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7 Iran President Pezeshkian sworn in at parliament

8 Bursa Kuwait records 11.39% growth in net profit for H1 2024

11 Number 1: How a photographer grabbed the perfect surf shot

16 Kuwaiti swimmer, shooter miss chance to qualify at Olympics



Tough new traffic law in works

Stiffer fines, penalties for traffic violators • Over 70,000 expats benefitted from amnesty

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The interior ministry is finalizing a new traffic law that will include tougher penalties and higher fines for violators in a bid to deter offenders amid rising casualty figures, a top officer at the ministry said on Tuesday. "The fine for reckless driving is currently KD 30. It will be KD 150 in the new law, head of the interior ministry public relations Brig Nasser Buslaib said. The fine for running a red traffic light will be tripled from KD 50 to KD 150, he added. He said the law is being finalized by authorities but gave no specific date for enacting it.

Buslaib said Kuwait's traffic law has not been amended for over 30 years, adding that deaths from traffic mishaps are now between 300 to 400 annually, a majority of them in the age group of 18-30

years. Buslaib added that other administrative penalties will be applied to frequent violators that will include withdrawing their driving licenses and forcing them to undergo a new driving test after accumulating a large number of penalty points.

The traffic department is also studying a new proposal to keep impounded vehicles at the homes of violators instead of keeping them at the interior ministry, he said. On May 30, the interior ministry confirmed that there will be zero tolerance for driving recklessly and endangering the lives of others. "The law will be applied strictly to preserve the safety of road users," the ministry said, urging residents to report reckless drivers on the emergency hotline (112) or WhatsApp of the General Directorate of Traffic (99324092).

Bad roads and poor driving habits in Kuwait

caused 296 deaths and over 50,000 accidents in 2023, while nine million traffic violations were recorded. Violations included over four million speed tickets, 850,000 red-light violations, 300,000 fines for not wearing a seatbelt, as well as over 185,000 booked for using mobile phones while driving.

Meanwhile, Buslaib said as many as 70,000 illegal expats benefitted from the three-month amnesty which ended on June 30, by either legalizing their stay or leaving the country without paying overstay fines. The ministry is currently conducting search campaigns against illegals who failed to avail of the amnesty and security forces have already arrested a number of them, the interior ministry has said. Legal procedures are being taken to deport them. Buslaib said the search campaigns will continue to apprehend violators.



Trailblazing Kuwaiti sailor says Olympic selection not sunk in



MARSEILLE: Ameena Shah, the first Kuwaiti sailor to qualify for the Olympics, only knew she would get a serious tilt at the Games a year ago after wrapping up a master's degree in London. Kuwait's sailing federation, which Shah had been in touch with throughout her university years, came back to her when she finished in August last year with the good news.

"They were like: 'Hey, let's go, let's see how far we can push within these next eight months,'" Shah, 23, told Reuters ahead of her Games debut in the women's dinghy. Shah, who was born in Scotland and loves its fish and chips but not the haggis, won a "universality place" on the basis of her performance at a "last chance" regatta in April.

"The feeling's still not sunk in yet. I feel honored, but again, it's still not like kicked in like: 'Oh my God, the Olympics!'. I'm hoping it clicks in soon," she said. "In the past two months I've been in five, six different countries ... just training, just regattas, trying to build up the levels as quickly as we possibly can," Shah said. In addition to spending "most of her time" in the gym since hearing she was heading for Marseille, Shah said she and her Lithuanian coach had notched up around 74 hours on the water.

Shah says she has received lots of messages of support from her sailing federation Kuwait, as well as family and friends. The more seasoned ILCA 6 sailors have also been welcoming to the newbies in the fleet. "It was really easy to jump in ... we all talk about the same things. We probably have all the same issues as well, so it's a really nice group to mesh into," she added.

While some other sailors are struggling with the Mediterranean heat, Shah said she is used to a lot worse. With diet crucial to fueling a campaign, Shah said she is enjoying the cheesecake in the Olympic village hotel. And if she had to choose between Kuwaiti and Scottish food? Shah said the Kuwaiti classic of chicken and vegetables is a favorite and "you can't go wrong" with desserts there. But when visiting relatives in her mother's hometown of Dundee, Shah said a trip to one particular chip shop is a must. "You can never say no to fish and chips," she said. — Reuters

108 killed after landslides strike India tea estates

WAYANAD, India: Landslides in India triggered by pounding monsoon rains struck tea plantations and killed at least 108 people Tuesday, with at least 250 others rescued from mud and debris. The southern coastal state of Kerala has been battered by torrential downpours, with blocked roads into the disaster area in Wayanad district complicating relief efforts.

"This catastrophe has resulted in the loss of 108 lives," the state's chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said in a statement. "This is one of the worst natural calamities Kerala has ever witnessed." Another 128 people had been hospitalized for treatment after their

rescue, he said. "My thoughts are with all those who have lost their loved ones and prayers with those injured," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on social media platform X.

Wayanad is famed for the tea estates that crisscross its hilly countryside and which rely on a large pool of casual laborers for planting and harvest. Several estates in the district were hit by two successive landslides before dawn when most of their inhabitants were asleep. Images published by the National Disaster Response Force showed rescue crews trudging through mud to search for survivors and carrying bodies on stretchers out of the area.

Homes were caked with brown sludge as the force of the landslide scattered cars, corrugated iron and other debris around the disaster site. India's army said it had deployed more than 200 soldiers to the area to assist

Continued on Page 6



WAYANAD, India: Relief personnel conduct a search and rescue operation at a site following landslides on July 30, 2024. — AFP

Zionists kill 300 in Khan Yunis; 'polio epidemic' in Gaza

GAZA: Fighting raged on unabated in the besieged Gaza Strip, with the territory's civil defense agency saying on Tuesday that a Zionist operation in and around the second city of Khan Yunis killed about 300 people since it began last week. "Since the beginning of the (Zionist) ground invasion of the eastern part of Khan Yunis province, the civil defense and medical teams have recovered approximately 300 bodies of martyrs, many of them decomposed," agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP.

The Zionist military launched the assault on July 22 to halt rocket fire from the area, which already saw heavy fighting earlier this year. Last week, it said troops had retrieved the bodies of five Zionists from the area.

Continued on Page 6



GAZA: A Palestinian man inspects a dug-up area where the Zionist army conducted operations before withdrawing in Bani Suhayla town in the east of Khan Yunis governorate in the southern Gaza Strip on July 30, 2024. — AFP

UK grieves as third child dies in knife attack

SOUTHPORT, United Kingdom: A third child died Tuesday from a mass stabbing at a Taylor Swift-themed dance event in northern England that Prime Minister Keir Starmer said "touches a nerve" with the whole country. Starmer was among a stream of people to pay tribute at the site of

Monday's knife attack in Southport, near Liverpool, that left five children and two adults with critical wounds. Three other children were hurt.

Laying flowers with hundreds of other wreaths, Starmer thanked emergency workers who responded to the stabbing spree and said: "I came here to pay my respects to the victims and families who are going through raw pain and grief that most of us can't imagine - I can't imagine, as a dad myself." Nine-year-old Alice Dasilva Aguiar died in hospital early Tuesday, police said. Bebe King aged

Continued on Page 6



SOUTHPORT: This combination of pictures shows nine-year-old Alice Dasilva Aguiar, seven-year-old Elsie Dot Stancombe and six-year-old Bebe King, who were killed in a mass stabbing. — AFP



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Kuwait promotes human rights, calls for exchange of expertise

Trafficking is 'a scourge threatening humanity'



Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah and other officials take a group photo after the 54th session of the Permanent Arab Committee for Human Rights. — KUNA photos



Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah announced on Monday that the 55th session of the Permanent Arab Committee for Human Rights will be held in Kuwait next February. Sheikhha Jawaher said in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) during the 54th session of the Permanent Committee that the Kuwaiti delegation suggested to the committee to prepare a periodic report every six months that includes the most important activities and achievements and highlights the progress made in the field of human rights as well as the activities they have organized in this field.

She pointed to the intervention she had during the agenda discussions, in which the Committee's vital role in establishing and spreading the culture of human rights was emphasized through holding

events related to human rights and periodic meetings. Regarding the Arab Charter on Human Rights, she stressed that necessary measures are taken in Arab countries through the exchange of expertise and best practices, as well as supporting the role of the Arab Charter Committee in order to carry out its responsibilities and desired goals.

She added that the member states agreed on March 16, 2025, to adopt a slogan of "right to food" in line with the suffering and atrocities in the occupied territories. Sheikhha Jawaher thanked the Secretariat of the League of Arab States for preparing the executive plan for the Arab Strategy for Human Rights.

Trafficking is 'a scourge'

In another development, the Secretary General

of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Al-Budaiwi, underscored the urgent need to combat human trafficking, describing it as a scourge threatening all of humanity, especially children and women. His statement came on Tuesday, in recognition of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, observed annually on July 30, and is themed this year as "Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking."

Human trafficking disproportionately affects the most vulnerable, especially children and women, amid global challenges, conflicts, and wars, Al-Budaiwi said, calling it "one of the most heinous crimes that violates human rights." He went on to say, "Choosing this year's theme focuses on the importance of protecting children from trafficking in persons due to the vulnerability of this

group and taking rapid international measures to end their trafficking.

Children still suffer from exploitation in forced labor, criminality, begging, assault, and sexual exploitation, and through modern means of communication." "The GCC countries have paid great attention to the issues of combating trafficking in persons, and this stems from their commitment to the provisions of Islamic Sharia, its laws, and procedures, which preserve human dignity and prohibit and criminalize all forms of insulting his dignity, depriving him of his freedom, and exploiting him," he stated. In conclusion, Al-Budaiwi "stressed that the international efforts made in this regard cannot succeed without concerted national and regional efforts and benefiting from best practices to eliminate trafficking in persons." — KUNA

Teen suicide and the untold stories behind it

By Ghalia Al-Qaoud

KUWAIT: Behind every smile, there may be an untold story of suffering and pain within a teenager whom people think is too young to have deep feelings. The teenage years are a phase that can be challenging and a time when they are searching for their passion. Imagine a teenager who wanted to have loyal friends, straight A's, and not strict and understanding parents, but he couldn't have these things; he didn't get to his expectations, so suicidal thoughts are always on his mind. Kuwait Times spoke with people who survived suicide while they were teenagers.

Shahad Amer was 17 when she tried to commit suicide, saying, "I was in the middle of an argument with my father. Suddenly, during our argument, my father clutched his chest and collapsed. He had a heart attack. I was terrified and felt an immense sense of guilt. As I tried to help him, it felt like my world was falling apart. The emotional strain was so intense. But I remembered that I needed to stay strong to help my father, so I called an ambulance and tried to keep him calm until help arrived." She continued, "After the strength that I had during that situation, all my strength disappeared: I turned into a fragile person. It's so hard to explain what the situation looks like, but after all that happened, I fell into a lot of traumas to the point that I tried to end my life."

She described her attempt and how she walked in the middle of the night on the neighborhood street and lay down waiting for a car to hit her, but there was no car passing by. Then she realized that she should give the world another chance, and that was when she planned to start going to a psychiatrist to help myself out. "I couldn't tell my family what I was going through after what happened because I didn't want to cause more pain, so I handled it on my own. I opened a small business and worked part-time to collect money for therapy sessions, and I moved on," she explained to Kuwait Times.



Abdullah Al-Khalifah, a psychology consultant

As for Jana Mohamad, who was 15, when she found out that her mother had cancer. She was brave enough to take care of her mother, while her father showed no concern for her mother's condition and wasn't convinced to seek treatment abroad. Despite the lack of support from her father, Jana remained resolute. She managed to gather enough funds to start her mother's treatment locally. However, despite all their efforts, her mother sadly died.

After her mother passed away, Jana struggled with her (bad) father alone without her mother, so she was overwhelmed by grief and her father wasn't supportive. Jana tried to take her own life by taking a large amount of medication. Thankfully, her younger brother noticed her condition and called for help. Emergency responders arrived quickly, and they went to the hospital. She had to undergo kidney dialysis because she overdosed, and the doctors managed to save her.

Meanwhile, Khaled Ali, 13, said, "Since I was 11, I've been facing bullying problems and being lonely all the time, and since nobody cared, I've been having bad thoughts about myself and losing my love for myself, and until now, I can't stop crying and asking, What is my purpose? I couldn't hold it, and I was so close to jumping out the window, until my brothers saved me mentally, saying they would never leave, and they will be right there for me."

According to Abdullah Al-Khalifah, a psychology consultant, recognizing signs that a teenager may be struggling with suicidal thoughts involves observing several key indicators, saying, "These include behavioral changes like withdrawal from family and friends, avoiding traditional gatherings, loss of interest in activities, significant changes in eating or sleeping patterns, declining academic performance, and increased secrecy."

He indicated that in Kuwait, reluctance to engage in religious practices and expressing negative views about cultural norms are additional signs, adding, "Emotional signs include persistent sadness, hopeless-



ness, extreme mood swings, feelings of worthlessness, guilt, and talking about death or suicide, even jokingly. Verbal cues such as saying "I wish I was dead" or "I can't take this anymore" and saying goodbye should be critically looked into. Behavioral warnings include risky behavior, giving away prized possessions, seeking means of self-harm, and self-destructive behaviors like substance abuse and reckless driving."

To support teen mental health and prevent suicide, the consultant said that it's important to create a safe, non-judgmental space for open communication where active listening and empathy are practiced. "Encouraging teenagers to seek professional help and educating themselves and their parents about mental health issues is essential. Building strong family relationships and positive peer connections, promoting healthy lifestyle choices like regular exercise, balanced diets, and good sleep habits, and providing access to mental health professionals and help lines are crucial steps," he pointed out.

He revealed that in Kuwait, both private and government centers offer quality mental health services; advising teens to reduce the social stigma surrounding mental health, monitoring social media use, reducing access to means of self-harm, fostering positive school environments through anti-bullying policies, and encouraging community participation are also important, noting that early intervention and consistent follow-up care with mental health professionals can help create a supportive environment that promotes mental well-being and reduces the risk of suicide among teenagers.

'Insulting religious symbols has dire consequences'

CAIRO: The 9th conference of the World Fatwa House, organized by the General Secretariat of Fatwa Houses and Bodies in the World, kicked off Monday, under the title "Fatwa and Moral Development in a Fast-Growing World," with the participation of senior muftis, ministers, and scholars from 100 countries.

In his speech at the opening of the conference, Egyptian Minister of Endowments Dr Osama Al-Azhari condemned the "insult and humiliation" of Muslim and Christian symbols, their sanctities, and all other religions in the opening ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympics. He stressed, "Insulting religious symbols has dire consequences and undermines all the efforts for stability and coexistence that we seek and fuels extremism and counter-extremism."

On the other hand, Al-Azhari reaffirmed that the Palestinian cause will remain the greatest cause, and will continue to support the Palestinians and their right to life, rejecting all forms of injustice and oppression to which they have been subjected since the events of October 7, 2023. He called for the importance of moral construction in Fatwas as well as in international politics, stressing the need to respect all international conventions that stipulate respect for the right of peoples to self-determination and the right of our Palestinian people to build their state.

During the closing session, the final statement will be presented by the mufti, in which he will announce a number of important initiatives and projects, including the issuance of the Global Charter for Fatwa and Religious Leaders in Peacemaking, Combating Hate Speech, and Resolving Conflicts. The statement will also address the announcement of guidelines in different languages in several fields, the scientific encyclopedia of true and false religiosity and the most important studies conducted by the Global Fatwa Index. — KUNA



Chemistry Olympiad: 333 talented people awarded

RIYADH: The 56th edition of the International Chemistry Olympiad 2024 concluded on Tuesday in the Saudi capital with the participation of 333 talented people from 90 countries and under the supervision of 260 international specialists in the field of chemistry. The number of awards that were distributed at the closing ceremony to the winners amounted to 232 awards (36 gold medals, 67 silver medals, 99 bronze medals, and 30 certificates of appreciation).

The top three places were taken by

students Zhong Zheng (from China), Viktor Lilov (from Bulgaria), and Yufei Chen (from the United States), respectively. 47 countries received four awards each, while five countries received three awards, namely Argentina, Denmark, Italy, and North Macedonia and Syria. Six countries received two awards: Cuba, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, and Spain, while Belgium, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Georgia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Montenegro, Norway, Pakistan, and Venezuela each received one award. — KUNA

FAJ calls for protecting journalists in Palestine, Lebanon, Sudan

CAIRO: The Federation of Arab Journalists (FAJ) called on the international community on Tuesday to protect journalists in Palestine, Lebanon, and Sudan from the threats that seek to silence and veil reality from being reported. FAJ condemned the blatant assaults on journalists in Palestine, emphasizing that these journalists, who bear witness to the atrocities of the occupation regime, have become targets for Zionist forces and settlers, often facing fatal risks in their pursuit of truth, said a statement released by FAJ.

FAJ called on Arab media institutions to highlight the plight of the Palestinian people, particularly journalists, by sharing documented human stories beyond mere statistics. Additionally, the Union urged a ban on normalization with representatives of Zionist regime. The statement reaffirmed the federation's commitment to monitoring the situation of journalists in Palestine, who face systematic and organized crimes by Zionist forces aimed at concealing the reality of the ongoing genocide against the Pales-

tinian population.

FAJ also lauded the bravery and determination of Palestinian journalists who continue their work despite daily threats and dangers to themselves and their families from Zionist forces. The statement also highlighted the perilous conditions faced by journalists in southern Lebanon, where Zionist occupation forces have increasingly targeted the media amid significant international political complicity. Furthermore, the federation expressed its full support and solidarity with Sudanese journalists working under extremely harsh and inhumane conditions.

The statement deplored the attacks on hundreds of Sudanese journalists, including instances of theft and kidnapping, noting that 12 journalists had been directly targeted due to their profession. FAJ reported the destruction of numerous media offices in Sudan and highlighted that approximately 1,000 Sudanese journalists are currently unemployed, representing half of the country's active journalist workforce. — KUNA

Kuwait, EU deepen ties, cooperation

BRUSSELS: The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, on Monday reaffirmed the EU's willingness to "deepen our cooperation" with Kuwait. Following a phone call with His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah, Michel took to X, saying that "the EU-Kuwait partnership is growing stronger every day." He affirmed that he is looking forward to the EU-GCC Summit, "which will showcase the positive momentum of the EU-GCC ties. We will work on every aspect of the EU-Kuwait bilateral relations, putting it at the service of peace and prosperity for our citizens," Michel added. His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah, received a phone call earlier from Michel, during which they discussed means to develop EU-Kuwaiti bilateral relations. They also discussed regional and global developments of shared interest and coordinated their responses towards them. — KUNA



Charles Michel

Local

Ministry of Health keen on fighting human trafficking

Officials mark 'World Day against Human Trafficking'

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health affirmed its keenness to perform its humanitarian mission in addressing human trafficking from several aspects, through the services it provides to victims in cooperation with concerned authorities. The Ministry's official spokesperson, Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad, said on the occasion of the World Day against Human Trafficking on July 30, that the legal and security teams are present around the clock at the Ministry of Health facilities.

Al-Sanad pointed to the Ministry's cooperation with the concerned government agencies in the Permanent National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, which develops the necessary plans and strategies to provide the necessary protection for victims. He stated that the Ministry provides services in this regard, such as providing medical services at the shelters. Other services include transportation service and ambulances equipped with the latest medical devices in accordance with international standards.

He pointed out that doctors always inform the



Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad

competent security authorities about the cases of patients who are victims of human trafficking so as to strengthen the capabilities of medical and nursing staff on how to deal with such people. The Ministry also conducts laboratory tests and x-rays for trafficking victims in the shelters and gives them seasonal vaccinations. Al-Sanad stressed legislators' keenness to

provide safety and to consolidate the provisions and principles of Islamic law, prohibiting selling or buying body organs by any means and preventing doctors from performing organ removal. The Ministry's hotline number (147) can be called to report cases of child abuse or exposure to any illegal acts. — KUNA



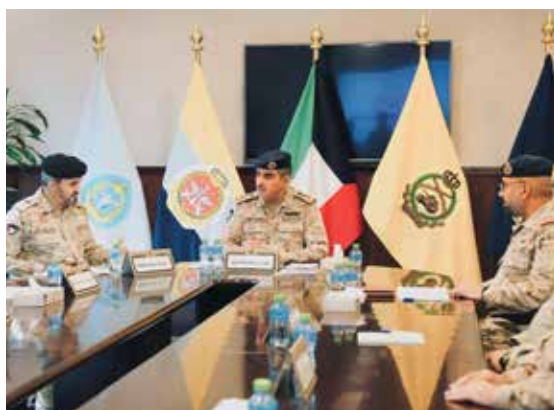
Kuwait's Ministry of Health building



Army Chief: Scientific research enhances strategic planning

KUWAIT: Chief of the Army General Staff Lieutenant General Pilot Bandar Al-Muzain said on Tuesday that scientific research provides insights and analysis that enhance strategic planning, which effectively contributes to making better decisions in the field. This came in a press statement issued by the Chief of Staff after the team visited the Center for Studies and Research, where it listened to a comprehensive explanation of the scientific research and the achievements of the center, calling on them to work with military researchers and develop their capabilities in scientific research.

Al-Muzain pointed out that scientific research also helps in developing training programs and providing the necessary knowledge to raise the level



of individual and collective performance of Kuwaiti army personnel, which ensures the readiness of the military institution to face future challenges. He expressed his thanks to the center's employees for their efforts, praising their role in organizing, planning, implementing, and supervising military scientific research. — KUNA



Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR)

KISR obtains new patent in nanofluid technology

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) obtained a new patent in the field of nanofluid technology on Monday from the US Patent and Trademark Office of the US Department of Commerce. The institute said in a press statement on Monday that this invention works on developing a system capable of producing hydrogen gas and nanofluids using effervescent tablets, funded by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). The project is titled "Dual Hydrogen and Suspension Production System Using Effervescent Tablets Containing Hydrogen Active Production Metallic Particles".

The research was a joint achievement between Dr Nasser Al-Sayegh, a participating scientific

researcher in the Nanotechnology and Advanced Materials Program at KISR, and Dr Husain Bahzad, professor of chemical engineering at the College of Technological Studies at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training. Professor of mechanical engineering at the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University Dr Nawaf Al-Juwayhel and a doctoral student on a scholarship from the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning Ali Al-Sayegh also participated in completing the project.

Dr Nasser Al-Sayegh pointed out the possibility of supplying vehicles with electricity through the hydrogen gas produced by the effervescent tablets, in addition to increasing the efficiency of cooling the internal combustion engine by the nanofluids resulting from the chemical reaction. He explained that this method of producing hydrogen is safer for hybrid vehicles than using hydrogen in its gaseous or liquid form in the event of traffic accidents, and it also requires much less storage space than that used to contain liquid or gaseous hydrogen. — KUNA

KOTC receives certificate of sustainability

KUWAIT: Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) announced on Tuesday that its headquarters, located in the Shuwaikh area received the certificate of Sustainability Assessment for Operation (Gold Level) - awarded by the Gulf Organization for Research and Development (GORD). Yusuf Al-Saqr, executive vice president of fleet operations at the company, told KUNA that this came after office evaluations and field visits from a specialized external team to compare building data and consumption patterns with environmental sustainability standards.

Al-Saqr added that the company's achievement (Gold Level) reflects its commitment to its endeavor

towards sustainability in line with KPC's strategy of energy transformation and emission reduction. GORD is considered one of the leading Qatari institutions in the field of environmental sustainability in the Middle East and North Africa and is headquartered in Qatar. Through its diverse activities, the organization seeks to support the transformation of societies, institutional structure, and to build sustainable environment. It seeks to promote innovation and capacity development to enable sustainable low-carbon growth for current and future generations. — KUNA



Yusuf Al-Saqr



Health Minister lauds emergency personnel for saving lives

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi has affirmed that the medical emergency department has contributed to securing various occasions and activities and saving lives round the clock. The minister, in a statement after a visit to the department on Monday, lauded the continuous efforts of the division, in harmony with the ministry's strategy and the government task plan. He revealed that the emergency department received 61,000 calls for urgent aid, according to the 2024 bi-annual report.

The personnel dealt with 86,000 cases, scrambled to aid victims in 5,400 road accidents, and transferred 73,000 cases, in addition to 530 others who were taken to hospitals by air. Moreover, they had conducted 296 first-aid operations. Furthermore, the department covered and secured 5,400



activities, conducted 24,000 diabetes examinations, carried out 405 catheterization operations, and conducted 23 training activities and campaigns during the year's half. — KUNA



Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi visits the medical emergency department. — KUNA photos

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In my view

Opportunity
is before us

Dr Khalid A Al-Saleh

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Reform principles are based on the rules of criticism. There is no perfect city, so active people adopt the rules of criticism and improvement, but people who are less active resort to insult and defamation. There is a fundamental difference between nations in the Renaissance era and nations in the pre-Renaissance era. Human beings will continue to develop in either way.

In the 16th century, scientists of the European Renaissance reformed the intellectual approach, taking advantage of the fall of Constantinople by copying the ideas of great nations who succeeded before them in liberating the human mind. The movement of development and civilization accelerated in recent history, and human beings advanced in science, industry, and agriculture and man stepped on the moon and created a global village surrounded by endless networks of waves.

The secret of the human being's success is in his ability to use his brain freely to improve and develop his surroundings. There are different kinds of people with different mentalities. Whenever the critical mentality disappears and pessimism and frustration spread, it is an indication of the people's failure and laziness, and these hinder growth and positive development. Spreading pessimism is not an indication of man's wish to act; rather, the opposite is totally right, and attacks and criticisms are not a sign of man's keenness to reform; rather, it is the opposite.

Critical mentality is what we need - a mentality that analyzes reality and uses the information that is based on evidence to perform an executive role. An optimistic mentality believes that imperfection is the nature of life, so do not become angry when you see any defect, but rather work on mending it. A good mentality adores freedom and respects human rights and every living creature because it is Almighty Allah's creation. How can we raise our children on those principles in the midst of those who are full of anger and pessimism? We will start by facing and analyzing reality and not run away from it. We need freedom, justice, and equality. Kuwaitis are thirsty for advanced civilization. So, the opportunity is in front of us. I hope that we do not let it go away.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: A rare sighting of a Eurasian hoopoe along Kuwait's coast. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

AI camp refines talents

16 Kuwaiti students participate in artificial intelligence camp in South Korea



Kuwaiti students pose for a group photo.

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KUWAIT: The Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Talent and Creativity, one of the centers of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), in coordination with the research capabilities program in the research and technology department at the institution, announced the participation of 16 Kuwaiti students from Grades 10 and 11 in the artificial intelligence camp in South Korea.

The center said in a press release that the camp, which started on Tuesday and lasts until August 10, comes in cooperation with the strategic partner - the Korean Institute of Science and Technology (KISTI), which is considered one of the enrichment programs for the center and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences. He added that the participation of students selected by specific scientific criteria in the camp is a good opportunity to highlight and refine their talents and to get acquainted with the latest achievements in the field of artificial intelligence in the world, especially that South Korea has enormous and advanced potential in this aspect.

He explained that this step will also establish a new generation of innovators from our Kuwaiti society by providing them with advanced skills in the

fields of artificial intelligence, engineering, science, and technology, among others, in addition to developing their skills in overcoming challenges, teamwork, and brainstorming. The center reaffirmed its keenness to provide all possible efforts and harness all possibilities to contribute to the development of the educational system in the country through the provision of specialized training, educational programs, workshops and camps.

The students who participated are Ajwan Al-Dahi, Ryan Buhimed, Zeina Al-Hays, Sarah Al-Awadi, Saud Al-Subaie, Salman Fadel, Abdul Latif Al-Nasser, Ali Theyab, Ali Jarak, Ghadir Akrov, Rakan Al-Dhufairi, Mohammed Jarak, Mohammed Al-Mufreh, Nasser Ali, Hala Al-Rashidi and Youssef Ali. The students are accompanied by a joint delegation from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences and the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Talent and Creativity, headed by the director of the research capacity building program at the research and technology department, Dr Abrar Al-Mousa, and the members Khaldoon Al-Harami, Nada Al-Fares, engineer Saleh Al-Duajj and Lulwa Al-Tuwajjri. — KUNA



Algeria to withdraw envoy to France over W Sahara rift

Harris to tour states next week with VP pick: Sources

Page 6

Page 7



CARACAS: Demonstrators clash with police close to an armored police car during a protest against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in Caracas on July 29, 2024. — AFP

Venezuelans protest 'stolen' vote

4 dead, dozens injured as police fire tear gas to disperse demonstrators

CARACAS: Venezuela braced for new demonstrations Tuesday, after four people died and dozens were injured when the authorities broke up protests against President Nicolas Maduro's claim of victory in the country's hotly disputed weekend election. Security forces had fired tear gas and rubber bullets Monday at angry protesters who claimed the election was stolen and flooded the streets chanting "Freedom, freedom!" and "This government is going to fall!"

Some ripped down and burned Maduro campaign posters while at least two statues of Hugo Chavez — the late authoritarian socialist who led Venezuela for more than a decade and handpicked Maduro as his successor — were knocked down by protesters. Attorney General Tarek William Saab said Tuesday 749 "criminals" had been arrested during the protests and faced charges of resisting authority or, "in the most serious cases, terrorism."

The opposition fiercely contests the outcome of Sunday's election which authorities say was won by Maduro with 51.2 percent of votes cast compared to 44.2 percent for Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia. Opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, who was replaced by Urrutia on the bal-

lot after she was barred from running by Maduro-aligned courts, said voting records showed Urrutia had a "mathematically irreversible" lead.

The opposition count gives Gonzalez Urrutia 6.27 million votes to Maduro's 2.75 million. The Organization of American States, a regional body, charged Tuesday there was "exceptional manipulation" of the election results that handed Maduro the win.

The protests that erupted on Monday left 44 injured, most of them with bullet wounds, according to the National Hospital Survey, a network that monitors crises in the country's hospitals. Two of the dead were in the state of Aragua and one in Caracas, the network said. The NGO Foro Penal meanwhile reported one more dead in the northwestern state of Yaracuy. "Unfortunately, in the last few hours we have reports of people killed, dozens injured and detained," Gonzalez Urrutia wrote on X. He urged security forces to "stop the repression of peaceful demonstrations."

'Absolute loyalty'

The Defense Ministry for its part reported 23 wounded military personnel. Defense Minister Vladimir

Padrino assured that Maduro had the "absolute loyalty and unconditional support" of the armed forces. Machado called for families to turn out Tuesday for "popular assemblies" nationwide to show support for a peaceful transition of power.

Maduro's campaign manager Jorge Rodriguez, also called on X for "large marches starting this Tuesday to celebrate the victory." Amid growing fears of violence, a leading figure in the opposition coalition, Freddy Superlano, was "kidnapped" by black-clad officials, his Voluntad Popular said on X.

Venezuela's elections were held amid widespread fears of fraud by the government and a campaign tainted by accusations of political intimidation. The United Nations, United States, European Union and several Latin American countries called for a "transparent" process after the vote, while allies including China, Russia and Cuba congratulated Maduro. Nine Latin American countries called in a joint statement for a "complete review of the results with the presence of independent electoral observers." Chile's president said the outcome was "hard to believe."

Amid the tensions, Peru recalled its ambassador and Panama said it was suspending relations with Venezuela.

Caracas meanwhile said it was withdrawing diplomatic staff from Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay.

'Bloodbath' warning

Independent polls had predicted Maduro would lose Sunday's vote. He has been at the helm of the once-wealthy oil-rich country since 2013. Amid US sanctions and economic mismanagement, the past decade has seen GDP drop by 80 percent, pushing more than seven million of Venezuela's 30 million citizens to emigrate.

Maduro is accused of locking up critics and harassing the opposition in a climate of rising authoritarianism. In the run-up to the election, he warned of a "bloodbath" if he lost. Sunday's election was the product of a deal reached last year between the government and opposition.

That agreement led the United States to temporarily ease sanctions imposed after Maduro's 2018 reelection, rejected as a sham by dozens of Latin American and other countries. Sanctions were snapped back after Maduro reneged on agreed conditions. Venezuela boasts the world's largest oil reserves but production capacity has been severely diminished in recent years. — AFP



MAJDAL SHAMS: Druze men from Majdal Shams wave flags as they gather facing Syrian Druze from the village of Ain Al-Tineh on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights. — AFP photos



BEIRUT: Debris covers damaged vehicles following a Zionist military strike on Beirut's southern suburbs on July 30, 2024.

Zionist air strike targets Hezbollah commander in Beirut

BEIRUT/JERUSALEM/MANILA: A Zionist air strike targeted a senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut's southern suburbs late on Tuesday in what the Zionist military said was retaliation for a cross-border rocket attack three days before that killed 12 children and teenagers.

A loud blast was heard and a plume of smoke could be seen rising above the southern suburbs — a stronghold of the Iran-backed Lebanese armed group Hezbollah — at around 7:40 p.m. (1640 GMT), a Reuters witness said. A senior Lebanese security source said a senior Hezbollah commander had been the target of the air strike and his fate remained unclear at the time of publication.

Lebanon's state-run national news agency said a Zionist air strike had targeted the area around Hezbollah's Shura Council in the Haret Hreik neighborhood of the capital. Beirut has been on edge for days ahead of an anticipated Zionist attack in reprisal for the rocket strike on the Zionist-occupied Golan Heights on Saturday that killed the 12 youngsters in a football field in a Druze village. Hezbollah has denied involvement in that attack.

In a statement, the Zionist military said it had conducted "a targeted strike in Beirut on the commander responsible for the murder of the children in Majdal Shams and the killing of numerous additional (Zionist) civilians". Details would follow. Earlier on Tuesday, more rocket fire from south Lebanon killed a civilian in a kibbutz in the north of the entity, medics said.

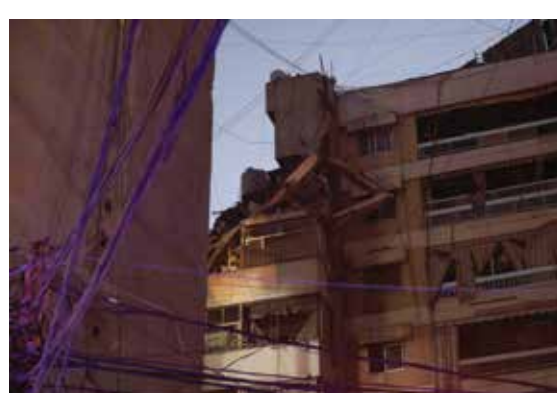
Shortly before the explosion in south Beirut, the Zionist military said 15 projectiles had been fired across the Lebanese border within the past few hours, with impacts in parts of the Upper Galilee region. No injuries were reported. The entity's air force had just hit a Hezbollah observation post and "terror infrastructure" in south Lebanon, it added.

Concerns about escalation as diplomats sought to contain the fallout, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said he did not believe a fight was inevitable between Hezbollah and the Zionist entity, though he remained concerned about the potential for escalation.

Druze reject retaliation

Hours before the strike, Druze residents of the Zionist-annexed Golan Heights had distanced themselves from Zionist threats to retaliate against Hezbollah.

Most of Majdal Shams's around 11,000 residents



The destroyed top floors of an eight-storey building are seen following the Zionist strike on southern Beirut.

still identify as Syrian more than half a century after the Zionist entity seized the Golan Heights from Syria and later annexed it in a move not recognized by the international community.

On a visit to the town on Monday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed the Zionist entity would deliver a "severe response" to the strike, which killed 12 children aged between 10 and 16 as they played football on Saturday. Scores of Majdal Shams residents had come out to protest Netanyahu's visit, many donning traditional Druze caps.

In a statement issued after his visit, Druze lay and religious leaders said the community rejects the "attempt to exploit the name of Majdal Shams as a political platform at the expense of the blood of our children". Noting that the Druze faith "forbids killing and revenge in any form", the community leaders said "we reject the shedding of even a single drop of blood under the pretext of avenging our children".

'Who will we strike?'

An AFP journalist reported that a semblance of normality had returned to Majdal Shams on Tuesday, with shops open and residents walking on the streets. But the Druze leaders and residents said the whole community was still reeling from the children's deaths. "The tragedy is immense, the impact is painful and the loss is shared by every household in the Golan," they said.

A paramedic from Majdal Shams, Nabih Abu Saleh, told AFP: "The town is in a state of mourning that may last for a week. 'We can't look into each other's eyes, because tears will flow,' he added. Saleh said his community was "against any (Zionist) response", and asked: "Who will we strike? Our people in Syria and Lebanon?" — Agencies

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International

Harris to tour states next week with VP pick: Sources

Democrat being forced to select running mate on highly compressed timeline

WASHINGTON: Vice President Kamala Harris will tour battleground states next week with her vice-presidential candidate, two sources familiar with the planning said on Tuesday, a sign the selection process for her running mate is coming to a close. The high-stakes decision on who will run with Harris has taken center stage since she became the Democratic frontrunner for the November 5 election after US President Joe Biden ended his White House bid just over a week ago. Harris will announce her vice presidential pick before next week's tour of states that could swing to Republicans or Democrats in November, one of the sources said.

Harris' campaign did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The short list of candidates under consideration include Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear, Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro, US Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg. On Monday, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper and Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer both indicated they were both out of the VP sweepstakes.

A handful of US states, often called bat-

legrounds, have decided the presidential election in recent years, including Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Typically, campaigns begin thinking about their vice-presidential pick after the primary race ends in the spring, giving them months to vet candidates and make a decision on who the candidate meshes with best personally and politically.

Harris is being forced to select her running mate on a highly compressed timeline. She faces an August 7 deadline set by the Democratic National Committee, but the decision is likely to come sooner, according to the sources. Eric Holder Jr, the former attorney general who led the vice-presidential vetting process for Barack Obama in 2008, is vetting Harris' picks through his law firm, Covington & Burling.

The candidates are informally auditioning for the job, hitting the airwaves and campaign stops to showcase what they would bring to the Harris ticket. Shapiro, for example, delivered a rousing testimonial about Harris in the Philadelphia suburbs on Monday. "She's not only ready, she's damned ready," he said to a cheering crowd. "And you know

who else knows she's ready? Donald Trump knows she's ready."

Walz, the governor of Minnesota, is credited with pushing the Democrats' new criticism of Trump and his running mate J D Vance - that they are "weird." "The fascists depend on us going back, but we're not afraid of weird people," Walz said on Saturday of the Republican ticket. "We're a little bit creeped out, but we're not afraid."

Harris has admitted that Democrats are the "underdogs" in the race. The question is now whether a vice president who recorded historically low approval ratings - but seeing a rapid improvement as a candidate - can keep up the momentum until November. Republican vice presidential candidate Vance - himself facing a bumpy first week amid reports that his party has buyer's remorse over his naming to the ticket - admitted that Harris' last-minute entry was a "sucker punch".

The race had seemed set to feature former president Trump, 78, against incumbent Biden, 81, but the Democrat's withdrawal due to concerns over his age now



MASSACHUSETTS: US Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris speaks during a campaign fundraising event at the Colonial Theater in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on July 27, 2024. — AFP

leaves Trump as the oldest candidate in US history. Vance told donors at a weekend fundraiser that "all of us were hit with a little bit of a political sucker punch," the Washington Post reported, citing a recording of his comments.

The "Hillbilly Elegy" author's popularity has taken a hit in recent weeks from damaging old videos, including one in which he disparaged prominent Democratic women as "childless cat ladies." — Agencies

US to provide \$500m military funding to Philippines: Blinken

MANILA: The United States will provide \$500 million in military funding to the Philippines, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Tuesday, as Washington boosts ties with Manila in the face of China's growing assertiveness.

Blinken was in Manila with US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin as part of an Asia-Pacific tour to strengthen Washington's latticework of alliances aimed at countering Beijing. "We're now allocating an additional \$500 million in foreign military financing to the Philippines to boost security collaboration with our oldest treaty ally in this region," Blinken told a joint news conference.

Blinken described it as a "once in a generation investment" to help modernize the Philippine armed forces and coast guard. "We're building on a lot of progress the Philippines has already made to be better positioned to defend their sovereignty. That is what this is about."

Blinken and Austin earlier met with President Ferdinand Marcos, who has taken a strong stand against Chinese actions in the South China Sea, before holding

"2+2" talks with their Philippine counterparts Enrique Manalo and Gilberto Teodoro.

The latest high-level US visit follows a series of escalating confrontations between Philippine and Chinese vessels in the disputed waterway that have raised concern that Washington could be dragged into a conflict due to its mutual defense treaty with Manila. The additional funding is part of the \$2 billion in foreign military financing approved by the United States in April.

The Philippines began a modest modernization program more than a decade ago under former president Benigno Aquino to strengthen its armed forces, one of the weakest in Asia. It has continued under Marcos, who has also ordered the military to increase their focus on external threats. Teodoro said the US funds would be used to help secure the Philippines' "credible deterrent posture", as it seeks to boost its cybersecurity capabilities among other things.

'Fanning the flames'

There has been a revolving door of top US officials passing through the Philippines since Marcos took office in 2022 and adopted a more US-friendly foreign policy. Marcos expanded an agreement giving American troops access to nine Philippine military bases, including in the far north of the country, which has infuriated Chinese leaders.

The Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement, or



PASAY: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (left) poses for a photo with a policeman before his departure at Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Pasay, Metro Manila, on July 30, 2024. — AFP

EDCA, allows US troops to rotate through the bases and also store defense equipment and supplies at them. Teodoro said Manila and Washington had agreed to "fully implement" EDCA projects and boost investment in the

sites. The Philippines' proximity to the hotly contested South China Sea, as well as self-ruled Taiwan, would make it a key partner for the United States if a conflict were to break out in the region. — AFP

108 killed after landslides strike...

Continued from Page 1

state security forces and fire crews in search-and-rescue efforts. Modi's office said families of the dead would receive a compensation payment of \$2,400 (200,000 rupees).

Vijayan said that more than 3,000 people were sheltering in emergency relief camps around Wayanad district. More rainfall and strong winds lashed Kerala on Tuesday, and Vijayan urged the public to "be prepared and heed warnings" of more potential disasters ahead. "Everyone should be willing to follow the instructions given by authorities and not ignore them," he added.

Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi, who until recently represented Wayanad in parliament, told lawmakers that the scope of the devastation was "heart-breaking". "Our country has witnessed an alarming rise in landslides in recent years," he said. "The need of the hour is a comprehensive action plan to address the growing frequency of natural calamities."

UK grieves as third child dies...

Continued from Page 1

six and Elsie Dot Stancombe aged seven were the two who died Monday. A vigil for the victims was to be held in the town on Tuesday.

Police said the two wounded adults had been trying to protect the children. Tributes have already been paid to the bravery of dance and yoga teacher Leanne Lucas, who was among the victims. A 17-year-old youth from a nearby village arrested shortly after the killings remained in custody, police added, without giving details of his identity. They have only said that the attack was not considered "terror-related" and that no one else was being sought. Interior minister Yvette Cooper said police were pursuing "every single avenue".

US pop star Swift said she was "completely in shock" over "the loss of life and innocence, and the horrendous trauma inflicted on everyone". "These were just little kids at a dance class. I am at a complete loss for how to ever convey my sympathies to these families," she added on Instagram.

Aguiar was the daughter of Portuguese parents from Madeira. "Her parents are in a state of shock," Portugal's communities minister Jose Cesario told AFP. Her family said in a tribute, "Keep smiling and dancing like you love to do our princess, like we said before to you, you're always our princess and no one would change that." Bebe King's family said, "No words can describe the devastation that has hit our family as try to deal with the loss of our little girl Bebe."

Residents of the seaside town said they were struggling to come to terms with the deaths. "The town is in shock and in mourning", local MP Pat-

rick Hurley told AFP, calling it the "most horrific atrocity that Southport has experienced in living memory". It is a "very small town, a close-knit community and everybody will be intimately affected by this", he added.

"I just cannot believe that it happened so close to home," resident Leanne Hassan told reporters. Hassan's daughter was at a nearby nursery which was locked down after the attack. Her daughter was safe, "but unfortunately that's not the reality for a lot of parents waking up today," she added. Local business owner Colin Parry recounted to UK media how he saw "about 10 kids go running past him, all bleeding". "One of them collapsed on the floor outside the neighbor next door," he told the Press Association news agency.

The teenager arrested on suspicion of murder and attempted murder is from the neighboring village of Banks but was born in Cardiff, according to police. His identity has not been revealed. Police said a name shared on social media was "incorrect and we would urge people not to speculate on details of the incident while the investigation is ongoing". Witnesses told UK media the attacker arrived at the scene in a taxi on Monday morning and entered the venue wearing a mask. Armed officers detained the suspect later and seized a knife.

While such attacks are rare, Monday's incident evoked memories of a school massacre in the Scottish town of Dunblane in 1996, which claimed the lives of 16 pupils and their teacher in Britain's worst mass shooting. King Charles III offered his "most heartfelt condolences, prayers and deepest sympathies" following the "utterly horrific" incident. Heir to the throne, Prince William, and his wife Catherine said "as parents, we cannot begin to imagine what the families, friends and loved ones of those killed and injured in Southport today are going through". — AFP

Zionists kill 300 in Khan Yunis; 'polio...

Continued from Page 1

They had been killed during the Hamas attacks of October 7 and their bodies taken back to Gaza, the military said. The Zionist military campaign in Gaza has killed at least 39,400 people, according to the health ministry, mostly women and children.

The health ministry in Gaza also declared the Palestinian territory a "polio epidemic area", accusing Zionist military campaign of destroying health infrastructure, which led to the recurrence of the virus. The CPV2 strain of the virus has been detected in sewage samples collected from the southern Khan Yunis area and central governorates, the ministry said.

It did not say if any human cases had been detected, but said the presence of the virus "constitutes a health threat to the residents of the Gaza Strip and neighboring countries and a setback to the global polio eradication program". The wild version of the virus is now endemic only in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but a type of vaccine that contains small amounts of weakened but live polio still causes occasional outbreaks elsewhere.

United Nations agencies said recently that such vaccine-derived type-2 poliovirus had been detected in samples collected from sewage. "The brutal (Zionist) aggression that deprived the people of usable water, the destruction of the sanitation infrastructure, the accumulation of tons of garbage and a lack of food security" had led to the recurrence of the virus, the ministry said.

On Tuesday, the World Health Organization said it was "looking at a very problematic situation". "Having vaccine-derived poliovirus in the sewage very likely means that it's out there somewhere in people," WHO spokesman Christian Lindmeier told journalists. "But again, about 75 percent of people infected by polio don't even show any symptoms. That means

it most likely is in the population but it doesn't necessarily mean that we see an outbreak of cases."

He said a campaign to distribute vaccines across the Gaza Strip was needed. "It's not enough just to get it (the vaccine) into Ben Gurion airport and then hopefully get it into Gaza. It needs to reach people," Lindmeier said. Zionist bombardments and ground assault have devastated swathes of Gaza, displacing the vast majority of its 2.4 million population.

Meanwhile, the Zionist entity and Hezbollah exchanged deadly fire on Tuesday, following a rocket attack from Lebanon on the Golan Heights that killed 12 children over the weekend and sent regional tensions soaring. The strike on the Druze Arab town of Majdal Shams in the Zionist-annexed Golan Heights on Saturday, whose victims were aged between 10 and 16, was blamed by the Zionist entity and the United States on Lebanon's Hezbollah, but the group has denied any connection to the attack.

Zionist medics on Tuesday said one civilian, a 30-year-old man, was killed following a rocket attack on the northern kibbutz of HaGoshrim. The Zionist army meanwhile reported its forces were "striking the sources of fire", which were in Lebanon. It had said earlier that it struck around 10 Hezbollah targets overnight in seven different areas of south Lebanon, killing one fighter from the Iran-backed group.

Hezbollah said on Tuesday that it had fired a salvo of Katyusha rockets at a military headquarters in the village of Beit Hillel, in response to "the (Zionist) enemy's attack on the town of Jibchit, which resulted in civilian casualties". Lebanon's official National News Agency had reported a strike in the Jibchit area that caused "major damage".

Lebanon has been bracing for major retaliatory strikes following the Golan attack, amid international efforts to defuse tensions. But Druze residents of the town - the vast majority of whom have rejected Zionist citizenship and identify as Syrians - have rejected threats of retaliation for the deadly strike. A paramedic from Majdal Shams, Nabih Abu Saleh, told AFP his community was "against any (Zionist) response", and asked: "Who will we strike? Our people in Syria and Lebanon?" — Agencies



GAZA: A Palestinian woman takes a photo as she stands in the excavated area where the Zionist army reportedly conducted operations before withdrawing in Bani Suhayla town in the east of the Khan Yunis governorate in the southern Gaza Strip on July 30, 2024. — AFP

International

Algeria to withdraw envoy to France over W Sahara rift

Macron angers Algiers after approving plan for territory's autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty

ALGIERS: Algeria announced Tuesday it was withdrawing its ambassador to Paris after France said autonomy within Morocco was the "only" solution to the decades-long Western Saharan dispute.

In a letter Tuesday to Morocco's King Mohammed VI congratulating him on his 25th coronation anniversary, French President Emmanuel Macron said Rabat's autonomy plan for Western Sahara was "the only basis that will lead to a just, lasting and negotiated political solution".

It drew an angry reaction from the pro-independence Polisario Front and the group's main backer Algeria. "The Algerian diplomatic representation in France is now the responsibility of a charge d'affaires," the Algerian foreign ministry was quoted as saying by Algeria's APS news agency. The ministry denounced a "step that no other French government had taken before."

Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony, is largely controlled by Morocco but claimed by the Polisario Front, which in 2020 declared a "self-defense war" and seeks the territory's independence. It is considered by the United Nations, which has had a peacekeeping mission there since 1991, as a "non-self-governing territory". The UN's stated aim is to organize a referendum on the territory's future, but Morocco has repeatedly rejected any vote in which independence is an option.

In his letter, Macron wrote: "The pursuit of the economic and social development of this region is imperative." "I welcome all the efforts made by Morocco in this regard. France will support it in this approach for the benefit of local populations," he added.

The Moroccan royal court hailed Macron's comments in his letter as "a significant step in support of Moroccan sovereignty" over the Western Sahara.

The Polisario retorted that the French leader was supporting the territory's "violent and illegal occupation" by Morocco.

'Historic change'

Macron's announcement did little to appease tensions between Paris and Algiers that appeared to be thawing in recent months. An official visit to France by Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune — pushed back twice already — was scheduled to take place this fall. But reports in Algerian media following Macron's statement have said it is unlikely to take place.

Algeria was a French colony for 130 years and gained its independence in 1962 after a devastating eight-year war. The two countries have had a few diplomatic spats in recent years. In February 2023, Algeria had also withdrawn its ambassador from France, accusing it of helping activist Amira Bouraoui flee the North African country.

Algerian-French ties fell into crisis in late 2021 after Macron questioned Algeria's existence as a nation before the French occupation, and accused the government of fomenting "hatred towards France". The two countries mended ties after a visit in August 2023 to Algeria by Macron, who signed with Tebboune a joint declaration to re-launch bilateral cooperation.

The Algerian foreign ministry said Tuesday that France was "flouting international legality, taking up the cause of the denial of the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination". Hasni Abidi, a North Africa expert at Center for Studies and Research on the Arab and Mediterranean World, said Macron's statement relayed "a historic change" in the French position on the issue.



PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron (left) welcomes Mohammed VI, King of Morocco, on April 10, 2018 at the Elysee Palace in Paris. — AFP

He said the decision came after pressure by the French right which believes that "Paris will never win Algiers and risks losing its major ally Rabat". In February, French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne had already said during a trip to Morocco that the kingdom could count on France's "clear and constant support".

On Tuesday, Algeria referred to France and Mo-

rocco as "colonial powers" and warned of "consequences that will follow France's decision". Algeria broke off diplomatic ties with Morocco in August 2021. In 2020, then US president Donald Trump recognized Morocco's annexation of the Western Sahara in return for Rabat normalizing ties with the Zionist entity. — AFP

Iran's President Pezeshkian sworn in at parliament

TEHRAN: Iranian reformist Masoud Pezeshkian was sworn in before parliament on Tuesday as the Islamic republic's ninth president at a ceremony attended by foreign dignitaries. Pezeshkian won a runoff race against ultraconservative Saeed Jalili on July 5 to replace president Ebrahim Raisi who died in a helicopter crash in May.

Tuesday's ceremony came two days after Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei officially endorsed Pezeshkian and gave the 69-year-old heart surgeon presidential powers. "I as the president, in front of the Holy Quran and the people of Iran, swear to almighty God to be the guardian of the official religion and the Islamic Republic system and the constitution of the country," Pezeshkian said at the ceremony which was broadcast live on state TV. Pezeshkian, who is expected to unveil his government within two weeks, had secured more than 16 million votes during the runoff, or about 54 percent of the roughly 30 million ballots cast.

Iran's presidential election took place against a backdrop of heightened regional tensions since the Gaza war began in early October, disputes with Western powers over Iran's nuclear program and domestic discontent over the state of the sanctions-hit economy.

Tuesday's ceremony was attended by senior officials from several countries including Kuwait, Armenia, Tajikistan, Egypt, Sudan, Iraq, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Cuba and Brazil. European Union envoy Enrique Mora was also present.

Regional Iran-backed allies were also in attendance, namely Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and the head of the Islamic Jihad Ziyad Al-Nakhalah. Lebanon's Hezbollah movement was represented by the group's deputy secretary general Naim Qassem while the Yemen's Houthi rebels sent spokesman Mohammed Abdulsalam.

'Death' to the Zionist entity

Haniyeh and Nakhalah, whose groups have been



TEHRAN: New Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses the members of parliament and foreign dignitaries after his swearing in ceremony at the parliament in Tehran, on July 30, 2024. — AFP

fighting the Zionist entity in the Gaza Strip, met with Khamenei and Pezeshkian. "Supporting the cause of the oppressed Palestinian nation will continue with strength, and no factor can disrupt our will in this direction," said Pezeshkian on Monday.

During his inauguration speech, Pezeshkian slammed the Zionist entity's "crimes" in the Gaza Strip with some Iranians present in parliament chanting "Death to (the Zionist entity). Death to America!" "Those who supply the weapons that kill children in Gaza cannot teach humanity and tolerance to others," he said referring to the United States. Iran has made support for the Palestinian cause a centerpiece of its foreign policy since the 1979 Islamic revolution, and hailed Hamas's October 7 attack on the Zionist entity.

Iran's president is not head of state, and the ultimate authority rests with the supreme leader — a post held by Khamenei for the last 35 years. On Monday, Pezeshkian warned the entity against attacking Lebanon, saying such an act would have

"heavy consequences". Since his election, Iran's new president has reaffirmed support for the so-called "axis of resistance", Tehran-aligned groups such as Hezbollah and the Houthis.

Pezeshkian was the only candidate representing Iran's reformist camp allowed to stand in Iran's presidential election, for which all contenders were approved by the conservative-dominated Guardian Council. In his speech on Tuesday, he also reaffirmed his willingness to end Iran's isolation, saying "I will not stop on the path of lifting the cruel sanctions".

During his campaign, he had vowed to try and revive a 2015 nuclear deal with world powers which collapsed in 2018 after the United States unilaterally withdrew from agreement. The deal had given Iran sanctions relief in return for curbs on its nuclear activity. Pezeshkian has recently called for "constructive relations" with European countries, even though he accused them of renegeing on commitments to mitigate the impact of renewed US sanctions. — AFP

centrating executive power firmly in the presidency's hands and reversing hard-won rights in the birthplace of the Arab Spring uprisings. Kharat said many factors are "reducing the credibility" of the upcoming election, referring to the candidacy criteria, the delayed announcement of the election day, and a 2022 law punishing "spreading false news".

The law, Decree 54, has been used to prosecute more than 60 journalists, lawyers and opposition figures, according to the National Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists (SNJT). Amnesty International Secretary General Agnes Callamard said last week that since Saied's power grab, "violations that we thought part of Tunisia's past are becoming more and more discernible and systematic".

"Instead of the vibrant debates of a pluralist political scene, I observed government repression, fueling fear and dread about what's to come." Yet many still aspire to submit their candidacies. Key would-be candidates include Kamel Akrouf, a retired military admiral, and Mondher Zenaïdi, 74, a former minister who has presented his experience as an asset for debt-stricken Tunisia.

Last week, K2 Rhyam, a famous 43-year-old Tunisian rapper, also announced his intention to run. The country is meanwhile still grappling with an economic crisis that has seen many Tunisians join mostly sub-Saharan African migrants seeking to cross the Mediterranean to Europe.

If Akrouf or Zenaïdi are pushed out of the race, it would be a referendum on Saied's rule, said the anonymous expert. The expert added that the vote "will define the nature of the (next) regime". "If Saied wins by a wide margin in the first round, he will become even more authoritarian. Otherwise, he will be more inclined to compromise."

'Sacred duty'

"Much will depend on the opposition and its ability to unite behind an alternative candidate to Saied," said Werenfels. "If one or more candidates get 15 or 20 percent of the vote, there will be a second round."

Left-wing movements and Ennahdha, the Islamist-in-



BEIJING: Tunisia's President Kais Saied attends a signing ceremony with China's President (not pictured) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 31, 2024. — AFP

spired party that had dominated Tunisian politics following the 2011 uprising, still hesitate to boycott the election, seeing it as "an opportunity to challenge Kais Saied", said Kharat. It remains difficult to measure support for Saied or any other hopeful prior to the vote, amid a ban on political polls.

While Saied's popularity among working-class Tunisians endures, experts believe he is far below the 72 percent he secured in the 2019 vote. Recent rallies in support of Saied have seen low turnout. IWatch, a Tunisian watchdog, said last week in a report that Saied had "failed to keep 87.5 percent of his electoral promises" over the past five years.

But Saied has stepped up his campaign, declaring that he was driven by "a sacred duty towards the homeland" when announcing his intention to seek a second term. In the past few weeks, he has multiplied his famed surprise visits, addressing issues such as pollution and water cuts, all while blaming "conspirators" and "traitors" working under "foreign influence". — AFP

Taliban cut ties with embassies loyal to former government

KABUL: The Taliban government has severed consular ties with swathes of Afghan embassies in Western countries, Kabul said Tuesday, cutting off diplomats loyal to the former foreign-backed administration. The 2021 Taliban takeover left diplomats staffing Afghanistan's foreign missions in limbo, having pledged to serve a government which collapsed in chaos after the withdrawal of US troops.

No country has yet formally recognized the Taliban government but in the past three years the Kabul authorities have installed Taliban ambassadors in some neighboring embassies. But Afghanistan's foreign ministry said Tuesday it now "bears no responsibility" for credentials including passports and visas issued by missions out of step with Kabul's new rulers.

The embassies include those in the cities of London and Berlin as well as the countries of Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, France, Italy, Greece, Poland, Sweden, Norway, Canada and Australia. "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has repeatedly urged the Afghan political and consular missions in European countries to engage with Kabul," a statement said. "Unfortunately, the actions of most of the missions are carried out arbitrarily, without coordination and in explicit violation of the existing accepted principles."

The statement said Afghans living abroad should deal instead with missions affiliated with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan — the self-styled name the Taliban have given the country under their rule. Pakistan, China and Russia are among Afghan embassies working on order from the Taliban government.

Embassies cut off from Kabul have found themselves in dire financial straits, relying heavily on consular fees to pay staff salaries, rent and bills. Without that income they may struggle to remain open. The foreign ministry did not respond to a request for comment on its future plans for the ostracized embassies. — AFP

Tunisia's presidential race marred by candidacy constraints

TUNIS: Tunisia has kicked off candidacy submissions for its upcoming presidential election on October 6, amid what experts say are significant constraints on hopefuls challenging incumbent President Kais Saied. A number of conditions and requirements to run for office have changed under Saied, 66, who was democratically elected in 2019 but orchestrated a sweeping power grab in 2021.

To qualify to appear on the ballot, candidates are required to gather "an enormous number" of signatures, said Amine Kharat, a political analyst at independent observatory Al Bawsala. "The conditions have been hardened," Isabelle Werenfels, North Africa expert at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, told AFP.

Not to mention, a number of would-be candidates will not be able to even obtain the initial candidacy form because they are in prison. Among them are Issam Chebbi, leader of centrist party Al Joumhouri, and Ghazi Chaouchi, head of the social-democrat party Democratic Current.

Detained for "plotting against the state", the two politicians are among over 20 of Saied's opponents held since a flurry of arrests in February 2023. Abir Moussi, a vocal critic of Saied and head of the Free Destourian Party, has also been detained on similar charges since October last year. Amnesty International labelled the arrests a "politically motivated witch hunt". An expert speaking on condition of anonymity told AFP "everything has been set up to push aside credible candidates who can represent a real danger" for Saied.

'Government repression'

In 2022, Saied led a revision of the constitution, con-

Radical UK Islamist preacher jailed for life for terrorism

LONDON: British radical Islamist preacher Anjem Choudary, whose followers have been linked to numerous plots around the world, was sentenced to life imprisonment on Tuesday for directing a terrorist organization. Choudary, 57, was convicted last week of directing Al-Muhajiroun, which was banned as a terrorist organization more than a decade ago, and encouraging others to support the proscribed group. "Organizations such as yours normalize violence in support of an ideological cause," Judge Mark Wall told Choudary at London's Woolwich Crown Court. "Their existence gives individuals who are members of them the courage to commit acts which otherwise they might not do. They drive wedges between people who otherwise could and would live together in peaceful coexistence."

Wall imposed a life sentence on Choudary with a minimum term of 28 years before he can be eligible for parole, less just over the year that he has spent in custody since his arrest.

Once Britain's most high-profile Islamist preacher, Choudary drew attention for praising the men responsible for the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States and saying he wanted to convert Buckingham Palace into a mosque. He was previously imprisoned in Britain in 2016 for encouraging support for Islamic State, before being released in 2018 after serving half of his five-and-a-half-year sentence. — Reuters

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2024

Boursa Kuwait records 11.39% growth in net profit for H1 2024

Trading volume increased by 58.28% while trading values jumped by 31.66%

KUWAIT: In a meeting of its Board of Directors on July 30, 2024, Boursa Kuwait announced its interim consolidated financial results for the period ended June 30, 2024, recording a net profit growth of 11.39 percent to reach KD 9.38 million compared to KD 8.42 million recorded during the corresponding period in 2023. Meanwhile, the company's operating profit increased by 17.02 percent from KD 9.89 million in 2023 to KD 11.58 million in the first half of 2024.

Boursa Kuwait's total operating revenues increased by 13.22 percent to KD 17.15 million in the first half of 2024 compared to KD 15.14 million during the corresponding period in 2023, while earnings per share rose from 41.94 fils to 46.71 fils, an increase of 11.39 percent. Additionally, consolidated assets increased 3.08 percent from KD 109.99 million in 2023 to KD 113.37 million in the first half of 2024 while shareholders' equity (attributable to the equity holders of the parent company) went from KD 56.85 million in 2023 to KD 58.75 million, representing an increase of 3.34 percent.

Commenting on these results, Boursa Kuwait Chairman Hamad Mishari Al-Humaidhi said: "Boursa Kuwait saw an increase in its net profit by 11.39 percent in the first half of 2024, recording a net profit of approximately KD 9.38 million for the period ended June 30, 2024, thanks to its strong operational model and robust financial performance. The exchange continues to play a vital role in developing a sustainable capital market, believing in the importance of enhancing sustainability and governance practices in its operations and among companies listed in the Kuwaiti capital market."

Boursa Kuwait continued its remarkable achievements in corporate sustainability and environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices, winning six awards from prestigious global magazines during the first half of 2024. These include the "Leadership in Sustainability Transparency" award from Global Finance magazine, "Best Sustainable Corporate Governance" and "Best ESG Development Strategy" awards from The European magazine. Additionally, the exchange received the "Outstanding Contribution to Women's Empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa for 2023" award, the "Best Capital Markets ESG Strategy in the GCC for 2023" award and the "Outstanding Contribution to Financial Inclusion - GCC for 2023" award from Capital Finance International (CFI), which were announced in June 2024.

Al-Humaidhi added, "The company recognizes that foreign and institutional investors are becoming increasingly interested in ESG standards and has developed an environment attractive to sustainable investments. Winning awards and recognitions in this field confirms our commitment to



Hamad Mishari Al-Humaidhi
Boursa Kuwait Chairman

- Boursa Kuwait continues to develop a sustainable capital market, recognizing the importance of promoting sustainability practices and creating an attractive investment environment for foreign and institutional investors



Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi
Boursa Kuwait CEO

- Boursa Kuwait's first-half results confirm that the exchange continues to develop a strong financial market with high liquidity and transparency, capable of attracting both investors and issuers

sustainability and demonstrates that the exchange has been a responsible company since its establishment. I would like to extend my gratitude to my fellow Board members, the Executive Management team, and all Boursa Kuwait employees for their diligent efforts that have enabled us to establish ourselves as a leading exchange in the region and the success story of the Kuwaiti financial scene."

Boursa Kuwait recorded much-improved performances during the first half of 2024 thanks to the growth in trading volume, which jumped 58.28 percent from approximately 17.08 billion shares to approximately 27.03 billion shares. Additionally, traded value increased by 31.66 percent from KD 5.04 billion to KD 6.63 billion, while average daily traded value (ADTV) increased by the same percentage from KD 42.33 million in 2023 to KD 55.73 million in 2024.

The company also welcomed the listing of Beyout Investment Group Holding Company in its "Premier" Market, which brought the total number of listed companies to 145 and the total of "Premier" Market companies to 34. The listing proves that Boursa Kuwait diligently works to attract substantial listings that add value to the Kuwaiti capital market as part of its progressive strategy to develop a strong and efficient capital market with high degrees of transparency and liquidity.

"Boursa Kuwait continues to achieve its strategic goals to develop a robust financial market with high liquidity and transparency, one that is capable of attracting investors and issuers alike. The results of the first half of this year confirm this progress and help strengthen the company's position as a pioneering financial market in the region that meets the evolving needs of all its participants. The exchange continues to promote the Kuwaiti capital market and its listed companies to the international investment community as well as conducting field visits to companies looking to list as part of its efforts to solidify its reputation as a leading institution in the Middle East," said Boursa Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Mo-



hammad Saud Al-Osaimi.

The Kuwaiti stock exchange organized its 12th Corporate Day in London in collaboration with Jefferies Financial Group and with the participation of six Kuwaiti companies, an initiative that highlight-

ed its efforts to showcase the most prominent listed companies and increase investor interest in the opportunities it offers. Additionally, the exchange organized its 13th Corporate Day with the participation of six listed companies in collaboration with HSBC, which took place in London in parallel with the GCC Exchanges Conference. Furthermore, in an effort to highlight the benefits and process of listing on the Kuwaiti capital market, Boursa Kuwait hosted a high-level Chinese delegation that included several companies listed on the Hong Kong market in collaboration with ARTE Capital.

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

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

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



BERLIN: (From left) German Finance Minister Christian Lindner, German Minister of Economics and Climate Protection Robert Habeck and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz deliver a press conference in Berlin. —AFP

German economy unexpectedly shrinks in Q2

FRANKFURT: The German economy unexpectedly shrank in the second quarter, preliminary data showed Tuesday, falling further behind as a recovery takes hold elsewhere across the eurozone. Output in Europe's biggest economy contracted by 0.1 percent compared with the previous three months, federal statistics office Destatis said, after expanding by 0.2 percent in the first quarter.

The second-quarter data surprised analysts surveyed by FactSet who had forecast a 0.1-percent increase. The April-to-June period noticeably saw declining investment in equipment and construction, Destatis said. "The German economy is stuck in crisis," said Klaus Wohlrabe, head of surveys at Ifo economic institute, citing persistent weakness in manufacturing and sluggish private consumption.

"Hardly any improvement is to be expected in the third quarter of 2024 either," he added.

Germany, traditionally a driver of European growth, was the only major advanced economy to shrink in 2023 as it battled high inflation, an industrial slowdown and cooling export demand.

A string of indicators had suggested a recovery

was getting under way at the start of the year, but hopes of a strong rebound have been tempered by weaker data in recent weeks. "Germany is performing very poorly at the moment, especially in comparison with neighboring European countries where we have seen quite robust growth figures," said LBBW economist Jens-Oliver Niklasch.

"Of course, Germany's export-orientated industry is more exposed to the weakness of the Chinese economy, for example, but many of the problems are homemade," he added. A shortage of skilled laborers, burdensome red tape, a costly green energy transition and years of under-investment in infrastructure are all adding to Germany's woes. The comparison with other eurozone heavyweights was stark on Tuesday, with the French economy rising by a more-than-expected 0.3 percent in the second quarter.

The Spanish economy also beat forecasts, growing 0.8 percent on the back of higher exports and strong household spending. Overall, output in the 20-nation eurozone expanded 0.3 percent over the second quarter, more than the 0.2 percent expected by analysts. Chancellor Olaf Scholz's government sees the German economy growing by 0.3 percent this year, buoyed by rising consumer spending as inflation eases further and interest rates come down. But in further worrying news, German inflation edged up in July to 2.3 percent year-on-year from 2.2 percent a month earlier, according to Destatis, despite analyst expectations that it would remain unchanged. — AFP

Spend and win up to KD 20,000 with Gulf Bank cards

Get more
with Gulf Bank cards



KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has launched the summer campaign to reward all credit and prepaid cardholders. This campaign allows customers the chance to win amazing cash prizes up to KD 20,000 for their purchases and expenditures during the summer, both locally and internationally.

The campaign runs until September 19, 2024, with winners selected in two draws: one grand prize winner of KD 20,000, 25 winners of KD 1,000 each, and 24 winners of KD 500 each.

All individual Gulf Bank credit and prepaid cardholders are eligible to participate. Customers earn one chance to enter the draw for every KD 10 spent in Kuwait, and three chances for every KD 10 spent internationally during the campaign. Additionally, transactions made using digital wallets such as Google Pay, Apple Pay, and Samsung Pay earn double chances. A minimum spend of KD 100 during the campaign period is required to qualify for the draw. Gulf Bank is dedicated to rewarding its customers and meeting their aspirations by providing exceptional services and

products, and an outstanding customer experience. Additionally, Gulf Bank's credit cards offer numerous benefits, including discounts and offers across various sectors such as restaurants, hotels, travel and tourism, entertainment, health and beauty, car rentals, and more.

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

Eurozone economy grows but outlook far from rosy

FRANKFURT: The eurozone's economy grew slightly more than expected in the three months to June, data showed on Tuesday, but a mixed underlying picture and a string of pessimistic surveys cloud the outlook for the rest of the year. The figures paint a picture of a bloc that is struggling to regain its ground in global trade but continues to enjoy a domestic rebound fuelled by higher real incomes and public spending. Output in the 20 countries that share the euro increased by 0.3 percent in the second quarter of the year, Eurostat data showed, keeping up the pace from the

previous quarter and slightly beating economists' expectations.

Among large economies, France and Spain did better than expected, Italy held its ground while German output unexpectedly contracted, strengthening fears about a lengthy crisis in a country that was for a decade Europe's powerhouse.

Consumer confidence also remained negative in July, adding to a number of weak surveys in recent days. "The eurozone economy is quite like the water quality of the Seine: some days it may look okay but overall it's poor enough to continuously worry about it," ING economist Bert Colijn said in reference to Paris Olympics hosts' troubles with scheduling events because of pollution levels in the river.

The 0.3 percent quarterly increase in French GDP was a case in point. While growth was a touch better than expected, this was partly due to the delivery of a single cruise ship boosting exports and offsetting flat consumer spending. — Reuters

Business

Burgan Bank reports net income of KD 21 million in first half of 2024

Bank continues to accelerate its forward-moving momentum: Sheikh Abdullah

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank ("Burgan" or "the Bank") announced its financial results for the first half of 2024 (H1 2024), for the period ending June 30, 2024.

The Bank reported KD 111 million in revenues for H1 2024, marking an impressive growth of 19 percent year-on-year (y-o-y). The increase in revenues was primarily driven by higher net-interest income of KD 71 million, up 17 percent y-o-y and robust non-interest income of KD 39 million, up 24 percent y-o-y. Burgan's net interest margin also increased to 2.1 percent in H1 2024 as compared to 1.9 percent during H1 2023 – an improvement of 20bps y-o-y.

Driven by higher revenues, the Bank reported a strong operating profit of KD 48 million, up 24 percent y-o-y. The Bank's cost-to-income ratio also improved by 170bps from 58.3 percent in H1 2023 to 56.6 percent in H1 2024. Its cost of credit - net of recoveries - also remained very low at mere 30bps during H1 2024 despite proactive provisioning. Consequently, Burgan posted a net income of KD 21 million with a very healthy growth of 17 percent y-o-y.

During H1 2024, the Bank delivered strong asset growth of 8 percent y-o-y, reaching KD 7.6 billion by the end of the period. The Group's loan book grew by 10 percent y-o-y and stood at KD 4.4 billion; primarily driven by its Kuwait operations, which increased by 8 percent y-o-y. Burgan's deposit base also expanded by 7 percent y-o-y and stood at KD 4.6 billion by the end of H1 2024.

During H1 2024, the Bank maintained solid and healthy capital levels. Burgan reported common equity tier 1 ratio (CET1) of 13.0 percent, Tier 1 capital ratio of 15.4 percent and capital adequacy ratio (CAR) of 19.3 percent, well above the regulatory requirements and demonstrating sufficient capital buffers to support future growth.

Commenting on the financial results, the Burgan Bank Chairman Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Al-Sabah said: "Burgan Bank has continued to accelerate its forward-moving momentum on the heels of a transformational year in 2023. We have maintained a stable financial core and delivered solid financial results, as we continue to be steadfast in our commitment to positioning ourselves as the most modern and progressive bank in Kuwait. Looking ahead, we aim to bolster this momentum by continuing to deliver on



Burgan Bank Chairman
Sheikh Abdullah Nasser
Al-Sabah

Burgan Bank Group
Chief Executive Officer
Tony Daher

key strategic goals. That includes ongoing efforts to elevate, innovate and streamline our overall customer experience. It also includes building on a robust business model that prioritizes enhancing operations by investing in technology and digitalization, elevating our innovation capabilities, developing our human capital and fulfilling our environmental, social and governance (ESG) commitments."

The Chairman further added: "As the year progresses, we are well-positioned for further growth and development, as we maintain an effective risk management approach to capitalize on promising growth opportunities. On that account, we are confident in our ability to advance our strategic priorities and objectives, enhance our performance, boost our competitiveness, and maximize shareholder value."

Meeting the parameters of financial strength and stability

Affirming Burgan Bank's strong financial core and stable standing, the Chairman highlighted that the Bank has maintained high international standards in terms of its creditworthiness. This is evidenced by Capital Intelligence Ratings (CI Ratings) affirming the Bank's Long-Term Foreign Currency Rating and Short-Term Foreign Currency Rating at 'A+' and 'A1', respectively, with a stable outlook. Meanwhile, Moody's Ratings (Moody's) affirmed the Bank's long-term foreign currency bank deposit ratings at "Baa1" with a stable

outlook. Moreover, the Bank completed its issuance of KD 150 million Perpetual Additional Tier 1 Capital Bonds, with demand exceeding expectations and bonds being oversubscribed. The transaction, lauded as a landmark achievement, is the first Perpetual Additional Tier 1 Capital Bond issuance denominated in Kuwaiti dinar by a bank and ranks among the largest Kuwaiti dinar issuances.

Commenting on the issuance, the Chairman said: "Today, we stand proud to have set a new benchmark on the local level after successfully completing the largest Kuwaiti Dinar Perpetual Additional Tier 1 Capital Bond issuance in Kuwait. This notable transaction attracted high investor interest, reaffirming our robust financial standing and demonstrating confidence in our strategic vision."

Sharpened focus on digital transformation journey

The second quarter of 2024 was shaped by the Bank's efforts to continue accelerating its dedicated technology evolution and digital transformation strategy. Of particular significance was Burgan becoming one of the earliest Kuwaiti banks to join the GCC cross-border payments system AFAQ, in adherence to the national digital transformation plan guided by the government and the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK). Another notable move was the Bank signing a monumental deal with Tata Consultancy Services to upgrade its core banking system by implementing the TCS BaNCs suite of products.

Commenting, Tony Daher, Group Chief Executive Officer at Burgan Bank, said: "The decision to join AFAQ and sign the new deal comes in response to the market's evolving needs and falls in line with our relentless efforts to adopt the latest state-of-the-art financial technology solutions with the ultimate goal of elevating our customers' overall banking experience to new heights."

As delivering digital transformation goes hand in hand with enhancing customer experience through new and upgraded products, Burgan Bank launched its interest-bearing savings account "awal" in Q2 2024. Tailored specifically for children up to the age of 14, the account builds on the success of its predecessor, "BuBa" savings account, and aims to instill a savings

culture in young customers. The latest launch attests to Burgan's steadfast efforts to meet the varying banking needs of all its customer segments. Building on this strength point, the Bank was voted the Best Domestic Bank in Kuwait in the "Best Service" category in the 2024 Euromoney Trade Finance Survey, recognizing its unwavering commitment to service excellence and an elevated customer journey.

Employees remain a primary pillar of success

On the human capital front, Burgan Bank continues to bolster its pioneering position in the domestic banking and financial market by offering one of the most desirable workplaces for national talents.

In line with its dedicated human development strategy that forms a keystone of the Bank's success, Burgan persisted in introducing dynamic employee advancement programs in the second quarter of this year. To illustrate, it launched an exclusive Investment and Wealth Management Academy in collaboration with the world-renowned provider of learning and development solutions Fitch Learning of Fitch Group. The Bank also launched its women empowerment program, "Burgan Lean in Circle", to address the challenges faced by females in the workplace, featuring monthly meetups, workshops, mentorship programs and networking events.

Concluding his statement, the Chairman said: "Our employees are imperative to our success as a leading financial institution, and continuing to invest in them individually will help propel us closer to achieving our strategic goals. From this standpoint, we are committed to remaining a top employer of choice in the local market by creating a supportive and inclusive workplace where all employees are given equal, ambitious career advancement and learning opportunities all year round." It serves to note that the consolidated financials for Burgan include the results of the Group's operations in Kuwait, as well as its share of results from its subsidiaries, namely: Burgan Bank Turkey, Gulf Bank Algeria and Tunis International Bank. Through this regional reach, Burgan Bank has one of the largest regional branch networks across Kuwait, Turkey, Algeria, Tunisia and a representative office in the United Arab Emirates.



KOLKATA: Gold jewelry kept on display inside a shop in Kolkata in this file photo. — AFP

India's duty cut to revive gold demand: WGC

MUMBAI: India's gold demand in the June quarter fell 5 percent from a year ago, but consumption in the second half of 2024 is set to improve due to a correction in local price following a steep reduction in import taxes, the World Gold Council (WGC) said on Tuesday.

Higher purchases in the world's second-biggest gold consumer could support global benchmark

prices which are trading near record highs. The recent 9 percentage point reduction in import duty on gold, implemented before the main festival season beginning in September, is expected to revive gold demand, further supported by good monsoon rains, said Sachin Jain, CEO of WGC's Indian operations.

India last week slashed import duties on gold to 6 percent from 15 percent, a move industry officials said could lift retail demand and help cut smuggling. The duty cut brought down domestic prices of gold last week to 67,500 rupees (\$806.20) per 10 grams, their lowest in four months, from a record high of 74,777 rupees earlier this month.

Good monsoon showers boost food grain production and improve farmers' income. Two-thirds of India's gold demand usually comes from rural areas,

where jewelry is a traditional store of wealth.

"Strong gross domestic product forecasts and rural sector recovery are all likely to support demand in the second half of the year," WGC's Jain said. India's gold consumption in the April-June quarter fell 5 percent to 149.7 metric tons, as a 17 percent fall in jewelry demand offset a 46 percent rise in the investment demand during the quarter, the WGC said. Demand for gold from India could stand between 700 metric tons and 750 metric tons in 2024, the lowest in four years, it said.

The Reserve Bank of India continued its gold buying spree in the June quarter, adding 19 tons, which brought its total purchases for the first half of the year to 37 tons, more than double the total purchased in all of 2023, the WGC said. — Reuters

Knife-edge BoE decision may keep sterling in check

LONDON: The pound held steady against the dollar on Tuesday as investors looked to the Bank of England's (BoE) interest rate decision later in the week and assessed the fallout of spending cuts announced by the new British finance minister. Sterling traded down 0.05 percent at \$1.2854, after having touched a near three-week low of \$1.2807 against the dollar in the prior session.

The euro gained 0.17 percent against the pound to 84.27 pence, with the common currency helped by data showing the eurozone's economy grew slightly more than expected in the three months to June.

Traders are pricing in a near 60 percent chance that the British central bank will cut interest rates by 25 basis points (bps) to 5.0 percent on August 1, according to ISEG's interest rate probabilities app, and see rate cuts of 52 bps by the end of the year. With the decision so finely balanced investors are nervous about trading sterling ahead of the decision. "If we just go back week or two ago, the market was thinking 50:50 chance of a rate cut but economist surveys are more confident that there will be a move this week," said Jane Foley, head of FX strategy at Rabobank in London. Prices in British shops rose at the joint-slowest rate since October 2021 this month, held down by falls in the cost of non-food items, the British Retail Consortium said. While headline consumer price inflation targeted by the BoE held at its 2 percent target in June, the central bank is most concerned about services price inflation, which at 5.7 percent last month was well above the bank's forecast. — Reuters

Chinese leaders pledge support for flagging economy

BEIJING: President Xi Jinping and other Chinese leaders stressed the need for further reform to support economic activity and the country's ailing property sector, state media reported Tuesday, following a key meeting centered on boosting growth. Beijing is racing to achieve its goal of five percent annual growth in 2024, a target considered ambitious by many experts as the world's second-largest economy faces headwinds including an indebted real-estate market, flagging consumption and high youth unemployment.

Tuesday's gathering of the Communist Party's powerful Politburo of senior officials was billed as a chance for top leaders to take stock of the current economic situation and set out policy directions for the second half of the year. They warned that "adverse effects brought about by current changes in the external environment are increasing", while there are "many risks and hidden dangers in key areas", state news agency Xinhua said.

The report did not include any specific new policies, though attendees highlighted the need to ease

local debt pressure and "accelerate the construction of a new development model" in the property sector. Rating agency Fitch in April slashed its outlook on China's sovereign credit to negative, citing heightened risks to the country's public finances.

Second-quarter growth slowed sharply to 4.7 percent year-on-year, according to official figures published this month. Authorities have announced various measures in recent months - including several key interest rate cuts - in a bid to get the economy humming again.

Zhang Zhiwei, President and Chief Economist at Pinpoint Asset Management, said in a note that Tuesday's meeting showed "the government recognizes that domestic demand is weak and plans to prepare some policy measures in the pipeline to address the problem".

"Monetary policy has already turned more supportive with the rate cuts recently, which is positive for the economy," said Zhang, adding that broader changes to fiscal policy could be "much more supportive". "It is not clear at this stage if such a shift of fiscal policy will happen."

The Politburo meeting readout also outlined new efforts to boost domestic consumption and household welfare. But Capital Economics' Julian Evans-Pritchard said: "The lack of any specifics means it is unclear what it will entail in practice." "Overall, the communique suggests the primary focus of policy remains on economic security and nurturing new productive forces in high-end sectors." — AFP



FUYANG, China: Employees work on a circuit breaker production line at a factory of an electronics company in Fuyang, in China's eastern Anhui province on July 30, 2024. — AFP

Business

Al-Shamlan: KFH achieves best ESG risk rating among Kuwaiti banks

KFH CEO speaks in an interview with CNBC Arabia

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Khaled Yousef Al-Shamlan emphasized that the bank's inclusion in the FTSE4Good Index reflects the growing interest in adopting environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards. In an interview with CNBC Arabia, he added that KFH's inclusion was achieved by meeting all ESG standards and requirements.

Al-Shamlan pointed out that this achievement was the result of the successful sustainability strategy developed by KFH in 2021. Through this strategy, numerous sustainability initiatives were implemented, elevating KFH to a top-ranked company on these global indices.

He emphasized that investors are increasingly drawn to companies that incorporate sustainability standards into their operations. As a result, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards have become crucial factors in investment decisions. He explained that KFH's inclusion in the FTSE4Good Index strengthens its reputation as a trustworthy institution among investors and aligns with the bank's strategic sustainability objectives.

He explained that this index validates KFH's commitment to building a sustainable future and increasing value for stakeholders. It also underscores KFH's dedication to upholding ethical standards across its operations, various banking activities, and in addressing global sustainability challenges.

Al-Shamlan added that KFH employs numerous metrics in its operations, such as the Sustainability Index, which evaluates sustainability risks (ESG Risks). He explained that KFH achieved the best ESG risk rating on this index, with an ESG risk rating of 24.7 - the best among Kuwaiti banks. This underscores KFH's strong commitment to sustainability and its significant progress in identifying and mitigating sustainability-related risks.

"KFH achieved excellence in sustainability through a clear strategy developed and directly overseen by the Board of Directors. As a pioneer, KFH established the banking industry's first specialized committee for governance and sustainability at the board level. Additionally, the bank was the first to create an integrated sustainability strategy aligned with the Sus-

tainable Development Goals (SDGs), encompassing economic, environmental, social, and governance dimensions. Furthermore, KFH was the first to create a dedicated department for sustainability monitoring. These achievements underscore the paramount importance of sustainability to both the Board of Directors and Executive Management," Al-Shamlan explained.

He pointed out that KFH releases sustainability reports regularly and has recently launched a Carbon Footprint report, a first-of-its-kind in the local banking industry.

On the financial inclusion front, Al-Shamlan pointed out that KFH's efforts in this field include offering banking services to customers 24/7 from any location through digital applications, attracting different customer segments, focusing on SMEs, in addition to promoting cybersecurity and customers privacy protection. He indicated that these factors reflect KFH's excellence in financial inclusion and sustainability. He went on to say that KFH offers recycled banking cards. In 2023, half of the cards issued by KFH were made from recycled materials.

"KFH's global presence that spans 12 countries in addition to providing banking services in the communities in which we operate are all key elements of the financial inclusion plans," added Al-Shamlan.

He affirmed that KFH's efforts and outstanding performance in the sustainability have earned the bank several global awards, including Kuwait's Best Bank for Sustainable Finance by Global Finance magazine, Kuwait's Best Bank for ESG by Euromoney and Corporate Social Responsibility - Middle East Award from EMEA Finance. KFH is also the first bank in Ku-



KFH Kuwait's CEO Khaled Yousef Al-Shamlan

- Inclusion in the FTSE4Good Index aligns with KFH's goals of achieving sustainability and building a sustainable future
- Excellence in sustainability is achieved through a clear strategy developed by the Board of Directors

wait to receive the Global Sustainability Assessment System GSAS - Gold Level Certificate for KFH Auto eco-friendly showroom.

Al-Shamlan also talked about KFH's top initiatives and activities in the sustainability field such as:

- Offering Green Financing for housing and consumer products that contribute to the preservation of natural resources and reducing energy consumption.
- Issuing green Sukuk with plans to issue more sustainability Sukuk in the future.
- Launching (Keep it Green) campaign as the umbrella of all environmental and sustainability projects and activities.
- Signing the first of its kind Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to establish stronger alignments with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across KFH.
- Training KFH's human capital in collaboration with the UNDP and other prestigious global entities, in addition to organizing high-level training programs for KFH's Board members and executive management.
- Empowering women by signing the Women's Empow-



KFH headquarters building

erment Principles agreement (WEPS) with the UNDP as the first Islamic bank in Kuwait. Additionally, women at KFH hold leadership positions.

- Establishing the Middle East's largest KFH Auto showroom which is an eco-friendly building.
- Participating with the UNDP in different initiatives including signing the Global Takaful Alliance Agreement to provide Takaful insurance to over 100 million farmers worldwide.

News in Brief

Armani posts higher revenue

MILAN: The Armani Group saw a four percent rise in revenues last year, the luxury fashion group said Monday, while acknowledging a slowdown in Asia that was crimping sales this year. Revenues grew by four percent to 2.45 billion euros (\$2.65 billion) in 2023, the company said in a statement. But it cited a "single-digit slowdown in the second half of 2023 and 2024", which it said was in line with declines seen at other luxury brands. Those slowing revenues "reflect an adjustment within the luxury market, especially in the Asia ex-Japan region and the more accessible segment of the offer, with a single-digit decline in revenues recorded in the second half of 2023 and confirmed in the first half of 2024, as compared to an excellent first half of 2023," the company said. — AFP

Spanish economy beats forecast

MADRID: The Spanish economy grew by 0.8 percent in the second quarter, more than expected, on the back of higher exports and strong household spending, official data showed Tuesday. The growth rate is one of the highest in the eurozone where it is the fourth biggest economy and contrasts with a 0.1 percent contraction logged by Germany in the second quarter. The Bank of Spain had forecast economic growth of 0.6 percent for the April-June period and the preliminary INE national statistics institute figures announced Tuesday matched the revised 0.8 percent growth seen in the first three months of 2024. — AFP

WPP names Jansen as new chair

LONDON: WPP named former BT chief Philip Jansen as its new chair on Tuesday, succeeding Roberto Quarta at the world's largest advertising company. Jansen will join WPP's board in September and replace Quarta, who has been in the role since 2015, on Jan 1. The appointment comes at a time when WPP, which owns the Ogilvy and GroupM agencies, became a clear laggard among global ad companies with an organic revenue drop in the first quarter, hurt by less spending from tech clients, a downturn in China and the loss of business from Pfizer. "(Quarta) has helped to steer the company through significant challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic, overseen the restructuring of our portfolio to return WPP to financial stability, and guided the fundamental reshaping of our offer to meet the needs of modern marketing," WPP CEO Mark Read said. — Reuters

India still against Chinese investment

NEW DELHI: India is not re-thinking the issue of allowing Chinese investments into the country, Trade Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday. Earlier in July, India's Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran said in the government's annual economic survey that New Delhi should focus on direct investments from China to boost its exports and help keep India's growing trade deficit with Beijing in check. "There is no rethinking at present to support Chinese investments in the country," the minister told reporters in New Delhi. The economic survey recommendations are not binding on the government, Goyal said. Following clashes in the remote Himalayan border in 2020 between the two nuclear armed nations, India tightened scrutiny on investments from Chinese companies. — Reuters

PayPal lifts 2024 profit forecast for second time

NEW YORK: PayPal on Tuesday raised its forecast for full-year adjusted profit for the second time, betting on resilient consumer spending in the back-to-school and upcoming holiday shopping seasons, while cost-cutting measures improved margins. Shares in the payments giant rose 4 percent in pre-market trading after results.

American consumers have remained remarkably hardy despite higher-for-longer interest rates burning a hole in their pockets. Even as rival payments firms have flagged worries of increasing pressure on the lower-income bracket, the sector logged broadly steady growth in transaction volumes this year.

Turks eye property investments abroad

ISTANBUL: Traditionally fond of real estate investment, Turks are turning their attention increasingly to buying property abroad in response to surging domestic prices, worsening returns on investment and the prospect of regulatory changes. The new trend highlights growing concern about the outlook for Turkey's real estate market, which is feeling the impact of a transformed economic climate after a policy U-turn towards more orthodoxy in 2023 following years of easy money.

In recent years, currency depreciation and the low rates championed by President Tayyip Erdogan pushed Turks into assets like real estate, cars and forex to protect savings as inflation surged to a current level above 70 percent. But Turks are now seeking properties in places such as Montenegro, Spain, Dubai and London as high prices, lessening supply, and high mortgage rates drive monthly housing sales in Turkey to the lowest level in a decade. Property investments abroad have nearly quadrupled since 2021, rising to \$2 billion last year, central bank data shows, and some sector experts say the trend may accelerate to \$3-4 billion this year due to the lira's recent real term appreciation and high domestic prices.

"House prices are very high, but house rental income remains low for those who want to own a house as an investment," said 56-year-old Tolga, who works in the energy sector. Last year, he decided to sell a property in Istanbul to buy a house in London to have a regular FX income and diversify his investments, but also due to regulatory uncertainty in Turkey.

"We also decided to buy something abroad due to uncertainty around real estate and income taxes, lack of rules in Turkey," he said. "We do not know what will happen tomorrow, whether the value of our house will decrease, whether it will be destroyed or something else will be built right next to our house." Turks have had years of punishing inflation, combined with a sharp clampdown on credit over the last year, and a series of currency crashes.

Real estate prices rose much higher than inflation throughout 2022 and 2023, according to central bank data, although there has been a recent slowdown. As inflation surged to a peak of 85 percent in 2022, the government imposed a 25 percent cap on rent hikes to protect tenants, triggering a backlash from landlords and thousands of legal disputes. The cap was lifted this month.

Pfizer lifts outlook on non-COVID business

NEW YORK: Pfizer lifted its full-year profit forecast Tuesday following solid results that showed progress in pivoting its business amid the pronounced decline of COVID-19 vaccine sales. The big pharma company - which had over the last year reported a string of weak earnings reports with the

Meanwhile, under CEO Alex Chriss, the company has focused on improving operating margins by restructuring, aggressively cutting costs and reducing its headcount. In January, it announced plans to slash about 2,500 jobs, or 9 percent of its global workforce.

PayPal now expects adjusted profit growth in a "low to mid-teens percentage" in 2024, compared with its April forecast of a "mid-to-high single-digit" increase. Total payment volumes increased 11 percent, to \$416.81 billion in the second quarter, while net revenue climbed 9 percent, to \$7.89 billion on an FX-neutral basis. PayPal's operating margins expanded 231 basis points on an adjusted basis, to 18.5 percent in the quarter. Its margins have been central to investor anxiety over the past year, after post-pandemic growth slowed.

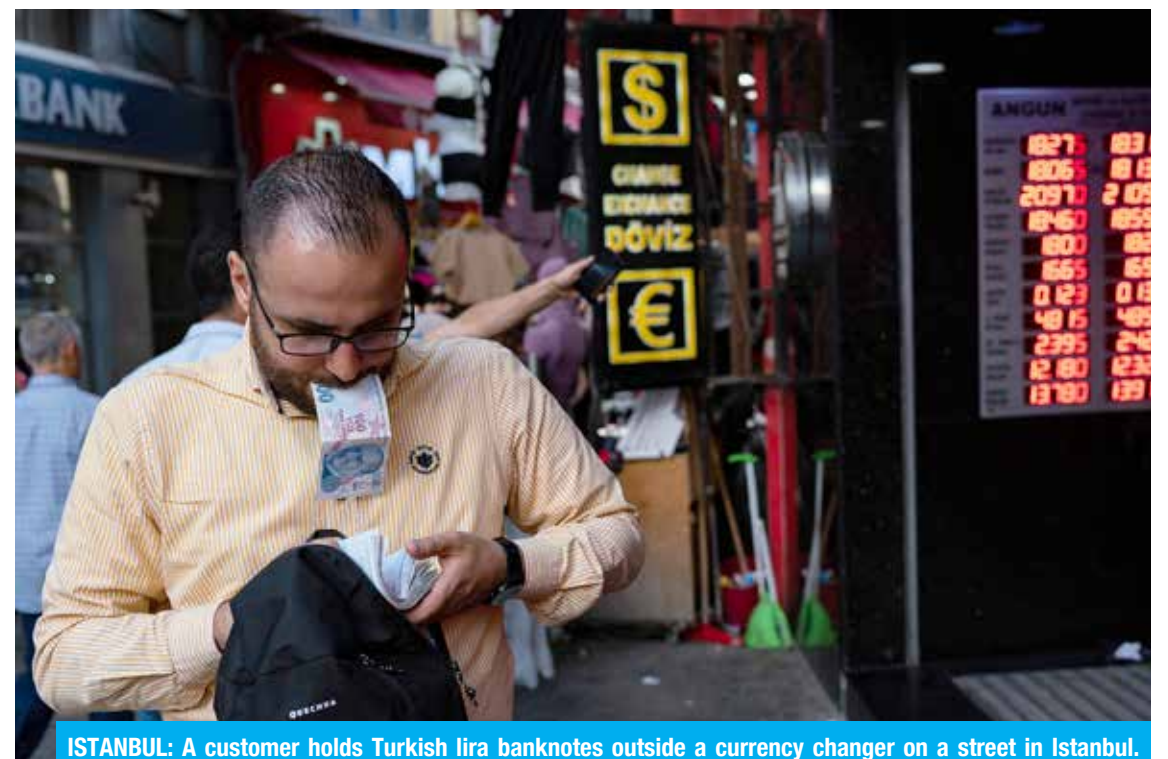
Easing some worries, total payments volumes in branded checkout grew roughly 6 percent in the second quarter. PayPal said branded checkout, Braintree, and Venmo contributed to the highest

transaction margin dollars growth rate - a key measure of profitability of its core business - since 2021.

Transaction margin dollars jumped 8 percent in the quarter, to \$3.61 billion. The entry of Big Tech giants such as Apple and Google parent Alphabet into the digital payments space in recent years has heightened competition, hurting PayPal's market share.

As a result, although PayPal's unbranded businesses have grown, weakness in its branded businesses such as Venmo has weighed on the stock. Soon after his appointment as CEO last year, Chriss had said he expects to increase revenue outside of purely transaction-related volumes and pledged to make the fintech leader.

PayPal also expects third-quarter revenue to grow by a "mid-single-digit percentage", below Wall Street expectations of an increase of around 7.5 percent, according to LSEG data. Its adjusted earnings per share rose to \$1.19 in the three months ended June 30, compared with 87 cents a year ago. — Reuters



ISTANBUL: A customer holds Turkish lira banknotes outside a currency changer on a street in Istanbul. Turks are turning their attention increasingly to buying property abroad in response to surging domestic prices, worsening returns on investment and the prospect of regulatory changes. — AFP

Against this background, there has been growing interest from Turks in the London housing market, according to Arzu Uygun, founder and managing director of Unique London, a real estate consultancy company operating in London. She said Turkey's rising real estate prices opened the door for Turkish investors to buy a house abroad as they aim to shorten their investment return and diversify risks. According to sector representatives, the return on investment period is around 30 years in Turkey, less than 18 years in the UK and Spain for a comparable residence, and less than 12 years in Montenegro.

Seeing the increasing demand from Turks, Turkish developers are looking to expand their businesses abroad. "I think real estate investment in Turkey will not provide good returns for the next five years. I don't think people will buy property for long-term investment," said Aycan Fenercioglu, chairman of construction company Fenercioglu, pointing to a price-to-rent ratio of 25-30 years.

"We have started to make investments abroad. We have obtained permits in Spain and will start con-

struction there in the autumn," Fenercioglu said. The company has investments in Alicante and is set to start building in Montenegro, investments in Dubai are planned next year. Recent media reports indicating possible new taxes for people who purchase houses for investment point to a change in the government's view in real estate investments, he added.

"I think the government wants real estate to stop being an investment tool in Turkey. This will lead to more Turks heading abroad in the coming period." With recent changes in regulation, Turkish authorities have made it harder to offer properties for short-term rentals, increasing necessary permits and paperwork. Real Estate Service Exporters Association head Bayram Tekce said inflation, rising real estate prices and an uncertain environment were worrying investors. "Buying a house in another country used to be a feature of the upper income group. But since Turkey is so volatile, now middle-income people want to put their eggs in different baskets," he said. — Reuters

precipitous decline of COVID vaccines - pointed to the gains from its oncology-focused Seagen acquisition, as well as a number of other products with growing customer bases.

"This was Pfizer's first quarter of topline revenue growth, on a year-over-year basis, since the fourth quarter of 2022 when our COVID revenues peaked," said chief financial officer David Denton.

Profits in the second quarter were a scant \$41 million, much below the year-ago level and reflecting a roughly \$1.3 billion hit in one-time restructuring

costs. Revenues rose two percent to \$13.3 billion.

Pfizer raised its full-year revenue outlook range by \$1 billion, as well as the range of expected earnings per share. Revenues from Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine tumbled 87 percent from the year-ago level, but revenues for COVID-19 therapeutic Paxlovid rose 79 percent to \$251 million. Besides the Seagen assets, Pfizer cited as sources of revenue growth the heart disease drug Vyndaqel, blood clot medication Eliquis and the migraine pharmaceutical Vydura. Shares of Pfizer rose 1.2 percent in pre-market trading. — AFP

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2024

Number 1: Photographer grabbed the perfect surf shot at Olympics

AFP photographer Jerome Brouillet knew to expect fireworks when he saw Brazilian Olympic surfer Gabriel Medina paddle into one of the day's biggest waves at one of the world's heaviest surf breaks. What he didn't know was that his picture of Medina kicking out of the wave after a ride that earned a record Olympics score in Tahiti would become a global sensation, and likely a defining image of the sport and the Games.

Brouillet was on a boat in the channel - an area of deeper, calmer water to the side of the wave but without a clear line of sight of the initial action. But it was exactly where he wanted to be. Brouillet was in a prime spot waiting for Medina to "kick out" - exit the wave face at the end of his run. "Every photographer is waiting for that. You know Gabriel Medina, especially at Teahupo'o will kick off and do something," said Brouillet. "You know something is going to happen. The only tricky moment is where he is going to kick out? Because I'm blind!

"Sometimes he makes an acrobatic gesture and this time he did that and so I pushed the button." Brouillet caught Medina soaring ramrod-straight above the waves pointing one finger in the sky, his surfboard pointing skyward at his side. "I think that when he was in the tube he knew that he was in one of the biggest waves of the day. He is jumping out of the water like 'man, I think this is a 10'," said Brouillet.

Brouillet suspected he had also captured something special but wasn't 100 percent sure. "When I'm shooting at Teahupo'o I don't shoot in such a high burst mode, because at the end of the day, if you push too hard on the button you come back with 5,000 shots in a day, and I don't like that!" "I got four shots of him out of the water and one of the four shots was this photo."

The picture has been used by scores of publications around the world and shared or liked millions of times online. "This may well be the greatest sports photo of all time," Australian media conglomerate News.com.au posted on its Facebook page. TIME magazine described it as "the defining image of triumph of the 2024 Summer Games". Medina posted the image on his own Instagram account, quickly attracting more than 2.4 million likes. Despite the accolades, Brouillet said celebrations would have to wait because he still had the rest of the competition to shoot. "I'm sleeping at a friend's house near Teahupo'o and we'll have a quiet one because if tomorrow the event is on, I have to wake up at five in the morning!" — AFP

Brazil's Gabriel Medina reacts after getting a large wave in the 5th heat of the men's surfing round 3, during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, in Teahupo'o, on the French Polynesian Island of Tahiti, on July 29, 2024. - AFP



An aerial view of a balloon attached to the cauldron (unseen) in the Tuileries garden during the opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. — AFP photos



The Olympic cauldron lit with the Olympic flame flies next to the Louvre Museum.

Flame-free Olympic ring of fire becomes Games' symbol

The Olympic cauldron tethered to a balloon in an iconic Paris park has become one of the hottest tickets at the 2024 Games with thousands flocking every day to see the seven-meter (23 feet) wide ring of environmentally friendly fire. The cauldron flies into the Parisian sky at sunset each day under a 30-metre balloon in the Jardin des Tuileries park. The flame made up of clouds of mist lit by LED rays has become a much-talked about symbol of the Games since it was lit by French sporting icons Teddy Riner and Marie-Jose Perec at Friday's opening ceremony. Visitors now pack the park, with all available 10,000 daily slots to see the flame

husband are planning to see BMX and basketball, but their children will have to stay home. "They won't have access to the Games," she said, adding that Olympic tickets were "too expensive." "But at their level they understand the importance of what's going on," she said. Paris' newest tourist attraction is free. Three hundred people are admitted to see the flame every quarter of an hour between 11:00 am and 7:00 pm.

'Message to the world'

"It's beautiful," exclaimed Murielle Taupin, a retired police officer who was also among the first guests to see the flame. The 52-year-old said she was

the chance to experience a moment of "sharing and communion." "This balloon is about lightness, it's a message to the whole world," Taupin said. For the first time in the history of the Olympic Games the flame is fuel free. "A meticulous combination of a cloud of mist and beams of light, the Olympic Flame will flicker with electricity as its sole source of energy," French utility EDF said in a statement. The ring "incorporates 40 LED spotlights to illuminate the cloud created by 200 high-pressure misting nozzles," the company said, adding that it ensured the flow of electricity and water 60 meters above the ground.

'Clean energy'

French designer Mathieu Lehanneur, 49, said he wanted to make the cauldron as accessible, visible and open "as possible." It is a nod to the hot air balloon invented by the Montgolfier brothers, the 18th century French aviation pioneers. Wearing a cap emblazoned with the Olympic rings, American Nelly Li said she came "to admire this new invention, which is environmentally friendly and uses clean energy." Baptiste Ferlin, a 35-year-old teacher, came to the Tuileries gardens to "enjoy the party."

Ferlin said he loved the idea of turning Paris into "an Olympic stadium" and is happily taking advantage of the opportunity to "experience the atmosphere of the Games." Arriving from the Paris suburbs, he walked along the Seine before coming to see the flame. "It makes for a wild party!" Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo said she hoped the hugely popular balloon as well as the rings on the Eiffel Tower and the statues of 10 French women that were part of the opening ceremony could find a permanent home in Paris. "We should explore possibilities for these three symbols," Hidalgo told the France Bleu broadcaster. "These three artistic, symbolic and magnificent objects deserve our full attention." — AFP



The Olympic cauldron is lit with the Olympic flame as it flies above Paris while attached to a balloon as seen from the Eiffel Tower.

taken until the Games close on August 11. Organizers have promised to add more slots. "We're victims of our own success," they said online.

'Join the party'

Virginie Decosta took her 11-year-old daughter and 6-year-old son to the gardens at the weekend. "It's for the kids, so they can join the party too," the 43-year-old told AFP. Decosta and her

somewhat "frustrated" at not being able to watch the opening ceremony up close. "So I'm taking part in all the free outdoor competitions," said Taupin, who watched road cycling on Saturday and also planned to cheer on triathletes on Tuesday. "With the Tuileries setting, it's magnificent," Taupin said.

Referring to what she called an "unbearable" political situation around the world, the spectacle also offered

Olympics shows golden age of metal music

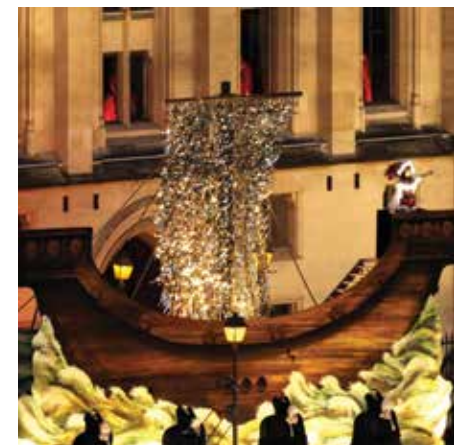
A thundering performance by thrash metal band Gojira at the Olympics opening ceremony shows how much the demonic-sounding genre has entered the pop culture mainstream. The head-banging foursome gave a unforgettable performance on the balconies of the historic Conciergerie palace along the banks of the Seine on Friday night with a song evoking the guillotine executions of the French Revolution. They were joined by opera singer Marina Viotti, for "Ah! Ca ira" ("Ah! It'll be fine"), based on the famous revolutionary song of the 1790s.

Viotti was still riding high from her appearance in front of more than a billion TV viewers when AFP spoke to her on Monday. "It's dizzying," the 38-year-old French-Swiss mezzo-soprano said. Viotti has dates coming up at Milan's La Scala and the Paris Opera, but she is no stranger to metal, having performed with groups Lost Legacy and Soulmaker. She was overjoyed to bring the music to a wider audience. "I've read comments on social networks saying 'I never listen to metal but, this one, it's great, it gave such energy to the show,'" she said.

She hopes it will help change the image of metal and finally rid the genre of its "Satanist" or "violent" cliches. A surprise inclusion in the Olympics show, Gojira are a French band that have won over metalheads around the world with their pulverizing guitars and earth-shattering drums. "It's crazy, a very nice surprise and a world first for metal," said Corentin Charbonnier, a doctor in anthropology and a French researcher on metal music. "Right now, we're living in a golden age for metal," he said. Charbonnier helped curate France's largest-ever exhibition about the genre at - of all places - the Paris Philharmonic, which is running until September 29.

Metal is usually traced back to English group Black Sabbath in the early

1970s, merging with glam in the form of Kiss around a decade later and finding its textbook form with US band Metallica in the 1980s and 1990s. It is now a fully established genre even in France, with a dedicated festival - Hellfest - that attracted around 240,000 fans to its latest edition last month. Metallica headlined



Metal band Gojira and opera singer Marina Viotti perform during the opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, France, July 26, 2024.

the festival for the second time in three years. "What is interesting in the current revival of metal culture is that some want to be recognized and others want to stay in the shadows, in the counter-culture," Charbonnier said.

The Olympics show has perhaps made it harder to stay niche - Gojira saw their Spotify streaming numbers jump by 282 percent in France over the weekend, and 129 percent worldwide. "Some people worry that we risk losing the essence of the music" if it grows too mainstream, Viotti said. "But, in my eyes, we must move in the direction of union, gathering, sharing, building bridges." — AFP



Smoke billows near windows as performers depicting the 18th century Queen Marie Antoinette participate and Metal band Gojira and opera singer Marina Viotti play, in the opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Lifestyle



A mosque in the village of the Bajau sea nomads.



The mile-long wooden jetty that connects the Bajau village of Pulau Papan with the island of Malenge as seen in the Togeian Islands in Sulawesi.



A fishing boat is seen tied to a stilt house at the village of the Bajau sea nomads.



INDONESIA'S SEA NOMADS
TURN TO JOBS ON LAND

Sofyan Sabi's sea-dwelling community has fished beneath the waves off the Indonesian coast for centuries, but climate change and overfishing have forced him and many of his contemporaries on land to make a living. The Bajau tribe of fishermen led a nomadic life at sea for generations, spending days and nights on boats with thatched roofs in the waters between Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Members of the tribe learn to dive from a young age, and their bodies have adapted over time

cucumbers or an octopus that could earn him as much as 500,000 rupiah (\$31).

Researchers attribute the Bajau ability to dive deeper and longer to a possible genetic mutation that has given them larger spleens, allowing their blood to store more oxygen. But commercial overfishing and rising temperatures have made sea catches increasingly unpredictable, said Wengki Ariando, a researcher at Thailand's Chulalongkorn University who has studied the Bajau. "They are facing decreasing marine resources," he said. As temperatures rise, fish migration and mating patterns change, corals are bleached, and the food chain changes. More than half of Indonesia's 11 fishery management areas are now listed as fully exploited. The country's fish stocks fell from 12.5 million metric tons in 2017 to 12 million in 2022, fishery ministry data shows. "The fish are decreasing because too many people are catching them," said 52-year-old fisherman Arfin, who goes by one name.

'Changed their livelihood'

A dilapidated mile-long jetty takes visitors along turquoise waters onto Pulau Papan. Davlin Ambotang, who lives on the island, says the Bajau first started to settle their three generations ago. "They

saw this island as suitable for building houses, so they settled there. No longer nomads, moving around," he said. But life on land has its own challenges. Davlin's brother runs a homestay banking on tour-

smoking cigarettes. "The young generation, they look like they are missing their identity," said Wengki. "They are more like a land-based community." With Internet access available on land, the Bajau



A fisherman's stilt house in Kadoda nearby the Bajau village of Pulau Papan in Sulawesi.

to allow them to fish underwater for longer periods, researchers say. But for the hundreds of Bajau people living on the tiny boardwalk island village of Pulau Papan in Indonesia, their ancestors' unique way of life has all but died out.

"We changed professions. We are fishermen who work at a farm. Farming gives better income because there are many crops I can plant," Sofyan said, adding that he owns a nearby two-hectare plot to grow corn and bananas. "Sometimes we earn nothing by going to sea. Sometimes there are fish, sometimes there aren't any," the 39-year-old told AFP. Trained to hold his breath between 10 and 15 meters (33 and 50 feet) deep since he was a child, Sofyan still scans the waters for sea



Stilt houses at the village of the Bajau sea nomads.

ist visits. He complains that authorities direct visitors to sleep at government-built cottages instead of helping Bajau businesses flourish. "There's no additional income for the people. The government controls everything," said Sofyan.

"There are many arguments between them and the locals." The long stateless Bajau grew increasingly settled in villages like Pulau Papan in search of government recognition. "The Bajau changed their livelihood because to get accepted as a people in Indonesia they have to be settled," said Wengki, adding that the drive to register them officially began in the 1990s under dictator Suharto.

'Difficulties on land'

Wooden boats sit at the edge of the island, while a main walkway cuts through it, splintering off into side jetties. The village hosts a silver-domed mosque. On a makeshift court, women play a game of volleyball, while a group of men sit around

have set up groups on social media with thousands of followers, helping each other with their problems.

"There is no development, nothing. From the district government, there were donations, each family gets two to three bags of rice every month," said Tirsia Adodoa, a housewife in her 20s whose husband is a fisherman. "It's not enough if we only rely on catching octopuses. If the octopus price drops like right now... it's not even enough for us to eat or buy things." But others yearn for the nomads to keep their seafaring ways - worrying future generations will be less like their boat-dwelling ancestors. "Once they feel comfortable, it won't be easy for them to go back to the sea," said fisherman Muslimin, 49, who goes by one name. "I wish they could work only as fishermen, because it's fun. There are too many difficulties on the land." — AFP

A man sits on a boat rack on a beach in Kadoda, nearby the Bajau village of Pulau Papan in Sulawesi.



Stilt houses at the village of the Bajau sea nomads.



A fisherman poses at his home in the village of the Bajau sea nomads.



A fisherman carves a new boat in Kadoda nearby the Bajau village of Pulau Papan in Sulawesi.

Lifestyle



A cat peers out of a case while attending cat night at the Shanghai Museum in Shanghai. - AFP photos



A cat rests on its owner's shoulder while attending cat night at the Shanghai Museum.



A woman carries her cat while attending cat night at the Shanghai Museum.



Cat owner Amy carries her cat named "Trump" while attending cat night at the Shanghai Museum.

NIGHT AT THE MEWSEUM: ANCIENT EGYPT EXHIBITION WELCOMES CATS



A man carries his cat in a case.



A man carries his cat while attending cat night at the Shanghai Museum.

A queue of glamorous visitors stood outside Shanghai Museum twitching impatiently, tails flicking and whiskers quivering as they waited to be let in for the institution's inaugural ancient Egypt cat night. Feline tickets for Saturday night's event sold out within days, as Shanghai's devoted pet owners seized the chance to share an educational experience with their animals - and share the photos on the mostly pedigree cats' personal social media accounts.

One pet owner told AFP she had postponed a trip to Europe to ensure she could nab one of the 200 available tickets for her regal ginger "son". Trump - named for his physical and psychological resemblance to the US presidential candidate - was dressed as a Chinese emperor, and blinked haughtily as journalists flocked around him with cameras. "I cannot imagine my life right now without a cat," his owner Amy told AFP. "So I really can have the same feeling why Egyptian persons, they valued cats on such a level."

The number of pets in China has soared, reaching over 120 million in 2023, and cats are the most popular. The trend is being driven largely by younger generations, many of whom see their "furred kids" as a cheaper substitute for human children, experts say. Shanghai Museum is capitalizing on that interest - Saturday's event, heralded as a first in China, is just one of

10 planned cat nights. As the guests of honor filed in, perched on shoulders or peering out of handbags, they had their vaccination and insurance records

checked before they were transferred



Visitors attend cat night at the Shanghai Museum.

into a fleet of specially designed kitten-eared prams.

Claire, who had dressed herself and her German Rex Tiedan in matching Egyptian costumes, said the exhibition showed "cats have always been humans' good friends". "Now young people are under great pressure, cats help us relieve a lot of mental pressure... probably the same as in ancient

times," she said. Cats were considered sacred in ancient Egypt. "In the modern world, kitties are a symbol of cuteness,

which is very different from (ancient Egypt)," said a young woman named Feifei, clutching a resplendent white furball named Sticky Rice. That cuteness has led to a surge in feline influencers and hopefuls.

Many of the cats at the exhibition had their own social media accounts, and one or two appeared to have small teams helping produce content. A section on Saqqara, a historic ne-

ropolis where archaeologists recently unearthed dozens of cat mummies and artefacts from a newly discovered tomb, was filled with confused mews

as the star visitors were photographed next to a Bast statue. "There are many ancestors of cats here, I wanted to bring (Sticky Rice) to have a look," said Feifei. Like most of his fellow felines, Sticky Rice seemed largely unmoved by the historical experience. — AFP

Bearded fireworm stalks shallows as Mediterranean warms

The fish in Alfonso Barone's net are hauled aboard off Sicily half-eaten, ravaged by bearded fireworms, a voracious predator flourishing in the increasingly warm Mediterranean Sea. The centipede-like creatures, around 15 to 30 centimeters (6-12 inches) long, devour everything from coral to the dying or dead catch in fishing nets - and rising sea temperatures caused by climate change are drastically boosting their numbers. Barone pulls a long, wriggling red worm off a headless mackerel in his boat. Its venomous white bristles come off at the slightest touch and the 34-year-old says he has been stung several times, once even in the eye. The fish are attacked as soon as they get caught in the net. "They eat the head, the whole body, they gut it," Barone said as he pulled up a mangled sea bream while fishing off the village of Marzamemi, on the southeastern tip of Sicily.

Fireworms are native to the Mediterranean but used to be fewer in number and spotted only off Sicily in summer. "With global warming the waters are heating up and becoming an ideal habitat for them, and they are growing in number, year on year... the whole year round," said Barone, who has fished since boyhood. Gnawed fish cannot be

sold, so fishermen reduce the time the nets are down in a bid to stop a feeding frenzy - resulting in a smaller catch, bits of which come adorned anyway with brown, green or red fireworms. "They used to eat around 30 percent of the catch... Now that's gone up to 70 percent," Barone said.

Scavenger and predator

The worms are also migrating north. Francesco Tiralongo, a zoologist who heads a University of Catania project to study the fireworm, has recorded cases in Calabria, southern Italy. The bearded fireworm "is an opportunistic species that behaves both as predator and scavenger" and "there are impressive quantities of them... in very shallow waters," Tiralongo told AFP. On Marzamemi's beach, many nervous bathers don masks or water shoes before diving in.

Fabiana Davanzo, a 56-year-old tourist from Milan, said she refused to "let it ruin my holiday, but I do always go in with my mask on so I can see the sea floor". As he gingerly dipped his toes in the water, holidaymaker Salvatore Lazzaro, 51, said he was stung by an unidentified creature the previous day, but was braving the water once more under a sweltering sun.



A fisherman takes a fish out of the net in front of the Sicilian fishing village of Marzamemi.

Spooked swimmers and frustrated fishers are not the only problem. "Climate warming is provoking several changes in the Mediterranean which will probably be exacerbated in the coming years," according to Federico Betti, an expert in invasive species at the University of Genoa. The average temperature of the Mediterranean has increased by around 1.2 degrees Celsius (2.2 degrees Fahrenheit) in the last 40 years, he said.

'Profound changes'

Warmer seas mean fewer seasonal variations in species, damage to deep water communities and loss of habitat, leading to more homogeneous environments unable to support rich and diverse ecosystems. The heat can also provoke mass mortality events in which vast numbers of a certain species die, Betti said. Other species relish it: There has been an increase in tropical, non-native species in the Mediterranean that "cause profound changes in marine ecosystems", Tiralongo said. Those include the blue crab, which is devastating shellfish production in the Po delta in northern Italy.

The crabs have no natural predators, though Italians are attempting to turn them into a resource by harvesting them to eat. But bearded fireworm spaghetti is not an option. And while more research needs to be done into possible solutions, Tiralongo has already made a disconcerting discovery. "You can't kill a fireworm by cutting it in half, it has excellent regeneration capabilities," he said. "If you slice it in two, not only does the part with the head regenerate a back half, but the back half manages in about 22 days to regenerate a head." — AFP



This photograph shows bearded fireworms caught in front of the Sicilian fishing village of Marzamemi.



A fisherman shows a bearded fireworm caught in his net.



A fish attacked by a bearded fireworm is caught in the net on a fishing boat.



A fisherman pulls a bearded fireworm caught in his net in front of the Sicilian fishing village of Marzamemi.



Fishermen lower the fishing net in front of the Sicilian fishing village of Marzamemi. - AFP photos

Sports

N Zealand to play US in Olympic rugby sevens semis, France out

Australians outclassed Ireland 40-7 in their quarter

PARIS: Defending champions New Zealand will play the United States in the semi-finals of the Olympic women's sevens, but French hopes of double rugby by gold were dashed after defeat by Canada at the Stade de France on Monday.

Another partisan, near sell-out crowd of 66,000 roared on the France team in their mission to emulate Antoine Dupont and the men's team in claiming gold. But there was disappointment as the Canadians ran out 19-14 winners to set up a semi-final against Australia.

The Australians outclassed Ireland 40-7 in their quarter, Maddison Levi scoring a hat-trick to set a new women's record of 11 tries scored at an Olympics, beating Portia Woodman-Wickliffe's previous best of 10 at the 2016 Rio Games. "It sounds pretty good, I guess gold medallist would be a little bit better!" said Levi. "I wouldn't be getting these accolades if it wasn't for the team inside me. They put me into good spaces to best utilize my skills."

"But obviously defence wins games and that's what's going to keep us going through to the gold medal match." Piper Logan opened the scoring for Canada against France, haring away from a scrum for a fine individual try, Chloe Daniels converting.

But the home side drew level at the whistle for half-time, Ian Jason sprinting away for a try. Yolaine Yengo converted that and her own try to take the lead after a brilliant Lili Dezou offload out of a double tackle.

But Logan scooted away for her second, identikit, try, captain Olivia Apps converting to make it 14 points apiece with three minutes to play. Daniels

dashed French hopes when she shot down an unguarded blindside for Canada's third try.

Numerical advantage

New Zealand, gold medallists at the COVID-delayed Tokyo Games in 2021, ran out comprehensive 55-5 winners over China and will play the US, 17-7 victors over Britain. They were on the scoreboard within 30 seconds, veteran Sarah Hirini finishing off a break by Theresa Setefano.

But China roared back, Yang Feifei hauled down with the line beckoning. When Hirini was yellow carded for a head-high tackle, the Chinese made the numerical advantage pay as Hu Yu outstripped the stretched defence for a try.

There was no panic from New Zealand, who went on to score eight tries without reply. Five-pointers for Jazmin Felix-Hotham, Michaela Blyde and rugby legend Woodman-Wickliffe, in her third and final Olympics, made it 24-5 at half-time.

Blyde crossed for her seventh try of the tournament early in the second period, swiftly followed by four more from Felix-Hotham, Mahina Paul (2) and Hirini in what turned out to be a procession. New Zealand's trans-Tasman rivals Australia, winners at the 2016 Rio Games, made a strong start against Ireland.

Levi bagged a first-half hat-trick in what was a re-run of both sides' final pool match earlier Monday won 19-14 by the Australians. Faith Nathan crossed to make it 26-0 at half-time before Isabella Nasser and Biene Terita added two more either side of an Irish consolation try from Stacey Flood.



SAINT-DENIS: (From L) Australia's Sharni Smale, Canada's Florence Symonds and Australia's Maddison Levi fight for the ball during the women's semi-final rugby sevens match between Canada and Australia during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis on July 30, 2024. — AFP

Britain took the lead in their quarter-final through Ellie Boatman, the US responding through Naya Tapper after a strong break from TikTok star Ilona Maher. Maher looked like she might have been in for the US' second on the stroke of half-time, but an out-

standing Jasmine Joyce tackle wiped her out.

Kristi Kirche did get that American second, however, early in the second half, followed by Sammy Sullivan to end British medal hopes and hand the US a place in the last-four for the first time. — AFP

Tearful Gauff calls for video replays after stormy exit

PARIS: Coco Gauff demanded the introduction of video replays at Roland Garros after being dumped out of the Olympic Games singles tournament on Tuesday in a stormy defeat to impressive Donna Vekic of Croatia.

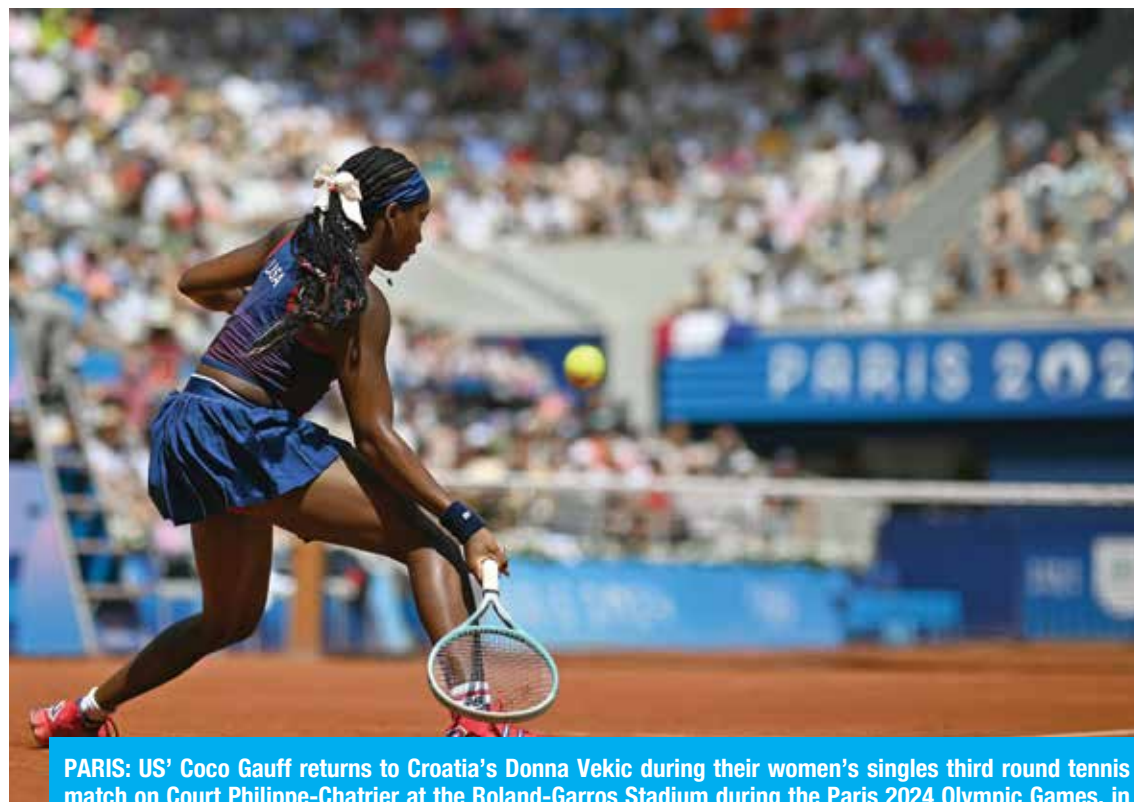
Vekic came through 7-6 (9/7), 6-2 to reach the quarter-finals after world number two Gauff became embroiled in a tearful, bitter dispute with the chair umpire over a line call in the sixth game of the second set.

Gauff, who had already surrendered a 5-2 lead in the first set, lost her composure on break point when a ball from Vekic was called out. However, Gauff then hit the return into the net as the chair umpire Jaume Campistol was correcting the original call.

He insisted the call had not hindered the American's shot. The 20-year-old wept as she pleaded her case but the point and break was awarded to Vekic. Gauff then called for the introduction of video replays to adjudicate controversial calls. The French Open venue is the only one of the four Grand Slams that does not utilize technology in any form as officials believe electronic aids are not accurate on dusty clay courts.

"There's been multiple times this year where that happened to me," Gauff, a runner-up at the French Open on the same Court Philippe-Chatrier in Paris in 2022. "I feel like in tennis, we should have a VR (video review) system because these points are big deals. And, yeah, usually afterwards, they apologize, so it's kind of frustrating when the sorry doesn't help you once the match is over."

Gauff added: "I can't say I would have won the match if I would have won that point but replaying that point can make a big difference in that game." The American star had also argued with the chair



PARIS: US' Coco Gauff returns to Croatia's Donna Vekic during their women's singles third round tennis match on Court Philippe-Chatrier at the Roland-Garros Stadium during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, in Paris on July 30, 2024. — AFP

umpire during her semi-final loss to Iga Swiatek at the French Open last month.

Again, the dispute centred on a line call. "I have to advocate for myself all the time," Gauff, who played a starring role at the Games opening ceremony on Friday where she carried the US flag with basketball superstar LeBron James, told the umpire on Tuesday.

"I'm getting cheated in this game. You guys are not fair to me," Vekic, the first Croatian woman in the Olympic singles quarter-finals since Iva Majoli in 1996, said the controversial incident was a "very tricky situation".

"I personally thought the umpire made a good

decision because the call came quite late," said the 28-year-old Wimbledon semi-finalist. In the immediate aftermath of the incident, Vekic had to save three break points in the seventh game as her momentum was checked by the delay.

"I lost my concentration for a couple of points, but I'm happy that I managed to come back in that game because it was an important game," she said. Vekic will face either Marta Kostyuk or Ukraine of Greece's Maria Sakkari for a place in the semi-finals Gauff, who sat out the delayed Tokyo Olympics with COVID, still has a chance of gold in Paris as she remains in both the women's and mixed doubles. — AFP

Sabalenka returns from injury at Washington

WASHINGTON: Two-time reigning Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka returns to competition at this week's WTA Washington Open after taking a month off due to a shoulder injury. And the world number three is counting on being as ready as her rivals now playing in the Paris Olympics when the US Open begins on August 26.

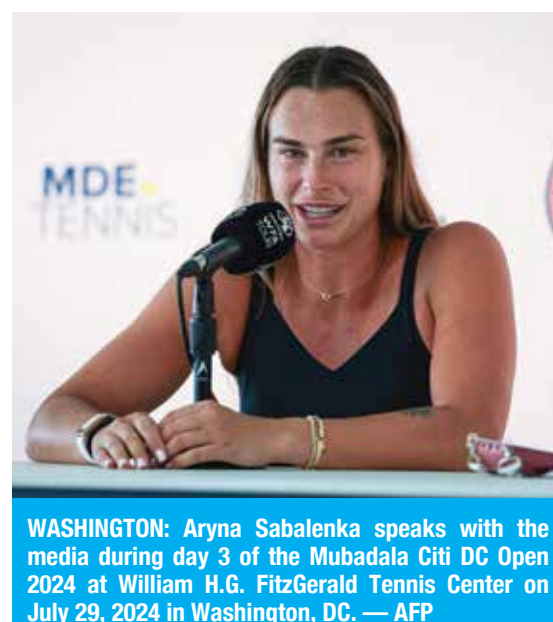
"It's still way to go to the US Open. I feel like they going to be ready," Sabalenka said. "Probably they'll just take a break. They're not going to play whatever. At the end it was very important for me to take a little break. I had really tough struggles starting from March. It was much needed. Mentally, I feel more fresh and more ready to go. I'll be ready."

Sabalenka reached the US Open semi-finals in 2021 and 2022 and last year advanced to the New York final, where she lost to American Coco Gauff. Sabalenka opted to skip the Olympics for scheduling reasons, preferring to prepare for the US hard-court season instead of playing on the clay courts of Roland Garros.

Sabalenka wants to get back on the court for competition after lengthy rehabilitation work on her right shoulder. "I'm here because I got injured and I haven't played for a while," Sabalenka said. "I felt like I need to build my confidence back and build my level back before going to the US Open. So I need to play some matches and that's why I'm here."

Sabalenka, who last played in Washington in 2017, suffered her shoulder injury last month at Berlin, forcing her to retire from a quarter-final match. She later withdrew from Wimbledon, where she had made the semi-finals in her two prior appearances.

"That was a very tough decision because I never pull out from the tournament because of the injury,"



WASHINGTON: Aryna Sabalenka speaks with the media during day 3 of the Mubadala Citi DC Open 2024 at William H.G. Fitzgerald Tennis Center on July 29, 2024 in Washington, DC. — AFP

she said. "Even if I was injured, I was still playing. I was still struggling, but being able to play. It was my first experience like that."

"But I decided to take care of my health, to do a proper rehab, get back stronger. So the recovery was very tough one because for two weeks I was doing rehab, like a lot of exercises, a lot of treatments, a lot of recovery stuff."

Sabalenka, 26, was off the court for a week and a half to focus on fitness. "It felt like the whole day I've been doing exercises," she said. "It feels like it's actually time to switch off, but you're still working out, still doing something. It was very tough."

Sabalenka worked out in hot and humid Florida, making similar conditions in the US capital somewhat easier. "I feel like physically I'm well-prepared after Florida," she said. "Hopefully this injury will never bother me again and I'll be able to play the next Grand Slam, which is my favorite one. I really want to do well there." — AFP

England white-ball cricket coach Mott stands down

LONDON: Matthew Mott has stood down as England's white-ball head coach, leaving Marcus Trescothick in caretaker charge while the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) begin the search for a permanent replacement, it was announced Tuesday.

The Australian's two-year stint in charge of the limited-overs teams ended after Rob Key, the managing director of England's men's cricket, decided an under-performing outfit needed a "new direction". The 50-year-old Mott, previously in charge of the all-conquering Australian women's side, had seen his position come under intense scrutiny after two disappointing England title defences in both last year's 50-over World Cup and the more recent T20 World Cup.

There were questions too over whether England white-ball captain Jos Buttler should remain in post, but the wicketkeeper-batsman has been backed to continue leading the side. Mott and Buttler won the T20 World Cup in 2022, just months after starting work together, but England's two most recent major tournaments were huge disappointments.

England put up a woeful defence of their 50-over crown in India, losing six of their nine games, and defeated only one Test nation before being thrashed by eventual champions India in a Guyana semi-final during last month's T20 World Cup.

Trescothick, a former England opening batsman and 2005 Ashes winner, will take over for the visit of arch-rivals Australia for both T20 and one-day international series in September while a successor is found.

Former Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara, who has worked closely with Buttler as coach of Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League, could be a candidate to take charge, while ex-England batsman Jonathan Trott, who has impressed as coach of Afghanistan, has also been linked with the job.

Eoin Morgan, Buttler's predecessor as England captain, has ruled himself out, while the vacancy may come too soon for former England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff, now back in cricket as the coach of Northern Superchargers in the Hundred.

Key, explaining the decision to part company with Mott, said in an ECB statement: "After three World Cup cycles in a short space of time, I now feel the team needs a new direction to prepare for the challenges ahead."

"This decision was not made lightly, but I believe it is the right time for the team's future success. With our focus shifting towards the Champions Trophy early next year and the next cycle of white-ball competition, it is crucial that we ensure the team is focused and prepared."

'Huge potential'

Former England batsman Key added: "Marcus Trescothick is well respected in the dressing room and will take charge of team affairs alongside white-ball captain Jos Buttler. "On behalf of everyone connected to England cricket, and me personally, I would like to thank Matthew for all he has done for the team since his appointment."

Mott, who insisted after the T20 World Cup in the Caribbean he was still the right man for the job, said: "I am immensely proud to have coached the England Men's team; it has been an honor. "We have put everything into trying to achieve success over the past two years, and I am incredibly proud of the character and passion that the team has displayed during that period, including a magnificent T20 World Cup victory in 2022." — AFP

Archer, Robinson extend Sussex stints

LONDON: England bowlers Jofra Archer and Ollie Robinson have both agreed one-year contract extensions at Sussex, the English county announced Tuesday. Express quick Archer, 29, is currently playing white-ball cricket only but England hope to have the 2019 50-over World Cup winner, whose career has been blighted by injuries, back playing Test cricket next year.

He will continue to play for south coast side Sussex until the end of the 2025 season, in an arrangement that ties in with his current England and Wales Cricket Board central contract. The 30-year-old fast-medium Robinson, who lost his England place earlier this season and made unwanted headlines when hit for a record 43 runs in an over by Leicestershire's Louis Kimber last month, is also staying at Hove.

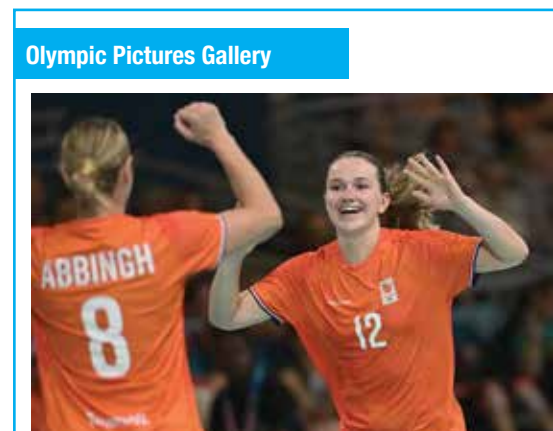
"I am delighted that both Jofra and Oliver have extended their contracts with the club for another year," said Sussex head coach Paul Farbrace. "It is fantastic to see Jofra back playing and being able to enjoy his high level of skill on the field. "He has made a significant contribution to club, even when he has not been able to play. "Oliver has played a key role for the team this season in both the County Championship and the (T20) Blast and he has contributed hugely to the on-field progress we have made as a club." — AFP

Sports

PARIS 2024

Hong Kong young fencers draw inspiration from Olympic 'Sword Queen' Vivian Kong

Kong: Fencing 'in such a beautiful palace was one of my dreams'



PARIS: Netherlands' left wing #12 Bo van Wetering celebrates after scoring during the Women's Preliminary Round Group B handball match between Netherlands and Spain. — AFP



MARSEILLE: Germany's Sebastian Koerdel (R) competes in Race 6 of the men's IQFoil windsurfing event during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games sailing competition. — AFP



PARIS: India's Chirag Shetty (R) and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy celebrate after winning the men's doubles badminton group stage match. — AFP



PARIS: US' Hannah Roberts competes in the Women's Cycling BMX Freestyle Park qualification. — AFP



PARIS: Mexico's Prisca Awiti Alcaraz and Slovenia's Andreja Leski (Blue) compete in the judo women's -63kg gold medal bout of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. — AFP

HONG KONG: Twelve-year-old Hong Kong fencing beginner Lloyd got a new role model over the weekend - "Sword Queen" Vivian Kong Man-wai, who clawed back a 7-1 deficit in the women's epee final to win Olympic gold in Paris.

"I woke up to the pleasant surprise of Vivian Kong (winning)," Lloyd told AFP on Monday at a fencing school in Central District, Hong Kong's commercial heartland. The 30-year-old Kong on Saturday became only the third Hong Kong athlete in history to have a gold medal draped around her neck when she beat France's Auriane Mallo-Breton in front of a fiercely partisan crowd at the Paris Games.

She won 13-12 in the most thrilling fashion, a sudden-death final point securing victory in the nail-biting contest after it was tied 12-12 when the clock ran out. "Very inspiring. It was just very nice to see the spirit she had," said Lloyd before starting his fencing class.

"She did not give up, she kept having to climb her way up... she still chased the challenge and managed to get the gold medal," he said. "I was very happy for Hong Kong." Later Monday in Paris, fellow fencer Edgar Cheung took home the gold medal in the final bout of the men's individual foil - successfully defending the title he won at the Tokyo Games three years ago.

Kong joins Cheung and windsurfer Lee Lai-shan at Atlanta 1996 as Hong Kong's only Olympic champions. Kong, a graduate of Stanford University in the United States, has battled back twice from torn cruciate ligaments down the years, one in each knee, to rise to world number one and achieve Olympic glory.

Swimmers O'Callaghan, Popovici fire up again after gold win

PARIS: Mollie O'Callaghan and David Popovici backed up from winning 200m freestyle gold with strong 100m heat swims Tuesday, as French hero Leon Marchand dived into the Olympic pool twice in his bid for more glory. Dominant American great Katie Ledecky was also back in action at La Defense Arena, cruising through her 1,500 freestyle heat as she bids to defend her title.

Australia's O'Callaghan upset defending champion Ariarne Titmus to clinch the 200m crown on Monday, while Romanian teenager Popovici won by a fingertip in a frenetic men's race.

They both returned barely 12 hours later, with Australian two-time world champion O'Callaghan fifth fastest through the heats behind pace-setting world record holder Sarah Sjoestrom (52.99sec) and Hong Kong's Siobhan Haughey.

Popovici - also a former world champion - was third best after timesheet-topping American Jack Alexy (47.57), with Chinese world record holder Pan Zhanle just scrapping through in joint 13th. With reigning champion Emma McKeon failing to qualify at the Australian trials, O'Callaghan has a golden opportunity to secure the revered 100-200 double.

She has not lost a 100 free in a major final since 2021, although Haughey came to Paris as the top seed after her 52.02 last year made her fastest

Kuwait beat Bahrain in qualifiers for Asian Youth Cup

KUWAIT: The Kuwait youth national team for basketball defeated Bahrain 85 to 66 points on Monday and Saudi Arabia defeated Oman, as the Kuwait-hosted Asian Youth Cup qualifiers for the Gulf region with the participation of five countries.

This important win gives the Kuwaiti team an advantage in the qualifiers as they seek to secure qualifications and compete in the Asian Cup, which is set in Jordan in September. The qualifiers will continue Tuesday, with two games between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar. — KUNA

In a tearful post-match interview at the Grand Palais—a 124-year-old exhibition hall that Paris transformed into an Olympic venue - Kong said fencing "in such a beautiful palace was one of my dreams". "I didn't want to lose so miserably," she said of fighting back from the six-point deficit.

"I didn't want to give up without demonstrating the Hong Kong spirit in my fight." The impact of Kong's win was immediate, said Lau Kwok-kin, a retired Olympian now teaching fencing, who works at the school where Lloyd trains in a class of about six youngsters with only one girl.

Lau said they received more calls from parents of young girls since Kong's victory. "Vivian Kong is a woman athlete and perhaps that has made some parents see the possibility of girls winning medals in the Olympics," Lau, 47, said.

'More professional'

Lau was the first fencer to represent the city in the Olympics, in 2004 and 2008, and the 47-year-old attributed Kong's success to the systematic training provided by Hong Kong Sports Institute. The government-funded body also provides athletes with better financial support than in the past.

"Back then we didn't have much time for training and we often did it after class or work, when we were already tired," Lau said. "But now being an athlete is a full-time job."

Lau added that the training plan for an elite athlete now covers "everything, from retreat, practicing, competition, techniques and physical conditions". "It is a much more professional model than what we had



HONG KONG: Fencing students learn techniques at a fencing studio in Hong Kong. — AFP

before - that's why the performance now is better."

Lau said the city could discover more talents if "satellite training bases" outside of the Hong Kong Sports Institute could be set up around the city, and if parents could lend more support.

Lloyd, who attends classes three times a week since taking up the sport a year ago, said he "most definitely" wanted to be fencing more but school work takes up a lot of time. "I still hold fencing very high in my priorities... (but) I might have to slow down on how much fencing I can do in a week because of the tests and preparation studying," he said. — AFP

Two Chinese swimmers cleared after positive tests in 2022: Report

PARIS: Two Chinese swimmers, including one scheduled to compete at the Olympics, tested positive in a doping control in 2022 but were cleared by Chinese authorities, the New York Times reported on Tuesday, citing anonymous sources.

The latest report follows a major dispute in the sport around the case of 23 Chinese swimmers who tested positive for trimetazidine (TMZ) at a domestic competition in late 2020 and early 2021 ahead of the Tokyo Games. They were also cleared with food contamination given as the explanation. The United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) has accused the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) of a cover-up in an increasingly bitter dispute. WADA has claimed that USADA's criticism is politically motivated.

In the new report, the New York Times said that Chinese authorities concluded that a steroid had been accidentally ingested when the two swimmers ate hamburgers in Beijing with only 'trace amounts' detected which they said was consistent with food contamination rather than doping.

The paper said that one of the swimmers had also been part of the previously reported case of the 23 swimmers. In a statement in response to the article, WADA said that the latest case was part of a "wider series of cases" also including a shooter and a BMX rider who all tested positive for metandienone, in late 2022 and early 2023. — AFP



NANTERRE: Australia's Mollie O'Callaghan (R) reacts with third-placed Hong Kong's Haughey Siobhan Bernadette after winning the final of the women's 200m freestyle swimming event. — AFP

since McKeon's 51.96 at the Tokyo Olympics.

The men's 100m is also without a defending champion after Caeleb Dressel's failure to make the grade at the US trials, leaving it wide open.

After standing for 13 years, Cesar Cielo's world record was finally topped by Popovici in 2022. But less than two years later Pan bettered it again, clocking 46.80. Pan, though, seemed out-of-sorts and failed to make it through the 200m heats, only surviving the 100m by 0.06.

Dressel's long-time rival Kyle Chalmers - who won gold in Rio and silver behind the American in Tokyo - was sixth fastest and fancies his chances again. "I feel like I'm in as good a shape as I could possibly be in for Olympic Games, definitely better than what I was in Tokyo," said the Australian. "Every race I enter I back myself. I think I got to have the confidence, and belief in myself that I can." — AFP



KUWAIT: Players in action during the qualifier match between Kuwait and Bahrain. — KUNA

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, Jeegar Bharatkumar Karvat, holder of Indian Passport No. S5881899, having permanent address 1807, Vishwadeep Heights, K.T. Soni Marg, near Mamta Dairy, Mahavir Nagar, Kandivali, West, Mumbai-400067, Maharashtra, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that I have changed my name from Jeegar Bharatkumar to Jeegar Bharat

(given name) and Karvat (surname). (#5640, 31/07/2024)

I Sera Maria, holder of Passport No U0201174 do hereby change my name to Sera Maria (as given name) Bosco (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Sera Maria Bosco and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (#5910, 29/07/2024)

PARIS 2024 

Olympic blow as triathlon postponed, Biles chases first gold of Paris Games

Men's triathlon has now been rescheduled to take place on Wednesday



PARIS: (From left) US' Jordan Chiles, Hezly Rivera, Jade Carey, Simone Biles and Sunisa Lee pose during the artistic gymnastics women's qualification during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. — AFP

PARIS: Unsafe pollution levels in the River Seine forced the postponement of the men's triathlon at the Paris Olympics on Tuesday, as gymnastics icon Simone Biles eyed her first gold of the Games. In a massive blow to Olympic organisers who have repeatedly vowed that the Seine would be safe to swim in, Tuesday's race was called off just hours before the start after last-minute water quality tests.

A joint statement from Paris 2024 and World Triathlon blamed the spike in pollution levels on the heavy rain that fell in the French capital on Friday and Saturday. The men's triathlon has now been rescheduled to take place on Wednesday, immediately after the women's event.

However the forecast of a major storm with more heavy rainfall hitting Paris later Tuesday raised serious doubts over whether Wednesday's rescheduled events could go ahead. Heavy downpours still overwhelm the city's underground drains and sewage system, leading to untreated effluent being released into the waterway.

If water quality does not improve in time, the swimming leg of the event would be removed and the

race converted to a duathlon. World Triathlon president Marisol Casado said she was still hopeful that the races could take place on Wednesday.

"We are all disappointed because we are not able to follow strictly what was planned," she told a press briefing. Benjamin Maze, the technical director of the French Triathlon Federation, told FranceInfo radio that there was "a bit of anger" among competitors who had risen early only to learn of the postponement.

"The athletes got up a bit before 4 am, they were having breakfast when we received the information from the international federation," he said. "Obviously there's a bit of anger and a lot of disappointment."

Biles targets gold

The triathlon setback overshadowed the start of day four of the games, where 13 other gold medals are up for grabs in table tennis, shooting, judo, fencing, rugby, swimming, surfing and gymnastics. The hottest ticket in town will be at the Bercy Arena where gymnastics legend Biles will attempt to lead the United States to victory in the final of the women's team event.

Biles appears to be back at the peak of her powers as she leads the United States on what has been billed an Olympic redemption mission. The 27-year-old, considered the greatest gymnast of all time, won four gold medals at the 2016 Rio Games.

But she battled the disorientating mental block gymnasts call the "twisties" at the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics three years ago. Biles dramatically pulled out of most of her events, including the team final, and the United States settled for silver behind Russia after winning gold in 2012 and 2016.

Biles, a 23-time world champion, left Tokyo with a silver and a bronze, but won many plaudits for opening up on her mental health. The US team topped the rankings in qualifying and Biles wowed an A-list crowd including Tom Cruise on Sunday in her first appearance in the French capital, despite tweaking her left calf and competing with her leg taped.

On the fourth day of swimming, defending champion Kaylee McKeown of Australia and US world record-holder Regan Smith go head-to-head for 100m backstroke glory. It is one of three golds up for grabs at La Defense Arena. — AFP

Kuwaiti athletes Al-Zubaid, Al-Mudhaf fail to qualify

PARIS: Kuwaiti swimmer Mohammad Al-Zubaid and shooting champion Khaled Al-Mudhaf both missed their chance to qualify to the Paris 2024 Olympics finals during Tuesday's events. Swimmer Al-Zubaid ranked sixth in the swimming 100 meter event after recording a 52.35 at La Defense Arena.

Al-Mudhaf on the other hand, hit 120 out of 125 discs at Chateauroux shooting center during the trap event. Chief of the Kuwaiti Olympics mission Ali Al-Marri spoke to the press affirming that the athletes have been great ambassadors of the country, and an honorable reflection of Kuwaiti youth. He stated that they all have the passion and drive to achieve the Olympic dream, adding that they were all keen on performing excellently and attaining the best possible results. — KUNA

Teen swimming star McIntosh sets herself up for superstardom

PARIS: Canadian prodigy Summer McIntosh answered the call and lived up to the hype by winning a breakthrough Olympic gold medal in Paris, with the teenage swimming sensation setting herself up for superstardom.

Still just 17, she has all the attributes to be the next big thing, and not just in the pool. Her prodigious talent has long been the talk of the swimming world with the only question whether she could translate it to the biggest stage of all—a pressure-cooker stadium with 15,000 screaming fans at the Paris Olympics.

McIntosh answered that emphatically in the 400m medley on Monday, powering to the wall in 4mins 27.71secs, putting more than six seconds between her and her nearest rival. It followed a sensational 400m freestyle swim on the opening day of action at La Defense Arena, outgunning American great Katie Ledecky for silver behind only Australian Ariarne Titmus, who is unbeaten over the distance since 2019.

More Paris gold is there for the taking, with McIntosh favourite in the 200m medley and a serious contender in the 200m butterfly. Her journey to the top began at the pandemic-delayed Tokyo 2020 Olympics, where she made her mark as a 14-year-old by coming fourth in the 200m freestyle behind winner Titmus. — AFP



PARIS: Chairman of the Kuwait Olympic Committee meets the Vice-President of the UAE Olympic Committee and Head of the UAE delegation. — KUNA

Olympic Committee head praises Kuwait, UAE sporting ties

PARIS: The Chairman of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, stressed Monday the depth of Kuwaiti-Emirati sporting ties.

This came in a statement to KUNA after the Chairman of the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee visit-

ed the UAE Olympic pavilion in the French capital, Paris, on the sidelines of the 2024 Olympic Games and met with the Vice-President of the UAE Olympic Committee and Head of the UAE delegation participating in the Games, Sheikh Rashid bin Humaid Al-Nuaimi.

Sheikh Fahad stressed the importance of these bilateral meetings to confirm the solidity of Kuwaiti Emirati sporting relations, affirming the UAE's distinction in the sports field.

Kuwait is participating for the 14th time in the Summer Olympic Games, with a delegation of nine athletes competing in six sports: Shooting, fencing, swimming, athletics, rowing and sailing. — KUNA



Khaled Al-Mudhaf



Mohammad Al-Zubaid