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2 KAF ambassadors call on schools to protect children from violence



6 Trump calls Harris 'lunatic' in first rally since Biden exit



11 Mate rituals, line art and secret beaches in today's Weekender



16 Palestinians slam IOC 'double standards' over Zionist entity



Hamas confounds Zionist forces

Zionists pummel Gaza as Netanyahu speech at US Congress slammed

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwait army ready to face threats

KUWAIT: Chief of Staff of Kuwait Army Lt Gen Bandar Al-Muzain affirmed the need to be alert and ready to defend Kuwait's security against threats. Muzain made the remarks in a press statement on Thursday after concluding a visit to the marine force, where he hailed their efforts to protect the country's marine borders and waters. — KUNA (See Page 2)

Kuwait slams Zionist UNRWA tag

KUWAIT: Kuwait's ministry of foreign affairs condemned on Wednesday the Zionist occupation Knesset's move to designate the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as a "terrorist" organization. The ministry said the Zionist move is a clear encroachment on the UN and its agencies, and a dangerous challenge to a UN humanitarian agency. — KUNA

Oil spill cleanup complete

KUWAIT: Cleanup efforts to remove any forms of pollution triggered by an oil spill off Kuwait's southern waters are now complete, state-run Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) said on Thursday, hailing the "timely" manner in which the procedure was carried out. KOC teams were quick to respond to the oil spill that spread over two kilometers on Tuesday off the southern Julaia shoreline, employing effective equipment to clean up any lingering remains. — KUNA

KAC flight safe after malfunction

KUWAIT: A Kuwait Airways flight bound for Sarajevo landed in Kuwait safely after a technical malfunction was reported, the airline said on Thursday. A statement said the flight's crew took all measures to ensure the safety of everyone on-board, indicating it was coordinating with passengers to enable them to reach their final destinations. An investigation was launched to determine the source of the malfunction. — KUNA

Court acquits ex-MP Qallaf

KUWAIT: The criminal court on Thursday acquitted senior Shiite cleric and former MP Hussein Al-Qallaf from charges of challenging the powers of HH the Amir after he criticized regulations on Shiite religious ceremonies during Ashura on social media. During the trial, Qallaf denied the accusations and insisted that he had criticized the government and not HH the Amir. Qallaf's lawyer also showed the court videos and tweets to prove that he strongly supported HH the Amir's actions.

Police arrest iqama violators

KUWAIT: The interior ministry said on Thursday police continued their clampdown on expats living illegally in the country who did not avail a three-month amnesty to legalize their stay or leave without penalty. The ministry said that police arrested a number of illegals from Farwaniya governorate and referred them to authorities, who will deport them to their home countries. (See Page 2)

Kuwait's Olympic outfits: Nautical nod to heritage



KUWAIT: Kuwait unveiled new outfits for its athletes for the opening ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympics, designed by Farah Al-Babtain and inspired by the national poem "Memoirs of a Sailor". (See Page 16)

Biden says time to pass torch to 'younger voices'

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden told Americans Wednesday he quit the 2024 election to unite the country, saying in a historic Oval Office speech that it was time to pass the torch to "younger voices". "I revere this office. But I love my country more," the 81-year-old said in an elegiac prime-time address to the nation urging his divided country to embrace democracy and shun hatred.

"The defense of democracy, which is at stake, is more important than any title," Biden said. "I have decided the best way forward is to pass the torch to a new generation. That is the best way to unite our nation." In his first televised address since his stunning decision, Biden also hailed his Vice President Kamala Harris, 59, who is set to be the new Democratic presidential nominee.

"She's experienced. She's tough. She's capable," Biden said in just the fourth address of his presidency from behind the Resolute Desk — and likely his last. Biden bowed out of the race later than any other president in US history, giving in to weeks of pressure from Democrats after a disastrous debate performance against Donald Trump

Continued on Page 6

Putin meets Assad to discuss Turkey and Zionist entity

MOSCOW/AMMAN: Russian President Vladimir Putin met Bashar Al-Assad in the Kremlin as Moscow nudges the Syrian leader towards a meeting with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and Damascus seeks the Kremlin's help in restraining the Zionist entity. Russia backed Assad in Syria's civil war, launching a military campaign that helped turn the tide of the 12-year conflict in his favor even though the West had called for the Syrian leader to go.

At a meeting in the Kremlin, Assad said that he wanted to discuss global and regional events with Putin, including scenarios for the future. "I am very interested in your opinion on how the situation in the region as a whole is developing," Putin told Assad. "Unfortunately, there is a tendency towards escalation, we can see that. This also applies directly to Syria." The Kremlin said the meeting took place on Wednesday.

Russia has been trying to facilitate a meeting between Assad and Turkey's Erdogan. Turkey severed ties with Syria in 2011 after the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, in which it supported rebels looking to oust Assad. The Syrian leader views the rebels as terrorists. A Turkish diplomatic source earlier this week denied a media report saying an Erdogan-Assad meeting would happen in Moscow in August.

When asked if Putin discussed a possible meeting between Assad and Erdogan and whether or not Assad asked for help in ensuring security against the Zionist



MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad during their meeting at the Kremlin on July 24, 2024. — AFP



WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden speaks during an address to the nation in the Oval Office at the White House on July 24, 2024. — AFP

GAZA: Senior figures in the Zionist entity's government have said it is closing in on its war aims of defeating Hamas militarily and the return of captives seized on Oct 7. But Hamas' survival as a guerrilla force and its sway in Gaza may overshadow any deal. Guerrilla tactics adopted by Hamas cells in recent weeks are aimed at ensuring the group survives, ties down Zionist forces and inflicts losses, according to a Palestinian source with knowledge of Hamas military tactics.

Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, addressing the US Congress on Wednesday during a trip to Washington, pledged the captives would be released soon and laid out a post-war vision of a "demilitarized and deradicalized Gaza" led by Palestinians who do not seek to destroy the Zionist entity. In his speech, Netanyahu also downplayed Palestinian civilian casualties during the more than nine months of war between Zionist forces and Hamas.

Hamas dismissed Netanyahu's comments as "pure lies" and accused the Zionist leader of thwarting negotiations to end the war and reach a ceasefire deal to release the hostages - outlined by US President Joe Biden in May and mediated by Egypt and Qatar. Netanyahu, who was to meet Biden on Thursday, has said that victory will only be achieved when the military and governing capabilities of Hamas are eliminated and Gaza poses no further threat to the Zionist entity.

"It was depressing, he didn't even mention ceasefire at all, not even once," said Tamer Al-Burai, a resident of Gaza City, now displaced in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip. "People awaited some surprise, a ceasefire announcement by Netanyahu as a gift to Biden, but they slept with much disappointment, as Netanyahu said he was deter-

mined to pursue war," he told Reuters. "Netanyahu spoke in a play, he spoke to clowns," added Burai.

Hamas' founding charter in 1987 called for the destruction of the Zionist entity and it subsequently directed suicide bombings in Zionist cities and, with Iran's help, built an arsenal of rockets that it has launched into the Zionist entity in frequent conflicts. Hamas has insisted that, despite losses, its command structure remains in place, even if weakened. Senior Hamas official Sami



WASHINGTON: Representative Rashida Tlaib protests during Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech to a joint meeting of Congress on July 24, 2024. — AFP (See Page 5)

Abu Zuhri told Reuters that the Zionist entity's accounts exaggerate the extent of its losses: "Facts on the ground are completely different," he said.

A Zionist airstrike on July 13 in a humanitarian area in southern Gaza targeted Hamas' military chief Mohammed Deif, who the Zionist entity says masterminded the Oct. 7 attack. The Gaza health ministry said at least 90 Palestinians were killed in the strike. Palestinian sources have confirmed the deaths of several leading Hamas

Continued on Page 6



New batch of fake certificates referred to public prosecution

Anyone involved in falsifying academic qualifications will not be met with any tolerance: Minister

By: Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: The Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr Adel Al-Adwani, on Thursday has referred a second batch of post-graduate scientific certificates to the public prosecution for review, in measures the government has been taking to fight counterfeit certificates.

The people who submitted these certificates as their education qualifications to obtain government jobs were revealed to have falsified the documents, the minister said in a statement. The false information in these certificates has allowed them to get their academic qualification recognized by the country's high education ministry, thus enabling them to compete for highly coveted government positions. Measures to uncover fake certificates come in implementation of the high directives to fight corruption and work on the advancement and progress of the country and within the tireless and comprehensive efforts

of the Ministry of Higher Education in combating corruption and eliminating counterfeiters.

Adwani said more certificates will be referred to the Public Prosecution during the coming period. "Reform and the fight against corruption is continuing and moving ahead steadily towards achieving justice and integrity," he said. Anyone involved in falsifying academic certificates or those found with fake documents will not be met with any tolerance. "This issue will be dealt with firmly and strictly so that no one gets away with this crime against the nation," said Adwani.

Early suspicions

Adwani had transferred all education ministry academic accreditation to the public prosecution on July 3 as part of efforts that had been delayed since 2019. In fact, the government's suspicions that some people working in the public sector had faked their academic papers dates back as early as 2017.



Dr Adel Al-Adwani

At the time, fake certificates were suspected in the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), and then in the Health Ministry in 2019.

Minister Al-Adwani approved the recommendation of the legal sector in the Ministry of Higher Education to refer certificates above high school to the Public Prosecution.

Adwani had said that referring these violating certificates to the Public Prosecution is a first stage that will be followed by another group of referrals during the coming period until this phenomenon, which poses a great danger to the education system

and the labor market, is completely eliminated.

Indeed, the Cabinet has recently assigned Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sharida Al-Maousherji to form a committee headed by the Fatwa and Legislation Department and the membership of five government agencies: the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice and the Civil Service Bureau.

The committee is tasked with examining post-secondary academic certificates of all degrees issued outside the State of Kuwait for employees, citizens and residents, since 2000, in implementation of the directives of the Council of Ministers.

The Civil Service Commission also sent letters to ministries and government agencies subject to its supervision, asking them to provide it with full data on post-secondary education certificates for all employees in the government and the private sector, both citizens and residents.

KAF ambassadors call on schools to protect children from violence

WASHINGTON: The Kuwait-America Foundation (KAF) peace ambassadors have called on schools to pay attention and properly address situations of bullying and violence among children. The student ambassadors who have taken a stand against violence were honored during the foundation's annual National Recognition dinner. Chairman of KAF Dr Hassan Al-Ebraheem said the ambassadors' participation in the program is a tribute to all Kuwaiti children who were subjected to violence during the Iraqi invasion.

The dinner celebrated some 54 students who participated in the program this year by writing reports tackling the causes and solutions to youth violence. The ambassadors will get their writings compiled into a book that will be presented to the Library of Congress. The dinner was held in the presence of Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikhha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, as well as several dignitaries, academics, reporters and children, totaling 54, chosen out of 77,000 participants across the globe.

In their speeches, the students stressed the im-

portance of protecting child victims of violence from isolation. The students also focused on the means of combating violence and dealing with the problem in a proper way to avoid its repercussions. Some children highlighted victims of violence and bullying and called on schools to pay much attention to treating such issues. Oral and emotional abuse is an integrated part of violence that has painful feelings, they said, stressing the need of raising awareness of children on violence and helping them to learn skills of resolving disputes.

They underlined the need of sports as a health tool for children facing violence and an effective way to combat negative feelings caused by violence. Attorney General in the US State of Ohio Dave Yost expressed his pride for being a KAF member over four years, stressing the need of effective action of children. According to statistics, violence at Ohio's schools dropped by 50 percent over the past years. Speaking to KUNA, KAF Chairman Al-Ebraheem said he was very impressed by the speeches of those children who have been honored, adding they give hopes for a future free of violence. He hoped that the KAF would continue its effective role.

This move came to honor the impressive articles of those outstanding students and their creative solutions about violence to be involved at the Congress Library that will help document their voices and ideas for the next generations. Some dignitaries have been honored due to their key



WASHINGTON: Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikhha Al-Zain Al-Sabah (left) is seen during the Kuwait-America Foundation (KAF) National Recognition dinner. — KUNA

role in protecting children in their societies. As an extension of the gratitude and generosity of the people of Kuwait, KAF was founded in 1991

after Kuwait's liberation with the core mission of strengthening ties between the United States and the State of Kuwait. — KUNA

Jordanian minister commends Kuwait's cultural contributions

AMMAN: Jordanian Minister of Culture Haifa Najjar commended on Thursday the State of Kuwait for its immense and tremendous role and contributions in bolstering Arab cultural development. Speaking to KUNA after meeting with Secretary General of Kuwait National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL) Dr Mohammad Al-Jassar, Minister Najjar indicated that Kuwait and Jordan have mutual interest in thriving Arab cultural development especially within the artistic field.

She lauded Kuwait's participation in the 38th edition of the Jerash festival, noting that the event highlighted many of Jordan's intangible cultural heritage sites. Dr Al-Jassar commended the cultural ties linking Kuwait and Jordan on so many levels, affirming that his country's participation in the Jerash festival was within the context of continued cooperation. Kuwait's NCCAL partakes in the Jerash festival with a pavilion highlighting several cultural activities pertaining to Kuwaiti heritage with the participation of several artists and poets. — KUNA



JERASH: Kuwait's Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Marri (center) and NCCAL's Secretary General Dr Mohammad Al-Jassar (right) are seen during the opening ceremony of the 38th edition of the Jerash festival. — KUNA photos



AMMAN: Jordanian Minister of Culture Haifa Najjar (right) and Dr Al-Jassar exchange gifts during their meeting.



KUWAIT: Chief of Staff of Kuwait Army Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain (left) is seen during his visit to the marine force. — KUNA

Kuwait army ready to face security threats: Chief of Staff

KUWAIT: Chief of Staff of Kuwait Army Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain affirmed the need to be alert and ready to defend Kuwait's

security against threats. Lieutenant General Al-Muzain made the remarks in a press statement on Thursday, after concluding a visit to the marine force, where he hailed their efforts to protect the country's marine borders and waters. During the visit, Lieutenant General Al-Muzain learned of the duties and tasks executed by the marine force, its preparation to face threats and the future plans and training courses for its members. — KUNA

Residency violators arrested in Shuwaikh Industrial Area

KUWAIT: The Public Security Sector at the Interior Ministry, in cooperation with the Al-Assima security directorate and traffic department carried out a security inspection campaign in Shuwaikh Industrial Area to arrest violators of the residency law and wanted persons. The campaign resulted in several arrests, and they were referred to the competent authority to take the necessary legal measures and deport them from the country.

The General Directorate of Relations and Security Media said security campaigns are continuing

throughout the country to arrest violators of the residency law and wanted persons, and calls on everyone to cooperate with security men in reporting violators and outlaws by calling the emergency phone number (112).

Kuwait had extended the deadline for illegal expatriates to readjust their legal status or leave the country until June 30. The deadline was originally set to end on June 17. There are no official figures available on how many expats made use of the grace period. But an official was quoted last month saying that thousands of expatriates have benefited from the campaign. The campaign, which was designed to address the age-old residency violations issue plaguing the country went on for three months. Expats who took advantage of the grace period given by the Interior Ministry could either leave Kuwait without facing penalties or adjust their legal status by fulfilling the necessary legal requirements.



Local

MoH unveils new dialysis unit, medical warehouse

New medical facilities boost Kuwait's healthcare infrastructure



KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi (right) visits the newly inaugurated dialysis unit at Sabah Al-Ahmad Health Center. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi confirmed that the opening of the dialysis unit at Sabah Al-Ahmad Health Center (Sector E) on Thursday underscores the ministry's commitment to upholding the highest standards of quality and patient safety.

Dr Awadhi noted that this new unit represents a significant addition to the ministry's efforts in overcoming challenges and enhancing healthcare services for citizens. Equipped with 20 state-of-the-art dialysis machines and staffed by a team of highly specialized doctors and nurses, the unit will serve up to 120 patients.

Currently, around 25 residents of Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City require dialysis, which previously necessitated traveling to Adan Hospital three times a week. This new facility will alleviate that burden, improving patient comfort and reducing hardship. He emphasized the ministry's dedication to providing the latest services and technologies, as well as preparing specialized teams to deliver integrated healthcare that prioritizes patient well-being.

Dr Bassam Al-Hilal, Head of the Nephrology Unit at the Mohamed Al-Khuzam Center for Dialysis and Diseases at Adan Hospital, stated that the new unit is a crucial step toward achieving comprehensive health coverage across Kuwait, in line with international standards. He added that the center will provide excellent care for patients with kidney failure, minimizing their difficulties and alleviating congest-

ion at the Mohamed Al-Khuzam Center, which currently serves over 450 patients.

Dr Hilal also noted that the opening of the Sabah Al-Ahmad unit follows the recent inauguration of the Ali Sabah Al-Salem Dialysis Center, which serves about 30 patients from the Ali Sabah Al-Salem suburb. This reflects the ministry's commitment to expanding and evenly distributing healthcare services across all regions.

Dr Awadhi also inaugurated the medical warehouse of Adan Hospital, which forms a key part of the new Adan Hospital project and is designated for the strategic storage of medicines and medical supplies. Khaled Al-Yaseen, Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry for Medicines and Medical Equipment Affairs, told KUNA during the opening that the warehouse was executed through the ministry's engineering affairs and projects department, covering an area of 11,000 square meters and a height of 14 meters, with a storage capacity of 8,000 storage units, representing an increase of approximately 35 percent over the previous capacity.

Yaseen explained that the warehouse include areas for storing medicines and others for storing medical supplies, equipped according to the best international standards to ensure the quality and safety of stored materials. They feature high-quality, multi-purpose shelves, in addition to refrigerated shelves for materials that require low temperatures.

He noted that the warehouse has been integrated



Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi is seen with officials at the medical warehouse of Adan Hospital.



The medical warehouse of Adan Hospital covers an area of 11,000 sq m and a height of 14 meters.

with the information systems department and the medical warehouses management to facilitate tracking and dispensing, indicating that it serves the Ahmad health district, including its facilities, Adan Hospital and health centers.

Yaseen pointed out that this inauguration is part

of the ministry of health's efforts to enhance the health infrastructure and provide a safe and efficient storage environment for medicines and medical supplies, in line with Kuwait's vision to achieve comprehensive health coverage and provide outstanding medical services to citizens. — KUNA

Riding smart: Motorcycle expert shares safety tips for riders in Kuwait

By Talal Abueljebain

During a long road trip in Oman, Khaled Abueljebain nearly lost control of his bike when a sudden sandstorm blocked his view of the road. Thanks to his well-equipped gear, he regained control and found a safe spot to stop shortly thereafter. This incident served as a reminder for Abueljebain, with his 23 years of riding experience, of the critical importance of preparation and safety gear, especially in unpredictable conditions.

Current state of motorcycle safety in Kuwait

In regions with high motorcycle usage, motorcycles contribute to over 70 percent of all road traffic fatalities, as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO). Factors contributing to these fatalities include the lack of helmet usage, speeding, mixed traffic conditions, and inadequate road infrastructure.

Delivery drivers and young riders are the ones at greatest risk due to these conditions, said Abueljebain, who is a motorcycle enthusiast and co-founder of Kuwait Riders. The tight deadlines imposed on delivery drivers make them prone to risky behaviors, while the immaturity of some young riders makes them more susceptible to fatal accidents.

Inexperienced riders might have trouble being aware of safety measures. Abueljebain, founder of Bikes4Sale, emphasized the importance of wearing full safety gear, including helmets, gloves, and protective clothing. "Adhering to traffic laws, maintaining a safe speed, and being aware of road conditions are essential," he advised. Regular maintenance of the motorcycle is another crucial aspect to ensure

it's in good working condition.

Supporting delivery drivers

While delivery drivers often breach safety rules, they are not entirely to blame. Some companies fail to provide their drivers with safe working conditions and don't take responsibility when a driver suffers an accident, according to several drivers who previously shared their experiences with Kuwait Times. Abueljebain said employers should better support their drivers so they're able to do their job safely. "Fair working conditions, such as reasonable delivery expectations and adequate break times, are key for safety," Abueljebain added. Abueljebain called for providing employees with proper training, maintaining motorcycles in good condition, and ensuring access to safety gear as fundamental steps.

Yet, he stressed that riders bear responsibility for themselves too, especially since they face unique challenges while frequently on the road. He advised, "Delivery drivers should prioritize safety over speed, plan their routes to avoid the busiest times and areas, and take regular breaks to avoid fatigue." He added, "Wearing appropriate gear, staying hydrated, and being aware of their surroundings can help mitigate risks."

Staying safe throughout the seasons

Riding in intense heat poses increased risk to the rider, Abueljebain adds. He recommended several precautions for motorcyclists to maximize safety. He advised staying hydrated, taking frequent breaks, and avoiding riding during the hottest times of the day. "Wearing ventilated gear and using cooling vests can effectively regulate body temperature," he suggested. Abueljebain said that extreme heat can affect tire pressure and engine performance which makes regular maintenance all the more important.

During the winter and rainy seasons, riders should be cautious of slippery roads. Abueljebain suggested reducing speed, maintaining a safe distance from other vehicles, and using appropriate tires for wet conditions. "Wearing layers to stay warm and ensur-



Khaled Abueljebain, founder of Bikes4Sale, poses with a motorcycle.

ing that the helmet visor is clear to avoid fogging is important to keep in mind as well," he noted.

Raising public awareness

Everyone can contribute by being more aware and respectful of motorcyclists on the road. This includes checking blind spots, giving motorcyclists enough space, and being patient in traffic.

Through Kuwait Riders, Abueljebain promotes motorcycle safety on a broader scale. "We've launched awareness campaigns and safety workshops for riders. Collaborating with local authorities to advocate for better infrastructure and stricter enforcement of traffic laws is part of our efforts," Abueljebain said. Public awareness campaigns are vital to educate drivers on sharing the road safely with motorcyclists.

'Still much to be done'

While Abueljebain acknowledged the efforts undertaken to promote motorcycle safety in Kuwait, he believed more improvements were necessary. "There is still much to be done to ensure that all road users respect motorcycle riders. Issues like potholes, unmarked lanes, and the lack of dedicated motorcycle lanes need to be addressed," he explained.

Looking ahead, Abueljebain believes that Kuwait should invest in better infrastructure, including dedicated motorcycle lanes and improved road maintenance. "Public awareness campaigns and stricter enforcement of traffic laws regarding motorcycle safety are needed. Training programs for new riders would also help reduce accidents, especially for delivery drivers," he asserted.

Enhancing motorcycle safety in Kuwait requires a multifaceted approach involving better infrastructure, public awareness, and stringent safety practices. By working together, Abueljebain hopes we can ensure safer roads for all and promote a culture of enjoyable and responsible motorcycling.

Kuwait's champions ready for Paris Olympics challenge

PARIS: Vice President of the Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah confirmed on Thursday the readiness of Kuwait's champions to participate in the Olympic Games (Paris 2024). This came in a special statement by Sheikh Mubarak to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) after he visited the players who arrived at the headquarters of the Kuwait mission in the Olympic Village in the province (Seine-Saint-Denis) in the capital, Paris. Sheikh Mubarak met with the director of the mission, Ali Al-Marri, and the technical and administrative staff of the national Kuwaiti teams to examine their preparations and readiness for the competitions.

He wished success to the Kuwaiti champions in the six competitions in which the Kuwaiti delegation is participating: shooting, fencing, rowing, swimming, athletics and sailing. He also expressed his pride in the participation of four female athletes, noting that it is a "historic participation". The female athletes, who make up nearly half of the delegates representing Kuwait, are Lara Dashli (swimming), Amal Al-Roumi (athletics), Suad Al-Faqan (rowing) and Amina Shah (rowing). Kuwait's male Olympic athletes participating in Paris 2024 are Yaqoub Al-Youha (athletics), Khaled Al-Mudhaf and Mohammad Al-Daihani (shooting), Yusef Al-Shamlan (fencing), and Mohammad Zubaid (swimming).

He expressed his thanks to all participants, including champions, administrators and representatives of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, in addition to representatives of federations, coaches, technical staff and media. Upon his arrival in Paris, Sheikh Mubarak met with the Kuwaiti sports delegation participating in the Paris 2024 Olympics at the mission's headquarters in the Olympic Village in Seine-Saint-Denis to follow up on all developments and arrangements in preparation for receiving the players who will flock to the Paris 2024 Olympics. The official opening ceremony of the Olympic Games (Paris 2024) is scheduled to take place Friday. The games will continue until August 11, while the 2024 Paralympic Games will be held in Paris from August 28 to September 8. — KUNA



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British envoy praises Kuwait's leadership in supporting UNRWA

KUWAIT: On Friday, July 19, 2024, the United Kingdom announced that it will resume funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), pledging £21 million in new funds to support its work in Gaza, the West Bank, and the wider region. This announcement came one week after the UNRWA Pledging Conference 2024, during which the UK joined 117 fellow UN Member States - led by Kuwait, Jordan, and Slovenia - in signing a joint statement emphasizing their shared support for UNRWA. UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy reiterated calls for an immediate ceasefire to end the suffering of civilians, and for aid to reach the people of Gaza without restrictions.

Belinda Lewis, British Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, noted: "I would like to acknowledge Kuwait's leadership in building support for UNRWA within the international community, with the UK having joined 117 fellow UN Member States in signing the statement Kuwait led, alongside Jordan and Slovenia, at UNRWA's Pledging Conference in New York on July 12.

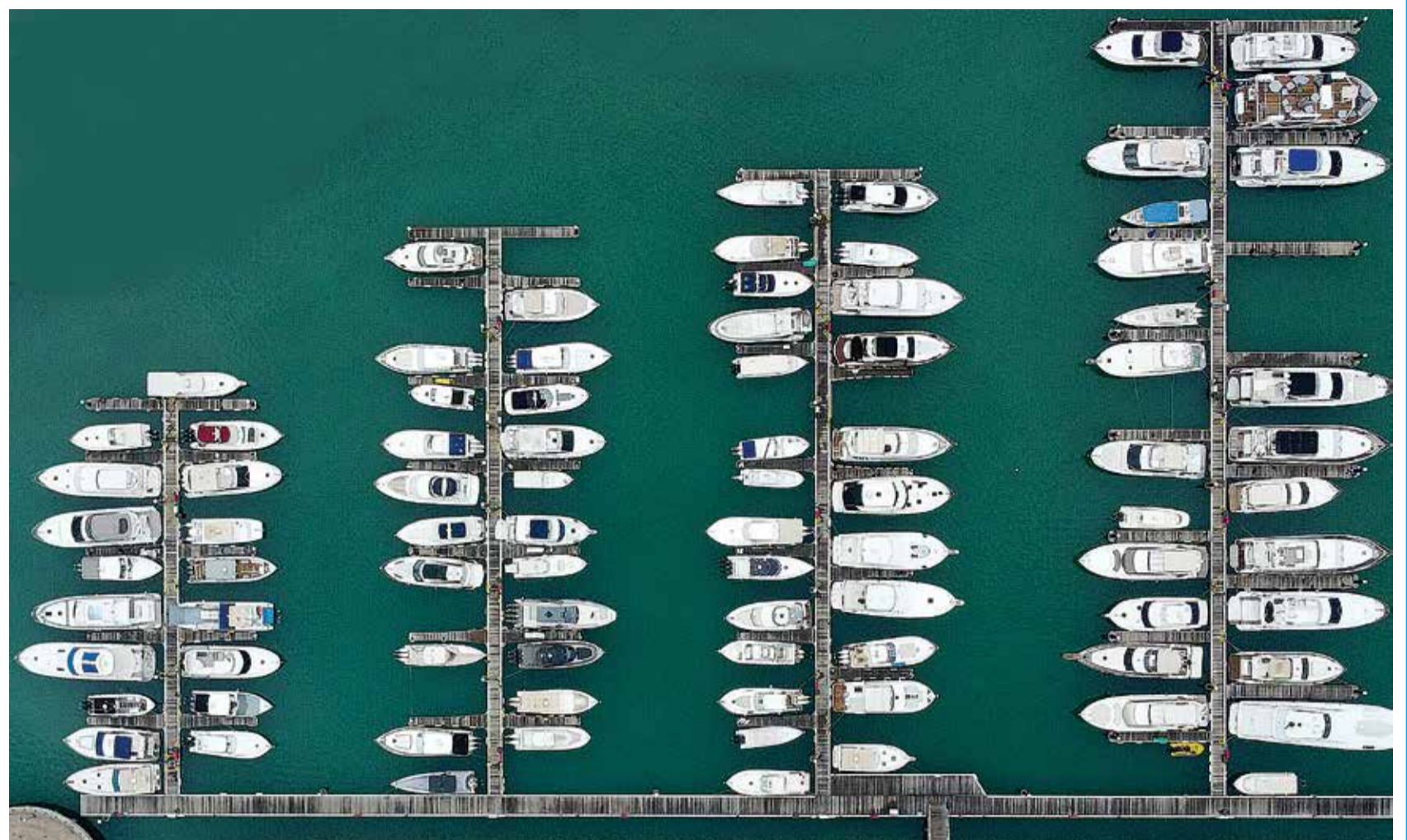
The UK's funding for UNRWA is one element of a broader package of support we are delivering through several humanitarian organizations, including UNICEF, the UN World Food Program, the Egyptian Red Crescent Society, the British Red Cross and British charity UK-Med. The latter has established field hospitals in Al-Mawasi and Deir El-Balah as part of its biggest humanitarian operation in its 30-year history.

Working jointly with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and the David Nott Foundation, the UK funded and delivered specialist training for Kuwaiti doctors deploying to Gaza. The UK Government is lobbying for greater, quicker access for aid into Gaza, supporting efforts to broker an immediate ceasefire and has pledged £15 million in financial and technical support to the Palestinian Authority."



UK Ambassador
Belinda Lewis

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: Boats are moored in the Marina dock in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Martial arts gaining popularity among children in Kuwait

With right instructor, martial arts can help children overcome shyness: Expert



Children participate in a martial arts class in Kuwait. — KUNA photos



KUWAIT: Fahad, 9, and Rakan, 7, pose with the Kuwaiti flag.



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MMA Champion and Brazilian Ju-Jitsu (BJJ) instructor Hussam Qashou

KUWAIT: Martial arts often conjures images of brave and mighty warriors using their skills in hand-to-hand combat and/or weapons to vanquish their adversary and protect loved ones. Such notions usually attract men and women from all walks of life, pushing them to pursue a path of discipline, honor, and self-growth. When it comes to children, the martial arts: when taught young and right, could utilize their innate capabilities, pushing kids from all ages to become top martial artists in their own respect, or maybe, if the situation required, could defend themselves and others.

In Kuwait, many parents would seek to enlist children in martial arts dojos of various disciplines whether it was karate, kickboxing, ju-jitsu, judo, or more recently Mixed Martial Arts (MMA). Speaking to KUNA, Under 92 Kg champion of the now defunct Gladiator Fighting Championship (GFC) Mohammad Al-De'ee affirmed that there was a misconception that the martial arts were used to inflict violence upon others. However, he continues, even if some actually do that, the vast majority of martial artists were outstanding people that seek peace and the betterment of their societies. When it came to children, Al-De'ee said that in the hands of a capable and well-mannered instructor, children with confidence issues and shyness would excel and become disciplined

people willing to help themselves and others. He reiterated the point that enlisting children in various martial arts dojos in Kuwait was on the rise due to parents' eagerness to see their kids become better persons.

MMA Champion and Brazilian Ju-Jitsu (BJJ) instructor Hussam Qashou indicated that parents bring their children to dojos, especially in the summer break with soaring heat preventing most outdoor activities. The increasing interest in martial arts throughout the Arab world has bred some world champions and brought in media attention, he said, adding that there's nothing better than teaching children something worthwhile and beneficial.

Mohammad Al-Muzaini - a parent - said that he enrolled his children in Kajukenbo, a hybrid martial art that originated in Hawaii, in addition to karate, kudo, kenpo, and boxing.

Muzaini pointed out that his children - Fahad, 9, and Rakan, 7, - had benefited greatly from Kajukenbo, noting that in the meantime, they were preparing for a tournament in Las Vegas, Nevada, which gave his children more reason to train and develop their skills. Muzaini and his children also expressed joy in discovering Kajukenbo, saying that the ginormous benefits of martial arts would last anyone a lifetime. — KUNA



Trump calls Harris 'lunatic' in first rally since Biden exit

Relatives of 18 dead in Nepal plane crash demand answers



WASHINGTON: Zionist entity's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses a joint meeting of Congress at the US Capitol on July 24, 2024 in Washington, DC. (Right) US Representative Rashida Tlaib, Democrat of Michigan, protests during Netanyahu's speech in the Congress. — AFP

Netanyahu urges global alliance against Iranian 'axis of terror'

Americans remain deeply divided over Zionist entity's actions in Gaza

WASHINGTON: Zionist entity's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu slammed Gaza ceasefire demonstrators Wednesday and called for a global alliance against the Iranian regime he accuses of funding them, as he addressed a US Congress divided by the war.

Washington has become increasingly alarmed by the humanitarian toll of Zionist entity's nine-month campaign in the narrow coastal territory, and protests in Zionist entity and the United States have been ratcheting up pressure on Netanyahu. The prime minister hit back at his critics in a speech at the US Capitol, accusing Tehran of funding and promoting US-based anti-Zionist entity protest—and called Gaza peace activists "Iran's useful idiots."

"America and Zionist entity today can forge a security alliance in the Middle East to counter the growing Iranian threat," he told lawmakers as demonstrators burned his effigy in the streets beyond the historic Capitol complex. "All countries that are in peace with (Zionist entity), and all those countries who will make peace with (Zionist entity), should be invited to join this alliance."

Iran, he said, was the "axis of terror"

behind almost all sectarian killing in the Middle East. He argued that the United States and Zionist entity "must stand together" against Tehran and its proxies.

"Our enemies are your enemies. Our fight is your fight. And our victory will be your victory," Netanyahu said to a standing ovation in the House chamber.

Deep divisions

But Americans are deeply divided over Zionist actions in Gaza as the death toll climbs, and the demonstration outside the Capitol swelled to thousands ahead of Netanyahu's appearance. Activists were kept at least a block away by police who fired pepper spray, and they eventually dispersed. Inside the House of Representatives—one-half of the main Capitol building—six protesters were arrested before Netanyahu began.

Rashida Tlaib, the only Palestinian-American lawmaker, waved signs from the floor calling Netanyahu a "war criminal" and accusing him of genocide. The Zionist entity leader's visit came in the wake of a gunman targeting Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, and President Joe Biden bowing out of the election and endorsing his deputy,

Kamala Harris. Netanyahu singled out both Biden and Trump for praise for their efforts towards Middle East peace.

Biden and Harris are both set to meet Netanyahu separately on Thursday, but Republicans nevertheless criticized Harris for skipping Wednesday's address. Vice presidents typically preside over such occasions, and Senate leadership hopeful John Cornyn was one of a number of Republicans who called her no-show "disgraceful." J D Vance, the Republican senator who wants to replace her as vice president, was not there either. Netanyahu will also meet Trump—with whose administration he had a much less fraught relationship than Biden's—in Florida on Friday.

Wednesday's address made Zionist entity's longest-serving premier the first foreign leader to address a joint meeting of Congress four times—pulling ahead of Britain's Winston Churchill. But he has lost backing among dozens of liberal lawmakers, and some 68 Democrats—including some of the most senior figures in Congress—said they would not attend.

Netanyahu said he was "confident" in efforts to secure the release of the 114 hostages still in Gaza, where Zionist mil-

itary campaign has killed at least 39,145 people, also mostly civilians, according to figures from the territory's health ministry. The Palestinian group said Netanyahu was "misleading" the international community in his address, saying he "thwarted all efforts aimed at ending the war and concluding a deal to release the prisoners." The United States has voiced concerns over bombing in heavily populated parts of Gaza but has defended Zionist interests while taking a key role in mediation efforts. A senior Biden administration official said Wednesday that negotiations for a Gaza ceasefire and a hostage release deal were in their "closing stages," speaking on the condition of anonymity.

In Congress, Netanyahu called on Washington to fast-track military aid to his country to "dramatically expedite an end to the war in Gaza and help prevent a broader war in the Middle East." But his call for support sparked a backlash from Democrats angry that there was little of substance in his speech about securing peace. Influential former House speaker Nancy Pelosi called it "by far the worst presentation of any foreign dignitary" invited to speak before Congress. — AFP

Russia, China FMs meet as ASEAN talks get underway

VIENTIANE: The foreign ministers of Russia and China met on Thursday on the sidelines of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) foreign ministers talks in Laos, Moscow and AFP journalists said. The three-day meeting of the 10-member ASEAN bloc started in the capital Vientiane on Thursday, with the South China Sea and the conflict in Myanmar high on the agenda.

Sergei Lavrov held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the meeting, Russia's foreign ministry said. A schedule for Thursday's meeting seen by AFP showed that Lavrov was due to join Wang for a 40-minute "ministerial meeting".

Lavrov left the venue at 7:15 pm local time (12:15 GMT), without commenting on what the meeting had covered. China is a close political and economic ally of Russia and NATO members have branded Beijing a "decisive enabler" of Moscow's war in Ukraine.

Their meeting came a day after Wang held talks in China with Ukraine's top diplomat Dmytro Kuleba. Lavrov said before an earlier meeting with the foreign ministers of China and Laos that ASEAN was "one of the essential elements of a new, more just multipolar world order".

It must "ensure a stable and secure development, outside the blocs, of the Asia-Pacific region," he said.

The foreign ministers of Canada, India and the United Kingdom arrived in Vientiane on Thursday to attend the talks as dialogue partners, AFP journalists said. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is also expected to attend. ASEAN ministers were thrashing out a common position on the civil war raging in member state Myanmar on Thursday, a Southeast Asian diplomat at the talks said.

"Myanmar is not resolved yet but we're almost there," the source said, requesting anonymity in order to speak to the media. A draft ASEAN communique seen by AFP said ministers "strongly condemned" the continued violence unleashed by the military's coup in 2021 that has plunged the country into turmoil.

The junta is struggling to crush armed opposition to its coup and has been barred from high-level ASEAN meetings over its crackdown on dissent. It had previously refused to send "non-political representatives" to attend high-level ASEAN meetings but two senior bureaucrats are representing Myanmar at the talks in Vientiane. The military's readiness to re-engage diplomatically was a sign of its "weakened position", said the diplomatic source. — AFP

Morocco heatwave kills more than 20 people in 24 hours

RABAT: A heatwave in Morocco has killed at least 21 people in a 24-hour period in the central city of Beni Mellal, the health ministry announced on Thursday.

The meteorology department said soaring temperatures affected much of the North African country from Monday to Wednesday, reaching 48 degrees Celsius (118 Fahrenheit) in some areas. In Beni Mellal, "the majority of deaths involved people suffering from chronic illnesses and the elderly, with high temperatures contributing to the deterioration of their health conditions," the regional health directorate said in a statement.

The ministry was not able to immediately say if this was the highest recorded death toll from a heatwave in the country. Beni Mellal, more than 200 kilometers (150 miles) southeast of Casablanca, was still experiencing temperatures of 43 degrees on Thursday. Temperatures are expected to drop in the coming days, the meteorology department said. In the tourism hotspot of Marrakesh, they are expected to drop by 10 degrees on Sunday.

Morocco has suffered a sixth consecutive year of drought, and record heat this past winter with January the hottest since 1940, according to the meteorology department which had recorded temperatures approaching 37C in some places. The rising temperatures and prolonged drought, which have lowered reservoir levels, are a threat to the vital farm sector.



OULED ESSI MASSEUD, Morocco: A shepherd checks his mobile phone sitting on cracked earth at Al-Massira dam in Ouled Essi Masseoud village, some 140 kilometers (85 miles) south of Casablanca. — AFP

Water evaporation reached 1.5 million cubic meters (53 million cubic feet) per day. Water Minister Nizar Baraka said at the end of June. The High Commission for Planning said in May that the "labor market continues to suffer from the effects of the drought" and reported that the unemployment rate had increased to 13.7 percent in the first quarter, up from 12.9 percent in the same period of last year.

Around 159,000 jobs in the agricultural sector disappeared, the figures showed. Morocco's record temperature — 50.4C—was set in August last year in the

coastal resort city of Agadir.

Globally, Monday was the hottest day recorded since measurements began in 1940, the European Union's Copernicus Earth observation program said. It has previously predicted that daily records would be broken this summer in the northern hemisphere and that the planet would endure a particularly long period of intense heat due to climate change. Scientists have linked climate change to more prolonged, stronger and more frequent extreme weather, including heatwaves. — AFP

Kazakhstan villages go 'dry' to combat alcoholism

KARAKUDUK, Kazakhstan: Scanning shop shelves in the Kazakh village of Karakuduk, locals will not find a drop of alcohol due to a prohibition movement growing in popularity across the Central Asian country. "We don't sell any alcoholic drinks. If you want something to drink, we've got water, juice, fizzy drinks and fermented milk," said Aigerim Mukeyeva, who owns a shop in the village of around 650 people, located in central Kazakhstan's vast steppe.

Like many ex-Soviet republics—particularly its

neighbor Russia—Kazakhstan has long-standing problems with alcoholism. The country's authorities are keen to promote healthy living and have supported moves to establish "dry" villages such as Karakuduk—although there is no legal ban on alcohol sales.

The country's interior ministry lists 97 "sober" places, half of them in the vast industrial Karaganda region, where Karakuduk is located. But local media have reported that even larger numbers of villages have gone alcohol-free. Although most Kazakhs are Muslim, religion does not appear to be a major factor in the prohibition push.

The country is a secular state, influenced by decades of Soviet atheism. Officially, the authorities are not imposing prohibition. A police spokesman told AFP that the impetus "comes from the people".

The decision to go dry is usually proposed by influential local elders, who act as a form of social control in

Central Asian societies, often in conjunction with the state. The fear of judgment by such community leaders can act as a powerful incentive for people to quit booze. "The only shop here that sold alcohol closed a few years ago, due to lack of demand," Karakuduk mayor Bauyrzhan Zhumagulov, a former special operations police officer, told AFP. He admitted, however, that he had quietly suggested to shop owners not to extend their alcohol licenses.

In other places, people have used more radical methods. In the village of Abai in central Kazakhstan, locals removed bottles from shelves and ceremonially smashed them. "We're against... vodka!" the mayor and a group of villagers shouted, pumping their fists, before throwing the bottles into a metal bin, footage on state television showed. In another village, Aksu in the north, police used a bulldozer to smash 1,186 bottles from a shop that had been secretly selling alcohol at night. Statistics on Kazakhstan's alcohol consumption are incomplete. — AFP



KARAKUDUK, Kazakhstan: Indira Egenberdieva prepares kumys (a local fermented milk drink) in the village of Karakuduk. — AFP

International

Trump calls Harris 'lunatic' in first rally since Biden exit

Harris' candidacy stirs enthusiasm among Democrats

CHARLOTTE, US: Donald Trump launched a volley of attacks against US Vice President Kamala Harris Wednesday, calling her a "radical left lunatic" in his first rally since she became the de facto Democratic Party nominee for November's election. In a speech where he also claimed that Harris was in favor of the "execution" of babies due to her position on abortions, the former president and Republican nominee said: "She is a radical left lunatic who will destroy our country."

"We're not going to let that happen," he told a crowd in North Carolina, repeatedly mispronouncing Harris' first name. Trump's address comes as Harris, 59, hits the campaign trail armed with President Joe Biden's endorsement - after his historic decision over the weekend not to seek reelection.

The 78-year-old Republican had been attacking Biden over his age, but is now being forced to pivot as he has become the oldest nominee in US history. Trump turned his aim at Harris on Wednesday, saying

she was "the ultra liberal driving force behind every single Biden catastrophe."

From dubbing her "Lyn' Kamala" to alleging that her record on the border has allowed communities to be "ravaged by migrant crime," he charged that "she's unfit to lead." He also raised the politically explosive issue of abortion, after Harris pledged to put abortion rights at the center of her campaign and to fight for the right to control one's own body.

"She wants abortions in the eighth and ninth month of pregnancy. That's fine with her, right up until birth and even after birth, the execution of a baby," Trump claimed. Harris has notably accused Trump of seeking to ban the procedure, previously saying that "we trust women to make decisions about their own bodies."

Trump alleged Wednesday that Democratic Party leaders ousted Biden in an "undemocratic" way, saying: "Now we have a new victim to defeat." "If we start beating her in the polls by 10 or 15 points, are they going to bring in a third candidate?" he added. Trump

accused Harris of covering up Biden's "mental unfitness" too. Earlier Wednesday, the White House denied it had covered up any possible decline in Biden's health prior to his decision to drop out of the presidential election race.

Harris' candidacy has stirred enthusiasm among Democrats after weeks of turmoil over Biden, who came under pressure after a disastrous debate performance against Trump last month.

On Tuesday, Harris whipped up a rapturous crowd at her first rally since effectively clinching the Democratic presidential nomination, while launching new attacks on Trump for trying to "take the country backward." While Biden used to target Trump as a threat to democracy, Harris has adopted a more personal and targeted approach, focusing on his record as a felon.

She pointed to her work as a California prosecutor dealing with what she said were "predators" and "fraudsters" before adding: "So hear me when I say I know Donald Trump's type." — AFP



CHARLOTTE, US: Former US President and 2024 Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally at the Bojangles Coliseum in Charlotte, North Carolina, on July 24. — AFP.



Nicolas Maduro

Nicolas Maduro runs for a third term in Venezuela

CARACAS: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, in power since 2013 and running for a third term on July 28, is confident he is still the right man to lead the OPEC country that has been governed by the socialists for a quarter of a century. "Come rain, shine or lightning ... we're going to win by a landslide," he said in a recent broadcast on state television, shortly after reading out mock election results in which he notched "an irreversible victory". The mustachioed Maduro, 61, a former foreign minister and bus driver, has bristled with energy and electoral confidence despite evidence of strong support for his opponent Edmundo Gonzalez among Venezuelans weary of years of economic deprivation. Former diplomat Gonzalez, 74, replaced opposition darling Maria Corina Machado on the ballot - which also includes nine other candidates - after a ban on her holding public office was upheld in January.

Maduro, who likes to chug green juices at campaign events, citing their health properties, is heir to his late mentor, Hugo Chavez, and is running for his second reelection. Venezuela's opposition, the United States and many other Western countries consider Maduro's win in 2018 to be a sham.

The election is being held on what would have been the birthday of Chavez, and Maduro has cast a win for him as a gift for the late leader. Maduro has presided over an extended economic collapse in the once relatively affluent South American nation, prompting an exodus of some 7.7 million migrants.

Almost 82 percent of Venezuelans live in poverty, with 53 percent in extreme poverty, unable to buy even basic foodstuffs, a UN special rapporteur said in February after visiting the country. — Reuters

Typhoon Gaemi hits Chinese seaboard, sinks freighter

BEIJING/TAIPEI: Typhoon Gaemi roared into southeastern China on Thursday after sweeping across Taiwan, where it killed three people, triggered flooding and sank a freighter before barreling west across the Taiwan Strait. The typhoon, the biggest to hit China's eastern seaboard this year, made landfall at 7.50 pm (1150 GMT) in Fujian province, state broadcaster CCTV said.

The storm is forecast to unleash intense rainfall over much of China after fuelling severe weather from the Philippines to Japan's Okinawa islands with its giant cloud-bands which spanned most of the Western Pacific Ocean. In Taiwan, the strongest typhoon to hit the island in eight years packed gusts of up to 227 kph (141 mph) before weakening as it made its way across the island, according to the Central Weather Administration. Some parts of southern Taiwan are expected to have recorded accumulated rainfall of 2,200 mm (87 inches) since Tuesday. The storm cut power to around half a million households, though most are now back online, utility Taipower said.

Chinese weather forecasters predict Gaemi will pass through Fujian and head inland, gradually moving northward with less intensity. But weather fore-

casters are expecting heavy rain in many areas as it tracks north. Three people died and 380 were injured by the typhoon in Taiwan, the government said, as the storm made its way across the island. Taiwan's fire department said a Tanzania-flagged freighter with nine Myanmar nationals on board had sunk off the coast of the southern port city of Kaohsiung and there had been no response from the crew. Search efforts were ongoing, it added.

Taiwanese television stations showed pictures of flooded streets in cities and counties across the island. Li Li-chuan, 55, saw the roof of her restaurant blow off in the northeastern Taiwanese city of Suao.

"I was frightened," she told Reuters. "It was the strongest in years. I was worried that the roof would hit other people." Offices and schools as well as the financial markets closed for a second day on Thursday, while trains were stopped until 3 pm (0700 GMT) and all domestic flights and 195 international flights were cancelled.

Ahead of Gaemi's arrival, China's governing Communist Party's top decision-making body held a meeting to discuss flood prevention and disaster relief, state media said, while the transport ministry upgraded its typhoon response to level 2. Local officials also stepped up warnings in the coastal provinces of Fujian and Zhejiang. In Fujian, government officials have relocated about 150,000 people, mainly from coastal fishing communities, state media reported. As gale force winds picked up, officials in Zhoushan in Zhejiang suspended passenger waterway routes for up to three days. — Reuters



KAOHSIUNG, Taiwan: People and vehicles wade through the water along a street that was flooded by Typhoon Gaemi in Kaohsiung on July 25, 2024. — AFP

Hamas confounds Zionist forces...

Continued from Page 1

military commanders. Yet Hamas fighters have drawn Zionist forces back into battle in the same areas of Gaza again and again, such as this week's fighting in Khan Younis, preventing the declaration of victory Netanyahu says he is determined to secure.

Michael Milshtein, a former Zionist military intelligence officer who leads Palestinian studies at Tel Aviv-based Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, said the Zionist entity would need more boots on the ground across more areas of Gaza to achieve its aim of eliminating Hamas. "We are very far from the goal of destroying Hamas' government and military capacities. We are really not close to that," Milshtein said. He noted, however, that a purely military victory would in any case ignore the group's social, political and economic influence. "We're continuing to treat an enemy who is multi-dimensional in its behavior as a military threat only."

The Zionist entity has turned Gaza into a chaotic wasteland. More than 39,000 people have been killed. While Hamas' armed wing began the war with 24 battalions, one source close to Hamas said the group has been preparing for years for a scenario where it would need to shift to guerrilla-style tactics to survive a conflict with the Zionist entity.

Key operations - including a foundry to make bombs and other weapons - were still operational, the source said. New recruits were also constantly joining Hamas' military wing, while the switch to guerrilla tactics had allowed the group to contain its losses, according to another source familiar with Hamas' tactics.

The network of tunnels, even after sections have been destroyed or compromised by Zionist forces, continue to hamper the Zionist entity's goal of

eliminating Hamas, experts and two sources close to Hamas says. "They show up from one shaft, destroy a tank, or prepare an ambush for another before they disappear until they reappear at another shaft," said a former Hamas fighter familiar with the group's operations. Some new tunnels, sources close to the group say, are being dug by hand.

More Zionist strikes hit Gaza on Thursday, killing and injuring people according to Palestinian medical sources, as the military said it had recovered the bodies of five Zionists taken to Gaza by Hamas fighters after they were killed on Oct 7. A group supporting Zionist hostages still held in the Palestinian territory welcomed the rescue but alleged "sabotage" of efforts to free others. At least 39,175 Palestinians have been killed in the Zionist military campaign in Gaza since the war began, according to the health ministry. The latest toll includes 30 deaths over the previous 24 hours. Palestinian medical services on Thursday said their teams had transported four dead and 12 wounded after a strike on a house in the Gaza City area in the north of the territory.

An AFP correspondent reported air strikes and machine gun fire from tanks in Gaza City. To the south, witnesses said there was shelling in the Khan Younis city and Rafah areas, as well as air strikes in Al-Qarara, near Khan Younis. The Zionist military said the five bodies recovered from Gaza, including those of two soldiers and two reservists, had been returned to the Zionist entity following a rescue operation on Wednesday in Khan Younis.

AFP correspondents in Gaza have daily witnessed children and women brought into hospitals injured or dead. In May, the United Nations said women and children made up at least 56 percent of those killed during the war. Washington on Wednesday criticized a Zionist bill that would declare the UN agency for Palestinian refugees - the main aid agency in Gaza - a terrorist organization. "UNRWA is not a terrorist organization," said State Department spokesman Matthew Miller, urging a halt to the legislation. — Agencies

Biden says time to pass torch to...

Continued from Page 1

raised concerns about his age. Speaking in a hushed voice after a COVID infection, Biden used the powerfully symbolic setting to insist on his achievements - while admitting it was time to move on. He said there was a "time and a place for new voices, fresh voices - yes, younger voices. And that time and place is now."

In a poignant sign of support for Biden after the toughest decision of his political life, most of his family sat watching him in the Oval Office as he spoke. They included his wife Jill and daughter Ashley - who held hands near the end of his remarks - Biden's troubled son Hunter and a number of Biden's grandchildren.

Jill Biden later posted a letter on X thanking "those who never wavered" - an apparent backhanded dig at the Democrats who called on Biden to quit - and said it was "time to put that trust in Kamala". Biden's withdrawal has upended Trump's campaign, which had previously focused on the president's age and mental acuity. Now it is Trump, 78, who is the oldest candidate in US history.

Trump, who had initially called for unity after surviving an assassination attempt on July 13, was in no mood for magnanimity after Biden's speech. "Crook-

ed Joe Biden's Oval Office speech was barely understandable, and sooo bad!" Trump said on social media. Republicans have called for Biden to step down altogether, saying that if he is not fit to stand for reelection then he is not fit to serve as president.

Biden however insisted that he was no lame duck and that he would continue to work on the economy and key foreign policy issues for the rest of his time in office. "Over the next six months I will be focused on doing my job as president," he said. One key goal is a peace deal in the Middle East - a legacy-defining dream that many US presidents before Biden have chased. Biden, who has been increasingly critical over the Zionist entity's military campaign in Gaza, met Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House on Thursday. But in a sign of how quickly things are changing, Netanyahu was to sit down separately with Harris as well, as well as meeting Trump in Florida on Friday.

The US election campaign meanwhile is moving ahead at full speed without Biden. In his first rally since Harris secured enough delegates to become the de facto Democratic nominee, Trump hit out at Harris as his "new victim". "She is a radical left lunatic who will destroy our country," he said, accusing Harris of hiding Biden's "mental unfitness". Earlier, the White House denied there was any "cover up" over Biden's condition. Harris was also on the campaign trail Wednesday, telling a black college sorority in Indianapolis that "I am fighting for our nation's future." — AFP

touched upon in one way or another," Peskov said. "That's all I can say."

Moscow has complicated, but generally pragmatic and warm relations with NATO member Turkey, with Putin and Erdogan speaking regularly. Syria has been pushing for Russia to use its influence with the Zionist entity to get it to rein in Zionist strikes on Syrian military units. Diplomatic sources say Damascus has also prodded Iranian militias to hold back on rocket strikes on the Zionist entity from the Syrian Golan Heights. — Agencies

Putin meets Assad to discuss Turkey...

Continued from Page 1

entity, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said there was a broad exchange of views on "all topics related to the situation in the region around Syria". "Many of the topics you mentioned were

International

Relatives of 18 dead in Nepal plane crash demand answers

Pilot, the lone survivor, recovering after fatal crash

KATHMANDU: Relatives of the 18 dead in an airplane crash in Nepal have yet to hear from the government or the airline on the possible cause of the disaster, they said a day after the small jet went down during take-off at the airport in Kathmandu, the capital.

The incident has cast a spotlight on the mountainous, landlocked nation's poor record on air safety, with almost 360 people killed since 2000 in plane and helicopter crashes. The 50-seater CRJ-200 aircraft that crashed this week was operated by Saurya Airlines, and was ferrying 15 technicians, two crew and two of a technician's family to the central city of Pokhara, where it was scheduled for regular maintenance. Only the captain survived after it crashed in a field beside the runway and caught fire.

"Nobody has contacted us," said Krishna Bahadur Magar, a relative of Nava Raj Ale who was a ground handler at Saurya and died in the crash. "Our relative was a member of the Saurya Airlines family," Magar said. "Why is the airline now behaving as if they don't care about him?"

Magar was among the dozens who crowded into a narrow alley outside the forensic unit of Kathmandu's Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital on Thursday, waiting for authorities to release the bodies of the dead. Some said doctors had told them they would not receive the remains of loved ones before Saturday, while those bodies charred beyond recognition would require DNA tests to be identified, a process that could take two weeks.

The victims' families felt as if Saurya officials were "deliberately hiding" from them, said Jageswar Giri, whose brother-in-law, Uddhab Puri, died in the crash. "We want to know what technical problems the aircraft was facing, why so many people were on it yesterday, and why it was decided that maintenance work would be done in Pokhara instead of Kathmandu where the plane was grounded," he said. Officials from the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) have said the plane was being sent to Pokhara because its new airport was equipped with aircraft maintenance hangars.

Responding to the families' questions, the regulator said it was the airline's responsibility to co-ordinate with them. "It was not a passenger flight," said CAAN spokesperson Gyanendra Bhul. "Saurya Airlines has officially said all people on board the plane were their staff, so they should co-ordinate with the family members." The airline did not respond to telephone calls and messages from Reuters seeking comment. A government panel set up on Wednesday to investigate the crash will submit a report within 45 days. Nepal's worst crash in 1992 killed 167. Last January, 72 people died when a Yeti Airlines plane crashed just before landing in Pokhara.

The pilot and sole survivor of a plane crash in Nepal's capital was recovering in hospital after a miraculous escape from an accident that killed 18 others, aviation officials said Thursday. Nepal has a woeful track record on aviation safety and the Himalayan republic has seen a spate of deadly light plane and helicopter



KATHMANDU: Relatives of the passengers who died in the Saurya Airlines' plane crash, mourn at a hospital in Kathmandu on July 24, 2024. — AFP

crashes over the decades. A Bombardier CRJ 200 plane operated by Saurya Airlines crashed at Kathmandu airport on Wednesday just as it was beginning its 20-minute flight to the tourism hub Pokhara for a maintenance review. Gyanendra Bhul of the Civil Aviation Authority told AFP that the pilot remained in hospital but his condition was improving. "The pilot sur-

vived because on impact he fell into a cargo container where there were no flames," he added. Bhul said the flight had climbed up to 400 feet (122 meters) from the ground but then suddenly veered to the right before crashing near the runway. Nepal's government has appointed a five-member investigation team to probe the causes of the crash. — Agencies



HANOI: Vietnamese people queue as they wait outside the national funeral home to pay their respect for the late General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Nguyen Phu Trong during the first day of mourning in Hanoi on July 25, 2024. — AFP

Mourners gather in Vietnam for leader's funeral

HANOI: Thousands of mourners, including top Vietnamese officials, schoolchildren and monks, gathered in Hanoi Thursday for the funeral of Communist Party leader Nguyen Phu Trong as two days of national mourning began. The 80-year-old, who died at a military hospital in the capital Hanoi last week "due to old age and serious illness", was Vietnam's most powerful leader in decades.

Trong, who had led the party since 2011, was the first leader to have held three consecutive mandates after the liberalization of Vietnam's economy in 1986.

He was known for a high-profile anti-corruption drive that swept through the party, police, armed forces and business, which analysts say has been linked to political infighting. Trong enjoyed remarkable longevity in office, although rights groups say his leadership coincided with increasing authoritarianism.

Alongside bouquets of yellow flowers and burning incense, Trong's flag-draped coffin was laid beneath a large portrait of the leader and dozens of his medals at the National Funeral Home in central Hanoi.

Wearing black and white headbands, Trong's family greeted the mourners, having requested no customary cash envelopes or flowers be given at the funeral. Black-clad officials, Buddhist monks wearing golden robes and schoolchildren in their uniforms were among those to file past the coffin.

All flags across the Southeast Asian country were to fly at half mast, while entertainment and sporting events have been suspended during the mourning period. Smaller remembrance ceremonies also started on Thursday morning in Ho Chi Minh City, the southern business hub. Thousands of people paraded through Trong's home village in Dong Anh district on the outskirts of Hanoi, holding portrait photos of him. "The general secretary's death is an irreparable loss for the party, the state, the people and his family," politburo member Luong Cuong said as the funeral began.

Vietnam's top party officials led tributes, including President To Lam, who was handed the reins of power a day before Trong's death was announced. "We vow to learn from you, devoting our life to the nation and the people," Lam wrote in the memorial book at the funeral home. South Korean Prime Minister Han Duck-soo and Cuba's parliamentary speaker Esteban Lazo Hernandez were among foreign officials to pay their respects. Trong was earlier praised by US President Joe Biden as "a champion of deep ties" between Vietnam and Washington, while Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed him as a "true friend of Russia".

Le Hong Hiep, a senior fellow at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, said "Vietnam managed to maintain a balanced foreign policy with all the major powers" under Trong's leadership. "And thanks to this, Vietnam managed to achieve significant economic development and now is on the way to become an upper middle-income economy by 2030," he said. — AFP

Philippines races to contain oil spill after tanker capsizes

LIMAY, Philippines: A Philippine-flagged tanker carrying 1.4 million liters of industrial fuel oil sank off Manila on Thursday, authorities said, as they raced to contain a spill. One crew member of the MT Terra Nova was killed when the tanker capsized in Manila Bay, nearly seven kilometers (4.3 miles) off Limay municipality in Bataan province, as it sailed to the central city of Iloilo.

The vessel went down in rough seas as heavy rains fuelled by Typhoon Gaemi and the seasonal monsoon lashed Manila and surrounding regions in recent days. An oil slick stretching several kilometers has been detected and the Philippine Coast Guard was preparing to apply dispersants and deploy floating barriers to contain the spill. Coast guard spokesman Rear Admiral Armando Balilo told a briefing earlier on Thursday authorities were "racing against time" to contain the spill and stop more fuel leaking. It appeared so far that diesel fuel used to power the tanker was leaking into the sea but not the industrial fuel oil cargo, Balilo said.

He warned that if all the industrial fuel oil in the tanker were to leak, it would be the biggest spill in Philippine history. "There is a big danger that Manila will be affected, even the shoreline of Manila, if the fuel will leak, because it is within Manila Bay," Balilo said.

Transport Secretary Jaime Bautista said 16 of the 17 crew had been rescued from the stricken vessel. The body of a missing crew member was found in the afternoon after rescuers spent hours searching the choppy waters, the coast guard said. An investigation into the cause of the incident was underway but Balilo said the vessel had not broken rules on heavy weather sailing. A Public Storm Warning Signal had not been raised when



MANILA: This handout photo taken on July 25, 2024 and received from the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) shows rescued crew of oil tanker MT Terra Nova receiving first aid aboard Coast Guard ship Melchora Aquino off Manila Bay. — AFP

the MT Terra Nova departed Limay and "therefore did not violate rules and regulations", he said in a statement. Thousands of fishermen and tour operators are dependent on the waters for their livelihoods. A photo released by the coast guard showed the MT Terra Nova almost entirely submerged in rough seas.

It has since sunk 34 meters below the waves, which Balilo said was "considerably shallow" and meant siphoning the oil out of the tanker "can be done quickly". Coast guard Commandant Admiral Ronnie Gavan said they had set a target of seven days to complete the siphoning. An oil slick stretching about 3.7 kilometers was being carried northeast by a "strong current", the coast guard said. Marine environmental protection personnel have been mobilized to help contain the slick. The coast guard said it was also working with some oil spill response organizations and oil companies, including Petron, had offered to help. "It will definitely affect the marine environment," Balilo said, describing the amount of oil on the ship as "enormous". — AFP



MIRPUR, Bangladesh: In this handout photograph taken and released on July 25, 2024 by Bangladesh Prime Minister's Office, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (2R) visits a metro station in Mirpur vandalized by students during the anti-quota protests. — AFP

Bangladesh PM surveys destruction as unrest recedes

DHAKA: Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina wept Thursday as she surveyed the destruction wrought by days of deadly unrest, as student leaders weighed the future of the protests that precipitated the disorder. Last week's violence killed at least 193 people including several police officers, according to an AFP count of victims reported by police and hospitals, in one of the biggest upheavals of Hasina's 15-year tenure. The unrest was sparked by protests against a public jobs quota scheme that critics say gives preference to allies of Hasina's ruling party. Thousands of troops are still patrolling cities and a nationwide internet shutdown remains largely in effect, but clashes have subsided since protest leaders announced a temporary halt to new demonstrations.

Hasina, 76, spent the morning surveying destruction in the capital Dhaka, where the commuter rail connecting the sprawling megacity of 20 million people was shut down after mob attacks on its net-

work. "Over 15 years, I've built this country," she told reporters afterwards, in a condemnation of protesters for damaging city infrastructure. "What didn't I do for the people?"

"Who has benefitted from what we have done?" she added. "Do I ride on the metro? Does the government only ride? Do our ministers only ride? Or is it in fact the general public that rides?"

Pictures released by Hasina's office showed the premier flanked by an entourage and weeping at the sight of a vandalized metro station in an outlying Dhaka suburb. The station is among several government buildings and dozens of police posts torched or vandalized during the height of last week's unrest. With calm returning to cities around Bangladesh, Hasina's government ordered another relaxation to the curfew it imposed on the weekend, allowing free movement for seven hours between 10 am and 5 pm.

Streets in Dhaka were choked with commuter traffic in the morning, days after ferocious clashes between police and protesters had left them almost deserted. Banks, government offices and the country's economically vital garment factories had already reopened on Wednesday after all being shuttered last week. Student leaders were meanwhile set to meet later Thursday to decide whether or not to again extend their protest moratorium, which is due to expire on Friday. — AFP

News In Brief

Belgium arrests 7 over suspected terror plot

BRUSSELS: Police in Belgium arrested seven people Thursday on suspicion they were preparing a "terrorist attack", federal prosecutors said, adding that 14 raids were conducted nationwide. A spokesman for the prosecutors' service said there was no evidence at this stage of any link to the 2024 Paris Olympics, whose opening ceremony takes place on Friday under unprecedented security. There are "no details at this time as to the locations or targets but what was found leads us to believe an attack was being prepared," the spokesman, Arnaud d'Oultremont, said. — AFP

Croatia bans 3 Montenegrin officials amid diplomatic spat

ZAGREB: Croatia on Thursday banned three Montenegrin officials from entering amid a simmering diplomatic row between the Balkan neighbors over a WWII death camp. The foreign ministry declared parliament speaker Andrija Mandic, deputy prime minister Aleksa Becic and parliamentarian Milan Knezevic persona non grata over "systematic actions to disrupt good neighborly relations", without elaborating. The ban comes weeks after Montenegrin lawmakers adopted a resolution to remember people killed in a Croatian World War II death camp, sparking anger in Zagreb. — AFP

Nigeria military to stop anti-government protests

ABUJA: Nigeria's military will intervene to prevent any violence at protests by citizens planned for next month against bad governance and economic hardship, defense spokesperson Major General Edward Buba said on Thursday. Buba said Nigerians had a right to protest peacefully but the demonstrations being planned from Aug 1 could turn violent as they were inspired by events in Kenya, where young people took to the streets and forced their government to scrap \$2.7 billion in tax hikes. More than 50 people have been killed in the Kenyan protests. Nigeria's military was last deployed to quell protests in October 2020, which led to bloodshed. — Reuters

EU sues Germany, Italy for bias against mobile workers

BRUSSELS: The European Commission said on Thursday it had decided to refer Germany and Italy to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) over practices it said discriminated against mobile workers. In both countries in recent years, schemes were introduced for family allowances that were smaller for some groups of workers than for others. In Italy, workers needed to have resided in the country for at least two years to be eligible for the benefit, while in Germany allowances were smaller for workers who had children residing in European Union countries where the cost of living was lower. — Reuters

Uganda police arrest more people protesting corruption

KAMPALA: Ugandan police detained several people in the capital Kampala on Thursday during a second day of anti-corruption protests that are demanding the resignation of the parliament speaker, footage broadcast by local media showed. Drawing inspiration from weeks of youth-led protests in neighboring Kenya that forced the president there to withdraw proposed tax hikes, young Ugandans began demonstrating this week against alleged graft by elected leaders. — Reuters

FRIDAY, JULY 26, 2024

In Rio, G20 finance ministers to mull taxing the super-rich

Lula launches an initiative to fight world hunger

RIO DE JANEIRO: Faced with growing global inequality, G20 finance ministers meeting in Rio de Janeiro will tackle the thorny issue of taxes for the super-rich, a topic that has divided member states.

It is a key priority of Brazil's leftist president, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who this year heads the grouping of the world's major economies, the European Union and African Union, which will discuss taxing billionaires in an afternoon session. "Some individuals control more resources than entire countries," Lula said Wednesday at the launch of an initiative to fight world hunger, another project topping his G20 agenda.

"At the top of the pyramid, tax systems are no longer progressive, but regressive." Global inequality has continued to widen in recent years according to a study by the NGO Oxfam published Thursday: the richest one percent of the world have earned more than \$40 trillion in a decade, but their taxation is at "historically" low rates.

French economist Gabriel Zucman, a consultant with the G20 on taxation issues, estimates that the tax rate for billionaires represents 0.3 percent of their wealth. In a recent report commissioned by the G20, he called for super-wealthy individuals to be taxed the equivalent of two percent of their fortune. However, not all G20 countries are keen on the idea.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen opposed international negotiations on the subject during a G7 finance meeting held in May in Italy. Germany's finance ministry considers the idea of a minimum wealth tax to be "irrelevant." The initiative is backed by France, Spain, South Africa, Colombia and the African Union.

In addition to international taxation, G20 finance ministers will also discuss the global economic situation in their last meeting before a summit on Nov 18 and 19. On Friday, the ministers will tackle the financing of the climate transition and debt. Founded in 1999, the Group of 20 assembles 19 of the world's largest economic powers, as well as the European Union and the African Union.

The organization was originally focused on global economic issues but has increasingly taken on other pressing challenges - even though member



RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (center) speaks during the pre-launch of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, in the framework of the G20 Ministerial Meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on July 24, 2024. — AFP

states do not always agree on what should be on the agenda. Brazil's presidency said in a statement that some members of the G20 considered that crises such as the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza "have an impact on the global economy and should be addressed at the G20, while others believe that the G20 is not the place to discuss these issues."

Divisions within the G20, of which Russia is also

a member, has made drafting a joint communique at the outcome of meetings a challenge. The last meeting of finance ministers in Sao Paulo failed to issue such a statement. Brazil hopes to publish three texts after the meeting, said Tatiana Rosito, a senior official at the economy ministry. Aside from a joint final communique, this would include a document on "international cooperation in tax matters" and a sepa-

rate communique from Brazil on geopolitical crises. "It is likely, based on my experience of previous G20s," that future ministerial-level meetings will publish separate statements in this manner, European Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen, told reporters Wednesday. Aiming for a single text "would not allow us to adopt anything," she said. — AFP

Apple's China market share shrinks 2%

BEIJING: Apple's market share in China shrank by two percentage points in the second quarter of 2024, as the tech giant faced intensifying competition from rivals like Huawei, according to data from market research firm Canalys. The decline underscores the difficulties the US tech giant faces in its third-largest market. Huawei's smartphone shipments surged 41 percent year-on-year in the quarter, bolstered by the launch of its new Pura 70 series in April.

The Canalys data, while not providing specific shipment figures for Apple, showed that the company's market share in China dropped to 14 percent in the second quarter of 2024, a decrease from 16 percent in the same quarter of 2023. As a result of this decline, Apple's ranking in the Chinese smartphone market fell from third to sixth place.

Overall, China's smartphone shipments rose by 10 percent in the quarter, Canalys said. Vivo was the top vendor with a share of 19 percent, followed by Oppo, Honor and Huawei with 16 percent, 15 percent and 15 percent respectively. "Domestic manufacturers have demonstrated market leadership, occupying the top five positions in the mainland Chinese market for the first time in history," said Lucas Zhong, research analyst at Canalys. "On the other hand, Apple faces growth pressure in the Chinese market and is actively focusing on optimizing channel management."

Huawei made a comeback to the high-end smartphone segment last August with the release of a device powered by a domestically-made chip, defying US sanctions that have cut off its access to the global chipset supply chain. In an effort to boost sales, Apple has ramped up its discounting efforts this year to entice consumers. The US company launched an aggressive campaign in May, doubling the scale of an earlier promotion in February and offering price cuts of up to 2,300 yuan (\$318.84) on select iPhone models. Analysts expect Huawei's strong performance to continue throughout the year. Canadian research firm TechInsights projected earlier this year that Huawei's overall smartphone shipments in China will exceed 50 million units in 2024, with the Pura 70 series accounting for 10 million of those shipments. That would make Huawei the No 1 seller with a 19 percent market share, up from 12 percent in 2023, TechInsights has said. — Reuters

World's richest 1% gained \$40tn in a decade: Oxfam

PARIS: The world's richest one percent increased their fortunes by a total of \$42 trillion over the past decade, Oxfam said Thursday, ahead of a G20 summit in Brazil where taxing the super-rich tops the agenda. Despite this windfall, taxes on the rich had plummeted to "historic lows", the NGO added, warning of "obscene levels" of inequality with the rest of the world "left to scarp for crumbs".

Brazil has made international cooperation on taxing the super-rich a priority of its presidency of the G20, a group of countries representing 80 percent of the world's GDP. At this week's summit in Rio de Janeiro, the group's finance ministers are expected to make progress on ways to raise levies on the ultra-wealthy and prevent billionaires from dodging tax systems. The initiative involves determining methodologies to tax billionaires and other high-income earners.

The proposal is due to be fiercely debated at the

summit on Thursday and Friday, with France, Spain, South Africa, Colombia and the African Union in favor, but the United States firmly against.

Oxfam dubbed it a "real litmus test for G20 governments", urging them to implement an annual net wealth tax of at least eight percent on the "extreme wealth" of the super-rich. "Momentum to increase taxes on the super-rich is undeniable," said Oxfam International's head of inequality policy, Max Lawson.

"Do they have the political will to strike a global standard that puts the needs of the many before the greed of an elite few?" Oxfam said that the \$42 trillion figure was nearly 36 times more than the wealth accumulated by the poorer half of the world's population.

French Economist Francois Gabriel Zucman, consulted by the G20 on tax issues, estimates the tax rate for billionaires to be 0.3 percent of their wealth and, in a recent report commissioned by the G20, called for taxing the equivalent of 2 percent of the wealth of the super-rich, on July 25, 2024. Despite this, billionaires "have been paying a tax rate equivalent to less than 0.5 percent of their wealth" across the globe, the NGO said. Nearly four out of five of the world's billionaires call a G20 nation home, Oxfam noted. — AFP

India duty cut halts silver, platinum imports from UAE

MUMBAI: India's silver and platinum imports from the UAE, previously benefiting from concessionary duties under a trade agreement, have ceased as New Delhi's move to reduce import taxes eliminated the duty arbitrage that bullion dealers were exploiting, trade and government officials told Reuters.

The world's second-biggest bullion consumer slashed import duties on gold and silver on Tuesday to 6 percent from 15 percent. After the reduction, there is no incentive to bring silver or platinum into India under the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed between India and the UAE, said Prithviraj Kothari, president of the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA).

"Now that regular customs duty for silver is lower than the tax under the CEPA, nobody's importing silver anymore." Bullion dealers primarily imported silver from the UAE under the CEPA, as they only needed to pay an 8 percent import duty compared to the regular 15 percent.

This helped the UAE corner nearly half of India's silver imports, with its shipments surging to 1,998 metric tons in the first five months of 2024 from just 133 tons during the same period a year ago. However, with the regular duty now reduced to 6 percent, imports via CEPA have become unfeasible, dealers said. In the past two days, bullion dealers have not approached customs to clear silver and platinum shipments under CEPA, said a government official.



KOLKATA: Gold jewelry kept on display inside a shop in Kolkata. India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on July 23 announced a reduction in custom duty on gold and silver to 6 percent and platinum to 6.4 percent in Budget 2024. — AFP

The imports of platinum have also stopped because of the duty cut, said Nitin Kedia, national general secretary at the All India Jewellers and Goldsmith Federation. India's four-week platinum imports from mid June eclipsed 2023's total as bullion dealers exploited a loophole by registering alloys containing around 90 percent gold as platinum to avoid higher duties, sources told Reuters.

Around six tons of silver and two tons of platinum alloy have been stranded due to the change in the duty structure, and importers are now facing losses because of a sharp drop in global prices, said a Mumbai-based bullion dealer. "Importers must now either export silver grains back to the UAE or sell them at a discount in the Indian market," the dealer said. — Reuters



French economist Gabriel Zucman poses during a photo session in Paris. — AFP

Egypt raises fuel prices as part of IMF-backed reforms

CAIRO: Egypt announced Thursday a 15-percent increase in petrol prices, part of a reform package requested by the International Monetary Fund to proceed with a \$5 billion loan to the cash-strapped government. The Egyptian petroleum ministry said the price hike would come into effect on Friday.

The announcement comes ahead of an IMF meeting on Monday to review the April payout package, unlocking \$820 million in funds after Cairo received another such tranche of the loan in late June.

Egypt is suffering its worst ever economic crisis, with ballooning foreign debt driving up inflation and resulting in several consecutive devaluations of the local currency against the dollar. Inflation peaked at nearly 40 percent last year, before winding down to 27.5 percent in June. The IMF has demanded wide-ranging reforms, most notably adopting a liberal exchange regime as well as limiting government spending and incentivizing private investment.

Alongside the economic crisis, Egypt has also been caught in regional tensions, with bloody wars raging in neighboring Gaza and Sudan. Attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels on shipping around the Red Sea have also hit revenues from Egypt's Suez Canal, recording a 23.4-percent drop in the 2023-2024 fiscal year compared to the previous one. The key waterway, which connects Asia to Europe, normally carries about 12 percent of global maritime trade. — AFP

US economic growth regains steam in Q2; inflation slows

Robust growth data shows US has 'strongest economy': Biden

WASHINGTON: The US economy grew faster than expected in the second quarter, but inflation subsided, leaving intact expectations of a September interest rate cut from the Federal Reserve.

Gross domestic product increased at a 2.8 percent annualized rate last quarter, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis said in its advance estimate of second-quarter GDP on Thursday. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast GDP rising at a 2.0 percent rate. Estimates ranged from a 1.1 percent rate to a 3.4 percent pace. The economy grew at a 1.4 percent rate in the first quarter. US central bank officials regard a 1.8 percent pace as the non-inflationary growth rate.

Meanwhile, President Joe Biden hailed robust US growth figures Thursday as proof the country had the world's "strongest economy," but said he had "more to do" in his last six months in the White House. Biden, who endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris after his historic decision to drop out of the 2024 election, added in a statement: "The Vice President and I will keep fighting for America's future."

The economy, which continues to outperform its global peers despite hefty rate hikes from the Fed in 2022 and 2023, remains supported by a resilient labor market even as the unemployment rate has risen to a 2-1/2-year high of 4.1 percent. The personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index, excluding the volatile food and energy components, increased at a 2.9 percent rate after surging at a 3.7 percent pace in the first quarter, welcome news for US central bank officials ahead of their two-day policy meeting next week. The so-called core PCE price index is one of the inflation measures tracked by the Fed for its 2 percent target.

The Fed has maintained its benchmark overnight interest rate in the current 5.25-5.50 percent range for the past year. It has hiked its policy rate by 525 basis points since 2022. Financial markets expect three rate cuts this year, starting in September. Despite the solid economic growth pace, the outlook for the second half of the year is hazy. The labor market is slowing, which will impact wage gains.

The saving rate is well below its pre-pandemic average and economists estimate that the bulk of the Fed's rate hikes is still to be felt. State and local government revenues are also slowing, which could erode spending. There are also worries about new tariffs, which could see businesses front-loading imports if former President Donald Trump is returned to the White House in November's presidential elec-



ARLINGTON, US: Shoppers walk through the Fashion Centre at Pentagon City, a shopping mall in Arlington, Virginia. — AFP

tion. Nonetheless, a recession is not expected, with monetary policy easing anticipated this year.

"We see consumption continuing to be the engine of the economy, continuing to keep economic growth on a relatively strong growth path of around two percent," economist Matthew Martin of Oxford Economics told AFP.

He said that although unemployment has been edging up, the trend has more to do with entrances into the market rather than layoffs. This means it is not the start of a cycle where unemployment leads to income loss, in turn reducing spending and triggering

more job losses. But there remain risks to the economy as unemployment tends to "shoot up" quickly, he said, noting that is not currently an expected outcome. "That's a big case to begin cutting rates in September and follow up with one every other meeting from there," he said of the US Federal Reserve's policymaking committee. "Maintaining excessively restrictive monetary policy when the labor market appears to be fully back in balance could lead to an undesired weakening of employment growth and the economy," said EY chief economist Gregory Daco in a recent note. — Agencies

South Korean GDP shrinks, boosting rate cut chances

SEOUL: South Korea's economy unexpectedly shrank in the second quarter, clocking the sharpest contraction since 2022 as slumping consumer spending undermined an export boom, reinforcing expectations that an interest rate cut could be imminent. Gross domestic product (GDP) for the April-June period fell 0.2 percent from a quarter earlier in seasonally adjusted terms, data from the Bank of Korea showed, missing a 0.1 percent gain seen by analysts in a Reuters poll. It was the sharpest fall since the fourth quarter of 2022.

The weak data, along with easing consumer price pressures seen in June, increases calls for the BOK to cut interest rates as soon as next month, some analysts say. The central bank left its key interest rate unchanged at a 15-year high of 3.50 percent this month and flagged the prospect of a policy pivot as price pressures abated. Capital Economics said the data suggests domestic demand will only worsen.

"The weakness of the latest GDP figures give us more confidence in our view that interest rate cuts are around the corner," Capital Economics said in a note. "While we expect the central bank to loosen policy starting from October, the risk of a rate cut in August has risen now." Other analysts, however, say the BOK will not deliver a rate cut until next quarter, choosing instead to wait for the US Federal Reserve to move first. Markets are currently fully pricing in a Fed rate cut in September.

The Korean won was down 0.45 percent against the dollar at 0153 GMT while the benchmark KOSPI stock index was down 1.9 percent amid a broad selloff in Asia. The performance follows a 1.3 percent expansion seen in the first quarter, the fastest pace since the fourth quarter of 2021, and keeps Asia's fourth-largest economy on course to hit the bank's projection of a 2.5 percent growth this year, said Shin Seung-chul, head of the bank's statistics bureau at a news conference. — Reuters



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 25 JULY 2024

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No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance										Valuation Multiples *				
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	871	873	880	866	14	18,949,856	2	0.23%	2.53%	870	879	13.1	1.67	3.9%	1.03
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	274	275	277	270	7	44,464,615	1	0.36%	2.76%	270	281	16.6	1.30	4.1%	1.27
104	Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait	Banking	295	302	302	285	17	17,863,185	5	1.68%	36.09%	292	303	15.1	1.26	2.9%	0.94
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	188	189	191	187	4	23,324,468	1	0.53%	29.78%	186	193	15.0	0.70	2.6%	1.07
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	189	191	195	188	7	4,968,889	1	0.53%	16.60%	185	191	18.8	0.69	2.9%	1.33
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	725	733	738	719	19	34,449,533	8	1.10%	10.05%	725	734	20.5	2.12	2.6%	1.14
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	577	572	578	568	10	7,004,593	-7	-1.21%	1.05%	567	579	29.1	2.36	1.3%	1.15
201	Kuwait Investment	Financial Services	174	173	176	173	3	606,839	-2	-1.14%	36.22%	168	178	8.0	0.80	5.7%	2.01
204	National Investments	Financial Services	256	253	257	251	6	3,490,311	-8	-3.07%	5.86%	248	257	28.1	1.03	5.9%	2.03
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	111	110	113	108	5	40,065,206	-2	-1.79%	4.76%	107	110	NM	0.62	0.0%	0.94
212	Arzan Financial Group	Financial Services	185	185	190	183	7	46,482,900	1	0.54%	-8.38%	179	186	22.2	1.02	1.0%	1.28
222	Aayan Leasing and Investment	Financial Services	152	155	156	151	5	4,343,989	2	1.31%	-10.92%	151	158	8.0	1.07	4.8%	1.60
252	Al Imtiaz Investment	Financial Services	50.2	50.6	51.8	48.5	3.3	4,314,849	-0.7	-1.36%	-10.44%	49.1	51.9	NM	0.35	0.0%	1.35
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	234	245	245	233	12	55,623,050	11	4.70%	26.68%	237	246	20.5	1.51	1.6%	1.14
404	Salhia Real Estate	Real Estate	426	425	434	425	9	4,465,262	-1	-0.23%	4.02%	424	444	16.1	1.40	3.3%	0.58
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	890	845	890	845	45	2,630,530	-43	-4.84%	6.25%	838	856	18.0	1.91	1.5%	0.94
418	The Commercial Real Estate	Real Estate	144	145	145	141	4	17,436,791	1	0.69%	45.00%	144	148	16.3	0.88	2.7%	0.66
501	National Industries	Financial Services	228	222	229	220	9	13,303,236	-7	-3.06%	14.26%	217	226	13.7	1.00	2.1%	1.60
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	1,591	1,659	1,689	1,590	99	1,931,777	66	4.14%	26.64%	1,652	1,750	18.2	1.32	3.9%	1.05
506	HEISCO	Industrials	925	939	950	910	40	622,456	14	1.51%	14.51%	907	940	21.3	2.24	3.2%	0.92
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	587	580	588	580	8	3,020,870	-5	-0.85%	-0.85%	580	604	17.5	1.18	10.3%	0.94
603	Agility	Industrials	285	283	286	281	5	10,460,458	-4	-1.39%	-44.40%	280	298	8.3	0.76	7.0%	1.59
605	Zain	Telecommunications	450	455	456	450	6	5,815,847	4	0.89%	-10.26%	450	459	10.3	1.58	7.7%	0.56
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	2,688	2,671	2,696	2,662	34	253,258	-17	-0.63%	-17.49%	2,628	2,675	8.7	3.87	12.4%	0.63
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	225	225	227	225	2	290,633	0	0.00%	25.00%	222	227	NM	0.99	0.0%	1.20
654	JAZEERA	Consumer Discretionary	929	970	994	925	69	3,501,372	39	4.19%	-30.17%	949	990	191.7	9.44	2.9%	1.34
813	GFH Financial Group	Financial Services	94.8	99.2	101.0	94.2	6.8	69,513,617	4.2	4.42%	30.01%	98.9	102	10.7	1.28	5.1%	1.35
821	Warba Bank	Banking	183	182	183	181	2	6,468,208	-2	-1.09%	3.72%	181	188	23.3	1.01	1.5%	1.08
822	Kuwait Telecommunications	Telecommunications	549	549	553	541	12	3,166,092	-1	-0.18%	-2.49%	548	565	16.4	2.43	6.4%	0.74
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	795	1,040	1,045	795	250	3,773,843	245	30.82%	80.87%	949	1,045	25.0	2.77	2.3%	0.45
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	551	566	570	537	33	4,107,575	18	3.28%	10.98%	555	567	31.4	2.22	3.5%	0.81
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	2,069	2,070	2,099	2,050	49	932,891	-25	-1.19%	20.07%	2,035	2,070	25.7	7.69	3.6%	1.37
830	AL GHANIM	Consumer Discretionary	1,020	1,078	1,089	1,014	75	3,340,964	60	5.89%	2.08%	1,069	1,123	10.3	3.88	6.6%	0.79
831	Beyout Investment	Financial Services	489	492	492	479	13	974,596	0	0.00%	#VALUE!	488	495	19.2	2.85	0.0%	NULL

* As of end of week closing

Business

China to earmark \$41 billion in bond funds to bolster recovery

PBoC makes surprise cut to key lending rate

BEIJING: China will allocate 300 billion yuan (\$41.40 billion) in ultra-long treasury bonds to support a program of equipment upgrades and consumer goods trade-ins, the government said on Thursday, in the latest step to spur an economic recovery. About half the planned bond funds will be used for supporting consumer goods trade-ins, according to a notice issued by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the state planner, and the finance ministry.

China's consumption faces "relatively big pressures" in the first half of this year, Xu Xingfeng, an official at consumption department of the commerce ministry, said at a media briefing.

"If we can stabilize the 'four guardians' of auto, home appliances, household products and catering, we can stabilize consumption," Xu said. According to the notice China will raise subsidies for qualified buyers of new energy passenger cars to 15,000-20,000 yuan each. Buyers of some home appliances including televisions, air conditioners and computers will get subsidies equivalent to 15 percent-20 percent of their sales prices, but the subsidy for each item will not exceed 2,000 yuan.

"We believe this policy will play a positive role to drive up the consumption market in the second half of this year," Zhao Chenxin, deputy head of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), told the media briefing on Thursday. All of the 300 billion yuan will be disbursed by the end of August, Zhao said.

Retail sales, a gauge of consumption, grew only 2.0 percent in June, the weakest in 18 months, as residents become more cautious due to falling home prices, job insecurity and high debt.

That helped drag growth of the world's second-largest economy to 4.7 percent in the second

quarter from the 5.3 percent pace in the first three months, the weakest since the first quarter of 2023.

The government has set a growth target of around 5 percent for 2024. "Policymakers may allow some slowdown in the economy, but they could become worried if growth deviates too much from the target," Hwabao Trust economist Nie Wen said. "The central government is giving the funds to cash-strapped local governments to enable them to subsidize consumers, which may help the trade-in scheme going forward."

China will lower project application requirements for using ultra-long special sovereign bonds to support equipment upgrades of small and medium-sized firms, according to the notice.

Authorities will bar local governments from using the bond funds to repay local debt and balance local budgets, it said. The steps followed a pledge last week by China's cabinet to increase support for the program which was aimed at spurring investment and consumption amid a shaky economic recovery.

China's central bank on Thursday unexpectedly cut a medium-term interest rate by the most in more than four years, marking the latest move by authorities to boost economic growth. The world's second-largest economy has encountered severe headwinds in recent years, as a heavily indebted property sector, sluggish consumption and high youth unemployment weigh on confidence.

Beijing has introduced a host of measures in recent months in a bid to get it humming again, but a full rebound has so far proven elusive. In a surprise move on Thursday morning, the People's Bank of China slashed the rate for its medium-term lending facility (MLF) - the interest for one-year loans to financial institutions - to 2.3 percent, from 2.5 percent. The central bank typically makes MLF announce-



People collect their delivered meals ordered online during lunch hour in Beijing on July 24, 2024. - AFP

ments on a predetermined day in the middle of the month. The last time the rate was cut was in August but the latest is the biggest since April 2020.

It comes after the PBoC cut two benchmark interest rates on Monday, as expected.

The country's economy has failed to fully recover from the impact of tough anti-pandemic measures, which were lifted in late 2022. Chinese authorities have set an official growth target for this year of

around five percent. But that is considered ambitious by many economists and it expanded just 4.7 percent on-year in the second quarter, data showed last week. Those figures came as Communist Party leaders, including President Xi Jinping, gathered for a meeting in Beijing, where they issued repeated calls to "eliminate risks" in the economy and boost domestic consumption. However, they have so far offered few concrete measures to revive growth. — Agencies

Tanzania launches electric rail service between key hubs

DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania: A new electrified commuter railway in Tanzania meant to modernize travel in the traffic-plagued country made its inaugural journey between the commercial hub Dar es Salaam and the capital Dodoma on Thursday.

Built by a Turkish company, the 440-kilometre (273-mile) line is part of a 2,561-kilometre Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) network expected to connect the north and west of the country to Dar es Salaam, an Indian Ocean port city.

The air-conditioned carriages from South Korea with built-in wifi have already developed a fan club among travelers weary of the ramshackle, diesel-spewing buses that dominate public transport in the nation of nearly 62 million people. "We have come a long way to have this service," Ruben Mtaita said as he departed Dar es Salaam. "We are making history."

A first line connecting the eastern Morogoro region to Dar es Salaam, some 200 kilometres apart, was launched last month, also built by Turkey's Yapi Merkezi.

Tanzania Railway Corporation (TRC) said it will operate daily trips between Dodoma and Dar es Salaam, cutting the usual lengthy bus trip by more than half to around three-and-a-half hours.

Analysts said the rail system is expected to provide a safe and reliable option to Tanzania's rising population, while cutting carbon emissions and curbing noise and air pollution. Abel Kinyondo, a lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam, described the railway as "the green way to conserve the environment by cutting vehicle-led pollution". The project in one of Africa's fastest-growing economies is the cornerstone of a transformation plan by President Samia Suluhu Hassan ahead of national elections next year.

"We have waited for this service for a long time but finally we are starting. For us, this is a milestone," TRC head Masanja Kadogosa told reporters. "Both business and regular classes are full and, in fact, many people missed tickets," he added. The frequency will be bumped up depending on demand, the state-owned agency said.

"It is my hope that the electric train will cut the number of buses playing the same route," said Donald Mmari, executive director of the Tanzanian poverty alleviation research think-tank, REPOA.

Zakaria Nundi, who was travelling with eight other people on the debut trip from Dar to Dodoma, expressed cautious optimism: "I hope the train will be reliable". Tanzania's railway system has two existing networks, one linking the East African nation to Zambia and the other to Kenya and Uganda.

In December 2022, Tanzania signed a \$2.2-billion contract with a Chinese company to build the final section of the SGR line aimed at linking the country's main port with its neighbors. "Upon completion of the SGR, Tanzania will be in a better position to utilize its strategic geographical positioning to facilitate cross-border trade," Hassan said at the time.

The project, due to be completed in 2026, nine years after it began, will eventually have spurs to Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. Tanzania's investment in the SGR had now reached about \$10 billion, including the latest contract, she said.

China is the biggest investor in Africa, pumping billions of dollars into infrastructure projects such as railroads, ports and airports in exchange for securing oil and commodity supplies such as copper and cobalt. — AFP

Nestle, Unilever sales disappoint

GENEVA: Nestle and Unilever may be raising prices more slowly but it has not been enough to win back some cost-conscious consumers, with the consumer goods giants delivering disappointing first-half sales growth on Thursday. Shares of Dove soap maker Unilever rose 5 percent as it nonetheless maintained its annual sales forecast and posted a first half profit beat, but Kit-Kat maker Nestle dropped 4 percent after it lowered its sales outlook.

After nearly three years of rapid price hikes and a protracted global cost of living crisis, consumer goods makers have been trying to draw back shoppers who traded down to cheaper, often private label products. "There is value-seeking behavior among consumers. There is pressure, especially at the low-income range," Nestle CEO Mark Schneider said on a call with journalists.

Reckitt Benckiser, which reported results on Wednesday, also missed sales growth expectations as lower volumes offset higher prices. The consumer goods industry has been struggling with soaring costs itself, with everything from sunflower oil and shipping to packaging, grain and energy becoming more expensive during and in the wake of the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Nestle, the world's biggest packaged food company, lowered its organic sales outlook to at least 3 percent from about 4 percent previously,

saying it had to slow the pace of price hikes earlier than it would have liked as consumers became increasingly cost-conscious. The Swiss company's first-half sales increased 2.1 percent, compared to the average estimate of 2.5 percent in a company-provided consensus.

Both Nestle and Unilever beat market expectations for first-half sales volumes and profit margins, however. "Unilever's ability to defend and expand margin, especially in this volatile input cost environment, speaks to the strength of the portfolio and management execution," said Jack Martin, an investment manager at Oberon Investments, which holds a small Unilever stake.

"Contrasted to Nestle, which has fallen victim to volatile input costs and has experienced customers downtrading amid economic pressure on the consumer," he added.

Nestle's pricing miss is likely to make investors worry about 2025 margins and raises questions about brand strength, both for the company and the broader sector. Jefferies analyst David Hayes said in a note to clients. Unilever forecast stronger-than-expected margins for the year but still expects margin expansion to be smaller in the second half. "The only fly in the ointment that we can see is that competitiveness remains underwhelming," RBC Capital Markets analyst James Edward Jones wrote in a note after Unilever's results. Both Unilever and Nestle are stepping up investment in their brands but while Nestle is looking to increase new product launches, Unilever is sticking to its plan to do "fewer things, better", focusing on its most popular lines.



ECUBLENS, Switzerland: Nestle's CEO Ulf Mark Schneider delivers his speech during a general shareholders meeting of Swiss food giant Nestle in Ecublens, near Lausanne. — AFP

Unilever CEO Hein Schumacher's first year at the helm has seen plans to spin off its ice cream business, lay off as many as 7,500 staff, and focus on 30 key brands as he tries to reverse years of underperformance. Schumacher's predecessor had been criticized for allowing the group's brands to grow to about 400, distracting management from the best performers.

Nestle said its approach to product launches was not just about quantity but about precision and focus, adding that it was clear on what it can scale and which brands to build up. Reckitt on Wednesday also announced plans to explore options for its troubled nutrition business and offload a portfolio of homecare brands by the end of 2025. — Reuters

In a Trump win, economists see revived inflation

NEW YORK: The Federal Reserve's battle to get inflation under control likely faces fresh challenges should Donald Trump regain the White House, a dynamic that could put the US central bank back in the former Republican president's crosshairs. A wide range of economists see Trump's tariff agenda, coupled with aims to deport millions of undocumented workers and the likelihood of expanded deficits, reigniting price pressures that are now easing and likely driving the Fed to react with more restrictive monetary policy than is now penciled in.

Forecasters predict Trump's plan to impose 10 percent-across-the-board tariffs on imported goods - and even higher rates on Chinese products - would generate a one-time surge in inflation, while deportations would drive up wages for remaining workers, adding to the pressure.

An Oxford Economics model which looks at the likely policy stances of the candidates, for instance, predicts that under a second Trump administration an inflation measure excluding food and energy prices tracked closely by the Fed would peak between 0.3 and 0.6 percentage point above what would be expected under current appropriations law and policy. That compares with potential excess inflation of between 0.1 and 0.2 percentage point under a Democratic administration led by Vice President Kamala Harris, the presumptive nominee now that President Joe Biden has dropped out of the race. Oxford and others see Harris largely continuing Biden's economic policies.

Resurgent inflation would be a setback for the Fed, which after aggressive rate rises is on the verge of quelling generation-high inflation, now retreating toward the central bank's 2 percent target. Markets now project a September rate cut, with more to follow.

"The Trump economic program is inherently inflationary," said Mark Sobel, US chairman at the Official Monetary and Financial Institutions Forum and a veteran of the US Treasury Department un-



NEW YORK: People walk by NYC Discount Pharmacy in Manhattan on July 23, 2024 in New York City. A major issue in the presidential race between both parties is the increase in prescription drug prices, an issue that especially energizes older voters. — AFP

der both Democratic and Republican presidents. "Much higher tariffs, an expansionary fiscal policy and mass deportation of immigrants: All these factors would combine together to raise inflation and interest rates higher than they otherwise would be."

Diane Swonk, chief economist with KPMG US, said in a note Trump's tariff increases coupled with a "sharp" curb on foreign workers means "a resurgence" in inflation which would likely force the Fed to hold rates at current levels for "much longer." The trade approach from Biden and Harris "remains leagues away from what Trump has been proposing regarding tariff policy," said Oscar Munoz, chief US macro strategist at TD Securities. Under the anticipated "surgical" trade actions pursued by a Harris administration, he said, "we don't anticipate those policies to represent a meaningful risk for our inflation/growth forecasts."

Evercore ISI analysts believe the Fed will respond more slowly than markets to a new outlook should Trump win. But a Trump victory could see policymakers dial back some of the cuts now expected for next year, potentially even moving to pencil in a late 2025 rate hike, they said. Asked how Trump's policy agenda would buck economists' expectations for higher inflation, Trump campaign National Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said: "The American people don't need economists to tell them which president put more money in their pockets." — Reuters

Pakistan's finance minister in Beijing to seek debt relief

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday arrived in Beijing to open talks on power sector structural reforms suggested by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), two government sources said. He held a meeting with his Chinese counterpart in Beijing, they said, and added that the finance minister together with Power Minister Awaiz Leghari is leading a delegation, which will take up several proposals with the Chinese side, including reprofiling of nearly \$15 billion energy sector debt.

The countries, which share a border, have been longtime allies. Rollovers or disbursements on loans from China have helped Pakistan meet its external financing needs in the past. Pakistan's finance ministry, junior Finance Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik and the Chinese finance ministry didn't respond to a request for a comment.

Both the finance and power ministers told Reuters in interviews last week that they will be discussing the power sector reforms in their Beijing visit, though they did not specify the timing.

China has set up over \$20 billion worth of planned energy projects in Pakistan. The reforms has been suggested by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which this month agreed on a \$7 billion bailout for the heavily indebted South Asian economy. Pakistan's power sector has been plagued by high rates of power theft and distribution losses, resulting in accumulating debt across the production chain - a concern raised by the IMF. The government is implementing structural reforms to reduce "circular debt" - public liabilities that build up in the power sector due to subsidies and unpaid bills - by 100 billion Pakistani rupees (\$360 million) a year, Leghari has said.

Poor and middle-class households have been affected by a previous IMF bailout reached last year, which included raising power tariffs as part of the funding program that ended in April. — Reuters

Weekender

FRIDAY, JULY 26, 2024



MATE REPUBLIC Building community one cup at a time



By Nebal Snan

A dallah of Arabic coffee at a family gathering, an iced Americano at a work meeting, a Spanish latte or a flat white on a date with a friend – coffee is at the center of most social gatherings in Kuwait. So when Maria Lucia Sanchez walked into her Kuwaiti friend's family gathering with a gourd of mate, everyone was puzzled, to say the least.

"There's an expression that says that Uruguayans are born with a thermos under their arm," said Sanchez, who goes by Lucia. She's referring to a thermos of hot water, an indispensable companion for mate drinkers. The caffeinated herbal tea is made by steeping the leaves and twigs of the yerba mate plant in hot water, and is consumed across South America for its health benefits. It's heavily featured in South American pop culture, with numerous tango songs and folktales woven around it.

Like many Uruguayans, Sanchez has been drinking mate all her life. It's so ubiquitous in the second smallest country in South America that "you cannot not see it," she says. "You get off the plane at



The yerba mate plant.

country. Away from her family and unable to meet new people, Sanchez was yearning for a piece from home, and mate was the closest she could get.

"Mate is kind of a companion. You prep it, you wait for it, you drink it, then when you're done, you have to clean it, you have to make sure it's fine. It's like taking care of a little pet," said Sanchez.

But the mate sold in Kuwait was different from what she was used to in Uruguay, she soon realized. Brands available locally are made according to the style enjoyed in Syria and Lebanon, where the drink became popular after waves of immigration to South America in the 19th

with people. So in June, they set up shop at Barayeh Salem. The cozy space is lined with shelves of mate equipment that the pair collected during their travels around the world. A 100-year-old mate cup with gold and silver embellishments was proudly displayed - it was an heirloom that Sanchez inherited from her grandfather.

You don't have to be a mate expert to visit Mate Republic. The pair host free open houses for anyone interested in trying the drink, where they explain everything you need to know about preparing and consuming it. The space has also served as a home away from home where people come to make new friends. Some visitors spend hours chatting on couches strategically placed next to a big window overlooking the busy pedestrian-only street.

Although it's not the obvious choice for most young entrepreneurs in Kuwait, Barayeh Salem has proven to be the perfect spot for Mate Republic. The diversity and relaxed vibe dominating the street matches the shop's concept perfectly, said Sanchez. While some find Mate Republic through Instagram, Sanchez was amazed that others find out about them only through seeing the store window,

Mate toolkit

The mate

Yerba mate comes in numerous varieties from different countries in South America and you can experiment until you find your favorite. The herbal tea can be enjoyed plain or mixed with other herbs, including chamomile and linden. You can also create unique concoctions by mixing in other ingredients, such as parsley, ginger, lemon, orange or rosemary.

The cup

A mate cup, called mate, is traditionally made from calabash gourds that are dried and carved. A gourd can also be made of other materials such as German silver, steel, glass, ceramic and silicone. Calabash gourds require more maintenance compared to modern-day materials because they are susceptible to mold growth.

The straw and thermos

To drink mate, you need a metal straw with a filter at the end, known

as bombilla. Traditionally, people steep the yerba mate in hot water poured from a thermos, or vacuum flask, for convenience, especially if they're taking the drink outside.

Mate etiquette

- **Don't hog the mate:** Mate is traditionally enjoyed during gatherings where the cup is passed around from one person to the other. So it's important not to take your time sipping on the drink to be respectful of others. In Kuwait, Mate Republic uses separate cups and straws for each customer.

- **Make the sound:** Slurping drinks noisily is frowned upon in many cultures. But for mate, things are different. When you sip all the mate in your cup, the straw will make a popping sound. You will hear that sound every time you finish your drink, and that's completely ok! It's how you'll know it's time for a water refill.



A cup of mate is seen on top of a glass display of mate straws or bombillas at the Mate Republic store in Barayeh Salem. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

the airport, people will be waiting for their families with it."

Seeing people carry their mate everywhere was a culture shock for Kuwaiti Fatima Alebrahim, who first met Sanchez while working for the same company in Uruguay. But there was something familiar about how the drink brought people of all ages together. "I didn't know about it in Kuwait. It wasn't popular at all. But there, everyone was into it," she said. "It's like the national drink. You know how we serve coffee here, Arabic coffee or tea? Over there its mate." A few years later, Alebrahim partnered up with Sanchez to introduce people in Kuwait to the drink. "I was pretty overwhelmed by how interested people can be ... not only interested but passionate. We have customers that bought, I don't know how many (mate) cups and honestly you only need one," said Sanchez.

Searching for the right mate

Sanchez moved to Kuwait in 2020, on the cusp of the COVID-19 pandemic. Health restrictions meant she couldn't go out for nearly her first two years in the

and 20th centuries. The leaves are quite big. There is also less powder and more stems in the tea compared to the Uruguayan variety, which changes the flavor.

After searching high and low to no avail, Alebrahim encouraged Sanchez to start a business importing South American yerba mate. Since then, the pair have brought several varieties of the herbal tea and have participated in many fairs to promote their products. "Kuwait is a cool place to do business. They really help out small businesses. ... And people here are super interested in cultural things," said Sanchez. They've had all sorts of customers, but students and people interested in sports stand out. Mate is famous among football players, with many stars such as Messi and Suarez photographed carrying the drink. It's enjoyed by students because its caffeine content helps them stay up late to get work done, said Sanchez.

Home away from home

After a few years of selling mate online and at sporadic events, Sanchez and Alebrahim wanted more interaction



The inside of a traditional mate gourd made from the calabash plant is seen in this photo.

located on the mezzanine floor. Regardless, finding a community in a foreign country and sharing mate with others has been life-changing. "When I just came here, I was absolutely lost. ... But I believe in myself now. Kuwait has made me a more confident and independent woman," Sanchez said.

For more information on Mate Republic, you can visit their Instagram @materepublickw



Argentina's forward Lionel Messi drinks mate while hugging the World Cup trophy in this photo he posted on Instagram.



France's forward Antoine Griezmann holding a traditional mate gourd. — AFP photos



Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez holds his mate gourd and thermos.



Argentinian-style yerba mate.



Sanchez pours a small amount of lukewarm water over the mate as she showcases one of the steps to prepare the drink.



Sanchez holds a cup of mate as a thermos containing hot water and a container of yerba mate leaves sit on the table next to her.



Sanchez enjoys mate next to the window overlooking Barayeh Salem.



Zahra Marwan

Bridging cultures through art and storytelling



By Sahar Moussa

Kuwait Times: Tell us more about yourself.

Zahra Marwan: I'm 35 years old, should-have-been Kuwaiti yet American. I live in an apartment that overlooks cottonwood trees near the Rio Grande River and work out of a studio at the Harwood Art Center nearby. I sleep, burn bukhoor when I need to, dream a lot and embody the Kuwaitiness I'm able to keep in everything I do.



KT: When did you start writing/drawing, and who or what encouraged you?

Marwan: My sister-in-law Yoko gave me a notebook when I graduated from high school at 17. I wrote quotes from books, noted my thoughts, defined words, made little drawings and was never afraid to express myself honestly. My older brother encouraged me to draw as a child and to take art classes in high school. He was inspired by our uncle, prominent painter AbdulReda Baqer, and his son,

In the vibrant world of storytelling, few individuals manage to seamlessly blend the art of words with the magic of visuals. Zahra Marwan is a gifted illustrator and writer whose work transcends the boundaries of traditional storytelling. With a unique ability to craft compelling narratives and bring them to life through enchanting illustrations, Marwan captivates audiences of all ages. Join us as we explore the creative journey and inspirations behind Marwan's remarkable works.

our cousin Ali Baqer, the artistic pride of the family.

My older brothers invested deeply in my alternative education, sharing their love of Russian literature, French cinema, our father's poetry, theater and photography, their loud witty stories and my mom recounting dreams and memories with me each morning. I have such a beautiful family!

not wanting to leave my family and home as a child and the luck of coming to a place where people treated me like I belonged. Even with something this personal, it had its challenges.

KT: How many awards have you won so far? And how many books have you written/illustrated so far?

Marwan: How to answer this hum-

trators in NYC – Dilys Evans Founders Award, a New Mexico Writers Grant, Out from the Margins Award from the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, a Makers Muse Award, a Creative Bravos Award from the City of Albuquerque, and the Women in Creativity Shine Award. I received nine awards among other honors.

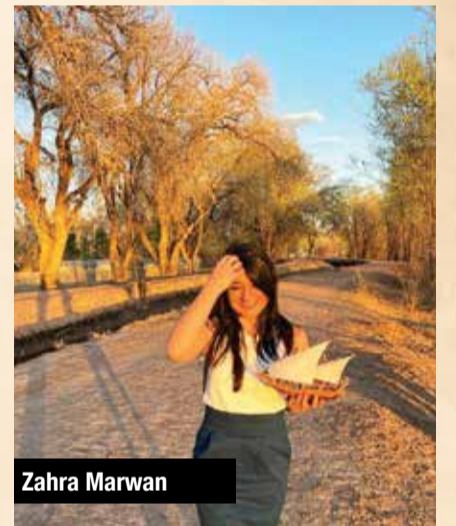
As for books, I have one book published, two that will be published in September, one that will be published next spring, and four more in progress. I have eight books either out in the world or in the works.

KT: When writing a book, do you start with the visuals or the text?

Marwan: Always the text, like clearing the way through a dust storm or managing to see through the humidity of inspiration.

KT: Who are some of your biggest influences in both writing and illustration, and how have they shaped your creative approach?

Marwan: I learned a lot from watching Albuquerque's flamenco professionals. They give so much every day to hone their craft. It was inspiring to see what it means to be a working artist. In recent years, I've been inspired by the way you can feel a writer's voice, like Daniel Nayeri, poet Kaveh Akbar or humor essayist David Sedaris' deep cynicism. I like fragmented ideas that feel real. I used to love Kurt Vonnegut when I was young. Regarding illustrators, let's start with Kuwaiti artist Reem Madooh, who



Zahra Marwan

brought a Palestinian story to thriving light in the US publishing world. Quiet and deeply thoughtful, her colors and compositions are so full of life.

KT: How do you hope your illustrations and stories resonate with your audience on an emotional level, and what do you wish for them to take away from your work?

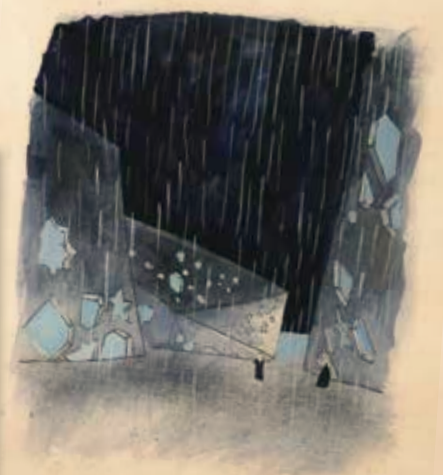
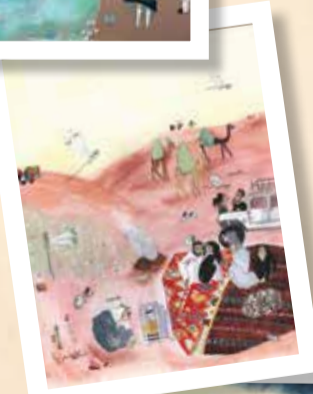
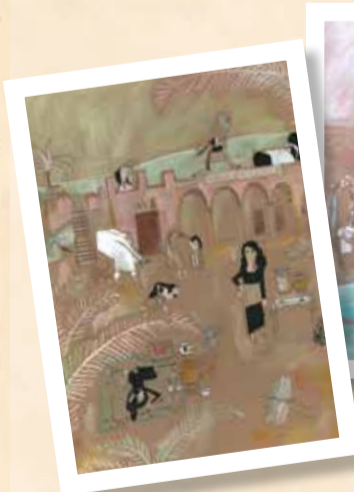
Marwan: I'm grateful when anyone reaches out, saying my work reminds them of a memory, or they feel what I feel, or they in some way resonate or care. It feels like a miracle to be able to relate to people from the obscurity and beauty of the arts.



KT: Can you share a specific project where you felt your skills as both an illustrator and a writer complemented each other particularly well?

Marwan: My first book was about

bly?! I received the following awards: New York Times/New York Public Library Best 10 Best Illustrated Books, United Nations Award for art that brings visibility to minority, indigenous and stateless rights, Ezra Jack Keats Honor for Illustration, Society of Illus-



The hidden gems on

Kuwait's coast



By Nafisa Maleah

You've heard of the famous beaches of Khairan, Marina and Al Kout. But there are many hidden gems that Kuwait's coasts have to offer. With the crowds brought about by the summer season, people who frequent these lesser-known spots like to keep them secret. Kuwait Times spoke with three people who all declined to share where their favorite beaches were.

Sarah Al-Khatib, an Egyptian resident, explained: "I don't share its location because I like the privacy – there's not a lot of public beaches that are always both clean and quiet". She outlined safety as one of the reasons. "As a woman, I don't always feel comfortable at crowded beaches. But because barely anyone goes to this beach, I can dress freely and relax," Khatib said. Her favorite summer activity is watching the sunset at the beach, adding that "it's like my own little slice of heaven".

Leen Darbnasser, a Syrian resident, prefers to escape the crowd flocking to Kuwait's coast. Located within Messila, she describes her favorite beach as a haven. "I use this beach as an escape from the world and my problems – it helps me clear my mind", she said.

"Since it's so calm and quiet, you can go there and read a book, tan, relax and sit comfortably with your friends without worrying who's around you", she added.

Miriam Engen, a Kuwaiti-Norwegian, stumbled across her favorite beach by chance. "When I was visiting a resort, I found it right next to the private beach and realized that it was public", she said. Engen added that one of the reasons she frequents the beach is because unlike some of the more crowded public beaches, "it's quite clean

It was hard to believe that they were all public beaches with no entry fees. Even during peak hours in the morning and afternoon where it tends to be the busiest, they were still relatively empty with only a few people around.

Darbnasser's beach of choice was completely empty, making it the perfect tranquil spot. At the other two beaches, a handful of people could be seen taking a dip in the cool waters, tanning and setting up chairs or tents. The surrounding buildings and trees



and there are lots of bins scattered around so you can throw your trash easily".

Kuwait Times visited the three beaches to give readers a glimpse of why people chose to keep their locations hidden. The ambience and cleanliness were akin to private beaches, featuring clear blue waters and spotless golden sands.

covered the beaches, providing a sense of security. Overall, their serene atmosphere makes them the perfect place to spend the hot summer months.

Do you know a beach so good that you keep it secret? If not, consider exploring Kuwait's coasts to find a hidden gem of your own.



WHAT'S ON IN KUWAIT

Event: The Art of Calligraphy
Location: Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre
Date: July 26, 2024

Event: Spaghetti Bridge Challenge
Location: Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre
Date: July 26, 2024

Event: Geekcon 2024
Location: Kuwait International Fairground- Hall 4A
Date: July 26-27, 2024

Event: Monawaat Bugsha Expo
Location: Boulevard
Date: July 26-27, 2024

Event: Show and tell workshop for kids
Location: Bliss and Paper Library
Date: July 27, 2024

Event: Seminar on strategic planning for social media content
Location: Tharamedia
Date: July 27, 2024

Event: Princess Crown workshop
Location: Interlace Studio
Date: July 27, 2024

Event: Cook Korea
Location: Madang Cultural Centre
Date: July 27, 2024

Event: Coding & Robotic Adventures
Location: Argan Bedaya - Sabah Al Salem
Date: July 27, 2024

Sports

Murray withdraws from Olympics singles but will play doubles

Playing with Dan Evans offers best chance of another medal

PARIS: Andy Murray withdrew from the tennis singles at the Paris Olympics on Thursday but the two-time gold medalist will play doubles in what will be the final event of his glittering career. The British former world number one, who will retire at the end of his fifth Games, has still not fully recovered from back surgery last month.

He believes the men's doubles, where he is playing with Dan Evans, offers his best chance of another medal. "I've taken the decision to withdraw from the singles to concentrate on the doubles with Dan," said the 37-year-old.

"Our practice has been great and we're playing well together. Really looking forward to getting started and representing GB one more time." Murray won gold in singles at London 2012 and in Rio four years later, as well as silver in mixed doubles with Laura Robson in 2012.

His withdrawal means his final singles match was his brief second-round

appearance at Queen's Club against Jordan Thompson last month before he was forced to pull out because of a spinal cyst. The Scot confirmed on Tuesday that he would retire after the Paris Olympics. "Competing for Great Britain has been by far the most memorable weeks of my career and I'm extremely proud to get to do it one final time," the three-time Grand Slam champion posted on social media.

Murray has been ravaged by injuries in recent years, slumping to 121st in the world. He has played with a metal hip since 2019 and suffered ankle damage earlier this year. Murray was not fit enough to play singles at Wimbledon this month due to his back surgery but played doubles with brother Jamie and was defeated in the first round before an emotional tribute arranged by tournament chiefs.

"It's hard because I would love to keep playing, but I can't," admitted

Murray at the All England Club. "Physically it is too tough now, all of the injuries, they have added up and they haven't been insignificant."

Murray ended Britain's 77-year wait for a men's champion at Wimbledon when he triumphed in 2013, defeating rival Novak Djokovic in the final. He added a second title in 2016, taking his career majors total to three after breaking his duck at the 2012 US Open.

Murray won gold at the 2012 Olympics on an emotional day at the All England Club when he defeated Roger Federer just weeks after he had lost the Wimbledon final to the Swiss on the same Centre Court. Four years later, he defeated Juan Martin del Potro to become the first tennis player, male or female, to win two Olympic singles golds. Murray also led Britain to the Davis Cup title in 2015, the country's first in 79 years. He has won 46 titles in all and banked around \$65 million in prize money. — AFP



WIMBLEDON: (FILES) Britain's Andy Murray waves to the public as he leaves Centre Court following his defeat against Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas. — AFP



Hussein Al-Musallam with French Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera.

Forum on 'United Through Sport'

KUWAIT: President of World Aquatics Hussein Al-Musallam said "True investment, that develops countries and cities is that of sport". Al-Musallam spoke during the International Forum themed "United Through Sport", that was held on the sidelines of Paris Olympics 2024, with the French Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera.

Al-Musallam said "I am from Asia, look at the Asian cities Seoul, Beijing and Doha, how they were and how they became after organizing the Olympics and the World Cup."

He said, "I am happy to be in Paris for the Olympics, and during the World Day for Drowning Prevention." He said that he has his colleagues in the World Aquatics changed the strategy and work vision, as a clear strategy was put to practice swimming which includes the sport, health and rescue.



PARIS: Poland's Iga Swiatek takes part in a training session at the Roland-Garros Stadium complex in Paris, ahead of Paris 2024 Olympic Games. — AFP

Iga Swiatek: Clay queen targets Olympic gold

PARIS: Iga Swiatek is returning to a happy hunting ground as she seeks a first Olympic crown to add to her four French Open titles at Roland Garros. The Polish world number one has been dominant on the red clay of Paris, winning four of the past five tournaments and is unbeaten there since a quarter-final loss to Greece's Maria Sakkari in 2021.

The five-time Grand Slam champion, who won the US Open in 2022, is seeking to go much further than she did at the Tokyo Games in 2021, where she lost to Paula Badosa in the second round. Swiatek, 23, has had plenty of time to prepare for the Paris Olympics after her early exit from Wimbledon, where she lost in the third round to Yulia Putintseva.

The painful defeat on the grass at the All England Club brought Swiatek's 21-match winning streak to a shuddering halt. She was asked afterwards how she would prepare for the Olympics in Paris. "For sure I'm going to take a lesson and rest a bit more," she said. "I don't know, I feel like even though I didn't perform well at this tournament, because of how the whole season is looking, I deserve it. "I should literally do it better because I'm not going to be able to go through the whole season playing good tennis."

In 2020, Swiatek announced herself to the tennis world when she won the French Open without dropping a set. She was the first Polish player, male or female, to win a Grand Slam singles title and has dominated the event since, with her one blip coming three years ago. — AFP

Djokovic, Nadal set for Olympics showdown

PARIS: Grand Slam record-breakers Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal were placed on an Olympics second-round collision course in the draw for the Paris Games.

Nadal, a singles gold medalist at the 2008 Olympics, is playing in his final Games having also won doubles gold in Rio in 2016, while Djokovic was a bronze medalist in singles in 2008. Serbia's Djokovic, a 24-time Grand Slam champion and top seed in Paris following the withdrawal of world number one Jannik Sinner, begins his campaign against Australia's Matthew Ebden.

"I am excited for this duel in the second round, and I will give it my all," said Djokovic, who has faced Nadal 59 times over the past 18 years. "I am aware of the importance of the Olympic Games. I represent my country, which is more responsibility and even more pressure."

Spain's Nadal, who has won 14 of his 22 Grand Slams on the clay of Roland Garros, faces Hungary's Marton Fucsovics in his opener. French Open and Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz, the second seed, tackles 275th-ranked Hady Habib of Lebanon in opening round of the tournament, which starts on Saturday.

"Roland Garros is the most special place in the world of tennis for me," said 38-year-old Nadal, who was de-

feated in the first round of the French Open by Alexander Zverev last month during an injury-hit season.

"This year I was not able to spend a lot of time at Roland Garros so I am excited to be back here. It's another opportunity and a chance to enjoy every single moment." Defending Olympic champion Zverev, seeded third, takes on Jaume Munar of Spain.

Russian fourth seed Daniil Medvedev, playing in Paris as a neutral following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, will meet Rinky Hijikata of Australia. Two-time singles gold medalist Andy Murray, who will end his career at the Olympics after almost two decades on tour, will only play doubles. The 37-year-old former world number one underwent surgery to remove a cyst on his back before Wimbledon, which also sidelined him from singles at the All England Club.

'Toughest decision'

At the Olympics he will play doubles with Dan Evans. "The Olympics are incredibly special for me and I am happy to do it one more time to compete for my country," Murray said at Thursday's draw. "I trained the last few weeks to get myself ready to play singles and doubles but I am getting older and it's harder to recover from all the injuries. I just ran out of time." Murray and Evans start their dou-

Verstappen eyes redemption at Belgian Grand Prix

BELGIUM: A week after ranting on the team radio in Budapest, Max Verstappen heads to the Belgian Grand Prix warned to take "nothing for granted" and advised by Red Bull to give up late-night simulation racing during race weekends.

The series leader and three-time world champion departed Hungary in a petulant mood after finishing a frustrated fifth, swearing on team radio and in post-race interviews, having gone to bed at 3 am before the race.

It was his and Red Bull's third consecutive race without a win and he will need to deliver a more composed and professional performance on his preferred circuit on Sunday to avoid extending his winless run to four for the first time since 2020. Another defeat and his commanding supremacy of the past, he won 19 of 22 races last year, will be forgotten. "Hungary was a tricky race and a weekend to forget

and move forward from," said Dutchman Verstappen, whose combative manner did not go unnoticed.

"We have been working to optimize our performance and get the best out of the car that we possibly can." Spa has always been his favorite track with fast corners and lots of opportunities to overtake. The fans are also great and we get a lot of support there," he added.

After winning the last three Belgian Grands Prix, Verstappen will be seeking to return to form with a fourth victory, but he may have to start from the back half of the grid if, as expected, Red Bull, fit his car with a fifth new engine of the season.

The limit for new power units is four, but Verstappen has proved at Spa in the past that he can overcome grid penalties when he seizes the momentum. Born in Belgium to a Belgian mother, but grew up in the Netherlands, Verstappen always enjoys passionate backing from the local crowd and he may need it as he bids to extend his lead, trimmed to 76 points last Sunday, ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris.

Coincidentally, Norris, who was also involved in some colorful 'team orders' radio exchanges last Sunday, also has a Belgian mother and he will be seeking to reduce the gap further by winning on Sunday, after handing victory last weekend to his team-mate Oscar

Piastri following instructions to do so.

Piastri's 'all-rounder' car

Red Bull team boss Christian Horner has warned the threat from McLaren, the in-form team with the fastest car, and both Mercedes and Ferrari, could wreck their season if they cannot respond and gather points more emphatically than they have.

"We're just going to develop the fastest car we can, and that's what we'll continue to do," said Horner. "In the drivers' championship, obviously Max has a good lead – but that can diminish very quickly, so, nothing can be taken for granted."

The team's influential director Helmut Marko, a close adviser and confidante to the world champion, told speedweek.com: "We agreed that he would no longer run simulations so late in the future." Most attention may be focused on the leading title contenders, but that will suit Piastri who showed commendable assurance as he claimed his maiden victory last Sunday.

"Spa's not been the happiest of hunting grounds for us recently, but I'm confident we'll be strong," said the 22-year-old Australian. "We've got a car that's become a real all-rounder so I'm super confident and I think the team should be as well." — AFP



MOGYOROD: Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen stands in the pits during the Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix at the Hungaroring race track in Mogyorod near Budapest. — AFP

Sports

US Olympic chiefs call for truce in global doping storm

USADA had been 'playing ping pong with media bullets'

PARIS: US Olympic chiefs called for an end to the feud between American anti-doping officials and the World Anti-Doping Agency on Thursday after fresh verbal sparring. Gene Sykes, the chairman of the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC), said WADA and the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) had been "playing ping pong with media bullets" since revelations about a 2021 doping scandal in China emerged.

USADA has been a vocal critic of WADA over the past decade. Tensions spiked this year after reports in April said 23 Chinese swimmers had tested positive for a banned substance ahead of the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, but were cleared to compete at the Games.

US anti-doping chief Travis Tygart has consistently accused WADA of covering up the cases, which China blamed on unintentional food contamination. Eleven of the 23 Chinese swimmers are in Paris. The acrimony between WADA and USADA erupted into public view again on Wednesday, with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) warning US officials they could be stripped of the 2034 Winter Olympics if WADA was not respected as the "supreme authority" of the anti-doping movement.

"What we want to do is to cool the tempers and find a way for these organizations to constructively work better together," Sykes told a press conference in Paris on Thursday. Sykes said the dispute between the two agencies had arisen due to WADA feeling "threatened" by criticism by USADA and the body's outspoken chief Tygart.

"As soon as one side comes out with a statement, the other side comes out with a statement," Sykes said. "They have not been shy about throwing rocks at each other." WADA president Witold Banka, who has made strongly worded criticisms of USADA and Tygart, rejected the suggestion that he had been too "dramatic" in his responses.

"Everything that I said about the US anti-doping system and the role of USADA I did in a very calm way," he said in a separate press conference. "Our expectations to our stakeholders are to follow the rules. Our role is to make sure that our stakeholders are following our regulations, rules and have national legislation in accordance with our world anti-doping code." Banka was asked whether he would be willing to sit down with Tygart and discuss their differences. "We are always very open for collaboration, and it's obvious

that they are one of our stakeholders," he said.

"But of course, in the current situation, after all these defamatory comments, allegations, really I have to say, statements which are totally against of the principle of collaboration, it's a very difficult situation and the relations are tough," he added.

Sykes said he was optimistic that the two bodies would settle their differences. "We believe there will be a solution to this dispute... (WADA and USADA) don't agree yet but they really haven't been talking to each other," he said.

"We're not trying to escape from the world anti-doping code. We're trying to support it and make it stronger. And actually, I think that Travis Tygart and USADA would agree with that statement. "And what we want to do is to if you will cool the tempers and find a way for these organizations to constructively work better together."

Olympic chiefs on Wednesday awarded the 2034 Winter Games to Salt Lake City but warned the decision could be reversed if US authorities did not get in line. Sykes said that situation would not arise.

"(It is an) amendment that allows the IOC to have an escape clause if the United States somehow un-



Travis Tygart

dermines the world anti-doping code. We're not going to do that," he said. "We're going to try to make it stronger." Banka rejected the idea that the amendment was designed to silence critics of WADA.

"It was not to cut criticism because we are always open for constructive criticism but it was to make sure that harmonization of the anti-doping system is protected," he said. — AFP

Emerging talents primed for Paris but boxing on the ropes

PARIS: Muhammad Ali, Floyd Mayweather and Lennox Lewis are among the boxing greats who have cut their teeth at the Olympics, with a new generation of fighters eager to follow in their footsteps in Paris. But there are serious questions over whether the sport will even remain on the Olympic programme.

Boxing made its debut at the modern Olympics in 1904 and has been contested at every Summer Games since, apart from the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm as Swedish law banned the sport at the time. But it only went ahead at the COVID-delayed Tokyo Games three years ago after the International Olympic Committee stepped in to oversee the competition.

The IOC suspended its recognition of the International Boxing Association in 2019 because of concerns over governance, financial and ethical issues and last year it withdrew its recognition of the governing body. The IOC will once again organize the boxing in the French capital and has given the sport until 2025 to get its house in order, otherwise it risks being excluded from the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Against this uncertain backdrop, nearly 250 boxers - evenly split for the first time between men and women - will do battle between July 27 and August 10, the penultimate day of the Games. Women's boxing made its Olympic debut at London 2012 across three weight categories but there will be six weight divisions in Paris, reflecting the growth of the sport.

Olympic boxing will take place at the North Paris Arena on the outskirts of the city and at Roland-Garros, better known as the home of the French Open tennis. Among those to watch in the women's competition will be Ireland's Kellie Harrington, who won the lightweight title in Tokyo.

She suffered her first defeat in three years in April and knows the pressure is on after her heroics in



PARIS: Australian boxer Tina Rahimi (C) takes part in the Australia boxing team training session at the Max Rousie training center in Paris, ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. — AFP

2021 catapulted her into the spotlight. "It's not about being the greatest, it's not about bringing back a medal," the 34-year-old recently told Irish media.

"It's that feeling of, I'm just going to get this done because this is what I've worked for." Also in the women's event is Cindy Ngamba, who was born in Cameroon but moved to Britain aged 11 and will represent the Refugee Olympic Team.

Delicious prospect

There are several plotlines in the men's competition, which will similarly feature reigning Olympic champions, some boxers with professional experience and also emerging talents. Led in the past by boxers such as Ali, Mayweather, George Foreman, Roy Jones Jr and Evander Holyfield, the United States is the most successful nation in the history of Olympic boxing.

onships, and the all-around world title in 2022.

With Biles seemingly back to her astonishing best, the pair gave an indication of what's in store over the next fortnight when they clashed in the 2023 world championships last autumn. Biles won four golds and a silver in Antwerp - Andrade finishing second to her arch rival each time - but significantly beating the American to the vault title.

"She is Biles' main opponent today, it's normal that the spotlight is on her," Ney Wilson of the Brazilian Olympic Committee told AFP, adding that they were paying attention to the psychological health of their brightest gymnastics star after what happened to the American in Tokyo.

"We are monitoring her closely, particularly her mental preparation. She is well prepared, she does not feel any additional pressure despite her status," Wilson added. A major part of Andrade's compelling back story is her rise from favela to fame.

In the women's all round event in Antwerp, American Shilese Jones was third behind Biles and Andrade: the first time at a major gymnastics championship that three black women had stood on the podium. "Representation, right?" Andrade said.

"We are seeing a lot more black athletes and are able to represent and encourage so many children and young people who previously thought they

couldn't dream but today can not only dream but can believe that it is possible."

'I clean the house and sing'

Chosen to carry Brazil's flag at the closing ceremony in Tokyo, Andrade's talent was spotted from a very early age. "I remember that she was already muscular, with a lot of strength in her little arms and legs," recalled her first coach Monica Barroso dos Anjos.

"I asked her to do a cartwheel, then some jumps. Then I told my colleague, 'We have the new Daiane Dos Santos' (Brazil's first female artistic gymnastics world champion). "She couldn't sit still. If we put music on, she would start dancing or imitating the movements of the older girls."

Andrade, one of eight children, is fondly known as RebeYonce, after her admiration for Beyonce. And like her heroine, Andrade enjoys exercising her vocal chords. "Singing does me a lot of good. I train and sing. I clean the house and sing. The shower is a good friend."

Her supporters will be hoping she hits the right notes at the Bercy Arena, the stage for the artistic gymnastics competition in the French capital over the coming days with the vault final scheduled for August 3. — AFP

NBA signs 11-year media deals worth reported \$76bn

NEW YORK: The NBA announced 11-year global media rights deals with The Walt Disney Company, NBCUniversal and Amazon on Wednesday worth a reported \$76 billion and running from the 2025-26 through 2035-36 season. In addition to expanding game coverage for US and global telecast audiences as well as streaming viewers, the contracts figure to boost the value of every NBA team in addition to the salaries of basketball's top superstars.

Even though no financial details were officially revealed, ESPN, The Wall Street Journal and Forbes magazine have reported the \$76 billion combined figure for the deals. "Our new global media agreements with Disney, NBCUniversal and Amazon will maximize the reach and accessibility of NBA games for fans in the United States and around the world," National Basketball Association commissioner Adam Silver said.

"These partners will distribute our content across a wide range of platforms and help transform the fan experience over the next decade." The move came after the league announced it had rejected a bid by Warner Brothers Discovery to retain its rights by matching Amazon's deal, saying the terms of the offer to remain on US telecaster Turner Sports were not sufficient.

"Warner Brothers Discovery's most recent proposal did not match the terms of Amazon Prime Video's offer and, therefore, we have entered into a long-term arrangement with Amazon," the NBA said in a statement. "Our primary objective has been to maximize the reach and accessibility of our games for our fans. Our new arrangement with Amazon supports this goal by complementing the broadcast, cable and streaming packages that are already part of our new Disney and NBCUniversal arrangements."

"All three partners have also committed substantial resources to promote the league and enhance the fan experience." The league's upcoming campaign will be its last for some time with US coverage on long-time partner TNT.

"We're grateful to Turner Sports for its award-winning coverage of the NBA and look forward to another season of the NBA on TNT," the league statement said. The new deals will keep US coverage on Disney-owned ESPN and ABC, NBC and Peacock as well as send a set of games to Amazon's Prime Video streaming service. — AFP



NEW YORK: (FILES) The NBA logo is seen outside an NBA fan store in New York on July 8, 2024. The NBA announced 11-year global media rights deals with The Walt Disney Company, NBCUniversal and Amazon on Wednesday worth a reported \$76 billion and running from the 2025-26 through 2035-36 season. — AFP

Andrade - Brazil's brilliant vault queen

PARIS: Rebeca Andrade vaulted into Olympic history in Tokyo when she became the first Brazilian woman to win gymnastics gold. The COVID-delayed 2020 Games will forever be remembered for US superstar Simon Biles' dramatic withdrawal after suffering a bout of "the Twisters".

After losing her sense of spatial awareness, Biles was forced to play the role of bystander as Andrade exploited her arch rival's absence to claim vault gold, and a place in her country's Olympic Games folklore.

For good measure she also took silver in the all-around. Three years on, Andrade is primed to follow up at Paris 2024 against a back-to-form Biles. "It's about doing my best," Andrade, 25, said recently. "And I hope she (Biles) does too, that she does her best, because it's an honor to be able to compete alongside her."

The showdown between the pair is shaping up to be one of the stand-out rivalries of the Paris Games. Since Tokyo, where Biles had topped vault qualifying before her shock sudden exit from competition, Andrade has taken vault gold at the 2021 world champi-

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804

Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Hospitals

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

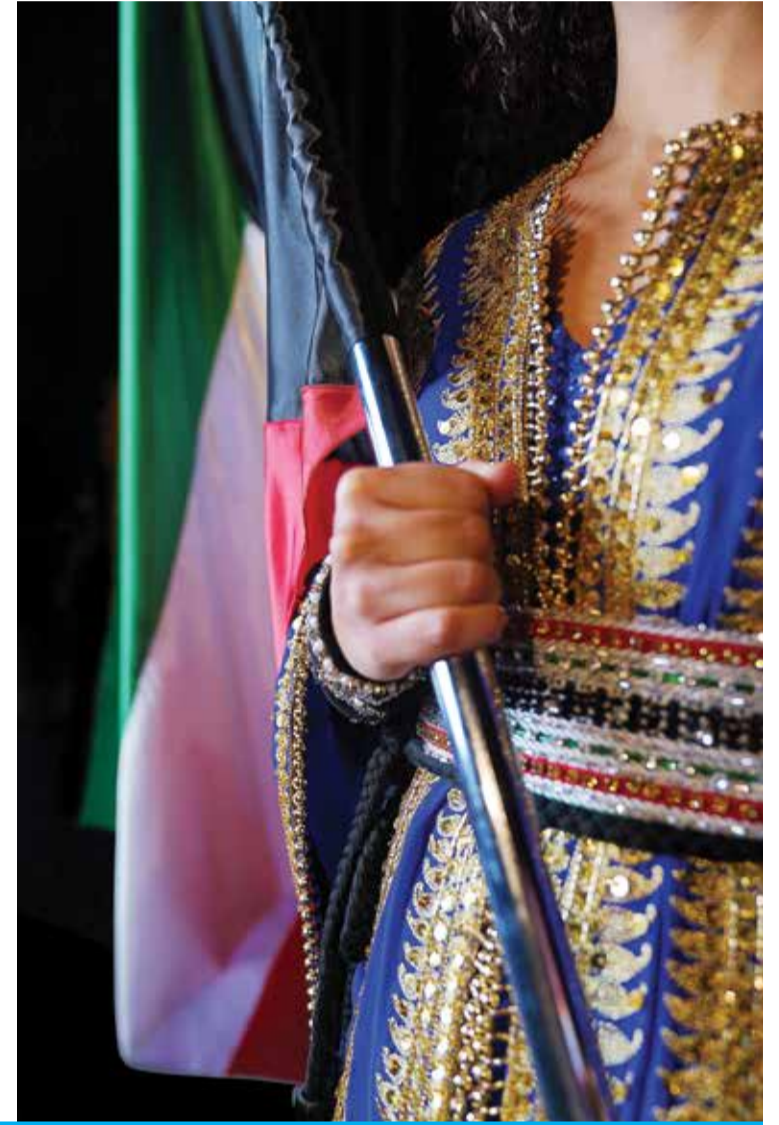
Change of Name

I, Moin Khan, holder of Indian Aadhar card no. 368209366721, Sataya beldan pos, Aadaam pur satawa Nalanda, Bihar - 803109, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that I have changed my name from Moin Khan to Mohammed Moiz Khan (given name) and Khan (surname).
(#5637, 24/7/2024)

I, Farhad Moin Khan, holder of Indian passport no. W0774163, H.NO. 244/02, Sharmik Nagar, Khairane midc near Yedekar Masala Company, Mahape, Navi Mumbai - pin: 400710 Maharashtra, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that I have changed my name from Farhad Moin Khan to Mohammed Farhad Khan (given name) and Khan (surname). (#5638, 24/7/2024)

Kuwait unveils stunning Olympic outfits

Athletes to celebrate Kuwait's rich cultural heritage during the opening ceremony



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Olympians display opening ceremony outfits, designed by Kuwaiti designer Farah Al-Babtain.

KUWAIT: Kuwait has unveiled stunning new opening ceremony outfits for its Olympic athletes, designed by talented Kuwaiti designer Farah Al-Babtain. In a display of cultural pride and modern elegance, Babtain has crafted an exquisite thobe for Kuwait's athletes, drawing inspiration from the national poem "Memoirs of a Sailor" by Dr Mohammad Al-Fayez. The design captures the indomitable spirit and perseverance of the Kuwaiti people, resonating with the essence of Kuwait's historic journey and its deep connection to the sea.

The opening ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympics, set along the iconic Seine River, will celebrate Kuwait's rich cultural heritage while highlighting its modern achievements and aspirations. The athletes, journeying on boats on the river, will visually embody the lyrics of "Memoirs of a Sailor", paying tribute to Kuwait's maritime legacy.

The chosen attire features the traditional Kuwaiti "thobe al-nashl" in a striking blue hue, symbolizing both the serene sway of Kuwait's seas and the official color of the national team. The garment is adorned with precious crystals, adding a touch of brilliance and elegance. Verses from "Memoirs of a Sailor" are

meticulously embroidered with golden threads and accented with fine metallic stones, enhancing the attire's regal appearance. A distinctive belt, decorated with the vibrant colors of the Kuwaiti flag and incorporating traditional Sadu art, further accentuates the ensemble, symbolizing hope and resilience. This design element represents the beauty of Kuwait's desert sands and its enduring spirit.

Rowing athlete Soad Alfaqaan will proudly bear the flag for Kuwait at the ceremony. She will be joined by athletes Lara Dashti from the swimming team and Ameenah Shah from the sailing team.

Lim shoots world record to signal Korean intentions

PARIS: Lim Si-hyeon delivered an emphatic statement on Thursday that she is the woman to beat at the Paris Olympics as the mighty South Korean archery team warmed up for another assault on the medal podium.

The 21-year-old Lim shot a world and Olympic record 694 in Thursday's women's individual ranking round at the stunning Esplanade des Invalides venue, breaking the previous mark of 692 held by compatriot Kang Chae-young who won Olympic gold in the team event in Tokyo three years ago.

Lim leads a young Korean squad bidding for a 10th individual gold medal and 10th consecutive women's team gold. The Korean women are undefeated in the Olympic team event since it was introduced at the 1988 Games.

"They're always up there. I think the money that they put into it is unlike any other country, they have professional teams," said Team GB's Bryony Pitman, who was 41st out of the field of 64.

"The last few months as well, they've had a replica Paris stage set up (at their training base just outside Seoul), they've been shooting against a robot that just puts them in the 10 all the time. They are as prepared as you could possibly be for an Olympic game."

World number one Casey Kaufhold, who was fourth on Thursday with a score of 672, is expected to be among her Lim's toughest challengers when the medal rounds start on Aug. 1. Kaufhold is hoping to be the first American female individual gold medalist since Luan Platon won in 1976.

Stunning venue

The 8,000-seat Esplanade des Invalides venue is situated next to the famous golden dome of the Hotel des Invalides. The Hotel, commissioned by Louis XIV in 1670 as a home and hospital for wounded soldiers, is a sprawling complex of buildings that is now mostly museums and monuments dedicated to France's military history. The glittering gold dome contains the imperial tomb of former French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte.

"The whole surrounding is absolutely stunning," said Pitman. "I've never seen a stage that big for archery before. I think it's just going to be insane when the stands are full as well. I'm really, really excited to get out there."

"I think it's one of the most beautiful and most famous places we've ever shot." Germany's Michelle Kroppen, who was seventh in the ranking round, said. "I will just try to enjoy it, to enjoy all the emotions and all the pictures in my head that nobody can steal from me, these emotions, these feelings." — AFP



ROISSY-CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT: Jibril Rajoub, president of the Palestinian Football Association and the Palestine Olympic Committee, Palestinian Olympic athletes and members of the delegation arrive at Charles-de-Gaulle airport in Roissy-en-France, north of Paris, on July 25, 2024, ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. — AFP

Palestinians slam IOC 'double standards' over Zionist entity

PARIS: The head of the Palestine Olympic Committee criticized "double standards" from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on Thursday over its decision to allow Zionist entity to compete at the Paris Games.

Palestinian Olympic head Jibril Rajoub demanded a boycott in a letter to the IOC earlier this week which was rejected by the head of the international Olympics body, Thomas Bach. "This confirms that there are international institutions that insist on applying double standards and not adhering to the Olympic Charter, laws and regulations, or morals," Rajoub said as he arrived at Paris's Charles de Gaulle airport with the Palestinian sporting delegation.

Around a hundred people were there to welcome the athletes with dates and shouts of "Free, Free Pal-

estine!" "The Zionists or the Zionist Olympic Committee have lost the moral, sports, humanitarian and legal right to participate," Rajoub added, saying Zionist's ongoing bombardment of Gaza amounted to "crimes of genocide, ethnic cleansing".

Palestinian militants from Hamas attacked Zionist entity on October 7, resulting in the deaths of about 1,170 people, according to an AFP tally of Zionist official figures. Zionist's retaliatory military campaign to destroy Hamas has killed 39,175 people, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza.

Around 400 Palestinian athletes have been killed, while others have been unable to train or travel because of Zionist bombing or restrictions, the Palestine Olympic Committee says. Russia has been banned from the Paris Olympics by the IOC for violating the Olympic charter when it annexed Ukrainian sporting organizations after the Kremlin's 2022 invasion.

The IOC has in the past denied that Zionist entity is in violation of the Olympic charter and stressed the relationship between Zionist and Palestinian Olympic Committees. "We have two National Olym-

pic Committees, that is the difference with the world of politics, and in this respect both have been living in peaceful co-existence," IOC chief Thomas Bach said in Paris on Tuesday.

He added: "We are not in the political business, we are there to accomplish our mission to get the athletes together." As he arrived on Thursday, Yazan Al Bawwab, a Palestinian swimmer, said he wanted to raise awareness about the Palestinian cause and the suffering in Gaza. "As an athlete... it's not about the medals. It's about reaching the most people, about the Palestinian cause," he said. "If a medal gets me more awareness, that's what I care about."

"Sports is a tool for peace also, it's a way to spread my message to the world about Palestinians and that we're suffering." Zionist entity's 88-strong delegation arrived in Paris earlier this week and the men's football team played their first game on Wednesday evening, drawing 1-1 with Mali.

The Zionist national anthem was whistled at the Parc des Princes stadium and Palestinian flags were waved by a handful of spectators, leading to angry exchanges between them and Zionist fans. — AFP