2024 and 2025, as after dissolving the parliament, the decision making is in the hands of the government, which makes decision making much easier," he clarified. "This has driven implementing and pushing megaprojects significantly, and we felt that recently in various sectors. There will be further awards in 2024 and 2025, but it is too early to give certain numbers at this point in time," he continued.

### Public debt and mortgage laws

On the chances to pass public debt and mortgage laws, Al-Sager said, "Speaking of the debt law, no material development on the topic took place but the government acknowledges its importance while focusing more on reforming the budget as a step to adjust imbalances. On the mortgage law, the late parliament passed underlying laws and initiatives pertaining to housing, and we see more chances for this law to be passed with outstanding housing applications approaching 100k putting more pressure on the

### Sujit Ronghe:

- Growth in business volumes, relatively higher interest rates, and a stronger operating performance are the underlying drivers for the robust bottom-line performance
- International Banking contributed 24 percent to net operating income and 23 percent to the Group's profit, enforcing the diversification agenda of the Group
- International Banking and Boubyan Bank contributed 40 percent and 24 percent respectively to Group's total assets by end of June 2024

need for a housing finance mechanism."

### Global and regional economy

"In light of the recent divergence in economic performance globally, market expectations for the global economic outlook have varied. Higher than expected levels of inflation still exist while geopolitical tensions are escalating, indicating a cautious approach to monetary easing for the remainder of the year." "Regionally, growth in the GCC area is expected to remain solid as oil prices continue to feed fiscal positions of GCC governments and supporting strides in its diversification agendas and capital expenditure plans."

### Strong operating performance

On his part, Sujit Ronghe, Group CFO of National Bank of Kuwait commented, "In the first half of 2024, the continued higher interest rate regime and an overall stable operating environment in Kuwait have benefitted the Bank in general. Underlying drivers for the robust bottom-line performance are a combination of YoY growth in business volumes, relatively higher interest rates, and a stronger operating performance. NBK's strong operating performance was driven by a healthy balance sheet, comfortable liquidity levels and a strong capital base." "In light of the ongoing regional and international geopolitical developments, we remain cautiously optimistic that the overall operating environment, although challenging, will remain generally stable during the remainder of 2024," he noted.

"The Group's balance sheet remains strong with a stable credit quality. NBK's capital base along with the ability to generate healthy operating profits provides a strong credit loss-absorption capacity. Additionally, the Group continues to benefit from its unique position amongst Kuwaiti banks in terms of geographical spread through International Banking and the ability to conduct business in both Conventional and Islamic Banking," he explained.

"In H1 2024, NBK's net profit stood at KD 292.4 million, reflecting a YoY growth of KD 17.1 million i.e. 6.2 percent. Group loans and advances grew year-on-year by 5.4 percent. Investment securities also contributed strongly to Group assets with a growth of 12.3 percent compared to June 2023."

"Net operating income increased by KD 46.5 million, i.e. 8.2 percent, whilst operating income mix continues to show a healthy mix with 21 percent coming from non-interest income sources."

"Average earning assets grew by KD 1.6 billion i.e. 4.5 percent from June 23, to reach KD 36.1 billion. Fees and commissions income was strong, reflecting robust contributions across different lines of business and geographies."

"Total operating expenses for H1 2024 stood at KD 226.6 million i.e. 9.6 percent higher than the previous year. The cost growth reflects increased activity levels at Kuwait and across the Group's network as well as investments in key businesses initiatives, digital technologies, and processes. This

utilities output rose by 2.8 percent. Capacity utilization reached 78.8 percent, slightly below its long-term average. Over the second quarter, industrial production grew at an annual rate of 4.3 percent, with manufacturing output rising by 3.4 percent.

### Unemployment claims

The latest figures released by the Department of Labor paint a concerning picture of the job market. The number of people filing initial unemployment claims for the week ending July 13th reached 243,000, a significant increase from the previous week's 222,000 filings and exceeding economists' predictions of 229,000. This ties with the highest weekly jobless claims reported in June, representing the most claims since August of last year. Furthermore, the number of continuing claims, which track those who have been unemployed for more than a week, also reached a new high. In the week ending July 6th, nearly 1.87 million continuing claims were filed, surpassing the prior week's 1.85 million and marking the highest level since November 2021. While some of this rise might be attributed to disruptions caused by Hurricane Beryl, according to Thomas Simons, an economist at Jefferies, the overall trend in recent weeks suggests a potential weakening in the labor market, with more cracks beginning to show. The US Dollar index closed the week at 104.396.

### ECB press conference

The European Central Bank decided to hold interest rates steady after lowering them in June. This decision was unanimous and reflects ongoing concerns about inflation, especially wage growth. While recent data shows some improvement, inflation is still above the ECB's target of 2 percent and is expected to remain high for a while. The central bank is waiting for more economic data, particularly on wages and growth, before considering further interest rate cuts. President Lagarde acknowledged that inflation will likely fluctuate throughout the year but expects it to decline overall in the second half due to several factors, including lower labor costs and the effects of the ECB's policies. The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.0877.

Canadian CPI rose 2.7 percent y/y in June, down from 2.9 percent in May. While the m/m figure was



enables the Group to offer best-in-class service to its customers and optimize resources to improve operational efficiency," he highlighted.

### Sectors' contributions in income

Ronghe mentioned that in H1 2024, International Banking contributed 24 percent to net operating income and 23 percent to the Group's profit, reflecting a strong operating performance. International Banking and Boubyan Bank contributed 40 percent and 24 percent respectively to the Group's total assets enforcing the diversification agenda of the Group.

"Overall, we see International operations as a growing contributor to the Group's assets and profits, and a very important pillar for the bank's diversification strategy."

"Our presence in the region or in UK, Europe, US etc is a very important driver not only from the point of view of booking assets, but also serves as an important franchise for collection of deposits and diversifying our funding sources," he confirmed.

### Loans and income forecasts

As regards to local loan growth, Ronghe said, "Given the current geo-political and the general macroeconomic situation, we continue to expect the overall loan growth for 2024 to be in the mid-single digit range. Given the overall geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainties, it would not be prudent to give specific guidance on earnings/capital adequacy. We are hopeful of maintaining capital adequacy ratios in line with our internal targets above the regulatory minimum," he added.

down 0.1 percent, lower than the 0.6 percent increase seen in May. The decrease is mainly attributed to a slower y/y growth in gas prices, which rose 0.4 percent in June compared to 5.6 percent in May. Decreases were also seen in durable goods as well as cellular services which decreased 1.8 percent and 12.8 percent respectively.

### Retail sales m/m

Canada's retail sales data released on Friday showed a steeper decline than expected in May, further strengthening the case for another interest rate cut by the Bank of Canada. This news comes as financial markets are already nearly certain the Bank will reduce rates by 0.25 percent again at its next meeting. The data from Statistics Canada revealed a drop of 0.8 percent in May sales compared to April, reversing the previous month's small increase. This decline was driven in large part by reduced spending at grocery stores and supermarkets, likely due to a combination of high food prices and rising interest rates impacting consumers.

The USD/CAD currency pair closed the week at 1.3732.

### Chinese GDP

The Chinese economy grew by 4.7 percent year-on-year in Q2 2024, falling short of the 5.1 percent forecast and down from 5.3 percent in Q1. This marks the slowest annual growth since Q1 2023, influenced by a property downturn, weak domestic demand, a declining yuan, and trade tensions with the West. The Third Plenum of the Communist Party, a significant political event, is expected to introduce reforms and support measures. The economy grew by 5.0 percent in the first half of the year, with the government targeting a 5.0 percent growth for 2024. In June, economic indicators showed a slowdown, with minimal retail sales growth and a three-month low in industrial output growth, while the urban jobless rate stayed at 5.0 percent for the third consecutive month. Exports rose more than expected but imports unexpectedly decreased. The USD/CNY currency pair closed the week at 7.2695.

### Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30540.

## Deliveroo Restaurant Awards 2024 presents second round of winners

KUWAIT: Deliveroo has announced the second round of restaurant winners of the year. For the second quarter of 2024, the winner of the 'Most Loved Coffee Shop' award is The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, celebrated for its exceptional brews and cozy atmosphere. Yelo Pizza has earned the title of 'Most Loved Pizza Restaurant' in honor of its delicious, cheesy pizzas that have won the hearts of locals. Freej Swaileh, renowned globally



for its Kuwaiti cuisine, now proudly holds the award for 'Most Loved Kuwaiti Restaurant,' while Good Stuff secured the award for 'Best Service' for constantly ensuring a memorable dining experience for all its patrons.

In celebration of the winners, customers will have the chance to enjoy a limited time, 25 percent discount on each of the restaurant award winners, over the next two weeks. Deliveroo Restaurant Awards are a quarterly celebration that recognizes exceptional restaurants and culinary pioneers who are reshaping the dining scene nationwide. The awards take place every three months, with winners across various categories including: Most Loved, which recognizes the most popular restaurant across three different cuisines every quarter; Best Service, which is awarded to the restaurant with the highest rating on Deliveroo, and Top Newcomer, which is reserved for new restaurants that have recently joined the Deliveroo app.

"Deliveroo Restaurant Awards are designed to consistently highlight restaurants that excel in outstanding service and exquisite cuisine on the Deliveroo platform and are a testament to the dedication and passion of our restaurant partners. We believe that by recognizing and celebrating their achievements, we can inspire even greater culinary innovation and elevate the food culture in our community. We look forward to seeing which restaurants will be celebrated in next quarter's edition and encourage everyone to participate and support their favourite local eateries," said سهام Al-Husaini, General Manager of Deliveroo Kuwait & Qatar. To learn more about the Deliveroo Restaurant Awards or to experience everything this quarter's winners have to offer, customers can download the Deliveroo app.

### NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

## ECB holds interest rates: US data crucial for decision on cuts

KUWAIT: The NY Empire State Manufacturing Index fell to -6.6 in July 2024, slightly below expectations of -6. New orders were stable, shipments increased slightly, and delivery times improved. Inventories decreased, reflecting ongoing challenges, and the labor market remained weak with declining employment. Input prices rose modestly, while selling prices saw minor increases. Despite these conditions, firms remained optimistic about future improvements. Richard Deitz, an economic research advisor at the New York Fed, noted sluggish manufacturing but highlighted positive signs such as steady orders and increased shipments, though weak employment and capital spending plans remain challenges.

### Fed chair Powell speaks

US retail sales came in higher than expectations in June, where the figure was unchanged for the month, above expectations for a 0.3 percent decline, while lower than the 0.3 percent increase seen in May. Meanwhile, core retail sales increased 0.4 percent for the month, higher than expectations and the previous 0.1 percent increase in May. The figure comes following an interview with Fed Chair Jerome Powell, where he spoke about the current situation of the economy, emphasizing that the upcoming data would be crucial in determining the next step for the Fed in terms of interest rates adding that while the second quarter of the year showed improvements in inflation and a softening labor market, more improvements need to be seen in order to be sure inflation is moving down sustainably.

### Industrial production m/m

In June 2024, US industrial production increased by 0.6 percent, surpassing market expectations of a 0.3 percent rise. Manufacturing output, which constitutes 78 percent of total production, grew by 0.4 percent, exceeding the forecasted 0.2 percent increase. Mining output increased by 0.3 percent, and

MONDAY, JULY 22, 2024



Paleontologists work on an excavation site where a dinosaur fossil was discovered.



Undated handout picture released by the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM) shows a paleontologist working on a dinosaur fossil which was discovered in Sao Joao do Polesine, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. — AFP photos



A scientist holds a part of a dinosaur fossil which was discovered in Sao Joao do Polesine.



A part of a dinosaur fossil discovered in Sao Joao do Polesine.

## 'Well-preserved' dinosaur fossil revealed by Brazilian flood



A scientist holds a part of a dinosaur fossil.

**T**orrential rains causing historic flooding in southern Brazil have revealed a "very well-preserved" dinosaur fossil dating back some 200 million years, according to the research team who discovered it.

The fossil was first identified in May near the city of Sao Joao do Polesine, some 280 kilometres (170 miles) west of Porto Alegre, in a part of the Brazilian pampas dubbed the country's 'El Dorado' of paleontology.

A team of paleontologists from the Federal University of Santa Maria spent four days excavating the fossil to remove the block of rock containing a "near complete" dinosaur fossil to take back to their research centre for study. Initial findings have determined the fossil was a specimen of the Herrerasauridae family, which were bipedal carnivores with long tails found in the area of modern-day Brazil and Argentina. The fossil dates to the Triassic period, between 250 to 200 million years ago.

Rodrigo Temp Muller, who's lead-



Paleontologists work on an excavation site where a dinosaur fossil was discovered.

ing the research effort, told AFP that the fossil is possibly the second most complete fossil of a Herrerasauridae specimen to date. The most complete was found in the same part of Brazil in 2014, leading to the identification of a new species with hooked claws, dubbed Gnatavorax cabreirai.

The fossil will undergo several rounds of analysis before researchers

can determine whether the specimen is a member of the same species. "We have to be very careful with this work, it's very meticulous, almost surgical," Muller said, adding the process could take "several months."

"Every little part that we might damage will be a bit of information that we might not be able to recover." Once the analysis is done, Muller's

team will publish the results in a scientific journal.

### Erosion acceleration

The heavy rains that affected the pampas in May killed more than 180 people in Brazil and caused major damage to infrastructure. The floods revealed the fossil much earlier by "accelerating erosion," a silver lining to researchers, who would not have discovered it until much later, according to Muller.

The downpour is not without its drawbacks, however, as heavy rainfall "also destroys a lot of the material" from the fossils, especially small fragments. Paleontologists maintain a close watch on the fossil deposits as a result, especially any fragments that may be exposed, and focus their efforts during excavations to recover these fossils in the best possible condition. — AFP



The site where a dinosaur fossil was discovered.

## Tense talks as UNESCO mulls Heritage sites at risk

**T**ensions are simmering ahead of summer talks on which UNESCO World Heritage sites are deemed to be endangered, with countries battling against featuring on the UN cultural body's list. Tense language can be expected among diplomats at UNESCO's talks starting Sunday in New Delhi as they discuss cases as varied as Britain's prehistoric Stonehenge circle or Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha in Nepal, ahead of a deadline at the end of July. The battles to come contrast with the usual suspense over which locations may be added to the prestigious World Heritage classification, which can be a lucrative driver of tourism.

UNESCO, the UN body for education, science and culture, insists that being placed on the narrower list of endangered sites is not a black mark. But many countries affected, especially in the West, see it differently, fighting

fierce rearguard actions against their inclusion. Venice has been on UNESCO's World Heritage List since 1987, but under threat from climate change and over-tourism, it recently imposed a fee on visitors staying only a day at peak times of year after risking addition to the unhappy club in 2023.

And after years facing down UNESCO over its Great Barrier Reef, Australia has pumped billions into improving water quality, cushioning the impacts of climate change on the coral and protecting endangered species. London, meanwhile, had long pushed for construction of a highway tunnel passing near Stone-

henge, which joined the World Heritage list in 1986 as "the most architecturally sophisticated prehistoric stone circle in the world" according to UNESCO.

British courts blocked an initial plan for the tunnel in July 2021 over concerns about the environmental impact on the site dating to between around 3,000 and 2,300 BC. The 14-year Conservative government nevertheless kept pushing forward with the project, claiming the tunnel would protect Stonehenge by reducing traffic.

### 'Universal value'

The recently elected Labor govern-

ment of Keir Starmer has "a different line" on the project, said Lazare Eloundou, head of World Heritage at UNESCO - although he is in the dark about what London will propose in New Delhi. In Nepal, the Buddha's birthplace of Lumbini - rediscovered in 1896 after long being lost to the jungle - is another sore point. Added to the World Heritage list in 1997, it is now visited by millions of people each year.

"The site is endangered because many of the monuments are not well maintained and are being seriously degraded," Eloundou said. Also afflicted with "many completely inappropriate

projects", the site's "universal value" is at risk, he added. "All of southeast Asia is watching this with great concern," Eloundou said. In New Delhi, the World Heritage committee will also consider sites already seen as in danger due to political instability.

These include the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan or Yemeni's capital Sanaa. There are some sites which could leave themselves off the endangered list. In Senegal, for example, elephants are returning to the Niokolo Koba national park that had long been deserted by animals - though other species' reappearance is yet to be spotted. UNESCO will consider 25 new candidates for inclusion on the World Heritage list, including the Marquesas Islands in French Polynesia, sites linked to the life of Nelson Mandela in South Africa and Brazil's Lencois Maranhenses national park, a vast expanse of sand dunes interspersed with deep blue and turquoise lagoons. — AFP



The sun rises at Stonehenge, near Amesbury, in Wiltshire, southern England on June 21, 2024, during the Summer Solstice festival, which dates back thousands of years, celebrating the longest day of the year when the sun is at its maximum elevation. — AFP



# Moonlit scramble across the sand for Turkey's booming baby turtle population



Baby loggerheads (*Caretta caretta*) in a nest in Manavgat.



The Dekafok information and observation centre in Manavgat.



A baby turtle, saved by volunteers of Dekafok marine conservation centre in Manavgat.



Photo shows the corpse of a baby turtle, due to light and noise pollution in the environment.

The baby loggerhead sea turtles emerged from their eggshells and began their first challenge in life: a wobbly dash across the sand to the moonlit waters of Turkey's Mediterranean coast -- sometimes with a helping hand from volunteers. It is a perilous journey into the unknown for the sea turtles as only about one in 1,000 hatchlings will survive to adulthood.

Some 25 years later, the females will return to the beach where they were born to lay their own eggs.

Despite grave threats from humans and predators such as birds, crabs and ants, protection measures are bearing fruit on Turkey's southern coast.

In Manavgat, a tourist hotspot nestled in the foothills of mountains and prized for its golden sands and stunning waterfall, the number of nests has doubled from last year to 700.

A group of volunteers holds vigil around the clock along the 10-kilometre (six-mile) coastline, located east of the local tourism capital of Antalya.

It is a major breeding area for the globally endangered loggerheads -- also known as *Caretta caretta* -- which are on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) red list of threatened species.



Professor Mehmet Cengiz Deval of Akdeniz University's faculty of fisheries speaks near a turtle protection zone in Manavgat.

"Our average estimate this year is around 60,000 eggs; 30,000 of them will become babies; only 30 of them will come back years later" to breed, Seher Akyol, founding president of DEKAFOK marine conservation centre, told AFP.

**Red lights**  
Turkey's southern coast is home to 21 official nesting areas -- eight of them in Antalya alone. Protection measures have been put in place such as limiting the use of light and the speed of sea vessels. Many beaches are declared protected areas and are off-limits from 8 pm to 8 am.

Manavgat, though, is not one of them, so volunteers have taken on the



Volunteers use red lights to dig in nests to help baby turtles to break from their shells and walk into the sea.

task of protecting the breeding nests. Akyol's volunteers, including young students from all over Turkey and abroad, mark the nests, framing them with sticks and keeping the eggs protected from sunbathers. At night, they patrol beaches, dig in nests with their bare hands and, donning white gloves, help baby turtles break from their shells and crawl to the sea.

Local officials also support volunteer initiatives. Manavgat's mayor, Niyazi Nefi Kara, has placed red lights on roadsides along the coast. Signs that read "Attention! *Caretta* Nesting Area" dot the beach.

Under the environment law, anyone who damages sea turtles and their nests can be fined 387,141 liras (\$11,700). Kara said his office takes advice from "scientists and environmentalists" on protecting the turtles.

"After all, we need to learn how to live in harmony with nature," he said. Akyol added that "people and *Caretta* can live together".

Songul Sert, 33, who was picnicking with her family around a wooden table near the beach, said "we do our best so as not to usurp their living space" with help from the signs.

Another local, Hasan Gulec, said that "nobody knew where they were breeding, so anyone could walk on nests". However, an AFP team saw some hotels along the beach still using the bright white lights that anger environmentalists.



Baby turtles, saved by volunteers of Dekafok marine conservation centre.



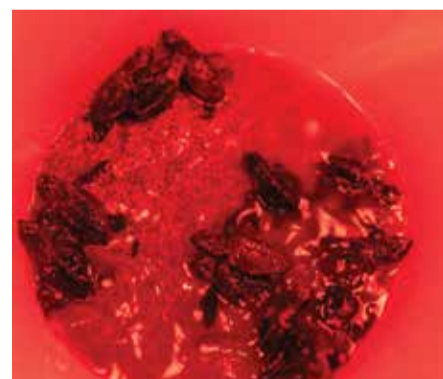
Photo shows baby loggerheads (*Caretta caretta*) in a nest in Manavgat.



A woman and child look at a sign near a turtle protection zone.



Akdeniz University Faculty of Fisheries Faculty Member Prof. Dr Mehmet Cengiz Deval (4R), Mayor of Manavgat Niyazi Nefi Kara (5L), Seher Akyol, founding president of Dekafok marine conservation centre (5R) and volunteers pose in front of Dekafok information and observation centre.



Baby loggerheads (*Caretta caretta*) taken before being released into the sea.



Volunteers help baby loggerheads (*Caretta caretta*) to reach the sea in Manavgat.



This aerial photograph shows the coast of Antalya's Manavgat coastline, where sea turtles lay their eggs.—AFP photos

## Lifestyle

### Climate change

Loggerheads, whose overall numbers are unknown, can live for up to 80 years. Their weight ranges from 90-180 kilograms (200-400 pounds) and they can reach 1.2 meters (four feet) in length. The small percentage of hatchlings that return to the beach to breed is why "they are endangered and need to be protected," Professor Mehmet Cengiz Deval of

Akdeniz University's faculty of fisheries told AFP.

Loggerhead sea turtles are found primarily in subtropical and temperate regions of the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans, and in the Mediterranean Sea.

According to IUCN, the Mediterranean loggerhead is considered of "least concern", though the species remains vulnerable globally. Climate change is

also a factor that threatens the species. The sex of hatchlings is determined by the temperature of the sand: cooler temperatures produce males and warmer ones produce females. High temperatures from July onwards means that "most of the babies are females," Deval said. "If this trend continues, in 30-40 years females will be the majority and there will be no male partners for them to

breed. This is the biggest danger."

Akyol, who dreams of building a rehabilitation centre to treat injured turtles, cannot hide her excitement each time she sends them off to the water. "I cannot forget their last look before meeting with the water," she said. "It's as if they show how grateful they are." —AFP



This aerial photograph shows the coast of Antalya's Mavavgat coastline, where sea turtles lay their eggs.



Seher Akyol, founder and president of Dekafok marine conservation centre, digs in the sand in a turtle protection zone



A volunteer helps a baby turtle to emerge from its eggshell in Manavgat.

## 'Saint or devil': Return of wolf stirs debate in Europe

Who's afraid of the big bad wolf? Well, quite a few European governments, it seems. Grey wolves were virtually exterminated in Europe a century ago but now, thanks to conservation efforts, numbers have rebounded.

The predator's population growth has triggered howls of protest from farmers and concern from conservationists.

In 2023, there were breeding packs of grey wolves in 23 countries of the European Union, with a total population estimated at around 20,300 animals, bringing the elusive creatures into more frequent contact with humans.

had disappeared in the country by the 1930s but began returning in the 1990s. France has recently registered a drop in the predator's population, the first in almost 10 years, but the number of wolf attacks is also on the rise.

### 'All kinds of abuses'

The estimated number of wolves in France last year stood at just over a thousand, down nine percent from 2022. Wolves can be killed to protect flocks, but only under very specific conditions.

Around 20 percent are killed each year, and the authorities would like to simplify culling procedures.

pared with 65 million euros in damage caused by wild boars and deer.

Wolf hunting was institutionalized in the ninth century, when Frankish king Charlemagne, known as the Father of Europe, established the "louveterie", a special corps of hunters responsible for eradicating harmful animals, to protect people and livestock. The institution has endured in France, with the lieutenants de louveterie now working as volunteers.

### Mythical creatures

The wolf became a "strictly protected" species under the 1979 Bern Convention. Chapron said the move enabled the animal to reclaim the continent, pointing to "a growing awareness that the environment was becoming important."

Saving the animals is "a success story, and we don't have many conservation success stories", he added.

The beast is a common motif in ancient mythology and children's fairy tales portray wolves as threatening creatures. "Wolves have been and remain an object of fascination for many human societies", said Nicolas Lescureux, who studies human-animal relations at France's CNRS scientific research centre.

He pointed to the role of the predator in ancient legends including a she-wolf who saved the twin founders of Rome; Fenrir, the monstrous wolf of Scandinavian mythology and the blue wolf, the mythical progenitor of the Mongols.

"The close relationship between humans and wolves goes back a very long way since our current dogs are descended from populations of wolves -- this is the oldest form of animal domestication," said Lescureux.

That relationship "undoubtedly became more complicated" with the domestication of livestock such as sheep, goats, cattle and pigs around 10,000 years ago, he said. Boitani, one of the world's leading authorities on wolves, said it was important to avoid "any fundamentalism" as society seeks to tackle the problem. "The wolf is not a saint, a secret animal or a devil," he added. —AFP

Now, many experts are concerned that wolves will again be under threat.

"If we weaken protection, it would be possible to hunt wolves without justification and this would open the door to all kinds of abuses," said Guillaume Chapron, a researcher at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Luigi Boitani, professor of zoology at the University of Rome, said "thinking that removing wolves solves everything is actually a dream and will not work."

He said that the focus should be on preventing attacks via electric fences and guard dogs, among other measures.

Boitani pointed out that other animals such as wild boar, deer and birds cause far more costly damage than wolves.

In France, compensation for damage caused by wolves amounted to four million euros (\$4.3 million) in 2022 -- com-



Last year, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen lost her beloved pony Dolly to a wolf who had crept into its enclosure on her family's rural property in northern Germany.

Brussels's top official insists it is not a personal vendetta, but now she has wolves in her sights. Several months after the attack von der Leyen warned that "the concentration of wolf packs in some European regions has become a real danger especially for livestock".

And the European Commission asked EU member states to revise wolves' conservation status, taking it from "strictly protected" to just "protected". Despite protests from animal protection activists, this would allow hunting to resume under strict regulation. France is one of a pack of countries trying to deal with the population explosion. Wolves



Wolves are photographed in a forest near the Russian border, in Hukkajarvi, eastern Finland. —AFP photos



A man applies sunscreen as he sunbathes in Central Park in the Manhattan borough of New York on July 11, 2024. —AFP

## In raging summer, sunscreen misinformation scorches US

Dismissively tossing a tube of sunscreen over his shoulder, a bare-chested TikTok influencer declares that the cream causes cancer. He instead promotes "regular sun exposure" to his 400,000 followers -- contradicting US dermatologists fighting a surge in such dubious misinformation. In the midst of a blazing summer, some social media influencers are offering potentially dangerous advice on sun protection, despite stepped-up warnings from health experts about over-exposure amid rising rates of skin cancer.

Further undermining public health, videos -- some garnering millions of views -- share "homemade" recipes that use ingredients such as beef tallow, avocado butter and beeswax for what is claimed to provide effective skin protection.

In one viral TikTok video, "transformation coach" Jerome Tan discards a commercial cream and tells his followers that eating natural foods will allow the body to make its "own sunscreen."

He offers no scientific evidence for this. Such online misinformation is increasingly causing real-world harm, experts say.

One in seven American adults under 35 think daily sunscreen use is more harmful than direct sun exposure, and nearly a quarter believe staying hydrated can prevent a sunburn, according to a survey this year by Ipsos for the Orlando Health Cancer Institute.

"People buy into a lot of really dangerous ideas that put them at added risk," warned Rajesh Nair, an oncology surgeon with the institute.

### 'No safe tan'

As influencers increasingly cast doubt on commercial sunscreen products, another US survey showed a dip in their use, with some 75 percent of Americans using sunscreen regularly, down from 79 percent in 2022.

The findings coincide with other trends showing rising public mistrust of established medical guidance -- including on COVID-19 and other vaccines -- and increasing reliance on influencers with little or no scientific knowledge.

Dermatologists are scrambling to disabuse people of the increasingly popular perception that higher levels of sun exposure are good for the skin.

"There is no safe tan," Daniel Bennett, a dermatologist and professor at the University of Wisconsin School of

Medicine and Public Health, told AFP. "The evidence that ultraviolet light exposure is the primary preventable driver of skin cancer is overwhelming," he added. Many of the misleading or false claims come from influencers seeking to monetize their content on social media platforms, an echo chamber where sensational and false claims often drive engagement, experts say.

Some content creators are leveraging "sunscreen skepticism" to "sell their own supplements or endorse alternative all-natural sunscreens," Eric Dahan, founder of the influencer marketing agency Mighty Joy, told AFP.

### 'Sun paranoia'

Dahan pointed out one Instagram post that advised against "wearing sunscreen constantly" while promoting a range of skincare products.

"Say goodbye to sun paranoia," the emoji-laden post said. "Catch some (guilt-free) rays this summer." Clutching a surfboard on a beach, another bare-chested Instagram influencer says he rejects sunscreen. "Do I worry about skin cancer? I do not," he posted, while promoting "animal-based sunscreen" made from beef tallow.

Tallow -- essentially rendered, purified beef fat -- alone has no ability to block ultraviolet radiation, said Megan Poynot Couvillion, a dermatologist practicing in Texas.

"I don't see a problem with using it on the skin as an emollient, but absolutely not as a sunscreen," she told AFP. The US Food and Drug Administration has called for more research into the ingredients in commercial sunscreens, but it does not recommend their use, noting that excessive sun exposure is a major contributor to skin cancer.

Homemade sunscreens "lack effective sun protection," leaving users vulnerable to sunburn, premature skin aging and skin cancer, the American Academy of Dermatology warns.

Some influencers' recipes include zinc oxide, a known sun protector. But concocting sunscreen at home that will effectively block UV radiation is unrealistic, said Adam Friedman, professor at the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences. "There's no way you're making this in your basement," Friedman said. —AFP



## Sports

# Brook leads England into strong position against West Indies

## West Indies made 450 in a Test innings for nearly a decade

**NOTTINGHAM:** Harry Brook's unbeaten fifty guided England into a strong position at stumps on a see-saw third day of the second Test against the West Indies at Trent Bridge. England were 248-3 in their second innings at Saturday's close, already a lead of 207 runs.

Brook was 71 not out and star batsman Joe Root unbeaten on 37, with the pair having shared an unbroken stand of 108 in 23.4 overs. England had been in control against a wayward West Indies attack as Ben Duckett made 76, his second dashing fifty of the match, and Ollie Pope added 51 to his first-innings 121. But a change of ball led to a change of luck for the West Indies, with paceman Alzarri Joseph removing both batsmen as England's 127-1 was soon transformed into 140-3. Root and Brook, however, restored England's grip as they scored briskly against a tiring West Indies pace attack.

England opened their second innings 41 runs behind after an aggressive last-wicket stand of 71 between Joshua Da Silva (82 not out) and Shamar Joseph (33) that took the West Indies to 457.

It was the first time the West Indies had made 450 in a Test innings for nearly a decade. Zak Crawley, dismissed for a duck in England's first innings, was then unluckily run out for three after Jayden Seales deflected a Duckett drive onto the stumps at the bowler's end. But Pope wrestled back the momentum with three fours off successive Seales deliveries. Left-hander Duckett was also in fine touch, sweeping off-spinner Kevin Sinclair for three fours in a row on his way to a 55-ball 50.

But the first delivery following the change of ball ended a second-wicket partnership of 119 when Pope edged Alzarri Joseph to Sinclair in the gully. The bowler's excellent inswinging yorker then had Duckett lbw.

Brook, however, counter-attacked and completed the third fifty of the innings by stylishly check-driving Alzarri Joseph to the long-off rope for a fifth four in 62 balls faced. Even so, the West Indies could take heart from a batting performance 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.

### Da Silva rampage

West Indies resumed on 351-5, 65 runs behind, after Kavem 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 either of the retired duo James Anderson or Stuart Broad - who between them took 1,308 Test wickets - had struggled on Friday.

Chris Woakes removed Jason Holder on an overcast morning and then dismissed Alzarri Joseph and Seales with successive deliveries before Shamar Joseph survived the hat-trick ball, with the seamer taking 4-84. "I haven't got Jimmy or Stuart Broad at the other end any more but I haven't felt more pressure because of that," Woakes told reporters. "I try to stay in the moment and at this stage of my career, playing my 50th Test, I've got enough experience behind me to know what works for me."

Da Silva, however, completed an 87-ball 50 when he launched fast bowler Mark Wood high over extra-cover for a spectacular six. And the wicketkeeper then took West Indies past 400 with an extravagant uppercut six off Wood. "It was pretty much what I expected," said Da Silva. "I thought I'd get a few more short balls from Mark Wood but it was nice." Boundaries came at both ends, Shamar Joseph pulling fast



**NOTTINGHAM:** England's Harry Brook (L) plays a shot on the fourth day of the second Test cricket match between England and West Indies at Trent Bridge in Nottingham on July 21, 2024. — AFP

bowler Gus Atkinson - fresh from 12 wickets on debut at Lord's - for six to level the scores.

Two balls later, Atkinson again dropped short as Shamar Joseph hoisted him for another six that knocked tiles off the Larwood and Voce Tavern roof. "He backs himself with the bat, he played some terrific shots," said Da Silva.

England captain Ben Stokes turned to Root to break the stand but Da Silva clubbed the part-time spinner for three fours and a six off successive balls. Wood eventually had Shamar Joseph chipping to mid-on, his only wicket of an innings where he topped 97 mph (156 kmh) and beat the outside edge. — AFP

## Gymnastics star Whitlock eyes fairytale farewell

**LONDON:** Max Whitlock plans to bid farewell to the Olympics in a blaze of glory as Britain's most successful gymnast prepares for his final Games in Paris. Whitlock, a three-time Olympic gold medallist, arrives in the French capital on an emotional last tour of Olympic duty following his decision to retire after the Olympics.

The 31-year-old won two gold medals at the 2016 Rio Olympics and successfully defended the pommel horse title in Tokyo three years ago. Having started his Olympic journey with two bronze medals at the London Games in 2012, Whitlock is relishing the chance to bow out in style.

"I can't wait. My fourth Olympic Games feels surreal. I am mega-excited," he said. Whitlock made history by becoming Britain's first Olympic gold medallist in artistic gymnastics eight years ago. He is also a three-time world champion, a four-time European champion and a four-time Commonwealth Games champion.

With such a glittering CV - which includes an MBE and an OBE for services to gymnastics - Whitlock struggles to pick the highlight of his golden career. "It is really hard to compare the emotions when you compare those four different Olympics. I think every Olympic Games in itself is different," he said.

"I think at London 2012, I was 19 years old, unexpected to produce anything and just going a lot for the experience to see where it could take me afterwards. I went to then having a bit of pressure on my shoulders for Rio, then a lot of pressure on my shoulders for Tokyo.

"Of course, there is a lot of pressure for Paris, but I feel like having announced it is my last one, I just want to go and give it my best shot." First introduced to gymnastics aged seven, Whitlock was burnt out by the demands of the sport when he walked away after the Tokyo Games in 2021.

"I felt like I had a lot on my shoulders, and I almost started to fear failure in terms of moving forwards," he said. But he was inspired to compete in the Olympics again after his young daughter started learning about the event at school.

Willow, aged five, will be cheering her father on from the stands as he aims to become the first gymnast to win four Olympic medals on the same apparatus. "I never wanted to send a message down of quitting because of the fear of moving forwards or anything like that," he said in a recent Olympics.com interview.

"Willow's got the opportunity to come to watch the Olympic Games rather than just watching old videos on YouTube or anything like that. "I think that's what feels really good for me to be able to give that experience to Willow, to know that I'm pushing myself out of my comfort zone here."

When he thinks back to his early experiences of the sport at the Sapphire school of gymnastics in Hemel Hempstead, even Whitlock would have struggled to envisage the success he has enjoyed. But those childhood dreams of Olympic success came true and now a fairytale ending is in his sights.

"I think the huge motivation now, I think it goes without saying, is retaining titles," Whitlock said. "That would be the absolute dream, and hopefully I can make that dream a reality." — AFP

## Dupont leads French charge for Holy Grail of rugby Sevens gold

**PARIS:** France rugby captain Antoine Dupont defied critics to miss the Six Nations tournament and focus on making the Olympic Sevens team. The presence of the mini-man mountain has thrown in a delicious curveball to a tournament Dupont likened to sport's Holy Grail.

Dupont has established himself as one of the best players rugby union has ever seen and his presence at a home Olympics is a massive coup not just for the national team, but also the organizers. His gamble of missing the Six Nations helped France to two wins on the World Rugby Sevens Series, including victory in the Madrid finals - a first in 19 years.

In between, he skipped his club Toulouse to Top 14 and Champions Cup glory in the 15-a-side code. "For any sports fan, the Olympics are still mythical, the Holy Grail of sport. Hosting this event in France will be an incredible celebration and to be in with a chance of winning an Olympic medal is a highly motivating challenge," Dupont said.

His absence from last season's Six Nations did not sit right with many France fans, still in shock at the team's quarter-final exit from the Rugby World Cup

on French soil. But for all the criticism, his absence, and Olympic presence, has been a long time coming.

"Antoine's idea of playing in the Olympics has been in the works for two years," France coach Fabien Galthie said in defence of the 2021 World Player of the Year. Rugby Sevens is often seen as 15-a-side rugby's poor cousin, but Dupont denied that was the case.

"It's just as enjoyable and when you see how difficult it is to play these matches, these tournaments with the physical wear and tear of the third day, the emotions are heightened, too," he said. "Sharing that with a smaller squad is also enjoyable. There are no cliques, everyone shares the emotions together and these are very strong moments." Dupont admitted that his involvement in the sevens team "gave confidence to everybody".

### Best player in world

France Sevens captain Paulin Riva admitted Dupont had offered an extra dimension to the team after their championship-winning final over Argentina in Madrid. "Antoine is the best player in the world, we think! When he's on the pitch we have a lot of confidence," Riva said.

Dupont, standing 1.74m tall (5ft 9in) and weighing in at 85kg (187lb), was crowned men's Rookie of the Year after the final. "We already had the goal of winning, but to do so and to show that we're capable of doing it twice by beating the best teams on the circuit, that shows we're capable of victory," Dupont said.



**MARCOUSSIS:** France's Antoine Dupont (R) looks on as Moulin Rouge's dancers teach dance to France national rugby sevens' players at the National Rugby Centre in Marcoussis, near Paris. — AFP

The Olympics, on home soil at the Stade de France, Dupont added, "will be a huge tournament, but we'll try to get that trophy in July". France sevens coach Jerome Daret said he had had no doubts about Dupont's successful crossover.

"When you see the statistics from Antoine Dupont at last year's World Cup, he is the player who made the most offloads, with a total of 10," Daret said. "He also has the ability to change pace and break that we are looking for. He has a great defence and can catch players 50 centimetres from the line, which is something we expect a lot in rugby sevens." — AFP

## AFP journalists injured in Lebanon join torch relay

**VINCENNES:** AFP photojournalist Christina Assi said she felt "incredible" support as she carried the Olympic Flame outside Paris Sunday, almost a year after being gravely wounded while reporting in Lebanon.

"I hope what we did today honors all the journalists and friends who have been killed this year," said Lebanese national Assi, who was joined in the relay by AFP video colleague Dylan Collins, an American hurt in the same incident.

"It's amazing and heartwarming to see all these people cheering after we survived a targeted attack as journalists," added Assi, who completed her 200-metre stretch through the streets of Vincennes in a wheelchair.

Assi said that she wished slain Reuters journalist Issam Abdallah and other journalists killed in the fighting "were here to witness this today". "I wish it didn't take such an attack to be participating and to be representing journalists," she added, visibly tearing up.

Around 50 AFP journalists joined the crowd in Vincennes just east of Paris to cheer on Assi and Collins. Assi, 29, was wounded by shellfire on October 13, 2023 while covering cross-border clashes between the Zionist army and armed groups in southern Lebanon.

The tank round, fired by a Zionist unit according to an in-depth AFP investigation, killed Reuters colleague Abdallah and wounded the six other journalists on the scene. Assi had to have her right leg



**VINCENNES:** Agence France Presse (AFP) Lebanese photographer Christina Assi (center), helped by AFP video journalist Dylan Collins (L), waves after receiving the Olympic flame during the Olympic Torch Relay in Vincennes, near Paris. — AFP

amputated. Collins, 36, was also wounded that day, soon after an injury suffered in Ukraine.

Assi said that her immediate plans are "to focus on my rehabilitation and stand up again. That's how I'm going to get my justice." "It was tremendously mov-

ing to see Christina and Dylan carrying the flame," AFP editor-in-chief Phil Chetwynd said. "Their courage in the face of unimaginable adversity is such an eloquent expression of the Olympic spirit. Everyone at AFP is so proud," he added. — AFP

## A's aim to finish off home season sweep of Angels

**SAN FRANCISCO:** The Oakland Athletics have a chance to complete a season-long, six-game home sweep of the Los Angeles Angels for the first time since 1991 when the California rivals meet for what is expected to be the final time at the stadium by the San Francisco Bay on Sunday afternoon.

The A's added to a three-game home sweep

earlier this month with 13-3 and 8-2 romps the past two days, putting them within reach of the 6-0 whitewashing they put on what was then the California Angels 33 years ago.

After a pair of shutouts drove the July 2-4 wins, the A's have overpowered their visitors with 25 hits, including four home runs, in the encore performance. Leading the way the past two days have been Max Schuemann, who has gone 4-for-6 with two doubles, a homer, five RBIs and five runs, and Lawrence Butler, who has gone 5-for-8 with a double, triple and five RBIs.

Miguel Andujar also has racked up five hits, including a double, while JJ Bleday has had a homer and two doubles, and Brent Rooker a homer and two singles. The onslaught also included a single by Ja-

cob Wilson in his major-league debut in Friday's win.

The organization's top prospect strained his left hamstring scoring on Butler's triple two batters later. The shortstop was pulled from the game and sat out Saturday as the team awaits the results of an MRI scheduled for Sunday. Rooker did his best to encourage the 22-year-old after the team's first-round pick in 2023, the No. 6 overall selection of the draft, saw his debut end prematurely on Friday.

"He's going to get healthy," Rooker said. "I talked to him and said, 'Look, you got all the firsts out of the way. You got the first start. You got the first hit. All that's done now. So whenever you're healthy, you just come back and get to play; you don't have to worry about that stuff.' So we're excited to have him back, whenever that is." — AFP

Sports

# LeBron rescues USA from South Sudan shock in Olympic warm-up

'Every opportunity we get. We have to try to make the most of it'



ABU DHABI: US forward #06 LeBron James grabs the ball during the Basketball Showcase friendly match. — AFP

LONDON: South Sudan's basketball team nearly delivered a stunning upset to a United States team of NBA superstars on Saturday before losing 101-100 in an Olympics warm-up game in London. LeBron James, 39, the all-time NBA scoring leader, registered a game-high 25 points, including the deciding points on a driving layup with eight seconds remaining at the O2 Arena.

South Sudan, who led 58-44 at half-time, took a late lead after an 8-0 scoring run and were poised to pull off one of the greatest shocks in international basketball before James saved the day. "The ending was good for us—just to feel that, to feel what it's going to feel like in Paris," US coach Steve Kerr said.

"Good experience for us. Good reminder that when we play against teams, it's the biggest experience of their lives and we have to expect everyone to play like that." J.T. Thor, who has played for the NBA's Charlotte Hornets for the past three seasons,

sank a three-pointer with 20 seconds remaining to put South Sudan into a 100-99 lead.

After James made the winning shot, South Sudan had one final possession but Carlík Jones missed a jumper with six seconds remaining and Wenyen Gabriel missed on two put-back attempts before the final buzzer. "South Sudan was amazing," Kerr said. "I did not do a great job of preparing my team. We did not focus enough on what they are capable of and that's on me."

"I think that really allowed South Sudan to gain confidence early. "Once we turned it up in the second half, they had already knocked down a bunch of threes and were feeling really good about themselves." It was James who sparked a 23-5 US run from late in the third quarter to early in the fourth.

"We have to continue to take a step forward," said James, a two-time Olympic champion and four-time NBA champion. "A lot of these teams that we're play-

ing have been practising either one month or months in advance and we have maybe two weeks together.

"So every game, every film session, we get an opportunity. We have to try to make the most of it, not taking any steps back." Cameroon-born Joel Embiid, who became a US citizen in 2022, added 14 points and seven rebounds for the Americans.

Anthony Davis came off the bench to produce 15 points and 11 rebounds for the US squad of NBA stars. "We're not 100 percent together, as we saw tonight," Davis said. "But it's like I said, everything is controllable." For South Sudan, ranked 33rd in the world, Marial Shayok scored 24 points, Jones added 15 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists and Thor had 14 points off the bench. Shayok plays in China and briefly played alongside Embiid with Philadelphia while Jones plays for perennial Serbian power Partizan. The Americans will face South Sudan again in the Olympics group stages on July 31 at Lille. — AFP

## Yoro makes first Man Utd appearance in win over Rangers

LONDON: Leny Yoro made his first Manchester United appearance following his £52 million (\$67 million) move from Lille as Jadon Sancho ended his exile in Saturday's 2-0 friendly victory over Rangers. Yoro and Sancho were the headline acts at Murrayfield in Edinburgh as they played the first 45 minutes of United's latest warm-up ahead of the new Premier League campaign.

Goals from Amad Diallo and Joe Hugill secured a comfortable United win against the Scottish Premiership club. Just 48 hours after United splashed out on Yoro, the promising 18-year-old French defender was pitched into action alongside Jonny Evans—a player twice his age—in the centre of defence.

The United supporters among a crowd of 56,574 at the home of Scottish rugby also got a glimpse of Sancho for the first time since his row with Ten Hag last season. The 24-year-old spent the second half of last term on loan at Borussia Dortmund—helping them reach the Champions League final—after claiming on social media that he had been made a "scapegoat" by Ten Hag when he was dropped for a game at Arsenal.

It was Sancho's first United appearance since he came off the bench in a win over Nottingham Forest last August. Along with several other United stars,

Dutch striker Joshua Zirkzee, recently signed from Bologna, was unavailable as he rests after Euro 2024.

Andre Onana, Aaron Wan-Bissaka, Casemiro and Mason Mount featured for United along with Diallo, who had a loan spell at Rangers two years ago. Diallo broke the deadlock in the 39th minute when he cut in from the right wing and fired a low shot beyond Jack Butland from just inside the area.

Ten Hag, whose side kick off the Premier League campaign against Fulham at Old Trafford on August 16, changed his entire outfield line-up for the start of the second half. Jack Fletcher, the 17-year-old son of United coach and former Scotland captain Darren Fletcher, and Will Fish were among a relatively inexperienced batch of players entering the fray. Hugill, 20, sealed United's victory with an emphatic 70th-minute strike via the underside of the crossbar. — AFP

## Horschel leads British Open

TROON: American Billy Horschel leads the British Open at four under par heading into Sunday's final round after torrential rain and a swirling wind at Royal Troon blew the challenge for the Claret Jug wide open. Horschel leads by one from a group of six, featuring USPGA Championship winner Xander Schauffele, English duo Justin Rose and Daniel Brown, South Africa's Thriston Lawrence and Americans Sam Burns and Russell Henley.

World number one Scottie Scheffler is just one shot further back at two under after battling to an even par round of 71. A total of 12 players are within four shots of the lead for what promises to be a fascinating final round. Overnight leader Shane Lowry had a day to forget as the 2019 champion crumbled in the sodden conditions to collapse from eight under par after seven holes to one under by the end of his round. Horschel was one of the big movers in a round that had allowed for lower scoring earlier in the day before the wind and rain picked up.

Starting at two under, Horschel produced a sublime four-under 32 on the front nine thanks to birdies at four, six, seven and nine. A bogey followed at 11 before another dropped shot at the last but he remains in prime position to land his first major.

"I've worked my entire life to be in this position," said world number 62 Horschel. "I know what it means to my legacy in the game of golf and what I want to do and accomplish." Brown, ranked 272 in the world, had been set to lead heading into the final round until dropping three shots in his last two holes.

But he and Rose remain in the hunt to become the first English winner since Nick Faldo in 1992. "I'm a little bit disappointed with how the last two holes went because I did so well so get to where I got to, and yeah, it's a bit nasty to finish like that," said Brown. Lowry began the day with a two-shot lead and extended that to three with a birdie at the par-five fourth. However, the Irishman's round began to come off the rails with a double bogey at the 130-yard Postage Stamp eighth. Worse was to come as five bogeys in eight holes on the back nine dropped Lowry back into ninth. — AFP

## Manolo Marquez appointed new India coach

NEW DELHI: Manolo Marquez has been appointed coach of the India men's football team, over a month after Igor Stimac's acrimonious exit.

Spaniard Marquez, 55, has been coaching league teams in India since 2020 and will take on the role for the national team "effective immediately", the All India Football Federation said in a statement Saturday.

"We are delighted to welcome Mr Marquez to this important role," AIFF President Kalyan Chaubey said, adding the federation was looking forward to working with the new coach "in the years ahead".

Marquez, who has more than two decades of international experience in football management, had been the coach of FC Goa since June last year and said he was "grateful" to AIFF for the opportunity as he considers India "my second home."

"I want to do my best to bring success to the millions of fans we have," he said. Former West Ham and Croatia defender Stimac was sacked in June following India team's poor performance in World Cup qualifiers.

Stimac's five-year tenure ended controversially, with India's federation accusing him of using astrology to pick his teams. Stimac, who played a World Cup semi-final for Croatia in 1998, became India coach in 2019 and they briefly broke into the top 100 of FIFA's world rankings for only the second time in nearly three decades. Once called "a sleeping giant" of the sport by former FIFA president Sepp Blatter, India are currently ranked 124th. — AFP



Manolo Marquez



Charlotte Dujardin

## Britain's Dujardin eyes seventh equestrian medal

LONDON: Charlotte Dujardin can become Britain's most decorated female Olympian if she wins a seventh medal in Paris and the dressage rider says she wants to inspire her baby daughter. The 39-year-old, who clinched gold in the individual and team events on Valegro at London 2012 and won team silver and individual gold at the Rio Games, will be competing in her fourth Olympics starting on Friday.

Dujardin also won two bronze medals at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and a medal of any color in Paris would take her tally past that of retired cyclist Laura Kenny, who also has six Olympic medals. "(The record) isn't really something I'm thinking about going to Paris if I'm honest. I'm going to compete and do my best," Dujardin told Reuters.

"It's going to be a very different Olympics now that I'm a mum. I guess obviously if that does happen that is a huge achievement. It just makes me feel so proud

as a mum. "Hopefully one day when she (daughter Isabella) is a bit older and whatever she wants to do in life, whether it be horses or another sport, I can inspire her and make her realize how hard work it is and what it takes to be able to go to an Olympic Games."

Having won team gold in the European Championships last September after giving birth to Isabella in March 2023, Dujardin said she is back in the groove. "It's always a worry I think having time out and you get back on and think, "Can I still do it?," she said in a telephone interview after Britain's squad was announced. "I was like, 'Yep, I can still do it, I can still have all the feelings that I had before.'" Dujardin, ranked fourth in the International Equestrian Federation's (FEI) world dressage standings, will be riding 11-year-old gelding Imhotep - known as Pete in the stables - in Paris. "Pete's a very enthusiastic horse and that's the sort of horse that I like," she said. "Pete at nine years old did the world equestrian games, at 10 years old he did the European Championships and at 11 years old he's doing the Olympics. That just goes to show how clever and talented he is." The dressage competition begins on July 20 at the Chateau de Versailles. Dujardin will compete in the team events alongside her European Championship-winning teammates Carl Hester and Charlotte Fry. — Reuters



TROON: US golfer Billy Horschel plays from the 15th tee during his third round, on day three of the 152nd British Open Golf Championship at Royal Troon on the south west coast of Scotland. — AFP

# Classifieds

### Change of Name

I, ANIL SURESH NAGDEV, holder of Indian Passport No. V3746767, do hereby change my name to ANIL SURESHLAL NAGDEV for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name of ANIL SURESHLAL NAGDEV, & I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.  
(#5907, 21/07/2024)

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.  
(#5904, 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)

### Lost Certificate

I, Umakanth Kalathil Payyanadan, (Salmiya, Block - 10, Sulaiman Al Adasani Street, Building No.14, 2nd floor, Flat No.7, Phone No. 99432922) Lost my Pre-degree examination mark list, registration No. 13591 of April 1984 and registration No. 81787 of April 1985 issued by University of Calicut and I intend to apply for a duplicate of the same. If you find the documents, please contact me or intimate the university.



NICE: UAE Team Emirates team's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar celebrates on the podium after winning the 20th stage of the 111th edition of the Tour de France cycling race, 132.8 km between Nice and Col de la Couillole, southeastern France. — AFP

## Pogacar on brink of third Tour de France triumph ahead of Riviera finale

### I can ride home from there and sleep: Pogacar

NICE: Tadej Pogacar will be firmly in the spotlight as he goes down the ramp last on Sunday's final day individual time trial in his adopted home of Monaco, with a third Tour de France title all but secured. The final stage of the 2024 Tour will be broadcast around the world as he speeds along the corniche from Monaco to Nice.

"I can ride home from there and sleep," Pogacar said earlier in the Tour. The picturesque Riviera resort plays host to the Tour's final day rather than the traditional ride down the Champs-Elysee in Paris with the 2024 Olympic Games beginning in the French capital on Friday.

Having won five stages, Pogacar enjoys

a healthy five-minute 14-second lead over Jonas Vingegaard, winner of the past two editions. Barring a major incident it will be his third Tour win, completing a Tour-Giro d'Italia double not achieved since 1998.

It will also provide him the platform for potential Olympic glory in two weeks and at the world championships which follow soon after. The 25-year-old, runner-up to Vingegaard on the last two Tours, took the lead on day four, attacking his key rival downhill as the race entered France via the Alps from Italy after three days there.

Vingegaard said on Friday he was no longer targetting the title but fending off third placed Remco Evenepoel, who starts

at Nice 2min 50sec adrift. Other stars emerged along the way, as Eritrean rider Biniam Girmay won three stages, the sprint points green jersey and national hero status in his homeland.

He narrowly beat the 2023 sprint king Jasper Philipsen, who won three stages but never had the lead in the points race. Belgian newcomer Remco Evenepoel is set to win the best young rider's white jersey, also winning the first individual time trial and looks good for a spot on the podium going into the final day in third.

The 24-year-old Evenepoel trails second-placed Vingegaard by 2min 50sec, but is expected to win the final day's in-

dividual run. "He's the best time-trialist in the world," Vingegaard said Saturday. Olympic champion Richard Carapaz is being hailed as the most combative rider on the 2024 Tour.

The Ecuadorian EF rider won a stage, took the yellow jersey for a day and came close to other victories. He raced on Saturday in the polka dot best climber's jersey. Another Belgian won hearts, as the tough Victor Campenaerts rung one up for dads everywhere.

After winning a three-way battle to close out stage 18 he grabbed a phone for a video call with his partner, who immediately showed him their newborn baby, Gustaaf, with dad in tears. "You

have no idea how much this means," he said, though nobody asked if he was referring to the stage win.

The French did well too, grabbing the opening day win with Kevin Vauquelin and calming nerves from home fans. Retiring Romain Bardet, twice a podium finisher, should be well received in Nice after a fine Tour. He took the yellow jersey, albeit for a day.

Mark Cavendish also grabbed the headlines, claiming a record 35th stage win. Second bottom of the overall rankings Cavendish will go down the ramp second for what is likely his last ever Tour de France stage. — AFP



Kuwait and Bahrain team in action.

### Kuwait's youth handball team lose to Bahrain

AMMAN: Kuwait's youth handball team lost to Bahrain's peers 14-18 in a match held on Saturday in Al-Hussein Youth City in the Jordanian capital Amman.

The match was part of the second and decisive round of the 18th Asian Championship, which is qualifying for the 2025 World Cup in Poland. Head of the Kuwaiti delegation to the championship Qaed Al-Adwani said, in a statement to KUNA, that the team management is aware of the difficulty of this match on the physical and psychological levels for the players and appreciates everything that the team have done in this Championship.

Al-Adwani stressed that the Kuwait Handball Association stands behind the players who have always made the Kuwaiti fans happy in previous matches, noting that the technical team has begun preparing for the upcoming game against the South Korean team. — KUNA

### India's Paes, Amritraj make history joining Tennis Hall of Fame

NEW YORK: Former doubles world number one Leander Paes and tennis broadcaster, actor and player Vijay Amritraj became the first Asian men inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame on Saturday.

The first inductees from India were joined by British tennis journalist and author Richard Evans in enshrinement ceremonies at the Hall of Fame in Newport, Rhode Island. Paes recounted his youth playing football and hockey before turning to tennis and eventually following his hockey-captain father as an Olympic medalist.

"It's my greatest honor to be on this stage with not only these legends of the game, people who have inspired me every single day of my life - not because you've only won Grand Slams, not because you've shaped our sport but every single one of these people have shaped the world we live in," Paes said.

"I would like to thank you so much for giving this Indian boy hope," Amritraj, 70, played from 1970 until retiring in 1993, winning 15 ATP singles titles and 399 matches and being ranked as high as 18th in the world and helped India to the Davis Cup finals in 1974 and 1987.

"I am humbled and honored to join this incredible and exclusive group that have brought glory to our sport," Amritraj said. After his playing days, Amritraj has helped humanitarian causes, backed ATP and WTA events in India and has acted in the James Bond and Star Trek movie series.

"A feeling came over me that I had never experienced," Amritraj said of learning about his election to the Hall. "This was an honor not just for me, for my family, for my parents, but for all of my fellow Indians and my country who live around the world."

Like Amritraj, Evans was inducted in the contributor category for his life impact on the sport. Paes, 51, was an 18-time Grand Slam champion in doubles and mixed doubles who was selected in

the player category after honing his trade in an Amritraj youth academy.

#### 'Inspire the world'

Paes and Amritraj made India the 28th nation represented in the Hall of Fame. "Playing for 1.4 billion people could either be pressure or it could be wind within your wings," Paes said.

"I'd like to thank every single one of my countrymen who supported me, who stood by through all the ups and downs, and we've been through a few, but you all were the inspiration, the support, you were even the strength to guide me through when even I didn't believe." Paes won career Grand Slams in both men's and mixed doubles, completing one in men's by winning the 2012 Australian Open and another in mixed by capturing the 2016 French Open. He won the 1996 Atlanta Olympics bronze medal by defeating Brazil's Fernando Meligeni 3-6, 6-2, 6-4.

His only ATP singles title came in 1998 on Newport grass in the same venue where he was inducted. "As my father always said to me, if you believe in yourself, you work hard, you'll be passionate not only to win prize money and trophies, but you do that to inspire the world," Paes said.

"It has been my greatest honor to play for my countrymen in seven Olympics, to stand where the national anthem is playing in all those Davis Cups, and to prove that we Asians can win Grand Slams and also be number one in our field, be it tennis or anything." — AFP



NEWPORT: The stage is set for 2024 inductees Leander Paes, Vijay Amritraj and Richard Evans to become enshrined in the International Tennis Hall of Fame in Newport, Rhode Island. — AFP



Ali Al-Merri (centre) with other officials.

### Al-Merri: Optimistic in Kuwaiti athletes participating in Paris

KUWAIT: The Director of Kuwait delegation to the 33rd Summer Olympic Games (Paris 2024) Ali Al-Merri expressed on Sunday his confidence in the capabilities of Kuwaiti athletes and their abilities to reach high levels of achievements.

In a press statement, Al-Merri stressed that the Kuwaiti Olympics Committee was keen to provide all technical and physical factors that would guarantee the success of all players, including internal and external training camps.

Kuwait's delegation to the 2024 Paris Olympics includes nine players competing in six games (archery, fencing, swimming, athletics, rowing and sailing). Khaled Al-Mudhaf and Mohammed Al-Daihani represent Kuwait in shooting, Yousef Al-Shamlan in fencing, Yaqoub Al-Youha and Amal Al-Roumi in athletics, Mohammed Al-Zubaid and Lara Dashti in swimming, and Souad Al-Faqaan and Al-Sharaa Amina Shah in rowing. The 33rd Summer Olympic Games (Paris 2024), will begin on July 26th and continue until August 11th. — KUNA