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Iran says Zionists seeking war

Norway slams Zionists for revoking diplomats' status • More deaths, misery in Gaza



JEDDAH/GAZA: Iran accused the Zionist entity on Thursday of wanting to spread war in the Middle East, as diplomatic efforts sought a regional de-escalation following the killings of Tehran-allied militant leaders. Ali Bagheri, Iran's acting foreign minister, told AFP the Zionist entity had committed "a strategic mistake" by killing Hamas' political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran last week - hours after the assassination in Beirut of Hezbollah's military chief.

Although the Zionist entity has not admitted to killing Haniyeh, Iran and its allies have vowed to retaliate, setting the region on edge as the Gaza war raged on into its 11th month. The Zionist entity seeks "to expand tension, war and conflict to other countries", but has neither "the capacity nor the strength" to fight Iran, Bagheri said.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking at a military base on Wednesday, said was "prepared both defensively and offensively" and "determined" to defend itself. Haniyeh's group named a successor - Yahya Sinwar, who the Zionist entity says had a key role in planning Hamas' unprecedented Oct 7 attack. Analysts believe Sinwar - Hamas' leader in the Gaza Strip since 2017 - has been both more reluctant to agree to a ceasefire and closer to Tehran than Haniyeh, who lived in Qatar.

On the diplomatic front, a Zionist decision to revoke the diplomatic status of Norway's envoys to the Palestinian Authority over "anti-(Zionist) behavior" drew anger from Oslo. "Today's decision will have consequences for our relationship with the Netanyahu government," said Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide.

Norway - a key facilitator in the Zionist-Palestinian peace process, particularly in the secret negotiations that led to the Oslo Accords of the 1990s - swiftly summoned the Zionist ambassador to lodge a formal protest. Norway accused the hard-right government of Netanyahu of adopting an "extreme" response. "This is an extreme action that first and foremost affects our ability to help the Palestinian population", Barth Eide said. "A short while ago, I summoned (the Zionist entity's) representative to Norway and met her at the foreign ministry to protest against this decision," the minister told journalists.

The Palestinian Authority accused the Zionist entity of resorting to "baseless pretexts" to put pressure on any government that tries to halt "violations against our people". A statement from its foreign ministry expressed "condemnation and strong disapproval of the decision by the (Zionist) occupation

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NEWS IN BRIEF

HRW slams poor heat protection

BEIRUT: Human Rights Watch on Thursday accused Arab Gulf states of poorly protecting migrant workers exposed to severe heat stress as climate change threatens to make already-sizzling summers hotter and longer. To protect laborers, Gulf states ban work under direct sunlight and in open-air areas at peak heat hours from mid-June until mid-September as part of a longstanding "midday break" policy. But in a new report, HRW called the measure "inadequate", saying it failed to prevent heat-related health risks such as fainting, vomiting and in some cases, death. — AFP (See Page 2)

Tunisia president replaces PM

TUNIS: Tunisian President Kais Saied sacked his prime minister Ahmed Hachani without explanation on Wednesday and replaced him with social affairs minister Kamel Madouri, according to a statement from his office. Hachani took office on Aug 1 last year, replacing Najla Bouden, who was also dismissed without an official reason by Saied. His replacement Madouri had only taken on the social affairs portfolio in May. — AFP (See Page 7)

Afghan public workers must pray

KABUL: Afghan government employees must attend mosque five times a day or face punishment, Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada said Thursday. "The officials of the ministries and institutions of the (Taliban government) are obliged by sharia to pray in congregation at their fixed times," said the order signed by Akhundzada. It added that employees who miss a prayer "without a reasonable excuse" should receive a warning, and if they repeat the transgression "the relevant official is obliged to appropriately punish him". — AFP

UK anti-racism, pro-Palestinian protesters unite

SOLIHULL, United Kingdom: UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer vowed on Thursday to maintain intensive efforts to stop further far-right riots in English towns and cities, as more people were convicted for their roles in the unrest. On Wednesday, with dozens of officers looking on, a crowd of "Stand Up To Racism" demonstrators were joined by hundreds of pro-Palestinian supporters in a noisy, carnival-like rally opposed to the far right.

Starmer said he would chair another emergency meeting of senior ministers and police leaders later Thursday to

plan for potential trouble in "the coming days". He also noted the criminal justice system would continue "working speedily" to convict those already arrested during a week of near nightly riots across England and in Northern Ireland. The disturbances, first sparked by a July 29 knife attack that killed three children, has seen mosques and migrant-related facilities attacked alongside police and other targets.

Officials have blamed misinformation spread on social media about the suspected perpetrator for fueling the disorder. "It's important that we don't let up here," Starmer told media outlets as he visited a mosque and met community leaders in Solihull, western England. "That's why later on today, I'll have another... meeting with law enforcement, with senior police officers, to make sure that we reflect



LONDON: A protester waves a Palestinian flag during a counter demonstration against an anti-immigration protest called by far-right activists in Walthamstow on Aug 7, 2024. — AFP

Yunus sworn in as Bangladesh leader

DHAKA: Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus was sworn into office Thursday, vowing to lead Bangladesh back to democracy after a student-led uprising ended the 15-year rule of Sheikh Hasina. Yunus, who earlier on Thursday had hailed the overthrow of Hasina as Bangladesh's "second independence", swore to "uphold, support and protect the constitution", in front of political and civil society leaders, generals and diplomats at the presidential palace.

"Today is a glorious day for us," Yunus, 84, told reporters hours earlier when he returned to Dhaka from Europe. "Bangladesh has created a new victo-

ry day. Bangladesh has got a second independence." Yunus called for the restoration of order after weeks of violence that left at least 455 people dead, calling on citizens to guard each other, including minorities who came under attack.

"Law and order is our first task... We cannot take a step forward unless we fix the law and order situation," he said. "My call to the people is if you have trust in me, then make sure there will be no attacks against anyone, anywhere in the country. Every person is our brother... our task is to protect them," Yunus said, adding that "the whole of Bangladesh is one big family".

More than a dozen members of his cabinet, who are titled advisers, not ministers, also took the oath. They included top leaders of the Students Against Discrimination group that led the weeks-long



DHAKA: Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus (center) takes the oath of office as the chief adviser of Bangladesh's new interim government, administered by President Mohammed Shahabuddin (left) on August 8, 2024. — AFP

Ukraine to let robodogs loose on frontlines

UKRAINE: Ukraine could soon unleash robot dogs on its frontlines, replacing soldiers for perilous missions like spying on Russian trenches or detecting mines. At a demonstration in an undisclosed part of Ukraine, the metallic dog known as model "BAD One" stood up, crouched, ran and jumped according to commands transmitted by its operator.

Stealthy and agile, they could soon become an

invaluable ally on the frontline for a Ukrainian army that is short on manpower to repel the Russian invasion, its makers said. Low on the ground and therefore difficult to detect, the robot dogs can use thermal imaging to inspect enemy trenches or the inside of buildings in combat zones.

"We have surveillance soldiers who get sent on reconnaissance missions (who) are most of the time very highly trained people, very experienced people (and) always exposed to risks," said the operator who called himself "Yuri", as he showed it off to AFP journalists. "This dog limits the risk for soldiers and increases operational capabilities. This is the core function of the dog," said the operator, who works for a British company providing military equipment. — AFP



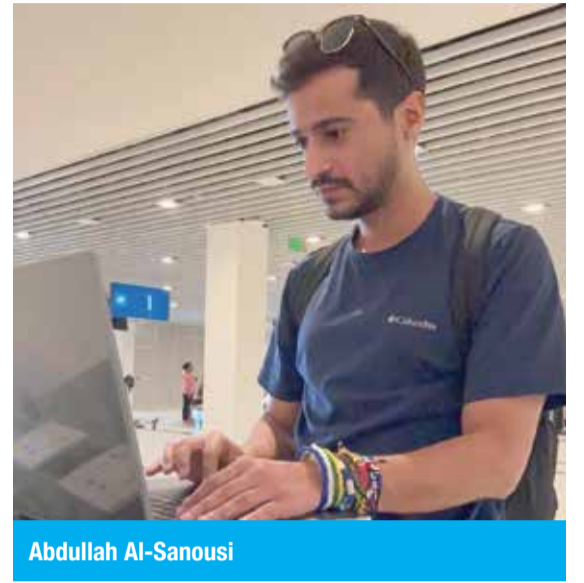
An operator with the call sign Yuri demonstrates the capabilities of a robot dog at an undisclosed location in Ukraine on Aug 7, 2024. — AFP



Local

Digital nomads: New-age employees freely roaming around ever-changing job market

‘Working remotely would be as regular as working in office’, book predicts



KUWAIT: The job market has dramatically changed in recent years, especially with the introduction of numerous technologies, including the ones during the coronavirus pandemic, which allowed for the proliferation of the “digital nomad.” Though no one knows when the aforementioned term was first coined, scientist Tsugio Makimoto and journalist David Manners popularized it in the 1997 book of the same name. The book predicted the invention of an individual communication device that would enable employees to work from anywhere in the world.

This is now largely achieved, as digital nomads in the 21st century use their skills to work via laptops, social media, and mobile phones. The book claimed people did not imagine that working remotely could be achieved; however, due to current circumstances, remote work is booming. The book also predicted that in the future, working remotely would be as regular as working in an office. However, artificial intelligence could make working remotely significantly easier. The digital nomad trend is on the rise and

increasing significantly since the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, and one of the perks of not having employees show up at work was saving cost.

In order to reduce expenses, companies had to change to working remotely to save money by renting a smaller, low-cost workplace and communicating with most of their employees remotely for some tasks that did not necessarily require their physical presence. Numerous companies were financially drained during the pandemic, and according to a Forbes article published on April 30, 2021, Google and most other large corporations told their employees to work from home.

“An unintended consequence of this remote work trend was the significant savings realized both companies and workers. The article added, “Bloomberg reported that Google, according to regulatory filings, saved about \$268 million in expenses in the first quarter of 2021. This was achieved by cutting down costs related to promotions, travel, entertainment, and in-office perks offered to workers.”

Back to the digital nomads, two Kuwaiti freelancers, Fajer Al-Rifai and Abdullah Al-Sanousi, followed suit, becoming part of the ever-growing trend. Al-Sanousi, an ambitious young man specializing in graphic design and passionate about travel, thought traditional jobs prevented him from traveling and discovering, so he became a digital nomad and replaced his human team with artificial intelligence. He worked from home or abroad.

All he needed was an Internet connection and a computer to work. Speaking to KUNA, Al-Sanousi believed the best way to work was to be more productive and open to ideas, especially since he was a designer and needed cognitive and cultural diversity. Sometimes, people may achieve three times their income in one month, and in that situation, financial wisdom was always to keep savings money, Al-Sanousi added. However, Al-Sanousi argued that working remotely has disadvantages compared to a traditional job, and digital nomads’ incomes needed to be more stable for one to survive. Meanwhile, Fajer Al-Ri-

fai is a managing partner in FTL Legal Services in Kuwait — a law firm specializing in commercial, financial, and technology law. She provides legal advice online and offers courses on becoming a digital nomad.

Al-Rifai pointed out that one of the most significant advantages of being a digital nomad was the freedom to travel and find a spot around the world that was fit for her to make it a place to work. She loved Mexican culture and found the country a suitable place to set up shop. As for disadvantages, she said that sometimes matters get more complicated, and the solution to such a problem was to find a supportive community.

In retrospective, Al-Rifai said some people do better in an office environment rather than being a digital nomad. Eventually, working remotely has pros and cons, and it depends on the person. Both Al-Rifai and Al-Sanousi agreed that to start as digital nomads, individuals should define their goals and what financial freedom means and create a plan based on such a premise. — KUNA



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Saud Al-Sabah holds a meeting with other officials. — KUNA photos

Bachelor of Fire Engineering Tech launched

KUWAIT: The First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Saud Al-Sabah said that the Bachelor of Fire Engineering Technology academic program will raise the efficiency of firefighters in the performance of their work and keep pace with modern international specialized study programs in this regard.

This came in a statement by Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef made to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA)

on Thursday on the sidelines of his attendance at the signing of a strategic partnership cooperation agreement between the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) to launch an academic program called “Bachelor of Fire Engineering Technology.” Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef explained that the members of KFF will be able to benefit from this program through cooperation with PAAET instead of sending them to the United States of America to study it, expressing his pride and appreciation for the role played by firefighters in serving the homeland.

For his part, the head of the Kuwait Fire Force, Major General Khalid Fahad, said in a similar statement to KUNA that the agreement aims to strengthen cooperation between government agencies, im-

prove job performance, and maintain the quality of education and the quality of educational outputs for members of the Kuwait Fire Force. Major General Fahad added that the students will study at the college because of the expertise and skills of its educational staff members in engineering and scientific studies.

He said that practical applications during the study will be in the Training Department of the Kuwait Fire Force, pointing out that the specialty of Fire Engineering Technology is considered one of a rare program in the region. He stressed that the desired objectives of the educational program are to keep abreast of the latest achievements in fire science and engineering and the development of the human element.

For his part, the Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam, confirmed to KUNA that the Authority seeks to extend bridges of cooperation and integration with various government agencies through the development of programs and specialties for high school graduates, which will be available in the future. Al-Fajjam expressed thanks and praise for the cooperation and support given by the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Saud Al-Sabah in making the agreement a success. The signing of the agreement was witnessed by the dean of the Faculty of Technological Studies at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, Dr. Mohammed Al-Hayyan, and a number of officials. — KUNA



Participants take a group photo after the program. — KUNA

KUNA organizes training course for students

KUWAIT: The Kuwait News Agency’s (KUNA) Center for the Development of Media Capabilities concluded a training course entitled “fundamentals of writing a news story”. This is within the agency’s journalism training program for university students in its ninth edition. The week-long course covered several aspects, including the theoretical aspect,

which includes the basics of writing a press release, its types, linguistic employment, logical linking in the information, as well as dealing with templates and technical forms of press releases.

The course also highlighted common mistakes on people’s tongues in the Arabic language, along with introductory verbs, the art of making and drafting news headlines, and general practical exercises. KUNA launched its ninth journalistic training program for university students last week with an enlightening program for trainee students, introducing them to both theoretical and practical aspects, as well as field visits to various state institutions and bodies. The program continues until the first of September. — KUNA

‘Inadequate’ heat protection for Gulf migrant workers

BEIRUT: Human Rights Watch on Thursday accused Arab Gulf states of poorly protecting migrant workers exposed to severe heat stress as climate change threatens to make already-sizzling summers hotter and longer. The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Qatar are among the hottest places in the world with summer temperatures often edging towards 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit).

To protect laborers, the three states ban work under direct sunlight and in open-air areas at peak heat hours from mid-June until mid-September as part of a long-standing “midday break” policy. But in a new report, HRW called the measure “inadequate,” saying it failed to prevent heat-related health risks such as fainting, vomiting and in some cases, death.

“As temperatures reach unprecedented levels globally, Gulf states should be leaders in implementing strong

heat protections to safeguard outdoor workers, not passive bystanders,” said Michael Page, HRW’s deputy director for the Middle East. “Migrant workers in countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar... are unnecessarily suffering every day, enduring long-term chronic illnesses, and even dying due to the suffocating heat,” he said.

HRW, which interviewed dozens of migrant workers in Saudi, the UAE and Qatar, said “nosebleeds, fever, headaches, nausea, and fainting are common among workers.” The “interviewees often lacked access to shaded rest breaks and cold water to hydrate and cool off,” HRW added, noting that “extreme heat conditions also occur outside” the months and hours during which work is prohibited under the midday break.

Workers in Arab states face some of the highest exposure to heat stress in the world, with 83.6 percent suffering from excessive heat exposure on the job, according to a recent report from the International Labor Organization, a United Nations agency. The risks from a warming planet were on display in June, when more than 1,300 people died while performing the annual Muslim hajj pilgrimage to Makkah, according to an official tally — most of them unauthorized pilgrims exposed to long periods outdoors. — AFP



KUWAIT: Workers take shelter from the sun under a tree in Kuwait City amidst a heatwave. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Local

Kuwait and Bahrain ink executive program for tourism cooperation

Agreement outlines framework for cooperation, exchange of expertise



Minister of Information and Bahrain's Minister of Tourism sign an executive program of tourism cooperation agreement for 2024, 2025 and 2026. — KUNA photos



Minister of Information and Bahrain's Minister of Tourism visit one of Kuwait Television's studios.



Minister of Information and Bahrain's Minister of Tourism visit Kuwait's Media Museum.



KUWAIT: In a significant step towards enhancing bilateral relations and fostering the tourism sector, Kuwait and Bahrain signed the executive program of the tourism cooperation agreement for the years 2024, 2025, and 2026. The signing took place Thursday, with Kuwait's Minister of Information and Culture, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and Bahrain's Minister of Tourism, Fatima Al-Sairafi, representing their respective governments.

The agreement, Al-Mutairi told KUNA, outlines

a framework for cooperation in various aspects of tourism, including the exchange of expertise and information related to tourism marketing, organizing joint tourism events, and strengthening promotional programs within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Al-Mutairi emphasized that this agreement aligns with Kuwait's vision of reinforcing GCC collaboration across various fields, particularly in tourism, a vital sector that significantly contributes to national economic growth.

On her part, Al-Sairafi affirmed Bahrain's commitment to strengthening tourism cooperation with Kuwait as part of broader efforts to advance GCC tourism to new horizons. The tourism sector in Kuwait, overseen by the Ministry of Information, is focused on creating an attractive tourism identity for Kuwait both domestically and internationally and on promoting sustainable tourism as a crucial contributor to the national economy. — KUNA

Petroleum media 'strategic partner to oil industry'

SALALAH: Dr Khaled Al-Qahs, a media and communications professor at Kuwait University, said that petroleum media is a strategic partner to the oil industry and contributes to its success. This came in his remarks to KUNA on the sidelines of his participation in the 5th GCC Petroleum Media for Gulf Countries in the Omani city, Salalah. Al-Qahs highlighted the significant role of petroleum media in shaping the public's awareness about the oil industry, aiming to enhance citizens' understanding of the sector.

He advocated for the establishment of specialized petroleum media institutions in oil-producing and exporting countries, which would also be responsible for training highly skilled and competent petroleum journalists. He emphasized the importance of presenting petroleum issues to the public in a simplified and comprehensive manner. Al-Qahs underscored the crucial role of media in promoting the oil industry and its benefits.

He highlighted the necessity of clarifying the industry's contributions to economic and social development in producing countries. Furthermore, Al-Qahs called for aligning Arab petroleum media with development plans, considering their multifaceted impacts and prospects at the domestic level. The forum, first launched in 2013 in Kuwait, aims to bolster



Dr Khaled Al-Qahs, media and communications professor at Kuwait University

the role of Gulf media in supporting energy sector issues. It seeks to keep the media updated on the latest developments in the sector.

Petroleum media role

Meanwhile, Plenipotentiary and GCC Director of Electricity and Water Department Dr Mohammad Al-Rasheedi underlined the significance of petroleum media in directing efforts towards achieving sustainable development. Dr Al-Rasheedi made these remarks to KUNA on the sidelines of his participation at the Oman-hosted GCC Petroleum Media Forum.

He described the forum as an opportunity for the exchange of expertise, extending communication bridges between media personnel and energy ex-



Plenipotentiary and GCC Director of Electricity and Water Department Dr Mohammad Al-Rasheedi

perts, as well as delve into the most notable issues and identify priorities for joint work. On the importance of media, Al-Rasheedi said that it contributes to shaping public opinion as it is not only a medium for the transmission of news but is also a partner in the decision-making process.

In light of these accelerating developments and challenges faced by GCC countries, the role of media is gaining importance, especially in relaying accurate, credible news and revealing false information, he commented. Al-Rasheedi called on experts and decision makers to develop new innovative strategies to address challenges facing the sector, including climate change, fluctuation of oil prices, and technological advancements. — KUNA



Photos show ruined infrastructure due to the recent floods in Yemen. — KUNA photos

Charity Al-Najat dispatches aid to Yemen

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Al-Najat Charity has sent sheltering supplies and nutritional aid to relieve the thousands of families that are affected by the re-

cent floods in Yemen. Head of the resources and PR department at Al-Najat, Abdullah Al-Shehab, told KUNA that the urgent relief is worth KD 50,000 and is an extension of the continuous efforts to aid and relieve various countries in need, especially neighboring countries. Al-Shehab explained that the dispatched aid to Yemen comprises of 1,000 food baskets, 250 sheltering supplies, including tents and mattresses, and 250 potable water tanks. The distribution process was coordinated with local concerned and official bodies, he added. — KUNA



A Yemeni woman carries food donation provided by a Kuwaiti charitable organization. — AFP

In my view

Will Article 19 rule enhance or paralyze economic activity?

By Mohammad Asaad Al-Zayed

Administrative circular No 11 of 2024 issued by the Deputy Minister of Commerce, which mandates a temporary halt on the establishment, renewal and amendment of companies, has sparked widespread debate in legal and commercial circles. This circular prohibits any resident or expat from becoming a shareholder or manager in a company unless they transfer their residency status to article 19 residency, raising numerous legal and economic questions.

Legal Concerns

(1) Conflict with the provisions of the commercial law No 68 of 1980:

While the commercial law allows foreigners to own up to 49 percent of the company's shares without specifying the type of residency, the circular restricts entering into companies to holders of article 19 residency without explicit legal basis, conflicting with the provisions of the commercial law.

(2) Conflict with the executive regulations of the companies law:

To obtain residency under Article 19, the expat's share in the company must be no less than KD 100,000, which may conflict with the legal requirements for the capital of small and medium enterprises in Kuwait. According to Article 13 of the executive regulations of the companies law No 1 of 2016, the minimum capital is set at KD 100 for general partnerships, limited partnerships, limited liability companies and single-person companies. The minimum for closed joint-stock companies and partnerships limited by shares is set at KD 10,000, and for public joint-stock companies, it is KD 25,000. This significant difference in requirements may hinder foreign investors' ability to comply with the law.

(3) Lack of clarity and transparency

The circular was issued without clarifying the required procedures for reconciling the status of current shareholders or managers, nor did it grant expats holding Non-Article 19 residencies who own shares in companies a grace period to reconcile their status. This raises ambiguity about the implementation mechanism and potential legal consequences of non-compliance.

Commercial impacts

(1) Negative impact on the business environment
The number of commercial licenses involving foreign shareholders is approximately 45,000. Therefore, implementing the circular could lead to the suspension of these licenses, negatively affecting the business environment and disrupting many commercial activities, increasing concerns about the country's economic stability.

(2) Restructuring partnerships

Resident shareholders may be forced to adjust their status according to the circular, either by transferring their residency to Article 19 or exiting the companies. This could lead to disruptions in existing companies and significant market restructuring, undoubtedly affecting business continuity negatively.

(3) Delays in issuing new licenses

The inability to issue new licenses to companies involving expats who do not hold Article 19 residency could delay the entry of new investments into the Kuwaiti market, hindering the economic development plans set out in the 2035 vision. The Ministry of Commerce must consider the broad impacts of this circular on companies and investors in Kuwait. Implementing the circular without amendment or clarification could lead to serious consequences for the business environment. Therefore, it is crucial to review the circular carefully to ensure a balance between protecting the national economy and maintaining an attractive and competitive commercial environment.

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KUWAIT: Pearl diving boats arrive for the annual pearl diving season. Pearl diving trips are held annually in order to keep the tradition alive.

150 youth set to embark on 33rd pearl diving trip

Journey to begin with traditional 'dasha' ceremony

KUWAIT: On Saturday, the "dasha" (departure) ceremony of the 33rd annual pearl diving memorial trip will take place, organized by the marine heritage committee at Kuwait Sea Sports Club. The event will be held from Aug 10 to 15 under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Kuwait Sea Sports Club has invited the general public and the families of the participating youth to attend the dasha ceremony, which will be held on the club's coast in Salmiya at 8:30 am. The ceremony includes the gathering of ships' captains (nokhathas) and young divers in front of an honorary platform, accompanied by a traditional maritime performance. This will be followed by the national anthem, after which the organizing committee, the young divers, and the nokhatha, along with their crew (majdamiya and bahria), will bid farewell to the attendees and their families on the beach.

They will then proceed to the diving ships to de-

part for the diving port in the Khairan, where the ships will gather throughout the journey, which will last until Thursday. During this period, the youth will engage in actual diving activities in the Khairan reefs, which are known for their pearl oysters.

The club's Secretary-General Khaled Mohammed Al-Foudari mentioned that around 150 young Kuwaitis, aged between 15 and 20, will participate in this journey, expressing their pride in the nation's rich heritage and the sacrifices of the first generation of fathers and grandfathers. He added that four diving dhows, gifted by the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, will participate.

These ships, of the "sambook" and "shoue" types, are named after prominent nokhathas who made significant contributions to diving journeys, along with a ship named after Gulf Bank. These dhows will be led by young divers under the supervision of Nokhatha Hamad Al-Siyar, the general supervisor of the committee, with the participation of several commit-

tee members, including veteran historian and journey advisor Thamer Al-Siyar.

The rest of the activities will include a media day on Tuesday, where the press and media will visit the diving port to closely follow the journey. The journey will conclude with the "ghafal" (return) ceremony, which will be held at 5:30 pm on Thursday on the club's coast. A grand celebration will mark the return of the diving ships, featuring traditional maritime performances, and families will welcome their sons back on the shore, as in the past.

Foudari praised the cooperation with the Public Authority for Sport, the ministry of interior, the ministry of health, the ministry of information, Kuwait Fire Force and all participating entities. He also expressed the club's appreciation to Gulf Bank, Rawdatain Water Bottling Company, Kuwait Flour Mills & Bakeries Company, Kuwait International Fair Company and the press and media for their support and contribution to the success of the journey.



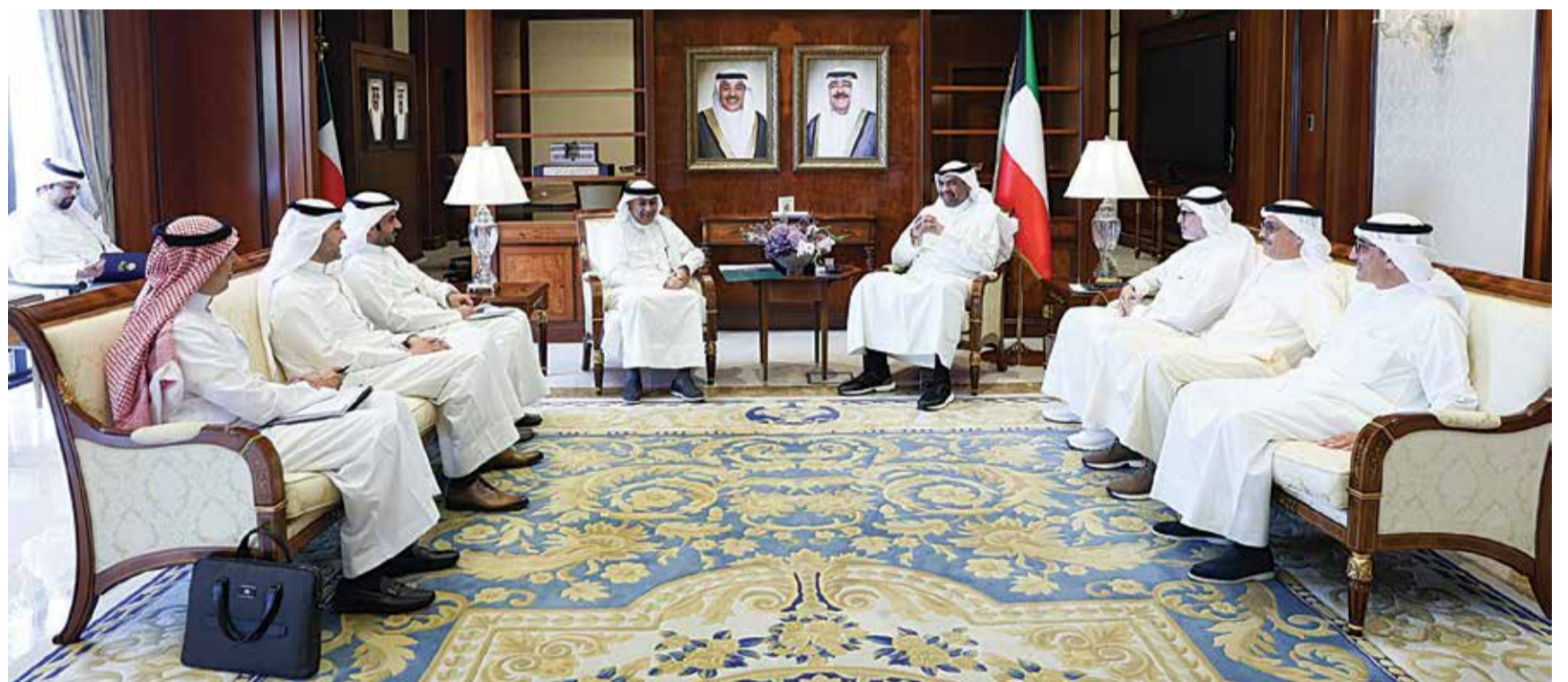
Kuwait's Ambassador to China Jasem Ibrahim Al-Najem with Chinese National Committee of Political Consultative Conference member Cai Guanxin.

China highlights growing investment opportunities in Kuwait

TOKYO: Kuwait provides an abundance of opportunities for investment across numerous fields, a Chinese official said on Thursday, citing Beijing's increasing involvement in Kuwaiti development projects as part of broader bilateral cooperation.

China looks forward to propelling cooperation with Kuwait to even greater levels, which includes bolstering bilateral trade, which was worth a record high of \$23 billion last year, Chinese National Committee of Political Consultative Conference member Cai Guanxin told Kuwaiti ambassador to Beijing Jasem Al-Najem during talks.

The Kuwaiti envoy spoke of the "solidity" of bilateral relations, citing economic and cultural ties as the ones to have seen the most tangible growth, he said. In a testament to Beijing's growing significance to Kuwait, the envoy said China remains Kuwait's perennial trade partner, having held the distinction for "nine years in a row," he added. — KUNA



FM, GCC Secretary General hold talks

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya on Thursday met with the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Jasem Al-Budaiwi. During the meeting, they discussed strengthening joint Gulf action and the latest regional and international developments. — KUNA



Kuwait's first cultural challenge on e-games kicks off

KUWAIT: The first cultural national challenge program for e-games kicked off on Wednesday, with the participation of 70 male and female youth. Speaking to KUNA in a statement, Director General of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL), Dr Mohammad Al-Jassar, said the council is organizing this challenge for the first time as a start for next challenges in the same field.

He expressed his delight at the youth's participation in this challenge, which constitutes a chance for them to be acquainted with each other. The move also enables the participants to share expertise and knowledge, he added. Meanwhile, Director General of the Youth Public Authority Nasser Al-Sheikh said the challenge is a chance for the authority to learn



Director General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Dr Mohammad Al-Jassar

about the skills and energy of youth, affirming that paying attention to youth is a national duty.

Omaima Al-Saad, an NCCAL official, told KUNA that the program comes to keep pace with media development and orientation of youth and children on how to acquire knowledge. She noted that books have no longer been the source of information, adding that modern methods offer information in an easy and simple manner. The e-games challenge is one of the creative economic tools, she stated. — KUNA

Ministry launches interactive service

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Higher Education launched a service to receive visitors, listen to their demands, and address all their issues through a specific platform on the government's (Sahel) application. Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry Lamia Al-Malhem said in a press statement on Thursday that this step came under the directives and follow-up of Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Adel Al-Adwani and within the framework of

providing a real interactive opportunity with citizens.

Al-Malhem explained that she will receive visitors at the Ministry on Sundays and Tuesdays of each week from 2 pm to 3 pm, and Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Scholarships, Equivalencies, and Cultural Relations Ghaida Madhkour will also receive visitors on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2 pm to 3 pm at the Ministry of Higher Education headquarters. She pointed out that the auditors' proposals will be listened to and the necessary measures and appropriate solutions will be taken according to the available capabilities while adhering to the laws, regulations, and organizational decisions under the direct supervision and follow-up of the minister. — KUNA



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Police hunt Catalan ex-leader Puigdemont

Haniyeh's killing a costly 'strategic mistake': Iran

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DEIR EL-BALAH: A Palestinian man walks past destruction in Deir El-Balah in the central Gaza Strip, on August 7, 2024, following Zionist bombardment. — AFP photos

Zionist entity arms embargo not on Harris' agenda: Aide

'I'm speaking': Democratic candidate hits back at pro-Palestine protesters in Detroit

WASHINGTON: Vice President Kamala Harris did not agree to discuss imposing an arms embargo on the Zionist entity during an exchange with pro-Palestinian activists who are pushing for changes to US policy toward its ally over the Gaza war, an aide said on Thursday. The Uncommitted National Movement had said late on Wednesday that Harris, the 2024 Democratic presidential candidate, had "shared her sympathies and expressed an openness to a meeting with Uncommitted leaders to discuss an arms embargo" during the interaction while campaigning in Detroit, the aide said.

The aide, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Harris did not express a willingness to discuss an arms embargo. But a campaign spokesperson said the vice president did tell members of the Muslim and Palestinian community she would continue to engage with them on the war the Zionist entity is waging in Gaza, which local officials say has killed nearly 40,000 people.

"@VP has been clear: she will always ensure (the Zionist entity) is able to defend itself against Iran and Iran-backed terrorist groups. She does not support an arms embargo on (the Zionist entity). She will continue to work to protect civilians in Gaza and to uphold international humanitarian law," Harris's national security adviser, Phil Gordon, said in a post on X.

Two founders of the Uncommitted group, Layla Elabed and Abbas Alawieh, said they spoke briefly with both Harris and newly minted running mate Tim Walz of Minnesota about their concerns about the US supplying weapons to the Zionist entity as it wages war in Gaza.

Alawieh said on Thursday that both he and Elabed asked for a meeting specifically to discuss the demand for an arms embargo on (the Zionist entity), "and in both

cases, Vice President Harris expressed an openness to following up." He said he was very encouraged by his engagements with Harris' office and hoped discussions would continue to be fruitful.

'I'm speaking'

The Uncommitted political group was organized to oppose President Joe Biden's staunch support for the Zionist entity's war, which has displaced nearly 80 percent of Gaza's 2.3 million people and caused severe food shortages. The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza has prompted calls for Washington to put conditions on the billions of dollars in military funding and other assistance it provides to the entity, which has received more US foreign aid since World War Two than any other country. The United States in May paused a shipment of 2,000-pound and 500-pound bombs due to concern over the impact they could have in Gaza.

The Uncommitted movement amassed sizable vote totals in presidential nominating contests in Michigan, Minnesota and Hawaii, and has won at least 25 delegates. Leaders have said they want to use their influence at this month's Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

In a reminder of how divisive the issue has been for Democrats, a group of pro-Palestinian protesters interrupted Harris' speech in Detroit on Wednesday, chanting, "Kamala, Kamala, you can't hide, we won't vote for genocide." Harris was cruising through her prepared remarks about the plans of Donald Trump's allies for a second Trump administration when protests began to echo through the room.

She paused for a moment, saying she believed in democracy and the importance of every voice, and then added, "But I am speaking now." When the chants continued, she repeated, "You know what? If you want Donald



MICHIGAN: US Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris speaks during a campaign rally at Detroit Metropolitan Airport on August 7, 2024.

Trump to win, then say that. Otherwise, I'm speaking."

Her reaction also suggests a new approach to dealing with the protests. In January, protesters calling for a cease-fire in Gaza interrupted President Joe Biden's speech. "That's all right, that's all right," the president said, as they were escorted out. "Look, folks, I understand their passion." At the time, the president's response felt like a careful balancing of the rights of free speech with a complicated political dynamic. But over the past 10 months, there has been a growing sense of impatience with such protests, which some in the Democratic Party believe threaten to divide the party against itself, paving the way for another Trump administration. — Agencies

EU, France, UK slam Smotrich for Gaza comment

JERUSALEM: The European Union, France and the UK on Wednesday condemned a far-right Zionist minister for suggesting it would be "justified and moral" to starve two million Gazans to free scores of captives held in the Palestinian territory. "No one in the world will allow us to starve two million people, even though it might be justified and moral in order to free the hostages," the Zionist entity's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said at a conference earlier this week. "We are bringing in humanitarian aid because we have no choice. We are in a situation that requires international legitimacy to conduct this war."

Smotrich's remarks sparked outrage in the international community, with the European Union saying the deliberate starvation of civilians was a "war crime". "It demonstrates, once again, his contempt for international law and for basic principles of humanity," the EU said in a statement. "We expect the (Zionist) government to unequivocally distance itself from the words of Minister Smotrich," the EU said, as it called for access to cover the humanitarian needs of Gazans, including hundreds of thousands of children.

The EU reiterated its call for an "immediate ceasefire" to secure the release of all hostages and also to increase the distribution of aid across the Gaza Strip. France also criticized Smotrich, expressing its "deep dismay at the scandalous remarks". Providing humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza is an "obligation under international humanitarian law" for the Zionist entity as it controls all access to the territory, it added. UK Foreign Minister David Lammy said on X that there "can be no justification for Minister Smotrich's remarks" and called on "the wider (Zionist) government to retract and condemn them".

The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has called on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue an arrest warrant for Smotrich for his comment. In a statement on Thursday, the Foreign Ministry described Smotrich's comments as an "explicit admission of adopting and bragging about the policy of genocide". "The Ministry further affirmed that such [a] statement is considered a direct disregard for international legitimacy decisions and international consensus on protecting civilians and securing their basic humanitarian needs," the statement said. — Agencies

Fears for women's rights as Iraqi bill resurfaces

BAGHDAD: Rights advocates are alarmed by a bill introduced to Iraq's parliament that, they fear, would roll back women's rights and increase underage marriage in the deeply patriarchal society. The bill would allow citizens to choose either religious authorities or the civil judiciary to decide on family affairs. Critics fear this will lead to a slashing of rights in matters of inheritance, divorce and child custody.

In particular, they are worried it would effectively scrap the minimum age for Muslim girls to marry, which is set in the 1959 Personal Status Law at 18 — charges lawmakers supporting the changes have denied. According to the United Nations children's agency, UNICEF, 28 percent of girls in Iraq are already married before the age of 18. "Passing this law would show a country moving backwards, not forwards," Human Rights Watch (HRW) researcher Sarah Sanbar said.

Amal Kabashi, from the Iraq Women's Network advocacy group, said the amendment "provides huge leeway for male dominance over family issues" in an already conservative society. Activists have demonstrated against the proposed changes and were planning to protest again later Thursday in Baghdad. The 1959 legislation passed shortly after the fall of the

Iraqi monarchy and transferred the right to decide on family affairs from religious authorities to the state and its judiciary. This looks set to be weakened under the amendment, backed by conservative Shiite Muslim deputies, that would allow the enforcement of religious rules, particularly among Shiite and Sunni Muslims.

There is no mention of other religions or sects which belong to Iraq's diverse population. In late July, parliament withdrew the proposed changes when many lawmakers objected to them. They resurfaced in an August 4 session after receiving the support of powerful Shiite blocs which dominate the chamber.

'Option to shop'

It is still unclear if this bid to change the law will succeed where several earlier attempts have failed. "We have fought them before and we will continue to do so," Kabashi said. Amnesty International's Iraq researcher Razaw Salihi said the proposed changes should be "stopped in their tracks". "No matter how it is dressed up, in passing these amendments, Iraq would be closing a ring of fire around women and children," she said.

According to the proposed changes, "Muslims of age" who want to marry must choose whether the 1959 Personal Status Law or Sharia Islamic rules apply to them on family matters. They also allow already-married couples to convert from the civil law to religious regulations. Constitutional expert Zaid Al-Ali said the 1959 law "borrowed the most progressive rules of each different sect, causing a huge source of irritation for Islamic authorities".

Several attempts to abrogate the law and revert to traditional Islamic rules have been made since the 2003 US-led invasion

that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein. This time, lawmakers are maintaining the 1959 law by giving people a chance to choose it over religious authorities. "They are giving men the option to shop in their own favor," Ali said. The bill would hand them "more power over women and more opportunities to maintain wealth, control over children, and so on." By giving people a choice, "I think basically they're trying to increase the chances of the law being adopted," Ali said.

'Malicious agenda'

The new bill gives Shiite and Sunni institutions six months to present to parliament for approval a set of rules based on each sect. By giving power over marriage to religious authorities, the amendment would "undermine the principle of equality under Iraqi law," Sanbar of HRW said. It also "could legalize the marriage of girls as young as nine years old, stealing the futures and well-being of countless girls." "Girls belong on the playground and in school, not in a wedding dress," she said.

HRW warned earlier this year that religious leaders in Iraq conduct thousands of unregistered marriages each year, including child marriages, in violation of the current law. Lawmaker Raed Al-Maliki, who brought the amendment forward, denied that the new revisions allow the marriage of minors. "Objections to the law come from a malicious agenda that seeks to deny a significant portion of the Iraqi population" the right to have "their personal status determined by their beliefs," he said in a television interview. But Amnesty's Salihi said that enshrining religious freedom in law with "vague and undefined language" could "strip women and girls of rights and safety." — AFP

International

Haniyeh's killing a costly 'strategic mistake': Iran

FM says Zionist entity lacks capacity, strength to fight Iran, assassination to cost entity gravely

JEDDAH: The Zionist entity committed a costly "strategic mistake" with its killing of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran last week, Iran's acting foreign minister told AFP in an interview on Thursday. "The act that the Zionists carried out in Tehran was a strategic mistake because it will cost them gravely," Ali Bagheri said one day after attending an extraordinary session of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the Saudi coastal city of Jeddah.

Although the Zionist entity has not commented on Haniyeh's death, Iran has vowed to retaliate, setting the region on edge. Bagheri accused the Zionist entity of wanting "to expand tension, war and conflict to other countries," while asserting it was not in a position to fight Iran. "The Zionists are in no position to start a war against the Islamic Republic of Iran," he said. "They neither have the capacity nor the strength."

The meeting on Wednesday of foreign ministers from the 57-member OIC produced a declaration holding the Zionist entity "fully responsible" for the "heinous" killing of Haniyeh, who lived

in Qatar and was a major player in talks to end the war in the Gaza Strip. Despite mounting fears of an escalation in the region and calls for restraint from Washington, Bagheri told AFP that OIC members voiced support for Iranian retaliation.

"Those we have spoken to yesterday, whether in phone calls or during in-person meetings, all of them stressed the Islamic Republic of Iran's right to respond to this terrorist crime," he said. "Western countries, who claim they have asked Iran to restrict its response, need to answer questions and are not in the position to advise the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Praise for Sinwar

Yahya Sinwar, the alleged mastermind of the October 7 attacks on the Zionist entity, was named head of Hamas this week following Haniyeh's death. Analysts believe Sinwar has been both more reluctant to agree to a Gaza ceasefire and closer to Tehran than Haniyeh. Bagheri hailed Sinwar's appointment on Thursday in a statement published by Iran's for-

eign ministry. "This selection at the current critical moment brings hope, cohesion, authority and victory for the Hamas movement, the heroic nation of Palestine and the axis of resistance," he said.

Hamas' Lebanese ally Hezbollah has also pledged to retaliate for Haniyeh's killing and that of its military commander Fuad Shukur in a Zionist strike in Beirut hours earlier. Bagheri said that Hezbollah and other Iran-backed groups in the region, including Yemen's Houthi rebels, had "similar goals" but would make independent decisions on how to pursue them. "We have similar goals but, in the field, the resistance movement acts based (on) its own ... understanding of the situation and its interests," he said.

An Iranian operation targeting the Zionist entity would be "exactly in line with the preservation of the security and stabilization of the region," he said. Bagheri called on Washington and other countries to cease sending arms to the Zionist entity that could be used in Gaza and said economic aid and diplomatic relations with Israel should also be severed. "The



JEDDAH: Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri speaks during an interview with AFP in the Saudi Red Sea port city of Jeddah on August 8, 2024. — AFP

countries who are providing arms and equipment, countries who have economic ties with the Zionist regime, countries who have diplomatic ties

with the Zionist regime which is carrying out so many crimes, they need to come and answer why this situation is continuing," he said. — AFP

Official defends Zionist entity snub at Nagasaki A-bomb memorial

TOKYO: Nagasaki's mayor said Thursday it was "unfortunate" that US and British ambassadors have refused to attend a ceremony marking the 1945 atomic bombing of the Japanese city because the Zionist entity was snubbed. But he defended the decision not to invite the entity to Friday's annual event, repeating that it was "not political" but to avoid possible protests related to the Gaza conflict. "It is unfortunate that they have communicated to us that their ambassadors are not able to attend," Shiro Suzuki told reporters. "We made a comprehensive decision not for political reasons. We want to conduct a smooth ceremony in a peaceful and solemn environment."

On August 9, 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki, killing 74,000 people including many who survived the explosion but died later from radiation exposure. This came three days after the first nuclear bomb on Hiroshima that killed 140,000 people. Japan announced its surrender in World War II on August 15, 1945. The United States, Britain, France, Italy and the European Union — plus reportedly Canada and Australia — are all sending diplomats below ambassador level to the ceremony.

Only the US and British embassies made an explicit link to Nagasaki's decision not to invite the entity's ambassador Gilad Cohen, although a source told AFP that Italy's move was also a direct consequence. The British embassy said leaving out the Zionist entity created "an unfortunate and misleading equivalency with Russia and Belarus — the only other countries not invited to this year's ceremony."

A spokesperson for the French embassy called Suzuki's decision "regrettable and questionable", while the German mission criticized "placing the Zionist entity on the same level as Russia and Belarus". Cohen, who attended a similar memorial ceremony in Hiroshima on Tuesday, said last week that the Nagasaki decision "sends a wrong message to the world". On Thursday Cohen thanked "all the countries that have chosen to stand with (the Zionist entity) and oppose its exclusion from the Nagasaki Peace Ceremony." "Thank you for standing with us on the right side of history," Cohen said on X, formerly Twitter. — AFP

Harris neutralizing a key Trump advantage: Crowd size

DETROIT: Some 14,000 ecstatic voters packed a Philadelphia arena Tuesday to see their favorite candidate. The next day in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, a line of thousands bound for a political rally there stretched more than half a mile. Such impressive numbers have been common at Donald Trump campaign events. But these boisterous, jumbo crowds were not for him; they had come to see US Vice President Kamala Harris, his White House rival who has skyrocketed towards Democratic flagbearer status.

"Everybody is really hyped," 46-year-old Kina Johnson, who works at automaker Stellantis, told AFP on Wednesday at an airfield in Detroit, Michigan where a huge rally crowd — packed into a hangar and spilling onto the tarmac — awaited Harris and her freshly minted running mate Tim Walz. "I think they're going to be bigger (and) more positive," Johnson said of the Democrats' campaign rallies. "It's a good thing for women actually right now, this is making history."

Walz, the governor of Minnesota, appeared stunned by the sea of supporters in Michigan, a critical election battleground. Campaign staff put it at 15,000 people, and Walz proclaimed it "the largest rally of the campaign." The sight of so many Americans attending a Democratic political event was more common during the Barack Obama era, when a charismatic young Black candidate broke barriers to become president.

It has been beyond rare in the dozen years since Obama, and Trump — acutely mindful of the numbers game and insisting large crowds correlate to broad support — relentlessly plays up the disparity on the campaign trail. But that advantage, less than three months before an immensely consequential presidential election, has evaporated as Harris and Walz send a jolt of enthusiasm through the Democratic Party base.

That has translated into attendance numbers off the charts compared with the smaller, quieter crowds that President Joe Biden has drawn this election cycle, or four years ago when he won during the coronavirus pandemic that squelched large gatherings. He and 2016 nominee Hillary Clinton could never compete with Trump's sprawling, chaotic road show, which featured overflow crowds, salty-language merchandise, and fervent supporters camping out overnight



WISCONSIN: US Vice President and 2024 Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris and her running mate Minnesota Governor Tim Walz wave to supporters as they depart after speaking during a campaign rally in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, August 7, 2024. — AFP

to ensure front-row seats. But with Biden bowing out of this year's race, Trump's new rival quickly showed she is more than capable of challenging the brash Republican in the rally size game — and clearly it has gotten under Trump's skin.

Harris filled a 10,000-capacity arena last weekend in Atlanta, Georgia, her first major rally since becoming the Democratic presumptive nominee. She enlisted two hip-hop stars to excite the crowd. Four days later Trump rallied at the same venue, with a similar-size crowd, and immediately attacked "Crazy Kamala" and her "lots of empty seats." "I don't need entertainers," Trump told the crowd. "I fill the stadium because I'm making America great again. That's our entertainment." Trump didn't stop there. Clearly agitated, he accused the hosts of preventing 1,000 more guests from getting in.

Trump advantage 'disappears'

"It has been a point of pride among Trump's supporters that his rallies have attracted much larger crowds than did Biden in 2020 or Clinton in 2016,"

Barry Burden, professor of politics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, told AFP. Such manifest support fueled Trump voters' suspicions about the validity of the 2020 election results. "Now that Harris is speaking to large crowds that rival or exceed Trump's, this rationale for believing Trump is the advantaged candidate disappears," Burden added.

Trump has milked such advantages from the start of his political career. In 2015 he packed an Alabama football stadium with a reported 30,000 people. As president, he was thrilled to use Air Force One as the ultimate campaign prop, roaring into his rallies and deplaining as awestruck supporters snapped cell-phone pictures.

But on Wednesday Harris took a page straight from Trump's campaign playbook, by rolling up to her own Detroit rally aboard Air Force Two, the vice-presidential jet. Trump had sought to corner the patriotic imagery market, and his appearances on the campaign trail are still met with chants of "USA! USA!" The same refrain was also heard, however, at Harris's raucous Philadelphia rally, something that rarely occurred at more subdued Biden events. — AFP

UK anti-racism, pro-Palestinian...

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on last night but also plan for the coming days." Starmer credited "police deployed in numbers in the right places, giving reassurance to communities" with helping to ease the unrest overnight. Wednesday evening turned out to be largely peaceful. Instead of the far-right gatherings at dozens of sites linked to immigrant support services for which police had been preparing, thousands of anti-racism and anti-fascism protesters staged peaceful demonstrations.

They massed in cities including London, Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool and Newcastle. "Whose streets? Our streets!" thousands chanted in Walthamstow, northeast London, where hundreds of pro-Palestine supporters joined the rally under a heavy police presence. "I live in the borough and we don't want these people on our streets... they don't represent us," Sara Tresilian, 58, told AFP as she joined the throngs in Walthamstow early Wednesday evening. "You have to turn out to give that message... I think it's important that you show up for your friends and neighbors."

Maz, 40, who declined to give his last name, had come down with his Palestinian flag along with hundreds of other Muslims from the surrounding area. "We're local, we're here for each other because these racists declared they were going to destroy our community," he said. "So we're here to keep the peace."

In Walthamstow, the crowds chanted "Whose streets? Our streets!" and other slogans, holding banners saying "smash fascism & racism" and "racists not welcome here". Several pro-Palestinian attendees held the Palestinian flag aloft, climbing atop

bus stops and other vantage points. "It's good to see," local restaurant owner Assad, who declined to give his last name, said of the collective turnout, from behind the counter of his Asian street food outlet.

"There was some concern," he admitted regarding whether far-right agitators would show up. "It's one of those things you don't expect in London. We're a restaurant run by immigrants, Muslims as well. The silver lining is the community here is very strong," he added. Although the event passed off peacefully, the capital's Metropolitan Police said Thursday that officers were investigating "as a matter of urgency" a video filmed there. In it, a now-suspended Labour councillor telling the crowd that far-right rioters needed their throats "cut". London Metropolitan Police subsequently released a statement saying a man in his 50s had been arrested.

Hours earlier, around the corner, a bakery store owner was closing early in case trouble erupted. "It's crazy," he said of the recent riots, which followed a knife attack in Southport, northwest England, that killed three young girls. Disinformation spread online wrongly blamed the stabbing spree on a Muslim asylum-seeker. "I understand why they're mad but this ain't the way," he said of protesters, who turned violent in the aftermath of the tragedy. "Blaming a whole culture for the actions of one man — what they're doing is wrong. What I just want is for them to do protests without attacking."

Muhammed Noman, an immigrant from Pakistan to the UK 13 years ago and who now owns several cafes in northeast London, was handing out bottled water from outside one on Wednesday. He was not planning to board up his store, as several neighboring businesses had done ahead of that evening's gatherings. "I came myself to look after the store," he said, adding friends and family had told him to shutter the place temporarily. Welcoming the heavy police presence, Noman added he wanted "peace" — in Walthamstow and across England. — Agencies

Iran says Zionists seeking war...

Continued from Page 1

authorities to restrict the work of Norwegian diplomats operating in the occupied State of Palestine, including Jerusalem". On the ground in Gaza, fighting continued on Thursday with the Zionist military issuing its latest evacuation order and rescuers and medics reporting at least 13 killed in strikes. The front pages of some of the Zionist entity's leading newspapers on Thursday cited "assessments" that Iran may be rethinking its course of action, reportedly in part due to US pressure.

Officials and leaders in the Middle East and beyond have called for calm, with Britain's minister for international development, Anneliese Dodds, telling AFP on a visit to Jordan: "We must see a de-escalation". The United States, which has sent extra warships and jets to the region, has urged both Iran and the Zionist entity to avoid an escalation.

Yunus sworn in as Bangladesh...

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protests, Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud. Others included a former foreign secretary and a former attorney general, an environmental lawyer, and prominent rights activist Adilur Rahman Khan who was sentenced to two years in jail during Hasina's rule.

Hasina, accused of widespread human rights abuses including jailing of political opponents, was forced to flee to neighboring India on Monday as masses of protesters flooded Dhaka's streets. The military then agreed to student demands that Yunus — who won the Nobel in 2006 for his pioneering microfinancing work — lead an interim government.

Yunus choked with emotion on Thursday as he re-

France's President Emmanuel Macron spoke Wednesday with his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian and later with Netanyahu, telling both to "avoid a cycle of reprisals", according to the French presidency. Zionist military chief Herzi Halevi told troops "we are not stopping" targeting the leaders of "our most dangerous enemies", vowing to "find" and "attack" Sinwar too, according to an army statement.

Also on Wednesday, the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation, meeting in the Saudi city of Jeddah, declared that the Zionist entity was "fully responsible" for Haniyeh's "heinous" killing. Bagheri said OIC members voiced support for Iranian retaliation. "Western countries, who claim they have asked Iran to restrict its response... are not in the position to advise the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The Zionist-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip has already drawn in Tehran-aligned militants in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen. Lebanese Hamas ally Hezbollah, which has traded near-daily cross-border fire with Zionist troops throughout the Gaza war, has vowed retaliation for military chief Fuad Shukur's killing. — Agencies

called the killing of student activist Abu Sayeed, shot dead in July by police from close range. He paid tribute to the youth who sparked the protest movement and those who risked all for their desire for change. "They protected the nation and gave it a new life," he said. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered his "best wishes" to Yunus on Thursday, saying New Delhi was "committed" to working with neighboring Dhaka.

During Hasina's reign, Yunus was hit with more than 100 criminal cases and a smear campaign by a state-led Islamic agency that accused him of promoting homosexuality. Yunus had travelled abroad this year while on bail after being sentenced to six months in jail on a charge condemned as politically motivated, and which a Dhaka court on Wednesday acquitted him of. Army chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman said Wednesday he supported Yunus. "I am certain that he will be able to take us through a beautiful democratic process," Waker said. — AFP

International

Police hunt Catalan ex-leader Puigdemont

Puigdemont disappears like 'magic' after returning to Spain from self-exile



BARCELONA: Catalonia's exiled separatist leader Carles Puigdemont delivers a speech on stage as his hardline separatist JxCAT party has scheduled a welcome ceremony on August 8, 2024. — AFP photos



Puigdemont arrives to the welcome ceremony scheduled by his party ahead of an investiture vote at the Parliament of Catalonia.

BARCELONA: Police launched a manhunt Thursday for Carles Puigdemont — the Catalonia leader who fled over his role in a failed 2017 independence bid — after he returned to Spain to address supporters before vanishing into the crowd. Roadblocks were set up in Barcelona and across Catalonia to find the 61-year-old, who remains the target of an arrest warrant.

Puigdemont delivered a short speech to thousands gathered near the Catalan regional parliament in Barcelona, which is set to elect a new leader later in the day. "Long live a free Catalonia!" he shouted when he climbed onto the stage, under the watch of dozens of police officers who made no attempt to detain him. "I have come here to remind you that we are still here," he said as many in the crowd waved red, yellow and blue Catalan independence flags. He then disappeared.

Puigdemont had been expected to try to enter the parliament building for the investiture vote, which began without him. Catalonia's regional police said it had arrested one officer who owns the car used by Puigdemont to leave the scene. In a statement, the force denied there was "any agreement or previous conversation" with Puigdemont's entourage, adding that officers had planned to arrest him "at the most opportune time so as not to

generate public disorder".

Around 3,500 people turned out to hear Puigdemont speak, according to Barcelona city hall. "He is a very noble person. The only one who believes in independence and has not stopped believing," Nuria Pujol, a woman in her fifties who came from the Alt Penedes region for the event, told AFP.

No-one had expected him to disappear again. Former Barcelona Mayor Xavier Trias, who was present at the gathering, described Puigdemont as a magician. "It was magic," he told Reuters of Puigdemont's escape.

'Problem with democracy'

A debate to swear in Illa as Catalonia's new president, ending a decade of separatist rule, began amid confusion and speculation about Puigdemont's whereabouts. A Catalan government spokesperson confirmed Puigdemont had evaded capture. "I can confirm Puigdemont has not been detained yet," he said.

Reacting to news that Puigdemont had again absconded from under the noses of a large deployment of the Catalan regional police force, a Supreme Court source said the judge had been clear in his instructions that the former regional president was to be arrested. "The Mossos know

that they have a detention order. The judge's writ reminded the state security forces that the national arrest warrant for aggravated embezzlement remained active and they had the obligation to detain him and bring him before the courts."

Two national police unions criticized the failure to arrest Puigdemont. "Where are the Mossos? The best-paid police force in Spain incapable of doing their job, of arresting the coup-monger and fugitive from justice Puigdemont," police union Jusapol said on X. Two sources with links to the Catalan government said it was realizing it had a problem with some rogue Mossos, who appear to be loyal to Puigdemont.

The Socialists won the most seats in the Catalan regional election in May but failed to get a majority and the support of the ERC is crucial. If a new Catalan government is not formed by August 26, a fresh election will be held in October. Puigdemont led the regional government in 2017, when it pushed ahead with an independence referendum despite a court ban, followed by a short-lived declaration of independence. He fled Spain shortly after the independence bid to avoid prosecution and has since lived in Belgium and more recently France.

Spain's parliament passed an amnesty law in May for those involved in the botched secession bid, but

the Supreme Court ruled on July 1 that the measure would not fully apply to Puigdemont. "A country that has an amnesty law and does not apply it, has a problem with democracy," he said in his speech.

'Unbearable humiliation'

The leader of the main opposition Popular Party, Alberto Nunez Feijoo, called Puigdemont's return to Spain an "unbearable humiliation" that damages the country's image. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez agreed to the amnesty in exchange for JxCAT's crucial support in the national parliament for his fragile minority government. The move sparked huge street protests that were organized by the right wing.

Sanchez is now facing opposition from parts of his own Socialist party as well as the right over a proposal to give Catalonia full control of taxes collected in the region. The measure was promised to the ERC in exchange for the party's support for Illa in the investiture vote. The proposal has for decades been one of the main demands of Catalan independence parties but critics argue it would deprive the central state of substantial revenue. It must still be approved by Spain's national parliament. If Illa passes the investiture vote, he will be the first head of Catalonia's regional government since 2010 who does not come from the separatist camp. — Agencies

Plot to attack Taylor Swift show in Austria linked to Islamic State

VIENNA: An Austrian teenager arrested over an alleged plot to strike a Taylor Swift concert in Vienna had built explosive devices for his attack and had pledged loyalty to Islamic State, authorities said on Thursday. The 19-year-old man, who has North Macedonian roots, made a full confession in custody. Austria's general director for public security Franz Ruf told a news conference.

He swore allegiance to the IS group's leader on the internet and had chemicals, machetes, and technical devices at his home in the town of Ternitz in preparation for an attack, Ruf added. The suspect, whose name was not given, was planning a lethal assault among the estimated 20,000 "Swiftie" fans set to gather outside Ernst Happel Stadium, said national intelligence head Omar Hajjawi-Pirchner.

"He wanted to carry out an attack in the area outside the stadium, killing as many people as possible using the knives or even using the explosive devices he had made," he said, adding there were no explicit threats to other concerts. Two other Austrian youths aged 17 and 15 were also detained on Wednesday over the foiled plot. Authorities painted a picture of the main suspect as having self-radicalized, transforming his appearance and sharing Islamist propaganda online. He quit his job on July 25, telling people he had "big plans", Ruf said.

One neighbor told Austrian broadcaster Puls24 that he kept to himself and had grown a "Taleban beard". Swift's three concerts in Vienna, due to



VIENNA: Fans of US singer Taylor Swift, swifties, gather after the singer's concerts were cancelled in Vienna, Austria, on August 8, 2024. — AFP

start on Thursday for a sold out 65,000 audience each, were cancelled, to the consternation of fans, many of whom had travelled far. "It's just heart-breaking, just frustrating. But at the end of the day I guess it's for everyone's safety," said Mark del Rosario, who had flown from the Philippines to see the wildly popular US singer.

US broadcaster ABC cited law enforcement and intelligence sources as saying Austrian authorities had

received information about the Swift concert threat from US intelligence. It cited the sources as saying at least one of the suspects had pledged allegiance to ISIS-K, a resurgent wing of IS, on Telegram in June, though the plot was IS-inspired rather than directed by the group's operatives. Austrian Interior Minister Gerhard Karner said foreign intelligence agencies had helped with the investigation, as Austrian law does not allow monitoring of messenger apps. — Reuters

Tunisia's Saied replaces prime minister

TUNIS: Tunisian President Kais Saied sacked his prime minister Ahmed Hachani without explanation on Wednesday and replaced him with social affairs minister Kamel Madouri, according to a statement from his office. Hachani took office on August 1 last year, replacing Najla Bouden, who was also dismissed without an official reason by Saied.

His replacement Madouri had only taken on the social affairs portfolio in May. In a social media post from his office, Saied is shown shaking hands with Madouri with a brief statement saying only that the president had "decided to assign him to head the government, succeeding Mr Ahmed Hachani". Saied, 66, was democratically

elected in 2019 but orchestrated a sweeping power grab in 2021 and is now seeking another term in office in elections on October 6. He submitted his official candidacy for the election on Monday, while some would-be challengers are being barred from running, including through prosecution and imprisonment.

After registering, the incumbent told reporters his candidacy was part of "a war of liberation and self-determination" aiming to "establish a new republic". As part of Saied's consolidation of power, Tunisia's constitution was rewritten in 2022 to create a presidential regime whose parliament has extremely limited powers. Last month, Amnesty International Secretary General Agnes Callamard said that since Saied's power grab, "violations that we thought part of Tunisia's past are becoming more and more discernible and systematic". But Saied on Monday denied his government was stifling critical voices, saying that "whoever talks about restrictions is delusional". — AFP

Spain busts global migrant smuggling ring

MADRID: Spanish police said on Thursday they had dismantled a global people-smuggling network that brought Indian, Pakistani and Bolivian migrants to Europe and North America. A total of 77 nationals of Spain, Italy, Libya, Bolivia and Mexico, including 6 alleged leaders, were arrested in multiple Spanish cities, ending a two-year probe.

The criminal network used elaborate routes to bring Pakistani and Indian migrants to the United States and Canada, and Bolivians to Spain, for fees ranging from 8,000 to 10,000 euros (\$8,700-10,900). More than 200 police officers worked on the joint operation between Spain, Europol and the US' Homeland Security

Investigations. Spanish police said in a statement. The migrants flew from Pakistan and India to Bahrain, then to Egypt, and finally to Libya. From there, they embarked on small boats without food or water — and arrived on the Italian island of Lampedusa 30 hours later. They stayed in Turin in northern Italy, before flying to Zaragoza or Barcelona in Spain.

Ring members then gave the migrants travel documents for Mexico, where cross-border networks brought them into the US. The Bolivians transited through Egypt or Libya before reaching Spain. Investigators searched 10 houses and travel agencies and found 500,000 euros (\$545,000) in cash. Spain is one of the main gateways for illegal immigration to Europe. Last year, 56,852 undocumented people entered the country, up 82 percent on 2022. Last week, Spanish police said they busted a highly sophisticated trafficking ring that smuggled about 1,000 people from Syria and Algeria into Europe by boat. — AFP

Bangladeshi Hindus try to flee to India amid violence

DHAKA/NEW DELHI: Hundreds of Bangladeshi Hindus have tried unsuccessfully to flee to India this week after many homes and businesses of the minority community were vandalized following the overthrow of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council said that 45 out of 64 districts in the country had seen the targeting of mostly Hindu homes, businesses or temples this week. A schoolteacher had been killed and 45 other people hurt, it said.

Hindus make up about 8 percent of Muslim-majority Bangladesh's 170 million people and have traditionally largely supported Hasina's Awami League party, which identifies as largely secular, instead of the opposition bloc that includes a hardline Islamist party. Hasina has taken refuge in India after fleeing the country on Monday in the face of mass protests against what critics called her authoritarian rule — provoking anger among some Bangladeshis towards their neighbor.

Many living close to India are trying to flee but facing resistance from both sides, local people said. Both countries have said they have stepped up border patrolling since the violence. Mohammad Rakibul Hasan, a local government official in Thakurgaon district in northwestern Bangladesh, said around 700-800 Hindus tried to flee to India around Wednesday evening after some of their houses were attacked and looted. "They returned home after we provided protection," Hasan told Reuters. "Border guard troops are patrolling the area. Everything is fine now with no further reports of violence."

Early on Thursday, about 300 Bangladeshis had assembled at a border point near India's Jalpaiguri district but dispersed later. Indian media showed Indian border troops around a group of people there. A Hindu goldsmith in the Narsingdi area, about an hour from Dhaka, who did not want to be named for fear of reprisals, said two youths demanded protection money of 1 million Bangladesh taka (\$8,550) and relented only after they agreed to pay 100,000 taka.

Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus, who returned to Bangladesh on Thursday to head an interim government following Hasina's departure, said attacks on minorities could have been part of a conspiracy. He did not say who was behind the conspiracy. "Our job is to protect all of them," he said on arrival in Dhaka from Paris. "If you have faith in me and trust me, please ensure no one is attacked in the country. If you cannot listen to me on this, I have no use being here."

The two countries have longstanding cultural and business ties and India played a key role in the 1971 war with Pakistan which led to the creation of Bangladesh. India, which has a Hindu majority, has said it was worrying that minorities, their businesses and temples had been attacked in many places. "It is the responsibility of every government to ensure the wellbeing of all its citizens," India's foreign ministry spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal, told a press conference. — Reuters

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9, 2024

\$1.4 million timepiece set to face off against best watches

Jeweler's eye-popping watch is love letter to Albania

TIRANA: Albanian jeweler Pirro Ruco labored day and night for five years to capture the essence of his country in a spectacular luxury watch. Now the timepiece, worth roughly \$1.4 million, is set to face off against the best watches from across the world at the Geneva Watchmaking Grand Prix in November. Set under a sapphire dome, the hours are marked by 12 golden folk dancers — each in different regional dress — set on Murano glass, the minute and hour hands adorned with eagle talons in homage to Albania's national symbol.

Ruco's rollercoaster rise mirrors that of Albania, from poverty and isolation as the most closed communist regime in Europe, to rollicking capitalism. Along the way the jeweler overcame jealousy, the secret police and being sent into internal exile to rise to the pinnacle of his profession. It all began for Pirro — as he is known in his homeland — in 1985 when he was asked to make a medal in red and gold bearing the head of Enver Hoxha, the paranoid dictator who ruled the small Balkan nation with an iron fist for more than four decades.

"That saved me," he told AFP from his workshop tucked away in an alley in the capital Tirana. The medals were awarded to the regime's most loyal supporters and later caught the eye of Hoxha's wife. The turn of fortune saw thousands more produced and worn by communist cadres across Albania. "All the congressional delegates had to wear it. I made a name for myself with it," he said. It also saved



TIRANA: Albanian artisan jeweler and founder of jewelry house Pirro, Pirro Ruco, poses for a photograph at his studio in Tirana. — AFP photos

him from the textile mills where he had been sent because his family had been deemed "rebellious".

'Priceless'

All this, however, was nearly derailed by an anonymous letter sent to authorities accusing Pirro of working with foreign agents. He was questioned by intelligence agents and his workshop raided. Down but not out, he was able to bounce back after crafting a ring bearing the image of the late husband of a member of

the communist politburo and in July 1990 won a prize for a piece featuring Albania's 15th-century national hero Skanderbeg.

But the very next day history intervened. The regime began to crumble and the collapse of Albania's communist rule in 1991 was followed by years of violent tumult as the country transitioned to a free-market economy. Amid the ups and downs, Pirro stayed busy designing pieces for officials and celebrities. During a trip to Basel in Switzerland in 2016, something new caught his eye. "I



TIRANA: Albanian artisan jeweler and founder of jewelry house Pirro, Pirro Ruco, examines his hand crafted watch 'Primordial Passion' at his studio in Tirana.

wanted to make a watch. It was my new dream," he told AFP.

For the next five years, Pirro said he focused on "doing something special, Albanian, and at the same time completely new and never before seen in the watch industry." The new timepiece which he calls Primordial Passion was designed in collaboration with the Swiss watchmaker Agenhor. "I never wanted to make jewelry, but art," the jeweler said. "Sculptures, images of the country, pieces of culture... This watch is the culmination of all that, of

this love for Albania," he added.

"It is more than just a watch. It combines the rich heritage of ancient Albanian culture with the notion of chronometry," Pirro refuses to divulge the methods used to craft the watch, but remains hopeful the painstaking details will be recognized by the judges at the Grand Prix in Geneva. Several collectors have already contacted him about buying the timepiece, he said, though it would be difficult to part with his creation. "I set a price because I had to. But for me, it is priceless." — AFP

Muhammad Yunus: Bangladesh 'banker to the poor'

DHAKA: Nobel-winning microfinance pioneer Muhammad Yunus will helm Bangladesh's interim government after the ouster of premier Sheikh Hasina, who had hounded him in speeches and through the courts. The 84-year-old, known as the "banker to the poorest of the poor", was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his work loaning small cash sums to rural women, allowing them to invest in farm tools or business equipment and boost their earnings. Grameen Bank, the microfinance lender he founded, was lauded for helping unleash breakneck economic growth in Bangladesh and its work has since been copied by scores of developing countries.

"Human beings are not born to suffer the misery of hunger and poverty," Yunus said during his Nobel lecture, daring his audience to imagine a world where deprivation was confined to history museums. But his public profile in Bangladesh earned him the hostility of Hasina, who once accused him of "sucking blood" from the poor. Hasina's 15-year tenure was characterized by a growing intolerance of dissent before her hurried resignation and departure from Bangladesh on Monday and Yunus' popularity had marked him as a potential rival.

Yunus announced plans in 2007 to set up his own "Citizen Power" party to end Bangladesh's confrontational political culture, which has been punctuated by instability and periods of military rule. He abandoned those ambitions within months but the enmity aroused by his challenge to the ruling elite has persisted. Yunus was hit with more than 100 criminal cases and a smear campaign by a state-led Islamic agency that accused him of promoting homosexuality. The government unceremoniously forced him out of Grameen Bank in 2011 — a decision fought by Yunus but upheld by Bangladesh's top court.

He and three colleagues from one of the companies he founded were sentenced in January to jail terms of six months by a Dhaka labour court that found they had illegally failed to create a workers' welfare fund. However, they were immediately released on bail pending appeal. All four had denied the charges and, with courts accused of rubber-stamping decisions by Hasina's government, the case was criticized as politically motivated by watchdogs including Amnesty International. A Dhaka court acquitted him on appeal on Wednesday.

Student leaders, whose protest campaign culminated in Hasina's ouster, met the military and President Mohammed Shahabuddin late on Tuesday and the decision was made to "form an interim government with... Yunus as its chief". Shahabuddin's office announced. "Be calm and get ready to build the country," Yunus said before beginning his journey back to Bangladesh on Thursday, calling for "free elections" within months. "If we take the path of violence everything will be destroyed," he said. Yunus was born into a well-to-do family — his father was a successful goldsmith — in the coastal city of Chittagong in 1940. He credits his mother, who offered help to anyone in need who knocked on their door, as his biggest influence. — AFP

Buoyed by past success, new CEO will try to turn Boeing around

NEW YORK: Aviation experts and analysts have been full of praise for Kelly Ortberg, who returned from early retirement on Thursday to take up the challenge of turning Boeing around after a series of quality and financial issues. The appointment of 64-year-old Ortberg to succeed outgoing Boeing chief executive Dave Calhoun was announced on July 31, the same day the US aerospace giant posted a second-quarter loss of more than \$1.4 billion.

"I'm extremely honored and humbled to join this iconic company," Ortberg said in a statement. He has not spoken publicly since his appointment. Calhoun will meanwhile remain a special adviser to Boeing's board of directors until March 2025. The aircraft manufacturer's finances are struggling to recover from the consequences of two fatal crashes of 2018 and 2019, and the COVID-19 pandemic. But Dave Calhoun's downfall — announced at the end of March — is the result of the accumulation of quality and compliance issues in Boeing's commercial aviation division.

"We see Kelly Ortberg as a win for Boeing," aviation experts at Melius Research wrote in an analyst note, adding that his experience as CEO of Rockwell Collins — now an RTX subsidiary called Collins Aerospace — "checks a lot of boxes." "He has an engineering background, experience running a public company, a multi-decade tenure in the aerospace industry, and is a Boeing outsider, which should allow for a fresh approach to solving Boeing's issues," they said. Ortberg is "a positive hire" given his prior industry experience and his role managing a large supplier," CFRA Research senior equity analyst Angelo Zino wrote in a note to clients.

Moving on

The most urgent issue on Ortberg's plate is un-

Qantas to slash ex-CEO's payout

SYDNEY: Australian airline Qantas said Thursday it will claw back millions of dollars of bonuses paid to ex-CEO Alan Joyce, citing poor performance and a series of damaging public scandals. The carrier said its board had approved a Aus\$9.26 million (US\$6 million) reduction in the Irish-born executive's payout package. Joyce took early retirement in late 2023 as the once-beloved airline faced sustained criticism over its service, soaring ticket prices and the treatment of staff. It enraged once-loyal Australians by charging high ticket prices despite record profits and getting a multi-billion-dollar taxpayer-funded bailout during the pandemic.

It was also embroiled in a bruising "ghost flights" scandal that saw it pay a massive fine for continuing to sell seats on long-cancelled flights. Qantas said it had made the decision



EVERETT: A Boeing 777X flight test aircraft is moved at the Everett Delivery Center in Everett, Washington. — AFP

doubtedly restoring Boeing's production quality, which has been criticized in several audits. The firm has already drawn up a roadmap to achieve this, as it was required to do by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

To accomplish the necessary quality standards, Boeing will also be taking back control of Spirit AeroSystems, a company it spun off back in 2005. The \$4.7 billion purchase, announced in early July, is due to be completed by mid-2025.

The appointment of Ortberg, who began his career in 1983 as an engineer at Texas Instruments, comes after two long days of hearings organized by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) as part of its investigation into an in-flight incident in January involving a 737 MAX 9. The consequences of the incident was a reshuffling of executives, a freeze of 737 production by the FAA, the launch of investigations, and the reactivation of the criminal case against the company.

These are just some of the issues that Ortberg will have to tackle. Another factor working in the new CEO's favor is that he plans to work from Seattle, the birthplace of Boeing, where the assembly lines for the 737 — its flagship aircraft — and the 777 are located. The new generation 777X also finally seems to be within reach of certification after years of delay. On the other hand, the 737 MAX 7 and MAX 10 are still languishing. The IAM-District 751 workers' union, which represents more than 30,000 Boeing employees around Seattle, called Ortberg's decision to base himself in the city "a step in the right direction."

The union's approval is important at a time when Boeing is negotiating its next collective agreement, which is due to come into force in September. The union has already approved strike action if no deal is reached by this deadline. Another major issue for Boeing is its guilty plea, announced July 24, in the criminal case relating to the crashes: the company is still waiting for the judge's decision, and civil proceedings. — AFP



SYDNEY: A Virgin Airways plane travels down the runway as a QantasLink Dash 8-400 series plane takes off at Sydney's Kingsford Smith international airport. — AFP

taking into account the "challenges" facing the airline and "in recognition of the customer and brand impact of cumulative events". The carrier was long seen as the "spirit of Australia" — the nation's link to the rest of the

world. Although not state-run, Qantas is seen as an integral part of the economy and vital to cohesion in a country where major cities are hundreds of kilometers apart.

Meanwhile, Qantas scrapped

its non-stop Perth to London flight Thursday, saying the decision was taken as a "precaution" due to tensions in the Middle East. The flight, usually a non-stop 17-and-a-half hour journey, will now refuel in Singapore, allowing it to carry a full load of passengers on a route that avoids contested air space. It is the second time this year the airline has been forced to redirect flights due to unrest in the Middle East.

The return service — London to Perth — will continue to fly non-stop on a readjusted path due to prevailing winds. Qantas joins other airlines including Lufthansa in redirecting flights from the area. The region is bracing for a military retaliation from Iran against Zionists, following the killing of Ismail Haniyeh, the political leader of the Palestinian militant group Hamas, last week in Tehran. Both Iran and Hamas blamed the Zionist entity for the assassination and, along with Iran-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah, threatened reprisals. The Zionist entity has neither confirmed nor denied that it was behind Haniyeh's killing. — Agencies

Business

Economic losses from natural disasters fall in first half 2024

Italy doubles flat tax for super-rich expats

ZURICH: Economic losses from natural catastrophes reached \$120 billion in the first half of the year, lower than over the same period last year, reinsurance giant Swiss Re said Wednesday. Disasters had caused \$152 billion worth of economic losses in the first six months of 2023, the group reported. But the losses so far this year were 31 percent higher than the average first-half losses between 2014 and 2023, Swiss Re said. Insured losses from natural catastrophes reached \$60 billion, the same as the six-month period last year, but 62 percent higher than the 10-year average.

The first half of 2024 was the second costliest on record for insured losses from severe thunderstorms, reaching \$42 billion, or 87 percent above the 10-year average, Swiss Re said. Thunderstorms, mainly in the United States, accounted for 70 percent of global insured losses. "In recent years, severe thunderstorms have emerged as a main driver of a significant increase in insured losses," said Balz Grollmund, head of catastrophe perils at Swiss Re. "This is due to growing populations and higher property values in urban areas, along with insured property being more vulnerable to hail damage," Grollmund said.

Super-rich expats

In another development, Italy's government said Wednesday it would double a flat tax on foreign income for high earners newly moved from abroad, from 100,000 euros (\$110,000) to 200,000 euros a year. The original rate, levied for a maximum of 15 years in lieu of other taxes, was introduced in 2017 in a bid to lure wealthy people from overseas, including Italians who had been tax resident elsewhere for many years. Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's government approved "a regulation that has made a lot of noise — the doubling of the so-called flat tax for billionaires", Economy Minister Giancarlo Giorgetti said after a cabinet meeting.

He said 1,186 super-rich individuals had transferred their residency for tax purposes to Italy since 2017, but said it was "very difficult to evaluate" how much they had invested in Italy. Giorgetti said the new rate — which a ministry spokesperson confirmed would only apply to new arrivals — was still attractive but said it was important that countries did not seek to compete to offer the lowest rates for high-worth individuals and companies. "We are against starting a competition because countries like Italy, which have very limited fiscal space, are destined to lose," he told a press conference. — Agencies



TALCAHUANO: In this aerial view steel workers protest against the eventual closure of the Huachipato steel plant located in the city of Talcahuano, Chile. — AFP

Chile steelmaker suspends production, blames China

SANTIAGO: Chile's largest steel plant announced on Wednesday that it had suspended operations because it could not sustain itself financially, despite new tariffs on Chinese steel meant to protect local production. The Chilean government described the Huachipato plant's decision as "irresponsible," with at least 2,700 workers directly affected and as many

as 20,000 jobs indirectly linked to the plant.

The company's board of directors said the decision to "indefinitely suspend" operations was made because it was impossible to competitively price its steel in the face of "the intensification of Chinese dumping," even with the tariffs in place. The decision came after the finance ministry in April imposed temporary tariffs on Chinese imports of steel bars and balls of 24.9 percent and 33.5 percent respectively.

Both products are key inputs in copper production, in which Chile is the world leader. "Almost four months after the measure was implemented, market behavior has made it impossible to correct the imbalances and to transfer these tariffs to the price," the company said in a statement. Huachipato's board

of directors concluded that the application of surcharges would not be enough to generate structural changes in the market to ensure the financial viability of the steel business in its current form.

The suspension of the steel company's activities will be gradual, with the process to be completed in September, the company said. Huachipato, located in Talcahuano, about 310 miles (500 kilometers) south of Santiago, had earlier suspended operations in March, demanding the imposition of the new tariffs on Chinese steel to continue operations. In the last two decades, China has increased its share of the world steel market from 15 percent to 54 percent, according to the Latin American Steel Association (Alacero). — AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 8 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	885	869	890	852	38	25,133,563	-31	-3.44%	2.06%	860	870	12.9	1.64	3.9%	1.05
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	300	299	307	287	20	68,696,468	-8	-2.61%	11.73%	298	303	18.1	1.42	3.8%	1.29
104	Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait	Banking	302	299	306	293	13	10,680,886	-10	-3.24%	34.74%	298	305	15.7	1.24	2.8%	0.95
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	182	180	185	171	14	81,444,540	-7	-3.74%	23.60%	176	180	14.3	0.66	2.7%	1.06
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	190	179	190	176	14	11,495,536	-13	-6.77%	9.27%	176	185	17.0	0.66	3.1%	1.33
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	723	720	729	706	23	85,811,326	-14	-1.91%	8.10%	715	725	20.2	2.09	2.7%	1.13
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	577	584	591	564	27	15,794,091	-2	-0.34%	3.17%	579	585	29.9	2.43	1.3%	1.13
201	Kuwait Investment	Financial Services	166	157	167	143	24	7,369,830	-11	-6.55%	23.62%	154	160	6.9	0.69	6.6%	1.99
204	National Investments	Financial Services	248	237	248	225	23	9,379,495	-14	-5.58%	-0.84%	237	242	26.4	0.97	6.3%	2.02
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	103	101	104	95	9	59,849,098	-4.2	-4.00%	-4.00%	99.5	103	NM	0.57	0.0%	0.93
212	Arzan Financial Group	Financial Services	183	172	184	161	23	12,523,191	-11	-6.01%	-14.82%	172	179	20.0	0.96	1.1%	1.25
222	Aayan Leasing and Investment	Financial Services	152	146	153	140	13	31,048,192	-9	-5.81%	-16.09%	146	151	8.2	0.99	5.1%	1.61
252	Al Imtiaz Investment	Financial Services	49.5	46.8	49.5	44.5	5	3,436,739	-2.1	-4.29%	-17.17%	46.0	47.7	NM	0.32	0.0%	1.32
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	239	230	243	221	22	15,533,001	-12	-4.96%	18.93%	229	237	19.2	1.42	1.6%	1.16
404	Salhia Real Estate	Real Estate	427	423	430	415	15	3,563,482	-7	-1.63%	3.53%	416	424	16.1	1.40	3.4%	0.57
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	830	838	848	817	31	4,409,046	7	0.84%	5.37%	825	838	17.9	1.90	1.6%	0.92
418	The Commercial Real Estate	Real Estate	145	144	145	137	8	12,449,887	-2	-1.37%	44.00%	144	148	15.9	0.86	2.8%	0.69
501	National Industries	Financial Services	221	220	221	208	13	23,142,670	-5	-2.22%	13.24%	217	226	13.5	0.99	2.2%	1.58
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	1,630	1,700	1,713	1,625	88	1,938,717	-1	-0.06%	29.77%	1,652	1,750	18.5	1.34	3.8%	1.07
506	HEISCO	Industrials	884	893	919	850	69	1,473,670	-28	-3.04%	8.90%	886	907	20.4	2.15	3.3%	0.89
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	579	582	584	560	24	4,556,686	1	0.17%	-0.51%	580	604	17.5	1.18	10.3%	0.91
603	Agility	Industrials	272	265	273	253	20	27,473,581	-11	-3.99%	-47.94%	253	274	7.8	0.72	7.5%	1.56
605	Zain	Telecommunications	450	453	455	425	30	19,881,982	0	0.00%	-10.65%	450	459	10.2	1.57	7.8%	0.55
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	2,619	2,576	2,626	2,500	126	749,371	-44	-1.68%	-20.42%	2,550	2,583	8.3	3.41	12.8%	0.61
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	221	225	225	218	7	475,505	1	0.45%	25.00%	222	227	NM	0.99	0.0%	1.15
654	JAZEERA	Consumer Discretionary	895	903	938	851	87	1,946,182	3	0.33%	-34.99%	880	915	180.8	8.90	3.1%	1.33
813	GFH Financial Group	Financial Services	98	96.3	99.2	88	11.2	71,524,911	-4.6	-4.56%	26.21%	95.0	97	10.2	1.22	5.3%	1.34
821	Warba Bank	Banking	181	185	186	171	15	79,414,976	1	0.54%	5.43%	181	188	25.5	1.01	1.5%	1.06
822	Kuwait Telecommunications	Telecommunications	528	520	528	511	17	5,806,496	-10	-1.89%	-7.64%	512	523	15.2	2.26	6.8%	0.74
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	850	925	970	833	137	1,053,027	55	6.32%	60.87%	979	949	21.9	2.43	2.2%	0.44
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	546	518	546	505	41	3,248,449	-32	-5.82%	1.57%	510	520	29.2	2.07	3.8%	0.76
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	2,054	2,000	2,054	1,972	82	562,096	-75	-3.61%	16.01%	1,971	2,005	24.2	6.89	3.7%	1.34
830	AL GHANIM	Consumer Discretionary	1,050	1,055	1,064	1,010	54	3,028,509	-25	-2.31%	-0.09%	1,033	1,069	10.0	3.79	6.6%	0.80
831	Beyout Investment	Financial Services	491	503	504	480	24	2,403,458	11	2.24%	#VALUE!	501	509	19.2	2.85	0.0%	NULL

* As of end of week closing

Business

Mining giant Glencore drops plan to exit its coal business

Company needs cash flow from its coal mines

ZURICH: Swiss commodities giant Glencore announced Wednesday that it had decided against spinning off its coal business for now after consulting shareholders who view the polluting fossil fuel as a cash-generating activity. Glencore completed its takeover of the steelmaking coal unit of Teck Resources in July following a protracted battle over the business with the Canadian company.

The Swiss commodities trading and mining group had considered merging the newly acquired business, Elk Valley Resources, with its own coal activities and spinning it off. But Glencore said that after consulting its shareholders, most expressed a preference for retaining the coal and carbon steel materials business. "I certainly am convinced that it's the right decision," Glencore CEO Gary Nagle said in a conference call.

The company has argued it needs the cash flow from its coal mines to invest in raw materials useful for the green transition, such as copper and cobalt. "Following extensive consultation with our shareholders, whose views were very clear, and our own analysis, the Board believes retention offers the lowest risk pathway to create value for Glencore shareholders today," chairman Kalidas Madhavpeddi said.

"The expected cash generative capacity of the coal and carbon steel materials business significantly enhances the quality of our portfolio," Madhavpeddi added in a statement. The company said shareholders preferred to keep the coal business "primarily on the basis that retention should enhance Glencore's cash generating capacity to fund opportunities in our transition metals portfolio" such as copper.

They also concluded that it would "accelerate and optimize the return of excess cash flows to shareholders". "There's no question that keeping it in Glencore's hands is positive from an ESG (Envi-

ronment, Social and Governance) perspective and from a value perspective," Nagle said. Glencore shares gained around 3.1 percent in late afternoon trading on the London Stock Exchange. The firm's CEO deemed that "to keep these assets in Glencore's hands rather than spinning out because of our responsible run down strategy" was "the way to go" — saying that even some "left-leaning NGOs" pushed it to retain its coal activities.

But the company's strategy to hold on to the highly-polluting resource has been criticized by environmental charities and shareholders, who pointed out that coal is banned from some investment portfolios. Norway's sovereign wealth fund, the world's largest, has excluded Glencore shares from its portfolio since 2020. While some investors may be "disappointed that they won't have the option to remove the coal arm from the rest of the business", said Hargreaves Lansdown analyst Matt Britzman, "operationally this decision makes sense". "The coal portfolio is a cash cow," he said.

'Managed decline'

Oil, gas and coal companies are under pressure to transition away from fossil fuels, the biggest contributor to climate change. While Glencore's Australian rival Rio Tinto and British group Anglo American are exiting coal, the Swiss company has a "managed decline" strategy to ensure a "responsible" phase out its coal operations. The Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility (ACCR), which advises shareholders company climate transition plans, urged Glencore to better explain its long-term intentions for coal.

"Glencore needs to move swiftly and give investors much needed visibility on how it plans to manage its increased exposure to climate transition risk," which has risen since the Teck coal take-



MOUNT THORLEY: An aerial view of Glencore's Bulga open-cut coal mine located near Mount Thorley, in the Hunter Valley region, north of Sydney. — AFP

over, the Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility (ACCR) said in a statement. Glencore said Wednesday that while it has decided to keep coal, its board "preserves the option to consider a demerger of all or part of this business in the future if circumstances change".

But the ACCR pointed out that the metallurgical coal mines Glencore acquired from Teck had an average life of 31 years, with most extending

beyond 2050 - compared to 13 years for Glencore's existing assets. Coal generates key revenue for the group, whose profits boomed in 2022 when prices for the combustible soared following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Separately, Glencore posted a \$233-million loss for the first half of the year, after earning \$4.6 billion over the same period last year, as commodity prices fell, "particularly thermal coal". — AFP



NEW YORK: Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange during morning trading in New York City. — AFP

Volatility persists as Europe, Asian stock markets fall

LONDON: European and Asian stock markets mostly fell Thursday, with analysts warning that this week's volatility has some time to run. Data last Friday showing fewer US jobs created in July than expected, plus the spike in the value of the yen after a rate hike last week, sent global equity markets plunging Monday. Since then there have been rebounds and renewed losses as traders seek to weigh up the risks of recession in the United States, the world's biggest economy.

London and Paris were down more than one percent in early afternoon deals Thursday after Tokyo closed down 0.7 percent. The Japanese index had tumbled more than 12 percent Monday before rocketing over 10 percent Tuesday, largely because of wild swings in the yen against the dollar. Wall Street closed down Wednesday as US equities experience their own roller-coast week. "Global markets remain jittery," noted AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould.

"There will be concern that a positive start to trading on Wall Street on Wednesday faded fast, with all eyes now turning to today's session and whether last night was just driven by a few big earnings disappointments or represents the start of a new downtrend," he added. Warner Bros Discovery's share price plunged more than 10 percent in after-hours trading Wednesday after it reported a quarterly loss of almost \$10 billion.

Almost all of the loss was down to a \$9.1 billion write-down in the value of the US media giant's cable network, it announced in a statement, underscoring the challenges facing the legacy television industry. Weak earnings from Disney, Airbnb and TripAdvisor added to the sense of concern that American consumers were tightening their belts as the impact of elevated inflation and two-decade-high borrowing costs bite. Federal Reserve boss Jerome Powell last week indicated that the US central bank could cut interest rates at its September meeting, with 25 basis points seen as the likely move.

But traders are now eyeing as many as 50 points, with another 50 possibly before the end of the year, following last weeks jobs data. The prospect of several reductions has been offset by profit-taking in the tech sector, whose valuation has soared this year on a rush for all things related to artificial intelligence. In foreign exchange Thursday, the yen rose against the dollar after tumbling Wednesday in reaction to a dovish signal from the Bank of Japan that its recent rate-hikes would not be repeated while markets remained volatile. — AFP

Siemens profits soar on software demand and AI 'boom'

FRANKFURT: German industrial giant Siemens said Thursday its quarterly profits jumped sharply, driven by demand for production software as well as the "boom" in artificial intelligence and customers upgrading power grids. Net profit was 1.98 billion euros (\$2.2 billion) from April to June - up about 50 percent from a year earlier and higher than analyst forecasts - on revenue of 18.9 billion euros. Siemens, whose sprawling global business runs from making trains and factory equipment to systems that manage data centers, said its software business performed strongly, winning a series of major contracts.

The electrification arm of the group also grew by more than 20 percent, said CEO Roland Busch. "We are benefiting from the boom in artificial intelligence, and the accelerated energy transition," he told journalists after the results were released. "On the one hand, many new data centres are being built, and on the other, power grids are being expanded to accommodate more renewable energy." The group's "smart infrastructure" division, which includes the electrification business, reported revenues were up 10 percent overall from a year earlier.

But sales fell in its industrial automation business, which covers areas like automating factories. Orders were down 16 percent overall from the

Harvest starts early in Sicily's vineyards

CONTESSA ENTELLINA: On the hills of the Contessa Entellina vineyard in western Sicily, the harvest is already well underway, the grapes ripening earlier than usual because of drought and high temperatures. The prestigious Donnafugata vineyards, which span the Italian island from the slopes of Marsala to the mantle of Mount Etna, began their harvest on July 22, an unprecedented two weeks early. At Contessa Entellina, the company's main estate in the province of Agrigento, there has been almost no rain since May. "Between October and the end of July, there has been 35 percent less rain," said Antonino Santoro, the estate's technical director and oenologist.

In 2022, the harvest had already begun on July 29. The Sicily of myth is a fertile orchard blessed with rivers of pure water, but the modern day Mediterranean island suffers more and more from global warming. Since the end of spring, water has stopped flowing, the soil and the springs parched. Farmers here are used to the naturally arid territory, but they are being tested. Even citrus fruits and olive trees are suffering from the drought and scorching temperatures which in 2021 set the European record of 48.8 degrees Centigrade (119.8 Fahrenheit).

Drop by drop

With 460 hectares of vines and 3.6 million bottles per year across all its territories, the Donnafugata company

Chinese top chipmaker reports plunge in profits

BEIJING: Leading Chinese chipmaker SMIC announced Thursday a sharp year-on-year drop in profits during the second quarter, as a domestic price war and technological rivalry between Beijing and Washington show no signs of abating. The United States has in recent years taken steps to cut off Chinese firms from accessing its technology and has tightened restrictions on semiconductor exports to the world's second-largest economy.

Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation (SMIC), which is listed in Hong Kong and its home city Shanghai, has been a primary target of these



BERLIN: The CEO of German industrial conglomerate Siemens Roland Busch gives a speech during a ceremony for the laying of the corner stone for 'Siemensstadt Square', a new Siemens project in Berlin. — AFP

same quarter in 2023, although that period saw a bumper crop of train orders. The "mobility" division, which includes the train business, saw orders drop 70 percent. The Munich-based group confirmed its outlook of achieving revenue growth of four to eight percent over its 2024 fiscal year, which runs to the end of September.

However, it cautioned the final result would likely be at the lower end of this range, with Busch saying that "the economic situation in China and

Europe remains difficult". "Recent macro indicators point to continuing challenging conditions for industrial demand," he added. In key market China, demand remained "muted", Siemens said. The group's shares were down about half a percentage point on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange following the results. Siemens had long been a producer of heavy industrial equipment but has in recent years sought to shift its focus towards digital technology and factory automation. — AFP

has the financial resources to adapt. "Before, irrigation was useful, today it is essential," Santoro said. Around Contessa Entellina the estate has installed several retention basins which meet around 75 percent of its irrigation needs, the rest covered by public reserves. During June and July, it irrigates the vines using a micro-sprinkler system, which provides water at a rate of four liters per hour per vine. "The aim is to optimize water use," said Giuseppe Milano, the estate's head of cultivation.

Irrigation is not cheap, costing between 4,000 and 6,000 euros per hectare per year. The average size of an Italian vineyard is 11 hectares. At the end of July, the Italian government recognized Sicily was facing "force majeure conditions and exceptional circumstances" due to the drought, according to Sicilian authorities. This eases some EU rules on agriculture and allows farmers to defer payments and charges, the region said, in response to a year-long drought it said was "one of the most serious in the last 50 years".

Quantity and quality

Donnafugata takes its name from the fictional town in "The Leopard", the novel by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa set in the area during the unification of Italy in the late 19th century. Back then, the grape harvest did not begin before September. As well as irrigation, Contessa Entellina adapts by growing its vines taller, up to 1.5 meters, so the upper foliage serves as a canopy to screen the grapes from the sun. There is no such shade for the grape pickers, who use pruning shears to harvest the grapes under a blazing sun.

They started at dawn, and by 10:00am it is already 29 degrees Celsius. For the first time, regional authori-

ties have banned working in the fields during the hottest hours of the day, between 12:30 pm. and 4:00 pm. They are now picking the Merlot grapes. The white Chardonnay ones were picked in July. Depending on the varieties and the terroir, the grape harvest in Sicily this year will be spread out over three or four months — "a unique situation in Europe", according to national agricultural association Coldiretti.

Contessa Entellina's harvest will be smaller than last year, with smaller grapes. But Milano insisted that what it lacks in quantity is made up in quality. Today, Donnafugata is involved in research projects to help prepare the vines for the evolving conditions. "I am optimistic," said Santoro. "The vine adapts better than other crops." It is not just heat that is affecting the harvest. — AFP



CONTESSA ENTELLINA: Workers harvest grapes of Merlot in Contessa Entellina, south west of Sicily. — AFP

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Despite making significant progress as Beijing pours tens of billions of dollars into the sector, the technical performance of China's top firms still lags that of TSMC, the Taiwanese juggernaut responsible for over half of global chip production. Experts say that SMIC has managed to produce a highly advanced seven-nanometre chip, which would represent a major milestone for the Chinese semiconductor industry. SMIC has not confirmed the claims. — AFP

Weekender

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9, 2024



SPRAYING IT FORWARD

Kuwaiti artist Nizzy spreads smiles with colorful graffiti creations



By Sahar Moussa

Abdullah Alenezi, better known as Nizzy, is a 33-year-old Kuwaiti graffiti artist whose colorful and charming works have brightened urban spaces and captivated audiences. "There was a lot of experimentation, but I landed on colors and cute styles to spread smiles," says Nizzy. His unique blend of cultural elements and contemporary aesthetics creates art that is both joyful and thought-provoking. In an interview with Kuwait Times, Nizzy shared his artistic journey, the inspirations behind his work and the positive impact of his murals on the streets of Kuwait and beyond.



Kuwait Times: Is graffitiing your full-time job?

Abdullah Alenezi: Graffitiing is a side job - I'm a full-time marketer at STC.

KT: What inspired you to start creating graffiti art?

Alenezi: The colors grabbed my attention - they were wild and followed no rules.

KT: How would you describe your artistic style, what makes you different and how has it evolved over the years?

Alenezi: There was a lot of experimentation, but I landed on colors and cute styles to spread smiles.

KT: What are some of the key themes or messages you aim to convey through your work?

Alenezi: Stay playful - it keeps you young.

KT: Can you share any particular challenges you've faced as a graffiti artist in Kuwait?

Alenezi: Graffiti art was misunderstood a lot in the beginning, but the public grew to love it.

KT: Name a person who has helped to support graffiti art in Kuwait.

Alenezi: Shahad Bshara, founder of Visual Therapy. In my opinion, graffiti

wouldn't be what it is today without her contributions to this form of art.

KT: Are there any specific artists or movements that have influenced your work?

Alenezi: I was influenced by the 7th Letter Crew, mainly Revok and Saber, who are artists from LA.

KT: How do you perceive the public's reaction to graffiti art in Kuwait?



Abdullah Alenezi aka Nizzy

Alenezi: Not a lot of people want to admit it - I don't know why. Maybe they like to seem like they struggled, but the public reacts very well to locals learning new things and growing talents.

KT: Has the Palestinian cause influenced your art?

Alenezi: I don't usually speak about politics on social media, but Palestine has always been the only

wish people are able to paint freely without any restrictions. But I have to admit, Kuwait still has a lot of talented artists.

KT: How do you think graffiti art can contribute to the cultural and social landscape of Kuwait?

Alenezi: Kuwait will be a more colorful place with graffiti art, and I believe that a vibrant atmosphere has a huge impact on positivity.

" I don't usually speak about politics on social media, but Palestine has always been the only political topic I'd speak up about "

political topic I'd speak up about. That is shown in one of my graffiti art where I have painted the word 'Palestine', a watermelon and the keffiyeh.

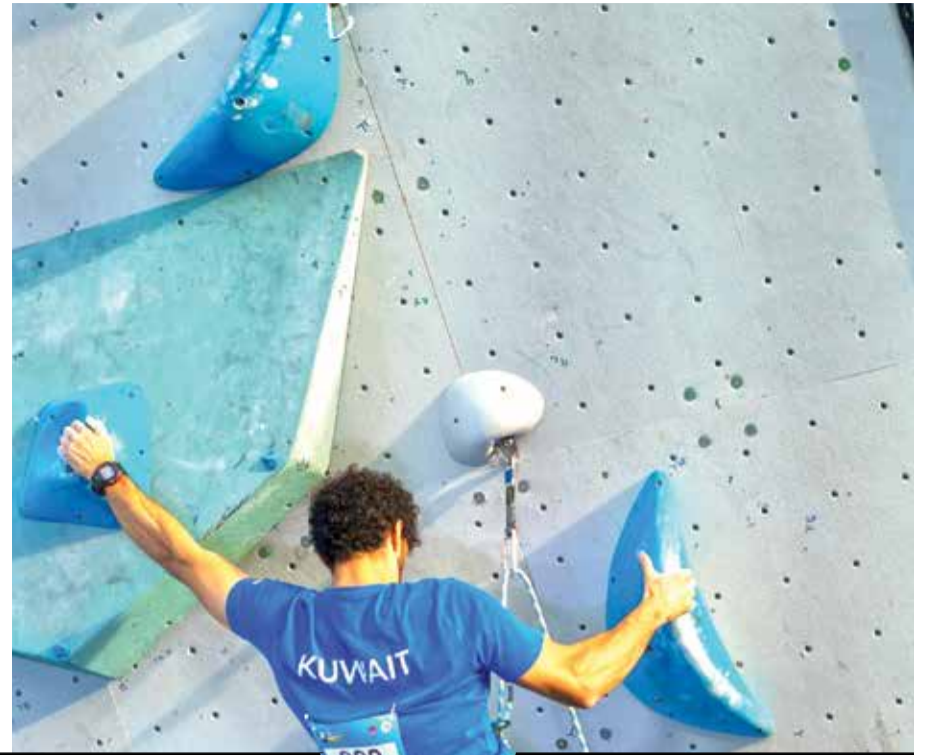
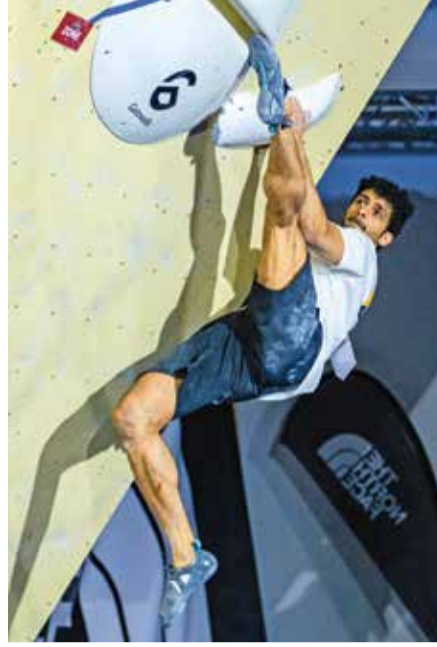
KT: How do you see graffiti art evolving in Kuwait?

Alenezi: Graffiti art is heading into a very corporate direction, and I

KT: What advice would you give to young, aspiring graffiti artists in the region?

Alenezi: Graffitiing is just like going to the gym. If you want to succeed, you have to keep doing it, never stop practicing. It is always discipline over motivation.





Tough, fun and insane: Nasser Borjaib's take on rock climbing



By Passant Hisham

It's the constant process of progression, the small glimmers of hope and the satisfaction of solving problems that once seemed impossible that have made rock climbing a central part of Nasser Borjaib's life for the past four years. This sport has transformed him into someone who, as he puts it, "is always hungry for more and never gets enough."



Often referred to as "Kuwait's ambassador for rock climbing", Borjaib stands out as Kuwait's only competitive rock climber and speed climbing record holder. Yet, he views this as just the beginning. "It's not like I am done; the job isn't finished," Borjaib said. "I need to keep going, especially given the limited resources in Kuwait."

His goal is to push the sport forward both locally and regionally, setting high standards for others to aim for and surpass. "Winning competitions or getting medals isn't enough," he believes. "There are so many more significant achievements possible with a sport, especially one that's still emerging."

Borjaib's competitive journey began in 2021 at the Rock Republic Dubai competition. "I wasn't expecting much; I was just testing the waters, and I ended up taking first place," he said. His next achievement came at the Jordan Federations Competition Arab Lead 2022, where he was pleasantly surprised to secure second place among the top climbers in the Arab region.

Since then, he has competed in various local and international events across Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE and China. Notably, in China, he made history as the first Arab climber to compete at the Asian Games. As he continues to make strides in his climbing career, Borjaib is now preparing for the World Cup West Asia competition later this year.

Training in his backyard in Kuwait on a climbing wall he built himself, he battled the heated climbing holds that nearly burned his hands in summer. Despite that, his relentless nature kept him climbing, using two air conditioning units and a water cooler to seek refuge near them whenever the heat became unbearable.

Overcoming the limited training resources, Borjaib is making the most of his situation by attending bootcamps abroad with rock climbing experts, engaging in remote mentoring, and watching every World Cup and competition to observe and learn from new climbing problems.

He believes that being genetically gifted is not enough to excel in rock climbing. "I work extremely hard for it,"



boulders and crags or artificial walls, you are essentially trying to find a path to get to the top, to complete the climb. That is, a sequence of operations, and the bouldering routes you take are called problems.

On the field, rather than immediately rushing through a climb, Borjaib takes a moment to strategize, spending around a minute analyzing the problem and crafting a plan in his

With speed climbing it's different - it's a standardized problem everywhere, where competitors race against each other and the climber who hits the buzzer first wins. Being his current favorite discipline, Borjaib refers to it as "the forever project that you must perfect".

He played a pivotal role in establishing both bouldering and lead climbing disciplines in Kuwait, and now he



Nasser Borjaib

“ When I climb, it's just me against the problem. I forget about everything else **”**

he said. "Even if you're the most talented person in the world, you won't achieve anything in this sport without putting in the effort."

That's when he pointed out that climbing isn't just about physical strength, but it also requires a lot of analytical, planning, and problem-solving skills.

"When I climb, it's just me against the problem. I forget about everything else," Borjaib said. He called it a problem because whether climbing natural

head. If his initial strategy doesn't work, he quickly improvises and tries a different approach to see how it performs on the wall.

"You keep falling until you get it," is his motto in bouldering. Sometimes it would take him a year and a half to work on one specific problem, which is when it becomes a project. For others, it can even take up to 10 years to finish their own. As he puts it, "You have to keep at it, trust the process, trust yourself, and stay patient."

aims to lead the way in speed climbing as well. After setting a new Arab record by a significant margin, he is actively working to encourage the Olympic community to build a speed climbing wall in Kuwait and to boost the sport's recognition. Describing rock climbing as "tough, fun, and insane," he hopes that the progress he achieves in his own athletic career will be reflected in the sport as a whole.





File photos show poets at the Nabat Poets Diwan. — KUNA photos

ABDULLAH AL-DAWISH: ONE OF KUWAIT'S LEADING NABATI POETS



By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

The bard of Kuwait's soul, weaving words across time

Abdullah Abdulaziz Al-Dawish was one of the leading Nabati poets and a founder of the Kuwaiti Writers Association. Born in 1919 or 1921 in the Al-Qibla neighborhood of Kuwait, he passed away on September 29, 1994. His father, Abdulaziz Al-Dawish, was also a well-known Nabati poet.

Abdullah Al-Dawish studied at Mubarakiya School, worked as a diver and traveled to India and East Africa. He authored 14 diwans and collections of Zuhairi poetry.

also a founder of the Kuwaiti Artists Association.

Nabati poetry is a form of local vernacular poetry widespread among nomadic and settled Arabs,

in contrast to the softer nature of contemporary poetry.

Zuhairi poetry, a form of Nabati poetry that emerged from southern Iraq and spread to the Gulf and the rest of the Arab world, is characterized by seven lines: The first three lines share the same rhyme, the next three lines have a different rhyme, while the last line returns to the original rhyme. A Mawwal is a form of sung poetry famous throughout the Arab world, allowing the singer to improvise with the myriad musical scales of Arab music.

Dawish's poetry career was a side pursuit alongside his work at the Kuwait Oil Company from 1943 until 1950, and at the Kuwait Municipality from 1950 until 1970. He once said: "Poetry is not a career one pursues to make a living. I've worked as a sailor, diver, traveler and trader, and after that, I worked at KOC and the Municipality."

He wrote his first Zuhairi poem in 1937, despite some early attempts in classical Arabic. His poems often expressed societal concerns and problems. One of his most important poetry collections is "Diwan

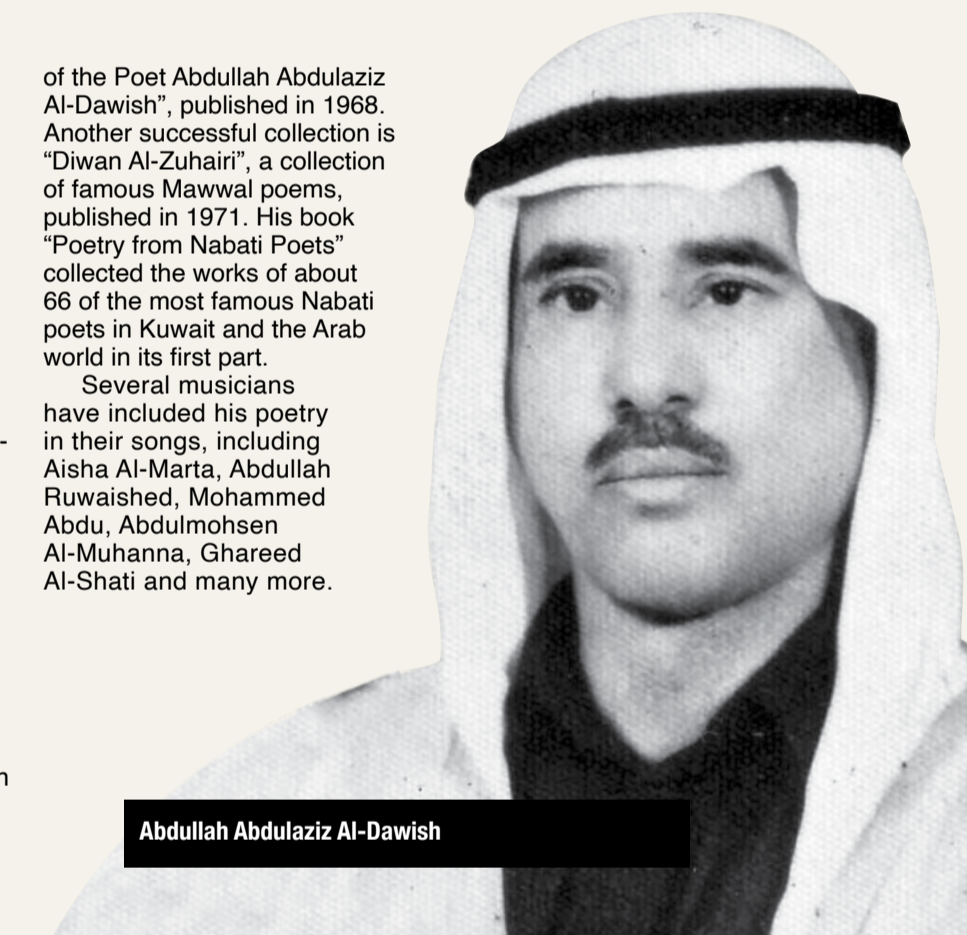
of the Poet Abdullah Abdulaziz Al-Dawish", published in 1968. Another successful collection is "Diwan Al-Zuhairi", a collection of famous Mawwal poems, published in 1971. His book "Poetry from Nabati Poets" collected the works of about 66 of the most famous Nabati poets in Kuwait and the Arab world in its first part.

Several musicians have included his poetry in their songs, including Aisha Al-Marta, Abdullah Ruwaished, Mohammed Abdu, Abdulmohsen Al-Muhanna, Ghareed Al-Shati and many more.



Influenced by his predecessors Mohammed bin Al-Uboun, Abdullah Al-Faraj, Humoud Nasser Al-Bader and Hamad Al-Maghlouth, he practiced his creativity in Nabati, Zuhairi, and Mawwal poetry. He was

unrestricted by modern classical Arabic grammar rules, with roots dating back to pre-Islamic times. Dawish once noted that poets of the past lived in harsh conditions, which gave Nabati poetry its strong words,



Abdullah Abdulaziz Al-Dawish



Nabat Poets Diwan



WHAT'S ON IN KUWAIT

Event: Game Jam
Location: Ishbiliya Public Library
Date: August 8-10, 2024

Event: Commemoration of the brutal Iraqi invasion
Location: Al-Qurain Martyrs Museum
Date: August 8-15, 2024

Event: Real science pop-up
Location: Play Assima Mall
Date: August 8-10, 2024

Event: Pokemon movie night
Location: Petzone - Al-Rai
Date: August 9, 2024

Event: Mixed media abstract painting Artspace
Location: Studio - The Scientific Center
Date: August 9, 2024

Event: Writing to Heal workshop
Location: The Promenade
Date: August 10, 2024

Event: Cook Korea - Luxury Raymeon
Location: Madang Korean Cultural Center
Date: August 10, 2024

Event: Watercolor flower drawing workshop
Location: Shuwaikh - Complex 163
Date: August 10, 2024

Event: Mister Pianist Hisham Hosni
Location: City View Hotel
Date: August 10, 2024

Sports

PARIS 2024



Indonesia's Leonardo wins speed climbing gold, Watson sets record

Indonesia struck first Olympic title in a sport other than badminton

LE BOURGET: Vedriq Leonardo struck gold in the inaugural men's speed climbing event on Thursday to give Indonesia their first Olympic title in a sport other than badminton at the Paris Games. The 27-year-old defeated China's Wu Peng by just two hundredths of a second, scaling the 15-metre wall at the Le Bourget venue in 4.75 seconds. However American teenager Sam Watson set a new world record in the battle for bronze.

Watson, 18, had lost to Wu in the semi-finals but came back with a spectacular time of 4.74 seconds to finish third. Watson lowered his own world record for the fourth time this year. Leonardo had been the first man to break the five-second barrier in April 2023.

Integrated into a combination of speed, bouldering and lead in the Tokyo Olympics, speed is a discipline in its own right in Paris for the first time. For the Paris Games, organizers decided to separate out the speed element, the most spectacular of the climbing disciplines.

Indonesians celebrated their country's first Olympic gold medal in a sport other than badminton, won by Vedriq Leonardo in the inaugural men's speed climbing event in Paris on Thursday.

Vedriq climbed to a personal best time of 4.75 to beat Chinese rival Wu Peng by just two hundredths of a second on the 15-metre wall. The 27-year-old former world record holder secured the ninth Olympic gold medal in Indonesia's history, the other eight all being won in badminton, much to the delight of fans and his family.

"Words can hardly express how we feel.

Praise be to God," his mother Rosita Hamzah told broadcaster Kompas TV. She said Vedriq called her on Wednesday night to ask her to pray for him before she watched his climb from home in Indonesia with other relatives.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo was among the first to congratulate Vedriq. "The Paris 2024 Olympics has brought new pride to Indonesia, thanks to Vedriq Leonardo, our proud speed climbing athlete, who secured Indonesia's first gold medal at the Paris 2024 Olympics," Widodo wrote on social media platform X.

"Congratulations!"

It was the inaugural individual men's medal for the separate event of speed climbing, after it had been integrated into a combination of speed, bouldering and lead at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. "I am proud, very proud. The excitement was explosive," Kristoforus Bagaskoro, a 41-year-old creative manager in the capital Jakarta, told AFP.

"We should hype up this sport more and help it develop even more." The Southeast Asian archipelago has become an unlikely force in speed climbing, smashing records and nabbing multiple medals at top international events.

Vedriq has led that charge, his father saying his son's enthusiasm for the exciting sport began after he joined a student group of nature enthusiasts that included wall climbing as an activity. "He really enjoys the sport. It has always been his dream," his father Sumaryanto, who like many Indonesians uses only one name, told Kompas TV.

Vedriq's coach broke down in tears after the



LE BOURGET: US' Sam Watson poses with a sign after setting a new World Record in the men's sport climbing speed event during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at Le Bourget Sport Climbing Venue. — AFP

victory and Indonesian Sport Climbing Federation chairwoman Yenni Wahid said she was "so moved I could cry". Others hoped Indonesia would secure more climbing success and enjoyed Vedriq's enthusiastic celebrations in Paris.

"He kept kissing the medal, and he couldn't stop smiling. He looked like he had been relieved from a heavy burden," 30-year-old Indonesian Annisa Balqis wrote on X. "Hopefully after this, he will be even more enthusiastic about winning." — AFP



Vinesh Phogat

Wrestler Phogat retires after disqualification

NEW DELHI: India's heartbroken Vinesh Phogat on Thursday announced her retirement from wrestling, a day after being disqualified from the women's 50kg competition at the Paris Olympics for being overweight for the final. World bronze medallist Phogat, 29, was in the public eye for months last year as part of a long-running protest against the then-chief of Indian wrestling when he was embroiled in a sexual harassment scandal.

Phogat, who has won three Commonwealth Games gold medals, had been due to face Sarah Hildebrandt of the United States for the gold medal on Wednesday in Paris but was found to be 100 grams over the 50kg limit.

"Mother wrestling won against me, I lost. Your dreams and my courage are shattered," Phogat wrote on social media platform X. "I don't have any more strength now. Goodbye wrestling 2001-2024. I will forever be indebted to you all. Sorry."

Hildebrandt took gold in Wednesday final against Cuba's Yusneylis Guzman Lopez, who was relieved after losing her semi-final to Phogat on Tuesday. Indian media reported Phogat has appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against her disqualification and demanded a joint silver to be awarded. CAS is expected to announce its verdict on the case later Thursday in Paris.

'A winner for us'

Videos of Phogat with chopped hair and sunken eyes, working out to cut her weight down in a last bid to compete in the final went viral on Wednesday. Phogat helped lead a weeks-long sit-in protest in New Delhi last year against then-Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, at the time a lawmaker from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party.

Singh is being tried on accusations of groping female athletes and demanding sexual favours from them—charges he denied. Wrestling is hugely popular in rural northern India and images of Phogat and other athletes being detained as they tried to march to parliament during the protest went viral on social media. "You will always remain a winner for us," Bajrang Punia, a fellow leader of last year's protests, and a Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist, said on social media. "Apart from being India's daughter, you are the pride of India."

Another fellow protest wrestler and Olympic bronze-medallist, Sakshie Malik, said "every daughter has lost for whom you fought and won". Phogat, who passed the weigh-in on day one, stunned four-time world and defending Olympic champion Yui Susaki of Japan in the opener with a late takedown to claim a 3-2 decision en route to the final. But Phogat was overweight on the morning of the final, despite the wrestler and her team working overnight to cut the kilos through exercising and sauna. Modi had backed Phogat in a social media post, saying: "I wish words could express the sense of despair that I am experiencing." — AFP

Henry expects to cap 'dream' Olympics with football gold

PARIS: Thierry Henry admits he doesn't want to wake up from his Olympic dream as his France team look to top off their campaign by winning gold in the men's football final against Spain on Friday. "I think it's going to be difficult waking up. Every night I watch and get goosebumps when I see guys win," the 46-year-old France coach, who won the World Cup and European Championship as a player, said on the eve of the game in Paris.

"When we manage to come together we are a beautiful country, and I think we needed this after all

Dagar 'inspiring' deaf with Olympic golf medal bid

PARIS: India's Diksha Dagar has shrugged off a car accident and is now hoping to "inspire" fellow deaf people as well as challenge for a women's golf medal in Paris this week. The 23-year-old made her Olympic debut in Tokyo at the delayed 2020 Games and was also a Deaflympic gold medallist three years ago.

She played herself into medal contention at Le Golf National on Wednesday, carding a one-under-par 71 to sit in a tie for seventh place after the first round of the women's event. "I never thought that — when I was playing tournaments, I had no idea what I was doing but when the people come to me, like hitting it, and they are deaf like me, they ask, 'I follow

Brazil smash beach volleyball opponents in Olympic march

PARIS: Women's beach volleyball favourites Brazil resolutely ended the Olympic hopes of their Latvian opponents in the women's quarter-finals Wednesday, continuing their unbeaten streak in a defiant Paris Games.

Ana Patricia Silva Ramos and Eduarda Santos Lisboa fought Latvian pair Tina Graudina and Anastasija Samoilova in a game which showcased their deserved reputation as world-class players. The pair took a while to find their footing, however, making clunky errors in the opening minutes that saw the Latvians claim an easy first six points—before the fightback began.

The top-seeded Brazilians quickly regained and overtook lost ground to secure the first set, and by the second set there was no doubt who was in charge. The duo romped to victory in just 32 minutes, winning the second set 21/10 to the delight of an army of Brazilian fans filling the stands of the stadium in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower.

Supporters in green and yellow T-shirts, hats and wigs waved flags, whooping and whistling every point as though it was a gold medal. The Brazilian victors ran

around the stadium after the game, posing for photos and high-fiving fans who lingered despite the best efforts of security to usher them out.

"I really like firing up the crowd," Silva Ramos said afterwards. "I feel like they are hugging us and supporting us, so I hope it happens again tomorrow." Silva Ramos and Santos Lisboa first teamed up in 2014 to win the gold medal at the Youth Olympic Games, but competed with different partners in Tokyo 2020 — with less successful results — and decided to reunite again for Paris.

They will face Tokyo 2020 silver medallists Taliqa Clancy and Mariafe Artacho del Solar from Australia in the semi-finals on Thursday at 9:00 pm (19:00 GMT). In the day's earlier quarter-final, Spain's Daniela Alvarez Mendoza and Tania Moreno Matveeva took on a dominant Melissa Humana-Paredes and Brandie Wilkerson from Canada.

Every point was fought-for hard as the score sheet crawled, with fans on their feet as an ecstatic Canadian pair snatched victory to secure the final point. Wearing distinctive one-shoulder white bikinis and reflective sunglasses, Humana-Paredes and Swiss-born Wilkerson bettered their Tokyo record, where they made it to the quarter-finals. They will now play Switzerland's Tanja Hueberli and Nina Brunner in the earlier semi-final on Thursday evening. The first two women's quarter-finals were played Tuesday in a tense session where Hueberli and Brunner knocked out women's world champions, US duo Sara Hughes and Kelly Cheng.

you, and it's very inspiring to see you," Dagar said.

"I mean, it feels so good, like it feels amazing. At least I'm walking on the right path and I want to do something better and inspire them more." Dagar says she feels fortunate to be competing, after her and her family were involved in a car accident in Paris last week which left her mother in hospital with a spinal injury.

"You can't avoid the accident. It happened. Like it was nobody's fault," she said. "I don't know how it will end up but you can say it was part of my Olympic experience. It was terrible accident but by God's grace we are safe."

"I'm very lucky and blessed to play the Olympics the second time." Left-hander Dagar and her India teammate Aditi Ashok both made good starts on the Albatros course, with Ashok signing for a level-par 72 as she attempts to go at least one better than when she finished fourth in Tokyo.

Dagar will play in the first group in Thursday's second round, teeing off at 9:00 am local time (07:00 GMT) with Taiwan's Hsu Wei-ling and Austrian Emma Spitz. — AFP

games before edging out Argentina and overcoming Egypt in extra time to reach the final. Now they will play in Paris for the first time since the tournament began as they aim to win their first football gold since 1984.

"We are only beginning to realize what is going on because we have not been in Paris," admitted Henry, part of the France squad when they won the World Cup as hosts in 1998. Meanwhile Henry was full of praise for winger Michael Olise, who has been one of France's standout players at the tournament.

The 22-year-old, who has just signed for Bayern Munich after an impressive season at Crystal Palace in the Premier League, was born in London but has chosen to represent France at international level.

"He has enormous quality and I think you've seen nothing yet," Henry said. "He could have gone to the Euros with England but he wants to play for France. It's his dream. I have enormous respect for that." — AFP



GUYANCOURT: India's Diksha Dagar competes in round 2 of the women's golf individual stroke play of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at Le Golf National in Guyancourt. — AFP

'Bringing the best out'

The first men's quarter-final match of the day pitted two prime teams together as the lights came on over the Eiffel Tower. Tokyo 2020 gold medallists Anders Berntsen Mol and Christian Sandlie Soerum of Norway—who have won every game of their Olympic campaign so far—cruised to a comfortable victory against Spain's Pablo Herrera Allepez and Adrian Gavira Collado, performing somersaults across the sand after booking their place in the next round.

"This Olympics is special," Berntsen Mol told reporters. "That is bringing the best out of us." But it marked the end of the road for 42-year-old Herrera Allepez, who has said this will be his last Olympics after playing alongside Gavira Collado since 2008 — the first pairing to compete together at four Olympic Games.

The quarter-finals rounded off with a showdown between Tokyo 2020 men's bronze medal winners Cherif Younousse and Ahmed Tijan of Qatar and Andrew Benesh and Miles Partain of the US. The playful Qatari pair had clearly set out to enjoy themselves with a cheeky style earning the support of a thunderous crowd as they spun the ball on their fingers, clapping and dancing with the crowd between their serves.

Younousse and Tijan — both naturalized Qataris born in Senegal and Gambia respectively — raced to a triumphant 21/14, 21/16, earning a standing ovation and leading the crowd in a dance after reaching victory.

The Norwegian victors will play Nils Ehlers and Clemens Wickler of Germany in the early semi-final Thursday; the Qatari duo will take on world number one, Swedish duo David Ahman and Jonatan Hellvig, in the later game. — AFP

Sports

PARIS 2024



American enters 400 metres Hall of fame through dogged determination

Astonishing performance, who only two years ago made the switch from 400m hurdles

PARIS: Newly crowned Olympic 400 metres men's champion Quincy Hall may have a set of gold teeth to go along with his medal but he likes to emphasize how he was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

The 26-year-old American produced one of the great Olympic performances on Wednesday coming from the clouds to become the fourth fastest man ever in the event. Hall — who has been mentored by fellow Kansas native the 2000 Olympic 100m champion Maurice Greene — is certainly not one who follows a conventional route. This is illustrated by where his inspiration for his "grit" as he calls it comes from. "Raising dogs and raising animals," the dog-breeding Hall told Fox4kc.com in July.

"You just see the determination the animal has, I just try to keep that same determination cause, can't outwork a dog," added Hall, who owns six dogs. It was an astonishing performance from a man who only two years ago made the switch from 400m hurdles to the flat. "I was wasting a lot of time on those hurdles man," he told Fox4kc.com. "Those boys are just as fast and they can hurdle, I can't hurdle, I'm not as flexible, I don't bend like that."

A year later he won world bronze in Budapest but

vowed he would make it a different colour come Paris — and he honoured his pledge. Appositely for the manner in which he hunted down his rivals one by one he is a lone wolf as he trains on his own.

He has certainly taken an unorthodox route to the top—trying all types of distances including cross country running and at school meets entered himself in several events from 200m to 1500m.

'All the pain'

Just as much as he challenged himself on the track so he had to meet challenges off it with two of his brothers dying young. He paid tribute to them after winning gold as he did to his two daughters, Abri, 7, and two-year-old Alani, the latter he said he would "tickle to death". That was a rare soft moment post celebration as he dwelled on his tough past in which he scrimped and saved by doing two jobs to get himself through school. He needed the money too as there were no catering facilities at the College of the Sequoias in California and once again he found similarities between himself and his favourite animal. "You got to get your own food," he said.

"No cafeteria, no study hall, none of that. You can find



SAINT-DENIS: US' Quincy Hall celebrates after winning the men's 400m final of the athletics event at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at Stade de France in Saint-Denis. — AFP

out how to be a dog by yourself." Taking the tough decision to move far away from Kansas also put distance between himself and his rock, mum Iecia Fritz, who raised him on her own, alongside his surviving brother, Milton, and sister, Breanna. — AFP

Olympics Gallery



SAINT-DENIS: Medical staff take Germany's Sophie Weissenberg away from the track during the women's heptathlon 100m hurdles of the athletics event.



SAINT-DENIS: A spectator takes pictures while watching the women's 4x100m relay heat of the athletics event at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.



PARIS: Egypt's Aliaa Saleh performs with the clubs as she competes in the rhythmic gymnastics' individual all-around qualification.



VAIRES-SUR-MARNE: New Zealand's gold medalists Lisa Carrington, Alicia Hoskin, Olivia Brett and Tara Vaughan celebrate after the medal ceremony following the women's kayak four 500m final of the canoe sprint competition. — AFP



PARIS: Iran's Nahid Kiyanchandeh (L) competes against Tunisia's Chaima Toumi in the taekwondo women's - 57kg quarter-final bout.

Van Rouwendaal wins Olympic 10k marathon swimming gold

PARIS: Sharon van Rouwendaal of the Netherlands made a late surge to win gold in the women's 10k marathon swimming at the Paris Olympics on Thursday.

Van Rouwendaal won with a time of 2hr 03min 34.2sec, with Australian Moesha Johnson taking silver 5.5 seconds behind and Italy's Ginevra Taddeucci claiming bronze. The race took place on the River Seine with the Eiffel Tower in the background after water pollution levels were deemed sufficiently safe for competition.

It was the third straight Olympic medal in the event for Van Rouwendaal, the gold medallist in Rio in 2016 and silver medallist in Tokyo, who made her move past Johnson around a pylon coming under the Pont des Invalides bridge.

The 30-year-old Dutchwoman, who was also world champion in Budapest in 2022, never looked back as she powered her way to the finish. Van Rouwendaal said her victory was dedicated to the memory of her pet dog

Rio, who died in May.

"Swimming is my everything, but so was he. When there were complications in May, he died shortly afterwards. Then my world stood still and I wanted to swim for him one more time," she said. "My father said: swim one more time and do it for him. And that's what I did," she added.

It was a crushing blow for Johnson who had led from the half-way mark onwards and was out front with the top three having broken well clear of the field going into the final lap. But the Australian said she had no regrets about her approach to the final stages when victory slipped from her grasp.

"Under that bridge, there are these pillars and the current's really strong coming through it and there was two options and I knew whatever option I took, Sharon behind me would have taken the other one and we just had to fight it out and see which route was quicker or who was stronger and obviously that's kind of where she passed me into the gold medal position," she said.

Richardson, Thomas guide US women into 4x100m relay final

PARIS: Olympic 100m silver medallist Sha'Carri Richardson and newly-crowned 200m champion Gabby Thomas steered the United States into the final of the women's 4x100m relay after winning their heat in 41.94 seconds on Thursday.

Melissa Jefferson, who won bronze in the 100m in Paris, ran the opening leg, with Twanisha Terry taking the baton down the far straight. Terry's handover to Thomas wasn't as smooth as it could have been, however, handing the advantage to Germany.

Thomas' pass to anchor-leg Richardson was clean. The 100m silver medallist then powered past Rebekka Haase to push the German quartet into second in 42.15. Switzerland took the third automatic qualifying spot. Britain won the second semi-final in 42.03sec ahead of France and Jamaica, the reigning Olympic champions but missing big guns such as Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, Shericka Jackson and Elaine Thompson-Herah.

Canada and the Netherlands sealed the two

fastest non-automatic qualifying places for the final scheduled for 1730 GMT on Friday. Noah Lyles' bid for a first triple sprint gold since Usain Bolt at the 2016 Rio Games remains on track thanks to his US teammates Christian Coleman, Fred Kerley, Kyree King and Courtney Lindsay.

China won the second semi in 38.24sec ahead of France and Canada. Jamaica, with 100m silver medallist Kishane Thompson on anchor, finished fourth and failed to advance. Also qualifying as the two next fastest were Japan and Italy, for whom Tokyo Games 100m gold medallist Marcell Jacobs ran the opening leg. After the two opening events of the heptathlon, the 100m hurdles and high jump, reigning world champion Katarina Johnson-Thompson led with 2,197 points. The Briton clocked 13.40sec in the hurdles and a best of 1.92m in the high jump.

Belgium's two-time defending Olympic champion Nafi Thiam, who missed last year's world champs through injury, was in second on 2,173pts. American Anna Hall, the world silver medallist, was in third, just nine points adrift.

The evening session sees the heptathletes compete in the shot put and 200m. Friday sees them in action in the long jump and javelin in the morning before wrapping up the two-day, seven-discipline event with the 800m at the Stade de France. — AFP



PARIS: (From L) Second-placed silver medallist Australia's Moesha Johnson, first-placed gold medallist Netherlands' Sharon Van Rouwendaal and third-placed bronze medallist Italy's Ginevra Taddeucci take a selfie as they celebrate on the podium after the women's 10km marathon swimming final. — AFP

"But I'm happy with my choice, I've committed to it and it's just such a tactical race and there were so many ifs, buts and maybes that could have happened in that race and to come out with a medal is just, it's unbelievable," she said.

The decision to hold the race on the river produced a glorious spectacle but had caused headaches for organizers. The triathlon was badly disrupted by poor bacterial readings

last week, with all swim training sessions cancelled and the men's individual race postponed by 24 hours until Wednesday.

Training for the 10k race had been cancelled due to the water pollution levels. But Johnson said the water quality had not been bad. "I'll go home and have some antibiotics, that was part of my plan, but I've tasted worse," she said. — AFP

China anti-doping agency calls for US probe into doping

BEIJING: China's anti-doping agency on Thursday called for an independent probe into its US counterpart, after a media investigation found that American authorities allowed athletes who failed drug tests to continue to compete.

The report by the Reuters news agency on Wednesday said the global and US anti-doping authorities were in disagreement over the American side's tactic of allowing athletes who tested positive for banned substances to avoid prosecution in return for giving undercover information on other drug cheats.

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) said the strategy by the US authority (USADA) was "in direct contravention of the World Anti-Doping Code" and "threatened the integrity of sporting competition". The China Anti-Doping Agency (CHINA) said Thursday that it "strongly calls for an independent investigation into USADA's cover-up of serious violations" of the code designed to prevent athletes from taking illicit substances that improve performance. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752

Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Hospitals

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

Change of Name

I, **Alinul Eslan** S/o Mohammad Aqil holder of Indian Passport No. T8767560 having permanent address H.No. 473-A Faithful Ganj, Cannt. Kanpur-208004, UP, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name Alemul and surname Eslan.
(#5646#, 09/08/2024)

I, **SANJNA JAYARAM**, Holder of Indian Passport No. U0190400 having permanent address: 129 Old Cement Line Austin Town Vivek Nagar, Bengaluru Pin:560047, Karnataka, India residing in Kuwait at present,

hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) Sanjana Jayaram.
(#5645#, 08/08/2024)

I, **Harriet Peter**, holder of Indian Passport No.W0775615, do hereby change my name to Harriet Dayal for all purposes. I will henceforth be known by the name Harriet Dayal and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.
(#5911, 07/08/2024)

I **Zahra Murtaza**, Passport No. X5374261, do hereby change my name

to Zahra Murtaza (as given name) Khanji (as surname) for all purpose. I will henceforth be known as in the name of Zahra Murtaza Khanji and I also undertake to carryout this name change in all documents. V/P Najampura Sagwara.
(#5643, 07/08/2024)

I have changed my name from **Rashida**, Passport No. Z5185067 in future I am know from this name Rashida Kutbuddin Seth V/P Najampura Sagwara Dist, Dungarpur (Raj).
(#5642, 07/08/2024)

PARIS 2024 

Olympic swimmers plunge into Seine, Lyles eyes sprint double

McLaughlin-Levrone and Femke Bol go head-to-head in a mouth-watering 400m hurdles final



SAINT-DENIS: US' Noah Lyles prepares to compete in the men's 200m semi-final of the athletics event at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at Stade de France in Saint-Denis. — AFP

PARIS: Olympic marathon swimmers dived into the Seine Thursday with the river deemed clean enough to compete, as US sprinter Noah Lyles hoped to pocket a 200m gold to go with his stunning 100m success. As the Paris Games builds to a crescendo, LeBron James leads his dream team of US superstars into a semi-final against a Serbia powered by Nikola Jokic, a three-time NBA most valuable player.

After a running saga over the quality of the water in the Seine, 24 women took the plunge for the 10-kilometre marathon swim through the heart of the city. Water quality in the Seine has been in the spotlight during the Olympics despite a 1.4-billion-euro (\$1.5-billion) effort to improve sewerage and water treatment.

Organizers have been forced to scrap several training sessions and postpone the men's individual triathlon after assessing the water to be too dirty to swim in. On the track, Lyles was characteristically

confident heading into the 200m final, despite not winning his semi-final. "I spent years working on the 100m, but the 200 is where it's at. This is where I get to show my speed and endurance and my top-end speed," said Lyles. "This is where I get to show I'm stronger than everybody else."

The American will face competition from teammates Kenny Bednarek and Erriyon Knighton, as well as Botswana's Letsile Tebogo, who beat him in the semi-final. His bid for a relay gold is also on track after teammates Christian Coleman, Fred Kerley, Kyree King and Courtney Lindsay booked their place in the final.

'Clear favourite'

In what could be the race of the Games, the two fastest women in history over the 400m hurdles clash on the lilac track of the Stade de France. Reign-

ing champion Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone from the United States and Dutchwoman Femke Bol go head-to-head in a mouth-watering 400m hurdles final.

"I am looking forward to racing Sydney. That will push us both. Sydney is the clear favourite, but I will be ready for it," said Bol ahead of the race. Bol already has one gold after running an extraordinary anchor leg to bring the Dutch to victory in the 4x400 mixed relay.

But McLaughlin-Levrone is the world record holder and defending Olympic champion in the 400m hurdles. Bol is plotting revenge after finishing third in Japan. In a packed athletics programme Thursday night, three-time world champion Grant Holloway from the US hopes to go one better than the silver he won in Tokyo in the men's 110m hurdles.

'Super positive'

As the basketball tournament approaches the

business end, the US and Serbia face each other for the third time in as many weeks, after a pool match and a pre-Olympics warm-up. The US have won both previous times by 26 points but coach Steve Kerr is taking nothing for granted, saying: "We can't get lulled to sleep because we beat them twice."

Hosts France, led by San Antonio Spurs star Victor Wembanyama, play World Cup holders Germany in the first semi-final. France were also in contention in the women's golf tournament with Celine Boutier taking a three-shot lead into the second round.

Switzerland's Morgane Mettraux overtook her with a superb eight under through 12 holes, taking a two-shot lead at 10 under par. In men's hockey, world number one Netherlands take on world champions Germany. The match could be the first part of a golden double for the Dutch whose women's team face China in their final on Friday. — AFP

Harmanpreet double takes India to Olympic men's hockey bronze

PARIS: Eight-time champions India came from behind to collect their 13th men's Olympic hockey medal with a hard-fought 2-1 win over Spain in the bronze medal match on Thursday. Harmanpreet Singh scored two penalty corners after Marc Miralles had given Spain the lead at the Yves du Manoir Stadium in Colombes, northwest of Paris.

It is India's fourth bronze medal, and second in succession following Tokyo, and adds to those eight golds, the last of which came in 1980, and three silvers. India had won seven of their previous 10 encounters with three-time champions Spain but after a cagey first half they found themselves trailing when Miralles fired an 18th minute penalty stroke past the 'Wall of India' Sreejesh Ravendran, playing his 336th and final international.

Borja Lacalle almost made it two, beating Sreejesh only to see his shot rebound off the post. With the country's richest man Mukesh Ambani supporting from the stands, India began to press hard and with just a few seconds remaining of the first half, Harmanpreet buried a penalty corner to level the scores.

Three minutes after the break, Harmanpreet repeated the trick, sweeping another penalty corner just inside the Spanish post. It was his tenth goal of the tournament, making Harmanpreet the top scorer at these Olympics.

Spain picked up the tempo in the final quarter, forcing a series of late penalty corners and one outstanding save from Sreejesh which ensured that India would take the bronze medal, the country's fourth medal in Paris. World champions Germany face Netherlands in the gold medal match later on Thursday. — AFP

USA women end Nigeria's dream run in basketball

PARIS: The United States edged closer to an unprecedented eighth straight women's basketball Olympic crown on Wednesday, ending the historic run of Nigeria with a 88-74 quarter-final victory. Two-time WNBA Most Valuable Player A'ja Wilson scored 20 points and grabbed 11 rebounds to pace a US side that could break a tie with the US men's basketball team for the most consecutive Olympic golds — set from 1936-68.

Jackie Young added 15 points and Breanna Stewart — another two-time WNBA MVP, chipped in 13. Every US player scored at least one point as the Americans notched a 59th straight Olympic game win. But US coach Cheryl Reeve said the record isn't foremost in her players' minds as they prepare to face Australia, who saw off Serbia 85-67.

"They don't think about it as much as we all talk about it," she said. "That's not on their mind. Their mind is on this journey and their mission is to win a gold medal." But the United States remain a big draw. NBA superstar LeBron James and USA teammate Bam Adebayo were court-side for the clash between the US dynasty and the first team from Africa, male or female, to make the Olympic basketball quarter-finals.

James and Adebayo, enjoying a night off before tackling Serbia in the men's semi-finals on Thursday, sat next to US swimming greats Michael Phelps and Katie Ledecky. Nigeria, who have made physical play a trademark, looked anything but intimidated by the powerhouse Americans as they traded buckets in the opening minutes.

Diana Taurasi trying to become the first Olympic basketball player to win six gold medals, came off the bench and drilled a three-pointer to put the US up 24-12 late in the first quarter. A steal and a layup by Promise Amukamara cut the deficit to single digits but every time Nigeria seemed to be making headway the Americans answered with a run. They closed the first half on a 14-4 surge. Breanna Stewart drained a



PARIS: USA's #10 Breanna Stewart goes to the basket in the women's quarterfinal basketball match between Nigeria and USA during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the Bercy Arena in Paris. — AFP

three-pointer then got loose for a layup in the final minute to push the US lead to 52-33 at the break. The US launched the third quarter with a 10-0 run and pushed the lead to 76-46 before Amukamara came up with a steal and raced the length of the court for a layup to end the quarter.

In the end the United States just had too much firepower, but the trail blazing Nigerians, who were led by 19 points from Amukamara with 16 from Ezinne Kalu, departed to a warm ovation from fans. Reeve said Nigeria's progress to the quarters was a sign of global growth in the game.

"They're a great story, made history," she said. "They have been trending in this direction. I'm looking at Nigeria two Olympics ago — kind of where they were and where they are now ... the growth of the game is there."

Next up for the United States is Australia, who had 22 points and 13 rebounds from Alanna Smith in a convincing victory over Serbia. The Australians, silver medallists in 2000, 2004 and 2008, are into the semi-finals for the first time since 2012, when they earned bronze.

'Throwing the first punch'

Australia connected on 58 percent of their shots in the first half, out-scoring Serbia 22-11 in the second quarter to take control for good. "In tournaments like this, how you start is how you finish, and we wanted to come out throwing the first punch," Smith said. The other semi-final will see France take on European champions Belgium. Tokyo bronze medallists France, led by 24 points from Marine Johannes, beat Olympic newcomers Germany 84-71 while Belgium reached the semis for the first time with a 79-66 victory over previously unbeaten Spain. Marine Johannes put on an offensive show, scoring 24 points for France and receiving plenty of support from Gabby Williams and Alexia Cherry. France took control with a 17-5 scoring run to open the second quarter and led by as many as 19 in the fourth.

Fans at Bercy Arena were already celebrating as the final seconds ticked down when a man tried to dash onto the court. He was quickly tackled by security and hustled away. — AFP