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Qatar to host Gaza truce talks

More killings in Gaza, West Bank • US OKs \$20bn arms for Zionists • Zionists approve new settlement



GAZA: Palestinian children sit on a windowsill at the Asdaa central prison facility, which has become a shelter for displaced people in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, on Aug 14, 2024. — AFP

GAZA: Qatar will host Gaza ceasefire talks on Thursday, sources close to the negotiations said, seeking a so-far elusive agreement that the United States hopes would stop Iran striking the Zionist entity and avert a wider war. US, Qatari and Egyptian mediators have invited the Zionist entity and Hamas for negotiations aimed at ending fighting that the health ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip says has claimed nearly 40,000 lives in the Palestinian territory.

The talks will be held in the Qatari capital Doha, a source close to Hamas and a second source close to the negotiations said Wednesday, though it remained unclear if the Palestinian group planned to participate. According to a US source familiar with the Doha meeting, CIA director William Burns is scheduled to take part. The office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told AFP the heads of the Zionist Mossad spy agency and Shin Bet secret service would go to Doha.

A Hamas official said the Islamist movement was "continuing its consultations with the mediators", after demanding the implementation of a three-phase proposal that US President Joe Biden laid out on May 31, instead of holding more talks. A truce deal in Gaza, based on "the framework agreement that's on the table", could help de-

escalate regional tensions and "prevent an outbreak of a wider war", said US envoy Amos Hochstein on a visit to Beirut on Wednesday.

The Zionist military offensive in Gaza has killed at least 39,965 people, according to the territory's health ministry, mostly women and children. The Zionist military said it carried out dozens of air strikes across Gaza in the past 24 hours while ground troops were engaged in "operational activity" in the southern city of Rafah. Civil defense rescuers reported artillery shelling and air strikes across the Gaza Strip, with four family members killed in a residential complex near Khan Yunis.

Zionist troops also killed five Palestinians in air strikes and a raid in the north of the occupied West Bank on Wednesday, sources said. Tubas governor Ahmad Saad told AFP that four Palestinians were killed in the town of Tammun and one in Tubas. "The (Zionist) forces are withholding the bodies of the five martyrs, and when we inquired with the liaison office, we were officially informed about the five martyrs," Saad said.

Palestinian official news agency Wafa reported that "the army entered Tubas at dawn and shot and killed a young man hiding in his home".

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NEWS IN BRIEF

KPC chief Sheikh Nawaf top CEO

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah was named by Forbes on Wednesday as the country's top chief executive, according to the magazine's annual list of the Middle East and North Africa region's most influential CEOs. The KPC CEO was also named the sixth top chief executive in the Middle East and North Africa region, the state-owned oil firm said on social media platform X, citing the Forbes list. — KUNA



Military show marks 3 yrs of Taleban rule

BAGRAM, Afghanistan: Afghanistan's Taleban rulers celebrated three years in power on Wednesday with a military parade paying homage to their homemade bombs used in war, fighter aircraft and goose-stepping security forces. The Taleban's armed forces towed Soviet-era tanks and artillery pieces through the former US air base in Bagram, where Chinese and Iranian diplomats were among hundreds who gathered for the parade and speeches.

The former Bagram base once served as the linchpin for US-led

operations against the Taleban for two decades. A swarm of motorbikes strapped with yellow jerry cans, often used to carry homemade bombs during the fight against international forces, also rumbled past assembled officials. There were US-made armored personnel carriers, the black-and-white flag of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan - the Taleban government's formal name for the country - fluttering above them.

Helicopters and fighter aircraft flew over the base, where Taleban fighters were once imprisoned, about 40 km north of Kabul. Taleban forces seized the capital on Aug 15, 2021, after the US-backed government collapsed and its leaders fled into exile. The anniversary is marked a day earlier on the Afghanistan calendar.

Continued on Page 6



BAGRAM: Taleban military vehicles parade to celebrate the third anniversary of their takeover of Afghanistan at Bagram Air Base on Aug 14, 2024. — AFP

Kuwait slams Al-Aqsa storming

KUWAIT: The ministry of foreign affairs expressed strong condemnation on Tuesday on the storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque by two occupying forces' ministers, members of the Knesset and hundreds of settlers and extremists. In a press release, the ministry emphasized that the occupying forces' repeated irresponsible and provocative actions violate international humanitarian law, undermine peace resolutions and escalate the situation and aggression, further deepening the crisis. Kuwait reaffirmed its call for the international community to take an active role in confronting the Zionist occupation's violations and provide protection to the people of Palestine. — KUNA

Staff to reconfirm attendance

KUWAIT: Public sector employees will start reconfirming their attendance at various departments from Sunday, the Civil Service Commission announced. Employees are required to reconfirm their attendance two hours after the initial clock-in using biometrics including fingerprinting and facial recognition or via smartphone apps, CSC noted.

'Squad' member Ilhan Omar wins Dem nomination

WASHINGTON: Firebrand US Representative Ilhan Omar clinched the Democratic Party nomination for a fourth term on Tuesday, in a victory for progressives after losses in party primaries by two fellow members of the group nicknamed "The Squad". Omar defeated former Minneapolis city council member Don Samuels in Minnesota's 5th District Democratic primary.

With 216 of 217 precincts reporting results, Omar was leading Samuels 56.2%-42.9%, according to

Minnesota Secretary of State tallies. At the end of a spirited campaign, Samuels acknowledged Omar's victory in a telephone interview, but said the results showed "there are still people who are feeling left out of the congresswoman's leadership."

Omar's robust campaign fundraising likely played a significant role in her victory. She collected \$6.8 million since the 2022 election, more than double the typical House member's reelection campaign and well over Samuels' \$1.4 million, according to federal campaign disclosures. "Because Omar had a tough primary last cycle (the 2022 election), she was prepared this time around with a strong ground game and excellent fundraising numbers that far outpaced Samuels," said Ryan Dawkins, a political science professor at Minnesota's Carleton College.

The Minnesota lawmaker, one of four pro-

gressive women whose 2018 election created The Squad, is expected to easily win the Nov 5 election. Control of Congress will be up for grabs as Vice President Kamala Harris and Republican Donald Trump seek the presidency. Fellow Squad members Representatives Jamaal Bowman of New York and Cori Bush of Missouri lost their party primaries over the past few months, facing opponents who had won substantial support from the pro-Zionist fundraising group AIPAC. — Reuters



Ilhan Omar

Millions of kids facing extreme heat exposure

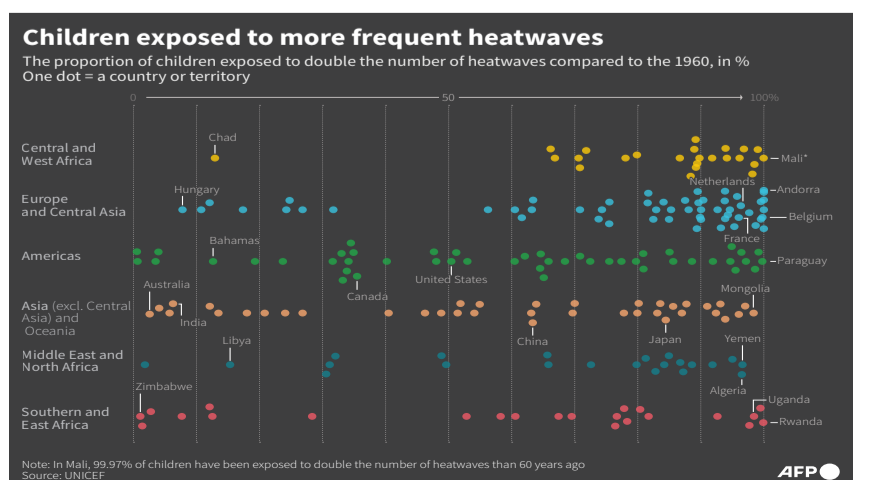
UNITED NATIONS: Nearly half a billion children are facing twice as many days of extreme heat each year - or more - than their grandparents did, the UN said Tuesday, warning of deadly consequences. As climate change continues to push up temperatures globally, one in five children - some 466 million kids - live in areas

that are registering "at least double the number of extremely hot days every year" compared to 60 years ago, the UN children's agency UNICEF said.

"The bodies of young children are not like little adults, they have much more vulnerability to extreme heat," UNICEF advocacy chief Lily Caprani told AFP, also warning of dangers for pregnant women. Additionally, children lose out from education when schools are forced to close due to high temperatures - which has affected at least 80 million children in 2024 so far.

UNICEF used days reaching 35 degrees Celsius as its benchmark.

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Chalet rental scams continue throughout summer in Kuwait

Renters urged to verify the identity of advertisers

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: Since the beginning of summer, multiple residents have fallen victims to chalet rental fraud via online channels such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Despite widespread warnings from local news outlets and social media activists, many continue to be scammed. "I sensed something was off, especially when the person who I contacted refused to let me view the actual chalet in advance or pay him the money in person," Salma Rashed, one of the victims told Kuwait Times.

Rashed found an ad on Facebook for a rental service showcasing a beautiful video of a chalet in Khairan. When she reached out to book the chalet for the weekend, she was pressured into paying a KD 50 deposit through a bank link. Unwilling to comply, she threatened to report the situation to the police, which made the person behind the ad stop responding to her calls and messages.

Lawyer Mohammad Al-Jasem noted that perpetrators of such rental fraud can face up to three years in prison, a fine of up to KD 3,000 or both. He added that anyone causing unlawful harm to someone, whether by intent or negligence, is liable to compensate for damages. According to Article 231 of the Kuwaiti Penal Code No 16 of 1960, fraud involves any deception intended to mislead

someone into transferring their money to the fraudster or another party. Examples of fraud include pretending to offer a fake project, hiding or changing the details of a real project, promising fake profits, creating fake debt documents, hiding real debt documents, misusing funds, or using a false identity.

Jasem stated that victims can use various forms of evidence to file an official complaint with the police against fraudsters. This includes WhatsApp conversations with the perpetrators, especially if authenticated by the relevant authorities, as well as copies of payment receipts. According to him, the Kuwaiti Court of Cassation has confirmed in its rulings the admissibility of digital evidence in proving electronic crimes, based on relevant legal provisions in the E-Commerce Law and the Law of Evidence.

To protect themselves from fraud, he warned renters to verify the identity of the advertisers. According to Article 20 of the Kuwaiti E-Com-



Lawyer Mohammad Al-Jasem



merce Law No 20 of 2014, service providers online must disclose their identity and contact information. Any lack of this information may be a warning sign of unsafe dealings. Jasem also advised renters to avoid paying the full amount in advance. Finally, he added that they should al-

ways request for official written contracts, citing Article 23 of the Kuwaiti E-Commerce Law. This article highlights the importance of documenting electronic transactions with written contracts that clearly outline all agreed-upon details and conditions between the parties.

You are what you eat: Connection between diet and body odor

By Zainab Al-Mashoor

KUWAIT: When it comes to personal hygiene, most of us focus on showering, using deodorants, and wearing clean clothes. However, one often overlooked aspect of body care is the influence of our diet on our natural scent. The saying "you are what you eat" might be more accurate than we realize, extending beyond just our physical appearance to include the very essence of how we smell. Body odor is naturally influenced by a variety of factors, including genetics, hygiene, and diet.

Primarily influenced by the bacteria on our skin and the substances that our body excretes through sweat. Sweat itself is mostly odorless; however, when it interacts with the bacteria on our skin, it can produce various odors. "Next time you consider a meal, think about how it might influence your scent," says Dr. Shaikha Ahmad Alqallaf, a Clinical Nutritionist. As a nutritionist, she gets complaints from patients including children about their body odor and how uncomfortable they feel at public spaces. Their diet plan adds to be a primary reason such as consuming junk and fast foods.

Dr. Alqallaf adds, "In some Gulf countries, elder women or women who just gave birth smells mostly like fenugreek seed as their culture and tradition involves adding the seeds in their food and drink which helps them to breastfeed and also help the digestion system but also leaves an

unpleasant smell - reflecting their body odor.

Dr. Alqallaf explains how diet can significantly impact body odor in various ways. Foods high in sulfur, such as garlic, onions, and cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and cabbage, can lead to a stronger and more pungent body odor because sulfur compounds are metabolized and released through the skin and breath.

Red meat can also contribute to more intense body odor: the longer digestion time required for red meat results in increased sweat production and a higher concentration of fatty acids, which bacteria break down into unpleasant odors. Strong spices, including cumin, curry, and fenugreek, can impact body odor as well. These spices contain aromatic compounds that are absorbed into the bloodstream and later released through sweat glands. Additionally, caffeine can contribute to body odor by increasing sweat production.

Conversely, a diet rich in fruits and vegetables generally leads to a more pleasant body odor due to their high antioxidant and fiber content, which helps detoxify the body and reduce odor-producing compounds. Finally, dairy products may cause body odor in individuals with lactose intolerance, as undigested lactose ferments in the gut, producing gases and compounds that can affect body odor.

To manage body odor involving the smell of breath, sweat or even excretion effectively, Dr. Alqallaf suggests adopting several nutritional strategies.



Dr. Shaikha Ahmad Alqallaf



First, maintaining a balanced diet that includes a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can help promote a healthier body odor. It is also important to avoid excessive consumption of foods known to cause strong odors.

Hydration plays a crucial role as well: drinking plenty of water helps dilute sweat and reduce the concentration of compounds that contribute to body odor. Incorporating herbs with natural deodorizing properties, such as parsley, basil, and mint, can also help neutralize body odor. Additionally, green tea, known for its polyphenol content, can further aid in reducing body odor.

Consuming probiotics through foods like yogurt, kefir, and fermented vegetables can support a healthy gut microbiome, which may indirectly influence body odor by enhancing overall digestive health. Therefore, understanding how different foods impact your body odor can help you make more informed dietary choices. If you notice a particular food is affecting your scent negatively, it might be worth moderating its intake. Conversely, incorporating more odor-neutralizing foods can contribute to a fresher natural aroma.



Kuwait committed to IAEA code of conduct

KUWAIT: Kuwait has enhanced its "commitment" to the code of conduct established by the UN nuclear agency on the safety and security of radioactive sources, a health official said on Tuesday. The measure is a testament to Kuwait's "firm belief" in nuclear safety on both regional and international levels, said Health Ministry Radiation Protection Department chief Ilham Al-Fares, underlining the solid rapport between relevant Kuwaiti bodies and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

As part of Kuwait's commitment to the UN Code of Conduct on the security and safety of radioactive sources, the country has formed a rigid policy and effective strategy to manage these sources, which includes ratcheting up inspection efforts to ensure the "validity and safety" of radioactive tools, added the official.

On the intricacies of the IAEA code of conduct, Kuwait's UN nuclear agency liaison officer Nader Al-Awadhi said that it provides an appropriate framework for radiation safety and security, while it also has the backing of more than 150 countries from around the world. National commitment to this nuclear code of conduct demonstrates the "broad safety" of radioactive material management in Kuwait, he said, emphasizing Kuwait's determination to further cooperate with the IAEA as part of efforts to ensure global nuclear safety. — KUNA

MoH to launch virtual medical office to assist Kuwaitis abroad

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health announced on Wednesday that it is ready to launch in the upcoming weeks the virtual medical office to help provide medical services to Kuwaitis abroad. In a press release, the Ministry affirmed that the step was in line with its policy to further digitize services. The aim is to provide the best medical services to Kuwaitis abroad, expedite treatment, as well as ease procedures to seek treatment.

The Ministry noted that the virtual office would be in contact with embassies and diplomatic missions abroad, especially in areas out of reach for physical offices.

The virtual office would be a welcomed addition to health diplomacy, easing communication and contact with international health organizations as well as highlighting local health initiatives to the world. The Ministry affirmed that the step was in line with efforts to lower expenses on the state general budget. — KUNA



The Ministry of Education is working to provide all schools with textbooks for the next academic year. — KUNA photos



Acting Director of Supplies and Warehouses Department at the Ministry of Education, Nashmiya Al-Dhuwaih

Ministry distributes books, educational material to schools

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Education affirmed its keenness to meet all the needs of schools at various levels in all educational districts as part of its preparations for the new academic year 2024/2025. Acting Director of the Supplies and Warehouses Department Nashmiya Al-Dhuwaih said in a press statement that work is underway to distribute educational material to all schools in various districts for the upcoming academic year 2024/2025. Al-Dhuwaih added that the Supplies and Warehouses Department is keen to meet all the needs of learners and

teaching staff, thanking all employees of the department for their efforts and wishing students success in the new academic year.

Changing majors

In another development, the Ministry of Higher Education announced on Wednesday the conditions for changing majors and universities for students on foreign missions for the academic year 2024/2025. The Ministry stated on its account on the social media platform (X) that there are three conditions for changing the university major, the first of which is that the student on a mission may change the major for which he was sent only once during his study period.

The second condition is that the student studying on the annual system is allowed to change his major after successfully completing the preparatory or first year based on the recommendation of the Cultural Office and the ap-

proval of the Ministry. The third condition is that it is not permissible to change the major if it will affect the graduation date.

Regarding changing the university or college for the mission student, the Ministry stated that he/she has four conditions, the first of which is obtaining the approval of the Cultural Office, the second of which is that the university or college is recommended in the field of major by the National Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education.

The third condition is that the mission student does not have the right to change the university in the final year of study. Fourthly, changing the university or college should not exceed one time during the mission period and during the academic study, and in any case beyond that, the decision is up to the Ministry and upon the recommendation of the Cultural Office. — KUNA

Club instills the culture of volunteering in kids

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) said that the Little Volunteer Club has achieved its desired results by instilling the culture of volunteering among children and developing

the spirit of cooperation, leadership, and solving problems in the best possible way. In a statement to KUNA on the occasion of the conclusion of the club's activities this season, Vice Chairman of the Society Anwar Al-Hasawi said that the society is keen on promoting the culture of volunteering, sustainable development, and building a better future for new generations, pointing out the society's constant orientation to enhance efforts to instill the love of giving, charity, and volunteering.

The club included programs developed with the participation of trainers on first aid, time

management, health culture, ideal sports, dental health, and preserving the marine and land environment. The trainers developed a specialized program for children, such as awareness and education programs, workshops, lectures, awareness publications, and stories directed at children, which contributes to a large extent to educating children and occupying their free time with useful things.

Al-Hasawi called for using the available energies of children to enhance their volunteer work by involving them in volunteer activities to serve

the community. On behalf of all employees of the association, he extended his sincere thanks and gratitude to everyone who contributed and worked in the Little Volunteer Club for the service of humanity, pointing out that the association is keen to establish such projects as part of its plan to spread feelings of joy and happiness in the souls of children. The Little Volunteer Club, which was established by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society this year, began its work on July 22 with the participation of 100 children, both boys and girls. — KUNA

Amiri Diwan expresses gratitude to mourners

KUWAIT: The Amiri Diwan on Wednesday expressed gratitude to those offering condolences over the late Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. The Amiri Diwan added that the gratitude came on behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Al-Sabah Family.

Representative of Saudi King



KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah and the Al-Sabah Family received on Wednesday Prince Turki bin Mohammad Al-Saud, Minister of State and Member of the Council of Ministers of Saudi Arabia, leading a delegation representing King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud to offer their condolences on the passing of Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG).

Representative of UAE President



HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah and the Al-Sabah Family received Wednesday envoy of the President of the UAE Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Tolerance Sheikh Nahyan Mubarak Al-Nahyan and his accompanying delegation, who offered the UAE's condolences on the demise of Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Representative of Omani Sultan



KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah and the Al-Sabah Family received the representative of the Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tareq, Harb bin Thuwaini Al-Said and his accompanying delegation, who offered condolences on the demise of Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Cabinet mourns Sheikh Salem Al-Ali

Govt to develop Al-Mubarakiya marketplace

KUWAIT: The Cabinet expressed sincere condolences to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Al-Sabah Family over the passing away of the Commander of Kuwait National Guard His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. HH Sheikh Salem offered, during his lifetime, countless contributions and services to the homeland and the citizens, the Cabinet recalled during its weekly session, held at Bayan Palace on Tuesday under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

The meeting heard a presentation by Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr Noura Al-Mashaan on the project to develop Al-Mubarakiya marketplace, according to statements by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sharida Al-Maousherji. The project aims to build a hotel with a classical architecture, a shopping complex, a parking lot and numerous facilities at the site.

Minister of Social Affairs, Labor, Family and Childhood Affairs and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah briefed the meeting on the activities

of the committee on national cooperative projects, including the cooperatives' center for addiction treatment, the cooperatives' center for pediatric hereditary disease treatment and the social care complex.

The Cabinet session approved the minutes of the higher committee on verification of Kuwaiti citizenship, including citizenship withdrawal cases under Act 15 (1959) and the subsequent amendments. Based on the recommendations of the ministerial committee on legal affairs, the Cabinet decided to: Approve draft bills to amend Act 16 (1960), Act 31 (1970) and the Penal Code 16 (1960) to toughen the penalties for aggression on civil servants and prohibit dropping of complaints or barring reconciliation with the aggressor.

It also approved a draft bill to amend Act 35 (1976) on real estate lease and a draft bill to amend Act 20 (1981) on setting up a circuit court for quick handling of administrative disputes. The Cabinet agreed to present the draft bills to His Highness the Amir for final endorsement. Ministers also heard a presentation by Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Adel Al-Adwani on the preparations for the 2024-2025 educational year, including the school rehabilitation and maintenance works across the country. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah presides over a Cabinet weekly meeting on Tuesday at Bayan Palace. — KUNA



KUNA interns get acquainted with KRCS workflow, field job



A memorial shield given by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society to KUNA.



A group photo of KUNA interns with Kuwait Red Crescent Society officials. — KUNA photos

Arab officials discuss ongoing war in Gaza

MANAMA: Bahrain's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Zayani discussed with Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit and Jordan Foreign Minister Ayman Al-Safadi the latest security and political developments in the Arab countries and the Gaza Strip. During a telephone call, Al-Zayani discussed with Abul-Gheit the need of stopping the ongoing war, protecting civilians, and facilitating humanitarian aid access to Gazans, as well as de-escalation in the region, Bahrain's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The two sides also covered ongoing diplomatic efforts made by the Arab League's secretariat to back joint Arab action in all fields to promote the interest of all Arab countries, it added. In a separate statement, the Ministry further said Al-Zayani and his Jordanian peer shared, during another telephone call, talked about international and Arab efforts to halt the war in Gaza and its repercussions on regional security and stability.

The two ministers discussed deep-rooted historic sisterly relations between the two countries and their nations and means of enhancing bilateral cooperation in all fields. In addition, they focused on continuing joint coordination and consultation towards all challenges and current regional happenings to achieve their joint goals, it pointed out.

Meanwhile, the Saudi Cabinet renewed support for Saudi Arabia's efforts aiming to establish a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, restore peace in the Middle East region, end the occupation, and restore the legitimate rights of the people of Palestine. A Cabinet session on Tuesday, chaired by Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, was briefed on the outcome of the meeting between the Crown Prince and President of the Arab Parliament, according to a statement by Acting Minister of Information Ahmad bin Sulaiman Al-Rajhi. The Cabinet appreciated the role of the Arab Parliament on the international arena, reaffirming the Kingdom's desire to deepen cooperation with other Arab countries, promote security and stability, and boost sustainable development, Al-Rajhi added. — KUNA

KUWAIT: As part of its internship program for college students, KUNA took its interns on a field training trip to Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), to get acquainted with the workflow of the society. The interns interviewed KRCS officials on the local, regional and international roles of the society, as well as the mechanisms it adopts in response to crises. They also conversed about KRCS' future plans and cooperation with local and international entities. — KUNA



KUNA interns get to know the nature of KRCS' work during a tour of their headquarters.



CSC keen on raising efficiency of employees

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) affirmed on Wednesday its keenness to provide scientific and practical qualifications and raise the efficiency of Kuwaiti employees by enabling them to study and obtain qualifications in accordance with the public interest of the state and within the framework of the plan of government agencies.

The Commission organized a meeting for the representatives of ministries, government departments, and agencies under the patronage and attendance of the Head of the Commission, Dr. Issam Al-Rubaian, to explain the amendments made to some articles of the missions and study leave regulations, which were recently issued with the approval of the Civil Service Council.

He pointed out his keenness to hold more meetings with government agencies so as to explain and interpret the recent amendments and clarify the mechanism for entering data on the integrated systems of the Commission, indicating that these amendments come from the Commission's belief in the role played by the missions. — KUNA

MPW adds new service via Sahel

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) announced on Wednesday the addition of a new service via the unified government application for e-services (Sahel), which is requesting sewage connection for residential plots. The official spokesperson for the Ministry, Eng Ahmad Al-Saleh, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the Ministry, under the directives of Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Dr Noura Al-Mashaan, is working to remove obstacles the citizens face and to provide them with all the services they need. Al-Saleh added that the inclusion of the service comes within the Ministry's efforts to provide good services via the application. — KUNA



KRCS first aid plane departs for Sudan

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced on Wednesday the departure of the first aid plane as part of Kuwait's humanitarian air bridge. The aircraft, equipped by the KRCS, is loaded with 10 tons of aid materials, including protective equipment and tents to support and provide relief to the Sudanese people who were displaced by the ongoing conflicts, heavy rain, and floods. KRCS Deputy Chairman, Anwar Al-Hasawi told KUNA that this flight marks the continuation of Kuwait's relief efforts aimed at alleviating the suffering of the Sudanese people.

He added that the preparations and dispatch of this aid were part of the "Kuwait by Your Side" campaign, in line with the directives of the Amir His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, which underscores Kuwait's commitment to humanitarian work. Al-Hasawi emphasized that Sudan is currently experiencing heavy

rains that have flooded entire villages and caused the collapse of dozens of houses, stressing the importance of supporting the Sudanese people during these challenging times. — KUNA



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Japan PM Kishida to step down

Ukrainian wanted over Nord Stream sabotage blast

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SUMY: Ukrainian servicemen drive an armored military vehicle past destroyed border crossing point with Russia, in the Sumy region, on August 14, 2024. — AFP

Ukraine says advancing deeper into Russia

Kyiv to create 'buffer zone' in Kursk, arrange access for humanitarian assistance: Officials

MOSCOW/KYIV: Ukraine said on Wednesday its forces had advanced further into Russia's Kursk region in the biggest foreign incursion into Russia since World War Two, posing a dilemma for President Vladimir Putin according to US President Joe Biden. Thousands of Ukrainian troops rammed through the Russian border in the early hours of August 6 into Russia's western Kursk region in what Putin called a major provocation aimed at gaining a stronger hand in possible future ceasefire talks.

Ukraine has carved out a slice of the Russian border region of Kursk and though Putin said the Russian army would push out the Ukrainian troops, more than a week of intense battles have so far failed to oust them. Senior Kyiv officials said on Wednesday Ukraine was creating a "buffer zone" in Russia's Kursk region and plans to organize humanitarian assistance and evacuation corridors for civilians looking to go either to Russia or to Ukraine. Kyiv plans to arrange access for international humanitarian organizations likely to include the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations, officials

said. "In the 'buffer zone' food, medicine, and other items necessary for the civilian population should be provided," Ukraine's human rights commissioner Dmytro Lubinets said on Telegram.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Kyiv's forces were continuing to gain ground in the Kursk region and that they had taken another one to two kilometers on Wednesday. "We continue to advance further in the Kursk region," Zelenskyy wrote in a statement on Telegram, "from one to two kilometers in various areas since the start of the day. And more than 100 Russian prisoners of war in the same period."

Russia's defense ministry said 117 Ukrainian drones had been shot down within its territory overnight, mostly in the Kursk, Voronezh, Belgorod and Nizhny Novgorod regions. It said missiles had also been downed, and showed Sukhoi Su-34 bombers striking Ukrainian positions in the Kursk region. Later, the ministry said Russian forces had repelled a series of Ukrainian attacks inside the Kursk region, including at Russkoye Porechnoye 18 km (11 miles)

from the border, and pro-Russian war bloggers said the front has been stabilized.

The Ukrainian drone attack included strikes on four Russian military airfields in an attempt to undermine Russia's ability to attack Ukraine with gliding bombs, a Ukrainian security source told Reuters on condition of anonymity. Russia's National Guard said it was beefing up security at the Kursk nuclear power plant, located just 35 km (22 miles) from the fighting.

Ukraine's unprecedented incursion comes with major risks for Russia, Ukraine and the West, which is keen to avoid a direct confrontation between Russia and the US-led NATO military alliance that has helped arm Kyiv against Moscow. Biden said US officials were in constant touch with Ukraine over the incursion, which he said had "created a real dilemma" for Putin, who ordered thousands of troops into Ukraine in February 2022.

Russian state television said Russian forces were turning the tide on the Ukrainian forces, showed footage of successful attacks on Ukrainian positions and gave wide coverage of the evacuations of Rus-

sian civilians from the border zone. Ukraine's top commander, Oleksandr Syrskyi, said that the Russian town of Sudzha, a transshipment hub for Russian natural gas flowing to Europe via Ukraine, was fully under Ukrainian control. Natural gas was still pumping on Wednesday.

By bringing the war to Russia, Ukraine has forced nearly 200,000 Russians to evacuate border regions near the site where during World War Two in 1943 the Red Army defeated Nazi forces in one of the world's biggest ever tank battles. Putin said on Monday that Ukraine "with the help of its Western masters" was aiming to improve Kyiv's negotiating position ahead of possible peace talks. But he questioned what negotiations there could be with an enemy he accused of firing indiscriminately at Russian civilians and nuclear facilities. The offensive brings risks for Kyiv: Ukraine may leave other parts of the front on home soil exposed by dedicating forces to fighting in Russian sovereign territory. Russia controls 18 percent of Ukrainian territory and has been gradually advancing recently. — Reuters

India's top police take over medic murder probe

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA: India's top police agency Wednesday took over investigations into the brutal rape and murder of young medic, a killing that has sparked outrage and fellow doctors to go on strike. The 31-year-old woman's brutalized body was found last week in a state-run hospital in West Bengal's Kolkata, where she was a resident doctor. A subsequent autopsy confirmed sexual assault and homicide. In a petition to the court, the victim's parents have said that they suspected their daughter was gang-raped, according to Indian broadcaster NDTV.

While police have detained a man who worked at the victim's hospital helping people navigate busy queues, officers have been accused of alleged mis-handling of the case. Kolkata's High Court on Tuesday transferred the case to the elite Central Bureau of Investigation to "inspire public confidence".

Hospital services were disrupted in several Indian cities on Tuesday as thousands of doctors protested the murder. Doctors marched on Monday in Kolkata and the surrounding West Bengal state to denounce the killing, demanding justice for the victim and better security measures. Protests spread on Tuesday, with more than 8,000 government doctors in the



VIJAYAWADA: Doctors hold posters to protest the rape and murder of a young medic from Kolkata, at the Government General Hospital in Vijayawada on August 14, 2024. — AFP

western Maharashtra state, home to the financial capital of Mumbai, halting work in all hospital departments except emergency services, media said.

In the capital, New Delhi, junior doctors wearing white coats held posters that read, "Doctors are not punching bags," as they sat in protest outside a large government hospital, Reuters Television images showed. Similar protests in cities such as Lucknow, capital of the most populous state of Uttar Pradesh, and in the western tourist resort state of Goa hit

some hospital services, media said.

"Pedestrian working conditions, inhuman workloads and violence in the workplace are the reality," the Indian Medical Association (IMA), the biggest grouping of doctors in the country, told Health Minister J P Nadda in a letter released before they met him for talks on Tuesday. IMA General Secretary Anil Kumar J Nayak told the ANI news agency that his group had urged Nadda to step up security at medical facilities. — Agencies

Thai politics braces for shakeup after court sacks PM

BANGKOK: Thailand's Constitutional Court on Wednesday dismissed Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin and ruled he "grossly" violated ethics by appointing a minister who was once jailed, raising the specter of political upheaval and a shakeup in the governing alliance. Real estate tycoon Srettha is the fourth premier in 16 years to be removed in verdicts by the same court, underlining the central role Thailand's judiciary has played in its long political crisis.

Srettha's exit after less than a year in power means parliament must choose a new premier on Friday, with the prospect of more uncertainty in a country dogged by coups and court rulings that have brought down multiple governments and political parties. His Pheu Thai Party, the biggest in the co-

alition, moved quickly to try to shore up its alliance and said it would meet early on Thursday to choose its candidate for prime minister ahead of a special session of parliament to vote on a new premier.

Pheu Thai and its predecessors have borne the brunt of Thailand's turmoil, with two governments removed by coups in a long-running grudge match between the party's founders, the billionaire Shinawatra family, and their influential rivals in the conservative establishment and royalist military. The judges ruled 5-4 in favor of dismissing Srettha, saying he failed to perform his duty with integrity. "The accused is terminated as prime minister due to his lack of honesty," the judges said, adding his behavior "grossly breached ethical standards".

The decision was the court's second bombshell in the space of a week following its dissolution of the opposition Move Forward Party — the 2023 election winner — over a campaign to amend a law against insulting the crown, which it said risked undermining the constitutional monarchy. Move Forward has already regrouped as a new party, promising to further its anti-establishment agenda.



Thailand's former prime minister Srettha Thavasin

Both rulings came at a tricky time for an economy that Srettha struggled to jumpstart, with weak exports and consumer spending, sky-high household debt and more than a million businesses unable to access loans. "It's a negative surprise. It is a direct risk to the economy," said Trinity Securities analyst Nuttachart Mekmasin, outlining key policies including Srettha's 500 billion baht (\$14.3 billion) cash handout plan may be stalled. — Reuters

Palestinian newborn twins killed as father got birth certificates

DEIR AL-BALAH: Mohammed Abu Al-Qumsan had just picked up birth certificates for his newly-born twins when he found out they had been killed, along with his wife and her mother, by a Zionist strike on the Gaza apartment where they were sheltering. He waded the laminated documents, supposed to signify rare joy in the besieged Palestinian enclave, as a man held him while he wept at the morgue where their bodies were brought.

"My wife is gone, my two babies and my mother-in-law. I was told it's a tank shell on the apartment they were in, in a house we were displaced to," said Abu Al-Qumsan, 31, recalling the devastating phone call from people in the neighborhood. He and others carried his boy and girl, Asser and Aysel, who were wrapped in white shrouds — a common sight in Gaza, where the Zionist entity's land and air campaign has put hundreds of thousands of people regularly on the move in search of shelter.

A man prayed as the bodies were placed in the back of a car and a crowd gathered and people looked on from the balcony of one of Gaza's overwhelmed emergency rooms, at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir Al-Balah in the center of the coastal strip. Ten months after the Gaza war erupted, air strikes, artillery shells and severe shortages of medicine, food and clean water have brought one of the world's most densely populated places to its knees. "Today, it was registered in history that the occupation army targets newborn children who are barely four days old, twins along with their mother and grandmother," hospital doctor Khalil al-Daqran said.

The Zionist entity says it goes to great lengths to avoid civilian casualties and accuses Hamas of using human shields, charges the militants deny. The Zionist offensive has killed nearly 40,000 people and wounded more than 92,000, according to Gaza health authorities, and reduced much of the enclave to rubble. — Reuters

International

Ukrainian wanted over Nord Stream sabotage blast

Germany asks Poland to arrest diving instructor despite Ukraine, Russia denying involvement

Independence Day Message

By Dr Adarsh Swaika,
Ambassador of India to Kuwait

On the special occasion of India's 78th Independence Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin residing in Kuwait. I would also like to convey my profound gratitude to the leadership, government and people of Kuwait for their steadfast support for strong and friendly ties between our two countries. India remains committed to further strengthening and expanding this long-standing partnership.

As we celebrate 78 years of independence, it is a significant milestone in our pursuit of a resurgent and self-reliant India, the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'. Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi outlined Amrit Kaal: Vision 2047: a 25-year roadmap for India's development, aiming for India to become a developed nation by 2047. It is the responsibility of all Indian nationals to work diligently towards this goal.

Today, as we celebrate our Independence Day, we take pride in India's many achievements. Our commitment to equitable development has been the cornerstone of various socio-economic policies. The principles of democracy, pluralism, and unity in diversity are deeply embedded in Indian society, guided by the ancient philosophies of 'Sarvadharmā Sambhava' (equality of all religions) and 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family), which also shape our foreign policy.

India today is a land of a billion opportunities, with a robust economy that has made significant strides despite global challenges. Our IT sector delivers digital solutions worldwide, and our startup ecosystem is thriving with innovation and technological advancements. India is among the top five global economies, a leader in science and technology, a hub of innovation and IT, known as the 'Pharmacy of the World,' and possesses world-class production and manufacturing capabilities. We are also a key global partner in addressing challenges such as climate change and ensuring food and health security through resilient supply chains.

There has never been a better time to invest in India, with unprecedented momentum in modernizing our physical and digital infrastructure. The 'Make in India, Make for the World' initiative is driving our economy forward, supported by business-friendly reforms that unlock the country's true potential. India has made significant improvements in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings, the Global Innovation Index, and is recognized as a key driver of the global economy.

On the international stage, India continues to play a vital role in promoting global peace, stability, and prosperity. Our leadership in global bodies has been significant, particularly during the past year's successful hosting of the G20 and SCO summits. India believes in resolving disputes through dialogue and diplomacy, upholding multilateralism, and taking leadership on global issues of relevance and concern such as cross-border terrorism, climate change, energy and food security, etc., and reforming multilateral institutions like the UN Security Council. Bilateral relations with Kuwait continue to progress, with increased engagement at various levels and growing trade and investments. Our cultural connections resonate well with our Kuwaiti friends, and people-to-people contacts form the foundation of our bilateral relations.

The Indian Embassy prioritizes the welfare and well-being of the large Indian community in Kuwait, serving as a 'Home Away from Home.' I extend my appreciation to Indian community associations, professional bodies, cultural groups, and media representatives for their efforts in supporting the community and strengthening India-Kuwait relations. On this proud and joyous occasion of India's 78th Independence Day, I wish every Indian in Kuwait and all friends of India in Kuwait, success, good health and happiness.

Millions of kids facing extreme...

Continued from Page 1

comparing average temperatures in the 2020-2024 period to the 1960s. Such hot days - as well as the means to cope with high temperatures, such as air conditioning - affect the entire world, it noted. Children in West and Central Africa are the most exposed, with 123 million children - 39 percent of the kids in the region - facing a third of each year with 95-degree days or higher.

At the higher end, in Mali, for example - where air conditioning is out of reach for millions and blackouts can leave fans idled - more than 200 days a year can reach 95 degrees or higher. In Latin America, meanwhile, 48 million children are facing double the number of 95-degree or higher days than 60 years ago. Worldwide, the "trajectory is getting worse and worse for these children," Caprani said. Children "are fragile and they breathe very quickly. They can't even sweat like an adult does. They are much more vulnerable to heat stress and it can be literally deadly," she added.

High temperatures can contribute to child malnutrition and leave kids more vulnerable to disease, especially malaria and dengue, which spread in warm climates. UNICEF warned. Excessive heat can also negatively impact neurodevelopment and mental health. UNICEF is calling for increased education for parents to know the signs of heat stroke, better training for medical personnel, and investing in air conditioning in schools - where, even when classes aren't canceled, learning can be made difficult by hot conditions. — AFP

BERLIN: German prosecutors have issued an arrest warrant for a Ukrainian man over the 2022 sabotage of the Nord Stream gas pipelines, German media reported Wednesday, with Polish prosecutors confirming they had received the warrant.

In the two years since the mysterious explosions hit the pipelines, speculation has been rife around who was responsible with Ukraine and Russia both vehemently denying any involvement. But German media reported on Wednesday that a European arrest warrant had been requested for a Ukrainian man, a diving instructor whose last known address was in Poland.

The Polish prosecutor's office told AFP it had received the warrant for a man named as "Volodymyr Z" in June "in connection with proceedings against him in Germany". However, the man left for Ukraine at the beginning of July before he could be detained, it said. German investigators believe the man was one of the divers who planted explosive devices on the Nord Stream pipelines, according to the ARD broadcaster and newspapers Die Zeit and the Sueddeutsche Zeitung.

They have also identified two more Ukrainians, a man and a woman, who they believe acted as divers in the attacks, the reports said — believed to be a married couple who run a diving school in Ukraine. However, no arrest warrants have yet been issued for them.

Different German media outlets reported Wednesday that they had reached Volodymyr Z and the woman in question, who both denied any involvement. The German federal prosecution service declined to comment when contacted by AFP. German government spokesman Wolfgang Buechner also did not comment directly on the reports but stressed that German prosecutors' "investigations are being carried out according to the law regardless of who is concerned and which results they lead to".

Buechner told reporters at a press conference that the results of the probe "of course do not change anything about the fact that Russia is waging an illegal war of aggression against Ukraine". Polish prosecutors said the suspect had been able to leave Poland because German investigators did not "include him in the database of wanted persons". "The Polish Border

Bangladeshi lawyer recounts Hasina's secret jail

DHAKA: Blindfolded, handcuffed and bundled out of his secret prison for the first time in eight years, Bangladeshi barrister Ahmad Bin Quasem held his breath and listened for the sound of a cocked pistol. Instead, he was tossed from a car and into a muddy ditch on Dhaka's outskirts — alive, at liberty, and with no knowledge of the national upheaval that had prompted his abrupt release. "That's the first time I got fresh air in eight years," Quasem, 40, told AFP. "I thought they were going to kill me."

Sheikh Hasina, the premier responsible for Quasem's abduction and disappearance, had fled the country hours earlier. Her August 5 departure brought a sudden curtain down on 15 years of autocracy that included the mass detention and extrajudicial killing of her political opponents. But Quasem was in the dark.

He had been confined in the "House of Mirrors" (Aynagar), a facility run by army intelligence, given its name because its detainees were never supposed to see any other person besides themselves. Throughout his long incarceration, Quasem was shackled around the clock in windowless solitary confinement. His jailers were under strict instruction not to relay news from the outside world.

'Screaming'

Elsewhere in the detention center, guards blared music throughout the day that drowned out the Islamic call to prayer from nearby mosques. It prevented Quasem, a devout Muslim, from knowing when he should offer his prayers — and from keeping track of how long had elapsed since his abduction. When the music was off, he heard the anguished sounds of other detainees. "Slowly, slowly, I could realize that I am not alone," he said. "I could hear people crying. I could hear people being

Qatar to host Gaza truce...

Continued from Page 1

Earlier, the Zionist police said they had shot dead a Palestinian teenager who was "climbing the wall" separating Jerusalem from the West Bank to "throw Molotov cocktails". The 16-year-old was taken to hospital for treatment but was pronounced dead, the police said in a statement shortly after midnight Tuesday.

US President Joe Biden's administration on Tuesday approved more than \$20 billion in new weapons sales to the Zionist entity, brushing aside pressure from rights activists to stop arms deliveries over the death toll in Gaza. In a notification to Congress, the State Department said it had approved a sale of 50 F-15 fighter jets to the Zion-

Military show marks 3 yrs of...

Continued from Page 1

Their government remains unrecognized by any other state, with restrictions on women, who bear the brunt of policies the United Nations has called "gender apartheid", remaining a key sticking point.

"Three years have passed since the dreams of girls have been buried," Madina, a 20-year-old former university student in Kabul, told AFP. "It's a bitter feeling that every year, the celebration of this day reminds us of the efforts, memories, and goals we had for our future." Prime Minister Mohammad Hassan Akhund, who



DUEODDE, Denmark: One of four gas leaks is seen at one of the damaged Nord Stream gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea in this 2022 photo. — AFP

Guard had no knowledge and no grounds for detaining Volodymyr Z," the prosecutor's office told AFP.

Yacht plot

Nord Stream's two pipelines had been at the center of geopolitical tensions as Russia cut gas supplies to Europe in suspected retaliation for Western sanctions over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Four large gas leaks were discovered in September 2022 in the pipelines off the Danish island of Bornholm, with seismic institutes recording two underwater explosions just before.

While the leaks were in international waters, two were in Denmark's exclusive economic zone and two in Sweden's. The pipelines were not in operation when the leaks occurred, but they still contained gas which spewed up to the surface and into the atmosphere.



DHAKA: The executed leader of Jamaat-e-Islami Mir Quasem Ali's son Ahmad Bin Quasem speaks during an interview with AFP. — AFP

tortured, I could hear people screaming."

Human Rights Watch last year said security forces had committed "over 600 enforced disappearances" since Hasina came to power in 2009. Rumors abounded of a secret black site housing some of that number, but Aynagar was unknown to the public until the publication abroad of a 2022 whistleblower report.

Hasina's government consistently maintained afterwards that it did not exist. It also denied committing enforced disappearances, claiming some of those reported missing had drowned in the Mediterranean while trying to reach Europe.

Kidnapped before trial

Quasem is certain of the reason for his abduction. His father, Mir Quasem Ali, a senior member of Bangladesh's largest Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami, was on trial that year. Ali was accused of running a paramilitary group that tortured pro-independence Bangladeshis during the country's 1971 liberation war against Pakistan.

He and several others were indicted by a war crimes tribunal, ostensibly to bring justice to the victims of that devastating conflict, but widely seen as a means for Hasina to eliminate political opponents. Whether or not Ali was guilty, there was no way of knowing from the mockery of justice that accompanied his prosecution. Quasem, called to the bar in London and then aged

32, was running his father's defense. His regular media briefings on procedural lapses and judicial bias at the tribunal, echoed by rights groups and UN experts, put a target on his back. Plainclothes men entered his house one night, snatched him from his family, dragged him down the stairs and threw him in a waiting car.

"I never could believe in my wildest dreams that they would subject me to disappearance just days before my father's execution," Quasem said. "I kept telling them, 'Do you know who I am? I need to be there to conduct my case. I need to be there with my family.'" Quasem's father was hanged four weeks later. Quasem did not know until about three more years had passed, when one of his jailers accidentally let it slip.

Like eight lifetimes"

After the car that had carried him out of prison sped away, Quasem walked through the night to try and find his way home. By sheer coincidence, he came across a medical clinic operated by a charity for which his father had once been a trustee. He was recognized by a staff member and a phone number was frantically tracked down to contact his family, who came rushing to be with him.

But first, the excited chatter of those around him filled Quasem in on the weeks of student protests that had resulted in his release. "This entire thing, it was made possible by few teenagers," he said. "When I see these children, these kids, leading the way," he added. "I am really hopeful this will be the opportunity where Bangladesh finds a new direction."

His wife Tahmina Akhter said the publicity around Quasem's case left her feeling ostracized by other mothers at their children's school. The family was reliably hounded every anniversary of his disappearance and warned to stop publicizing it. His two young daughters were three and four years old when he was taken away. The elder witnessed his abduction and is still scared of certain authority figures, such as the private security guard posted outside her school. The younger did not remember him at all. "It didn't feel like eight years for us," Quasem's mother Ayesha Khatoon told AFP. "It felt like eight lifetimes." — AFP

had "completed its work and published a plan for the new Nahal Heletz settlement in Gush Etzion", a bloc of settlements south of Jerusalem.

All of the Zionist entity's settlements in the West Bank, occupied since 1967, are considered illegal under international law, regardless of whether they have Zionist planning permission. "No anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist decision will stop the development of settlements," Smotrich, who lives in a settlement, posted on X. "We will continue to fight against the dangerous project of creating a Palestinian state by creating facts on the ground."

The anti-settlement group Peace Now denounced the plan, calling it a "wholesale attack" on an area "renowned for its ancient terraces and sophisticated irrigation systems, evidence of thousands of years of human activity". Over the years, dozens of unauthorized settlements have sprung up in the West Bank. Excluding east Jerusalem, some 490,000 Zionist settlers now live in the territory, alongside some three million Palestinians. — Agencies

had been scheduled to appear at Bagram, praised the Taliban authorities' victory over "Western occupiers" in a statement read by his chief of staff. The Taliban government has "the responsibility to maintain Islamic rule, protect property, people's lives and the respect of our nation", he said.

Security has been a priority for Taliban authorities as they consolidated their power over the past three years, implementing laws based on their strict interpretation of Islam. However, attacks by the Islamic State group remain a threat and extra security was deployed in Kabul and in the Taliban's spiritual home of Kandahar ahead of the "day of victory". A convoy of military vehicles and arms also paraded near the southern city.

Helicopters flew over the Ghazi stadium in Kabul, where hundreds of men gathered to watch speeches and an exhibition of athletics and performances of Taleban anthems. Rugby player Samiullah Akmal praised the day's events, saying it was "better than other years". "As a young man, I see Afghanistan's future is bright... we are independent and the people surrounding us are our own."

The stadium was full of people from surrounding provinces, Noorullah Noori, Minister of Borders and Tribal Affairs, told AFP, adding that there was a feeling of "unity". "Whether people are members of Islamic Emirate or not... they should be grateful for this blessing from God, they should stand behind the Islamic Emirate." The black-and-white standard decorated streets and trucks full of smiling men that choked Kabul streets. Happy young boys carried a large flag in the Green Zone, once a secure enclave of foreign embassies, saying "We're ready to do a suicide attack!" — AFP

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International

Japan PM Kishida to step down

Ruling party to choose new leader after scandals, inflation tanked premier's ratings

TOKYO: Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said on Wednesday he would step down next month, succumbing to public disaffection over political scandals and rising living costs that marred his three-year term, and setting off a scramble to replace him. "Politics cannot function without public trust," he told a press conference to reveal his decision not to seek re-election as the leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). "I made this heavy decision thinking of the public, with the strong will to push political reform forward."

The LDP will hold a contest in September to replace him as president of the party, and, by extension, as prime minister. Kishida's ratings dipped after he took office in 2021 following revelations about the LDP's ties to the controversial Unification Church. His popularity took another hit when a slush fund of unrecorded political donations made at LDP fundraising events came to light. He also faced public discontent as wages failed to keep pace with rising living costs as Japan finally shook off years of deflationary pressure.

"An LDP incumbent prime minister cannot run in the presidential race unless he's assured of a victory," said Koichi Nakano, a professor of political science at Sophia University. "It's like the grand champion yokozunas of sumo. You don't just win,

but you need to win with grace." His successor as LDP leader will face the task of restoring the public's confidence in the party and tackle the rising cost of living, escalating geopolitical tensions with China, and the potential return of Donald Trump as US president next year.

Monetary policy and military buildup

Through his stint as Japan's eighth-longest serving post-war leader, Kishida broke from previous economic policy by eschewing corporate profit-driven trickle-down economics to set his sights on boosting household income, including wage hikes and promoting share ownership. He led Japan out of the COVID pandemic with massive stimulus spending and also appointed academic Kazuo Ueda as head of the Bank of Japan (BOJ) to guide the country out of his predecessor's radical monetary stimulus.

In July, the BOJ unexpectedly raised interest rates as inflation took hold, contributing to stock market instability and sending the yen sharply higher. Kishida's departure could mean tighter fiscal and monetary conditions, depending on the candidate, said Shoki Omori, chief Japan desk strategist at Mizuho Securities in Tokyo. "In short, risk-assets, particularly equities, will likely be hit the most," he said.

Kishida's premiership was also marked by a changing security environment that spurred Japan to revisit its traditionally pacifist policy. He unveiled Japan's biggest military buildup since World War Two with a commitment to double defense spending aimed at deterring neighboring China from pursuing its territorial ambitions in East Asia through military force.

At Washington's prodding, Kishida also mended Japan's strained ties with South Korea, enabling the two and their mutual ally, the United States, to pursue deeper security co-operation against the threat from North Korea's missile and nuclear weapons programs. "Personally, I wish he continued a little bit more as prime minister," said Naoya Okamoto, a 22-year-old office worker in Tokyo, the capital. "Maybe he was stressed (with the low ratings), and with all the circumstances around him, I guess he has no choice but to step down."

Next leader

Former defense minister Shigeru Ishiba has already thrown his hat in the ring as a prospective replacement for Kishida, saying he would like to "fulfill his duty" if he gained enough support, public broadcaster NHK said. Other names floated as potential contenders include Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa, Digital Minister Taro Kono, and former



TOKYO: Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida arrives to speak at a press conference at the prime minister's office in Tokyo on August 14, 2024. — AFP

Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi.

Experts say the LDP will have to pick a fresh face that breaks from the scandals if it is to survive a general election due by the third quarter of 2025. "If the LDP picks its next leader in a way that disregards public criticism against political funding scandals, the party could suffer a crushing defeat," said political analyst Atsuo Ito. "The party must choose someone young who has no ties with the present administration and thus can present a new LDP." — Reuters

Korean peninsula swelters, Seoul nears 'tropical nights' record

SEOUL: A streak of super-hot tropical nights is set to break a century-old South Korean weather record, according to official data released Wednesday, as the peninsula bakes in a prolonged heat wave. North Korean authorities also issued a warning over "fierce heat" with temperatures of up to 37 degrees Celsius (99 Fahrenheit), as AFP images showed Pyongyang residents using umbrellas and portable fans to keep cool.

Much of the world is enduring a summer of extreme heat, with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warning last month that humanity is suffering an "extreme heat epidemic" and calling for action to limit the impacts of heat waves intensified by climate change. The so-called tropical nights phenomenon refers to when the temperature does not drop below 25 degrees Celsius (77 Fahrenheit) overnight, according to the Korea Meteorological Administration.

Seoul experienced its 24th consecutive tropical night into Wednesday, marking the second-longest streak since modern weather observation began in 1907. With forecasters saying the heat wave is set to continue into next week, the country will likely break the record — 26 consecutive days — by Saturday.

According to data from Seoul's interior ministry,



SEOUL: A woman splashes herself with water in the Cheonggye stream in Seoul on August 14, 2024. — AFP

21 people have died from suspected heat-related causes so far this year, with hundreds of thousands of livestock also perishing. The intense heat has led to the cancellation of three professional baseball games in the South this month, the first such cancellations in the league's 43-year history.

South Korea's temperature is "rising at a steep pace," Chang Dong-eon, the head of the Korean Meteorological Administration told the Yonhap news agency, adding that "signs of climate change on the peninsula are stronger" than elsewhere. "The average temperature of the Korean peninsula over the past three decades (1991 to 2020) has risen by 1.6 degrees compared to the 1981 to 2010 period," Chang said.

'Extreme heat'

South Korea's electricity demand hit an all-time high on Monday as the country's population battled the ongoing heat wave with air conditioners and fans. Usage reached 102.3 gigawatts Monday, surpassing the previous record of 100.5 gigawatts set last August, according to the Korea Power Exchange.

By contrast, the impoverished North has long endured power shortages, and experts say most residents have no access to air conditioning. "In our country we witnessed the fierce heat in recent days," Kim Kwang Hyok, an official at North Korea's State Hydro-Meteorological Administration, told AFP.

Central areas including Pyongyang have been affected, he said. "Severe heat of 33 to 37 (degrees Celsius) is foreseen in some areas. That's why we announced the warning for this fierce heat until August 14," he added. The average number of "extreme heat" days experienced by South Korean cities has doubled over the last two decades, Greenpeace Korea said this week. "This clearly illustrates the rising temperatures globally, leading to greater uncertainty and more widespread damage," said Greenpeace activist Lee Sun-ju.

The average global temperature over the past 12 months (July 2023 to June 2024) is the highest ever recorded, according to the European Copernicus Climate Change Service. Scientists emphasize that repeated heatwaves are a hallmark of global warming linked to climate change. — AFP



ABIDJAN: Evicted residents gather in the street with their belongings after the demolition of their houses. — AFP

Ivory Coast urban clean-up drive harms Abidjan poor

ABIDJAN: Ivorian sandwich seller Nadege Oulaye watched her livelihood being smashed up as police took a sledgehammer to her small stall in the city of Abidjan before her eyes. Her kiosk is one of many informal businesses fallen prey to a new police brigade devoted to fighting "urban disorder" in Ivory Coast's economic capital.

Since the end of July, nearly 300 police officers have been crisscrossing its main thoroughfares, hammer and truncheon in hand, to smash the booths of telephone credit vendors or dispute with street vendors who resist them. Those officers are also in charge of enforcing a recent ban on begging, fly-posting and urinating in the streets — a rule they themselves sometimes flout publicly. Oulaye, who admits never seeking permission to set up her sandwich stall, is now out of work. Her business brought in between 35,000 and 40,000 CFA francs (58 and 67 dollars) a month — or nearly a quarter of her household's income. "What are we going to do?" she despaired.

Like Oulaye, nearly seven million urban-dwelling Ivorians make their livings off the informal economy, according to the World Bank, outstripping the number of those formally employed in the country of 29 million people. They have become just one of the victims of a government drive — of which the urban disorder force is just a part — carried out in the name of "cleaning up" and "developing" Abidjan, a metropolis of six million people.

'Excessive use of force'

Since January, authorities have carried out mass demolitions of precarious shantytowns, expelling their residents. Launched by new governor Ibrahim Cisse Baongo, an ally of President Alassane Ouattara, the campaign has drawn condemnation from the country's opposition and rights groups.

As similar expulsions have taken place in the past, the dispossessions are defended by the authorities as a means to reduce the toll from floods and landslides, which kill dozens each year. But Amnesty International, which said that "tens of thousands of people" have been evicted since January, condemned the police's "excessive use of force". In a survey of four Abidjan districts, Amnesty said that all the people it spoke to "said they were not properly consulted on the conditions of the evictions nor duly notified of the day of the demolitions".

In July, clashes broke out in the Adjame district between security forces and hundreds of residents of expelled to make way for the widening of a road, with at least one mechanical digger set ablaze. Two people died at the scene, Ivory Coast's ruling party said shortly afterwards, without giving details about the deaths. "We're not against what the government is doing, but there's a better way to go about it," Adjame resident Melissa Adoba said.

Besides homes and businesses, at least two schools were destroyed, preventing around 1,300 students from attending classes "with no solution in sight", Amnesty said. After an outcry, the government announced in March it would help people expelled from their homes find alternative accommodation, with assistance including a 250,000 CFA franc per household payment.

But by August, "thousands of forcibly evicted families remained to be rehoused and/or compensated," Amnesty said, urging an "immediate end" to the expulsions. Ivory Coast's National Council for Human Rights has denounced the "operations carried out in disregard of fundamental rights" and "without consultation". — AFP

Athens fire reignites questions over 'fire every year'

ATHENS: Climate change may have played a part in the latest massive wildfire just outside Athens, but some critics blame inadequate equipment and lack of planning for what has become an annual crisis. The wildfire, which started on Sunday in Varnavas, 35 kilometers (22 miles) from the capital, had by Tuesday killed one woman, caused widespread damage and sent thousands fleeing from their homes.

The blaze even came as close as the suburbs of Athens before firefighters got the upper hand. "People shouldn't be burnt alive in 2024," said Marianna Chatzieleftheriou at a small far-left rally on the crisis outside parliament on Tuesday. For her the death was a "political crime", and one she blamed on the conservative government. "There are not many firefighters ... all the equipment is poor. And the actions start at a late stage," the 27-year-old doctor told AFP.

Fellow protester Marietta Papadopoulou said the water-bombing planes were old models — and there were not enough of them. "I'm really angry ...," the 58-year-old gym teacher told AFP. "The government doesn't take the necessary measures to protect the environment, cities, villages."

Some sections of the press also attacked the response from the authorities. "Enough is enough" said the front page of Greece's top-selling centrist daily Ta Nea. The liberal Kathimerini said the blaze "had left huge destruction (and) unanswered questions". "This year too, we are spectators of the same play," said Nikos Androurakis, head of the socialist opposition party PASOK, as he visited some of the devastated sites on Tuesday. "We cannot experience such tragic consequences every year. We need to do more and as soon as possible."

'Difficult to contain'

"Every year we are doing our best to improve," said Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, who cut short his holiday to deal with the crisis. "But unfortunately conditions are becoming more difficult," he



PENTELI: Locals cry as they try to save some belongings during a wildfire near Penteli, on August 12, 2024. — AFP

added after an emergency cabinet meeting Tuesday.

This year's summer wildfire season has seen dozens of blazes, as the Mediterranean country recorded its warmest winter and the hottest June and July since reliable data collection began in 1960. Scientists say that human-induced fossil fuel emissions are worsening the length, frequency and intensity of heatwaves across the world.

Government spokesman Pavlos Marinakis said Greece had successfully dealt with numerous forest fires since May — even though their number was up by half from the same period last year, from over 2,300 to over 3,500. "The Varnavas fire occurred on a level five extreme risk day ... This means that if a fire does occur, it is extremely difficult to contain," he said. Marinakis said Greece now had "17,500 firefighters — more than ever before". In April, Greece also unveiled a 2.1-billion-euro upgrade to its civil protection infrastructure, touted as the country's most ambitious to date. Mostly EU-funded, it in-

cludes new water bombing aircraft, helicopters, fire engines, thermal cameras and over 100 surveillance drones. But none of that will arrive until next year — and the first planes from an order of seven new DHC-515 water bombers will be delivered in 2027.

Civil Protection Minister Vassilis Kikilias said the original fire Sunday spread even though a water-bombing aircraft reached the area in just five minutes. "The fire spread very quickly because of the strong wind," firefighter Marinis Peristeropoulos told AFP near one of the hotspots on Monday. Fellow firefighter Asterios, 45, added: "The pine trees are like a match. And climate change has brought desert to the woods."

Evangelos Kouris, an electrical engineer from the Athens suburbs, also blamed the rainless, "extremely hot, dry summer". His T-shirt smudged with soot, he had spent the night from Monday to Tuesday putting out small fires with neighbors. "The environment is too flammable," the 51-year-old told AFP. — AFP

local governments nonetheless imposed "no-catch" zones affecting tens of thousands of fishermen in the bay. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources has urged the public to "exercise caution when consuming fish from the affected areas due to the risk of petrochemical contamination".

One of the worst oil spills in Philippine history occurred in February 2023, when a tanker carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil sank off the central island of Mindoro. Diesel fuel and thick oil from that vessel contaminated the waters and beaches along the coast of Oriental Mindoro province, devastating the fishing and tourism industries. The oil dispersed over hundreds of kilometers of waters famed for having some of the most diverse marine life in the world. — AFP

Philippines begins transfer of oil cargo from sunken tanker

MANILA: The Philippines said Wednesday it began retrieving 1.4 million liters of industrial fuel oil from a sunken tanker off Manila Bay that for weeks has threatened to cause an environmental disaster. The Philippine coast guard said a private company is transferring the cargo, an operation the government earlier indicated could take

one week to complete. "The syphoning operation for the first tank is ongoing," a coast guard media officer told reporters.

The Filipino-flagged tanker capsized and sank off Manila on July 25, killing one crew member as the ship tried to return to port amid bad weather fueled by Typhoon Gaemi. It was carrying eight tanks of industrial fuel oil when it sank. It took authorities three weeks to control the spillage of the cargo and install the equipment to remove the fuel oil from the vessel that now rests at the bottom of the bay about 34 meters (112 feet) below the waves.

The coast guard had warned the release of the cargo onto the bay would be an "environmental catastrophe" and the country's worst oil spill. The coast guard later said the spillage has been minimal, but

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2024

Kuwait, Uzbekistan eye MoU to foster trade and investment cooperation

KCCI receives Uzbekistan FM and economic delegation, discusses means to deepen ties



KCCI officials and Uzbekistan economic delegation hold talks.

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Wednesday received an economic delegation from the Republic of Uzbekistan, led by Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov.

In a welcoming speech, Firas Al-Oda, Assistant Director General of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry stated that the visit of the Uzbek delegation following the Kuwaiti-Uzbek Investment and Trade Forum held last May indicates the strength of the relations between the countries and Uzbekistan's commitment to deepening these ties with Kuwaiti companies and investors.

He added that over the past twenty years, opportunities between the two countries have steadily grown due to the shared visions and efforts of both countries, pointing out that Kuwait seeks to deepen relations and uncover hidden opportunities.

For his part, Uzbek Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov emphasized the strength of the bilateral relations between the two countries, noting that they have significantly developed in recent years, affirming that his country is rich in significant investment opportunities such as in food and agricultural products, light industries, medical supplies, confectionery, and poultry farming, hoping Kuwaiti investors would become well-acquainted with these opportu-

nities available in Uzbekistan.

For his part, Saleh Alazemi, Assistant Undersecretary for International Organizations and Foreign Trade Affairs Acting at the Kuwait's Ministry of Commerce and Industry, said that international challenges in recent years have played a significant role in changing many concepts of international trade policy, noting that the importance of adopting modern trade policies and reinforcing the principles of free trade and multilateral international agreements is a must to increase trade exchanges and diversify its sources.

On the sidelines of the meeting, an Uzbek product exhibition was inaugurated, which was attended by the Kuwaiti side in addition to the delegation that included 60 business people and 15 officials representing the Uzbekistan Ministries of Industry, Trade, Finance and Health.

"The Uzbek exhibition is considered an entry point for further bilateral cooperation between the two friendly countries," he said, adding that the proposal of a draft memorandum of understanding in the field of trade cooperation between the two countries can be the first step to increase trade exchange rates. He indicated that the first step of this cooperation will begin with the establishment of a joint trade committee between the two countries, with the private sector playing a central role.



KUWAIT: (Left to right) Firas Al-Oda, Assistant Director General of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Uzbek Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov and Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Hayat touring the exhibition.



MOUNTAIN VIEW, US: Influencers view new Google products during the Made By Google event at Google's Bay View campus in Mountain View, California, on August 13, 2024. — AFP

Google launches new Pixel 9 phones as AI race heats up

MOUNTAIN VIEW, US: Google on Tuesday unveiled new Pixel 9 smartphones, its latest salvo in the scramble by Big Tech to corner the market on nascent artificial intelligence. The Silicon Valley search giant has been racing against Microsoft, OpenAI and others to lead in AI since the 2022 release of ChatGPT ignited intense interest in the technology.

Pixel 9 account for a tiny sliver of the global smartphone market dominated by Samsung and Apple, but Google argued its new line is a chance to answer what — after all the hype — AI can actually do for customers. "I understand people's skepticism," Google senior vice president of devices Rick Osterloh said at company's campus in Mountain View, California.

"There have been so many promises, so many 'coming soon,' and not enough real world helpfulness when it comes to AI — which is why today we're getting real." But AI-infused Pixels also raise questions about how well Google is safeguarding personal data, and how regulators will react to the

tech giant's push to make users even more dependent on its platform.

A US judge last week handed Google a major legal blow, ruling in a landmark anti-trust case that it has maintained a monopoly with its dominant search engine. The court decision against the tech giant could alter how the sector operates in the future.

The Pixel weaves users more tightly into Google's online services, taking a page from Apple's strategy with the iPhone and App Store. Pixel 9 models use Google's Gemini AI capabilities, offering consumers an alternative to the iPhone's "Apple Intelligence" AI, as well as the company's alliance with ChatGPT-maker OpenAI. The phones can help with daily tasks like booking appointments or finding old files in the mountain of data people tend to save, according to Pixel senior director of product management Shenaz Zack.

A Pixel might be used to take a photo of a concert poster, for example, then check whether that calendar date is open and draft a message inviting friends to join. And conversations with Google's AI on Pixel will be more free flowing, allowing interruptions or sudden topic shifts, the company said. New Pixels will also be able to take notes during phone calls, automatically notifying the other party first. Google said it has prioritized privacy, from protecting data used by its AI to letting users create password-protected private spaces for apps and other content. — AFP

Gulf Bank WAMD service for secure money transfers

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has announced the launch of its new "WAMD" service for transferring money using a phone number via the bank's mobile app. This service is designed to be easy, fast, and secure. Customers simply select the recipient's mobile number, specify the transfer amount, and send the money directly. The "WAMD" instant payment system, implemented by the Shared Electronic Banking Services Company (KNET) under the supervision of the Central Bank of Kuwait, enables quick and straightforward money transfers.

Bader Al-Ali, Gulf Bank's Deputy General Manager of Consumer Banking, commented that the "WAMD" service offers customers a new way to transfer funds using the bank's mobile app. The app provides a wide range of payment and transfer features that are among the best and easiest in the banking industry. Al-Ali emphasized that the Gulf Bank app offers a variety of exceptional banking services tailored to different customer segments, including exclusive services for Gulf Bank customers. The bank is continually developing and innovating to provide even more services.

He also noted that the Gulf Bank mobile app



Bader Al-Ali

marks a significant advancement in the bank's digital transformation journey, enhancing various services and all stages of banking transactions. This makes banking with Gulf Bank more convenient, accessible to everyone, everywhere, at any time, through a simple, fast, and secure interface.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience. Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

British annual inflation rises first time in 2024

LONDON: Britain's annual inflation rate rose in July for the first time this year and is now back above the Bank of England's target, official data showed on Wednesday.

The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) climbed 2.2 percent in the 12 months to July compared with a 2.0-percent annual gain in June, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

The rise was "mainly driven by prices of gas

and electricity falling by less than a year ago", the ONS added. The faster inflation rate could keep the Bank of England from cutting interest rates quickly, according to analysts. Earlier this month, the BoE trimmed borrowing costs for the first time since the onset of the COVID pandemic after UK inflation retreated from four-decade highs back towards its 2-percent target. Wednesday's data "may not alleviate the Bank's concerns about persistent price pressures entirely", noted Ruth Gregory, deputy chief UK economist at research group Capital Economics. "And it probably isn't enough to prompt a back-to-back interest rate cut in September."

Gregory added, however, that she expects the BoE to cut again this year, bringing its main interest rate down to 4.5 percent from 5.0. — AFP

Egypt Kuwait Holding achieves net profit of \$90 million in H1 2024

Company records total revenues of \$321 million

KUWAIT: Egypt Kuwait Holding Company (EKH) on Wednesday announced its financial results for the period ending June 30, 2024, prepared in accordance with Egyptian accounting standards. The company recorded total revenues of \$321 million during the first half of 2024, with a gross profit margin of 42 percent, and net profit of \$100 million, resulting in a net profit margin of 31 percent. The net profit attributable to the company's shareholders rose to \$90 million.

Commenting on the Group's performance during the first half of 2024, EKH Chairman Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi stated: "The results of the first half of 2024 reflect the company's resilience and ability to seize opportunities, achieving exceptional profitability despite regional challenges."

Al-Kharafi emphasized the group's commitment to expansion in 2024, noting the recent agreement with the Egyptian Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources which expands the concession areas granted to North Sinai Petroleum Company – an EKH subsidiary that holds the North Sinai offshore concession, with the aim is to enhance exploration efforts and increase gas production in the coming period.

He highlighted that the agreement follows the company's success in discovering and commencing production from the expanded concession's first exploratory well, KSE-2, in June 2024. The second well, Aton-1, is expected to commence production in September 2024, further contributing positively to the performance of our subsidiary and EKH overall. This demonstrates our ability to realize the benefits of strategic investments made in recent years, which have played a key role in diversifying and strengthening our investment portfolio.

Al-Kharafi further added that in 2024, the Group has focused on expanding into regional markets and exploring investment in new and diverse sectors. This strategy is aimed at achieving sustainable growth and maximizing the company's foreign currency revenues. He also commended the efforts of the executive management and employees across the company and its subsidiaries for their efforts in executing the board's growth strategy and maximizing returns for shareholders.

Strong results

Jon Rokk, CEO of Egypt Kuwait Holding, expressed pride in the strong results achieved by the group despite the opera-



Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi

- The results reflect the company's resilience and its ability to seize opportunities and achieve exceptional profitability despite regional challenges.
- The agreement with the Egyptian Ministry of Petroleum to expand the concession areas granted to North Sinai Petroleum Company is one of the fruits of strategic investments.



Jon Rokk

- The group has managed to maintain outstanding operational performance across the various sectors in which it operates and has achieved strong revenue performance during the first half.
- We trust in our team's ability to maximize long-term positive returns for shareholders.

tional challenges faced during this period, including the devaluation of the Egyptian pound against the US dollar and the slow recovery of global urea prices.

Rokk added that the group's investment portfolio succeeded in achieving strong revenue performance and maintained outstanding operational performance thanks to its commitment to operational excellence, as well as its extensive track record and expertise in the sectors in which it operates.

He stressed the group's commitment to implementing proactive strategies to address potential exchange rate fluctuations. The management is studying opportunities for geographic expansion and investment in new and diverse sectors to achieve sustainable growth and maximize the company's foreign currency revenues while avoiding market challenges. He affirmed his confidence in the team's ability to maximize long-term positive returns for shareholders and all stakeholders, as we strive to seize attractive growth opportunities.

Fertilizers and petrochemicals sector

The fertilizers and petrochemicals sector achieved revenues of \$181 million during the first half of 2024, with a stable net profit margin of 41 percent. The net profit attributable to the company's shareholders amounted to \$67 million during the same period.

Alexandria Fertilizers Company recorded revenues of \$107 million during the first half of 2024, continuing to achieve strong profitability, with the gross profit margin remaining stable at 38 percent, and the operating profit margin before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization increasing by 2 percentage points to 45 percent during the first half of 2024, thanks to com-

prehensive reforms implemented by the company during the period. Additionally, the net profit margin remained stable at 33 percent, with the net profit attributable to the company's shareholders reaching \$26 million. The company is expected to achieve strong results in the coming period, supported by forecasts of rising urea prices and stable gas supplies.

Sprea Misr's revenues, denominated in Egyptian pounds, grew by 8 percent year-on-year due to the gradual improvement in prices, reaching \$74 million. The net profit attributable to the company's shareholders rose by 15 percent to \$40 million during the first half of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023.

Energy and energy-related activities sector

The energy and energy-related activities sector recorded revenues of \$83 million during the first half of 2024, with a 4 percentage point increase in net profit margin to 49 percent. The net profit attributable to the company's shareholders increased by 1 percent year-on-year to \$37 million during the same period.

NatEnergy recorded revenues of \$55 million during the first half of 2024, with a 6 percentage point increase in net profit margin to 44 percent, and the net profit attributable to the company's shareholders rose by 3 percent year-on-year to \$21 million. Additionally, revenues from the North Sinai offshore gas concession area reached approximately \$29 million during the first half of 2024, with a 2 percentage point increase in net profit margin to 56 percent during the period. The company continues to achieve positive results, driven by ex-

pansion efforts, including increasing the concession area to 440 square kilometers and drilling two new wells.

Insurance and other diversified sectors

Revenues from other diversified sectors amounted to \$57 million during the first half of 2024, driven by

the strong performance of Delta Insurance Company during the first quarter of the year. The insurance sector also achieved notable results, benefiting from rising interest rates and the increase in insurance premiums due to the revaluation of insured assets, which will positively impact the sector's performance in the coming period.



Egypt Kuwait Holding

EXCEPTIONAL PROFITABILITY DESPITE REGIONAL CHALLENGES

Indicators of profits for the first half of 2024

Net profits

90 Million dollars

Total Revenue

321 Million dollars

Total shareholders' equity

447 Million dollars

Total assets

1.4 Billion dollars



SAN FRANCISCO, US: A customer shops at a Safeway store in San Francisco, California. —

US inflation sees smallest annual rise since 2021

WASHINGTON: US consumer inflation eased slightly in July, according to government data published Wednesday, its smallest 12-month increase since March 2021 and a positive sign for the Federal Reserve as it weighs cutting interest rates. The consumer price index (CPI) eased to 2.9 percent last month from a year ago, down slightly from 3.0 percent in June, the Labor Department said in a statement, while a measure that strips out volatile food and energy costs cooled to an annual rate of 3.2 percent.

This was slightly lower than the median forecast of economists surveyed by Dow Jones Newswires and The Wall Street Journal. The monthly inflation rate picked up by 0.2 percent after declining in June, in line with expectations. "Today's report shows that we continue to make progress fighting inflation and lowering costs for American households," US President Joe Biden said in a statement.

"We have more work to do to lower costs for hardworking Americans, but we are making real progress, with wages rising faster than prices for 17 months in a row," he added.

Almost 90 percent of the monthly increase was down to a 0.4 percent increase in shelter costs, the Labor Department said. Energy prices remained unchanged, while the index for food rose 0.2 percent. So-called "core"

inflation, excluding volatile food and energy prices, also eased last month to 3.2 percent — its lowest level since April 2021. The July CPI data are good news for US Federal Reserve as it weighs the right time to start bringing interest rates down from a 23-year high. The US central bank has been attempting to lower inflation to its long-term target of two percent without crashing the economy or causing a surge in the unemployment rate, known as a "soft landing".

After a small uptick in the Fed's favored inflation measure earlier this year — which is calculated slightly different the CPI — inflation is now easing again. In other good news for the Fed, economic growth remains positive, and the labor market has shown signs of coming into better balance without a dramatic rise in the unemployment rate. Against this backdrop, Fed chair Jerome Powell suggested last month that the policymakers could cut rates "as soon as" September, if the data continue to come in as expected.

"Today's report will raise confidence within the Fed that inflation is indeed on a sustainable path towards 2 percent," economists at High Frequency Economics (HFE) wrote in a note to clients.

But the rise in shelter inflation remains "a thorn in the Federal Reserve's side" as it weighs rate cuts, Oxford Economics chief US economist Ryan Sweet wrote in a note published Wednesday, adding that the rise in rents was broad-based. "Rents tend to be sticky but with the disinflation elsewhere, the Fed has the greenlight to cut interest rates by 25bps (basis points) at its September meeting," he added. — AFP

Saudi firm plans hydrogen-powered skyscraper in Egypt

CAIRO: A Saudi-controlled real estate firm says it plans to break ground early next year in Egypt's new capital on a \$1 billion, 50-storey office tower that aims to be the first of its kind to be powered by clean hydrogen. The sophisticated design and high price tag represent a bet by Magmom Properties, a subsidiary of Saudi industrial group Rawabi Holding, that international clients will be drawn to the new capital, a city for over 6 million people being built from scratch in the desert east of Cairo.

It is also a bet on clean hydrogen, produced using renewable energy and not yet proven at scale, as Egypt seeks to position itself as a green energy hub in the face of regional competition.

Ministries transferred to the city from July 2023, but few residents have moved in and construction continues on infrastructure including rail links. Magmom will soon start the detailed design of the Forbes International Tower and aims to complete the building by 2030, said Karim Dayhoum, the company's executive director of projects. It purchased land for the tower in 2021 in the new capital's business district, and is selecting land for sister towers planned later for Dubai and Riyadh.

"We want to offer our tenants and our buyers and investors the opportunity to utilize the facilities and amenities across the region," Dayhoum said in an interview. "It's a network of sophisticated office space." The new capital is the most ambitious in a series of mega-projects pursued by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi. They have spurred infrastructure development but also strained the budget, increased debt and sucked up foreign currency, leading the government to cap public investment under pressure from the International Monetary Fund.

Investors say they see potential in Egypt's strategic position and large workforce, but the economy has long been hampered by mismanagement and weak productivity. Critics say the new capital does not cater to ordinary Egyptians. The \$1 billion price tag for a single tower and high-luxury design are unusual for Egypt. The estimated investment cost of the rest of the Chinese-built business district, with 20 towers, is \$3 billion. — Reuters



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Business

Dismal data dulls expectations for a Chinese economic rebound in 2024

Call for more stimulus; Post-pandemic recovery failed to materialize in 2023

BEIJING: A recent string of dismal indicators have dulled expectations for China's economic performance in July, in an ominous sign for the rest of 2024 and pointing to the need for more stimulus measures beyond plastering over pain points in the world's second-largest economy. Calls for more growth boosting measures for the \$19 trillion economy have dogged officials after a widely expected post-pandemic recovery failed to materialize in 2023. Still, the government is targeting economic growth of around 5 percent this year.

The latest data point to a rocky start to the second half. On Tuesday, central bank data showed July new bank loans plunged to a 15-year low, while other key gauges showed export growth slowed and factory activity slumped as manufacturers grapple with tepid domestic demand.

The economy had already grown more slowly than expected in the second quarter, expanding 4.7 percent from a year earlier, as wary consumers remained reluctant to spend and trade ties with major markets became more tense, suggesting a period of prolonged sluggishness is increasingly likely.

"The market consensus will move to the left side of the 'around 5 percent' growth target, since the economy slowed in July and a forceful plan to support the economy seems to be missing," said Xu Tianchen, senior economist at the Economist Intelligence Unit, which has kept its growth forecast at 4.7 percent since March. On Thursday, China will release a raft of activity data. Economists polled by Reuters poll expect that retail sales grew

2.6 percent year-on-year last month, versus 2.0 percent in June, while industrial output was forecast to have grown more slowly and investment growth leveled off. Officials will also release the latest reading on new home prices, which fell at the fastest clip in nine years in June despite a host of support measures aimed at luring back buyers and stemming a protracted property crisis.

Credit data this week showed household loans, mostly mortgages, contracted 210 billion yuan (\$29.37 billion) in July, compared with a rise of 570.9 billion in June. One of the main reasons people are not spending in China is 70 percent of household wealth is held in real estate, a sector which had long been a major growth driver.

One of the few bright spots this year - exports - has so far failed to spark a broader economic recovery, not least because manufacturers have had to slash prices to find buyers overseas amid weak domestic demand. And there are signs that global demand is slowing. The official factory managers' survey for July showed producers received fewer export orders for a third month.

"It all hinges on exports," said Alicia Garcia Herrero, chief economist for the Asia-Pacific at Natixis. "Exports are stagnant, (and) we have already seen Thailand announcing import tariffs, and, of course Turkey, Europe, and the US." "If we see exports growing negatively, then I think we need to lower our projections for 2024, maybe to 4.2 percent, something like that."

To be sure, after a surprise reduction in a short-term



A woman shops at a store inside a shopping mall in Beijing on August 14, 2024. — AFP

rate in July, many economists are penciling in more interest rate cuts in China later this year, especially if the US Federal Reserve starts slashing borrowing costs from September. But with domestic demand so weak and the outlook unclear, households and businesses

are in no rush to borrow. "There is definitely a chance officials will hurry up to announce a more clear plan to stimulate domestic consumption since they seem particularly concerned about poor domestic demand recently," the EIU's Xu said. — Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Malaysia in \$2.4 billion deal with China to acquire trains

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia plans to pursue a \$2.4 billion deal to acquire new passenger trains for state rail company Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB) via a leasing agreement with China, the transport minister said on Wednesday. In the first phase from 2024 to 2027, the government aims to acquire 62 new passenger train sets at an estimated cost of 10.7 billion ringgit (\$2.4 billion) to be paid in installments over a 30-year lease period, Minister Anthony Loke told reporters. "The actual cost will be finalized following the completion of negotiations with the Chinese government in the near future," Loke said, adding the leasing costs would include maintenance, repair and operations services by the train suppliers. — Reuters

Ukraine 2024 corn harvest may fall to 20-21m due to drought

KYIV: Ukraine's 2024 corn harvest may fall to 20 to 21 million metric tons from around 30 million tons in 2023 if drought continues, the producers group the Ukrainian Agrarian Council told Reuters on Wednesday. Most of Ukraine experienced an abnormal heatwave in July, which producers expect will decrease the yield of late crops by around 30 percent. Ukrainian senior industry official said on Tuesday the farm ministry forecast the 2024 corn crop at around 25 million tons. The ministry is set to publish its new crop forecast in September. Analysts and traders have predicted the corn output at between 23 and 25 million tons, while USDA in its August report out production at more than 27 million tons. — Reuters

EasyJet cancels over 200 Portugal flights before strike

LISBON: British budget airline EasyJet said Wednesday it has cancelled more than 200 flights to and from Portugal because of a strike by cabin crew based in the country. EasyJet said it cancelled 232 out of 1,138 affected flights between Thursday and Saturday, it told AFP. EasyJet has offered to reimburse passengers on cancelled flights or to rebook them on other flights. The Portuguese government has ordered airlines to maintain a minimum number of flights to the island of Madeira. EasyJet also serves the Portuguese capital Lisbon as well as Porto in the north and Faro along the southern Algarve coast. — AFP

Russia reintroduces ban on petrol exports till year end

MOSCOW: The Russian government announced Wednesday that it was reintroducing a ban on petrol exports for another six months to "maintain a stable situation" on the domestic fuel market after major price hikes. The government said in a statement that it has "brought in a restriction on exports of petrol from September 1 to December 31, 2024". The measure is intended to keep prices stable "during a period of continued seasonal demand and planned repairs on oil refineries", the government said. Russia in March introduced a six-month ban on petrol exports, but then suspended it temporarily between May and July, saying the domestic market was saturated. — AFP

Foxconn Q2 net profit rises on AI demand

TAIPEI, Taiwan: Taiwanese tech giant Foxconn on Wednesday reported a six percent jump in net profit for the second quarter of the year, driven by strong growth in demand for artificial intelligence servers. Also known by its official name Hon Hai Precision Industry, Foxconn is the world's largest contract electronics manufacturer and assembles devices for major tech companies, most notably Apple's iPhones. It said Wednesday that net profit for April-June rose to NT\$35.05 billion (\$1.08 billion) from NT\$33 billion in the same period last year.

Revenues for the second quarter increased 19 percent on-year to NT\$1.55 trillion, while documents released by Foxconn ahead of an earnings call showed that income from AI servers surged 60 percent from the previous quarter.

"The performance of AI servers was more robust than expected and drove revenue growth of the group to

be better-than-expected," spokesman James Wu said during the call. The figures represent the fourth consecutive quarter of profit growth for the firm as it rides a wave of demand for generative AI — following the runaway popularity of products such as ChatGPT since it launched two years ago.

Wu said Foxconn was expecting operations to "gradually heat up" as the firm enters the third quarter, traditionally a peak season. "In the first half of this year, the revenue of AI servers more than doubled compared to the same period last year. In the second half of the year, we expect AI servers will continue to be better quarter by quarter," he added.

Foxconn, China's largest private-sector employer, had previously declared ambitions to move beyond electronics assembly, investing significantly to be part of the AI technology market and transition into a "comprehensive situations platform provider". The firm announced in October it would team up with US chip giant Nvidia to create "AI factories" — powerful data-processing centers that would drive the production of next-generation products. It has also sought to diversify its manufacturing supply chain beyond the mainland — after production



NEW TAIPEI CITY, Taiwan: This aerial photo shows a Foxconn logo on a building in Tucheng district, New Taipei City. — AFP

was hit by three years of strict COVID restrictions, a bout of industrial unrest and tensions with the United States.

In response to a question about the uncertainty surrounding the upcoming US presidential election, Foxconn's CFO David Huang touted the company's "205 bases across 24 countries in

Southeast Asia, Europe, North America and South America". "We have the flexibility to adjust global producing capacity... In this circumstance, we can meet the needs of different customers and product demand, which is an advantage compared to other competitors," Huang said. — AFP

Chinese Internet giant Tencent's net profits soar in Q2

BEIJING: Chinese Internet giant Tencent announced on Wednesday an 82 percent surge in second-quarter net profit, its biggest jump since late 2020, after a resurgence in its gaming business. Tencent is one of the most valuable players in China's tech industry, operating the country's ubiquitous WeChat messaging and services "super-app" as well as offerings across gaming, cloud computing and content streaming.

However, it posted its lowest annual profit since 2019 earlier this year, due in part to stagnating gaming revenue in the final quarter of 2023. The Shen-

zhen-based company said in a filing to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange that net profit hit \$6.7 billion in April-June, compared with \$3.7 billion in the same period last year.

Sales rose by eight percent year-on-year to \$22.5 billion, it said. "Our second quarter 2024 results demonstrated the strengths of our platform plus content strategy," Tencent said in the filing. "Looking forward, we continue to invest in our platforms and technologies including AI, enabling us to create new business value and better serve user needs," it said.

Tencent's revenue from domestic gaming "resumed growth", it said, while "international games revenue accelerated growth". That was driven by "increased user engagement at several of our evergreen titles, and the successful launches of certain new games", it said.

Decades of meteoric growth that transformed China's tech industry into one of the world's most

dynamic came to an abrupt stop in 2020 after Beijing introduced more stringent oversight measures. Major Chinese tech companies have faced a series of regulatory crackdowns related to competition and personal data, following years of relative leniency, which has unsettled the sector.

Since 2021, Chinese authorities have also imposed a strict weekly limit of three hours of online games for minors under 18 to curb addiction among young people. The restrictions significantly affected Tencent's profitability and the group reported its first quarterly revenue drop in 18 years in 2022.

In search of new opportunities, Tencent is now eyeing the promising artificial intelligence (AI) market, like other Chinese tech giants such as Baidu, Huawei, Alibaba, and ByteDance. In September, Tencent unveiled Hunyuan, an AI-powered chatbot designed to compete with the United States' ChatGPT, which is not accessible in China. — AFP

Global financing conditions pass selloff test, so far

NEW YORK: A tumultuous sell-off in financial markets this month has barely scathed global financing conditions, but the risk of further volatility means borrowers are not yet out of the woods. Equity and corporate debt markets have clawed back some of their losses sparked earlier in August by US recession fears and the unwinding of a popular yen carry trade. They remain markedly weaker than a month ago, however, with the S&P 500's broad US stock index still 5 percent below July's peak after an initial plunge of nearly 10 percent. European stocks have taken a similar hit.

Higher and lower-rated corporate bonds have meanwhile given up much of a decline this year in the risk premium they pay over government bonds. But financing conditions — the ease with which borrowers can obtain funding — have not tightened enough, even at the height of the selloff, to spark worries about a sharper economic slowdown that could hasten central bank interest rate cuts. "We just haven't seen big enough moves to materially change financing conditions for corporates or

households," said Chris Jeffrey, head of macro strategy at Legal & General Investment Management.

Indeed, a closely-watched gauge of US financial conditions compiled by Goldman Sachs shows that while they have tightened sharply since mid-July, conditions remain loose historically and more accommodative than in much of last year. Global stocks, for example, are still up nearly 10 percent this year and credit spreads are lower than in 2023.

Goldman estimates that every potential further 10 percent sell-off in equities would reduce US economic growth over the next year by just under half a percentage point, while associated moves in other markets if equities slumped could imply a total hit of just under a percentage point. So with US growth still over 2 percent, it would take a much bigger drop in equity markets to cause significant economic pain that ripples out globally.

Rate cuts

With the US Federal Reserve set to start cutting rates soon and other central banks already doing so, the

NYSE										
TPL	0.00	0.00	SPX	5,344.16	24.85	TRAM	0.00			
IBUY	103.09	0.33	SPK	1,003.19	1.35	VIX	20.57			
TENY	3.96	0.01	GOM	49.38	-0.10	RUT	2,080.92			
US3M	0.00	0.00	KBE	60.58	0.92	XES	06.31			
KCE	154.08	0.32	BRNT	35.84	0.29	REIT	0.00			
DRG	0.00	0.00	GDX	0.00	0.00	XSO	214.23			
KEBO	0.00	0.00	FANG							



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

key takeaway from the recent market ructions is a fall in borrowing costs. US 10-year Treasury yields are down more than 50 basis points since the start of July, while yields on UK and German government bonds have fallen over 30 bps apiece as investors bet on steeper rate cuts.

That bodes well for borrowers. US investment-grade corporate bond yields have also dropped 50 bps since the start of July. Highly-rated companies raised \$45 billion from US bond sales last week, according to LSEG's

IFR — at the high end of analyst expectations and a sign of confidence amid the selloff. There were also more bond sales in Europe than a year ago, while the US market made a strong start to this week.

"It doesn't seem like access to credit is really a problem right now," said Idanna Appio, portfolio manager at First Eagle Investment Management. "Indeed, lower Treasury yields are opening up a window for companies to come to market," Appio, a former Fed economist, said. — Reuters

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2024

Y2K Series



Y2K NAIL TRENDS: A FLASHBACK TO FUTURISTIC MANICURES

As we delve deeper into the resurgence of Y2K aesthetics, it's impossible to overlook the vibrant and imaginative world of nail art from the era. The early 2000s were a time when nails became more than just an accessory; they were a bold statement of personal style and individuality. Today, the Y2K nail trend revival is painting the beauty landscape with strokes of nostalgia, innovation, and playful creativity, marrying the audacious spirit of the millennium with the refined techniques and consciousness of the modern age.

The quintessential Y2K manicure was anything but understated. It reveled in the use of bright colors, metallic finishes, and an array of embellishments that reflected the era's fascination with all things futuristic and digital. Today, these trends make a comeback



with a contemporary twist, embracing the advancements in nail technology and artistry to create looks that are both a nod to the past and a step into the future of nail design.

One of the hallmarks of Y2K nail art was the use of metallic and holographic polishes, embodying the era's obsession with technology and space-age aesthetics. These finishes have returned with even more variety and sophistication, offering a mesmerizing effect that captures the light and the eye. Modern formulations provide a smoother application and longer-lasting wear, allowing enthusiasts to enjoy their futuristic nails without frequent touch-ups.

Glitter and rhinestones were also staples of Y2K nail art, used liberally to create designs that sparkled with every movement. In today's revival, these embellishments are applied with a more strategic hand, often used to accentuate minimalist designs or to add a touch of glamour to a classic manicure. The modern use of these decorations reflects a

blend of nostalgia and the minimalist tendencies of current beauty trends, proving that a little sparkle can go a long way.

Another distinctive feature of Y2K nails was the experimentation with bold patterns and graphic designs. From animal prints to abstract art, these designs showcased the wearer's playful and adventurous side. The resurgence of these patterns in nail art today is marked by a greater precision and complexity, thanks to the evolution of nail art tools and techniques. Nail artists and enthusiasts alike have the freedom to recreate intricate designs with an accuracy and finesse that were once difficult to achieve.

The revival of Y2K nail trends is more than just a return to the flashy and eclectic designs of the early 2000s; it's a celebration of self-expression, creativity, and the joy of embrac-

ing one's unique style. As we revisit the bold and imaginative nail art of the Y2K era, we're reminded of the importance of having fun with our beauty choices and the endless possibilities that come with experimenting with color, texture, and design. The Y2K nail trend revival invites us all to play, to dream, and to adorn our nails with the fearless spirit of the millennium, proving once again that in the world of beauty, the past and the present can come together in spectacular and inspiring ways.

Join us at Dashe Beauty on this journey to discover the essence of the Y2K nail trends. Get more inspiration by visiting our website <https://dashebeauty.com> or follow up on our beauty blog. — Dashe Beauty Kuwait



US singer and songwriter Taylor Alison Swift, also known as Taylor Swift performs on stage at the Paris La Defense Arena as part of her The Eras Tour, in Nanterre, north-western France. — AFP

Taylor Swift set for emotional London return after terror threat

Taylor Swift will take to the stage in London on Thursday, resuming the world's biggest ever concert tour amid tightened security after a foiled Islamic State-inspired attack forced the cancellation of her Vienna dates last week. British police have said there is nothing to indicate that events in Vienna would impact the five appearances at Wembley Stadium, where 90,000 "Swifties" are expected to cheer her on each evening. However, security is set to be tight. Tay-gating, the practice of gathering outside a Taylor Swift show without a ticket, like thousands did in Munich earlier in the summer, will not be allowed, as authorities try to reduce harder-to-control vulnerabilities outside the venue.

Fans at Wembley will enter through metal detectors and are only allowed to bring one small bag. Glass and metal containers, laptops and umbrellas are all banned. "Anyone hanging around outside the stadium will be moved on by security," Wembley said on its website.

Swift, 34, has previously said her biggest fear was the risk to her fans following two attacks at music events in 2017 - a Las Vegas shooting and a suicide bombing at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England, that prompted a rethink of the way British authorities police major shows. She said the attacks had made her "terrified" of going on tour and prompted additional planning and safety measures.

"We have to live bravely in order to truly feel alive, and that means not being ruled by our greatest fears," she said in 2019. The "Cruel Summer" singer will return fueled by the positivity, heartfelt lyrics, friendship bracelets and sequined outfits that have made her a global megastar.

She performed in Britain in June to sell-out crowds that included heir-to-the-throne Prince William and two of

his children, plus Keir Starmer, who has since been elected prime minister. London also published a special Taylor Swift tube map of her song titles. Her 'Eras' tour is set to gross over \$1 billion in revenue, the first to do so, from 149 shows over two years. The last performance will be in Canada in December.

Return to Britain

Swift's return to Britain could be emotional after recent events. On July 29 three young children were killed at a Taylor Swift-inspired dance class in Southport, northern England. Swift told her 284 million Instagram followers that she was "completely in shock" over the "loss of life and innocence". She has not said anything on the Vienna cancellations. Security experts said British authorities had learnt from the Manchester attack, which killed 22 people including young children, with police, venue security and organizers working as one to protect a venue.

Chris Phillips, former head of Britain's National Counter Terrorism Security Office and now a security consultant to major events, said Wembley benefited from being a permanent venue. "They employ a lot of security teams," he told Reuters. "Wembley is as safe as you're going to get." Experts said they expected staff to be re-vetted after a suspect in Vienna secured a job providing services at the stadium there.

Noah Price, international academy director at security group G4S, said there would be "enhanced levels of protection at the venue", with staffing patterns closely monitored. "The insider threat is actually the most prevalent (...) because it has unfettered access," he said. "You've got to look at unusual behavior," he added. "People turning up earlier or leaving later. Look at the access control logs." — AFP

Earth hit by 'severe' solar storm

The Earth was hit by an intense solar storm that could bring the northern lights to night skies further south than normal, a US agency announced. Conditions of a level-four geomagnetic storm - on a scale of five - were observed Monday from 1500 GMT, according to a specialized center at the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

These conditions may persist for several hours, but were not expected to increase further in intensity, NOAA added in a statement. "A severe geomagnetic storm includes the potential for aurora to be seen faintly as far south as Alabama and northern California," NOAA said in

a statement, referring to US states. The new solar storm is caused by coronal mass ejections (CMEs), which are explosions of particles leaving the Sun. When these particles arrive on Earth, they disrupt its magnetic field.

"There are a lot of auroras now... If it lasts until nightfall here, we might be able to see some," Eric Lagadec, an astrophysicist at the Cote d'Azur Observatory in France, said on X. On Sunday, NASA astronaut Matthew Dominick published on X a superb photo of the aurora borealis - or Northern Lights - taken from the International Space Station, where he is currently stationed. But solar or geomagnetic storms can also

trigger undesirable effects. For example, they can degrade high-frequency communications, disrupt satellites, and cause overloads on the electricity grid. Operators of sensitive infrastructure have been notified to put in place measures to limit these effects, NOAA said.

In May, the planet went through the most powerful geomagnetic storms recorded in 20 years. They caused auroras to light up the night sky in the United States, Europe, and Australia, at much lower latitudes than usual. This type of event has increased recently because the Sun is currently close to its peak activity, as per its 11-year cycle. — AFP



File photo shows the Aurora Australis, also known as the Southern Lights, glows on the horizon over waters of Lake Ellesmere on the outskirts of Christchurch. — AFP

Human bones in Spain likely those of mediaeval bishop behind popular pilgrimage, study shows

Remains found in a tomb in north-western Spain are likely to belong to a ninth-century bishop believed to have helped create the Camino de Santiago, one of Christianity's most popular pilgrimages, a new study has found. A combination of bone analysis, carbon dating, stable isotope analysis and DNA testing yielded data that "supports the possibility" that the human bones found in 1955 are those of Bishop Theodimir, according to a paper published on Tuesday in the "Antiquity" journal. Oral tradition, later written down, has it that Theodimir discovered the tomb of St. James the Apostle between 820 and 830 AD following a divine revelation in

what is now Santiago de Compostela, the capital of the Galicia region.

News of the discovery reached King Alfonso II of the neighboring region of Asturias, who marched with his court from Oviedo to Santiago. The 146 km (90 mile) royal pilgrimage established what is today known as the "Primitive Way", the oldest path used by pilgrims of the Camino, or Way of St. James. Theodimir's existence had been hotly debated until 1955, when Spanish archaeologist Manuel Chamoso Lamas discovered a tombstone underneath Santiago de Compostela's cathedral inscribed with his name.

An initial study of the bones concluded that they probably came from an elderly adult male, but three decades later a

new assessment based on photographs of the site proclaimed them to belong to a woman aged between 50 and 70. The newest study, led by Patxi Perez-Ramallo of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, combined different analytical methods in a bid to recreate the individual's life story. The carbon-14 dating shows the person died after the age of 45, and the bones' features suggest they had a weak build and performed little physical work during their lifetime, which is consistent with the lifestyle of high clergy during the period. Perez-Ramallo told El Pais newspaper that there was a "98% likelihood of it being Theodimir". — AFP

The Liberation of Paris

in stories, big and small



A cheering crowd salutes as they wait for soldiers of the Allied troops and the French 2nd armored division (2ème DB) on the Place de la Concorde in Paris on August 26, 1944 during the parade to celebrate the Liberation of Paris, during World War II.

E ighty years ago Parisians rose up against their German Nazi occupiers, liberating the French capital on August 25, 1944 after a wild week of strikes, barricades and street fighting. AFP takes a look at some key moments from this historic event, some tragic, others more joyful.



This photograph taken between August 19-25, 1944, near the end of the Battle of Paris shows people inspecting destroyed German military trucks in the 17th district as French and British flags appear at windows shortly before the liberation of the city. — AFP photos



This photograph dated August 1944, shows US soldiers admiring The Eiffel Tower in Paris.



This photograph shows a group of Parisians happy to eat white bread, which they can buy again after years of rationing in August 1944.



Goumiers, auxiliary soldiers supplied to the French army by Algerian or Moroccan tribes, march in Paris on July 14, 1945.

Shot in 1944; died in 2005

On the morning of August 19, Parisians first rose up. The police, who had been on strike for four days, reoccupied their HQ. Police officer Armand Bacquer, 24, was arrested by the Germans and shot by a firing squad with a colleague on the banks of the river Seine. While his colleague died on the spot, Bacquer, left for dead, was rescued the next day. He was operated on, survived and resumed his job as a policeman. He died in his sleep more than 60 years later in 2005.

Finally freed

On August 19, Madeleine Riffaut who had been arrested, tortured and sentenced to death by the Nazis after killing a junior Nazi officer, was finally freed. She was then sent on a mission to intercept a German train as it passed through the Buttes Chaumont Park in northeastern Paris. With three comrades she pounded the train with explosives from a bridge over a tunnel, captured 80 German soldiers and then partied on the champagne and foie gras the Germans were taking home. "Let us say, we celebrated on that day: it was the 23 August. I was 20," she said.

'To the barricades!'

On August 22, Parisians responded to the call of resistance leader Colonel Henri Rol-Tanguy to go "To the barricades!" The Parisians, determined to take part in their own liberation, erected a chain of 600 barricades, including paving stones, rails, bathtubs, mattresses, and trees, to block the Germans' movement.

A sleepless night in Paris

"It was only on the evening (of August 24) around 9:45 pm that the news broke across Paris: at 9:28 pm the first French tank, the Romilly, arrived at the town hall. Everywhere there was an indescribable emotion," wrote Jean Le Quiller, journalist for the newly-created Agence France- Presse. "Whole apart-

ment blocks sang the Marseillaise, whole streets applauded in the night... A concert of bells filled the air... bringing tears to the eyes," he wrote. As allied troops entered from different sides of Paris, AFP wrote: "Now it is for sure: they are there. Paris

Killed on his 20th birthday

On August 25, Brigadier Pierre Deville, who had just returned from Morocco, called his parents and said: "I'm



Smoke and flames rise from The Grand Palais in Paris on August 23, 1944, during the battle for the Liberation of Paris, during World War II.

ment blocks sang the Marseillaise, whole streets applauded in the night... A concert of bells filled the air... bringing tears to the eyes," he wrote. As allied troops entered from different sides of Paris, AFP wrote: "Now it is for sure: they are there. Paris

on my way." With his platoon he went to the military school to the west of Paris where the Germans were holed up. It took nearly four hours to neutralize them. Deville was then shot in the head. It was his 20th birthday.



A man sorts through debris in the Halle aux Vins in Paris in August 1944, which was destroyed after a German air raid during the battle for the Liberation of Paris, during World War II.



This photograph taken on August 26, 1944, shows the ruined buildings of Bichat Hospital in Paris after a bombardment during the battle for the Liberation of Paris.



Armed FFI fighters escort German soldiers on the Grands Boulevards in Paris after the taking of the Kommandantur building on the Place de l'Opéra, in August 1944.



Picture taken in August 1944 of English patients wounded during the battle for the Liberation of Paris at La Pitie Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris.



French general Philippe Leclerc waits to march on the Champs Elysees Avenue on August 26, 1944 with his troops of the French 2nd Armored Division (2e Division Blindée, 2ème DB), after the Liberation of Paris.

A fireman's revenge

On the same day, not far away, fireman Captain Sarniguet climbed the 1,700 steps of the Eiffel Tower. It was sweet revenge for the man the Nazis had ordered in June 1940 to take down France's tricolour flag from the top. He put up French flags, cobbled together with low quality dyes and sown in secret by the wives of junior officers. So the French flag replaced the swastika which had been flying for about 1,500 days. "The only obstacle I met was the wind," Sarniguet said.

Bullets greet de Gaulle

On August 26, French wartime leader General Charles de Gaulle made a triumphant return from exile in London, parading in liberated Paris. He arrived late for a prayer of praise at Paris's Notre Dame Cathedral. As he greeted the crowd in the square from an open-topped car, gunfire broke out. He brushed it off and carried on his way. He put it down to a coup by counter-revolutionaries seeking to sow panic and seize power. — AFP



France's General Charles de Gaulle (center), accompanied by his personal representative in Paris Alexandre Parodi (right), French General Philippe Leclerc (second right, second row), his aide de camp Captain Guy (far right) and Andre Le Troquer (second left with bow-tie) walk down The Avenue Champs Elysees in Paris.



This photograph dated August 1944, shows Parisians shooting at German troops with a British Bren machine gun from a window of Paris police headquarters in Paris.



A German vehicle burns near Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral in Paris on August 19, 1944, during the battle for the Liberation of Paris.



Guards and gendarmes fire on German troops in Paris in August 1944.



Parisian people buy newspapers in August 1944.



Parisians cheer FFI (French Forces of the Interior) fighters and Allied troops as they parade on Rue de Rivoli in Paris on August 26, 1944, after the battle for the Liberation of Paris.



French resistants arrest a German soldier in August 1944, rue de Montyon in Paris.



A nurse looks at the bodies of peacekeepers and police officers in the courtyard of the Château de Vincennes near Paris on August 25, 1944, after the Liberation of Paris.

Uruguay's Fede Alvarez returns 'Alien' saga to roots with 'Romulus'

It's back to basics for the "Alien" film franchise: "Alien: Romulus" hits theaters worldwide this week and director Fede Alvarez is hoping to follow in the footsteps of Ridley Scott, who launched the saga in 1979. In an interview with AFP, Alvarez explained how he was forever marked by the series' early chapters as a kid growing up in Uruguay. After Scott, James Cameron ("Aliens," 1986), David Fincher ("Alien 3," 1992) and Jean-Pierre Jeunet ("Alien Resurrection," 1997), Disney has entrusted this installment to Alvarez, who is far less known. Scott rebooted the franchise in the 2010s with "Prometheus" and "Alien: Covenant," and is still one of the produc-

ers. Alvarez, whose previous films include "Evil Dead" and "Don't Breathe" — deems the first two "Alien" installments as "fundamental" to his work and for cinema in general. "Romulus" — which takes place almost entirely within the confines of a drifting spaceship — is set at the time of the first films, when teams of space travelers discover, in deadly fashion, the existence of xenomorphs, formidable extraterrestrials. "There's a scene in the 1986 film where we see a bunch of children and young people running around a space station. I thought, 'What is it going to be like for these kids when they grow up?'" wonders the director, who is now based

in Hollywood. The film is also meant to bring back the gore and horror of the first film. Alvarez faithfully reproduces the familiar motifs and scenes, including the emblematic hatching of the parasitic alien in the body of its human host. The 46-year-old filmmaker also revisits the visual style of Scott, whom he calls "one of the great masters of the genre."

'Ambitious film'

"It's not so much a desire to go back, but simply the fact that as a filmmaker, I want to practice as I learned to do," he explains, particularly his decision to film without "too many green screens" — a technique allowing visu-

al effects to be added in post-production. Alvarez immersed himself in the "futurism of the 1980s," with mythical specimens of "Alien" controlled by teams of puppeteers. "Technically, it's a very ambitious film," he says. "Generating real emotion in people is the most difficult thing there is." And "when you decide to see this film, you know more or less what you want to expose yourself to. It's like when you go on a roller coaster," he explains, adding: "I like having that effect on people." In the tradition of "Alien," which starred a young Sigourney Weaver as the hero Ellen Ripley, this film features Cailee Spaeny, who earned a Golden Globe nomination for

her portrayal of Elvis Presley's wife in the 2023 biopic "Priscilla." In "Romulus," she plays an orphan, reduced to the state of quasi-slave on a sunless corner of the planet managed in a "Blade Runner"-style atmosphere by the private conglomerate Weyland-Yutani, which mines a toxic mineral there. She doesn't hesitate when a group of young rebels suggest that she try to escape to more hospitable skies. The plan? Seize a spaceship that they think is abandoned, but really is inhabited by xenomorphs who have brutally murdered the crew. — AFP



Uruguayan filmmaker Fede Alvarez (left) and British filmmaker Ridley Scott attend the "Alien: Romulus" film premiere at the TCL Chinese Theater in Hollywood, California.



(From left) British actor Spike Fearn, Chinese-US actress Aileen Wu, Uruguayan filmmaker Fede Alvarez, British filmmaker Ridley Scott, British actress Isabela Merced and British actor Archie Renaux attend the "Alien: Romulus" film premiere.— AFP photos

Sports

Pieterse wins Tour de France Femmes stage four, Vollering extends overall lead

'To take the win here, in a sprint against Demi is a dream come true'

LIEGE, LIEGE PROVINCE: Puck Pieterse of Fenix-Deceuninck outsprinted race leader Demi Vollering to win the fourth stage of the Tour de France Femmes on Wednesday and move second overall, with defending champion Vollering strengthening her hold on the yellow jersey.

The 122.7-km ride from Valkenburg to Liege came down to a three-way battle for the stage win, and Poland's Katarzyna Niewiadoma had to settle for third place as the Dutch duo raced for the line and were separated by the narrowest of margins.

"It's quite unbelievable actually. The last few days I had super good legs, first day I had good legs, the second day I had good legs and today I didn't feel my legs at all," Pieterse said. "To take the win here, in a sprint against Demi is a dream come true."

The first attack came from Spain's Sara Martin, with the Movistar rider breaking away with over 90 kilometres still to ride, and while she did put over a minute between herself and the peloton, she was eventually clawed back.

Martin did have a chance to catch her breath while out in front, as the race came to a standstill at a railway crossing, and the Tour patiently waited

for a train to pass. Belgian Justine Ghekiere was first to reach the top of the penultimate of eight climbs, and with 23 kilometres remaining decided to take her chance and leave the bunch behind.

Vollering began pushing the peloton, and they reeled Ghekiere in before the top of the final climb, and the race leader made her move, and along with Pieterse and Niewiadoma, had a 30 second lead going into the final kilometre.

Niewiadoma, third overall in the last two Tour de Femmes, attacked with 700 metres left, but she peaked too soon and it was Pieterse who came out on top in a photo finish as the rain poured down in Liege.

Vollering began the day with a three second lead over Team SD Worx – Protime teammate Lorena Wiebes, and now has a 22 second gap to Pieterse, who also took over the best climber's polka dot jersey, with Niewiadoma third, a further 12 seconds back.

Thursday's stage five is a 152.5 kilometre flat ride from Bastogne to Amneville as the race reaches France after spending the opening three days in the Netherlands and Belgium. — AFP



LIEGE: Fenix-Deceuninck team's Dutch rider Puck Pieterse (C) celebrates on the podium with the best climber's polka dot (dotted) jersey after the 4th stage (out of 8) of the third edition of the Women's Tour de France cycling race, a 122.7 km between Valkenburg and Liege. — AFP

Thompson's Mavs to visit Warriors in NBA Cup opener

NEW YORK: Klay Thompson's new club, the Dallas Mavericks, will visit his long-time team, the Golden State Warriors, on the opening night of the NBA Cup, the league announced Tuesday. The second edition of the NBA's in-season tournament will start on November 12 and conclude on December 17 under the group-stage Cup schedule revealed by the league.

The complete NBA 2024-25 regular-season schedule will be released on Thursday. Group-stage games, which also count in the league standings, will be played on Tuesdays and Fridays from November 12 to December 3.

A feature contest on Cup opening night will send reigning Western Conference champion Dallas to San Francisco to face Golden State, with new Mavs guard Thompson, a five-time NBA All-Star, going against the Warriors, the squad with which he won four NBA titles and played for the past 13 seasons.

Also on opening night will be the New York Knicks at the Philadelphia 76ers in a matchup of expected Eastern Conference contenders. Three days later, the defending Cup champion Los Angeles Lakers, who beat the Indiana Pacers in last year's final to complete an undefeated title run, will visit French star Victor Wembanyama, last season's NBA Rookie of the Year, and the San Antonio Spurs.

Indiana and Milwaukee, who met in last year's Cup semi-finals and the first round of last season's NBA playoffs, will meet on November 22 as well as Dallas and the Denver Nuggets, the past two West champions.

The closing day of group play will feature the Warriors visiting Denver. All 30 NBA teams were randomly drawn into five-team groups, who will each play four group contests. Four teams from each conference, three group winners and a wild card will advance into knockout rounds. Quarter-finals will be played December 10-11 with the semi-finals and final to be played on December 14 and 17 in Las Vegas. — AFP

CAN organizes reduce your weight program

KUWAIT: Interest in reducing increased weight lately, as the obesity phenomenon became widespread, to a point it is almost categorized as a pandemic in most societies for several reasons including change in lifestyle and physical activity in addition to increasing portion of meals, that besides the existence of hormone or genetic reasons.

So, maintaining a healthy weight, and reducing excess weight is something very important to prevent against diseases resulting from obesity such as type 2 diabetes, heart attacks and cancer.

The Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) took the initiative to fight this pandemic through organizing a program to reduce weight in cooperation with Heido Academy under the theme "reduce your weight" that relies on a physical activity to reduce weight coupled with concentrating on healthy nutrition.

The program focuses on maintaining healthy weight, boost self-confidence, care for physical



health and prevent against chronic diseases. Following a healthy nutrition system, and exercising lead to strengthening the body and its fitness.

So, Heido Academy carried out the eighty "reduce your weight" program, as the Academy's Abdullah Al-Khalid said the program lasted 27 days (2/7 – 29/7/2024) with 52 participants. The activity started with weighing all participants

then the physical and fitness program began with several coaches.

Most of the participants benefited from the program by losing weight in addition to eating healthy. The program relies on changing the daily routine by adopting new habits and stop others that may affect weight, such as eating food while watching TV, have physical activity for 30 minutes per day.

Braves chase another win over Giants

SAN FRANCISCO: The Atlanta Braves hope to continue what has been a happy mass homecoming when they send their transplants against the host San Francisco Giants for a third consecutive time on Wednesday night.

Former Giants players Jorge Soler (one unearned run in one inning), and ex-Oakland Athletics Ramon Laureano (solo home run among two hits) and Jesse Chavez (scoreless inning with two strikeouts) all contributed in Atlanta's 4-3 win Tuesday in front of at least some of their old fans in the Bay Area.

One night earlier, former As Sean Murphy and Matt Olson as well as ex-Giant Adam Duvall were all part of the Braves' starting lineup in a 1-0 win.

Braves reliever Luke Jackson is the only one of the eight one-time San Francisco Bay Area employees who has yet to play in the series. Atlanta has won the first two contests of the four-game set to open a 3 1/2-game advantage over San Francisco for the final wild-card spot in the National League. The Giants, in turn, have lost three games in a row — all by one run — to fall back to .500 for on the season.

"Frustrating," San Francisco manager Bob Melvin assured. "Three games in a row where we've lost by a run, and at home (where) we've been pretty good about winning the close games." It's possible Duvall won't be around to see the rest of the series. Having gone 0-for-4 in the series opener to see his season average fall to .178, the 35-year-old is considered a potential roster casualty, with the Braves expected to activate outfielder Michael Harris II from the injured list in time for Wednesday's game.

Surely, it won't be Soler losing his



SAN FRANCISCO: Catcher Travis d'Arnaud of the Atlanta Braves has a wild pitch kick off his shoulder as Matt Chapman of the San Francisco Giants bats, scoring LaMonte Wade Jr. from third base in the bottom of the eighth inning at Oracle Park. — AFP

job. Dealt from San Francisco to Atlanta at the trade deadline last month, the veteran has hit a solid .279 with four homers in 12 games since joining the

Braves. He's even gotten regular time in the outfield after having been used exclusively as a designated hitter and pinch hitter by the Giants. — Reuters

Stokes out of Sri Lanka series with torn hamstring

LONDON: England captain Ben Stokes has been ruled out for the rest of the season with a torn hamstring and will miss the Test series against Sri Lanka, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced Tuesday. "England Men's Test Captain Ben Stokes has been ruled out for the rest of the summer after tearing his left hamstring while playing for Northern Superchargers in The Hundred on Sunday," said an ECB statement.

The 33-year-old all-rounder will be replaced as Test skipper by vice-captain Ollie Pope, the ECB added. The first Test against Sri Lanka begins on August 21 at Old Trafford. "As a result of the scans conducted in Leeds on Tuesday, Stokes will miss England's three-match Test series against Sri Lanka," aid the ECB.

"The all-rounder is aiming to return for England's winter Test tour of Pakistan, scheduled to start in early October." No replacement player has been added to the England squad for the Sri Lanka series announced on August 4.

Stokes had knee surgery in November and then ruled himself out of England's T20 World Cup title defence in the Caribbean and the United States earlier this year to ensure he could be fit to play a role as a fully-fledged all-rounder in the Test side.

He scored 192 runs at an average of 48 and took five wickets with his lively medium-pace bowling during a 3-0 series whitewash of the West Indies — the first half of England's home Test programme this season.

Stokes looked well on his way to full fitness before suffering the injury against Manchester Orig-



Ben Stokes

inals at Old Trafford, where he was later seen on crutches. Stokes' injury provoked a fresh round of social media criticism of the Hundred, the ECB's controversial 100-balls-per-side tournament, that features eight specially created teams rather than the traditional 18 first-class counties.

England players are routinely withdrawn by the ECB from the first-class County Championship or domestic limited-overs tournaments such as the T20 Blast and One-Day Cup to protect their fitness for international duty.

Stokes, however, was cleared to play in the Hundred, despite pulling out of the T20 World Cup. His absence is a fresh injury blow for England, with opening batsman Zak Crawley already ruled out of the Sri Lanka series because of a broken finger sustained while fielding against the West Indies.

Uncapped paceman Dillon Pennington has been sidelined after also suffering a hamstring injury while in action for Northern Superchargers. Sri Lanka will have one warm-up match, a four-day fixture against the second-string England Lions in Worcester starting Wednesday, before the first Test. — AFP

Crew ousts Messi-less defending champion Miami in Leagues Cup

WASHINGTON: Diego Rossi's two second-half goals launched Columbus Crew over reigning champions Inter Miami 3-2 to reach the Leagues Cup quarter-finals on Tuesday. The Uruguayan forward lifted the host Crew level in the 69th minute and netted the decider in the 80th to dethrone Miami, who also lead this season's overall MLS league standings.

Miami star Lionel Messi did not play, as he was still sidelined with a right ankle injury suffered a month ago in Argentina's Copa America final win over Colombia. With the victory, reigning MLS champion Crew will play host to a Saturday quarter-final against New York City, who won 2-1 over Tigres. Paraguayan midfielder Matias Rojas gave Inter Miami a 1-0 lead in the 10th minute and compatriot Diego Gomez doubled the margin in the 62nd before US striker Christian Ramirez answered for the Crew in the 67th, setting the stage for Rossi's winning brace.

The tournament features MLS and Liga MX Mexican sides, with Messi leading Miami to last year's inaugural crown shortly after arriving in Florida. New York City rallied to reach the last eight.

Argentine midfielder Guido Pizarro, the Tigres captain, opened the scoring with a header in the 18th minute but City netted the equalizer in the 20th through another Argentine midfielder, Maxi Moralez. Uruguayan Santiago Rodriguez scored the final goal for City in the 65th minute.

At Cincinnati, Tai Baribo's two goals lifted the Philadelphia Union over the hosts 4-2. Philadelphia grabbed a 2-0 lead on goals by Danish forward Mikael Uhre in the 51st minute and Israeli striker

Baribo in the 61st. Czech midfielder Pavel Bucha answered for Cincinnati in the 66th minute and US defender DeAndre Yedlin netted an equalizer for the hosts in the 80th minute. The Union responded on goals by Baribo in the 82nd and US substitute Quinn Sullivan in the 84th.

Mazatlan advances

Next up for Philadelphia will be a home quarter-final on Saturday against Mazatlan, which defeated Cruz Azul on penalties after playing to a 2-2 draw in Washington. Mazatlan grabbed a 2-0 lead on goals by Bryan Colula in the 40th minute and Panamanian midfielder Edgar Barcenas in the first minute of stoppage time.

Cruz Azul fell to 10 men in the fourth minute of the second half when Argentine defender Gonzalo Piovi was shown a red card. Cruz Azul, however, was far from done as Uriel Antuna scored in the 84th minute and Colombia defender Willer Ditta added an equalizer in the opening seconds of stoppage time.

In penalties, Antuna, Ditta and Giorgos Giakoumakis failed to convert and Mazatlan won 3-1 to advance. The Colorado Rapids advanced with a 2-1 home triumph over Toluca. Brazilian forward Rafael Navarro scored in the 45th minute for Colorado but Portuguese striker Paulinho answered in the 83rd, setting the stage for American Darren Yapi's winner in the sixth minute of stoppage time.

Next for Colorado is a Saturday quarter-final against Mexican champions Club America, which won 4-2 at St. Louis. Uruguayan's Brian Rodriguez scored for Club America on a penalty kick in the 86th minute and compatriot Rodrigo Aurier added an insurance tally in the eighth minute of stoppage time. Rodriguez scored his first goal in the 15th minute but US midfielder Indiana Vassilev equalized for St. Louis in the 49th and German midfielder Eduard Lowen lifted the hosts ahead in the 55th on a penalty kick. Chilean striker Diego Valdes equalized for Club America in the 79th minute. — AFP

Sports

Mbappe set for long-awaited Real Madrid debut in UEFA Super Cup

‘Kylian can play from the start just like everyone who is here’

WARSAW: Kylian Mbappe is set to finally make his debut for Real Madrid when the European champions take on Europa League winners Atalanta in the UEFA Super Cup in Warsaw later on Wednesday.

After years of trying to secure the services of Mbappe, the Spanish giants got their man when he signed a five-year deal at the Santiago Bernabeu in June as a free agent after ending his association with Paris Saint-Germain.

The France captain will now be thrown in at the deep end in his new club's first official game of the campaign, which offers him the chance to win his first European trophy. Mbappe helped France reach the semi-finals of Euro 2024 although he endured a difficult tournament in Germany, breaking his nose in his country's opening game and only scoring one goal from a penalty.

The 25-year-old was then unveiled before 80,000 fans at the Bernabeu before being afforded a holiday, meaning he played no part in Real's pre-season tour of the United States. Therefore, Mbappe's debut in the Polish capital will come just a week after he completed his first training session with Carlo Ancelotti's squad.

"Kylian can play from the start just like everyone who is here," Ancelotti said in Warsaw on the eve of the game. "He is adapting really well, he is focused and he is showing extraordinary quality." Media back in Spain are licking their lips at the prospect of seeing Mbappe in action for Real at long last.

'Superdebut'

The two major sports dailies in the Spanish capital splashed the same picture of the striker in training on their front pages on Wednesday. "Superdebut" was the headline on the cover of AS, while rival publication Marca went with KMO, using the new signing's initials to signify "Kilometre Zero" ahead of his first game. Ancelotti, meanwhile, laughed off suggestions that fitting Mbappe into a side that won the Champions League last season could somehow be a problem. "I have been thinking about this all summer. Who to play and who not to play. It has ruined my holidays," joked the Italian.

Real already had Vinicius Junior, Jude Bellingham and Rodrygo in attack, while Mbappe is not the only new recruit, with Brazilian prodigy Endrick also having arrived from Palmeiras. Toni Kroos and Nacho have departed since Madrid were crowned European champions for the 15th time at the start of June, while Eduardo Camavinga is out of Wednesday's game after injuring a knee in training.

Atalanta are contesting the Super Cup for the first time after winning last season's Europa League, their first piece of European silverware. The Italian club are without striker Gianluca Scamacca, who tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee at the start of the month. However, they have signed another Italian international striker in Mateo Retegui, who has joined from Genoa. Last season's Super Cup was won by Manchester City, who beat Sevilla on penalties. — AFP



WARSAW: Real Madrid's French forward Kylian Mbappe (C) and other Real Madrid players attend a training session on the eve of the UEFA Super Cup football match. — AFP

France launches probe over cyberbullying of Olympic boxer Khelif

PARIS: France has launched a cyberbullying probe following a complaint by Algerian Olympic boxing champion Imane Khelif, who was at the centre of a gender controversy at the Paris Olympic Games, prosecutors said on Wednesday. The controversy has rapidly become a hot-button issue outside the ring, with politicians and celebrities including Donald Trump and Elon Musk weighing in. The investigation was opened Tuesday into "cyberharassment" following the high-profile gender row at the Games, the Paris public prosecutor's office told AFP.

The athlete's lawyer Nabil Boudi said last week that Khelif, 25, had filed a complaint for online harassment, calling it a "fight for justice." "The investigation will determine who was behind this misogynist, racist and sexist campaign, but will also have to concern itself with those who fed the online lynching," he said at the time. The Central Office for Combating Crimes against Humanity and Hate Crimes has been tasked with the investigation.

'Born a woman'

According to US magazine Variety, billionaire entrepreneur Musk and Harry Potter author JK Rowling have been named in the complaint. Former US President Trump, who is the Republican party's nominee in the 2024 presidential race, would also be part of the investigation. Variety said, citing the lawyer.

Khelif won the women's 66kg final against China's Yang Liu in a unanimous points decision, having been the focus of intense scrutiny in the French capital during the Olympics. Together with Taiwan's Lin Yuting, who won the 57kg women's final, Khelif was disqualified from last year's world championships after they failed gender eligibility testing. However they were cleared to compete in Paris, setting the stage for one of the biggest controversies of the Games. The row in Paris erupted after Khelif won her bout against Italy's Angela Carini in just 46 seconds with two strong punches to the Italian's nose.

Trump said he would "keep men out of women's sports" and his running mate JD Vance described the bout as a "grown man pummelling a woman in a boxing match". Rowling also weighed in, saying on X that the Paris Olympics would be "forever tarnished by

the brutal injustice done to Carini". The International Boxing Association's Russian president and Kremlin-linked oligarch, Umar Kremlev, has targeted both athletes, claiming that Khelif and Lin had undergone "genetic testing that shows that these are men".

The IBA were responsible for the world championships in 2023 that Lin and Khelif were thrown out of, but the IOC cleared them to box in Paris. Khelif said she is "a woman like any other". "I was born a woman, lived a woman and competed as a woman," she told reporters about her eligibility. "They hate me and I don't know why," she said of the IBA.



Imane Khelif

'Defamation campaign'

Russia's team has been banned from the Paris Olympics over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. On Monday, Khelif received a hero's welcome at Algiers airport, with crowds cheering the boxer with chants of "Tahia Imane" (Long live Imane).

An editorial in government daily El Moudjahid praised Khelif. "Imane's victory is also a victory for the oppressed and the excluded, but above all it is a victory for the law, which for too long has been trampled by the logic of the powerful, who are greedy for domination and adept at double-standard policies."

Asked if the International Olympic Committee was prepared to consider reviewing the gender issue, its president Thomas Bach has said: "If someone is presenting us a scientifically solid system how to identify men and women, we are the first ones to do it." "But what is not possible that someone is saying this is not a woman just by looking at somebody or by falling prey to a defamation campaign by a not credible organisation with highly political interest." — AFP

Five talking points in the new EPL season

MANCHESTER: Manchester City face a strong challenge from Arsenal as the champions look to win an unprecedented fifth successive Premier League title. Liverpool start a new era with Arne Slot replacing Jurgen Klopp, while Erik ten Hag is under pressure to deliver at Manchester United after narrowly avoiding the sack. AFP Sport looks at five things to watch out for when the new season gets underway on Friday:

Slot's big shoes to fill

Liverpool fell short of giving Jurgen Klopp a glorious goodbye as they stumbled down the final straight last season to finish third. Arne Slot has the unenviable task of replacing the German, who restored the Reds to the top of English and European football, while also bringing his larger than life personality to Anfield.

The Dutchman will struggle to match the cult of Klopp, but the early signs are positive that he can continue to win on the field. Liverpool have swept all before them in pre-season, beating Arsenal, Manchester United and Sevilla. But they are yet to make a single signing in the transfer window. Martin Zubimendi of Real Sociedad has been linked as a potential new anchor for the midfield. Slot has spoken of the similarities between he and Klopp's style of play as one of the reasons he was poached from Feyenoord for the job. And he will be hoping for a fast start to ease any fears over Klopp's departure with a kind run of fixtures in the early months of the season.

Arsenal's time?

Only once have Arsenal ever won more points in a Premier League campaign than the 89 they collected last season and it was still not enough to dethrone Manchester City. Fuelled by that painful near miss, Mikel Arteta's men are the coming force in English football.

The Gunners have steadily improved over the past three seasons and finished second in each of the past two campaigns. Italian international Riccardo Calafiori adds even more quality to what was the best defence in the league last season.

But it is at the other end of the field where Arsenal may still find themselves short. Kai Havertz had a fine second half to his first season at the club after a slow start. The German is set to maintain his place as Ar-

teta's centre-forward as Arsenal have again decided not to go into the market for a striker.

Ten Hag's short leash

Manchester United's shock FA Cup final win over Manchester City in May was enough to save Ten Hag's job and even earned the Dutchman a new contract. Yet the former Ajax boss remains on a short leash after United's worst ever Premier League finish of eighth.

United have been one of the most active English clubs in the market, splashing out on Leny Yoro and Joshua Zirkzee, with deals for Bayern Munich defenders Matthijs de Ligt and Noussair Mazraoui completed on Tuesday.

But in a worrying repeat for Ten Hag of last season's injury woes, Yoro has already been sidelined for three months by a broken bone in his foot. United open the season at home to Fulham on Friday and Ten Hag can ill afford a poor start or questions will quickly be raised again over his future.

Ipswich return

Leicester and Southampton have bounced back into the Premier League at the first time of asking, but Ipswich are fresh faces as they return to the top flight for the first time in 22 years. Kieran McKenna has masterminded back-to-back promotions to bring the Tractor Boys back into the big time and keeping hold of the Northern Irishman despite interest from Chelsea and Brighton has been vital for Ipswich's chances of survival. The scale of the task they face is laid bare by the fact that all three promoted sides last season were relegated.

Maresca's difficult choices

New Chelsea boss Enzo Maresca has a baptism of fire as his side host Manchester City on the opening weekend, but the Italian is certainly not short of selection options. In keeping with previous transfer windows since a takeover fronted by LA Dodgers co-owner Todd Boehly, the Blues have spent big money on young talent from around the world over the close season.

That includes Pedro Neto in a £54 million move from Wolves and Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall, who shone for Maresca last season in Leicester's promotion from the Championship. However, Chelsea's summer business has swelled their squad to upwards of 50 senior players. That leaves Maresca with a difficult balance of trying to instill his style of play on a dressing room that will have a lot of players unhappy at their lack of playing time. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

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

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

Hospitals

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

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Change of Name

I have changed my old name from **Mohamad Ubed Abdul Saddique** to new name Kagzi Mohammed Ubed Abdul Saddique & I will be known as new name which please note. SD: Kagzi Mohammed Ubed Abdul Saddique, ADD: C-30, Ihsan Park, Block No. 272/B, near Kasturi Hotel, Isroli, VRC- Bardoli, PO-Bardoli, Dist - Surat, Gujarat - 394601.

(6153#, 15/08/2024)

I have changed my old name from **Abdul Saddique Abdul Aziz** to new name Kagzi Abdul Saddique Abdul Aziz & I will be known as new name which please note. SD: Kagzi Abdul Saddique Abdul Aziz, ADD: C-30, Ihsan Park, Block No. 272/B, near Kasturi Hotel, Isroli, VRC- Bardoli, PO-Bardoli, Dist - Surat, Gujarat - 394601.

(6152#, 15/08/2024)

I **Qaid Joher** Holder of Indian Passport No. Z3201458 having permanent address 24/1,

Ibrahimipura Bakhal, Dada Bhai Noroji Marg, Kharakunwa, Ujjain M.P. India Pin 456006, Residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be Read as Under: Qaid Joher Adenwala.

(5650#, 14/08/2024)

I, **Ebsiba**, holder of Indian Passport No. Y1280869 having permanent address H.No. 11/412, Karthianikattu (H) Theyyappara, Kodenchery, Kozhikode, Pin- 673580, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: Ebsiba. Name: Ebsiba Eldose and surname: Eldose Skaria.

(5649#, 13/08/2024)

I, **Edson**, holder of Indian Passport No. Y1280872 having permanent address H.No. 11/412, Karthianikattu (H) Theyyappara, Kodenchery, Kozhikode, Pin- 673580, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: Edson. Name: Edson Eldose and surname: Eldose Skaria.

(5648#, 13/08/2024)

Rangers, Fenerbahce out of CL

Hosts Rangers pay the price for a harsh second yellow card



ISTANBUL: Fenerbahce's Polish midfielder #53 Sebastian Szymanski (L) fights for the ball with Lille's Brazilian defender #04 Alessandro (C) during the UEFA Champions League 3rd Qualifying Round second leg football match between Fenerbahce and Lille LOSC. — AFP

PARIS: Rangers exited the Champions League after losing 2-0 to Dynamo Kyiv in the second leg of the third qualifying round on Tuesday, while Jose Mourinho's Fenerbahce were knocked out by Lille. Hosts Rangers paid the price for a harsh second yellow card issued to defender Jefte as Dynamo struck twice in the final 10 minutes through substitutes Oleksandr Pikhonok and Nazar Voloshyn.

Rangers coach Philippe Clement blasted the referee's decision that left his team with 10 men. "It's hard for my team. They don't deserve this after these two games versus Dynamo Kyiv. One person with one decision made a really big change for us," Clement told BBC Scotland.

"It's the second time in my career of over 30 years that something unjust has happened. We

can only accept it and move forward towards the league and the Europa League." Clement, who is looking to overhaul his squad in an attempt to challenge Celtic, said the defeat would have serious ramifications for the club's finances.

"Financially, it's a big difference for the club. It will make a difference for the transfers coming in also. I don't expect this rebuild to be done in a few weeks' time." Ukrainians Dynamo advanced 3-1 on aggregate and head into a play-off tie against Salzburg, who edged FC Twente 5-4 after a 3-3 draw in the return leg in the Netherlands. Jonathan David's penalty secured Lille a place in the next round as the French club snatched a 3-2 aggregate victory in Turkey, marking a disappointing start to Mourinho's time in charge of Fenerbahce.

Fenerbahce lost the first leg 2-1 last week and appeared to be going out until Bafode Diakite's late own goal sent the match to extra time. Lille substitute Aissa Mandi was sent off on his debut for a reckless challenge on Irfan Can Kahveci, but the visitors were awarded a penalty for a handball by Jayden Oosterwolde and David made no mistake from the spot.

Cenk Tosun then headed against the bar as Lille held on. Their reward is a meeting with Slavia Prague, who were 4-1 aggregate winners over Union Saint-Gilloise. Slovan Bratislava, who entered in the first qualifying round, overcame APOEL Nicosia 2-0 over two legs.

They will take on Midtjylland for a place in the new-look, 36-team tournament after the Danish

champions beat Hungary's Ferencvaros 3-1 on aggregate. Norwegian champions Bodo/Glimt eased through with a 4-1 win over Poland's Jagiellonia Bialystok, completing a 5-1 aggregate triumph.

Sweden's Malmo won a thrilling tie with PAOK, striking late in Greece to force extra time and then winning the second leg 4-3 to prevail 6-5 overall. Sparta Prague beat Romanians FCSB 4-3 on aggregate, while Qarabag stunned Ludogorets with four goals in extra time to pull off a remarkable 7-2 win in Bulgaria.

Switzerland international Kwadwo Duah netted twice on the night to put Ludogorets 4-2 ahead in the tie, but the visitors from Azerbaijan scored six times without reply to run away with an 8-4 aggregate success. — AFP

Philippines holds victory parade for gold gymnast Yulo

MANILA: Thousands of shrieking fans jammed the streets of the Philippine capital Manila on Wednesday in a celebratory homecoming parade for Paris Olympics double gold medalist Carlos Yulo. The 24-year-old gymnast rode a float with other Filipino Olympians through major Manila streets, having given his country its grandest Games result in 100 years.

By winning the men's floor exercises and vault, the diminutive Yulo tripled the country's overall Olympic gold medal haul to three. With his medals hanging proudly on his neck, a beaming Yulo flashed victory signs to the adoring crowd who waved Philippine flags and took selfies using the float, adorned with the five Olympic rings, as backdrop.

Giant posters bearing Yulo's image hung from electric posts on the side of the streets. Yulo's Olympic feat reignited hope for the 115 million Filipinos, many of whose lives are blighted by poverty, natural disasters and corruption.

Growing up in a poor neighborhood in Manila, Yulo's journey showed that hard work and persistence pays in a world where the privileged often get a head start. He fell in love with gymnastics at seven when his grandfather brought him to watch gymnasts at an old training facility near his home.

Battling homesickness, the formidable language barrier, and strenuous training, he left the country for Japan at 16 to train under Japanese coach Munehiro Kugimiya to pursue his dream of becoming a world-class athlete. Lia Orellano, 82, ambled out of her home with the aid of a cane on



MANILA: Philippines' Carlos Yulo (C), Paris 2024 Olympic Games double gold medalist in gymnastics, and other Philippine athletes who competed at Paris 2024 Olympics, wave from a float during a celebratory homecoming parade along a street in Manila. — AFP

Manila's downtrodden Leveriza Street to welcome her former neighbor Yulo.

"I'm very happy and proud of what he has achieved. He gave us hope that everyone can be like him from this small street," she told AFP, recalling that when he was little Yulo loved "to do 'tumbings' here even on these dirty streets".

President Ferdinand Marcos met the 22 Filipino athletes Tuesday and handed them hefty bonuses. Marcos gave Yulo a presidential citation and

20 million pesos (\$350,000) on top of the 10 million-peso reward legally mandated for Olympic gold medalists.

Yulo also earned cash and gift pledges from other government offices and private companies. These include a fully-furnished three bedroom condominium in one of Manila's posh districts and a lifetime of free buffet of chicken barbeque and Japanese noodles. A gastroenterologist also offered Yulo free colonoscopy tests after he turns 45. — AFP



Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Arab tennis juniors championship to be held in Tunis

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Board of Arab Tennis Federation Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah said the Arab juniors championship will be held in Tunis from August 16 until 24. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber who is also Chairman of the organizing committee said more than 120 players of both genders from 10 Arab countries will participate in the tournament, adding that the Arab Federation along with Tunis Tennis Federation are fully ready for the launch of the tournament.

He said the tournament's draw will be held on August 15 in the presence of the technical committee and a representative from every participating country. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber is pleased with the number of participants from Arab countries adding a new success for the ATF. He wished all participants good luck.