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Hamas, Hezbollah vow revenge

Funerals held for Haniyeh, Shukr • Kuwait will not be base for attacks • KAC to halt Beirut flights



(Left) Iranians take part in a funeral procession for late Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on Aug 1, 2024, ahead of his burial in Qatar. (Right) Hezbollah fighters and mourners carry the casket of slain top commander Fuad Shukr during his funeral in Beirut's southern suburbs on Aug 1, 2024. — AFP photos (See Page 5)

Trump claims Harris opted to 'turn black'



CHICAGO: Former US President Donald Trump answers questions as moderator and journalist Rachel Scott looks on during the National Association of Black Journalists annual convention on July 31, 2024. — AFP

HARRISBURG, Pennsylvania: Donald Trump suggested Wednesday that Vice President Kamala Harris had decided to "turn black" for political gain, as he attacked his Democratic White House rival during a combative interaction with African American journalists in Chicago. The Republican former president's inflammatory comments marked an escalation of the 78-year-old's vitriol against Harris, whom he falsely accused of having identified as Indian but then, "all of a sudden, she made a turn, and she became a black person."

Harris, 59, has long identified as black and graduated from a historically black university. "So I don't know, is she Indian or is she black?" asked Trump during a heated interview at the National Association of Black Journalists conference. Harris later denounced the attacks as "the same old show" of "the divisiveness and the disrespect" from Trump.

The interview at the NABJ convention started on a tense note, when ABC News reporter Rachel Scott - one of three black women moderators - listed a series of racist comments Trump had made and asked why black voters should support him. In response, Trump called the question "horrible," "hostile" and a "disgrace" and described ABC as a "fake" network.

Continued on Page 6

TEHRAN: Iran and its regional allies vowed retaliation on Thursday for the deaths of Hamas and Hezbollah leaders, raising regional tensions as mourners filled Tehran's city center calling for revenge. A public funeral was held for Hamas' political chief Ismail Haniyeh in the Iranian capital where he was killed early Wednesday in an attack which the Zionist entity has not commented on. Haniyeh's body was then flown to Qatar, where he had resided and where he is to be laid to rest on Friday, when his group called for a "day of furious rage" in the Palestinian territories and across the region.

Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah, addressing the

funeral of the Lebanese group's top military commander, said the Zionist entity and "those who are behind it must await our inevitable response" to Fuad Shukr's and Haniyeh's killings within hours of each other. "You do not know what red lines you crossed," Nasrallah said, addressing the Zionist entity, a day after Shukr was killed in a strike in south Beirut.

Kuwait will never be used as a launchpad for attacks on neighboring countries, spokesman for the defense ministry Col Hamad Al-Saqer said on Thursday. Kuwait authorities will not allow the use of the country's lands or airspace to carry out military operations against neighbors and allies, he was cited as

saying in a military statement, denying the veracity of reports alleging otherwise.

Kuwait Airways said the last scheduled flights to Beirut would be Aug 4, and then they would be put on hold due to the regional situation. Kuwait Airways said in a press release that the decision was made in coordination with the foreign ministry and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). On Wednesday, the DGCA affirmed it was continually coordinating with the foreign ministry and Kuwaiti carriers to reschedule flights from and to Beirut via Kuwait International Airport.

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Kuwait marks 34th invasion anniversary, remembers support

KUWAIT: On August 2, Kuwait marks the 34th anniversary of the 1990 Iraqi invasion, a significant event that led to widespread international condemnation and a global coalition to liberate Kuwait. The invasion caused extensive destruction and suffering among the Kuwaiti people, who responded by forming resistance groups.

The Kuwaiti government, led by late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, garnered international support, resulting in UN Security Council Resolution 660. This resolution condemned the invasion and demanded Iraq's immediate withdrawal.

Russia, US in major East-West prisoner swap

ANKARA: US journalist Evan Gershkovich and a Russian intelligence colonel jailed for a Berlin killing were among 24 prisoners and two minors freed Thursday in the biggest East-West prisoner swap since the Cold War, officials said. The 24 were brought to Ankara from Russia, the United States, Germany, Poland, Slovenia, Norway and Belarus under the deal that Turkey said its MIT intelligence service had spent weeks putting together.

Ten Russians, including two minors, were exchanged for 16 Westerners and Russians detained in Russia, said a statement released by the Turkish presidency. US President Joe Biden called the deal "a feat of diplomacy". "Some of these women and men have been unjustly held for years. All have endured unimaginable suffering and uncertainty. Today, their



KUWAIT: Oil wells set ablaze by Iraqi troops. — KUNA

The international community, including Arab states, formed a coalition that successfully liberated Kuwait in February 1991. Kuwait's reputation as a peaceful and generous nation contributed to the strong global support it received. — KUNA (See Pages 2, 3, 11, 12 & 13)

agony is over," Biden added in a statement. The Wall Street Journal said it was "overwhelmed with relief" at the release of Gershkovich, 32, who was detained in Russia in March 2023 and jailed in July for 16 years on spying charges that were denounced by the United States. Paul Whelan, a former US marine detained since 2018, also flew to Ankara. Another American, Alsu Kurmasheva, and Vladimir Kara-Murza, a Russian with US residency were also freed.

Opposition politician Ilya Yashin and Vladimir Kara-Murza, a Russian-Briton with US residency, who had both been jailed for criticizing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, were among Kremlin opponents set free. Yashin will go to Germany with 11 other German nationals and Russians, according to the US administration. They included Rico Krieger, a German who was sentenced to death in Belarus on espionage charges before being reprieved this week.

Among those returned to Moscow was Vadim Krasikov, a Russian intelligence agent imprisoned in Germany for killing a former Chechen rebel commander in a brazen assassination. The German government acknowledged that agreeing to free

Continued on Page 6

US strikes plea deal with 9/11 mastermind

WASHINGTON: US prosecutors have reached a deal with 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the Pentagon said Wednesday, reportedly involving a guilty plea in exchange for avoiding a death penalty trial. The agreements with Mohammed and two other accused moves their long-running cases toward resolution. These have been bogged down in pre-trial maneuverings for years while the defendants remained held at the Guantanamo Bay military base in Cuba.

A Pentagon statement said no details of the deal would be immediately made public at this time, but the New York Times reported that Mohammed, Walid bin Attash and Mustafa Al-Hawsawi had agreed to plead guilty to conspiracy in exchange for a life sentence instead of a trial after they could get the death penalty. Such a proposal was detailed by prosecutors in a letter last year but divided the families of the nearly 3,000 people killed in the Sept 11, 2001 attacks, with some still wanting the defendants to face the ultimate penalty.

Much of the legal jousting surrounding the men's cases has focused on whether they could be tried fairly after having undergone methodical torture at the hands of the CIA in the years after 9/11 - a thorny question that the plea deals help avoid. Mohammed was regarded as one of Al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden's most trusted and intelligent lieutenants before his March 2003 capture in Pakistan.

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed

Continued on Page 6



Local

How Iraq's invasion of Kuwait upended lives of expatriates

'We learned the true meaning of defending the country from which you earn your living'



KUWAIT: Buildings damaged by the Iraqi troops are seen after the liberation of Kuwait. — KUNA photos



A helicopter flies over burning oil fields which were set on fire by Iraqi soldiers before they retreated from Kuwait.

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: The first thing Ragaa Ghait woke up to on the morning of August 2, 1990, was the sound of the television echoing through their house, announcing that Kuwait had been declared the nineteenth province of Iraq. The Egyptian family, like many other expatriates seeking a better life away from instability in their home countries, found it hard to believe that their once peaceful haven had been invaded.

"During those seven months, we learned the true meaning of defending the country from which you earn your living," said Ghait, the mother whose family's life was threatened, with her husband nearly losing his eyesight during the invasion.

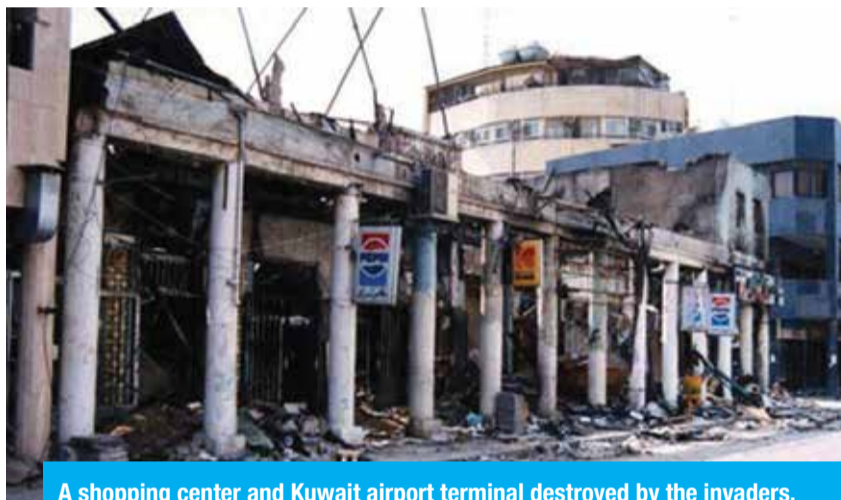
Ghait remembers how Iraqi troops reached neighborhoods, occupying every empty house that came along their way. They tried to occupy the home of one of Ghait's neighbors who were away on summer vacation. But Ghait's husband, Saad Mahmoud, could not stand idly by. He stood in the occupiers' path, shouting, "This is my neighbor's house!"

The knife that took his eyes

At that moment, the Iraqi man drew a knife hidden in his sock and slashed Mahmoud's face from his eye to his cheek. He was immediately rushed to the hospital. "We could hear Mahmoud screaming in pain as he received fifteen stitches without anesthesia," Ghait recounted. Since that incident, his vision was permanently impaired.

Upon learning that Iraqi soldiers were capturing Kuwaitis, Ghait, whose sister is Kuwaiti, knew she could not leave. Ghait's family and her sisters and kids decided to stay together out of fear for their safety. Whenever Iraqi soldiers came knocking at their doors searching for Kuwaitis, Ghait and her husband would open the door themselves and say, "Only Egyptians live here."

In one of those times, the soldiers broke into the house, and targeted a rifle toward Mahmoud's head. "I want my dad," cried Mahmoud's daughter who was only five years old at the time. "Iraqis didn't leave a house without looting it and stripping it of everything. In just a week, all of Kuwait was empty," said Gait. After the long-anticipated liberation, she recalled how every resident in Kuwait, regardless of nationality, worked together to rebuild the country. "We were all like a family,



A shopping center and Kuwait airport terminal destroyed by the invaders.



working to bring old Kuwait back," she said.

I thought I was going to die'

Aida Ali, a Lebanese resident who was born in Kuwait, didn't need television to know the Iraqis had entered the country, she saw it firsthand. While driving to work the morning of August 2, she heard the roar of a warplane flying directly above her, dropping what appeared to be two fireballs in her path. Trapped on the highway, she couldn't stop or turn back. "I thought I was going to die," she said, recalling the overwhelming mix of fear, confusion, and disbelief she felt.

But the fireballs didn't explode, leaving her grateful yet more bewildered. "After that, everything felt like a dream," she said. Having previously escaped Lebanon's civil war to Kuwait, Ali and her family had nowhere else to turn. "Every day we hoped it would end, but things only got worse."

She recalled bombs damaging her parents' house, leaving large holes in the ceiling and forcing her parents to move to her home. Iraqi soldiers also used psychological tactics to agonize people — she remembered the anxiety she felt when an Iraqi soldier would shine his cannon in front of their building every day. Most painfully, she spoke of the day she had to leave her parents and go to her husband's family just before Operation Desert Storm's ground offensive began. "I had never experienced such separation from them," she said. "I feared I

might never see them again."

When those difficult days ended, she hoped the worst was behind her. However, some of the post-war impacts lingered and persist today. The oil wells set on fire by Iraq turned mornings into nights, with black smoke spreading across the country and even staining men's white traditional attire. Food remained scarce as borders closed and supplies were cut off. They were only able to eat thanks to rations shared by Kuwaiti friends. Years later, every time Ali hears a sudden loud noise or encounters an accident, her mind reverts to 1990, struggling to shake off those memories. "I lost my sense of security, always scared that anything could happen at any time."

Gulf war refugees

Born in Kuwait and having lived there for 16 years, Fatema Shamoan, an Indian resident, knew no other home but Kuwait. Shamoan and her family were among the last to be evacuated by the Indian government. She often heard her father say, "I don't want to abandon this country; I want to wait and see how things will turn out." However, evacuation orders were strict, and they had to leave or stay at their own risk.

Each family member was allowed to pack only one small bag with their basic stuff. "We had to leave behind so many memories — our belongings, dad's car, childhood photographs, even my sister's wedding photos," Shamoan said.

The trip back to India took almost eight days, and was entirely by road, traveling from Kuwait to Basra, Baghdad, and through the desert to Jordan. From there, they took a plane from Jordan to India. Trapped in no-man's land on the border between Iraq and Jordan, Shamoan said that they were referred to as "Gulf war refugees." Shamoan's sister who was pregnant throughout the entire trip, delivered her baby the day after they reached their hometown.

Even though Shamoan felt more of an observer or just a follower of her parents, she could feel the amount of uncertainty her family had been passing through during this turning point in their life. Losing everything they built in Kuwait, having to go back to India during a very weak economic phase, they have often questioned, "should we start building a career here? Should we wait until Kuwait is liberated? Or should we travel for another country?"

It wasn't until 1994 that they were able to return to Kuwait and gradually rebuild everything from scratch. Shamoan's brother was the first to return, but he had no place to stay. When he was there, he visited their old apartment, curious to see its condition, but was surprised to find it intact and untouched. "I saw everything we had left behind and could have easily taken it, but I didn't know where to put it. I barely had a place to sleep myself," her brother told her. "So, yes, we had to let go of our memories one more time," Shamoan said in despair.

British envoy reaffirms UK's commitment to Kuwait's security

KUWAIT: August 2 marks the 34th anniversary of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. As we reflect on this significant day, we honor the courage, sacrifice, and enduring spirit of the Kuwaiti people. The United Kingdom stands in solidarity with Kuwait, remembering the shared history and the steadfast partnership that has grown over the years. British Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Belinda Lewis stated:

"On the occasion of the 34th anniversary of the Iraqi Invasion of the State of Kuwait, I would like to pay tribute to the bravery and resilience of the Kuwaiti people who faced immense challenges with unwavering strength. We also remember the sacrifices made by the coalition forces, including British servicemen and women, who played a crucial role in the liberation of Kuwait. The UK's commitment to Kuwait's sovereignty and security remains as strong today as it did 34 years ago.

Kuwait and the UK have a long-standing defense relationship that has evolved over several decades, built on mutual respect, shared values, and a commitment to peace and stability in the region. Our partnership is reflected through defense agreements, military training, education, and



British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis

regular joint exercises to enhance and strengthen our defense capabilities. This year is another milestone in our deep historical ties, as we commemorate 125 years of Kuwait-British relations. I look forward many more years of working together as we jointly face the challenges and enjoy the opportunities of the future.

"During Kuwait's most challenging time, a story of extraordinary bravery among its people and strong leadership unfolded. The UK played a vital role as an ally, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Kuwait in its darkest hour. During the invasion of Kuwait, the UK swiftly provided crucial military assistance and diplomatic backing, ensuring the protection of Kuwait's sovereignty and the restoration of its freedom."

MoH urges blood donations to mark invasion 'versary

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi said that blood donation campaigns enhance the blood stock in the Central Blood Bank and save human lives, calling on citizens and residents to donate blood because of its importance for many medical cases such as cancer patients, operations and road accidents.

This came in a press statement by Al-Awadhi after the launch of the campaign (Together forever a wall for the homeland 9) organized by the ministry, represented by the Central Blood Bank, in cooperation with the military corps and civil society institutions on the occasion of the 34th anniversary of the brutal Iraqi invasion of the State of Kuwait.

Awadhi said that during his visit to the blood bank to supervise the launch of the campaign, he was briefed on a patient in the blood transfusion unit at the center who was being prepared for liver transplantation. The patient, Awadhi was told, needs about six blood bags per day. Another patient he met gets daily blood transfusions to survive. This requires people to donate blood regularly.

Director of the Central Blood Bank, Dr Reem Al-Radwan, said that the campaign comes in gratitude to the military corps who served during the brutal Iraqi invasion and to all those who sacrificed their blood for the liberation of Kuwait. She noted the keenness of civil society institutions to participate in blood donation. She added that the blood stock is stable, but the bank continues to receive donors and organize blood donation campaigns, pointing out that the donated blood is good to use for only a month, which requires intensifying campaigns continuously.

It is noteworthy that the campaign (Together forever is a wall for the homeland) is launched for the ninth year in a row and aims to serve as a reminder of national cohesion and the role of the righteous martyrs who gave their blood as a sacrifice for Kuwait. The campaign comes with the participation of the military corps represented by the army, police and the National Guard, in addition to the Kuwait Fire Force, as well as a number of civil society institutions and the government and private sectors, in order to consolidate the concept of humanitarian and voluntary work, promote social solidarity and spread the culture of donation. — KUNA



KUWAIT: (Top) Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi thanks military personnel donating blood. (Above) Minister Al-Awadhi poses for a photo with Central Blood Bank staff. — KUNA photos

Local

Being in Kuwait during invasion: Soldier's sister shares story

Woman recalls moving houses, enduring food scarcity, and fear of being caught



KUWAIT: Shops are seen vandalized after the Iraqi invasion. — KUNA photos



Army barracks left by the Iraqi army are seen on a beach on the Arabian Gulf.

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: From enduring the constant rumble of tanks and the threat of chemical attacks to navigating food shortages and the darkened silence of a city in chaos, Fatima Ghloom's experience was a testament to resilience. Ghloom shared with Kuwait Times snippets of what life was like in Kuwait during the invasion. "If you're asking me about the hardest thing I went through during the invasion, everything was difficult. Those seven months dragged on as if they were seventy years," Ghloom said.

Ghloom's elder brother was a soldier in the Kuwaiti army and the family was terrified for him. "We could hear gunfire and tanks rumbling through the streets, and the sounds were incredibly frightening for us. On top of that, the news was unstable and unsettling." The family were told that the Iraqis had reached military records and were extracting the names and addresses of soldiers. "As a precaution, our addresses and phone numbers were removed to prevent us from being tracked down," she said.

Psychological terror was a constant companion, said Ghloom. Families with military members were the most distressed, living under constant threat and frequently moving from one relative's house to another or staying in abandoned homes left by those

who had fled Kuwait during the invasion.

The family split into two groups because they were told that if a soldier did not surrender, his brothers would be taken. "My older brother told my younger siblings to move to our elder brother's house, who is married and living in another area. My parents and I stayed in our original home, while my siblings moved to my older brother's home," she said. The family also feared traitors living among civilians, who were "informing the invaders about the locations of resistance fighters or soldiers."

Only three loaves

Ghloom also spoke about the struggle to get food. "I would go to the cooperative society early in the morning, around six, and not return until four in the afternoon, sometimes six in the evening, standing in line to get some food," she said. "Sometimes I would come back empty-handed. We could only get three loaves of bread per family from the baker, regardless of the number of family members. Even if a family had more than ten members, they would only get three loaves." Often after a long wait, she added, an Iraqi soldier would come and order the baker to give him all the bread to take to his camp, leaving nothing for civilians.

When cooperatives ran out of food, the family

couldn't find anything to eat. "Initially, lentils were the only available food, but soon even that was no longer available," she said. "Some trucks came from outside the country to sell food, but everything was very expensive, and our money wasn't enough to buy anything due to the suspension of salaries."

Ghloom recalls the family's desperation after they couldn't use a small amount of Iraqi money a young man had given them one day. "Dealing in Kuwaiti dinars was dangerous. It was considered treason, as they claimed Kuwait was an Iraqi province," she said. "We couldn't use the money as the cooperative societies were out of food supplies. We couldn't search for places with food either because cars with Kuwaiti plates were being stopped, and everyone had to change their Kuwaiti car plates and IDs."

A flood of darkness

Another difficult memory was when the family received news that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein wanted to bomb Kuwait with chemical weapons. "We taped up the windows to prevent them from shattering and ground charcoal wrapped in cloth for protection."

The situation worsened when electricity was cut off, and the Iraqi forces struck the oil wells in Kuwait, plunging the country into darkness and quiet,

like a pitch-black night with no electricity. "We had to light candles during the day to see. Everything turned black - from our bodies, which were stained, to household items, which became blackened as darkness flooded our homes. We needed candles day and night, so when they ran out, we melted them down, poured the wax into molds with a wick, and used those."

Ghloom said her experience was "minor" compared to the young people who were killed in front of their homes as their families watched. "That was more devastating than anything else. If it hadn't been for the traitors that were living among the civilians, informing the Iraqis about those resisting, fewer young lives would have been lost."

But there was a silver lining despite the horrors and brutality of the invasion, Ghloom said. "One beautiful memory is that despite everything, Kuwaitis in the neighborhood were united, and the loyal and faithful residents helped each other as much as they could. As the orphanage centers were running out of supplies, many families went to the orphanage centers to care for orphaned infants who had no one to look after them," she said. "The story is long and full of distress, and words alone can't fully convey the traumatic experience. No matter how much we try to express it, letters and language fall short."



Officials pose for a photo at the exhibit. — KUNA photos



Martyr Bureau marks invasion with AR exhibits at malls across Kuwait

KUWAIT: The Director General of Kuwait's Martyr Bureau Salah Al-Ofan on Thursday affirmed the office's keenness to commemorate the martyrs of Kuwait and translate their heroism and sacrifices through events that Kuwaiti society can attend. The events, he said, are a way to express appreciation for everyone who gave his soul as a sacrifice for the homeland.

Ofan made the statement during the opening of an interactive photo exhibit held by the bureau at the Avenues Mall to commemorate the 34th anniversary of the brutal Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. He said that the exhibition aims to promote the values of loyalty and belonging among the Kuwaiti people and embody the heroism of the martyrs of the righteous Kuwait who sacrificed their lives for Kuwait since its independence in 1961. He explained that the event consists of five exhibitions that include pictures of the martyrs of Kuwait, as well as paintings and models related to the martyrs. The exhibitions are held at the Avenues Mall,



KUWAIT: Visitors interact with the Martyr Bureau exhibit commemorating the martyrs lost in the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait at the Avenues Mall.

360 Mall, Al-Khiran Mall, Salhiya Complex and Al-Hamra Mall.

He added that the interactive photo exhibition at the Avenues Mall includes 30 interactive images which utilize augmented reality (AR) technology. The images embody the strength and steadfast-

ness of the martyrs of Kuwait and their courage in defending their land. He pointed to the keenness of the political leadership in the State of Kuwait to support the Martyr Bureau by providing care to the families of the martyrs and commemorating their memory in public spaces across Kuwait.

It is noteworthy that the total number of martyrs registered with the Kuwait Martyr Bureau is 1,342, including 921 martyrs who passed away in military operations, 267 martyrs who were lost in natural disasters and exceptional accidents, and 154 martyrs who died performing their military duty. — KUNA

August 2 a reminder of Kuwaitis' solidarity, sacrifice: Governors

KUWAIT: Kuwait's governors confirmed that the Kuwaitis conveyed during the period of the brutal Iraqi invasion of the country in 1990 the most wonderful meanings of sacrifice and loyalty in the defense of their land and that they are an example to be followed in standing behind their leadership.

This came in separate statements from the gov-

ernors of Assima, Ahmadi, Jahra and Hawally on Thursday on the occasion of the 34th anniversary of the brutal Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990. The governors recalled with pride the steadfastness of the Kuwaiti people and their heroic sacrifices in face of the aggression and the sacrifices of the martyrs of Kuwait.

The Governor Al-Assima, Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah said that all the Kuwaiti people remember the importance of preserving the homeland and the sacrifices made during that painful ordeal and the values of steadfastness and heroism made by the martyrs of the righteous Kuwait in defending the land and freedom in the face of tyranny and injustice. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah valued the role of the

Gulf Cooperation Council countries, brotherly Arabic countries and friendly countries in standing by the State of Kuwait and its people in defending the Kuwaiti legitimacy and harnessing all capabilities in order to liberate the homeland from the clutches of the hateful occupation. He called on the Kuwaiti people to draw lessons from the crime of the brutal Iraqi invasion, which showed the whole world the ability of Kuwait to overcome adversity.

"We remember with pride the steadfastness of the Kuwaiti people and their heroic sacrifices in the face of treacherous aggression," said Governor of Ahmadi Sheikh Hmoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, referring to the sacrifices of the martyrs of the righteous Kuwait who gave their pure blood as a sacri-

fice for the homeland, asking God Almighty to bless them with His mercy. Governor of Jahra Hamad Al-Habshi said that the Gulf countries and most Arab countries' support will forever be engraved in the memory of people. He said all segments of society without exception fought for the freedom of Kuwait and were martyred. This cohesion indicates the national unity embodied by the Kuwaitis during those days. Governor of Hawally Ali Al-Asfar said that the anniversary of the brutal Iraqi invasion of the State of Kuwait is an annual opportunity to remember the sacrifices of the Kuwaiti people. He said that the people of Kuwait will not forget August 2 and the sinful treachery and destruction left by the invasion of the country. — KUNA

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KUWAIT: Health Minister Ahmad Al-Awadhi (left) and Acting Director of Dasman Diabetes Institute Dr Faisal Al-Refae pose for a photo.



Minister Al-Awadhi signs a guestbook.

Health minister, Dasman Diabetes Institute discuss cooperation

KUWAIT: Acting Director of Dasman Diabetes Institute Dr Faisal Al-Refae received Health Minister Ahmad Al-Awadhi at the institute. The two sides discussed several issues of mutual concern including upgrading and developing the cooperation agreement between the two sides and the digital transformation of medial service, electronic linking of patients records and exchange of experts among their staff.

The meeting also discussed means of cooperation in the research field, education and training to improve health standards in the patients' interest and ensure efficacy of diabetes treatment and its complications.

The minister was briefed on the institute's services and programs. He also toured the premises to check the most recent studies and research projects, services and programs.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: A waning crescent moon rises above Kuwait City on August 1, 2024. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Shuwaikh beach to welcome visitors in March 2025

Minister Al-Mashaan, NBK Executives review work progress in development project



Minister Al-Mashaan and CEO Al-Sager pose with Kuwait Municipality's team overseeing the project and other executives.

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized an on-site visit to Shuwaikh Beach Development and Beautification Project to review work progress in this landmark tourism and entertainment project spanning an area of 1.7 km, three months after starting construction works.

The visitors were headed by Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, and Isam Al-Sager, Group Vice-Chairman and CEO of National Bank of Kuwait. During the tour, the visitors reviewed the progress made since starting the project's construction works in early May, as work is underway, with the entire project set to be completed within 11 months, by the end of March 2025, after which Shuwaikh Beach will be ready to welcome visitors with its new look.

It is worth mentioning that NBK signed a cooperation agreement with Kuwait Municipality, under which the bank committed KD 3 million for the development and renovation of Shuwaikh Beachfront to serve all visitors' needs, with a focus on providing high quality and highly efficient modern facilities, in a way that fosters sustainable health, sports and entertainment in Kuwait.

"This project aligns with the Municipality's strategy to partner with all development stakeholders in a way that serves New Kuwait vision 2035," said Mashaan. Mashaan praised NBK's generous donation for this vital project. She explained that the Shuwaikh Beach Development and Beautification Project comes within the Municipality's ongoing efforts to develop seafronts in Kuwait in order to serve the well-being of its visitors from local citizens and residents, as well as external visitors.

"This visit aims to review work progress in Shuwaikh Beach Development and Beautification Project, which stands out as a model for fostering Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Kuwait," CEO Al-Sager said. "NBK's contribution to this project comes within its efforts to promote sustainable development of Kuwait's economy, and to serve the implementation of New Kuwait vision 2035, which underscores the importance of developing tourism and entertainment sector in the country. This initiative also reflects our ongoing fostering of Kuwait's climate action plan, in line with the country's pledge to become carbon neutral by 2060."

The project includes four integrated main areas providing all the needs of beachgoers, while being eco-friendly to help reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact, reflecting NBK's unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability on the one hand, and pioneering corporate social responsibility on the other hand.

The visitors also included Maysa Boushahri, Deputy Director General for Projects Sector Affairs at Kuwait Municipality, and Amina Hamada, Head of the



Minister Al-Mashaan and CEO Al-Sager listen to Amina Hamada, Head of the Municipality's Shuwaikh Beach Project Management and Supervision team, explain the progress of work on the project.

Municipality's Shuwaikh Beach Project Management and Supervision team, and team members. NBK's attendees also included Ezzat Hallal, General Manager - Engineering Services, Ahmed Assi, AGM - Engineering Services, and Talal Al-Turki, Executive Manager, Head of Public Relations and Event Management.

NBK is committed to supporting Kuwait's national initiative to promote environmental, social and economic prosperity, in line with the country's recent pledge to become carbon neutral by 2060 by progressing towards its environmental goals and supporting the banking sector's endeavors to accelerate the transition to a carbon-free economy.

Project areas

The Shuwaikh Beach Development and Beautification Project consists of four areas. Area 1 includes playgrounds and entertainment areas, as well as a large green areas allowing for outdoor activities, in addition to restoration of the mosque, restrooms, and commercial kiosks within the project. The area also includes future work sites for a number of kiosks, ATMs and ITMs. Area 2 includes an extended sandy beach area with wooden benches in the middle. Area 3 includes a walled garden with green landscape and dense trees providing large, shaded areas for relaxation and meditation amidst serene atmosphere. Area 4 includes the project's starting point and interactive giant checkers game, in addition to large green spaces that allow for outdoor activities and multi-use spaces.

Project management team

Kuwait Municipality's team of engineers assigned to manage and supervise Shuwaikh Beach Development and Beautification Project is headed by Amina Hamada, and includes members: Khaled Abdul-Latif Al-Kandari, Sarah Al-Qahs, Iman Al-Kandari, Ahmed Al-Enezi, Hessa Al-Sanea, and Rawa'a Al-Radwan.



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Teen in court over UK stabbings as Starmer seeks to quell unrest

Hopes fade for more survivors in Indian landslide; toll crosses 200

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TEHRAN: Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei office shows him (center) leading the prayer, next to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (center right), over the coffin of late Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and his bodyguard, during his funeral procession in Tehran on Aug 1, 2024, ahead of his burial in Qatar. — AFP

Iran, allies plan joint but limited retaliation against Zionist entity

Khamenei threatens 'harsh punishment' for Haniyeh assassination

Zionist strike on Beirut shows diplomatic fiasco

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Hezbollah did not clear its sensitive sites or evacuate top officials in Beirut's suburbs before this week's attack that killed a top commander because it thought US-led diplomacy would keep the Zionist entity from striking the area, security sources close to the group and diplomats said.

Hezbollah's impression was that the Zionist entity would not hit the southern suburbs, or Dahiyeh, a heartland of support for the Shiite Muslim group, as it believed Zionist forces would adhere to unofficial red lines both sides have generally observed in the conflict that has escalated during the Gaza War, they said. This assessment was relayed to Reuters by eight diplomats with knowledge of recent mediation efforts led by Washington and including France and the United Nations, as well as three security sources close to Hezbollah. They all spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitive nature of the topic.

That understanding was shattered on Tuesday when a Zionist strike on Beirut's Dahiyeh killed Hezbollah's top military commander, an Iranian military adviser and five civilians. Lebanese officials and Hezbollah now question whether diplomatic assurances had been relayed to the group accurately.

"We were not expecting them to hit Beirut and they hit Beirut," Lebanon's foreign minister Abdallah Bou Habib told Reuters. Coupled with the killing in Tehran hours later of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Palestinian armed group Hamas, it has risked sending the entire region into a violent tailspin. Tensions began spiraling after a deadly strike on the Zionist-occupied Golan Heights on July 27 which the Zionist entity blamed on Hezbollah, vowing retaliation. The group denied any involvement.

A Hezbollah official said mediators had informed them of such efforts. The Lebanese official and three diplomats involved in the messaging said the Zionist entity had not made any commitments.

Still, Hezbollah's posture signaled its comfort: in the days leading up to the strike, top officials from the group were seen moving around Dahiyeh. Hezbollah had cleared out some of its key sites in south and east Lebanon in anticipation of possible strikes, but did not take similar measures in Beirut, two security sources told Reuters. Hezbollah figures living near the targeted building were rushed out in a panic after it was hit, the sources said. A regional diplomat said that meant the Zionist entity had no major Hezbollah targets to hit in south or east Lebanon. Two European diplomats said Hezbollah had not taken protective measures in Beirut and "were not cautious".

Several of the diplomats, as well as a Western envoy, said they had understood Dahiyeh would be spared. "There was a clear message sent" that the Zionist entity would spare big cities including Beirut, a diplomat said. — Reuters

BEIRUT: Iran and armed groups backed by it are preparing coordinated action meant to deter the Zionist entity but avert all-out war, sources and analysts said, after the killings of top Hamas and Hezbollah figures. On Wednesday, Iranian officials met in Tehran with representatives of the so-called "axis of resistance" — a loose alliance of Tehran-backed groups hostile to the Zionist entity — to discuss retaliation for the deaths of Hamas' leader and Hezbollah's top military commander, said a source close to Lebanese group.

"Two scenarios were discussed: a simultaneous response from Iran and its allies or a staggered response from each party," the source who had been briefed on the meeting told AFP, requesting anonymity to discuss sensitive matters. Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei threatened a "harsh punishment" for the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, which the group blamed on the Zionist entity, also vowing revenge. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah was speaking Thursday at the funeral of Fuad Shukur, the group's top commander leading operations in Lebanon's south, where the group has been exchanging near-daily fire with the Zionist entity since the Gaza war erupted in October.

Military vs civilian targets

"There is a very strong likelihood that the response will be coordinated... among other resistance

Death of Fuad Shukur: Biggest loss for Hezbollah since 2008

BEIRUT: Fuad Shukur, the top Hezbollah commander killed by the Zionist entity on Tuesday, was a founding member of the Iran-backed group who helped oversee its expansion from a shadowy Lebanese civil war militia to a major force in the Middle East. His killing is the heaviest blow to Hezbollah's command since the 2008 assassination of Imad Mughniyeh, underlining the gravity of this week's escalation in the conflict, which has been rumbling across region since the Gaza war erupted. While the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran marked a major political setback to the Palestinian Islamist group and its Iran-backed allies, Shukur's killing has stripped their camp of one of its top military leaders. Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah is due to speak at his funeral on Thursday.

Also known as Al-Hajj Mohsin, Shukur was part of a generation of Lebanese Shiite Muslims who mobilized in 1982 to fight Zionist troops, which had invaded Lebanon that year. They were driven by ideological inspiration from Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution. He was a close associate of Mughniyeh, a shadowy figure remembered in Hezbollah as a legendary commander.

The United States says Shukur played a central role in the bombing that killed 241 US military personnel. In 2017, it put a bounty of up to \$5 million on Shukur's head, according to the US government's Rewards for Justice website. The Zionist entity said Shukur was responsible for the killing of numerous Zionist people and foreign nationals over the years.

The Zionist entity killed Shukur, 61, in retaliation for a July 27 rocket attack that killed 12 children and teenagers in a Druze village in the Zionist-occupied Golan Heights on Saturday. Hezbollah, which has been trading

actors," said Amal Saad, a Hezbollah researcher and lecturer at Britain's Cardiff University. "It's going to greatly deepen the tactical coordination between Iran" and the groups it supports across the region, she said, naming Lebanon's Hezbollah, Palestinian movements Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Yemen's Houthi rebels and Iraq's Hashed Al-Shaabi force. A leader of the Islamic Resistance of Iraq, a loose alliance of pro-Iran groups, told AFP that "Iran will lead the first response with the participation of Iraqi, Yemeni and Syrian factions, striking military targets, followed by a second response from Hezbollah". The Iraqi alliance has claimed attacks on US troops, most recently over the Gaza war, before suspending them in late January.

It has also claimed to have targeted the Zionist entity with drones and rockets. The source, who requested anonymity to discuss sensitive matters, said Hezbollah may target civilians to avenge the killing of three women and two children in the strike that killed Shukur in Beirut. Iran and its allies are widely expected to respond militarily to the killings blamed on the Zionist entity, which has claimed responsibility only for Shukur's death, though experts say the retaliation would be measured to avoid a wider conflagration.

"Iran and Hezbollah will not want to play into (Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu's hands and give him the bait or ammunition he needs to drag the US into a war," Saad said.

"They will more than likely try to avert a war while also strongly deterring Zionist entity from continuing with this new policy, this targeted shock and awe." The White House said the two killings hours apart "don't help" regional tensions, though National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said that Washington saw "no signs that an escalation is imminent".

Iranian analyst Ahmad Zeidabadi, who specializes in international relations, said "a stronger response is expected" from Tehran than during its last direct face-off with the Zionist entity in April. Iran on April 13 made its first ever direct attack on Zionist soil, firing a barrage of drones and missiles after a strike blamed on the Zionist entity killed Revolutionary Guards at Tehran's consulate in Damascus.

The United States was in touch with Iran at the time, sending "a series of direct communications through the Swiss channel," a senior administration official had told AFP. Zeidabadi said that "a repeat of the previous operation wouldn't make much sense, because the missiles and drones did not hit sensitive areas or have a deterrent effect." But he ruled out a "generalized, all-out and out-of-control war". According to Middle East analyst Rodger Shanahan, "regime survival" is a top priority for Tehran, "the same as Hezbollah". "They will put a lot of pressure on the Zionist entity on behalf of the Palestinians, but they are not going to risk an existential threat



Fuad Shukur

fire with the Zionist entity since Oct 8, denied any role in the attack. In 1982, Shukur helped to plan a suicide car bomb attack on Zionist troops at their barracks in the southern Lebanese city of Tyre, along with Mughniyeh and others, according to details of his life published by the pro-Hezbollah Al-Akhbar newspaper.

Photos of Shukur published by the paper on Thursday showed him in fatigues standing between Mughniyeh and Mustafa Badreddine, another Hezbollah veteran commander who was killed in Syria in 2016. Al-Akhbar also published a photo of Shukur alongside Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Quds Force, who was killed in a US drone strike in Baghdad in 2020.

As a top Hezbollah commander from 1985 until the mid-nineties, Shukur oversaw the evolution of Hezbollah attacks from suicide bombings to operations that included storming Zionist positions, whilst building Hezbollah's arsenal with the addition of weapons such as anti-tank missiles, Al-Akhbar reported. He assumed many of Mughniyeh's responsibilities after his assassination, sources familiar with his role said. His roles included acting as military adviser to Hezbollah leader

Bangladesh police release student leaders after unrest

DHAKA: Bangladesh police freed six student leaders on Thursday whose campaign against civil service job quotas sparked deadly nationwide unrest, as the government looked to calm tensions and forestall fresh demonstrations. Students Against Discrimination staged nationwide rallies last month that ended in a police crackdown and the deaths of at least 206 people, according to an AFP count of police and hospital data.

The group's leadership were among thousands picked up in the police dragnet that followed some of the worst unrest of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 15-year tenure. "All six quota movement coordinators have been returned to their families this afternoon," deputy commissioner Junaed Alam Sarkar said.

Principal leader Nahid Islam and two others were forcibly discharged from a hospital in the capital Dhaka last Friday by plainclothes detectives and taken to an unknown location. His father Badrul Islam confirmed to AFP that Nahid Islam had returned home early Thursday afternoon but did not give any more details.

Three others were detained in the following days, with the government saying they had been held for their own safety. Justice minister Anisul Huq told AFP on Thursday that all six had volunteered to be in police custody. "They came willingly. They said they wanted to go. They are allowed to return to their parents," he said. — AFP

International

Teen in court over UK stabbings as Starmer seeks to quell unrest

Violent protests over the attack erupted in several English cities

LIVERPOOL, UK: A teenager appeared in court Thursday charged with murdering three girls in a stabbing attack at a Taylor Swift-themed dance party as violent protests over the attack erupted in several English cities. Axel Rudakubana, 17, faces three counts of murder and 10 of attempted murder following the killings Monday in Southport, northwest England.

The attack has shocked the country, and false information online about the background of the suspect led to far-right agitators targeting a mosque and clashing with police in Southport. Protests also rocked London, and the northern cities of Hartlepool and Manchester on Wednesday night. Police arrested more than 100 people outside Prime Minister Keir Starmer's official Downing Street residence. Starmer was to hold an emergency meeting Thursday with police chiefs seeking to quell the unrest.

Rudakubana was remanded in a youth detention centre during a hearing at Liverpool's crown court, where a judge lifted normal court reporting restrictions for a minor, ruling that he could be named.

"Continuing to prevent the full reporting has the disadvantage of allowing others to spread misinformation, in a vacuum," said judge Andrew Menary, lifting the restriction. While the suspect

would normally have had anonymity because of his age, he would in any case have lost it when he turned 18 next Wednesday. Rudakubana wore a grey tracksuit sweatshirt and at times rocked back and forth and side to side.

The youth is accused of murdering Bebe King, six, Elsie Dot Stancombe, seven, and Alice Dasilva Aguiar, nine. He allegedly wounded another eight children and two adults during the attack, which has sparked an outpouring of grief in Southport, a quiet seaside town.

False social media information about him contributed to violent clashes in Southport on Tuesday night, in which bricks were thrown at a mosque and 53 police officers were hurt. Police have blamed members of the far-right English Defense League grouping, an Islamophobic organization founded 15 years ago whose supporters have been linked to football hooliganism.

The protests spread on Wednesday, including to Downing Street. Protesters in London threw bottles at police and shouted, "We want our country back" and "Stop the boats" — the latter a reference to small boats bringing irregular migrants across the Channel.

In Hartlepool, northeast England, demonstrators set fire to police cars and threw objects at officers. Police said they had made eight arrests. Hartlepool po-



LONDON: Protestors remonstrate with police officers during the 'Enough is Enough' demonstration on Whitehall outside the entrance to 10 Downing Street in central London on July 31, 2024, held in reaction to the government's response to the fatal stabbings in

lice said officers faced "missiles, glass bottles and eggs being thrown at them, with several suffering minor injuries".

At the meeting with police chiefs, Starmer will pay tribute to the bravery of emergency service workers, a statement by the prime minister's office said. He will

also say that while the right to protest must be protected, "criminals who exploit that right in order to sow hatred and carry out violent acts will face the full force of the law". The Labour government has vowed to clamp down on crime and antisocial behavior. Interior minister Yvette

Cooper promised to ramp up the presence of community police "in every corner of the country". Starmer will tell police leaders "that they should not hesitate to use their powers to stop mindless violence in its tracks and make sure justice is served", the statement from his office said. — AFP

Bomb attack in north Nigeria teahouse kills 19

KANO, Nigeria: A bomb exploded in a teahouse in a village in northeast Nigeria, killing 19 people and wounding two dozen more, the second major attack in a few weeks, security sources said on Thursday. The blast in Kawuri village in Borno State on Wednesday evening was one of the deadliest in recent years in northeast Nigeria, where violence from a grinding jihadist conflict has been on the decline.

"There was an explosion at a tea joint in Kawuri around 8:00 pm yesterday. We have recovered 19 dead bodies and 27 injured," Ibrahim Liman, a member of an anti-jihadist militia that works with the army, told AFP. Two other militiamen confirmed the toll in Kawuri, around 50 kilometers (around 30 miles) from the state capital Maiduguri. No group has claimed responsibility for Wednesday's blast, but the Boko Haram jihadist group and their rivals Islamic State West Africa Province are both active in Borno.

Borno State governor on Thursday declared a 24-hour curfew after the attack, a police statement said. The curfew was imposed as Nigerians demonstrated nationwide Thursday over a cost of living crisis, including in the capital Abuja and in Maiduguri. Islamist militants still carry out ambushes, roadside bombings and kidnappings from rural hideouts, but bomb attacks in towns and villages are now less common in the northeast.

"Boko Haram struck in Kawuri last night. They took us all by surprise because it has been a while without such attacks," Babakura Kolo, a militia commander, told AFP. The wounded were transported to hospitals in Maiduguri, he said. Nigeria's military did not immediately respond to a request for confirmation.

The Kawuri attack came just weeks after multiple suicide attackers killed 32 people in Borno State's Gwoza area when they targeted a wedding, a hospital and a funeral. Large bomb attacks have become rare since Nigeria's army pushed militants back from territory they controlled at the height of the conflict in 2014. Chadian forces helped drive jihadists out. Tackling insecurity was one of the priorities for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu when he came to office more than a year ago. — AFP

Blinken hails closer ties with Mongolia

ULAANBAATAR, Mongolia: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken departed Mongolia on Thursday at the end of a 10-day tour of Asia, hailing growing ties with the landlocked democracy sandwiched between authoritarian powers China and Russia. His long tour, which also took him to Southeast Asia and Japan, has sought to hammer home US support for allies and counter China's influence in the region — even if Washington insists it is not pursuing a policy of containment against Beijing.

During a meeting in the Laos capital Vientiane last week, Blinken raised the issue with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi during "frank and productive" exchanges, according to Washington. In Japan and the Philippines, Blinken and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced closer military and defense ties with the two countries in the face of what they described as Beijing's "provocations", particularly in the South China Sea.

In Ulaanbaatar on Thursday, Blinken stressed the US approach was not "against



ULAANBAATAR, Mongolia: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (left) and Mongolian Prime Minister Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erdene watch events during the Nadaam festival in Ulaanbaatar on August 1, 2024. — AFP

any one country". "It's for a common vision that we share for what the future should look like," he said during a press conference. "And yes, part of that common vision is clearly the freedom... for any country to make its own decisions, to make its own choices about the future," he said. Mongolia is a vast, sparsely populated democracy of 3.4 million that held parliamentary elections in June.

The United States has said it intends to cultivate closer ties there, including "people-to-people" exchanges, and maintain a "comprehensive strategic dialogue" with Mongolia. Blinken on Thursday held talks with Mongolian Foreign Minister Batmunkh Battsetseg, who was in Washington last week to meet the top diplomat and launch that strategic dialogue. — AFP

Hamas, Hezbollah vow revenge...

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The Zionist entity, which said Shukr's assassination was a response to deadly rocket fire last week on the annexed Golan Heights, warned its adversaries on Thursday they would "pay a very high price" for any "aggression". "(The Zionist entity) is at a very high level of preparation for any scenario, both defensive and offensive," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement. "Those who attack us, we will attack in return." Meanwhile the Zionist military said an air strike in Gaza last month killed Hamas' military chief Mohammed Deif. The Palestinian group has not confirmed it.

A source close to Hezbollah told AFP that Iranian officials met in Tehran on Wednesday with representatives of the so-called "axis of resistance", a loose alliance of Tehran-backed groups hostile to the Zionist entity, to discuss their next steps. "Two scenarios were discussed: A simultaneous response from Iran and its allies or a staggered response from each party," said the source who had been briefed on the meeting, requesting anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

Analysts told AFP that the retaliation would be measured to avoid a wider conflagration. Iran and the groups it backs "will more than likely try to avert a war, while also strongly deterring the Zionist entity from continuing with this new policy, this targeted shock and awe," said Amal Saad, a Hezbollah researcher and lecturer at Britain's Cardiff University. In Tehran, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei led prayers for Haniyeh having

earlier threatened "harsh punishment" for his killing.

Crowds, including women shrouded in black, carried posters of Haniyeh and Palestinian flags in a procession and ceremony that began at Tehran University, an AFP correspondent reported. Senior Iranian officials, including President Masoud Pezeshkian and Revolutionary Guards chief General Hossein Salami, attended the ceremony, state television images showed.

Khalil Al-Hayya, Hamas's foreign relations chief, vowed during the funeral ceremony that Haniyeh's message will live on and "we will pursue (the Zionist entity) until it is uprooted from the land of Palestine". Pezeshkian later told Hayya that Iran "will continue to support with firmer determination the Axis of Resistance", Iran-aligned regional groups that include Hamas, the official IRNA news agency said.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards announced the day before that Haniyeh and a bodyguard were killed in a pre-dawn strike Wednesday on their accommodation in Tehran. The New York Times however reported, citing anonymous sources including two Iranian officials, that the blast was caused by an explosive device planted several months ago.

Qatar-based Haniyeh had been visiting Tehran for Pezeshkian's swearing-in on Tuesday. Pezeshkian said Iran "will continue to support with firmer determination the axis of resistance", the official IRNA news agency said. Qatar-based network Al Jazeera reported said the plane carrying Haniyeh's body had landed in Doha, where the Palestinian leader is to be buried following prayers at the Qatari capital's largest mosque.

Hamas called in a statement for a day of protests on Friday. "Let roaring anger marches start from every mosque," it said. — Agencies

that killed 17 sailors in an attack on the USS Cole. He took refuge in neighboring Pakistan after the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and was captured there in 2003, and was then held in a network of secret CIA prisons.

Hawsawi is suspected of managing the finance for the 9/11 attacks. He was arrested in Pakistan on March 1, 2003, was also held in secret prisons before being transferred to Guantanamo in 2006. The United States used Guantanamo, an isolated naval base, to hold militants captured during the "War on Terror" that followed the Sept 11 attacks in a bid to keep the defendants from claiming rights under US law. The facility held 800 prisoners at its peak, but they have since slowly been repatriated to other countries. President Joe Biden pledged before his election to try and shut down Guantanamo, but it remains open.

In another 9/11-related case, the Justice Department denied a request by Zacarias Moussaoui, the so-called "20th hijacker", to serve the remainder of his life sentence in France. — AFP

Trump claims Harris opted to...

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"I have been the best president for the black population since Abraham Lincoln," he boasted, drawing groans from the audience.

Trump repeated a line from the presidential debate in June, claiming that migrants crossing the US southern border would take away "black jobs," a term that drew criticism from some black leaders. "What exactly is a 'black job,' sir?" Scott asked him. "A black job is anybody with a job," Trump replied. Trump also declined to say whether Harris was a "DEI hire," as some fellow Republicans have claimed, saying, "I don't know."

DEI stands for "diversity, equity and inclusion" initiatives aimed at increasing representation of women and people of color in the workforce to address longstanding inequities and discrimination. The term "DEI hire" is used to suggest a person is not qualified and was chosen on the basis of race or gender.

When asked about his position on granting police officers immunity following the death of Sonya Massey, a Black woman who was killed in her own home by a sheriff's deputy in Illinois, Trump acknowledged he didn't know much about the case — drawing some gasps from the crowd — before adding that "it didn't look good to me." During the interview, some of Trump's false statements were met with murmurs and laughter from the crowd. At one point, someone yelled out, "Sir, have you no shame?" before others shushed him.

The combative remarks by Trump, who has been eager to improve his performance with black voters, are likely to send shockwaves through the 2024 White House contest. They come as the former president, convicted two months ago of felony fraud related to hush money payments to a porn star, struggles to formulate a new strategy less than 100 days before the election.

Later Wednesday he held a campaign rally in Pennsylvania, a battleground state where he narrowly survived an assassination attempt earlier this month, and continued the verbal assault on his rival. "Everything about Kamala Harris' rollout, it's phony," he told the crowd, adding Harris "tried to outbrand a new Southern accent" when she addressed a large rally Tuesday in Atlanta, Georgia. "The contrast could not be more stark," he said. "On the one hand you have a radical left puppet candidate who is fake fake fake, and on the other hand you have a president who will fight fight fight for America."

In her address to a sorority gathering Wednesday in Houston, Texas, Harris slammed Trump's attacks. "The American people deserve better," she said. "We deserve a leader who understands that our differences do not divide us, they are an essential source of our strength." Trump's White House bid was thrown into chaos on July 21 when President Joe Biden, 81, withdrew his candidacy, backing Harris as the Democratic nominee.

Since then, Harris has seen her favorability ratings jump and raked in over \$200 million in campaign donations. Trump, who had placed Biden's health at the heart of the election, now finds himself up against someone nearly two decades his junior, a trailblazer who became the country's first black, female and South Asian-origin vice president. — Agencies

US strikes plea deal with 9/11...

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He then spent three years in secret CIA prisons before arriving in Guantanamo in 2006.

The trained engineer — who has said he masterminded the 9/11 attacks "from A to Z" — was involved in a string of major plots against the United States, where he had attended university. In addition to planning the operation to bring down the Twin Towers, Mohammed claims to have personally beheaded US journalist Daniel Pearl in 2002 with his "blessed right hand" and to have helped in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing that killed six people.

Bin Attash, a Saudi of Yemeni origin, allegedly trained two of the hijackers who carried out the Sept 11 attacks, and his US interrogators also said he confessed to buying the explosives and recruiting members of the team

Russia, US in major East-West...

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Krasikov had not been an "easy decision". "Our duty of care to German citizens as well as solidarity with the USA were important factors" in the decision to send Krasikov home, said government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit.

Amnesty International said in a statement the swap was a sign that Russian President Vladimir Putin "is clearly instrumentalizing the law in order to use political prisoners as pawns". Hopes for a prisoner exchange had risen in recent days after a number of high-profile prisoners in Russia, including Whelan, went missing from facilities where they were serving terms, fueling specula-

tion they were being moved for a swap.

This was the first exchange between Russia and the West since star US basketball player Brittney Griner returned home in return for convicted Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout in Dec 2022. It was the biggest since 2010, when 14 alleged spies were exchanged. They included double agent Sergei Skripal, who was sent by Moscow to Britain and undercover Russian agent Anna Chapman, sent by Washington to Russia. Before then, major swaps involving more than a dozen people had only taken place during the Cold War, with Soviet and Western powers carrying out exchanges in 1985 and 1986.

Gershkovich was arrested in Yekaterinburg while on a reporting trip. He, his employer and the US government all strongly denied the espionage allegations against him. Media rights group Reporters Without Borders said it was "hugely relieved" at the release. — AFP

International

Hopes fade for more survivors in Indian landslide; toll crosses 200

Soldiers build metal bridge to marooned area in Kerala

WAYANAD, India: Indian rescue crews scoured mud-caked tea plantations and villages on Thursday with little hope of finding more survivors from landslides that killed more than 200 people. Days of torrential monsoon rains have battered the southern coastal state of Kerala, with blocked roads into the Wayanad district disaster area complicating relief efforts since Tuesday.

Indian soldiers rushed to complete construction of a metal bridge on Thursday to connect the worst affected area in the Kerala landslides as search continued for survivors and bodies after the disaster that has killed more than 200 people. Heavy rain in the southern coastal state of Kerala, one of India's most popular tourist destinations, caused landslides in the hills of Wayanad district early on Tuesday, sending torrents of mud, water and tumbling boulders downhill and burying or sweeping people to their deaths as they slept.

Army engineers scrambled to build a 190-foot (58 m) bridge to ferry heavy equipment from the nearest town of Chooralmala to the affected area, Mundakkai, after rising water in a local river washed away a makeshift bridge on Wednesday. The main bridge was washed away in the landslides on Tuesday, cutting off Mundakkai.

"Our bridge will be ready by 4 pm (1030 GMT) and once the bridge comes up, it will be a major change," V T Mathew, a senior army official in charge of the rescue operations, told Reuters. "We need to search the entire area with heavy equipment which can move on the bridge. It will speed up all rescue and retrieval efforts."

People trapped in places like tea plantations have all been rescued, locals and rescue officials said. Authorities said they were not expecting any

more survivors and were looking to retrieve the bodies. There was no information on the number of tea-plantation workers staying in makeshift houses made of clay, wood and tin that were completely flattened by the landslides.

Steady rain and lack of road access to affected areas have hampered rescue work over the last two days. Light rain continued on Thursday as rescue workers shifted through the debris amid the mud and sludge. Teachers at a nearly-destroyed local school in Chooralmala were seen trying to retrieve relevant documents and student records.

The disaster was the worst in Kerala since deadly floods in 2018. Experts said the area had received heavy rain in the last two weeks that softened the soil before extremely heavy rainfall on Monday triggered the landslides.

Authorities said 182 dead bodies have been recovered while 206 were still missing. The local Asianet news TV channel put the death toll at 281.

Nearly 1,600 people have been rescued from hillside villages and tea and cardamom estates during the last two days, authorities said, adding that nearly 350 buildings were affected. The death toll was expected to rise further once the construction of the metal bridge was completed and authorities are able to speed up the search. "Our focus is to rescue those who were isolated and stranded," Pinarayi Vijayan, the chief minister of the state, told reporters after conducting an aerial survey of the landslides-hit areas. "Rescue operations will continue in the river to search for missing persons. Rescued people are temporarily being shifted to camps and rehabilitation work will be done at the earliest."

Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi, who won a seat in Wayanad in the recent general election, but re-

Watson's extradition will be made by Denmark's justice ministry, it added.

A custody hearing will be held in Greenland on August 15, pending a Danish decision on the extradition request. Watson was arrested after arriving in Nuuk, Greenland's capital, when the ship John Paul DeJoria docked to refuel. The vessel was on its way to "intercept" a new Japanese whaling factory vessel in the North Pacific, according to the CPWF. One of the activist's lawyers, Francois Zimeray, said he was "not surprised" by the extradition request. "Japan has a personal vendetta against Paul Watson, and this so-called offence is the pretext for revenge against a man who defied and therefore humiliated them," Zimeray said. He said an extradition to Japan would be a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, since "the country does not respect international standards on fair trials and prisons." Watson was arrested on the basis of an Interpol "Red Notice" issued in 2012, when Japan accused him of causing damage and injury to one of its whaling ships in the Antarctic two years earlier.

He faces a charge of causing injury, which can carry up to 15 years in prison or a fine of up to 500,000 yen (\$3,300). He also faces a charge of forcible obstruction of business, which carries a penalty of up to three years in prison or a fine up to 500,000 yen.

Japan is one of only three countries in the world to permit commercial whaling, along with Iceland and Norway. Watson's wife on Thursday appealed to Denmark's King Frederik X and Queen Mary to secure his release. "Please, Denmark, release Paul!"



WAYANAD, India: A makeshift bridge has been installed for the rescue operation after the landslides in Wayanad on August 1, 2024. — AFP

signed as he was also elected in his family bastion in the north, also visited the affected areas on Thursday. Saraswathy, one of hundreds of laborers on the tea estates struck by a wall of mud before dawn on Tuesday, said she had been unable to contact her sister and niece in the days since. "After this many days, we've lost hope," Saraswathy, who goes by one name, said.

"I came back from the hospital, I kept looking for their bodies but couldn't find them," she said. "Eventually I couldn't stand it. Seeing all these bodies, I almost fainted." Wayanad is famed for the tea estates that crisscross its hilly countryside and which rely on a large pool of laborers for planting and harvest. — Agencies

Japan asks Denmark to extradite anti-whaling activist Watson

COPENHAGEN: Denmark's justice ministry said Thursday that it had received Japan's extradition request for anti-whaling activist Paul Watson, who was detained in Greenland last month on an international arrest warrant. Watson, the 73-year-old American-Canadian founder of the Sea Shepherd activist group, was arrested on July 21 in Greenland, an autonomous Danish territory, over a 2010 altercation with Japanese whaling ships.

Watson, who featured in the reality TV series "Whale Wars", founded Sea Shepherd and the Captain Paul Watson Foundation (CPWF), and is known for direct action tactics including confrontations with whaling ships at sea. "The Ministry of Justice received a formal extradition request regarding Paul Watson from the Japanese authorities yesterday," the ministry told AFP in an email.

It said it would forward the case to Greenland police, "unless the ministry on the present basis finds grounds to reject the extradition request beforehand". If the case is forwarded to Greenland police, they will investigate "whether there is basis for extradition", including whether it is in accordance with the extradition act applicable to Greenland, the ministry said. But the ultimate decision on



PARIS: NGO Sea Shepherd Conservation Society founder, Paul Watson of Canada, poses on board of the "Brigitte Bardot", a Sea Shepherd multihull moored in Paris. — AFP

Yana Watson posted on Facebook, posting pictures of him with their two young sons.

"He has diabetes Type 1. Japanese prison will be lethal for him," she said.

Earlier this week, the head of the French branch of Sea Shepherd said Watson did not regret his actions despite the risk of extradition. "Paul is doing well, he is in good spirits. He has no regrets," Lamy Essemali said in a statement after visiting Watson in custody on Monday.

French President Emmanuel Macron's office has asked Danish authorities not to extradite Watson, who has lived in France for the past year. — AFP

Heavy rain lashes northern India, hundreds stranded

NEW DELHI: Torrential rain is causing heavy damage in northern India, killing at least 10 people and leaving hundreds of pilgrims stranded in the Himalayas, officials said on Thursday. The capital Delhi was lashed by a bout of intense rain on Wednesday evening, with a total 147 mm (5.8 inches) recorded in eastern parts of the city and its suburbs by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

At least five people died, according to local media. Three people have died and parts of two bridges were washed away due to a cloudburst in Uttarakhand state, officials said, adding that bad weather in the hilly terrain was hampering communications. Earlier local media said four people were killed.

Three hundred pilgrims were stranded in different locations on the Kedarnath route - a trek to a Hindu pilgrimage site - and a patch of the national highway was washed out, district official Saurabh Gaharwar told Reuters by phone. Uttarakhand, which is prone to flash floods and landslides, was ravaged by record rain in 2013, and nearly 6,000 of tens of thousands of Hindu devotees on pilgrimages went missing. In neighboring Himachal Pradesh state, two people died and nearly 50 people were missing after torrential rain led to floods, authorities said. Visuals shared by the state chief minister showed rescue workers crossing streams by rope, as muddy water gushed through rocks between hills. "The situation is quite bad there and we are trying to pull out people, dead bodies (if any) from the debris," Jyoti Rana, a district official in the capital Shimla, told Reuters.

Torrential rains in the mountains of India and neighboring Pakistan and Nepal over the past few years have been attributed to climate change by some experts. Earlier this week, landslides swept through tea estates and villages in southern India's Kerala, killing at least 178 people after unexpectedly heavy rain. In Delhi, water was seen leaking from the newly-constructed parliament building, according to a post on X by opposition leader Akhilesh Yadav.

Delhi has experienced a series of extreme weather events in the past few months, from sizzling temperatures to floods and heavy rainfall that caused a roof collapse at the city's airport. — Reuters



ZIXING, China: Members of a rescue team walk to a flood-affected area in Zixing, in central China's Hunan province. — AFP

30 dead after torrential rains in central China

BEIJING: Torrential rains in China have killed at least 30 people and left dozens more missing, state media said on Thursday, as the country grinds through another summer of extreme weather. Confirmation of the deaths came the same day that weather authorities said July was China's hottest month since records began six decades ago. China is the world's biggest emitter of the greenhouse gases that scientists say are driving climate change and making extreme weather more frequent and intense. Heatwaves this summer have scorched parts of northern China, while heavy rain has triggered floods and landslides in central and southern areas.

This week's downpours were triggered by Typhoon Gaemi, which moved on from the Philippines and Taiwan to make landfall in eastern China a week ago, with hilly, landlocked Hunan province hit particularly hard. More than 11,000 people were evacuated from the city of Zixing after some areas endured record rainfall of 645 millimetres (25 inches) in just 24 hours, state news agency Xinhua said on Tuesday.

Many roads connecting townships in the Zixing

area were temporarily cut off, which also affected the power supply and communications infrastructure. State broadcaster CCTV said on Thursday the disruption was mostly over. "Initial findings show that there have been 30 deaths and 35 are missing," the report said, adding that search and rescue efforts were still ongoing. Xinhua said on Tuesday four people had been killed and three people were missing in Zixing. Three people were killed in Hunan's Yongxing county, Xinhua also said Tuesday, while a landslide on Sunday killed 15 people elsewhere in the province.

Last month was "the hottest July since complete observations began in 1961, and the hottest single month in the history of observation", the national weather office said Thursday. It said the average July air temperature in China was 23.21 degrees Celsius (73.78 degrees Fahrenheit), exceeding the previous record of 23.17C (73.71F) in 2017. The mean temperature in every province was also "higher than the average for previous years", with the southwestern provinces of Guizhou and Yunnan logging their highest averages, the weather office said.

It forecast that the mercury would continue to climb in eastern regions this week, including Shanghai, where a red alert for extreme heat was in place on Thursday. "Next week will be more of the same. It's like being on an iron plate," wrote one user of the Weibo social media platform in response to the megacity's heat warning. Another quipped: "It's so hot, Did Shanghai do something to anger the gods?" — AFP

News in Brief

Two Austrian mountaineers dead in Italian Alps ascent

ROME: Two Austrian mountaineers have died while attempting to summit a 2,500-metre (8,200-foot) peak in Italy's Julian Alps, the mountain rescue service of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region bordering Austria said Thursday. Missing since Wednesday, the two men were both Alpine rescuers from the southern Austrian city of Villach close to the Slovenian and Italian borders, the rescue service said on Facebook. They were scaling the "Cima di Riofreddo", whose peak culminates at more than 2,500 metres, when they fell. — AFP

China dismisses Germany accusations over cyberattack

BEIJING: China's embassy in Berlin on Thursday dismissed as groundless German charges that Beijing was behind a cyber attack on a German government agency in 2021, accusing it of "anti-China political manipulation". On Wednesday, Germany alleged that China of having been behind a 2021 cyberattack on the federal cartography agency for espionage purposes and summoned Beijing's ambassador in Berlin to lodge a complaint. It was the latest country to accuse China of cyber-espionage, joining the United States, Britain, Canada, the Netherlands, Philippines and New Zealand. China denies any such action. — Reuters

Russia holds military drills on disputed island near Japan

MOSCOW: Russian missile troops held drills on a disputed island which both Japan and Russia claim as their own, the Interfax news agency cited Russia's Defence Ministry as saying on Thursday. Soviet troops took control of the four islands off Japan's Hokkaido - known in Russia as the Kurils and in Japan as the Northern Territories - at the end of World War Two and they have remained in Moscow's hands since. The dispute has prevented the two countries from signing a peace treaty. Interfax said on Thursday that Russian troops had practiced moving and camouflaging their vehicles on Matua island. Moscow said in May it would establish observation posts on the islands. — Reuters

Korean Air cuts hot cup noodles in economy as turbulence rises

SEOUL: Korean Air will stop serving instant cup noodles, a popular snack in Korea known as ramyeon that requires boiling water, on its long-haul flights, part of changes in response to increased turbulence incidents. Concerns about turbulence on planes have heightened since a Singapore Airlines flight from London in May encountered a severe incident leading to one death and dozens of injuries. "This decision is part of proactive safety measures in response to increased turbulence, aimed at preventing burn accidents," Korean Air said in a statement on Thursday. The cup noodles are a popular part of the airline's in-flight service, featuring heavily on social media. — Reuters

FRIDAY, AUGUST 2, 2024

BNK Capital invests in Waves app

New funds to drive expansion and innovation

KUWAIT: Waves app, a pioneering platform for booking sea trips, marine activities and chalets, has secured significant investment from BNK Capital. Co-Founder and CEO Abdulrahman Al-Sadoun announced the successful closure of the recent investment round, which included participation from prominent institutional investors. The new funds are set to enhance the company's services in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, aligning with the nation's Vision 2030 initiatives and the ambitious Red Sea projects.

Al-Sadoun expressed pride in the company's achievements since its launch in Kuwait in 2021, highlighting its commitment to contributing to the region's maritime economy and improving the quality of life. He emphasized the promising nature of the marine market in the UAE, one of the largest in the region, and outlined a strategic plan to capture a significant market share there.

Sulaiman Al-Tunaib, Co-Founder and CFO of Waves, underscored the company's success in Kuwait and detailed plans for expansion into new cities and countries, including Dubai in the UAE and the Eastern Province in Saudi Arabia. This expansion reflects Waves' commitment to providing unique experiences for customers through seamless integration of complementary services. The company aims to digitalize the marine tourism sector in collaboration with tourism authorities, government agencies, and local partners, promoting a unique digital tourism experience.

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Founder of BNK



(From left) Abdulrahman Al-Sadoun, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi and Sulaiman Al-Tunaib.

Capital, expressed enthusiasm for Waves' innovative solutions for organizing the marine and chalet market in the GCC. He highlighted the app's potential for global expansion, positioning it as the leading platform for booking sea trips, activities and chalets.

Waves app, the first of its kind globally, offers a comprehensive electronic booking service for

marine activities and accommodations. It also provides the convenience of ordering food and marine equipment for delivery to yachts and boats before departure, marking a significant step in integrating the digital economy into marine services and sea tourism. Currently, Waves operates in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar.

Saudi wealth fund signs \$50bn of deals with Chinese firms

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund PIF has signed six memorandums of understanding (MoUs) worth a total of \$50 billion with leading Chinese financial institutions, the fund said in a statement on Thursday. The MoUs were signed with Agricultural Bank of China (ABC), Bank of China (BoC), China Construction Bank (CCB), China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation (SINOSURE), Export-Import Bank of China (CEXIM), and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), the statement added. PIF said the MoUs covered areas of cooperation such as encouraging two-way capital flows via both debt and equity.

One of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds, Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) has a sprawling portfolio of investments, from date farms to multinational conglomerates. The kingdom's ambitious Vision 2030 plan aims to diversify its economy away from fossil fuels to develop a vibrant private sector. China said in July it was ready to deepen cooperation in infrastructure, energy resources, green development and the digital economy, and welcomed Saudi companies such as its sovereign wealth funds and oil giant Aramco to continue to "take root" in China. — Reuters



Gamers play the online game "World of Warcraft" at internet cafes in Beijing (left) and Jinzhou (right) after US gaming giant Blizzard relaunched its game in China on August 1, 2024. — AFP photos



Nostalgia as 'World of Warcraft' returns to China

BEIJING: Millennial gamers soaked up the nostalgia and embarked on fresh adventures in a land of orcs, mages and elves Thursday as "World of Warcraft" came back online in China. Beloved titles from the fantasy epic to shooting game "Overwatch" went offline in China in January 2023 after a contract dispute between the American developer Blizzard and local partner NetEase — prompting a wave of mourning and anger from fans.

But the two firms reached a new deal this year, announcing the titles would return to Chinese screens sequentially — starting with "World of Warcraft" (WoW) on Aug 1. And at an internet cafe in the capital Beijing, his fellow gamers tapping furiously on multicolored keyboards, 35-year-old Wei Jia told AFP he felt "nostalgic" as soon as he had heard that WoW was coming back.

Playing the game, he said, was "like taking a trip down memory lane." "It was a game that really touched me," he explained. "I would stay up all night for a whole week to play it." He admitted that his age meant he couldn't "play that hard anymore."

"But I still really like it." Massively popular worldwide, particularly in the 2000s, WoW is an online multiplayer role-playing game set in a fantasy world where good battles evil.

It is known for its immersive and addictive gameplay, and players can rack up hundreds of hours of game time. Liu Haoran, a 30-year-old media worker, said he had come to the internet cafe near his office as soon as he heard that WoW was back online. His fondest memories of the game are the friends he made as he explored the vast, mythical world of Azeroth, he explained, as dragons and other mythical creatures flew past on his screen. "It's a game I've played for a long time," Liu, who said he started playing WoW in 2004, told AFP.

"I have a lot of real-life friends on it, and I've made a lot of friends playing it. Many of my childhood friends are on it and there are many memories."

Among those memories are an evening spent with a girl stargazing in Nagrand — a land traditionally

sacred to the orcs — as well as watching New Year's Eve fireworks with friends in picturesque Stormwind City. "We would chat and greet each other and spend the New Year's countdown in World of Warcraft," he said. "There were a lot of good memories like that."

Others had been busy recruiting fellow players for battle ahead of the relaunch.

"In just a few days, we have more than 100 members in our WeChat group and we are all waiting for the Chinese servers to come online," Wang Jing, 44, told AFP over the phone. "Over the years playing WoW, we have gone from young people to middle-aged people," he said. "Our children have grown up... and we once again have time and energy to reunite in World of Warcraft and make new friends."

The return of Blizzard titles is a welcome boost for NetEase, which like many of the country's tech giants has had a rough few years after a government crackdown on the industry. Gamer Wei told AFP he had been "disgusted" with the falling-out between Blizzard and NetEase and that he'd felt "regret" when it went offline. But he's "happy" it's back. "Because we can play together again and talk about the past. All in all, it's good." — AFP

BP to develop new oil and gas fields in Iraq

BAGHDAD: Iraq signed an agreement with British energy giant British Petroleum on Thursday to develop four oil and gas fields in the northern province of Kirkuk. A memorandum of understanding was signed by Iraq's Oil Minister Hayan Abdel Ghani and BP's CEO Murray Auchincloss, Prime Minister Mohamed Shia Al-Sudani's media office said.

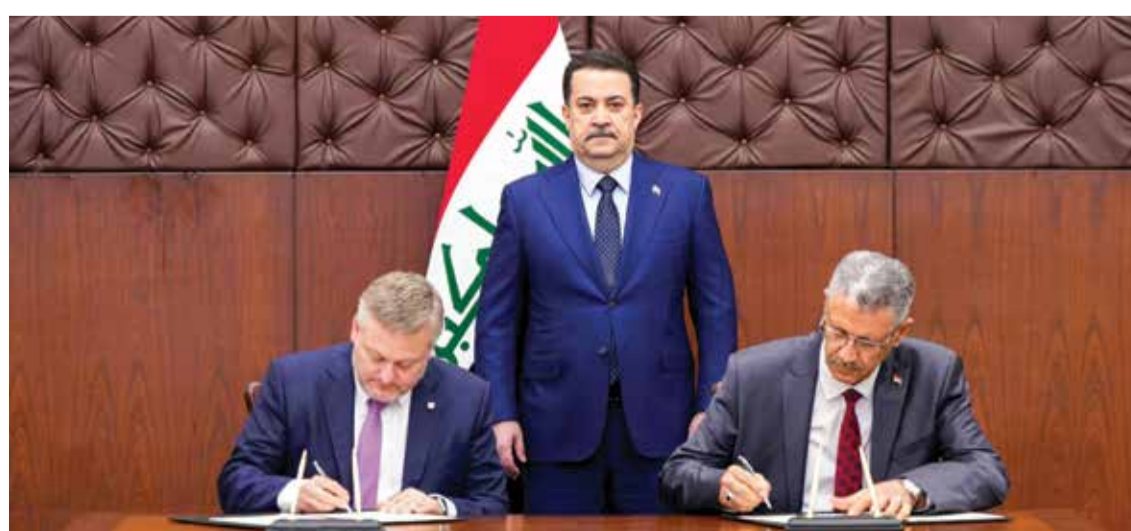
"The memorandum includes the rehabilitation and development of the four oilfields under the North Oil Company in Kirkuk: the Kirkuk oilfield, Bai Hassan, Jambur and Khabbaz oilfields," the statement said. "This initiative is part of the government's efforts to optimally invest in promising energy opportunities, aiming to increase and enhance oil production and gas and solar energy investments," it added. BP is one of the biggest foreign players in Iraq's oil sector, with a history of producing oil in the country dating back to the 1920s when it was still under British mandate.

According to the World Bank, Iraq has 145 billion barrels of proven oil reserves — among the largest in the world — amounting to 96 years' worth of pro-

duction at the current rate. But Iraq aims to keep exploring to boost its crude reserves to more than 160 billion barrels, Abdel Ghani said in May.

Despite its vast oil reserves, Iraq hopes to increase natural gas production to help reduce dependence on imports from neighboring Iran, a crucial supplier for Iraqi power generation. Sudani has re-

peatedly stressed the need for Iraq to diversify energy sources to ease Iraq's chronic power outages, especially during summer. To reduce its dependence on Iranian gas, Baghdad has started importing electricity from Jordan and Turkey, and it hopes to start connecting to the electricity grid of Gulf countries later this year. — AFP



KIRKUK, Iraq: This handout picture released by Iraq's Prime Minister's Media Office on August 1, 2024, shows Prime Minister Mohamed Al-Sudani (center) looking on as BP CEO Murray Auchincloss (left) and Iraq's Minister of Oil, Hayan Abdul Ghani Al-Sawad sign a memorandum of understanding to develop four oil fields in Kirkuk. — AFP

Powell leaves key rate unchanged

WASHINGTON/LONDON: The US Federal Reserve left its key lending rate unchanged again on Wednesday, but signaled that it could make its first cut as soon as September. After two days of deliberations, policymakers voted unanimously to maintain the US central bank's benchmark interest rate between 5.25 percent and 5.50 percent, the Fed said in a statement — keeping rates at a 23-year high. But speaking to reporters in Washington shortly after the decision was published, Fed Chair Jerome Powell said the first interest rate cut could come "as soon as" the Fed's next rate meeting in September if the data continue to suggest it is on track to meet its twin objectives to tackle both inflation and employment.

"The broad sense of the committee is that the economy is moving closer to the point at which it will be appropriate to reduce our policy rate," he said, adding that there had been a "really significant decline in inflation."

Meanwhile, the Bank of England on Thursday cut its main interest rate for the first time since the COVID pandemic broke out in 2020, as British inflation has retreated in recent months. In a tight 5-4



WASHINGTON: US Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell speaks during a news conference after a Federal Open Market Committee meeting at the Federal Reserve in Washington, DC, on July 31, 2024. — AFP

vote, BoE policymakers agreed to reduce borrowing costs by a quarter-point to 5.0 percent, the central bank announced following a regular meeting.

Governor Andrew Bailey joined four other policymakers in bringing the rate down from a 16-year high, which will ease pressure on borrowers while denting interest earned by savers. Retail banks tend to mirror the direction of BoE policy when setting their own interest rates.

"Chair Powell made clear in the press conference that the base-case for Fed officials is to begin cutting rates at the upcoming meeting in September," Citi economists wrote in a note to clients after the decision was announced.

After a small uptick in inflation earlier this year, recent data suggest the Fed's mission of bringing inflation back down to its long-term target of two percent is now firmly back on track. Its favored measure of headline inflation eased to an annual rate of 2.5 percent last month, while economic growth has remained resilient, and the labor market has come into better balance.

"In recent months, there has been some further progress toward the Committee's 2 percent inflation objective," the Fed said in its rate decision. This marks a slight change in tone from its June statement, when it noted only that "modest further progress" had been made. — AFP

Ethiopian authorities crack down on price hikes after currency float

Birr weakens by 28% after central bank's new forex rate decision

ADDIS ABABA: At least two Ethiopian local governments have ordered the closure of dozens of businesses found hiking prices of basic commodities after the central bank floated the national currency, officials said on Thursday. The Ethiopian birr weakened by 28 percent against the dollar this week after the central bank adopted a market-determined foreign exchange rate to secure a new International Monetary Fund lending program and to put debt restructuring back on track.

"The businesses were caught making unreasonable price increases mostly on food items ... The stocks were imported before the new exchange rate," said Sewnet Ayele, a spokesperson for the Addis Ababa City Trade Bureau. Some 71 businesses have been affected by the closure order, Sewnet said. In Oromiya region, another 19 businesses were closed and three people detained, said Meseret Assefa, head of the Trade Bureau of Oromiya. "Those whose business are closed were the ones who increased prices on items just immediately after the (exchange rate) announcement," Meseret said.

The main commodity whose price has gone up is cooking oil, which is selling at 25 percent, or 300 birrs, more, said a trader in Addis Ababa, who did not wish to be named. Other commodities whose prices have gone up by a smaller margin include rice, said the trader. Although the removal of foreign exchange trading restrictions helped Ethiopia to clinch the IMF deal and funding from other creditors like the World Bank, some Ethiopian analysts fear it will cause price hikes that hit the poor hardest.

The government and its development partners say the liberalization will help the private sector make a bigger contribution to the economy and boost long-term growth.

The World Bank approved a \$1.5 billion financial package to support cash-strapped Ethiopia's economic reform program after officials loosened curbs on the local currency. The World Bank's financing is the first in a series and will include a \$1 billion grant and a \$500 million concessional loan, the Washington-based lender said on Tuesday. "This operation supports the government of Ethiopia at a critical time in its efforts to accelerate poverty reduction and shift to more inclusive, sustainable, and private sector led growth," World Bank Ethiopia director Maryam Salim said.

"Importantly, there is a strong emphasis on protecting poor and vulnerable people from the cost of



ADDIS ABABA: Pedestrians walk on the newly built walkway in Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian birr weakened by 28 percent against the dollar this week after the central bank adopted a market-determined foreign exchange rate. — AFP

economic adjustment." Africa's second most populous nation is in dire need of financial help as it weathers a severe economic crisis marked by rapid inflation. The World Bank said it expected to provide an additional \$6 billion in new commitments over the next three fiscal years. Analysts had said the IMF was demanding several reforms of Ethiopia's state-controlled economy, including floating the currency, in order to unlock the funding. Battered in recent years by several armed conflicts, the COVID pandemic and

climate shocks, the country has about \$28 billion of external debt and is grappling with sky-high inflation at around 20 percent and a shortage of foreign currency reserves. Under the shift to a market-based exchange rate regime, the National Bank of Ethiopia said banks could buy and sell foreign currencies to their clients and among themselves.

When he took office in 2018, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed pledged to embark on reforms of Ethiopia's closed and state-dominated economy, but progress has been slow. — Agencies

News in Brief

Egypt ups Cairo metro ticket prices

CAIRO: Cairo travelers faced price rises of as much as 30 percent for tickets on the city's metro on Thursday after the public transport operator hiked charges in response to a fuel price hike last week. Egypt's National Authority for Tunnels, which has overall responsibility for managing Greater Cairo's public rail transport system, raised metro prices by more than 30 percent to 8 Egyptian pounds (\$0.16) for shorter trips and by 25 percent for longer trips to 15 pounds, local media and users said. Egypt last Thursday raised the prices of fuel products by up to 15 percent. — Reuters

Ukraine economy minister in Turkey

KYIV: Ukrainian Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko has arrived in Turkey, aiming to strengthen economic cooperation with Ankara and discuss the ratification of a free trade agreement, Svyrydenko said on Thursday. "On the agenda was also expanding cooperation between Ukrainian & Turkish businesses within the framework of the free trade agreement, as well as in the context of Ukraine's reconstruction and integration with the EU," Svyrydenko said on X social network. She said food security, Ukrainian peace initiatives, regional trade, navigation security and demining Black Sea waters were also in focus. — Reuters

Volkswagen profit dips

FRANKFURT: German automaker Volkswagen pledged Thursday to focus on cutting costs following a drop in second-quarter profits as the group grappled with lower demand in China and restructuring expenses. The 10-brand auto giant reported a net profit of 3.6 billion euros (\$3.9 billion) for the April-June quarter, a 4.2 percent fall from a year ago. Revenues nevertheless rose 4.1 percent to 83 billion euros, VW said, boosted by a strong performance in the financial services unit. — AFP



شركة الصفاء للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 1 AUGUST 2024

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No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance										Valuation Multiples *				
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	875	900	905	873	32	30,083,736	27	3.09%	5.70%	895	913	13.6	1.73	3.9%	1.04
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	275	307	326	275	51	169,076,677	32	11.64%	14.72%	303	310	18.7	1.47	4.1%	1.29
104	Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait	Banking	303	309	312	300	12	36,551,354	7	2.32%	39.25%	305	312	15.9	1.25	2.9%	0.95
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	189	187	192	183	9	35,827,459	-2	-1.06%	28.41%	186	193	14.8	0.69	2.6%	1.07
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	191	192	197	191	6	15,212,252	1	0.52%	17.21%	191	197	17.9	0.69	2.9%	1.32
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	734	734	745	731	14	45,044,062	1	0.14%	10.20%	734	740	20.6	2.13	2.6%	1.14
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	575	586	599	571	28	26,074,928	14	2.45%	3.53%	585	593	30.1	2.44	1.3%	1.15
201	Kuwait Investment	Financial Services	174	168	175	167	8	6,264,883	-5	-2.89%	32.28%	168	178	7.8	0.78	5.7%	1.99
204	National Investments	Financial Services	253	251	259	249	10	4,625,214	-2	-0.79%	5.02%	248	257	28.2	1.03	5.9%	2.03
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	110	105	111	103	8	61,100,611	-5	-4.55%	0.00%	104	107	NM	0.60	0.0%	0.93
212	Arzan Financial Group	Financial Services	185	183	190	183	7	24,132,402	-2	-1.08%	-9.37%	179	186	22.3	1.03	1.0%	1.28
222	Aayan Leasing and Investment	Financial Services	156	155	158	154	4	9,731,016	0	0.00%	-10.92%	151	158	8.0	1.08	4.8%	1.60
252	Al Imtiaz Investment	Financial Services	50.0	48.9	50.8	48.1	2.7	5,433,598	-1.7	-3.36%	-13.45%	47.7	49.1	NM	0.34	0.0%	1.34
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	245	242	250	238	12	38,270,921	-3	-1.22%	25.13%	237	246	20.1	1.48	1.6%	1.14
404	Salhia Real Estate	Real Estate	432	430	433	425	8	4,175,901	5	1.18%	5.24%	424	444	16.1	1.40	3.3%	0.57
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	856	831	860	831	29	3,793,495	-14	-1.66%	4.49%	825	838	17.9	1.90	1.5%	0.94
418	The Commercial Real Estate	Real Estate	145	146	147	143	4	14,368,496	1	0.69%	46.00%	144	148	16.5	0.89	2.7%	0.67
501	National Industries	Financial Services	223	225	226	222	4	5,283,092	3	1.35%	15.81%	217	226	13.9	1.01	2.1%	1.60
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	1,659	1,701	1,756	1,648	108	1,811,667	42	2.53%	29.85%	1,652	1,750	18.9	1.37	3.9%	1.07
506	HEISCO	Industrials	945	921	950	903	47	366,524	-18	-1.92%	12.32%	907	940	20.8	2.19	3.2%	0.90
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	580	581	585	579	6	3,390,221	1	0.17%	-0.68%	580	604	17.6	1.18	10.3%	0.94
603	Agility	Industrials	285	276	285	271	14	19,185,963	-7	-2.47%	-45.78%	274	280	8.0	0.74	7.0%	1.58
605	Zain	Telecommunications	455	453	457	449	8	7,612,635	-2	-0.44%	-10.65%	450	459	10.3	1.58	7.7%	0.55
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	2,685	2,620	2,729	2,616	113	732,505	-51	-1.91%	-19.06%	2,583	2,628	8.4	3.46	12.4%	0.62
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	227	224	227	219	8	880,783	-1	-0.44%	24.44%	222	227	NM	0.98	0.0%	1.19
654	JAZEERA	Consumer Discretionary	965	900	981	900	81	2,522,232	-70	-7.22%	-35.21%	880	915	183.0	9.01	2.9%	1.33
813	GFH Financial Group	Financial Services	99.5	100.9	104	99.2	4.8	68,588,786	1.7	1.71%	32.24%	98.9	102	11.0	1.31	5.1%	1.34
821	Warba Bank	Banking	182	184	185	180	5	18,089,889	2	1.10%	4.86%	181	188	23.2	1.00	1.5%	1.08
822	Kuwait Telecommunications	Telecommunications	547	530	549	529	20	3,957,787	-19	-3.46%	-5.86%	530	548	16.0	2.37	6.4%	0.73
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	1,040	870	1,114	853	261	2,018,547	-170	-16.35%	51.30%	839	879	21.2	2.35	2.3%	0.46
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	570	550	572	546	26	3,482,304	-16	-2.83%	7.84%	546	555	31.5	2.23	3.5%	0.81
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	2,070	2,075	2,090	2,048	42	955,805	5	0.24%	20.36%	2,070	2,094	24.8	7.07	3.6%	1.36
830	AL GHANIM	Consumer Discretionary	1,077	1,080	1,095	1,055	40	2,862,149	2	0.19%	2.27%	1,069	1,123	10.1	3.82	6.6%	0.80
831	Beyout Investment	Financial Services	494	492	494	481	13	1,738,356	0	0.00%	#VALUE!	488	495	19.1	2.84	0.0%	NULL

* As of end of week closing

Business

Al-Roshood: KFH implements strategic steps to strengthen expansion, solvency

KFH holds earnings webcast for H1 2024

Al-Mukhaizeem: KFH is committed to leaving a clear mark by supporting development and economic growth in Kuwait

Al-Humairi: Higher profits are mainly from the increase in total operating income

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) held the earnings webcast for highlighting the Bank's financial performance during H1-2024. AbdulWahab Al-Roshood, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer said: "By the grace of Allah, KFH has reported a record net profit for its shareholders of KD 341.2 million up to the end of the first half of 2024, an increase of 2.3 percent compared to the same period last year.



AbdulWahab Al-Roshood



Eng Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem



Jamal Al-Humairi

Earnings per share reached 20.73 fils; an increase of 2.6 percent compared to the same period last year. The financial statements demonstrated a solid capital base, high liquidity ratios and robust operating performance which drove growth in all key financial indicators.

Al-Roshood added that KFH ranked first among the largest listed companies and banks on Boursa Kuwait in terms of a market capitalization which exceeded KD 12 billion. Additionally, KFH claimed third place among the top 20 Middle East and Africa Banks by market cap according to the latest S&P Global Intelligence analysis. He pointed out that KFH implemented strategic steps to strengthen its expansion and solvency, develop its operations, and keep pace with technology and digital banking updates. Additionally, KFH Group signed the final agreement with Al Salam Bank to acquire, in return for cash consolidation, the entire share of KFH Group in KFH – Bahrain.

Al-Roshood said that KFH is the first strategic partner for major development plans. The Bank offers comprehensive financing solutions across various project sectors, with a particular focus on petrochemicals, oil and gas, water and energy, renewable energy, and infrastructure as well as SMEs. KFH is committed to providing top-notch digital financial services and solutions. The Bank successfully transitioned numerous processes and functions from manual systems to automated systems using Robotic Process Automation (RPA). This improved production efficiency, reduced service times for customers and increased their satisfaction levels. Al-Roshood indicated that KFH is dedicated towards investing in green finance products and integrating Sustainable Development Goals and ESG principles across all its operations. KFH has been recently included in the FTSE4Good Index Series created by the global index and data provider FTSE Russell. KFH also released the first-of-its-kind in the Kuwaiti banking sector carbon footprint report. Additionally, KFH signed the Global Takaful Alliance agreement with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This alliance aims to provide Takaful insurance to 100 million farmers worldwide.

Al-Roshood said that KFH succeeded in attaining the key goals of its strategy, overcoming the challenges of the operational environment. KFH maintained its long-term credit rating at (A) by Fitch with Stable Outlook and at (A2) by Moody's with Stable outlook.

KFH has scooped many local and global awards. The awards confirm KFH's reputation, diverse capabilities in the Islamic finance sector, brand excellence, and robust operating performance. These awards include Kuwait's Best Bank for Sustainable Finance by Global Finance magazine. KFH also received His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Informatics Award under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for the category of excellence in digital transformation in technical financial solutions, in addition to winning several awards in different categories.

Eng Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem

Meanwhile, Group Chief Strategy Officer Eng Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem covered highlights of the Kuwait operating environment with an overview on KFH. He also shared KFH's strategy, as well as H1-2024 results. Al-Mukhaizeem said: "During 2024, Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) has maintained the discount rate at the level of 4.25 percent, after an increase of 75 basis points during 2023. Furthermore, inflation is moderating where Kuwait's annual inflation rate based on average consumer prices is forecasted to decline to 3.2 percent in 2024 compared to 3.6 percent in 2023 according to latest International Monetary Fund (IMF) outlook report.

Additionally, Kuwait's GDP is estimated to reach KD 39.7 billion in 2024 and to increase further in the coming years according to the most recent (IMF) report. Kuwait's crude oil price increased to \$87.9 per barrel as of the end of June 2024 with an increase of 13 percent from the same period last year. Al-Mukhaizeem added that Moody's Rating Agency has recently affirmed the Government of Kuwait's long-term local and foreign currency issuer ratings at A1 with a stable outlook. Similarly, in June Standard & Poor's also reaffirmed Kuwait's sovereign rating at A+ with a stable outlook. We expect for Kuwait long-term economic prosperity with signals of stability in the local environment and a commitment to advancing the development path. He pointed out that Kuwait has implemented a range of economic reforms with the goal of diversifying its economy and reducing its reliance on oil revenue. These reforms encompass areas such as Economic Diversification, Foreign Investment Promotion, Fiscal Reforms, and Public-Private Partnerships.

Their aim is to establish a more resilient and di-



KFH headquarters building.

versified economy, attract foreign investment, and foster sustainable economic growth in Kuwait. However, there are certain challenges associated with these reforms, in addition to external factors, including volatility in oil prices and production, as well as spillovers from regional conflicts.

Al-Mukhaizeem explained that Kuwait has solid economic fundamentals, due to improved financial balances as well as increased foreign investments and anticipates more opportunities in 2024 notably in terms of diversification, strategic investments, and financial and structural changes. Kuwait's improved financial and external balances mean that its financial prospects are still favorable overall.

Al-Mukhaizeem said that KFH was recognized for its leading position in the Islamic banking sector by winning five prestigious awards at Euromoney's Middle East Awards for Excellence 2024. Additionally, KFH Capital, the investment arm of KFH Group, won the Islamic Finance Deal of the Year Award in Türkiye for its role in the Republic of Turkey's \$2.5 billion Sukuk. Winning these awards further recognizes KFH's successes and achievements in its pursuit of becoming one of the 100 largest banks globally. KFH is also committed to leaving a clear mark by supporting development and economic growth in Kuwait.

Jamal Al-Humairi

Acting Group Chief Financial Officer and General Manager Financial Control and Regulatory Reporting, Jamal Al-Humairi said that KFH Group has achieved Net Profit After Tax attributable to Shareholders for the first six months ended 30th June, 2024 of KD 341.2 million higher by KD 7.8 million or 2.3 percent compared to H1 2023 of KD 333.4 million.

Al-Humairi added that the higher profits are mainly from the increase in total operating income and lower provision. Partly offset by higher net monetary loss that resulted from the application of IAS-29 "Financial reporting in Hyperinflationary Economies" on the financial statements of Kuwait Turkish Participation Bank (KTPB) and increase in operating expenses. Financing income has increased by KD 424.6 million or 42.9 percent compared to the same period last year mainly due to an increase in yield.

Net financing income at KD 558.8 million increased by KD 100.3 million or 21.9 percent com-

pared to same period last year mainly due to increase in financing income by KD 424.6 million offset by increase in finance cost and distribution to depositors by KD 324.3 million.

Looking at the operating income profile, Al-Humairi said the contribution of net financing income to operating income increased from 62.4 percent in H1 2023 to 67.9 percent in H1 2024 due to an increase in net financing income and decline in investment income. Increase in fees and commissions by KD 22.3 million is mainly related to increase in transaction fee income due to increase in card income and increase in arrangement fee. Group NFM for H1 2024 at 3.02 percent is higher by 40bps compared to H1 2023. Average yield improved by 255bps while average COF also increased by 215bps. This was the result of both rate hikes and repricing of assets and liabilities during the period.

Looking at provisions and impairments, Al-Humairi explained that the group total impairment charge decreased of KD 19.5 million compared to H1 2023.

KFH's cautious approach towards provisioning have contributed to financing provision balance exceeding ECL required as per CBK IFRS 9 by KD 544 million as of June 30, 2024. Moving to the Net Monetary Loss, application of IAS-29 on the financial statements of KTPB resulted in recognition of net monetary loss of KD 86.8 million in the current period an increase of KD 77.6 million compared to H1 2023 due to increase inflation and significant maturity of CPI linked sukuk.

Al-Humairi said that the total assets amounted to KD 36.4 billion. Net financing receivables at KD 19 billion decreased by 2.2 percent mainly due to sale of KFH Bahrain and foreign currency volatility during the period. Excluding this impact, group net financing receivable increased in H1 2024 by 4.5 percent. Investments in debt securities amounted to KD 6.1 billion.

Additionally, deposits for H1 2024 amounted to KD 19.5 billion. The contribution from CASA deposits to total group customer deposits as at the end of H1 2024 is 42.8 percent and on an overall basis group continues to benefit from a large pool of low-cost deposits. Contribution of customer deposits to total funding is 67.6 percent compared to 71.7 percent in 2023.

Japan store pulls 'lazy dad' kid clothes after backlash

TOKYO: A line of kids' clothes featuring slogans about lazy, uninvolved fathers have been pulled from shelves in Japan after the designs sparked an online backlash.

The items sold by the chain Birthday included a T-shirt saying "Daddy's always sleeping" and baby socks that declared "Daddy doesn't take care of me at all". Some commentators called them an affront to hard-working fathers, while others said they highlighted the country's childcare gender gap that weighs heavily on women.

"We want to deeply apologize for the offensive phrases," the brand said on social media platform X on Tuesday, adding that the products would no longer be sold. The announcement fuelled a heated debate over the division of domestic labor, with some saying the levity had crossed the line.

"You work all day, only to find your own kid is wearing clothes at home saying all you ever do is sleep, with your wife laughing at the sight of it... How is this supposed to make you happy?" one X user wrote. "This is discrimination against fathers," another posted.

Others saw the tongue-in-cheek clothing, which also included a headband saying "Daddy always comes home late", were an accurate satire of inequality in Japan. Women in Japan spend 5.5 times longer than men doing unpaid work from chores to parenting, the highest gap among OECD countries, a 2020 government white paper said. "How about the fact that husbands lie around all day while moms are busy non-stop, even on weekends — isn't that discrimination against women?" one user commented on Birthday's apology post on Instagram. A "men at work, women at home" mentality lingers in Japan, with women leaders still a rarity, although gradual change is afoot.

The percentage of eligible male workers taking parental leave hit a record 30 percent last fiscal year, jumping from the previous year's 17 percent, according to figures released Wednesday. The government is seeking to increase the rate to 50 percent by 2025. — AFP

Nigeria protesters demonstrate over high cost of living

ABUJA: Police fired tear gas to disperse crowds of protesters in Nigeria's capital city Abuja on Thursday, as thousands rallied against escalating cost of living and governance issues in Africa's most populous nation, according to eyewitness accounts. Protesters demonstrated in Abuja, the commercial capital Lagos and several other cities to show discontent with economic reforms that have led to rampant inflation and inflicted increasing hardship on ordinary Nigerians. President Bola Tinubu has vowed to pursue the changes that he says are needed to keep the country afloat.

Authorities deployed armed security personnel in an effort to preempt potential violence. In Lagos, armed police watched as protesters marched towards the government house and then proceeded to two locations that were authorized for the protest. Some shopping malls in the city were shut and guarded by a heavy police presence. Inspired by protests in Kenya in June that led to the government there scrapping some planned tax increases, Nigerians are mobilizing online to demand the reinstatement of subsidies for petrol and electricity, free primary and secondary education and measures to combat insecurity, among other demands.

In Abuja, the military mounted roadblocks along the highway leading into town, while some protesters gathered at a stadium. Youths demonstrated in the city of Maiduguri, the hotbed of a militant insurgency in the northeast of the country, in the face of a heavy security

Ukraine suspends debt payments from August 1

KIEV: Ukraine invoked a law allowing it to skip international debt payments, putting it into what is expected to be a short-lived default as it finalizes a plan to restructure its nearly \$20 billion of international bonds. Late on Wednesday, the government said it would "temporarily suspend" payments starting Aug. 1, after



ABUJA, Nigeria: Demonstrators react as Nigerian policemen fire tear gas canisters during the End Bad Governance protest in Abuja on August 1, 2024. — AFP

presence, to voice their frustration at the government and its policies. The government said before the protests it was open to dialogue. Tinubu has asked citizen to bear with his reforms, but citizen complain that politicians are not making enough sacrifices themselves.

After taking office more than a year ago, Tinubu removed some fuel subsidies, devalued the naira currency and later hiked electricity tariffs, moves that have sent inflation soaring past 34 percent, eroding incomes. Consumer inflation rose to a new 28-year high of 34.19 percent in annual terms in June.

Nigerians are also grappling with widespread

insecurity, which has damaged the farming sector, while armed gangs kidnap residents and school children for ransom in the north.

Labour unions have led previous protests. But Thursday's march was mostly by unemployed youth — introducing a new element for the government trying to lessen the impact of its economic policies.

Tinubu signed a new minimum wage into law on Monday to help workers cope with hardship caused by his economic changes, but many of the country's 200 million people are either self-employed or do not have jobs. — Reuters

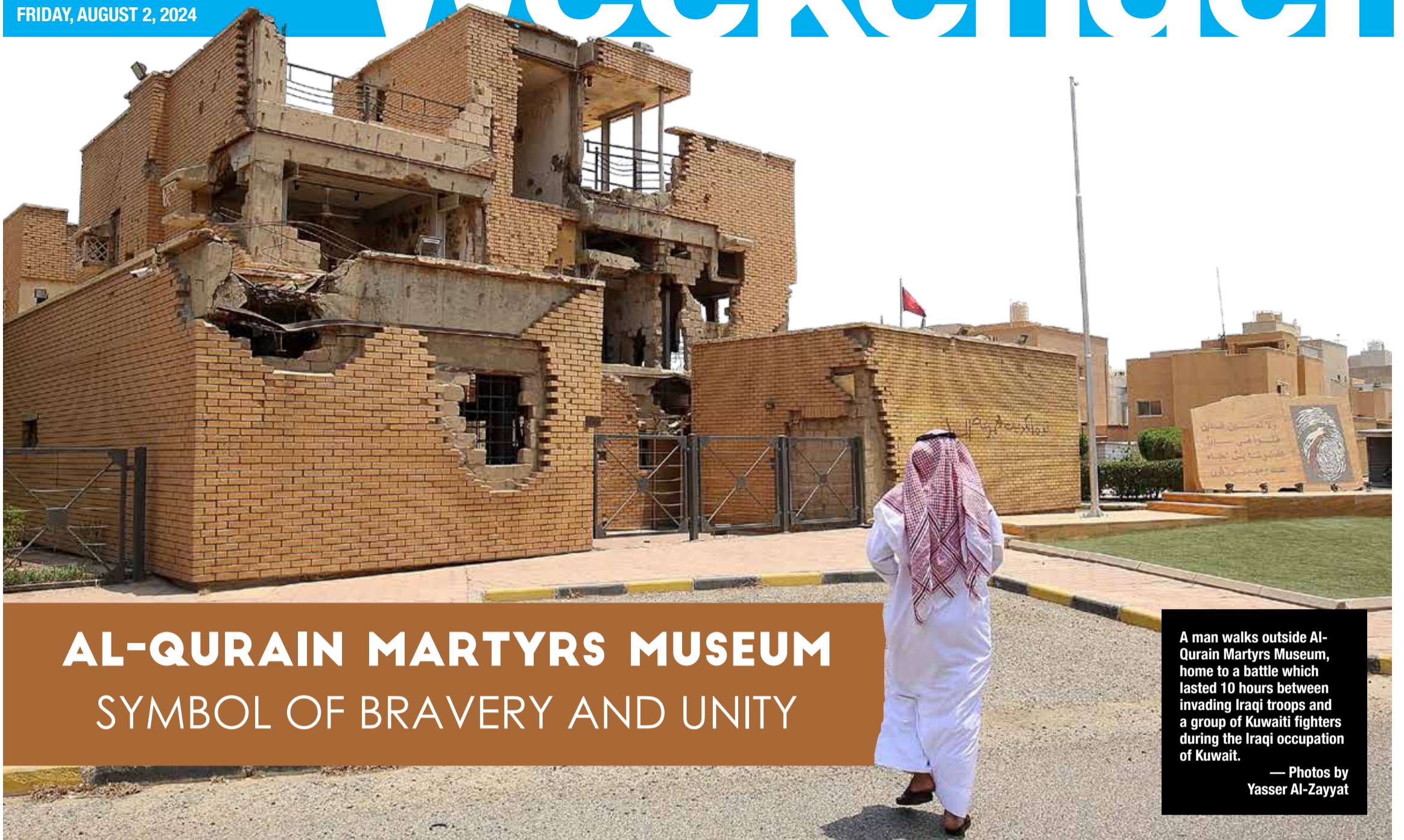
President Volodymyr Zelenskyy earlier in the day signed the law allowing a suspension until Oct. 1. Ukraine, ravaged by war since Russia's February 2022 full-scale invasion, has a \$34 million coupon payment on a 2026-maturing Eurobond due on Aug. 1, with a 10-day grace period, but the government said it would not pay. "Ukraine will invoke the moratorium law in order to suspend payments, because the process of finalizing the restructuring will be completed after Aug. 1," the finance ministry said in a statement, calling the move a "necessary technical solution".

Kyiv announced a provisional restructuring deal on July 22, which bondholders are expected formally approve in the coming weeks. The statement added that Ukraine was engaging with investors to garner support for the deal and enable the country to conclude it "as soon as possible."

Though the move officially notches up another default for Ukraine, it is unlikely to trigger any concerns in debt markets as the impending restructuring made it unavoidable. By 0910 GMT, Ukraine's sovereign dollar bonds were little changed, bidding between \$30.56-\$33.72 on the dollar. The war with Russia, now in its 29th month, continues to drain Ukraine's resources and economy, leaving it heavily reliant on money — and military aid — from international partners. The restructuring proposal would see a 37 percent nominal haircut on Ukraine's outstanding international bonds, saving Kyiv \$11.4 billion in payments over the next three years — the duration of the country's program with the International Monetary Fund, according to government statements. — Reuters

Weekender

FRIDAY, AUGUST 2, 2024



AL-QURAIN MARTYRS MUSEUM SYMBOL OF BRAVERY AND UNITY

A man walks outside Al-Qurain Martyrs Museum, home to a battle which lasted 10 hours between invading Iraqi troops and a group of Kuwaiti fighters during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



By Passant Hisham

For 10 long hours, a fierce battle raged at a house in Qurain between Iraqi soldiers, heavily armed with weapons and cannons, and 19 members of the Kuwaiti resistance group “Al-Messila”, who had only inadequate weapons. The story of this house dates to February 24, 1991. Today, it stands as a museum, a monument preserving the memory of these resistance heroes.

The confrontation started when Iraqi army arrived to search the house. When no one answered their knocks, a soldier scaled the house’s wall and attempted to break in. In response, a member of the resistance group inside shot the soldier. The Iraqi forces, supported by tanks and RPGs, surrounded the house and opened fire on the lightly armed resistance fighters.

rating the story of the house, which was converted into the Al-Qurain Martyrs Museum.

Sami is one of the survivors of this battle, but unfortunately, his father, Sayed Hadi Alawi, the leader of the resistance group, was one of the martyrs whose memory is still commemorated to this day. Sayed was known for his bravery and concern for the entire group.

bloody battle, Sami felt like “the bravest person in this battle”. “I was 20-21 years old holding a weapon, and I had my dad with me. What would scare me?” But the moment he called for his dad and didn’t get a response, everything changed. “That’s when fear took over me. I felt like a lost child without his father, as if his hands had been holding me and then let go.”

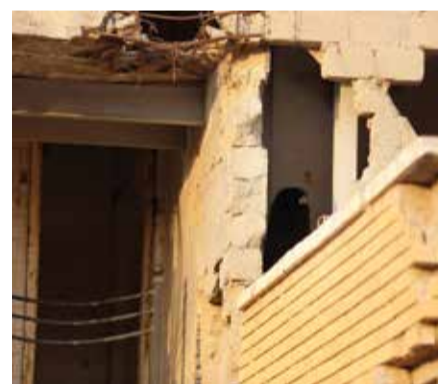
Twelve martyrs resulted from this battle and seven survived, as if they were destined to keep narrating the real story that took place in this house without fabrication, believed Sami. Recalling the names of the martyrs, it became clear how they all came from different ethnic groups: Bedouin, Urbanite, Sunni and Shiite. “There was no discrimination back then - we were all Kuwaitis who gave up our lives for our nation,” Sami said.

The group of martyrs who became a symbol of sacrifice and resilience included the group’s leader, Sayed Hadi Al-Alawi and the heroes Ammar Faraj Al-Enezi, Mubarak Ali Mansour, Youssef Khodir Ali, Abdullah Abdulnabi Mandani, Mohammed Othman Al-Shaya, Badr Nasser Al-Eidan, Jassim Mohammed Gholoum, Khalil Khairallah Al-Balushi, Ibrahim Ali Mansour, Khaled Ahmed Al-Kandari, and Hussein Ali Reda.

As the battle wore on, the number of Iraqi soldiers grew, while the resistance fighters fell, one by one. “Bayt Al-Qurain is but a drop in the ocean of efforts made by the Kuwaiti youth and resistance. And if not for the blood, sacrifices, and steadfastness of the people of Kuwait, this country would not have been liberated,” said Sami Sayed Hadi Alawi in a video account nar-

After every bullet hit the house, he would call out the names of the 18 other members to make sure everyone was alive.

Then came the moment when he went to the roof alone, and his son called out loudly, “Bu Sami, Bu Sami,” but there was no response. “I knew that at this moment, either he was killed or injured,” Sami recalled. Despite the increasingly



A Soviet-built Iraqi tank outside the Al-Qurain Martyrs Museum.





Evacuees onboard MV Safeer await disembarkation in Dubai on September 7, 1990.



MV SAFEER

AN EPIC RESCUE MISSION

Ship owner recalls historic evacuation of 722 Indians from Kuwait in 1990



By Antonio Coelho

Considered the largest sea evacuation of refugees on a cargo ship, the MV Safeer played a critical role during the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. On September 4, 1990, MV Safeer, embarked from Shuwaikh Port with 722 Indians on board, mostly women and children. This Panama-registered cargo ship, owned by the late Captain Ibrahim Modak, Captain Viraf Kekobad and a third party, was initially docked at Shuwaikh Port, discharging a cargo of bagged rice, when Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait on August 2, 1990.



Indian refugees from Iraq and Kuwait are seen Oct 8, 1990 waiting to board buses at Al-Andalus camp to go back home.

The MV Safeer found itself trapped in the war zone with no means of communication. The primary concern for the vessel's owners was the safety of the crew and the ship itself. The most significant challenge was negotiating the ship's release through the intervention of the Indian government and the Iraqi authorities. This operation involved the Indian shipping industry, New Delhi, the Indian Navy, the Indian Embassy in Kuwait, the Indian mission in Dubai, Iraqi authorities, Dubai police, immigration departments, vessel owners, the ship's captains and the dedicated crew of the MV Safeer.

Kuwait Times spoke to Captain Kekobad about the challenges his team faced over the evacuation and whether they received any rewards for their humanitarian mission. "We have the blessings of 722 Indian nationals who were safely evacuated from war-torn Kuwait and reunited with their loved ones. They are grate-



Late Capt Ibrahim Modak

ful that they got a new lease on life. We thank the Almighty for granting our vessel a safe passage, and that was our biggest reward," he said.

The Bollywood movie Airlift, released in January 2016, portrayed the



Capt Viraf Kekobad

captain of the ship as taking money from the helpless evacuees caught in the war. To set the record straight, the owners made a documentary titled Mission Safeer: 37 Days to Freedom, available for free on YouTube. It has

won many Indian and international awards across four continents.

Captain Kekobad emphasized that this mission was a glaring example of the collective efforts of Indians from all walks of life, coming together selflessly to make this humanitarian mission a resounding success. The mission was carried out free of cost and was recognized in the Limca Book of Records in 2019.

Captain Kekobad's prized possession is a letter of recognition from the then External Affairs Joint Secretary, K P Fabian. It reads: "This is to confirm that the Government of India did not pay your company any amounts towards the evacuation process of Indian nationals who were carried aboard MV Safeer. We are indeed grateful to you for having safely carried over 700-plus Indians from Kuwait under Iraqi occupation to Dubai."



Officers and crew of MV Safeer.



Picture taken on Sept 9, 1990 at Amman airport shows Bangladeshi refugees sitting in a Soviet Antonov plane chartered by the UN and the IOM.



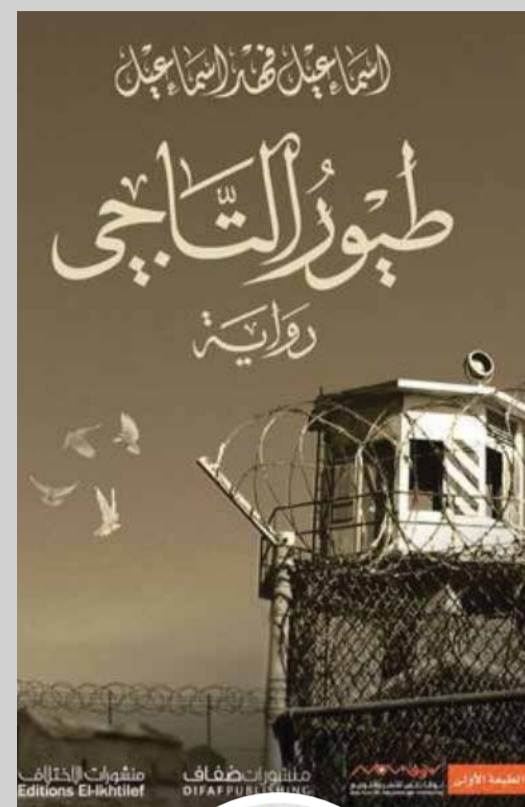
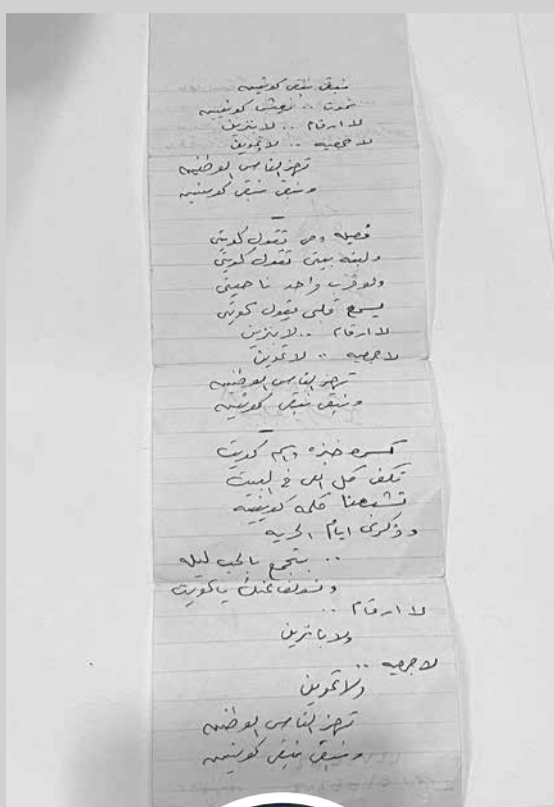
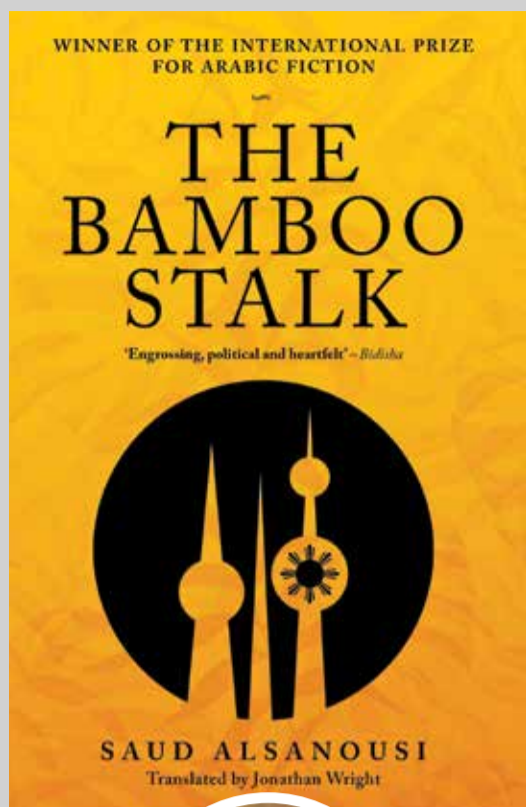
Picture taken on Aug 31, 1990 in a camp in Ruwashed near the Iraqi-Jordan border shows Filipino refugees holding a placard asking for help.



Picture taken on Aug 25, 1990 shows an Egyptian refugee family washing while crossing the Ruwashed border between Iraq and Jordan to flee the war.



Picture taken on Aug 27, 1990 shows South Asian refugees from Iraq and Kuwait arriving at Amman airport. — AFP photos



"The Bamboo Stalk", a novel by young Kuwaiti writer Saud Al-Sanousi.

"We Remain Kuwaiti", a poem written by martyred Kuwaiti poet Fayege Abduljaleel during the Iraqi occupation in 1990.

"Do You Allow Me to Love My Country?", a book of poetry by renowned Kuwaiti poet Dr Suad Al-Sabah.

"Tuyoor Al-Taji", a novel about Kuwaiti prisoners in Iraq by late Kuwaiti writer Ismail Fahd Ismail.



Photo dated Aug 3, 1990 shows an Iraqi helicopter shot down by Kuwaiti resistance fighters in Hawally. — AFP

THE INVASION'S IMPACT ON KUWAITI LITERATURE

By Mahmoud Zakaria

Today, August 2, marks the 34th anniversary of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, a day remembered for the moment when Iraqi soldiers toppled the Kuwaiti border sign and replaced it with one declaring Kuwait as "the 19th province of Iraq".

On August 2, 1990, Iraqi forces entered Kuwaiti territory, leading to violent clashes with heavy weaponry between Kuwaiti units and the Iraqi army in the center of Kuwait City. The international community strongly condemned the invasion, causing oil prices to rise significantly. The UN Security Council held an emergency meeting, demanding the "immediate unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces".

Washington responded by freezing all Iraqi assets in the United States and its subsidiaries abroad, as well as Kuwaiti assets, to prevent their seizure by Baghdad. Additionally, the Soviet Union ceased supplying weapons to Iraq. On November 29, the Security Council authorized "member states to use all necessary means" if Iraq did not withdraw from Kuwait by January 15, 1991.

After several failed diplomatic initiatives, Operation Desert Storm began on January 17 with intensive air strikes. The following day and for several weeks, Baghdad retaliated by launching Scud missiles at the Zionist entity and Saudi Arabia. The ground campaign against Iraq commenced on February 24, 1991, and three days later, it was announced that "Kuwait

was liberated" and "the Iraqi army was defeated".

The invasion had a profound literary and artistic impact, serving as inspiration for Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti writers. Kuwaiti novels addressed the invasion not only as a national disaster but also as a central theme in Kuwaiti literature.

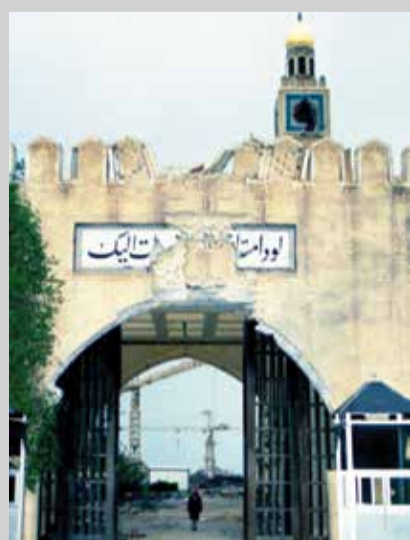
Renowned poet Dr Suad Al-Sabah addressed the invasion's

International Prize for Arabic Fiction in 2013, highlighting the actions of the Kuwaiti resistance that claimed many lives.

Other prominent writers, such as the late poet Ismail Fahd Ismail, Laila Al-Othman, Thuraya Al-Baqsam and Suleiman Al-Shatti, also addressed the invasion in their works. The people of Kuwait stood united in confronting the invasion, exemplified by the martyrdom



Photo dated Aug 3, 1990 shows Iraqi soldiers in a military transport truck in a street of Kuwait City. — AFP



Seif Palace after its destruction by the brutal invasion.



Oil wells set on fire by the invaders.



Kuwait Marriott Hotel after it was burned down by the invaders. — KUNA

catastrophe in several notable works, including "Do You Allow Me to Love My Country?" and her poetry collection "Urgent Telegrams to My Country". The young Kuwaiti novelist Saud Al-Sanousi explored the invasion's aftermath in his novel "The Bamboo Stalk", which won the

of Kuwaiti poet Fayege Abduljaleel, who bravely defended Kuwait. Abduljaleel and other heroes of the Kuwaiti resistance displayed remarkable courage and bravery, and their legacy will remain etched in the memory and conscience of the Kuwaiti people.

Sports

USA ease past South Sudan to reach Paris Olympic basketball quarters

Kevin Durant chipped in with 14 points after his return from injury

LILLE: Bam Adebayo led the United States with 18 points in a 103-86 win over South Sudan on Wednesday as the reigning champions sailed into the quarter-finals of the Olympic men's basketball tournament.

Team USA have never lost to an African side at the Olympics but they had a scare when they played South Sudan in a warm-up game in London on July 20.

However there was never any threat of an upset in Lille as LeBron James got the US, seeking a fifth successive gold medal, off to a fast start in the first quarter and never looked back. Jayson Tatum began the game for the US after coach Steve Kerr kept the Boston Celtics star on the bench for the entirety of Sunday's opening win over Serbia.

Instead, it was the turn of Joel Embiid to sit out the evening as Adebayo had the hot hand, the Miami Heat center making his first six shots and eight of 10 in total. Kevin Durant chipped in with 14 points, producing another solid shooting display after his return from injury against Serbia, while James finished with 12 points.

"You've got guys from all ages in the league that (have) accomplished so much, but they're all unselfish players who want the best for the team," said Durant. "I think we've got to continue to prove ourselves because other teams I've been on we won the

gold, but as far as talent and what we look like on paper, it's probably the best team I've played on."

Anthony Edwards, Derrick White and Devin Booker all reached double digits as well, but it was a tough night for Stephen Curry who finished with just three points. The US led 55-36 at half-time and while South Sudan fought bravely to stay in the contest, the Olympic newcomers could never get back to within fewer than 10 points.

"I think a team like this we need to put our foot on the gas for 40 minutes straight," added Durant, a three-time gold medalist. Nuni Omot scored a game-high 24 points for South Sudan, with Carlrik Jones adding 18 for a team coached by former NBA player Royal Ivey.

With two wins from two in Group C, the US are now guaranteed to advance to the last eight. Canada, Germany and hosts France had already secured their passage to the quarter-finals. South Sudan, who began their Olympic debut with a win over Puerto Rico, remain well positioned to make the knockout phase.

Earlier on Wednesday, Serbia bounced back from their opening loss to the US with an emphatic 107-66 win over Puerto Rico. Three-time NBA MVP Nikola Jokic came up just short of a triple-double as he registered 14 points, 15 rebounds and nine assists. — AFP



VILLENEUVE-D'ASCQ: USA's #06 LeBron James (R) passes the ball in the men's preliminary round group C basketball match between USA and South Sudan during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the Pierre-Mauroy stadium in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, northern France, on July 31, 2024. — AFP

Dortmund sign midfielder Gross from Brighton

BERLIN: Borussia Dortmund on Thursday announced the signing of Germany midfielder Pascal Gross from Premier League club Brighton and Hove Albion on a two-year deal. German media reported Dortmund paid a fee of up to 10 million euros (\$11 million), including bonuses, to sign the 33-year-old.

A creative midfielder with an eye for goal, Gross joins the Champions League finalists after seven years with Brighton, having joined from German side FC Ingolstadt in 2017. In 228 Premier League appearances, Gross scored 30 goals and laid on 45 assists and helped Brighton qualify for European competition for the first time in their 122-year history after finishing sixth in the 2022-23 season.

Gross was named Brighton's player of the season twice — in his first season at the club in 2017-18 and last year in his final campaign. Reacting to the transfer, Brighton chairman Tony Bloom said Gross was the Seagulls' "greatest-ever Premier League signing".

"I am really sad to see him leave — and I know it has not been an easy decision for him — but I understand his desire to see out his career at the top of the German game with the club he grew up supporting," Bloom said.

Gross said in a statement he "can't wait to play alongside my new teammates". Dortmund director Lars Ricken described the midfielder as a "top performer" who would add "solidity and flexibility" to the team. Gross received his first Germany call-up at the age of 32 and was part of manager Julian Nagelsmann's 26-man squad at Euro 2024. He has eight caps with one goal at international level. Dortmund signed Gross after a poor domestic season in 2023-24.

Despite reaching the Champions League final, where they lost to Real Madrid at Wembley, Dortmund had a disappointing Bundesliga campaign, finishing fifth in the league and going out at the last-16 stage of the German Cup.

This summer Dortmund have already signed striker Serhou Guirassy and defender Waldemar Anton, both from last season's surprise Bundesliga runners-up Stuttgart. — AFP

Ex-Indian batsman Anshuman Gaekwad dies at 71

NEW DELHI: Former India batsman and two-time national coach Anshuman Gaekwad has died aged 71 following a long battle with cancer, cricket authorities said Thursday. Gaekwad passed away in the western city of Baroda on Wednesday after suffering various health complications.

He played 40 Tests and 15 ODIs for India before becoming a selector and coach of the national team. Gaekwad scored 1,985 runs from 70 Test innings, with a highest score of 201 against Pakistan in the 1982-83 series.

"My deepest condolences to the family and friends of Mr Anshuman Gaekwad. Heartbreaking for the entire cricket fraternity," Jai Shah, secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), said in a social media post.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also expressed sadness over the batsman's death. "He was a gifted player and an outstanding coach. Pained by his demise. Condolences to his family and admirers," he wrote on X.

Gaekwad was known for fearlessly facing West Indies fast bowlers in an era when there were neither helmets nor restrictions on bouncers. He had to undergo an operation after being struck on the ear by a Michael Holding bouncer that punctured his eardrum. — AFP

India buoyant but not in Sri Lanka to 'chill': Rohit

COLOMBO: India are still buoyant after their T20 World Cup triumph but skipper Rohit Sharma said Thursday his men were keeping focused ahead of their next engagement with Sri Lanka. Rohit and star batsman Virat Kohli both sat out this week's 3-0 series sweep by the tourists, both having announced their 20-over retirement after snagging India's first international trophy in more than a decade.

Both are back on tour for the first time since the Barbados final in June, for the first of three ODIs in Colombo on Friday. "It was a great feeling," Rohit told reporters. "We have to move on. It is time to move on now as well and think of what lies ahead of us."

"We are not here to chill in Colombo. At the end of the day, the standard of Indian cricket is more important," Rohit said he was agonising over the choice of wicketkeeping mainstay K.L. Rahul or Rishabh Pant, who returned to internationals for the World Cup after a horror car crash and a long injury absence.

"You know the ability of both players. They are match winners in their own way," he said. "It is nice to have problems picking teams. That means we have quality." Injuries have bedevilled Sri Lanka, with fast bowlers Dushmantha Chameera and Nuwan Thushara both forced to withdraw ahead of the T20 series.

Left-arm seamer Dilshan Madushanka and Matheesha Pathirana have also departed the squad with hamstring and shoulder injuries respectively, with uncapped Mohamed Shiraz and Eshan Malinga added as replacements.

Sri Lanka squandered opportunities during the T20 series as batting collapses hurt them in all three



COLOMBO: India's players attend a practice session at the R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium in Colombo on August 1, 2024, on the eve of the first one-day international (ODI) cricket match between India and Sri Lanka. — AFP

games. The last match Tuesday saw them fall short, despite needing just nine runs in the final two overs with six wickets still in hand.

"India are a champion outfit. They are the world champions. It was a good learning experience," debutant ODI skipper Charith Asalanka told reporters. "For the ODIs we have a different setup and hopefully we will put up a good show. We hope to do well against a strong side."

Squads

Sri Lanka: Charith Asalanka (capt), Pathum

Nissanka, Avishka Fernando, Kusal Mendis (wk), Sadeera Samarawickrama (wk), Kamindu Mendis, Janith Liyanage, Nishan Madushka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Dunith Wellalage, Chamika Karunaratne, Maheesh Theekshana, Akila Dananjaya, Mohamed Shiraz, Eshan Malinga, Asitha Fernando.

India: Rohit Sharma (capt), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, K.L. Rahul (wk), Rishabh Pant (wk), Shreyas Iyer, Shivam Dube, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Washington Sundar, Arshdeep Singh, Riyan Parag, Axar Patel, Khaleel Ahmed, Harshit Rana. — AFP

Salah scores as Liverpool beat Arsenal 2-1

WASHINGTON: Mo Salah and Fabio Carvalho scored first-half goals to give Liverpool a 2-1 victory over Arsenal on Wednesday while Chelsea cruised and Manchester United edged Real Betis 3-2 in pre-season matches.

Kai Havertz scored Arsenal's goal in front of a crowd of 69,879 at the home stadium of the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles. In other friendly action in the United States, Chelsea swept past Mexico's Club America 3-0, AC Milan beat Real Madrid 1-0 and Manchester United edged Real Betis 3-2.

Egyptian Salah opened the scoring for Liverpool in the 13th minute, outpacing the defenders to latch onto Harvey Elliott's defence-splitting pass. The striker shrugged off the attentions of Arsenal centre-back Gabriel and fired a low left-footed shot past Arsenal goalkeeper Karl Hein.

Carvalho doubled Liverpool's lead in the 34th minute, with Elliott again the provider. The 21-year-old Portuguese winger ran onto a perfectly lofted Elliott pass into the box and fired home a crisp right-foot volley through Hein's legs.

Arsenal reduced the deficit in the 40th minute when Havertz scored past Liverpool goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher from point-blank range after Martin Odegaard found him in the six-yard box. A goalless second half secured the triumph for Liverpool's new Dutch manager Arne Slot, who has



ATLANTA: Chelsea's English midfielder #32 Tyrrique George controls the ball as Club America's Mexican defender #29 Ramon Juarez falls to the pitch during an FC Series pre-season club friendly football match between Chelsea FC and Club America at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta, Georgia, on July 31, 2024. — AFP

replaced Jurgen Klopp. Arsenal's newly signed 22-year-old Italian defender Riccardo Calafiori was not in the Gunners' lineup. At San Diego, Real Betis grabbed an early advantage thanks to Iker Losada's strike in the 15th minute. The lead lasted only three minutes as Romain Perraud fouled Manchester United's Amad Diallo in the box and Marcus Rashford blasted home from the spot.

Diallo gave the Old Trafford club the lead in the 24th minute and Casemiro added a left-footed blast off a pass from Rashford in the 31st for a 3-1 half-time

lead. Diego Llorente's 61st-minute header pulled one back for Betis. In Atlanta, Chelsea's French striker Christopher Nkunku converted a penalty in the third minute to set them on their way against their Mexican club opponents. Spanish 18-year-old Marc Guiu scored the second with a 21st-minute header.

Winger Noni Madueke scored Arsenal's second penalty of the game in the 79th minute to seal the 3-0 win. In Chicago, Nigerian international Samuel Chukwueze's 55th minute goal gave AC Milan a 1-0 victory over Real Madrid. — AFP

Cross-country to be included in Winter Olympics

PARIS: World Athletics President Sebastian Coe expressed his confidence Thursday that cross-country running would soon be included in the Winter Olympics programme. Coe has long ar-

gued that the rightful place for cross-country was at the Winter Olympics, which would open those Games to a large African audience in a hat-tip to diversity the International Olympic Committee (IOC) so heralds.

The last time it featured in the Olympics was at the 1924 Paris Games when most of the athletes dropped out due to extreme heat and pollution from a nearby factory. Talks have been ongoing between Coe and his international cycling federation (UCI) counterpart David Lappartient for a joint proposal of cross-country running and cyclo-cross, on the same circuit.

"There's a lot of detail to be sorted," Coe said. "But we've had some good discussions about the thought of sharing the same course with cyclo-cross, which in itself would probably add a little bit of jeopardy into cross-country which is what we've welcomed in the past, particularly around our recent cross-country championships," Coe said.

Coe is a fervent supporter of cross-country running, a long-time proponent of the sport's training benefits. "For me, there's one really important element in this: I've always wanted to see cross-country back," said the Briton, who won two Olympic 1500m gold medals in 1980 and 1984. — AFP

Sports

PARIS 2024



Olympic track, field duels to savour

I have to win there, I believe I can do it: Benjamin

Olympics Gallery



NANTERRE: France's Florent Manaudou prepares to compete in a heat of the men's 50m freestyle swimming event. — AFP photos



VERSAILLES: US' Laura Kraut with horse Baloutine competes in the equestrian's jumping team qualifier.



PARIS: Spain's right back #23 Paula Arcos (R) vies with Hungary's left wing #06 Nadine Szoellosi-Schatzl during the Women's Preliminary Round Group B handball match between Spain and Hungary.



PARIS: Ecuador's Brian Daniel Pintado crosses the finish line to win the men's 20km race walk of the athletics event at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at Trocadero in Paris on August 1, 2024. — AFP

Pintado walks to first Olympic athletics gold

PARIS: Ecuador's Brian Pintado dedicated the first Olympic athletics gold medal of the Paris Games to his loved ones back home after powering to victory in the men's 20km walk on Thursday. The 29-year-old's beloved family may not have been present in Paris as he strolled to victory in 1hr 18min 55sec but he wore a "necklace of my son running beside me" and "a scarf that my grandmother gave me."

Brazil's Caio Bonfim improved on his fourth from Rio in 2016 taking silver with Spain's world champion Alvaro Martin taking the bronze. It was Ecuador's second Olympic title in the event after Jefferson Perez's gold medal at the 1996 Atlanta Games, and only the South American country's fourth ever gold.

Pintado clutched a family photograph as he crossed the line before being connected to loved ones via a live link. "It has been tough to be away from my family, my wife, my kids, for four months and just seeing them through a screen," said Pintado. — AFP

PARIS: Track and field takes centre stage at the Olympics on Friday with a swathe of stars on show, some of whose dreams will come true and others whose will be shattered.

AFP Sports picks out five of the many duels to savour in the Stade de France:

WOMEN 400 metres hurdles

Femke Bol (NED) v Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone (USA).

Probably the most keenly-anticipated potential match-up of the Games pits world champion Bol against the 24-year-old American who has dominated the event for the past three years. "It's inspirational and motivational how McLaughlin-Levrone's racing and seeing how she's raising the bar," said 24-year-old Bol earlier this month. The Dutchwoman has twice taken minor medals behind the world record holder — a bronze in Tokyo and silver at the 2022 worlds — but she certainly comes to Paris race-fit whereas the American has been sparing in her appearances. Bol can take heart that no-one has successfully defended the title — Deon Hemmings and Dalilah Muhammad going closest in winning silver at the Games after their moment of glory. But McLaughlin-Levrone has shown she is all about making history.

200 metres

Shericka Jackson (JAM) v Gabby Thomas (USA)

Jackson has shed the 100m and bet the house on the 200m to at last win an Olympic individual gold after two bronzes at 400m and 100m in Rio and Tokyo respectively. A worrying injury close to the Games may have forced her hand but the 30-year-old probably needs all her reserves to handle Thomas. The Jamaican knows how to handle pressure for she has two 200m world titles to her credit whereas Thomas, 27, has something to prove after taking bronze in Tokyo and then silver at the worlds behind Jackson last year. Thomas has been in far better form than Jackson this year but the Harvard graduate is expecting the old warrior to turn up primed and ready for what could well be her last tilt at individual Olympic gold. "It means a lot, I don't have an individual Olympic gold medal," said Jackson.

MEN 100 metres

Marcell Jacobs (ITA) v Noah Lyles (USA)

This is a fascinating clash between the mercurial Italian and the livewire American — the former defending his surprising title from Tokyo and the latter trying to rubber-stamp the image of himself as the rightful suc-



SAINT-DENIS: Belgium's Hanne Olaes looks at her phone at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, north of Paris, on August 1, 2024 a day before the start of the athletics event at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. — AFP

cessor to Usain Bolt. The two could not be more of a contrast physically — Jacobs is all muscles while Lyles has remained lithe, but on form since the Olympics the American is odds-on favorite. However, Jacobs has shrugged off a series of injuries and illnesses that have bedevilled him since Tokyo. Lyles took advantage by winning 100m-200m gold at the world championships last year. Jacobs, 29, threw down the gauntlet in winning the European title in June and if in top form Lyles' claim to Bolt's mantle may receive a jolt of reality. "I worked really hard to get here to win again... so I can do the double," said Jacobs.

400m hurdles

Karsten Warholm (SWE) v Rai Benjamin (USA)

Warholm has been the leading man and Benjamin never quite a scene-stealing supporting actor in one of athletics' most enthralling rivalries of the past few years. From the 2019 world championships in Doha to the Tokyo Games where he broke the world record in stunning fashion — the American also did in a valiant losing effort — and Budapest last year the 28-year-old Warholm has shown Benjamin a clean set of heels. Benjamin, though, perhaps landed a psychological blow when he

beat Warholm in the Monaco Diamond League meeting in July. "Paris is going to be madness," said Benjamin. "I have to win there. I believe I can do it."

Shot

Ryan Crouser (USA) v Joe Kovacs (USA)

The field event that World Athletics president Sebastian Coe savours could turn into quite a duel between the two American rivals. Kovacs, 35, is four years older than Crouser so this is probably his final chance to secure an elusive Olympic gold — and deny his compatriot a historic third title. Kovacs claimed Crouser was beatable and blamed having to cope with a new-born baby last year for disrupting his preparations for the Budapest world championships. His excuse rang hollow given Crouser produced a stunning performance to take gold less than three weeks after being diagnosed with deep vein thrombosis. Crouser has been laid low by injuries this season too and is philosophical about how he will cope on Friday. "The best analogy is this — it's like an airplane where we're all loaded up, and everything's ready to go," he said. "We just have a short runway. It's tough to know exactly where I'm at." — AFP

France showdown with Argentina in Olympic football

PARIS: There is no love lost between France and Argentina on the football field these days and their quarter-final meeting in Bordeaux on Friday will add spice to the men's Olympic tournament. The last-eight clash between the rivals is in many ways exactly what was needed for a competition mainly reserved for players aged under 23, lacking in star names and struggling to attract attention from the general football public.

There will be plenty of reasons to follow the encounter between two of the leading contenders to go all the way and win gold in Paris on August 9. It will be the first meeting of the nations since Argentina players were recorded singing racist chants about their French counterparts as they celebrated winning the Copa America in mid-July.

FIFA announced that it would investigate the chants, which targeted France's star striker Kylian Mbappe among others and included racist and homophobic insults. The chants even led to a diplomatic incident, with Argentina apologizing after the South American country's vice president, Victoria Villarruel, wrote on X that France was a "colonialist country". "Enough with feigned outrage, hypocrites," she added.

Argentina players have already been booed by rival fans during the Olympic tournament and can expect another heated welcome from the French crowd. "With everything that has happened recently, everyone in France was affected, so we will see what happens in the quarter-finals," warned France's Crystal Palace striker Jean-Philippe Mateta after the hosts finished the group phase with three wins out of three. — AFP

Algeria boxer in Olympic gender row wins in 46 seconds

PARIS: Algerian boxer Imane Khelif, who failed a gender eligibility test last year, pummeled her Italian opponent in 46 seconds at the Paris Olympics on Thursday to spark an angry reaction from Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. A distraught and hurt Angela Carini shrugged off attempts by the Algerian to shake her hand and collapsed to her knees and sobbed before breaking into tears again in front of dozens of reporters.

Khelif advanced to the quarter-finals of the women's 66kg category after unloading two strong punches on Carini, who had blood on her shorts and was unable to carry on because of a badly hurt nose.

"I have a big pain in my nose and I said, 'Stop'. It's better to avoid keeping going. My nose started dripping (with blood) from the first hit."

The 25-year-old added: "I fought very often in the national team. I train with my brother. I've always fought against men, but I felt too much pain today."

Khelif and Taiwan's Lin Yu-ting, who fights on Friday at 57kg, were disqualified from the world championships last year but deemed eligible to box in the women's competition in Paris. The IOC website for accredited media in Paris said that the 25-year-old Khelif was disqualified after "elevated levels of testosterone failed to meet the eligibility criteria". Both boxed in the women's event at the Tokyo Olympics three years ago.

As the controversy threatened to overshadow the sixth day of the Games, Meloni denounced a fight



VILLEPENTE: Algeria's Imane Khelif leaves after her women's 66kg preliminaries round of 16 boxing match against Italy's Angela Carini during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the North Paris Arena, in Villepinte on August 1, 2024. — AFP

that was "not on an equal footing." "I do not agree with the IOC," she said. "I think that athletes who have male genetic characteristics should not be admitted to women's competitions," she said during a meeting with Italian athletes in Paris, according to a video she posted on X. Khelif, who came fifth in Tokyo, was given a huge roar when she came into the North Paris Arena, where there were numerous Algeria fans with the country's flag. Before and during the very brief bout they chanted her name, but the action itself was over in a flash. Explaining why she dropped to her knees and was so tearful, Carini said: "It's for my father. I am sorry not to have taken Italy on to the podium." "I'm going out with my head held high," she added.

Earlier Thursday, Algeria's Olympic Committee (COA) condemned what it called "malicious and unethical attacks directed against our distinguished athlete, Imane Khelif, by certain foreign media". The COA hit out at "lies" that were "completely unfair". — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem Nuzha	22549134
	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, **Abdul Kareem Mohamed Ra-beek** holder of Indian passport No. S0581422, residing at 1/997-c Vasan Nagar, 10th cross, Rettaivaikal, Nachikurichy, Trichy, Tamil Nadu-620102, residing in Kuwait at present hereby declare that I have changed my name from Abdul Kareem Mohamed Ra-beek to Mohamed Ra-beek (given name) and Abdul Kareem (surname), father's name from Haidumiah Abdul Aziz Abdu Kareem to Abdul Kareem. (#5641, 02/08/2024)

I, **Jeegar Bharatkumar Karvat**, holder of Indian Passport No. S5881899, having permanent address 1802, 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 Karvat (surname). (#5640, 31/07/2024)

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1899988

PARIS 2024 

Marchand bags two Olympic golds after gymnastics thriller

Djokovic, Alcaraz close in on Olympics showdown as Nadal exits



NANTERRE: Silver medallist Australia's Zac Stubbly-Cook (L), gold medallist France's Leon Marchand (C) and bronze medallist Netherlands' Caspar Corbeau (R) attend the podium ceremony of the men's 200m breaststroke swimming event during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the Paris La Defense Arena in Nanterre. — AFP

PARIS: Home favourite Leon Marchand wrote his name into the Olympic history books with a phenomenal double gold on a pulsating night in the Paris pool Wednesday, as Japanese gymnast Shinnosuke Oka took a thrilling all-around title.

In another action-packed Olympic day in a sweltering French capital, fans waved a possible farewell to tennis superstar Rafael Nadal, who crashed out of the men's doubles. The hottest ticket in town was at La Defense Arena, where a raucous crowd wildly cheered every stroke as Marchand, rapidly becoming an Olympic superstar, staged a remarkable late surge to tap home in the 200m butterfly.

Trailing world record holder and defending champion Kristof Milak of Hungary until the final strokes, Marchand dug deep to secure gold in a new Olympic record time. He followed up less than two hours later with victory in the 200m breaststroke, tricolore flags waving around the stadium as the crowd cried out every time he bobbed his head up to breathe.

The double gold added to his dazzling victory in the 400m medley on Sunday and took the hosts to eight golds, briefly topping the medal table. "I think

it will take a while for me to realise. I'm just trying to keep going. I really enjoyed every moment of those two finals," said the 22-year-old.

"I'm really proud of everything." In another electric night in the Olympic pool, China's Pan Zhanle swam the first world record of the Paris Games, winning the 100m freestyle in 46.40sec and taking the Chinese back ahead of France in the overall standings. Sweden's Sarah Sjoestroem turned in the performance of a lifetime to pip Torri Huske from the United States to the wall in the women's 100m freestyle. But Australia's Mollie O'Callaghan will have to wait another four years for a freestyle double as the 200m champion was beaten into a surprising fourth place.

US great Katie Ledecky, a seven-time gold medallist, also comfortably defended her 1500m freestyle crown, as the battle for swimming medals reached the halfway stage.

'NadAlcaraz'

Over at Roland Garros, fans flocked to see 14-time French Open champion Nadal partner up with rising star Carlos Alcaraz in a Spanish dream team.

But the dream fizzled as "NadAlcaraz" never really got going against United States pair Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram, losing 6-2, 6-4.

At the age of 38 and beset with injuries, Nadal is unlikely to grace the Roland Garros clay again but his record there will probably never be beaten. Alcaraz however remains on course for a blockbuster tennis showdown with 24-time Grand Slam winner Novak Djokovic, who is eyeing an Olympic gold to complete his impressive CV.

'Shameful for our sport'

Day five had started with a boost for organisers as the triathlon finally went ahead after concerns over hazardous pollution levels in the River Seine. Organisers cancelled training this week and postponed the men's race on Tuesday after the Seine was found to be too dirty for athletes following rainstorms last week. But when athletes finally dived into the Seine at the historic Alexandre III bridge, the race resulted in more home joy as Cassandre Beaugrand seized gold. She told reporters it would have been "shameful for our sport" if the swimming had not gone ahead.

The men's race saw a nailbiting finale, as Britain's Alex Yee overhauled New Zealand's Hayden Wilde in the final stretch to improve on his silver from Tokyo. In other action on day five, China's table tennis world number one Wang Chuqin suffered a shock defeat, a day after having his bat broken.

Wang won mixed doubles gold on Tuesday but his elation turned to anger after a photographer accidentally snapped his bat while jostling to take a picture. Less than 24 hours later, Wang went out in the singles after a 4-2 defeat to Truls Moregard of Sweden. There was better news for China and their bid for a clean sweep in diving, as they prevailed in the women's synchronised 10m platform ahead of North Korea and Britain. China have won all three golds in the sport in Paris so far.

The US men's basketball team, four-time reigning champions, sailed into the quarter-finals with a 103-86 win over South Sudan powered by Miami Heat star Bam Adebayo. And in women's football, title-holders Canada beat Colombia 1-0 to advance to the quarter-finals following a six-point deduction over a spying scandal. — AFP

Oka dethrones Hashimoto in men's all-around triumph

PARIS: Japan's Shinnosuke Oka claimed a shock victory in the Olympic men's gymnastics all-around title on Wednesday in a thrilling final after a word in his ear from the man he dethroned, his compatriot Daiki Hashimoto.

Oka, 20, claimed gold ahead of Chinese duo Zhang Boheng in second, with Xiao Ruoteng taking bronze as a tearful Hashimoto finished sixth. In a gripping battle for gymnastics' most coveted title, less than a point split the top three going into the last of the six rotations - the horizontal bar.

With the Bercy Arena crowd holding their breath the last to go Zhang, who was set for bronze, produced a huge performance. That left all eyes trained on the giant screen for his score to see if he had pulled gold out of the bag.

When it finally flashed up, Oka's face lit up as his internal calculator worked out he had held on by just 0.233 points with an overall points tally of 86.832. Xiao, silver medallist behind Hashimoto at the Tokyo



PARIS: Japan's Shinnosuke Oka competes in the pommel horse event of the artistic gymnastics men's all-around final during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the Bercy Arena in Paris. — AFP

Games, was a further 0.235 points back.

Oka later revealed Hashimoto had whispered something to him before the tense concluding segment. "He kept telling me to be confident and try your best. So that helped, it gave me a lot of power," the Olympic debutant disclosed.

He added: "I wanted to win, and if I beat Mr Hashimoto I thought I would win the gold - I did not

make any mistakes so I feel great." Oka's unscripted success gave Japan an unprecedented fourth consecutive men's all-around title after Hashimoto and Japanese icon Kohei Uchimura, the winner at London 2012 and four years later in Rio.

Most athletes will never experience the joy of having an Olympic gold medal hanging around their necks - Oka in contrast now has scooped up two in the space of 48 hours after he helped Japan to the team title at the Paris Games on Monday.

Zhang had looked razor sharp in qualifying, topping the list of 24 going through to the final ahead of Oka and Hashimoto. The Tokyo champion started as though he meant business, landing his tumbles on the opening floor exercise with such sure-footedness the judges could have been forgiven for wondering if he had glue on the soles of his feet.

Over to Zhang, who drew gasps of consternation from the Chinese contingent in the Bercy Arena with a fall at the start of his routine and a hop back on his last jump.

"Anything can happen in a competition," shrugged Zhang. "In the floor exercise I made errors, but I pulled myself together and continued to work hard to catch up. "In the end I didn't win the gold but looking back I believe I progressed personally. "To lose, that is normal, how you pick yourself up after you lose, that is a life lesson I want to learn." — AFP

Kuwaiti sailor begins Olympic quest in Paris

PARIS: Kuwaiti sailor Amina Shah begins her Olympic quest sailing the (Ica 6) class in the port of Marseille. The Olympic committee stated that 23-year-old Shah, sailing a small single-handed dinghy, has prepared for this momentous event with international camps and courses months prior to the Paris 2024 Olympics.

The committee hailed Shah's previous achievements and her gold medals from championships in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The (Ica 6) class includes the participation of 20 male and 20 female competitors, explained the Olympic committee, adding that this is the vigorous event's first Olympic appearance. — KUNA



Amina Shah