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NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwait, Qatar eye new LNG deal

DOHA: Qatar Energy is in talks with Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) for a new long-term supply of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to help meet rising demand for power generation in the state, five trading and industry sources told Reuters. They said the deal would see Qatar providing Kuwait with 3 million metric tons per annum (mtpa) of the seaborne fuel over 15 years from its North Field project, which is expected to commence operation in 2026. The deal is expected to be announced in the fourth quarter of this year as "arrangements" are still being made. — Reuters

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait, under HH the Amir's directives, is accelerating reforms to achieve economic development and financial sustainability through building strategic partnerships with major countries. HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has repeatedly emphasized the importance of ensuring sustainability of the national economy, a guideline for every government to make major transformations in reforms, economy, production and human resources.

The seven agreements signed between Kuwait and the People's Republic of China in September 2023 constituted one of the most important milestones driving development efforts in Kuwait. Kuwait is working to diligently implement the recommendations that were agreed upon during the visit of HH the Amir to China last year. The Kuwaiti

government recently intensified discussions with the Chinese side, represented by the commissioner-general of the representative office for the Middle East and Africa, with the aim of overcoming obstacles and support efforts to put the agreements into effect as soon as possible.

Kuwait Investment Authority, meanwhile, is moving to seize investment opportunities and enhance its presence in promising markets, especially in Saudi Arabia, as the authority decided on June 25, 2024 to open an office in the kingdom to enhance cooperation with Saudi and international companies in joint projects.

Al-Zour Refinery project, which was inaugurated by HH the Amir in May, added a new strategic dimension to Kuwait with the aim to advance development and strengthen the country's leading position. The

government is also planning to launch major policies and create a solid legislative structure that keeps pace with the process of economic and financial reform and creates an attractive environment for investments.

In order to integrate a vision in this regard, the Council of Ministers assigned the ministry of finance to draw up policies about financial and economic reforms in a way that ensures financial sustainability as well as maximizes non-oil revenues. The Council of Ministers also formed a committee to prepare priorities and the main theme of its action plan and a specific execution timetable. The committee is headed by the minister of finance with the minister of public works, minister of commerce and industry, minister of electricity, water and renewable energy as members.

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Power cut to 'bachelor' buildings

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality revealed on Tuesday that 26 properties housing "bachelors" in Khaitan had their electricity cut in cooperation with the ministry of electricity, water and renewable energy. In a press release, the Municipality said the procedure was carried out due to various violations. Owners of the real estate properties would be issued violation warrants, added the statement, noting that "bachelors" are prohibited from living in private residential areas. — KUNA

WHO: Mpox 'not the new COVID'

GENEVA: The mpox outbreak is not another COVID-19, the World Health Organization said Tuesday, because much is already known about the virus and the means to control it. While more research is needed on the Clade 1b strain which triggered the UN agency into declaring an international health emergency, the spread of mpox can be reined in, the WHO's European director Hans Kluge said. "Mpox is not the new COVID," he said. WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic said the agency was not recommending the use of masks or mass vaccination. — AFP

World's oldest person dies at 117

MADRID: The world's oldest person, Spain's Maria Branyas Morera, who was born in the United States and lived through two world wars, died Tuesday at the age of 117, her family said. Branyas had warned in a post social network X on Monday that she felt "weak". "The time is near. Don't cry, I don't like tears. And above all, don't suffer for me. Wherever I go, I will be happy," she added on the account, which is run by her family. — AFP (See Page 12)

Blinken meets Sisi as Hamas slams Biden

EL ALAMEIN: Top US diplomat Antony Blinken met Egypt's president Tuesday for talks about a Gaza ceasefire after saying the Zionist entity had accepted a US "bridging proposal" for a deal and urging Hamas to do the same. The Palestinian group said it was "keen to reach a ceasefire" agreement but protested US modifications in the latest proposal, accusing the Zionist entity of "setting new conditions".

Blinken, on his ninth visit to the Middle East in more than 10 months of the Zionist-Hamas war, flew from the Zion-

ist entity to the Egyptian Mediterranean city of El Alamein, where he met with President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and other officials. "The time has come to end the ongoing war," Sisi told Blinken, according to an Egyptian statement, warning of the consequences of "the conflict expanding regionally".

Both Egypt and Qatar are working alongside the United States to broker a truce, which diplomats say would help avert a wider conflagration in the Middle East that could draw in Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, after meeting with Blinken, "expressed his hope that the coming round of negotiations sees a genuine (Zionist) political will to end the war", an official statement said. More truce talks are expected in Egypt this week.

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GAZA: A medic checks a wounded child at Nasser Hospital following Zionist bombardment of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on Aug 20, 2024. — AFP

Biden passes the torch to Harris in poignant farewell

CHICAGO: An emotional US President Joe Biden passed the torch to Democratic nominee Kamala Harris with a hug on Monday, saying he gave everything for his country in a bittersweet farewell speech at the party's convention in Chicago. "America, America, I gave my best to you," the 81-year-old Biden said, quoting a patriotic hymn during a nearly hourlong address that ran through his achievements while urging voters to back his vice president against Donald Trump in November.

Harris joined him on stage after the speech and the pair embraced, as the crowd gave Biden a rapturous reception following his stunning decision less than a month ago to drop out of the 2024 White House race.

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CHICAGO: US President Joe Biden holds US Vice President Kamala Harris' hand after delivering the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention on Aug 19, 2024. — AFP

Kenya 'psychopath' serial killer suspect escapes from police

NAIROBI: Red-faced Kenyan police on Tuesday arrested eight of their own officers and launched a manhunt after a man accused of murdering and dismembering 42 women escaped from a Nairobi police cell along with a dozen other people. The escapees include Collins Jumaisi, 33, described by police as a "vampire, a psychopath", who was arrested last month after the horrific discovery of mutilated bodies in a dump in a slum of the Kenyan capital.

Jumaisi and the 12 others, all Eritrean nationals, appeared to have escaped by cutting through a wire mesh roof at the police station. "Our preliminary investigations indicate that the escape was aided by



Collins Jumaisi

insiders," acting national police chief Gilbert Masengeli said in a statement. He told reporters that eight officers on duty at the time have been suspended and "placed in custody", adding that the matter was being investigated by the Internal Affairs Unit.

Police said they discovered the breakout when officers made a routine visit to the cells at around 5 am to serve the prisoners breakfast. "On opening the cell

door, they discovered that 13 prisoners had escaped by cutting the wire mesh in the basking bay," police said, referring to a covered courtyard area in the station where detainees could get access to fresh air.

The 12 Eritreans had been arrested for being in Kenya illegally, police said, adding that four others who did not escape were helping with the investigation. The police station is located in the upmarket Nairobi district of Gigiri, home to the regional headquarters of the United Nations and numerous embassies.

It is the second time in barely six months that a suspect in a high-profile case has escaped from custody. Kenyan national Kevin Kangethe, who is accused of murdering his girlfriend in the United States last year and leaving her body in an airport car park, fled a police station in February before being caught about a week later. Jumaisi had appeared in a court in the Kenyan capital on Friday, when the magistrate ordered him to be held for a further 30 days to enable police to complete their investigations.

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Between two worlds: The impact of Kuwait's nationality law

Legal rights and limitations for children of Kuwaiti women under the law

By Passant Hisham, Nafisa Maleah

KUWAIT: Nouri Kohli, who was born to a Kuwaiti mother and an American father, has always felt a sense of exclusion growing up. "I felt that I was pushed away from the culture," Kohli recalls, attributing this distance to the fact that he is not considered fully Kuwaiti by the law, resulting in an ambiguous position in society. Despite his Kuwaiti heritage, he felt that he was often dismissed by the people around him. "When I tell people that my father is not Kuwaiti, they tend to overlook my Kuwaiti ethnicity. It made me think, if they're overlooking it, maybe I should too."

Identity is often interlinked with citizenship or passport, but people who fall between the lines face unique challenges. For people who have a Kuwaiti mother and foreign father, the lack of Kuwaiti citizenship is more than just a legal obstacle. "I didn't feel like I was necessarily accepted by my peers at school, and it also gave me a little bit of anxiety whenever I tried to connect with the culture. Sometimes I just tell people that I'm American, and I don't go into details on my cultural background because of that," Kohli said, adding that this resulted in him not learning Arabic until later on in life.

One of the most challenging aspects of Kohli's experience is the legal barrier that prevents people like him from obtaining Kuwaiti citizenship. "It stops me from having the same rights that the people around me have — whether it's owning a business, owning a home, or even living here in general," he added. However, this legal barrier is not in place for children of Kuwaiti men, who can easily attain citizenship. "Nothing about my rights should change just because my mother is the Kuwaiti one," Kohli said.

Kohli describes how this situation also affects his mother, believing that it takes away her perspective as a Kuwaiti woman, as she's not given the same rights to pass down her heritage, unlike a Kuwaiti man. "As her son, it feels a bit insulting to my mother — it's upsetting that she can't pass down what she's been given and grown up with her entire life to her children."

43,766 children in Kuwait

As Kohli prepares to leave Kuwait for university,



Lawyer Athra Alrefai

the weight of his situation becomes more apparent. "Kuwait is my home, but I can't imagine living here without feeling accepted, both by society and by the government. It's something that affects me and will continue to do so, especially as I think about my future," Kohli said. According to the latest statistics from the Public Authority for Civil Information, released in June 2022, there are approximately 43,766 children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis. This figure does not account for Kuwaiti women married to stateless individuals (bedoon), indicating that the actual numbers are likely higher.

So, Kohli's case is just one example highlighted by Kuwait Times, reflecting the sense of alienation many children of Kuwaiti mothers' experience compared to Kuwaiti citizens. Compounding the issue is the widespread lack of awareness among these children regarding their legal rights. Lawyer Athra Alrefai sheds light on all the rights and limitations for children of Kuwaiti women under the government's law, distinguishing between those with stateless fathers, GCC nationals, and fathers from other Arab or foreign countries.

When rights almost align

In the areas of education, employment, and healthcare, Refai explained that the government almost provides children of Kuwaiti mothers with rights similar to those of Kuwaiti citizens. However, she highlighted that critical challenges remain in other areas, particularly concerning residency and housing rights after the mother's death.

Refai stated that children of Kuwaiti women are entitled to free government education up to the secondary level. At the university level, they can attend public or private institutions within Kuwait at no cost and receive a social allowance of KD 200 from the Ministry of Higher Education. Nevertheless, unlike Kuwaiti citizens, they are not eligible for scholarships when studying abroad, as they are responsible



Childhood picture of Nouri Kohli wearing Kuwait's flag vest.

for their own educational expenses.

Yet, in this case, they continue to receive health insurance and social allowances. In the government sector, healthcare is provided free of charge for all children of Kuwaiti women, but they must prove their status as children of Kuwaiti women by providing a birth certificate. In terms of employment opportunities, children of Kuwaiti women receive priority after Kuwaiti citizens.

However, Refai pointed out that the nature of their employment contracts varies based on their father's nationality. Those with stateless fathers face greater disparities, working under contracts with limited job security and no end-of-service benefits or leave al-

lowances. In contrast, employment contracts for children of Kuwaiti women with foreign fathers (whether from Arab countries or elsewhere) grant these rights. The only ones who enjoy employment rights similar to Kuwaiti citizens are those who are children of GCC fathers, due to GCC agreements, only with slight differences in their salaries.

After the mother passes away

"After the death of their Kuwaiti mother, the real struggle begins," said Refai, regarding children of Kuwaiti mothers and foreign fathers. She stated that this category doesn't have the right to own the family home after the mother's death but is only entitled to a share of the inheritance. Regarding residency rights, Foreign-national children who are dependents under their mother's residence permit are exempt from annual residency fees. But, once they switch to a work visa, they are required to pay the relevant fees.

In the event of their mother's death, they will need to secure a sponsor for their residency. This sponsor could be a family member, such as a grandmother, or an employer. On the other hand, children of Kuwaiti women with GCC national fathers receive a civil ID similar to that of Kuwaiti citizens. Also, stateless individuals do not need to transfer their residency or pay work residency fees.

The vision is unclear

Refai stated that before the National Assembly's suspension, there was a proposed law for granting civil rights for children of Kuwaiti women, which included the issuance of a civil ID indicating their status as children of Kuwaiti women. "But now, the vision of the future regarding this law remains unclear," she added.

According to Former MP Jenan Boushehri in a previous statement at the media center in the National Assembly, she confirmed that the proposed law grants the children of Kuwaiti women the right to permanent residency from birth, which would entitle them to a civil ID valid for five years, regardless of their passport's validity. The law also exempts children of Kuwaiti women with permanent residency from the requirement to transfer their residency when joining the workforce, whether in the public or private sector. This is intended to cover those married to stateless individuals.

Deputy PM and foreign envoys hold talks

KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Saud Al-Sabah held discussions on Monday with a number of foreign ambassadors in Kuwait on issues of common interest. In a statement, the Ministry of Defense said

Sheikh Fahad Al-Sabah met, separately, with the Malaysian Ambassador Alauddin Mohd Nor, the Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika, the Canadian Ambassador Aliya Mawani and the US Ambassador Karen Sasahara.

The discussions focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation as well as addressing recent developments on both regional and international fronts. During the meeting, US Ambassador Sasahara honored Colonel Mohammad Abdulrahman from the Office of the Ministry of Defense, recognizing his efforts in enhancing collaboration and coordination between the defense ministries of Kuwait and the United States. — KUNA



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and US Ambassador Karen Sasahara. — KUNA photos



Deputy PM and Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika.



Deputy PM and Canadian Ambassador Aliya Mawani.



Deputy PM and Malaysian Ambassador Alauddin Mohd Nor.

Kuwait FM receives Chinese delegation

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya on Monday received CEO of State Power Investment Corporation (SPIC) and Representative of China in the Middle East and North Africa Ma Chao, and the accompanying delegation at the Ministry's headquarters. During the meeting,

both sides discussed joint efforts and bilateral work to begin implementing the agreements and memoranda of understanding that were signed during the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the People's Republic of China in September 2023. They also touched upon the latest developments related to the Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in the fields of the electricity and renewable energy, as specialized Chinese companies will implement a number of energy projects according to the latest technical standards and specifications. — KUNA

GCC's justice ministries discuss judicial matters, discrimination, crimes

DOHA: The Ministry of Justice of Kuwait participated on Monday in the fourth and fifth meetings of the committee of officials of the departments of international cooperation and international relations of the ministries of justice of the GCC countries in the Qatari capital. The Ministry of Justice said in a statement on the social networking platform (X) that the meeting (scheduled from August 19 to 22) will discuss common legal and justice topics within the framework of the Gulf Cooperation Council in preparation for submitting them to meetings of undersecretaries of Justice ministries and then the meeting of Justice ministers scheduled in October.

The meeting will also discuss the draft development of the agreement on the execution of sentences and judicial declarations in both GCC countries. Participants will talk about the agreement on the ex-

tradition of accused and sentenced persons between the GCC states and the unified rules of the GCC states to combat discrimination, hate speech, and juvenile crimes. The Ministry of Justice is participating in the two meetings with an official delegation headed by the Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice for Legal Affairs. — KUNA



DOHA: Officials from the GCC's Justice ministries hold meeting in Doha. — KUNA photos

Local

'Summit of the Future', a historic chance for global harmony: UN

Kuwait keen on development of humankind



Representative Secretary General of the United Nations and the Resident Coordinator in Kuwait Ghada Al-Taheer

KUWAIT: The Summit of the Future, scheduled in the UN headquarters New York on September 22 and 23, is a historic chance to create global harmony for the upcoming generations, said a UN official on Tuesday. In an interview with KUNA, the Representative Secretary General of the United Nations and the Resident Coordinator in Kuwait Ghada Al-Taheer said that Kuwait was always a great supporter and the first to implement international accords and agreements aimed at peace, stability, and overall development.

This attitude reflects Kuwait's keenness on the development of the world and humankind, added the official. She stressed the importance of Kuwait's role within the frame of climate work especially in the Middle East region, reiterating that environmental challenges were one of the most crucial obstacles to tackle. The official also commended Kuwait's interest in the role of youth in innovation, saying that such interest would usher in a better world in the future and also enable young individuals to utilize their skills in overall technological and sustainable development.

Back to the Summit of the Future, Al-Taheer said that world leaders would convene in the UN headquarters to exchange ideas and collaborate on matters that were concerned as challenges to the world,

stressing the need to address these challenges to build a better future. The official touched on the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres report "Our Common Agenda", which called for holding regular meetings based on the principles of human rights to renew commitment to policies aimed at keeping the dignity of humans across the globe.

The report also called for renewing the multiparty system throughout meetings concerned with the future of the world, saying that such step would benefit all people from all walks of life. The goals of the Summit for the Future would be reaffirming existing commitments — including to the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Charter — and move towards a reinvigorated multilateral system better positioned to impact people's lives positively.

She hoped that the end-result of the summit would be finding a global system that was more ready to address challenges and figuring out what was best for future generations. Al-Taheer noted that prior to the summit, a preparatory conference would be held under the slogan of "Action Days" on September 20 and 21 to find common grounds for all sectors of societies around the globe and also to utilize the youth's skills and innovations. — KUNA



Egypt, Kuwait eye broader bilateral ties

CAIRO: Egypt and Kuwait plan to ratchet up bilateral cooperation across numerous fields, with emphasis placed on the industrial and transportation sectors, Kuwait's Ambassador to Cairo Saqer Al-Ghanim said on Monday. Lauding the meteoric development seen in the Arab world's most populous nation, the Kuwaiti diplomat expressed his country's "eagerness" to propel cooperation with Cairo to greater levels, he told KUNA after talks with Egyptian Transport, Trade, and Industry Minister Kamel Al-Wazir. Progress in trade relations would help usher in more growth in the two nations' economies, the Kuwaiti diplomat underlined, saying his talks with the Egyptian minister also focused on existential "opportunities" for further cooperation. — KUNA

Sultan praises bilateral Kuwait, Brunei relations

KUALA LUMPUR: The Sultan of Brunei Darussalam Hassanal Bolkiah, praised Tuesday the strong bilateral relations with Kuwait, noting that they have significantly developed in all areas. This was mentioned during a meeting held at the Sultan's office in the Nurul Iman Palace with Kuwait's Ambassador Salah Al-Mutairi, on the occasion of the end of his tenure in Brunei, said a statement from the Kuwait Embassy in Brunei.

Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah conveyed his greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as he expressed his wishes to visit Kuwait in the near future to meet the Amir and discuss ways to boost the bilateral relations between the two nations. In turn, Ambassador Al-Mutairi affirmed Kuwait's commitment to working closely with Brunei to develop relations



Sultan of Brunei Darussalam Hassanal Bolkiah received Kuwaiti Ambassador to Brunei Salah Al-Mutairi. — KUNA

in various domains, expressing his gratitude to the government of Brunei for the support he received during his tenure. — KUNA

The need for workshops focused on adult growth and development

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: We often find many workshops encouraging children to develop their skills and discover new or perhaps hidden hobbies. However, adults are frequently overlooked. It is usually assumed that they have already found their path in life and their situation is settled. But this is not often the case; many adults suffer from feeling lost and not knowing their goals or hobbies, leading them to experience a sense of boredom or frustration.

Therefore, Lulwa Al-Saddoun, one of the individuals who discovered one of the adult workshop groups in Kuwait, spoke about the necessity of giving adults space for activities that have a significant and effective impact on their life paths. Al-Saddoun explained to Kuwait Times: "This age group was targeted due to the significant need and the lack of focus on it. Since we belong to the same generation, we shared the needs with the people of our generation."

There is diverse expertise in fields such as business administration, public relations, media, and financial accounting that adults would love to discover. Thus, we utilize skills and specializations to organize and coordinate such programs and events."



She also highlighted that the best methods are to focus on needs and diversity rather than concentrating on just one aspect. For instance, programs based on value diversity, where the spiritual, social, psychological, and recreational aspects are emphasized.

"We always ensure to consult specialists when creating any content. Keeping up with generational changes, renewal, seeking the best services, and ensuring quality are fundamental principles for our team. The impact of purposeful recreational and educational activities is significant in building relationships and developing personalities," Al-Saddoun

elaborated. She also shared successful examples that she has witnessed through the workshops: "Many adults lack skills in creating relationships or personal and skill development."

With their commitment to these activities and continued participation in such meetings and gatherings, we have witnessed substantial development in their personalities, and some of them are now our outstanding volunteers. "This emphasizes the need to start providing more workshops for adults, as they have a significant impact on their lives just as they do for children, since the importance is equal for both groups."

Joint force consolidates efforts in maintaining stability and peace

MANAMA: The Kuwaiti Naval Force received the command of the Duty Force (152) from the Royal Saudi Naval Forces during a reception and handover ceremony at the headquarters of the Naval Forces Command in the Bahraini capital Manama in the presence of the commander of the Fifth Fleet, Lieutenant General George Wyckoff. Marine Brigadier General Talal Al-Kandari, who received the Command, stressed in a speech during the ceremony the importance of

the timing in enhancing joint efforts between friendly countries, continuous training, and gaining experience, which in turn strengthens the concept of maritime security in the Arabian Gulf region.

Al-Kandari pointed out that the ceremony is not only for the purpose of transferring leadership but also to highlight the joint commitment to consolidate stability, cooperation, and peace in the region, stressing that "the prosperity and security of our region are closely linked to the safety of these waters." He pointed out that the work of the Force (152) in cooperation with the international partners emphasizes the importance of unity and shared responsibility in addressing maritime challenges. "Together we have made great strides in enhancing awareness of the maritime field, conducting joint exercises, and

promoting a spirit of cooperation that transcends national borders," he added.

He stressed that the Kuwaiti naval force is steadfast in its commitment to this mission, and "we will continue to build on this strong foundation laid by our Saudi counterparts, and our focus will be on maintaining high levels of readiness and enhancing alignment with our allies and ensuring our contributions to the overall goal of regional stability," he said.

The ceremony was attended by the Kuwaiti military attache in Bahrain, Brigadier General Mohammed Rashid Mohammed, in addition to a large number of representatives of the coalition countries, such as the British ambassador, the Saudi Consul, and a number of military attaché officers of those countries. — KUNA

IACA Dean reaffirms Kuwait's commitment in promoting integrity

VIENNA: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Austria and its Permanent Representative to United Nations offices in Vienna Talal Al-Fassam received the newly appointed Dean of the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) Professor Slagjana Taseva during a visit to the Kuwait embassy. The visit was the Dean's first official activity with Kuwait since assuming office last month, said Al-Fassam in a press release to KUNA on Tuesday.

During the meeting, Ambassador Al-Fassam congratulated Taseva on her appointment and expressed Kuwait's support for her and the academy's mission in combating corruption. He also reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to promoting transparency, integrity, and good governance at both regional and international levels. Ambassador Al-Fassam reiterated Kuwait's keenness to strengthen relations with the academy and to explore new partnership opportunities to combat corruption.

In turn, Taseva provided an overview of the academy's current initiatives and strategic goals, including its academic programs, capacity-building efforts, and global partnerships aimed at enhancing anti-corruption measures. Taseva also highlighted the importance of cooperation with member countries like Kuwait in achieving the academy's mission. The meeting included talks of areas of collaboration such as joint training programs, workshops, and other initiatives that would benefit Kuwait. — KUNA



Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria Talal Al-Fassam with Dean of IACA Professor Slagjana Taseva during her visit to Kuwait embassy.

Police arrest criminal gang

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior announced on Tuesday the arrest of a gang of five Africans who specialized in robbing shops, restaurants and exchange offices. The Ministry said in a press statement by the General Department of Public Relations and Security Media that the General Department of Criminal Investigations, represented by the Hawally Governorate Investigations Department, succeeded in arresting these individuals as part of the Ministry's ongoing efforts to curb the spread of crime, ensure security and arrest lawbreakers.

It added that a search and investigation team was formed by Salmiya Police Station detectives and by intensifying efforts, using modern technology and monitoring the scene of the incident, the suspects were identified and arrested. It indicated that after investigation, they confessed to all the charges and were referred to the competent authorities for necessary legal measures. — KUNA



Kuwaiti Naval Force receives the command of the Duty Force (152) from the Royal Saudi Naval Forces during a reception and handover ceremony at the headquarters. — KUNA photos



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Ministry rationalizes spending in line with government's policy

KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah, said that moving the headquarters of the Public Authority for Youth to Building No 1 in Shuwaikh Complex affiliated with the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) during the next few months aims to rationalize Social Affairs spending and is in line with the government's policy in this regard.

Minister Dr Al-Huwailah praised the distinguished cooperation shown by Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Adel Al-Adwani and Director General of the Applied Education and Training Authority Dr Hassan Al-Fajjam. She stated that she directed all officials of the Youth Authority to exert all efforts to ensure the smooth running of this move in a way that does not hinder work at the Authority.

Humanitarian efforts

In another development, Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah highlighted Kuwait's exceptional global humanitarian efforts as the world commemorated "World Humanitarian Day" on August 19, focusing on urgent humanitarian issues. Dr Al-Huwailah told KUNA in a press statement that the world celebrates the humanitarian efforts of individuals and institutions to improve people's lives globally, alleviating the suffering of the poor, and aiding those afflicted by poverty, disease, or facing natural disasters and humanitarian crises.

She underscored Kuwait's global humanitarian leadership, including fundraising and aid campaigns in over 70 countries with no discrimination. Dr Al-Huwailah expressed gratitude and recognition to all humanitarian and charitable organizations in Kuwait for their efforts in coordinating and advancing humanitarian work in the country. Kuwait's exceptional humanitarian efforts earned global recognition, with the UN designating it as an international center for humanitarian efforts and naming the late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah a "Humanitarian Leader" in 2014. — KUNA

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: The Super Blue Moon rises behind the Kuwait Towers. — KUNA

3rd relief plane takes off from Kuwaiti air bridge

KRCS sends tons of food supplies to Sudan

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced Tuesday the departure of the third relief plane from the Kuwaiti airlift to Port Sudan Airport carrying 10 tons of food supplies to support and relieve the displaced people inside Sudan due to rains, floods, and ongoing conflicts there. The Society's Director General Abdulrahman Al-Aoun told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that this aid comes in response to the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and is within the framework of Kuwait's support for the Sudanese people and its full support in facing the difficult circumstances they are experiencing.

The Kuwaiti airlift is carrying food and medical supplies in addition to other materials. He explained that what Sudanese people are going

through requires immediate intervention from humanitarian organizations to provide relief, stressing that the KRCS has undertaken many initiatives and efforts to support the affected people. He stated that Kuwait has always supported humanitarian work, generously contributed, and responded immediately to provide relief to victims of humanitarian crises and disasters, hoping that this aid would contribute to alleviating the suffering of the people.

He stressed the continuation of relief flights to Sudan in direct coordination with Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Air Force, and the Sudanese Red Crescent, expressing his thanks and appreciation to Kuwait's Ministry of Defense for providing aircraft and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their contribution to the success of the humanitarian mission. — KUNA



The third plane takes off from the air bridge to Sudan loaded with food supplies. — KUNA

KRCS launches drinking water project in Gaza

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced on Tuesday the implementation of a project to provide clean drinking water in the central and southern Gaza Strip for the displaced in shelters. The society's secretary general, Maha Al-Barjas, told KUNA that Zionist aggression on the Gaza Strip destroyed hundreds of water and sanitation facilities and caused significant damage to water supply warehouses, noting that it poses a real threat to the residents of the Gaza Strip.

She added that the project aims to contribute to providing potable water to the displaced families in shelters and those living in tents in the southern Gaza Strip and in Khan Younis governorate. She explained that the water project has benefited more than 30,000 people in the 19 Khan Younis camps under

the supervision and follow-up of the Cooperation Foundation in the Gaza Strip.

She pointed out that the destruction witnessed in the Gaza Strip is "catastrophic," as the people of the Strip live a difficult life and lack food, water, and medicine, stressing the importance of international interventions to provide them with relief and a decent life. The Zionist aggression caused an indescribable humanitarian and health disaster and led to the spread of epidemics and infectious diseases without providing the necessary medical capabilities to treat them, noting that the project contributes to providing clean drinking water for displaced families and those in shelters.

Al-Barjas stressed the importance of introducing humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip and increasing it to ensure the provision of basic materials such as food, water, and health care. She expressed her sincere thanks and appreciation to the private sector and citizen donors who continued their generous support for humanitarian and development projects in Palestine, appreciating their great sympathy with the victims of the aggression in the Gaza Strip and all Palestinian territories. — KUNA



Kuwait Red Crescent Society implements drinking water project in Gaza Strip. — KUNA



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India's top court sets up safety task force after doctor's murder

Philippines to host Afghan refugees seeking US visas

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CHICAGO: Pro-Palestine activists face police during a demonstration outside the venue of the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Illinois, on August 19, 2024. — AFP

Thousands march against US support for Zionist entity

'It's (the Democrats') war. They're responsible for it, they're complicit, and they can stop it.'

CHICAGO: Thousands of mostly peaceful pro-Palestine protesters marched in Chicago on the opening day of the Democratic National Convention on Monday, in a show of anger against the Biden administration's support for the Zionist entity in the Gaza war.

After hours of peaceful demonstrations, dozens of protesters broke through part of the perimeter security fence, drawing riot police to the site, a Reuters witness said. The DNC's security team confirmed that protesters breached a portion of the fencing on the outer perimeter near the convention arena but said law enforcement personnel acted quickly and there was no threat to attendees.

Reuters witnesses saw four people detained and placed in handcuffs. Chicago police confirmed at a press conference that arrests were made but did not say how many. Chanting intensified ahead of the fence breach, as protesters reached a neighborhood park on

Chicago's West Side and paused to amplify their calls for a ceasefire. Amid the noise, the crowd turned its frustration toward Vice President Kamala Harris, referring to the Democratic candidate as "Killer Kamala".

Chicago police formed a perimeter around the park on foot to contain protesters, with some police members on bikes. Still, the umbrella group "March on the DNC" drew fewer supporters than expected to a park outside the convention arena, hours before President Joe Biden was to address the gathering.

They started a one-mile march near where Democratic delegates will nominate Harris as their candidate to face Republican Donald Trump in November's presidential election. Organizers had expected tens of thousands of protesters — enough to fill the park and the march route — Hatem Abudayyeh, a spokesman for March on the DNC, said early Monday. By afternoon though, several thousand protesters

had gathered for speeches and the park was only half full.

The coalition of more than 200 groups includes those advocating for a variety of causes from reproductive rights to racial justice. Many people were coming from Palestinian and Arab communities in Illinois and neighboring states, organizers said last week. Dozens of Muslim delegates and their allies, angry at US support for the entity's offensive in Gaza, are seeking changes in the Democratic platform and plan to press for an arms embargo, putting the party on guard for disruptions to high-profile speeches at the convention.

Roman Fritz, at 19 one of the youngest Wisconsin delegates, wore a scarf imprinted with the traditional Palestinian keffiyeh pattern. He said he supported Harris as the party nominee to beat Trump. Some protesters were doubtful that the party will change its platform. "It'll never happen," said Mwalimu Sundiata

Keita, who traveled from Cincinnati, Ohio, to join the protest. "It's the policy of the party to support (the Zionist entity), and until that policy changes, that's the way it's going to be."

Another large protest was scheduled for Thursday, when Harris is due to formally accept the nomination. Pro-Palestinian groups have for months protested the Biden administration's military and financial support for the entity in its war against Hamas, which has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians in Gaza, according to Gaza health officials.

Protests swelled on US college campuses in the spring, with police clearing student encampments, at times after confrontations between protesters and counter protesters. "The Democrats are the ones in power," Abudayyeh said on Monday. "It's their war. They're responsible for it, they're complicit, and they can stop it." — Reuters

As polio reemerges in Gaza, a mother fears for her child

DEIR EL-BALAH: In Gaza, a mother worries that her month-old son, Mohammed, could be infected with polio after the Palestinian health ministry confirmed the first case in the enclave last week, ending a 25 year period in which the Strip was polio-free. Just three days after his birth, Ghada al-Ghandour's son Mohammed started developing skin rashes. "He had skin rashes as if he was burnt," she said.

A doctor told her there were no creams to treat her child. She later brought him to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah in central Gaza to seek a diagnosis and treatment. The rash fueled his mother's fears that other symptoms and diseases could follow due to a lack of hygiene and medical supplies in Gaza after more than 10 months of conflict.

In a statement, the Palestinian health ministry confirmed the first case of polio in the city of Deir al-Balah had been detected in a 10-month-old baby who had not been vaccinated. Likewise, Mohammed has not received a polio vaccine. "My son was deprived of the first vaccine in his first month," his mother said. Polio was detected in sewage in Gaza's Deir al-Balah and Khan Yunis governorates, Dr Hamid Jafari, a polio specialist at the World Health Organization (WHO), said on August 7, adding it was possible the virus had been circulating since September.

Poliomyelitis, which is spread mainly through the fecal-oral route, is a highly infectious virus that can invade the nervous system and cause paralysis. Children under 5 are most at risk from the viral disease, and especially infants under 2 since normal vaccination regimens have been disrupted by the war. "If the occupation continues to close the (border) crossing and denies access to vaccines, it will lead to a health disaster," said Khalil Al-Daqran, spokesperson of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital.

The Zionist entity announced it would facilitate the transfer into Gaza of polio vaccines for around one million children. More than 43,000 vials of the vaccine were expected to arrive in the entity in the coming weeks and would be sent to Gaza, according to a statement. This would be enough for two rounds of doses for over a million children, it said. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Monday that the United States and the entity were working towards a plan to vaccinate Gazans for polio. "It is urgent. It is vital," Blinken said of the vaccination. — Agencies

Gaza engineer uses sunlight to make saltwater drinkable

KHAN YUNIS: In war-ravaged Gaza, every drop of water counts, making Inas Al-Ghul's makeshift sun-powered water filter a vital asset for parched Palestinians surviving endless bombardment under the territory's scorching heat. Using wood from the few pallets of aid that make it into Gaza, and window panes salvaged from buildings that have largely been abandoned in 10 months of war, the 50-year-old agricultural engineer built a glass-covered trough.

She lets saltwater evaporate from the trough, heated by the greenhouse effect created by the glass panes, allowing the water to distil and leaving behind the salt. From there, a long black hose carries the evaporated water to other containers filled with activated charcoal to further filter out impurities. "It is a very simple device, it's very simple to use and to build," Ghul told AFP after taking a long gulp from a glass of filtered water in her house in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip.

Abundant energy

Ghul's device "doesn't require electricity, filters, or solar panels, it operates solely on solar energy", which

Gaza has in abundance, with 14 hours of sunshine per day in the summer, and eight hours in the winter. This has proven particularly useful at a time when Gaza's only power plant is down and electricity supplies from the Zionist entity have been cut for months.

With fuel also in short supply, Gaza's desalination plants that haven't been damaged in the Zionist assault have been working at a drastically reduced capacity. Mohammad Abu Daoud, a displaced Gazan sweating in the midday sun, said Ghul's invention "comes exactly at the right time". "For about two months, we have relied on it entirely," he told AFP.

This brings crucial help to those who benefit from it, as the available water for Gazans currently averages 4.74 liters per day, "under a third of the recommended minimum in emergencies", Oxfam reported in July. This represents "less than a single toilet flush", the aid group warned in a report, which estimates that available water per person per day in the Gaza Strip plummeted by 94 percent since the beginning of the war. Water was already scarce before the conflict erupted, and most of it was undrinkable. The 2.4 million population relies primarily on an increasingly polluted and depleted aquifer, humanitarian agencies say.

'Water as a weapon of war'

In the school-turned-shelter where Abu Daoud lives, close to Ghul's house, other displaced families have come to rely on the water filtration system to fill up their bottles. The 250-litre tank that



KHAN YUNIS: Inas Al-Ghul speaks to AFP while standing behind her makeshift sun-powered water filter in this screen shot taken from an AFP TV video. — AFP

stores the clean water quickly empties. Oxfam accuses the Zionist entity of using "water as a weapon of war", and has warned of "a deadly health catastrophe" for Gazans, almost all of whom have been displaced at least once.

The aid group calculated that "(Zionist) military attacks have damaged or destroyed five water and sanitation infrastructure sites every three days since the start of the war". The lack of clean water has had drastic effects on the population, with "26 percent of Gaza's population falling severely ill from easily preventable diseases", it said. Conscious of the pressing need for her device and of the ubiquitous danger of air strikes, Ghul regularly climbs up to her terrace to watch over her creation, and to open or close her precious taps. — AFP

International

India's top court sets up safety task force after doctor's murder

Doctors vow to continue protests, say overhaul of system needed

NEW DELHI: India's Supreme Court created a hospital safety task force on Tuesday to recommend steps to ensure medical workers' safety, days after the rape and murder of a trainee doctor caused national outrage and protests by junior doctors. The attack on August 9 in the eastern city of Kolkata has triggered demands for justice for the victim and greater safety for women at hospitals, with doctors in several places refusing to see non-emergency patients.

A police volunteer has been arrested for the crime and the federal police have taken over the investigation. The public anger and protests over violence against women is reminiscent of what followed the gang-rape and murder of a 23-year-old student on a bus in New Delhi in 2012. "If women cannot go to a place of work and be safe, then we are denying them the basic conditions of equality," said Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, who headed a three-judge bench of the court.

The court suggested the doctor-led task force consider sweeping reforms to make medical establishments safer for staff, but hundreds of the junior doctors who have been staying away from work in protest said they were not satisfied and would keep on demonstrating. "Legislation alone will not solve these problems; we need a comprehensive overhaul of the system," the national body of trainee and junior doctors said in a statement, adding that the court's directives did not address the "core problem" of inadequate healthcare funding and staffing.

The Supreme Court, which took up the case on its

own, directed the federal police to submit a report on the status of its investigation into the trainee doctor's killing on Thursday. It also ordered a federal paramilitary force to be deployed at the hospital where the crime took place to provide security to female doctors who complained they did not feel safe after the crime and vandalism at the hospital carried out by unidentified men.

The court suggested the task force consider safety measures including separate resting rooms for female staff, adequate lighting across the campus, CCTV coverage, and creation of employee panels to conduct quarterly safety audits. It told the panel to submit an interim report within three weeks and a final report within two months, and asked doctors abstaining from work across the nation to resume duties at the earliest. "It is our earnest request to doctors all over the country who have stopped work... we are here to ensure their safety and protection," the court said.

Women's rights activists say the incident has highlighted how women in India continue to suffer from sexual violence despite tougher laws brought in after the notorious 2012 gang rape and murder in New Delhi. On Tuesday, thousands of people blocked railway tracks for hours in the western state of Maharashtra, disrupting train services as they protested against the alleged sexual abuse of two, four-year-old girls by a cleaner at a school outside the financial capital of Mumbai. Police said the man has been arrested and state Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said the case would be tried in a fast-track court. — Reuters



KOLKATA: High Court advocates hold posters during a protest to condemn the rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata on August 19, 2024. — AFP

US orders Boeing 787 inspections after LATAM plane plunge

NEW YORK: US regulators said Monday they ordered inspections of pilot seats on hundreds of Boeing 787 planes following a March flight in which the plane's sudden plunge led to passenger injuries. The Federal Aviation Administration is requiring inspections after a report "of uncom-

manded movement of the captain's seat in the forward direction that caused a rapid descent," the agency said in a statement.

Operators are also required to perform necessary corrective actions under the airworthiness directive, which affects 158 US-registered 787 Dreamliner models and 737 planes worldwide, the FAA said. The move is in response to a March flight on a New Zealand-bound plane operated by LATAM Airlines that suddenly lurched downward while flying from Sydney to Auckland, injuring some 50 passengers.

Since that incident, the FAA has received reports from Boeing of four additional instances of

"uncommanded horizontal movement" of the captain and first officer's seats, the agency said. Three of the incidents were due to "loose" switch caps on the seat, while the other two incidents are under investigation, the FAA said.

The "unintended and sustained movement of the seat" can lead to "in-flight upset from unintended and abrupt flight control inputs, which could result in a rapid descent of the airplane and serious injury to passengers and crew," the FAA said. "The FAA is issuing this airworthiness directive to address the unsafe condition on these products," the agency added. Boeing did not immediately respond to a request for comment. — AFP



BRIDGEVIEW: Women walk past by a Palestinian shop in Bridgeview in the suburbs of Chicago, Illinois, on August 18, 2024. — AFP photos



A Palestinian flag with "free Palestine" written on it flutters in the wind next to a strip mall housing Arab businesses in Bridgeview.

Anger in Chicago's 'Little Palestine' as Democrats convene

BRIDGEVIEW: On the outskirts of Chicago, as enthusiastic Democrats gather for their national convention, some residents of "Little Palestine" have a different message for presidential nominee Kamala Harris. "They won't be having our votes this year," said Ali Ibrahim, the manager of a Palestinian bakery in Bridgeview, Illinois, a pendant in the shape of Palestine's map hanging around his neck. "And we do not want them in office."

Nestled by Midway International Airport and a soccer stadium, the Chicago suburb is home to the largest Palestinian community in the United States. Palestinian flags flutter in the wind, shops display signs in both Arabic and English, and posters call for demonstrations against steadfast US military support of the Zionist entity as the death toll mounts in Gaza.

The kickoff of the Democratic National Convention on Monday, just 15 miles (24 kilometers) away in downtown Chicago, has only heightened divisions between Palestinian Americans and the national party, and comes amid similar fractures with the country's larger Arab community, once a reliable Democratic voting bloc. "We are angry. We are frustrated," Souzan Naser, a 46-year-old professor, told AFP. "You can't expect us to vote for you when your values, your policies, your principles don't align with ours."

'Betrayed'

Biden and Harris "could have easily called for a ceasefire, had this war over a long time ago," said Ibrahim. Naser, a member of the activist group US Palestinian Community Network, was born in the Palestinian territories and raised in Bridgeview. Residents in the Chicago suburb worked hard to elect Biden in 2020, she said, "and now they feel betrayed." For many, the war is more than a hypothetical question of foreign policy, she added. "I had one student who lost 35 members of her family," she told AFP, her voice choking with emotion. "And couldn't reach others. Didn't know if they were alive or not."

tion that the suspected killer of three young girls was an Islamist migrant. Videos also circulated of white men attacking people of color across the country - including one wielding a hedge trimmer running towards a Muslim couple in a petrol station and a group badly beating a black man in Manchester.

Fears resurface

For Black Britons, the riots reignited memories of racist violence by the far-right during the second half of the 20th century and sparked discussions still ongoing over how to keep each other safe. "The conversation happening in most black and minority households is around how much this has thrown us back to those days when we saw our parents and elders going through this," said Ngozi Fulani, CEO and founder of Sistah Space, a London-based charity supporting Black British, African and Caribbean victims of domestic violence.

Sistah Space boarded up the windows of the African and Caribbean heritage charity shop it hosts in Dalston, East London, and sent staff home after supporters warned them that far-right rioters were headed in their direction. Other shops, offices and medical centers also closed early. Please remain indoors do not come to the surgery - the St Clements Surgery in Birmingham warned patients by text.

By August 5, sweeping arrests and counter-demonstrations by thousands of anti-racist locals and activists had put an end to most of the unrest that began on July 30, but the fear it provoked

Hope for new policies

Harris has, at times, struck a different tone than her boss, calling for a ceasefire in March before she was running for president. Most recently, however, during her last-second campaign launched after Biden decided not to run for reelection, she rejected calls for an arms embargo. "Has she done enough yet? No, will she? We hope," said restaurant owner Muhammad Baste, 38, insisting on a change in US government policy rather than just rhetoric.

It is possible the Democratic Party will have to go into November without votes from "Little Palestine" and other Arab-American communities — including a large number of residents in nearby Michigan, viewed as a key battleground state. "We know another Trump presidency would be a disaster," said Naser, while insisting that the Palestinian community has given "Biden ample time to change course."

Harris has been largely vague on foreign and domestic policy so far, and it is unclear what sort of relationship she will strike with Palestinian Americans — but the vice president got off to a rocky start. As anti-war protesters interrupted a speech in Michigan earlier this month, she shot back: "If you want Donald Trump to win, then say that. Otherwise, I'm speaking." — AFP



WEYMOUTH: Police officers face off with protesters during a 'Enough is Enough' demonstration in this file photo. — AFP

lingers on. "It feels like we've stepped back into the 1960s," Fulani said.

Olivette Otele, Professor of the Legacies and Memory of Slavery at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, said what stood out in the riots was that the mainly white instigators were very specific about who they were targeting. "They were attacking immigrants, migrants, asylum seekers, people of African heritage, British Muslims. So, it's very specific," Otele added. "The kind of discourse was about wanting their country back, but people they were attacking were British, so it means that they have a certain outlook on what British looks like." — Reuters

How Obama boosted Harris, continues to shape Democratic Party

CHICAGO: After Kamala Harris secured the Democratic presidential nomination in an unprecedented party upheaval, she got some advice from former President Barack Obama: Tap the campaign talent pool that is out there; you can have anyone you want. Within days, Obama's former campaign manager David Plouffe and other high profile alumni from Obama's 2008 and 2012 election efforts joined her nascent campaign. "He just wanted her to know that she was in a position to recruit anyone she thought they needed," said a source familiar with Obama's and Harris' conversation.

Democrats have coalesced around Harris as opinion polls swing in the party's favor, but a month ago some were openly questioning whether she was the right choice to beat Republican candidate Donald Trump when President Joe Biden was forced out of the race after a halting debate performance. Obama waited to endorse Harris for several days, planning to stay above the fray in case there was a competitive nominating process. When it was clear no significant challengers were coming, he jumped in.

Ex-Obama advisers, including Plouffe and 2012 deputy campaign manager Stephanie Cutter, quickly joined Harris' campaign, cementing the former president's imprint on her political operation and underscoring his support for her and his continued influence within the party she now leads. Obama, 63, the keynote speaker at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago on Tuesday, has known Harris, 59, for two decades, aides say.

They first met at a California fundraiser in 2004. Both rose in local politics, she as a prosecutor and he as a community organizer and state senator, before entering the US Senate. Both have represented historical firsts — he as the first Black US president, and she as the first woman and first Black and South Asian person to serve as vice president.

Harris was an early supporter of Obama's 2008 presidential campaign when she was San Francisco district attorney, showing up at his campaign launch in Springfield, Illinois, and knocking on doors for him ahead of the Iowa caucus that helped propel him to the nomination.

Obama backed Biden's pick of Harris as vice president, according to a Democrat briefed on Biden's deliberations. He has kept in regular touch since the 2020 election, aides say. The former president and his wife Michelle have shared dinner with Harris and her husband, Doug Emhoff, at least a couple times. "She was an early supporter of his and he was an early admirer of hers, without question," said David Axelrod, a longtime Obama adviser. "He will not be talking about someone he doesn't know."

Unsolicited advice

A clip of the Obamas congratulating Harris warmly in the call was released by the Harris campaign in a one-minute video that has been viewed by millions. A Harris aide said the former president now reaches out to Harris unsolicited with advice, which the aide said was welcome, even if she does not always take it. Harris spoke to Obama during her vice-presidential selection process, the aide said. "He has offered to support her campaign in any way that he can — including policy or strategic advice, fundraising, and of course campaign travel to help get-out-the-vote," another Obama aide said.

Echoes of Obama have been evident at Harris' rallies since she became the Democratic standard bearer, drawing crowds of thousands. "They're very different political figures, but certainly the excitement around her is familiar to those of us who were around in 2008," said Jamal Simmons, a former Harris adviser. Obama's campaign buzzed with the themes of hope and change; Harris' campaign, with running mate Tim Walz, the governor of Minnesota, has found energy in promoting joy. — Reuters

For black Britons, UK riots leave lasting scars

LONDON: "Please do not go out until this blows over," Sarah Akinterinwa, messaged a friend on August 7. "I'm going into town tomorrow. Should be okay," came the response. "Alone?" she asked. The messages from Akinterinwa, an illustrator and writer from London, are typical of the concern that spread among Black Britons as racist riots erupted in towns and cities across the country at the start of August.

The violence was ostensibly aimed against Muslims, immigrants and the police after misinformation about a deadly knife attack on young girls spread online. But it morphed into a much wider threat that has left the black community shaken. "My mother lives in Harrow, so I told my brother to make sure she doesn't go anywhere," said Natalie Foster, a software developer who learned that the London suburb was on a list circulating among far-right groups of places to gather next.

The targets were mainly immigration lawyers' offices and immigration centers, but the violence was broader. White rioters attacked hotels housing asylum seekers, mosques and police officers as well as smashing and looting shops on the pretext of false online informa-

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2024

Tesla faces lower-rate EU tariffs on China-made EVs

Chinese trade group slams 'unfair' tariffs

BRUSSELS: The European Commission announced Tuesday to impose an extra nine-percent tariff on Tesla's China-made electric cars, much lower than what Chinese firms face unless Beijing compromises in a trade row. Brussels last month slapped EVs imported from China with hefty provisional tariffs — on top of current duties of 10 percent — after an anti-subsidy probe found they were unfairly undermining European rivals. Beijing vociferously opposes the EU tariffs, and has filed an appeal with the World Trade Organization — which Brussels has acknowledged while voicing confidence its measures are WTO-compatible.

On Tuesday the commission released a draft plan making the tariffs definitive, at slightly revised rates, subject to input from interested parties by end August, and to approval by EU member states by end October at the latest. The rates faced by major Chinese manufacturers would be 17 percent for market leader BYD, tweaked downward from 17.4; 19.3 percent for Geely, down from 19.9; and 36.3 percent for SAIC, down from 37.6.

Other producers in China that cooperated with Brussels will face a tariff of 21.3 percent - revised slightly upwards from 20.8 - while those that did not would be subject to the maximum 36.3 percent duty. Musk's Tesla - which manufactures Model 3 and Model Y cars in China - had asked Brussels for its own duty rate, set at nine percent after the commission deemed that it received lower Chinese subsidies than domestic manufacturers.

The bulk of the benefits taken into consideration involve batteries being supplied to Tesla for less than market value, as well as land use provided below

market value and various Chinese grants for exporting producers. The European Commission also decided to grant European manufacturers involved in joint ventures that export EVs from China the rate applying to their Chinese partner firm.

European firms affected include Germany's Volkswagen and BMW — which have expressed fears the EU tariffs could damage trade ties with China, where they have significant business interests.

The Chinese Chamber of Commerce to the EU (CCCEU) slammed the commission's "protectionist approach" and "unfair use of trade tools" that would worsen trade tensions. A European Commission official said the EU executive remained "open" to resolving the trade dispute without resorting to tariffs — but that the ball was in China's camp. "We consider that it's very much up to China to come up with alternatives," the official said. Concerning the provisional duties companies have faced since July 5, provided in the form of bank guarantees, the commission said it had determined it did not have legal grounds to collect the funds, which will be released once definitive measures take effect. China and the EU have butted heads in recent years on a range of issues relating to trade, technology and national security. The EU has launched a raft of probes targeting Chinese subsidies for solar panels, wind turbines and trains, while Beijing has begun its own investigations into imported European brandy and pork.

But Brussels faces a delicate balancing act as it tries to defend Europe's crucial auto industry and pivot towards green growth while also averting a showdown with Beijing. China's emergence as an EV powerhouse stems in part from a targeted industrial



AMMAN: This picture taken on Sept 21, 2023 shows an electric vehicle plugged into a power inlet for charging in Amman. — AFP

strategy, with Beijing pouring vast state funds into domestic firms as well as research and development. The approach has given Chinese firms a critical edge in the race to provide cheaper, more efficient EVs over leading European automakers, which have not

always enjoyed such state largesse. According to the Atlantic Council, Chinese sales of EVs abroad rose 70 percent in 2023, reaching \$34.1 billion. Almost 40 percent went to the European Union, the largest recipient of Chinese EVs. — AFP

Burgan Bank appoints Bader Al-Turkait as Deputy GM of FIs

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced the appointment of Bader Al-Turkait as Deputy General Manager of Financial Institutions (FI) under the umbrella of its Treasury and Financial Institutions Group. In a series of new leadership appointments across its various functions, the latest talent acquisition comes as part of the Bank's comprehensive human capital development strategy, which centers on acquiring and developing Kuwait's most talented and aspiring talents. The strategy aims to advance Burgan's business role as well as raise the bar of qualifications across the domestic banking market's talent pool.



Abdullah Marafie

Bader Al-Turkait

Commenting on Al-Turkait's appointment, Abdullah Abdulmajed Marafie, General Manager — Treasury and Financial Institutions at Burgan Bank, said: "In the intricate environment of Burgan Bank, every acquired talent is instrumental to our collective success, and today, we are delighted to wel-

come on board Bader Al-Turkait, whose role is pivotal to fortifying our position in the market through building profound relationships with external financial entities. We are certain that Al-Turkait will add value to his team and the organization in adherence to our standards for quality and governance."

Prior to joining Burgan Bank, Al-Turkait was the Executive Manager of the Treasury and Financial Institutions Division at the Kuwait Finance House (KFH). In addition to his most recent responsibilities, Al-Turkait brings with him 25 years of experience in the banking sector with similar positions at the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) and Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK).

Al-Turkait's unique perspective is owed to his diverse academic journey, beginning with acquiring his bachelor's degree in Political Science from Colorado State University, followed by earning his MBA in Finance from the University of Denver and completing the General Management Program at Harvard Business School.

One year in, EU turning up heat in big tech fight

BRUSSELS: If 2024 already looks like an annus horribilis for big tech in the EU, the months ahead could prove a winter of discontent as the bloc wields a fortified new legal armory to bring online titans to heel.

Since August 2023, the world's biggest digital platforms have faced the toughest ever tech regulations in the European Union — which shows no sign of slowing down in enforcing them. Brussels scored its first major victory after forcing TikTok to permanently remove an "addictive" feature from a spinoff app in Europe in August, a year after content moderation rules under the bloc's Digital Services Act (DSA) started to apply.

That followed a seven-day period earlier in the summer in which Brussels issued back-to-back decisions targeting Apple, Meta and Microsoft. And more is to come before 2024 is over, say officials.

The EU's moves are all thanks to two laws, the DSA — which forces companies to police online content — and its sister competition law, the Digital Markets Act (DMA) - which gives big tech a list of what they can and can't do in business. Since the DMA curbs kicked in in March, the EU has notably pressured Apple to back down in a spat with Fortnite maker Epic over a gaming app store. "The European Commission is doing the job: it is implementing the DMA with limited resources and within a short timeframe compared to lengthy competition cases," said EU lawmaker Stephanie Von-Courtin, who focuses on digital issues.

Jan Penfrat, senior policy advisor at online rights group EDRI, says changes are already visible: the DSA giving users the "right to complain" when content is removed or accounts are suspended, or the DMA allowing them to select browsers and search engines via choice screens. "This is just the beginning," Penfrat said.

He notes for instance that EDRI and other groups in July compiled a list of areas where Apple fails to follow the DMA. "We expect the commission to go after those as well in time," Penfrat told AFP. Apple is the biggest thorn in the EU's side as the DMA's chief critic, claiming it puts users' security at risk. The iPhone maker became the first company in June to face formal accusations of breaking the DMA's rules and faces heavy fines unless it addresses the charges.

Apple announced changes to the App Store on August 8 to comply with the DMA, although smaller tech firms under the Coalition for App Fairness slammed them as "confusing". The EU is now evaluating Apple's plans. It is too early to say whether Apple will fall into line without the EU's heavy hand but one thing is clear: Brussels is ready for a fight.

Another high-profile test of the bloc's new powers will be X, with regulators to decide as early as September whether the former Twitter should be made to comply with the DMA. The DSA's rules on curbing disinformation and hate speech have already sparked a spectacular clash between X's billionaire owner Elon Musk and the bloc's digital chief Thierry Breton — with the spectre of fines or an outright EU ban on the site if violations persist.

EU competition chief Margrethe Vestager has said that Brussels is going at "full speed". This was always the goal: to cut short the length of competition investigations, which lasted years, to a maximum of 12 months under the DMA. But companies can challenge fines or decisions in the EU courts, which could mean years of subsequent legal battles, lawyers say. — AFP

Somali traders protest over digital sales tax

MOGADISHU: Market traders in Somalia demonstrated for the second straight day on Monday over the implementation of a five percent tax on electronic payments.

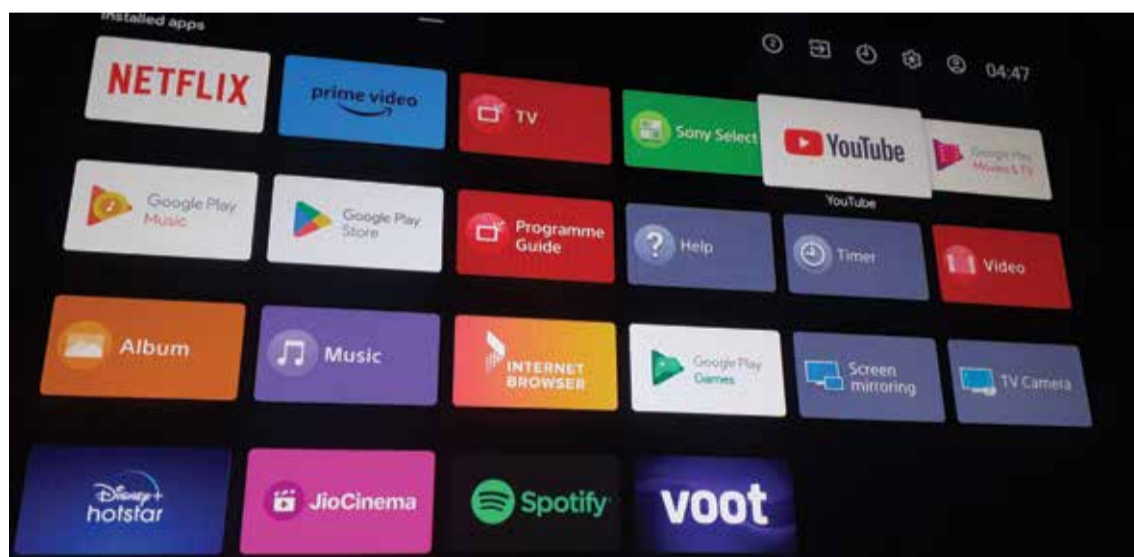
Some shops in the capital city Mogadishu's main Bakara market were closed as dozens staged protests over the tax, saying they were already burdened by high tariffs to transport goods into and around the country. The change would see all merchants—irrespective of their business size — add a flat five percent extra to electronic transactions, which the government says is needed to fund infrastructure and security.

Somalia is one of the poorest and most corrupt countries in the world, and is also grappling with a long and bloody insurgency by the Al-Qaeda-linked jihadist group Al-Shabaab. "We are not against the tax, but we need a proper system and a halt to the money being illegally extorted from merchants before we can agree to the government's instructions," trader Suleyman Adan told AFP.

Mogadishu resident Fadumo Adan said although a few businesses were open and already implementing the change, she had witnessed dozens of merchants marching "to showcase their dissatisfaction" with the value-added tax (VAT). Lawmakers have also criticized the levy, which came into effect on Sunday. "The merchants have already been taxed heavily, imposing more tax on the people without having guiding laws is not fair," politician Yusuf Gamadid told parliament during a debate on the issue.

"We are asking that there has to be a proper law for tax so that the complaints of the public can be addressed," he said. MP Faiza Jeyte said the protests also stemmed from a lack of public services.

"The merchants pay tax and when fire catches the market, there is no firefighting services ready to respond to the emergencies, so the question is what has been used for the tax they paid?" she said. — AFP



BANGALORE: An image of a smart TV screen with the emerging streaming services in India.

Disney-Reliance merger will hurt rivals: India body

NEW DELHI: India's antitrust body has reached an initial assessment that the \$8.5 billion India merger of Reliance and Walt Disney media assets harms competition due to their power over cricket broadcast rights, four sources told Reuters on Tuesday. In the biggest setback so far to their planned merger, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has privately told Disney and Reliance its view and asked the companies to explain why an investigation should not be ordered, one of the sources said.

"Cricket is the biggest pain point for the CCI," said one of the sources. The merged company, which would be majority owned by Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani's Reliance, would have lucrative rights worth billions of dollars for the broadcast of cricket, raising fears over pricing power and its grip over advertisers. Reliance, Disney and the CCI did not immediately respond to requests for comment. All sources declined to be named as the CCI process is confidential.

Antitrust experts had warned the merger, announced in February, could face intense scrutiny as it will create India's biggest entertainment player which will compete with Sony, Zee Entertainment, Netflix and Amazon with a combined 120 TV channels and two streaming services. The CCI earlier private-

ly asked Reliance and Disney around 100 questions related to the merger. The companies have told the watchdog they are willing to sell fewer than 10 television channels to assuage concerns about market power and win an early approval, sources told Reuters. But they had refused to relent on cricket, telling the CCI that broadcast and streaming rights will expire in 2027 and 2028 and cannot be sold right now, and that any such move would require the cricket board's approval, which could delay the process. The CCI notice may delay the approval process but the companies can still address the concerns by offering more concessions, a second source said. "This is a precursor of things getting complicated ... The notice means that initially the CCI thinks the merger harms competition and whatever concessions offered are not enough," added the person. A third source said CCI has given the companies 30 days to respond and explain their position, and the concerns currently revolve around how advertisers could face pricing challenges if the entities are merged.

"The CCI is concerned the entity can increase rates for advertisers during live events," said the third person. Jefferies has said the Disney-Reliance entity will have a 40 percent share of the advertising market in TV and streaming segments. Cricket has a fanatical following in India and matches are sought after by advertisers. Reliance-Disney will own digital and TV cricket rights for top leagues, including for the world's most valuable cricket tournament, the Indian Premier League. The former head of mergers at the CCI, KK Sharma, has said the merger could lead to "almost an absolute control over cricket." — Reuters

Business

Gulf Bank redefines digital banking with innovative mobile app features

App simplifies access to banking services, allows for seamless transactions

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank continues to lead the way in digital banking innovation with its cutting-edge mobile app, providing customers with an unmatched banking experience. In the latest session of the "GB Talks" series, Hasan Fayyadh, Manger of Digital Banking at Gulf Bank, highlighted the app's standout features to a large audience of customers and bank employees.

Fayyadh highlighted the app's transformative impact on the banking sector, calling it one of the most user-friendly and efficient platforms available. "Our mobile app marks a major advancement in customer experience," he stated. "It simplifies access to a variety of banking services and allows for seamless transactions anytime, anywhere, through a straightforward, fast, and secure interface." Fayyadh also emphasized the app's advanced technological features, which deliver a highly personalized and innovative banking experience. The app allows users to customize their homepage and provides a range of exclusive services available only to Gulf Bank customers.

Alongside its user-friendly design, the app offers advanced money transfer features, including the newly launched "Wamd" instant transfer service for quick transfers via mobile phone numbers. It also supports payment links from its external interface and facilitates fast transfers between personal accounts, either from the summary page or by dragging the account icon between accounts.

To further enrich the user experience, the app enables customers to send payment links to groups, split bills, increase daily transfer limits, and switch to dark mode for enhanced privacy. "As we advance our digital innovations, our goal remains clear: to surpass

our customers' expectations and deliver the most advanced and secure banking solutions available," Fayyadh concluded.

Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait's leading bank, fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace to deliver exceptional customer service while contributing sustainably to the community. Through its exten-

Hasan Fayyadh

The mobile app is one of the most user-friendly and efficient platforms available, offering a fast and secure interface

sive branch network and innovative digital services, the bank empowers customers to conduct banking transactions conveniently and efficiently, ensuring a seamless experience. In alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, "New Kuwait," and its commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships, Gulf Bank is dedicated to driving robust sustainability initiatives across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions. The bank is committed to implementing strategically selected and diverse sustainability programs both internally and externally.



Hasan Fayyadh outlines the innovative features of Gulf Bank's mobile app.

India and Malaysia look to reset ties with trade boost

NEW DELHI: Prime ministers of India and Malaysia sought to reset relations between the two countries on Tuesday as they agreed to boost trade, movement of workers and the use of their own currencies to settle bilateral transactions. Malaysia is home to nearly three million people of Indian heritage, but relations soured around late 2019 following remarks by largely Muslim Malaysia's then-Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad against New Delhi removing the autonomy of India's only Muslim-majority region Kashmir.

That had also hit purchases of Malaysian palm oil

by India, the world's biggest buyer of edible oils like palm. But the Malaysian approach has changed under Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, who took office in 2022 and previously told Reuters he was keen to have good ties with India.

The two countries started settling trade in their own rupee and ringgit currencies in April last year, and India's palm oil imports from Malaysia has also increased. "With the support of Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, there has been a new momentum and energy in our partnership," Modi said, as Anwar stood by his side during his first visit to New Delhi as prime minister.

"Today we have decided that our partnership will be elevated to a 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership'. We believe that there is still a lot of potential in economic cooperation. Bilateral trade and investment should be expanded," Modi noted that Malaysia had invested \$5 billion in India in the past year and identified semiconductors, financial

technology, the defense industry and artificial intelligence as areas of possible cooperation. Anwar said his country would reinvigorate relations with India in all fields and that their potential had not been tapped in the past few years.

Indian foreign ministry official Jaideep Mazumdar told a press conference the country would make a one-off export of 200,000 metric tons of non-basmati rice to Malaysia, making an exception to a ban on such shipments. Mazumdar said India is also keen to sell defense equipment to Malaysia, as well as aircraft manufactured by state-run Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. The two countries also agreed a framework for the welfare of Indian workers going to Malaysia, which sources labor from some 15 countries including India for its palm plantations and other industries. There are already some 140,000 Indian workers in Malaysia, the highest ever, and this total could rise as India seeks job opportunities for people at home and abroad. — Reuters

News in Brief

Kaisa in debt restructuring deal

BEIJING: Chinese property developer Kaisa has reached an agreement with creditors for partial repayment of its debt, the company said Tuesday, a positive development as it battles to avoid liquidation. Real estate once served as a vital growth engine for the world's second-largest economy, undergoing two decades of dazzling expansion as living standards rose across the country. But the sector has faced unprecedented headwinds in recent years, with major firms failing to follow through on projects and a clampdown on property market speculation by Beijing. — AFP

EV firm XPeng posts surging sales

BEIJING: Chinese automaker XPeng announced on Tuesday a surge in quarterly revenue despite posting a net loss, as a price war between the country's electric car brands weighs down profitability. Founded in 2014 in the southern city of Guangzhou, XPeng is one of the country's dozens of young automotive firms to emerge in recent years as consumers shift towards electric vehicles. The company — listed on stock exchanges in New York and Hong Kong — is one of China's most prominent EV brands, alongside BYD and Nio. XPeng's revenue during the second quarter of 2024 rose 60.2 percent year-on-year, totaling 8.11 billion yuan (\$1.1 billion), according to a statement published on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. — AFP

i3 Energy surges on takeover offer

LONDON: Shares of i3 Energy jumped as much as 33.7 percent on Tuesday morning after Canada's Gran Tierra Energy GTE.TO offered to buy the British oil and gas producer in a deal valued at 174.1 million pounds (\$226.23 million). The deal has an implied valued of 13.92 pence per i3 Energy share, which represents a premium of 49 percent to the London-listed company's Aug. 16 closing price. "This looks to be at a hefty premium to the prevailing i3E price...deal makes sense for GTE as it diversifies the portfolio outside South America and gives it a hefty boost to reserves and production," said Panmure Liberum analyst Ashley Kelty. — Reuters

Russian ruble stable after volatility

MOSCOW: The Russian ruble weakened slightly against the dollar but remained stable, recovering from a period of volatility in the immediate aftermath of Ukraine's biggest attack on Russian territory since the start of the war. By 0800 GMT, the ruble was 0.4 percent weaker at 90.20 to the dollar, according to LSEG data. Trading in major currencies shifted to the over-the-counter (OTC) market, obscuring pricing data, after Western sanctions on the Moscow Exchange and its clearing agent, the National Clearing Centre, were introduced on June 12. One-day ruble-dollar futures, which trade on the Moscow Exchange and serve as guidance for the OTC market rates, were flat at 89.09. — Reuters

Canada July inflation cools to 2.5%

OTTAWA: Canada's inflation rate fell 0.2 percentage points in July to 2.5 percent, its lowest level in more than three years, the national statistical agency said Wednesday. The drop, expected by economists to increase pressure on the Bank of Canada to further cut its key lending rate, was led by lower prices for travel tours, passenger vehicles and electricity. "With inflationary pressures fading away but concerns about the weakening labor market growing, we continue to forecast three further 25 basis point cuts by the Bank of Canada at (its) remaining meetings this year," CIBC Economics analyst Andrew Grantham said in a research note. — AFP

Fed officials uneasy about job market ahead of Jackson Hole

WASHINGTON: Federal Reserve officials gathering at the annual central banking conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, this week can take some satisfaction that the US unemployment rate, at 4.3 percent, remains low by historical standards. But it usually is: The US experience of unemployment since the late 1940s has involved jobless rates that far more often than not are below the 5.7 percent long-run average, until they rise fast and far above it, a phenomenon Fed officials are worried about repeating.

The emerging trend is not fully clear. The steady rise in the unemployment rate from 3.7 percent in January of 2023 to 4.3 percent as of July 2024 has also been accompanied by an increase of 1.2 million in the number of people looking for work — something that is usually considered a positive sign for the economy but that can cause the unemployment rate to rise.

In recent days, however, Fed officials have become more explicit that a potential weakening of the job market has them ready to cut interest rates after keeping the US central bank's benchmark policy rate in the 5.25 percent-5.50 percent range for more than a year. The current level is the highest in a quarter of a century. "The balance of risks has shifted, so the debate about potentially cutting rates in September is an appropriate one to have," Minneapolis Fed President Neel Kashkari said in a recent Wall Street Journal interview, referring to the central bank's Sept 17-18 policy meeting.

Other Fed officials including San Francisco Fed President Mary Daly said in other interviews they were gaining confidence that inflation was returning to the central bank's 2 percent target and that they were open to rate cuts. The Fed is widely expected to reduce its policy rate by a quarter of a percentage point next month. In addition, policymakers will provide updated projections showing how they believe rates and the economy may evolve through the rest of this year and into 2025.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell is expected to further pin down the view that the central bank is about to start to loosen credit conditions after taming the worst outbreak of inflation in 40 years when he speaks on Friday at the Kansas City Fed's Jackson Hole conference.

Fed policymakers hope those cuts come in time to complete what has developed so far as a textbook "soft landing" in which inflation slows without the sort of sharp rise in the unemployment rate that has often accompanied central bank efforts to slow the pace of price increases by restricting the economy through higher interest rates. In past cycles of monetary tightening, once the unemployment rate has started to rise it has kept going. By contrast, the progress made on inflation in the current cycle has been dramatic. The personal consumption expenditures price index, which is tracked by the Fed for its



CHICAGO: Traders work in the S&P options pit at the Cboe Global Markets exchange following the Fed's announcement on interest rates in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

2 percent inflation target, peaked at an annual rate of 7.1 percent in June 2022, and was running at 2.5 percent as of July — honing in on that target.

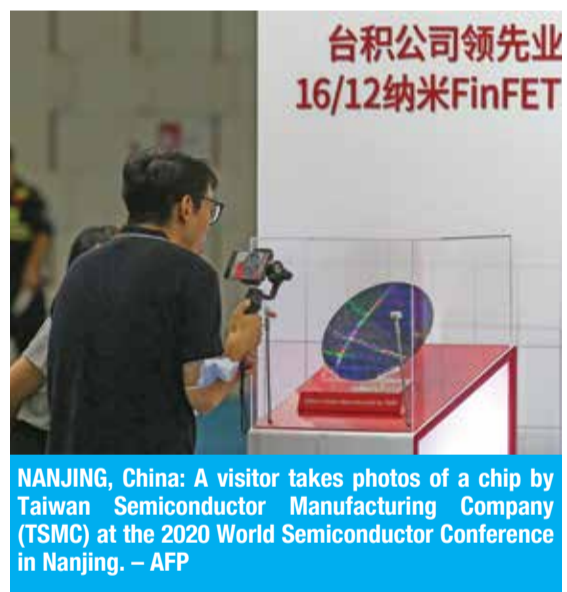
Yet the unemployment rate until recently had barely budged, remaining below 4 percent for two years running, while payrolls growth was far above the average seen in the decade before the COVID-19 pandemic. The trend began changing this year, and Fed officials have given increasing weight to the risks they feel they are running by keeping monetary policy too tight for too long. Recent labor market data shows why they are getting concerned.

The US government reported weaker-than-expected job growth in July, with employers adding just 114,000 positions. The July reading pulled the three-month average below the pre-pandemic trend, and pushed the unemployment rate up two-tenths of a percentage point to 4.3 percent. In addition, some of the ways in which the data are changing on a month-to-month basis, as people enter and leave a job or a job search, is not encouraging. While the labor force is rising on net, a constructive change, it also appears to be taking longer for people to find jobs — as shown by the rising number of people who join the labor force but go first through a spell of unemployment instead of directly into a job.

In addition, federal labor flows data shows a rising number of people each month moving from a job to unemployment. Yet at the same time unemployment claims have not begun to rise dramatically, and in fact have kept pace with growth in the labor force.

Amid still-strong consumer spending and economic growth that may be slowing but remains positive, the Fed is not yet ready to consider the job market in crisis — it just wants to avoid creating one.

In comments to the Financial Times published on Sunday, Daly said that keeping rates high while inflation declined was a "recipe for getting the result we don't want, which is price stability and an unstable and faltering labor market." The same sentiment was largely echoed by Chicago Fed President Austan Goolsbee, who told the CBS "Face the Nation" program on Sunday: "If you keep too tight for too long, you will have a problem on the employment side of the Fed's mandate." — Reuters



NANJING, China: A visitor takes photos of a chip by Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) at the 2020 World Semiconductor Conference in Nanjing. — AFP

Taiwan's chip giant TSMC breaks ground on first EU plant

BERLIN: Taiwanese semiconductor giant TSMC broke ground Tuesday on its first European factory in the eastern German city of Dresden as the EU looks to shift key supply chains onto the continent. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen attended the ceremony to mark the beginning of construction work along with TSMC's top brass, with von der Leyen hailing it as "an endorsement for Europe as a global innovation powerhouse". Semiconductors have become indispensable in an array of industries, from electronics to wind turbines and even missiles.

TSMC is investing some 3.5 billion euros (\$3.9 billion) in the Dresden project and will own 70 percent of the capital, with Dutch chipmaker NXP, Germany's Infineon and Bosch owning 10 percent each.

Taiwan is home to a powerhouse semiconductor industry — largely thanks to TSMC's dominance. But the supply chain is highly vulnerable to shocks and what von der Leyen referred to as "growing geopolitical tensions". A major concern that has emerged in recent years is over Taiwan's neighbor, China, which claims the self-ruled island as part of its territory and has ramped up rhetoric about "unification". As a result, TSMC has come under pressure to widen its operations by opening factories in other parts of the world.

Meanwhile, western countries have been redoubling efforts to bring semiconductor production closer to home. Scholz said on Tuesday that "we are dependent on semiconductors for the sustainable technologies of the future" and added that "we must not be dependent on other regions of the world for the supply" of the chips. The Dresden facility will be specialized in the production of semiconductors for Germany's flagship automotive industry, currently in the throes of transitioning to electric vehicle production. — AFP

NBK introduces a new batch of services on its Mobile Banking App

To offer users an even more enhanced and secure digital experience

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues to elevate its Mobile Banking App by introducing successive batches of new services and enhancements to ensure delivering a richer digital banking experience enabling customers to manage their accounts and make transactions in a convenient and secure manner, anytime, anywhere, without the hassle of visiting branches.

In this context, continuing its unwavering commitment to provide products and services aligned to market trends and customers' needs and suggestions, NBK has introduced a new batch of services as well as enhancements to existing ones on the app for even more secure payments, which included the following:

Prepaid gift card

NBK Mobile Banking App users can conveniently issue virtual cards as e-gift cards and be able to gift it to their loved ones easily. This service is perfect to be used for different occasions and e-cards can be given in an easy, quick, and trendy way to add to digital wallet and use instantly locally, internationally or online.

In-app payment: This service is an authenticated method that provides an additional layer of security to protect against fraudulent when making transactions using cards. In this release we are providing this service for prepaid and debit cards, offering users an even more secure experience when using their cards to make transactions through the app.

e-dividend payments: Using NBK Mobile Banking App, customers can register to dividend electronic transfer service allowing registered shareholders to receive dividend payments digitally in their accounts with Kuwait Clearing Company (KCC).

The service aims to facilitate the process for its customers and encourage them to use one of their accounts with NBK to subscribe to the dividend distribution service, especially as only one bank account can subscribe to dividend payments through KCC.

Auto login

Customers can enjoy the quickest, simplest way to log in to NBK Mobile Banking App after enabling FaceID on their mobile device. Once enabled, users won't need to type in their password or tap on



Mohammed Al-Dakheel

- Increased customer satisfaction encourages us to continue adding more services and enhanced features to the app
- Issuing and offering prepaid eGift card and electronic payment of dividends
- Enabling secure in-app payments for debit and prepaid cards

the FaceID button, but just open the app and it will let them login automatically.

What's new section

The latest release of the app allows users to learn about the latest products and services available through the app and their features in detail, in addition to how to use and benefit from them, which allows them to know everything they want to know about the new products before applying for and using the services.

Linking accounts

Customers can link their minors' accounts to their profile easily through NBK Mobile Banking App, whereby they can manage their accounts easily in addition to creating standing orders after the linkage.



LuLu Hypermarket launches 'Back to School' campaign

KUWAIT: LuLu Hypermarket, the region's leading retailer, launched its 'Back to School Savers' campaign that enables students to kickstart the new academic year with confidence and style. The campaign, which began on August 14 across all LuLu Hypermarket outlets in Kuwait, offered an unparalleled selection of essential school supplies, uniforms, electronics, and footwear at unbeatable prices. In order to ensure students are well-equipped for the digital age, LuLu Hypermarket presented an impressive range of laptops, tablets, and printers at exclusive discounts. Parents could find the perfect tech tools to support their children's learning journey at very affordable prices.

The wide range of school uniforms offered during the campaign also ensured that every student could look sharp and smart as they began their new academic year.

In addition, to complement the back-to-school essentials, LuLu Hypermarket offered a variety of com-



fortable and stylish school shoes, including renowned brands like Skechers. By providing a comprehensive range of products at competitive prices, LuLu Hypermarket helped parents prepare for the new academic year with confidence. And, with every need covered under one roof, parents could also complete their children's back-to-school shopping list with ease.

LuLu Hypermarket remains committed to supporting the community and providing exceptional value to its customers. The 'Back to School Savers' campaign serves as a reminder of the retailer's dedication in meeting the needs of its customers throughout the year.



sustainability initiatives." She added "This partnership with Deliveroo and Aseer Time allows us to contribute to a refreshing and enjoyable experience for the people of Kuwait during the hottest time of the year. We are proud to be a part of this initiative, which aligns with our ongoing commitment to enrich the lifestyle of our customers and foster stronger connections within different members of the community."

To learn more about Deliveroo, customers can download the Deliveroo app and follow @deliveroo_kw on Instagram.

Deliveroo, stc and Aseer Time launch summer campaign

KUWAIT: Deliveroo, Kuwait's leading food delivery app, has launched the 'Summer Refresh' campaign in Kuwait, in collaboration with Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, and Aseer Time, the well-known juice and dessert shop. The campaign was launched during the month of August, with the aim of providing a refreshing experience for the community by distributing free refreshments at key locations across the country. Deliveroo, stc, and Aseer Time hosted a series of pop-up events to distribute a selection of refreshing juices at high-traffic locations throughout the country.

Seham Al-Husaini, General Manager of Deliveroo Kuwait & Qatar, commented: "Deliveroo's latest partnership represents our ongoing commitment to giving back to the community in innovative and collaborative ways. By joining forces with stc and Aseer Time, we aim to not only support businesses in Kuwait, but also provide the community with a refreshing initiative that builds ongoing connection and engagement. Thank you to our partners for their continuous collaboration to bring joy, convenience, and revitalization to the people of Kuwait."

Danah Al-Jasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, said, "stc actively participates in and organizes initiatives that enable the Company to engage with and support the community in meaningful ways. This is not the first time we partner with Deliveroo as this is one of multiple collaborations we engage in as part of our ongoing CSR agenda and

IBAN+

Under the new enhancements, the apps' users can now speed up their transfers by typing the IBAN to find the customer's name, thus making transfers easier and faster. Exclusive rewards for the holders of the revamped NBK UEFA Champions League Platinum Mastercard Prepaid Card.

The revamped card is available to all family members with starting age as low as 7 years old, and is the first prepaid cashback card for youngsters in Kuwait. Cardholder earns 3 points for every KD 1 spent locally as well as internationally and 3 points for every KD 1 loaded into the card. Youngsters can redeem their earned points with cashback direct to the card, or with e-vouchers/gift cards redeemable at more than 185 merchants locally and globally in all shopping categories related to the youngsters' segment such as PlayStation, Xbox, etc.

The First Mobile App in GCC to receive Google MASA security certification

NBK Mobile Banking has received the MASA Security Certificate on Google Play which verifies the security and safety of NBK Mobile Banking App. NBK is committed to providing the most secure and safest digital financial services and strives to maintain the best-in-class digital security standards.

Other enhancements

In addition to the services released in this update, there are also some enhancements made on the app to improve the banking experience when making transactions. These enhancements are on transfers where customers can view the currency exchange when making a transfer across currencies within his own accounts, enhancements made on sending and receiving money locally using the mobile number with WAMD service, the ability to view the prepaid card on the dashboard without pressing on view, and much more enhancements the bank makes to offer a pleasant customer experience for its customers to make managing their account convenient anytime, anywhere. In addition to the services released, NBK Mobile Banking App is the ultimate travel companion when it comes to smart, fast, and convenient. The app is designed to meet the customers' peace of mind and allows them to manage their accounts and trans-

act from the comfort of their home, office, or even abroad. The users can make a variety of transactions that save them the trip to the branch or even calling the Contact Center in few taps only. These services are managing their cards where they can select the cards they will be using while being abroad to avoid any blockage, report lost or stolen cards, temporarily block or unblock cards instantly, add cards to the device wallet, apply for NBK products, make the necessary payments, speak with NBK Contact Center agents by calling one of the toll-free numbers, and much more.

Digital excellence

Commenting on the new batch of services and enhancements, Mohammed Al-Dakheel, Head of Mobile Banking, Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait said, "At NBK, we always seek to strengthen our digital excellence through the services provided on the NBK Mobile Banking App, especially with customers' increased reliance on it for their banking transactions. Therefore, we are keen to introduce more new services and enhancements to the app to deliver a superior digital banking experience that not only meets customers' needs, but exceeds their expectations."

"With every new batch of services added to the app, we notice growth in transactions made using it, which reflects increased customer satisfaction with our service level. This, in turn, encourages us to continue adding more distinguished services and enhancements to the app, in response to market trends on one hand, and to meet customers' needs and ensure providing them with cutting-edge banking services on the other hand," he added.

Through the NBK Mobile Banking App, NBK aims to offer customers a secure platform to conveniently manage their finances at any given moment. This service facilitates a wide range of banking activities, including opening new accounts, monitoring transactions on accounts and credit cards, accessing accumulated NBK Miles and NBK Rewards Program points, settling credit card dues, making payments for electronic bills, locating NBK Branches, ATMs, and CDMs across Kuwait, updating personal information... etc. Customers can easily download the NBK Mobile Banking App, which is currently available on various platforms including the Apple App Store, Google Play, and Huawei AppGallery.

BHP's quick strike fix sets tone for labor union talks

SANTIAGO: Mining giant BHP's quick fix to a recent six-day strike at its huge Escondida copper mine in Chile could set the tone for upcoming negotiations elsewhere, with workers emboldened by high copper prices to push for a larger share of the profits. Members of Escondida's powerful Union No. 1 signed a sweetened deal on Sunday after walking off the job a week ago when contract talks collapsed, demanding better pay and benefits at the world's biggest copper mine.

With a preliminary deal in hand already on Friday, a union lawyer had termed the agreement its "greatest recent victory." It gave each worker a bonus and interest-free loan of about \$34,000, compared with BHP's original offer of some \$28,900. The quick turnaround contrasts with a 2017 walkout that dragged on for a month and a half, severely hitting BHP's production, boosting global copper prices and even denting Chile's GDP, heavily reliant on the red metal.

That was a scenario BHP wanted to avoid, particularly given strong current demand and global copper prices, analysts and other experts said. Demand for the metal is expected to shoot up, driven by the rise of electric vehicles and artificial intelligence technologies. "The specter of the 44-day strike in 2017 created constant fear throughout the negotiations," said Andres Gonzalez, an analyst at mining consultancy Plusmining. "BHP wanted to avoid something similar, which pushed them to seek an agreement."

The two sides were also not so far apart when the strike started, he noted, making a middle ground easier to achieve. The union's position also appeared to be buoyed by the public perception of BHP having capital to spare. The miner is among the world's biggest, turning out more than a million metric tons of copper a year at Escondida alone. It recently sought to acquire Anglo American in a \$49 billion deal before scrapping the offer.

"Its current image is that of a company that has cap-

ital available to acquire assets or even invest in mergers ... so the union was going to insist on achieving its goals," said Cristian Cifuentes, an analyst at Chilean think tank Cesco. Despite occasional strikes, Chile's mining industry largely manages to renew workers' collective contracts without conflict and even in advance, avoiding the risk of disrupting production. Escondida is unique due to its large size and powerful union, which represents 2,400 people, almost all in key operational roles. The union has frequently clashed with BHP.

Analysts are now watching whether Escondida will set a precedent, but say other mines in Chile are not necessarily in similar situations, such as those that are smaller or grappling with problems in production and costs. State-run copper giant CODELCO, fighting to revive production from a 25-year low, is due for pay negotiations at its Ministro Hales mine in September, followed by the El Teniente and Gabriela Mistral mines in October.

At each site, the unions represent a substantial part of the overall workforce. Of particular note is El Teniente, one of CODELCO's biggest mines, a complex that represented more than a quarter of company copper production last year. El Teniente workers are represented by five separate unions, but those combined represent more than 80 percent of total workers, or 3,200 people. "What is worrying is how the unions at El Teniente will react," Cifuentes said.

Workers from one of three unions at Lundin Mining's Caserones copper mine in Chile also went on strike one day before the Escondida strike and remain so. "The price of copper has been quite favorable in recent months... Those profits have to be paid to the workers," said Marco Garcia, president of the striking Caserones union, though he admitted the Escondida union had more "productive pressure."

"We know that the next three years will be quite profitable for Caserones in the production of copper," he added. "That's what leads us to our position and to be able to demand higher wages for the members of our union." The Caserones management is due to negotiate with other unions at the site later this year. The head of Chilean mining association SONAMI, Jorge Riesco, cautioned that it is necessary to strike a balance between worker pay and industry competitiveness. — Reuters



ANTOFAGASTA, Chile: Workers from the Escondida copper mine gather while holding a strike after failing to reach a labor agreement with Australian group BHP, in Puerto Coloso, Antofagasta, Chile. — AFP

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2024



Workers arrange freshly picked mangoes in trays intended for sale on social networks in a field at Gadiaga in the Thies region.



Agro-influencer Nogoye Sene, senior agronomy technician and director of Ebena Agrobusiness, works in a field at Sinthiou Dara in the commune of Keur Moussa.



Agro-influencer Mame Abdou Diop, holds his mobile phone while standing in his mango orchard in Gadiaga, Thies region.



Agro-influencer Nogoye Sene carries a tray of seedlings in a field at Sinthiou Dara in the commune of Keur Moussa.

SENEGAL 'AGRI-INFLUENCERS' SEEK TO SHAKE UP KEY SECTOR

Crouched next to a pile of fresh mangoes, Senegalese farmer Mame Abdou Diop shoots a TikTok clip hoping it will be a hit with his burgeoning social media following. Diop, 30, is part of a new wave of agricultural entrepreneurs in the West African nation embracing online platforms to boost sales, share knowledge and carve their own path in a key economic sector. Since 2020, Diop has run a small business managing plots of land and growing a range of crops from watermelon and mangoes to onions and beans. But since launching on TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and LinkedIn two years ago, he has seen profits soar and his client base more than double.

"I used to make videos for fun, I didn't even know what kind of impact social media would have," said Diop, who has amassed nearly 14,000 TikTok followers and 2,000 on Instagram. But he soon realized the videos were "very good marketing," he said in the village of Gadiaga, east of the capital Dakar. Agriculture represents roughly 16 percent of Senegal's GDP, but the industry suffers from chronic underperformance. The new government has prioritized attaining food sovereignty, with the aim of creating more jobs in a country plagued by youth

unemployment. Senegal imports almost 70 percent of its food requirements, despite 60 percent of the labor force growing food crops, according to the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

'Get more visibility'

Low productivity is due to a number of factors including a lack of quality infrastructure and technical support as well as poorly organized value chains and crop processing. For Senegal's young and increasingly urban, tech-savvy population, social media offers an opportunity for innovation. Diop films himself in reels and adds his phone number to advertise his mangoes, which are sold directly to local businesses or exporters shipping to Europe or Morocco. Buyers contact Diop by text or through social platforms, and after a price is agreed, the crops are delivered directly.

He said social media allows him to bypass costly or inefficient middlemen, reduce the price and pick, process and sell his mangoes in a day. N'Diaye Pape, 26, a fruit juice seller in Dakar, found Diop while scrolling on Instagram and appreciates the speed of his service. "I saw the quality. So I contacted them and they delivered on time," he said.

Social media also allows farmers



Agro-influencer Mame Abdou Diop, prepares social media content in his mango orchard in Gadiaga, Thies region.

to share and monetize technical expertise, said Helene Smertnik from research firm Caribou Digital, which studied the use of social media in Senegalese agriculture in partnership with the MasterCard Foundation. "Quite a number of people become consultants and start making a decent amount of money," she explained. Using a stick to transplant a row of chillies at a farm, 27-year-old Nogoye Sene explained how Instagram had helped her fledgling consultancy take off.

"I started social networking in Sep-



Agro-influencer Nogoye Sene prepares social media content in a field at Sinthiou Dara in the commune of Keur Moussa.

tember... to get more visibility and to find people," she said. "They contact me directly on Instagram. So I give them my number, then I visit their fields and now I help them with production," she added. Sene, who describes herself as an agri-influencer, manages plots for around a dozen clients, helping with land development, market garden production and the planting of fruit trees.

She shares videos and selfies offering tips on how to grow and harvest crops, install irrigation systems and manage farming projects. She found the

majority of her clients through Instagram, where she now has over 3,000 followers.

Sharing expertise

"There is this quite fertile ground ... in that there is this mix of youth that is more and more online and using social media both for entertainment and trade," said Smertnik. But the trend is in its infancy and mostly confined to urban individuals working in smaller-scale value chains, she said. Agri-influencer and horticulture entrepreneur Adjaratou Kosse Faye is the founder of a social media cooperative sharing expertise and training with fellow producers.

What started as a small forum on the social media platform Clubhouse during the COVID pandemic is now a WhatsApp group with over 50 participants. Faye said she had only met a handful of the members face-to-face but stressed that the group had allowed knowledge to be shared on a regional scale. "We have farmers from Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, The Gambia and Mali," she said. "I think it's wonderful that we can trust each other and that social media has enabled us to create this network," she added. — AFP

Nintendo museum to open in Japan on October 2



A woman looks at a Nintendo Switch display at a Nintendo store in central Tokyo on November 6, 2023.

Japan's Nintendo said Tuesday it will open its much-awaited first museum on October 2 featuring vintage video games and an interactive shoot-em-up with "Super Mario" characters. The museum in Kyoto's Uji city is located inside a renovated old factory built in 1969, where the gaming giant began life making Western-style and Japanese playing cards and later repaired consoles. The company on Tuesday also released a video of Shigeru Miyamoto, the renowned creator of "Super Mario Bros" and other famous games, giving a sneak preview of what's inside. "The Nintendo Museum is a place where visitors can learn about Nintendo's commitment to manufacturing that places importance on play and originality," Miyamoto said in the clip.

Along with the shooting game and some of the firm's first consoles, ex-



A Nintendo Switch is pictured at the Nintendo booth at the Gamescom video game fair in Cologne, western Germany, on August 23, 2023.

hibits include a giant controller that two people operate and another featuring ancient Japanese poems. The company first announced plans for the museum in 2021, part of efforts to widen its revenue stream, and it was originally meant

to open earlier this year. Super Nintendo World, the company's first theme park, opened in March 2021 after months of pandemic delays.

Part of the Universal Studios Japan complex in Osaka, it features a Mario Kart ride with a real-life Bowser's Castle. Nintendo began life in 1889 as a manufacturer of Japanese "hanafuda" cards and launched its first home video game machines, known as TV Game 15 and TV Game 6, in 1977. The Super Mario Bros. games were launched in 1985, two years after the company began selling its Nintendo Entertainment System console. Tickets for the museum for October and November went on sale on Tuesday costing 3,300 yen (\$22.60) for adults and less for children. — AFP

Rare Viking treasures discovered in Denmark

Seven ancient silver bracelets which show the staggering breadth of the Vikings' reach have been found in Denmark, a museum said Monday. One of the bracelets - which date from the ninth century - was inspired by Russian or Ukrainian models while others were of a Scandinavian type that later influenced bangles in Ireland. The hoard was found close to Aarhus, and showed how Denmark's second city was connected "to the East and the West", historian Kasper Andersen, of the city's Moesgaard Museum, told AFP.

"These are early specimens, and it helps us understand better how the Vikings in this part of Scandinavia operated in a global world, from western Asia to the North Atlantic," he added. At their height, Viking trading networks stretched from Greenland and the fringes of North America to Turkey and Central Asia. "It's the first time we have found a hoard of this kind so close to Aarhus so it's both uncommon and very interesting," Andersen said. The discovery was made earlier this year by a 22-year-old archaeology student armed with a metal detector.

Gustav Bruunsgaard found a single bracelet on a site north of Aarhus before returning a few days later and discovering six more. "We did an excavation on the site but didn't discover any other artefacts," Andersen said. "The guess is that someone buried them to hide them and never picked them up," the historian added. — AFP



File photo shows a young customer looking at a display for Super Mario by the Japanese gaming company Nintendo at an electronics store in Tokyo. — AFP photos



People visit a Nintendo store in Shibuya district of Tokyo on May 2, 2024.

Lifestyle



Edita Burgos (right), the mother of missing activist Jonas Burgos, holding a portrait of her vanished son while posing with her younger son, independent film director JL Burgos.



Edita Burgos going through a family photo album during an interview with AFP in Manila.



Edita Burgos (right) going through a family photo album with her younger son and independent film director JL Burgos during an interview with AFP in Manila. — AFP photos

Filipino mother's search for missing son in the spotlight

For 17 years, Edita Burgos has looked inside body bags, visited military camps, led street protests, and filed court cases in a desperate search for her missing son Jonas. He was 37 and a prominent activist for a left-wing farmers group when he was bundled by a group of unknown men into a vehicle at a Manila shopping mall in 2007. He has not been seen since.

Jonas's abduction and the family's soul-crushing search for him. While Jonas's political views echoed those of the rebels, Edita doesn't know if her middle son was a communist. She said it shouldn't matter anyway.

"Whatever he was, no one has the right to kill somebody, not even a rapist," Edita, 80, told AFP ahead of the screening of "Alipato at Muog" (Spark and For-

ted in 2017 after a key witness failed to testify. JL, 50, said he was "haunted" by his older brother's disappearance and suffered a "breakdown" as he worked on the documentary over eight months. He hoped the film would prompt someone to come forward with information about Jonas' whereabouts — even if it were just his remains. "Logically, he should no longer be alive, but then we cannot prove that," said JL.

Waiting for answers

Edita, a widow of an outspoken critic of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr, has sought the help of presidents and military generals, and even the communist rebels' urban death squad, in her search for Jonas. She's still waiting for answers. Jonas, who briefly trained in his early teens to become a priest, had been helping people in poor rural villages in Bulacan province when he was abducted in Manila. Edita has long blamed an army battalion operating in the province for her son's disappearance.

In the film, Edita is seen visiting the unit's headquarters in Bulacan where she is told that the number plate of a van earlier seized and impounded by soldiers had been stolen. The same number plate was seen on the vehicle used in the abduction of Jonas. Edita has accused Eduardo Ano, who was a military intelligence officer at the time, of being the "mastermind" of her son's disappearance.

Ano, who was later promoted to the head of the military and is now the national security adviser to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, the son and namesake of the ex-dictator, has denied involvement. The documentary was a "desperate attempt to revive an old case linking the military to the disappearance



Edita Burgos speaks as she sits next to a portrait of her vanished son during an interview with AFP in Manila.



Independent film director JL Burgos (front) acknowledging the applause from a crowd ahead of the screening of his film "Alipato at Muog" (Spark and Fortress).

of Jonas Burgos," Jonathan Malaya, spokesman for the National Security Council, told AFP.

The criminal cases have all been "dismissed for lack of merit", while the allegations of Ano's alleged involvement "are a rehash of old accusations that have never been proven nor supported by facts or evidence", Malaya said. Edita, meanwhile, lives with the pain of not knowing what happened to her son. "You can't even pray and say 'May his soul rest in peace' because you do not know if he's still there."

'Culture of violence'

Forced disappearances have continued under the administration of Marcos Jr, who took power in 2022, Karapatan secretary-general Cristina Palabay told AFP. Thirteen activists have gone missing during Marcos Jr's term, taking the group's tally to 1,913 since the start of the communist insurgency during the elder Marcos's rule more than five decades ago. That does not include the many victims of

suspected extra-judicial killings at that time. "(It's) a strategy to quell dissent," Palabay told AFP.

"You don't see a tombstone, and you do not have closure as a family. It has a longer-lasting impact that extends to the community. There's a strong message that 'If you do this, this will happen to you and your family,'" she said. Edita said Marcos Jr had a responsibility to find out what happened to her son and other victims of forced disappearances. "He should really address human rights," Edita said, "because it was his father who set the tone that led us to a culture of violence among the uniformed ranks". As the years go by with no news of her son, Edita said there was still hope in her heart that one day he would be found. "For all we know they could just be hiding him," Edita said. "Who knows, one of these days I will hear somebody knocking and asking, 'Mummy, what's for dinner?'" — AFP



People looking at a promotional poster for the film "Alipato at Muog" (Spark and Fortress), a documentary on the forced disappearance of activist Jonas Burgos and the family's soul-crushing search for him.

Human rights group Karapatan estimates hundreds of people have gone missing or died in extra-judicial killings since the government began fighting a communist insurgency in the late 1960s. The military accused Jonas of being a high-ranking communist rebel leader, but have always denied involvement in his disappearance. Edita, a mother of five, is the protagonist in a new documentary by her youngest son, JL Burgos, that examines

stress) at the country's independent film festival Cinemalaya earlier this month. "You have to take them to court, not make them vanish." No one has ever been convicted over Jonas's abduction, despite the Court of Appeals, Supreme Court and the independent Commission on Human Rights finding that members of the military were involved.

An army major was arrested in 2013 and put on trial for the alleged arbitrary detention of Jonas, but he was acquitted

World's oldest person dies in Spain at 117

The world's oldest person, Spain's Maria Branyas Morera, who was born in the United States and lived through two world wars, died Tuesday at the age of 117, her family said. Guinness World Records had officially acknowledged Branyas's status as the world's oldest person in January 2023 following the death of French nun Lucile Randon aged 118. "Maria Branyas has left us. She died as she

count which is run by her family. In the wake of Branyas' death, the oldest living person in the world is Japan's Tomiko Itooka, who was born on May 23, 1908 and is 116 years old, according to the US-based Gerontology Research Group. Branyas, who lived through the 1918 flu, World War I and World War II and Spain's civil war, got Covid-19 in 2020 just weeks after ringing in her 113th birthday but made a full recovery.

the wisdom of the years," he said, calling her "Catalonia's grandmother".

Branyas was born in San Francisco on March 4, 1907 shortly after her family moved to the United States from Mexico. The entire family decided to return to their native Spain in 1915 as World War I was under way, which complicated the ship voyage across the Atlantic. The crossing was also marked by tragedy — her father died from tuberculosis towards the end of the voyage, and his coffin was put into the sea.

'Completely lucid'

Branyas and her mother settled in Barcelona and in 1931 - five years before the start of Spain's 1936-39 civil war - she married a doctor. The couple lived together for four decades until her husband died aged 72. She had three children, including one who has already died, 11 grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren.

"I haven't done anything extraordinary, the only thing I did was live," Branyas told Catalan daily newspaper La Vanguardia in 2019. Manel Esteller, part of a team of researchers from the University of Barcelona who studied Branyas' DNA to determine the source of her longevity told daily Spanish newspaper ABC in October 2023 he was surprised by her good health.

"Her mind is completely lucid. She remembers with impressive clarity episodes from when she was only four years old, and she has no cardiovascular disease, which is common in the elderly. The only things she has are mobility and hearing problems. It's incredible," the genetics professor said. The oldest verified person to have ever lived was Frenchwoman Jeanne Louise Calment who died in 1997 at the age of 122 years and 164 days old. — AFP



wished: in her sleep, peacefully and without pain," her family wrote on her account on social network X. "We will always remember her for her advice and her kindness."

Branyas, who had lived for the last two decades in the Santa Maria del Tura nursing home in the town of Olot in the northeastern region of Catalonia, had warned in a post on Monday that she felt "weak". "The time is near. Don't cry, I don't like tears. And above all, don't suffer for me. Wherever I go, I will be happy," she added on the ac-

'Endearing woman'

Her youngest daughter, Rosa Moret, once attributed her mother's longevity to "genetics". "She has never gone to the hospital, she has never broken any bones, she is fine, she has no pain," Moret told regional Catalan television in 2023. The head of the regional government of Catalonia, former health minister Salvador Illa, expressed his "heartfelt condolences" to Branyas' family in a message posted on X. "We lose an endearing woman, who has taught us the value of life and



This photo taken on May 21, 2024 shows a worker installing a barrier to block the sight of Japan's Mount Fuji emerging from behind a convenience store to deter badly behaved tourists, in the town of Fujikawaguchiko, Yamanashi prefecture. - AFP

With tourists away, Mount Fuji barrier taken down in Japan

A barrier erected in Japan to block a popular view of Mount Fuji has been taken down - for now - after succeeding in discouraging unruly tourists, a town official said Tuesday. Fujikawaguchiko put up the large screen in May after residents complained about streams of mostly foreign visitors causing problems while trying to snap photos of Japan's famous volcano. The town lowered the screen on August 15 ahead of a typhoon and has decided not to put it back up. "We wanted to see what would happen," the town official told AFP.

"There are still some people who come to the place. But we no longer find many people suddenly rushing

out into the traffic to cross the road," he said. Pictures taken from the narrow pavement in front of a dentist's office were popular online, with the snow-capped mountain rising photographically into the sky from behind a convenience store.

The town's struggle with unruly tourists made international headlines as record numbers of tourists headed to Japan over the summer, creating some opposition among locals. The Fujikawaguchiko official said the town can put up the screen again if tourists return and cause more problems. — AFP

Lifestyle



A young man plays Chinese action role-playing game 'Black Myth: Wukong', developed by Chinese video game company Game Science, during its launch day in Shanghai. — AFP photos



People walk past the image of the 'Monkey King' character, or 'Sun Wukong' of Chinese action role-playing game 'Black Myth: Wukong'.



Two young people walk past a cardboard cutout of the 'Monkey King' character, or 'Sun Wukong', of the Chinese action role-playing game 'Black Myth: Wukong'.

'Black Myth' elates fans and becomes one of China's most successful games

Shape-shifting monkeys wielding magic staffs battled giant demons as players worldwide dived into "Black Myth: Wukong", already hailed as one of the most successful Chinese-made video games. "Black Myth" was released globally on Tuesday and enjoyed one of the best opening days, as measured by the number of players on gaming platform Steam, and sold nearly 1.2 million pre-release copies. Gamer Li Song told AFP at a video shop in Beijing he bought it as soon as it was available for pre-order.

"It feels good," the 41-year-old said as his character scammed around a lush forest, dodging attacks from furry beasts before transforming into an insect. "The controls and overall experience are solid," Li said. Considered the first Chinese-developed "Triple A" title, a term used to describe major, high-budget, stand-alone games, it is inspired by the classic 16th-century Chinese novel "Journey to the West". Players step into the shoes of a character similar to the Monkey King Sun Wukong, a key figure in the story. A classic role-playing

game, it requires players to build an arsenal of magic powers and deadly weapons as they control the "Destined One". "The basic combat feels great, there are no problems there," Li said. "The game's story, rooted in Chinese mythology, is promising."

Gaming shop owner Yuanyuan — who declined to give her family name — said she could never have imagined that a Chinese title could enjoy such success. "It presents our myths and stories in a game for the whole world," she told AFP. "As a Chinese person, I feel very proud."

'A long wait'

More than 1.4 million people were playing "Black Myth" via gaming platform Steam at around 5 pm (0900 GMT) on Tuesday. That was the fourth-highest number recorded for a game — more than recent blockbuster titles such as "Elden Ring" and "Cyberpunk 2077". It also won praise from gaming press in the West with review aggregator website Metacritic giving it a rating of 82 out of 100



People watch the Chinese action role-playing game 'Black Myth: Wukong'.

based on an average of 57 reviews. Hype has been building since 2020, when its first trailer racked up 10 million views in just 24 hours on Chinese video streaming platform Bilibili.

"It feels like it's been a long wait," said Violet Zhang, a 21-year-old univer-

sity student, speaking at a launch event in Shanghai. "But it's really exciting to get to this day." Developer Game Science, based in the eastern and southern cities of Hangzhou and Shenzhen, has been working on the game since 2018. The process hasn't been without

controversy — US gaming website IGN detailed last year what it called a "history of sexism" at Game Science.

The article prompted a backlash from players in China and elsewhere, with many defending the game and rejecting what they claimed was an attempt to push "woke" Western ideas onto a Chinese context. Neither Game Science nor the game's co-publisher Hero Games responded to AFP's requests for comment on the controversy on Tuesday. Yuanyuan told AFP she hoped that audiences would be "more tolerant of this game and accept its shortcomings".

"That way we can keep improving in the future," she said. Gamer Li said he was "not really interested" in the future. "This is irrelevant to us, we're not interested in those issues," he said. Wu Tianyu, a 29-year-old tech industry worker in Shanghai, said he was "very moved" by the game. "I hope that our domestic video games will be increasingly successful in the future. I'm sure they will." — AFP



Actor Tony Goldwyn speaks onstage during the first day of the Democratic National Convention at the United Center on August 19, 2024 in Chicago, Illinois. - AFP photos



US singer Mickey Guyton performs on the first day of the Democratic National Convention (DNC).



US musician Jason Isbell performs on the first day of the Democratic National Convention (DNC).

Five things to know as Taylor Swift's European tour ends

Taylor Swift's "Eras" tour wraps up its European leg in London on Tuesday, after the American megastar wowed hundreds of thousands of fans across a dozen countries. "I wish I could have toured Europe more. This is a dream crowd," the 34-year-old singer told fans at Paris's La Defense Arena, where she kicked off the run of shows in May. Four months later, here are five takeaways from Swift's time in Europe, as she goes out in "Style" in front of a 90,000-strong crowd at the British capital's Wembley Stadium.

'Swiftonomics'

From "Swiftflation" to economic boosts, European cities saw hotel prices soar as fans descended from around the world. Heeding Swift's song lyric "grab your passport and my hand", 120,000 Swifties travelled from 130 countries to Stockholm in May, where they were expected to spend half a billion Swedish kronor (\$46 million), according to the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce. Hotel rooms also saw a price spike of "approximately 295 percent", the chamber's chief economist Carl Bergkvist told AFP, with some economists fearing the Swift craze could send Swedish consumer prices rising again.

Two concerts in Madrid are estimated to have injected 25 million euros (\$27.6 million) into the Spanish capital's economy. And the tour was forecasted to boost the UK economy by almost £1 billion (\$1.3 billion), Barclays bank said in a study titled "Swiftonomics".

'Shake it off'

Seismologists across the continent recorded Swifties literally making the ground shake. In Lisbon in May, concerts triggered seismic activity detected up to six kilometres (four miles) from the stadium. The strongest activity was recorded appropriately during the song "Shake it off", reaching a magnitude of 0.82 on the Richter scale. In Edinburgh, the British Geological Survey revealed fan favorites "Ready for It?", "Cruel Summer" and "Champagne Problems" resulted in the "most significant seismic activity". During "Ready for It?", the crowd in the Scottish capital transmitted approximately 80 kilowatts of power — equivalent to some 6,000 car batteries, the geologists said.

Foiled attack

The last month of the Europe tour was marred by a foiled suicide attack plot, with Austrian authorities revealing that an Islamic State-sympathizer was planning a deadly attack at a Swift concert in Vienna. Three suspects were detained and all three August concert dates in Vienna were cancelled following an

investigation conducted with the help of US intelligence. Disappointed Swifties tried to lift their spirits by gathering at Vienna's Corneliussgasse — dear to Swift's fans for its resemblance to her hit "Cornelia Street" — to chant the pop star's songs and exchange bracelets with each other, an Eras Tour tradition among fans.



American singer and songwriter Taylor Swift performs on stage as part of her Eras Tour in Lisbon. - AFP

Knife tragedy

Tragedy struck when three girls were killed in a stabbing in the northwest English town of Southport at a dance class themed around Swift on July 29. "The horror of yesterday's attack in Southport is washing over me continuously, and I'm just completely in shock," Swift wrote in an Instagram post, ahead of a concert in Warsaw, Poland. Swift met two survivors of the attack during her August shows in London, with a mother posting pictures on TikTok of the girls backstage with Swift after a concert, Rolling Stone magazine reported. Her fans raised nearly £400,000 for the victims under the banner "Swifties for Southport".

'Tay-gating'

Ticketless fans dressed up and exchanged bracelets as they listened to concerts from outside stadiums in a practice known as "Tay-gating". In Madrid, Swift noted around 50,000 "people came out and listened to the show" from a nearby hillside on both nights, "participating in the show from afar". Officials in London and Amsterdam warned fans not to gather outside venues though, citing disruption to local residents. — AFP

Hollywood stars brought sizzle to Democrats' Convention

An actor who played a fictional TV president hosted the first night of the Democratic National Convention in Chicago on Monday, as part of the star power that took center stage in support of Kamala Harris' presidential campaign. Tony Goldwyn, who portrayed President Fitzgerald Grant III in the ABC drama "Scandal," was tapped to emcee the convention's kickoff night. Goldwyn had been active in Democratic politics and had advocated for criminal justice reform. "The Office" TV star Mindy Kaling and actor Kerry Washington, who played a political fixer on "Scandal," took over convention hosting duties later in the week.

Country artist Mickey Guyton and singer-songwriter Jason Isbell performed on Monday evening. Music legend James Taylor, who sang at the 2012 Democratic convention, closed out the night. A month earlier, George Clooney and other frustrated stars had publicly called for President Joe Biden to exit the race. Some had even threatened to withhold campaign contributions to the party. Feelings changed when Biden ended his reelection bid, and support swelled around Vice President Harris, who, as a native Californian, was no stranger to Hollywood, having served the state as both attorney general and a US senator.

Actors and musicians began clamoring to appear at the convention or other Harris events, according to political consultants. "They are organically, authentically excited about this ticket, not just as celebrities but as people, as parents, as creators," said Donna Bojarsky, a Democratic strategist who had worked with celebrities. Celebrities including John Legend and Billy Porter headlined nighttime parties and concerts during the four-day convention. "Veep" TV star Julia Louis-Dreyfus was scheduled to moderate a policy discussion with female governors.

While Hollywood names had tended to support Democrats, Republican candidate Donald Trump had brought out some famous backers at his party's convention in Milwaukee in July. Country singer Lee Greenwood, pro wrestler Hulk Hogan, and reality TV personality Savannah Chrisley were among those who appeared on his behalf. In Chicago, buzz built around pop superstar Beyoncé, given her past support for Democrats. In 2013, Beyoncé had sung the National Anthem at President Barack Obama's inauguration. In 2016, she and husband Jay-Z headlined a concert for Hillary Clinton.



US musician James Taylor performs a sound check on the first day of the Democratic National Convention (DNC).

More recently, the Grammy winner had granted the Harris campaign permission to use the song "Freedom" to pump up crowds at public events, according to CNN. Last year, Beyoncé had gifted a pair of concert tickets to Harris and her husband, Doug Emhoff. Beyoncé's publicist did not respond to requests for comment on whether the singer would take part in the convention.

Democrats had been hoping for support from pop superstar Taylor Swift. The singer was on tour in London on Monday,

and there was no indication she would appear in Chicago during the week. Trump had posted a fake image saying Swift had endorsed him. Many Hollywood actors, producers, and filmmakers viewed Harris as their hometown candidate. She shared a home with Emhoff, a former entertainment lawyer, in the celebrity enclave of Brentwood on the west side of Los Angeles. Media executives and stars had gotten to know her during her campaigns for state office and for president in 2020.

In some Democratic circles, however, there was a worry that too many celebrity supporters could fuel a backlash. Some felt Hillary Clinton, who lost the 2016 election, had created an image of elitism with a long parade of stars campaigning for her. Bojarsky did not share that concern. She believed entertainers' support helped candidates by drawing the attention of the media and the public, and by providing validation in a celebrity-driven culture.

For Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, celebrity endorsements may have been more significant than in the past, she said. "This campaign is about the zeitgeist," Bojarsky said. "It's about the place to be, about where people's hearts and minds want to be." When celebrities backed a candidate, "it solidified this notion that this is where you want to be," she said.

The Democratic convention reached beyond traditional Hollywood. A blue carpet was rolled out for social media stars. Comedian and actor Matt Friend conducted interviews that were featured on Snapchat. After the convention, Hollywood figures were expected to appear at campaign rallies and get-out-the-vote drives in the weeks leading up to the November 5 election. - Reuters

Sports

Pope ready to lead England his way but glad of Stokes support

Stokes absence adds extra edge to England-Sri Lanka series

MANCHESTER: Ollie Pope is prepared to "do his own thing" as England Test captain but accepts he is in caretaker charge of what is still effectively Ben Stokes's side. Pope will become the 82nd man to take up the captaincy when he leads England out in the first Test against Sri Lanka at Old Trafford starting Wednesday.

The 26-year-old Surrey batsman was promoted from vice-captain after Stokes was ruled out after suffering a torn hamstring playing in the Hundred. Stokes is set to miss the three-match series against Sri Lanka. Pope's elevation caps a rapid rise for a cricketer who was not certain of his place when Stokes took charge two years ago alongside coach Brendon McCullum.

Stokes first led England, in 2020, deputizing for father-to-be Joe Root who left a message reading "do it your own way". Pope has no qualms about sticking with the basic 'Bazball' approach and will also be able to call directly on Stokes, who will be with the England squad for all three Tests.

"It's a great opportunity for me, one of the greatest honors in English cricket," Pope told a pre-match press conference at Old Trafford on Tuesday. "But I think it's still Stokes's team. That's probably the difference. I've had no message in my locker but I'm sat next to him in the changing room!"

"It's going to be great to have him around. If I want to lean on him, I can lean on him and I think he's going to let me do my own thing for the course of this Test series as well. I've picked his brains a little bit on that moving forward. It's a lot of the same messages but from a different voice and in my own way."

"He's obviously going to be watching, chatting, so I can have those conversations in the intervals if I think anything needs to change and we can bounce a few ideas off each other. We've got some great coaches and obviously he's just another brain in the changing room."

As England head into the first Test against Sri Lanka at Old Trafford starting Wednesday with several players given a chance to prove a point after

captain Ben Stokes's series-ending injury. And that means England will be without their inspirational leader for the first time since Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum launched the team's dynamic 'Bazball' era two years ago.

England announced their team on Monday, with fast bowler Matthew Potts recalled as they opted for a five-man attack. Meanwhile, Dan Lawrence — rarely deployed as an opener in county cricket — returns to the England side for the first time in two-and-a-half years after Zak Crawley's fractured finger created a vacancy at the top of the order.

Crawley suffered his setback as England completed a 3-0 whitewash of the West Indies last month. England will be expected to achieve a similar result against a Sri Lanka side who, like the West Indies, have played just a solitary warm-up match prior to the first Test.

Conventional cricket wisdom has rarely been a part of England's approach under the guidance of former New Zealand captain McCullum, so it should come as no surprise they have opted against replacing Crawley with a specialist opener.

Indeed Lawrence himself is in no doubt his natural attacking game is well-suited to the approach of the current England set-up. "I think that's the style of cricketer that Baz McCullum and Ben Stokes are generally after and my general way of going about it is to try and be quite aggressive," Lawrence said Monday.

"Throughout my whole career I've played a certain brand of cricket and that has served me well so I'm just going to do the same thing. I'm just going to go out there and try to be as free as possible."

Experience

Sri Lanka can no longer call on star batsmen Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene, but their squad does contain experienced performers in Angelo Mathews and Dimuth Karunaratne. Dhananjaya de Silva's side will, however, be able to turn to another Sri Lanka great in Sanath Jayasuriya, the squad's



Ben Stokes

interim coach, who took over after Chris Silverwood, the ex-England paceman, opted against renewing his contract in June.

And former England batsman Ian Bell, also a member of the backroom staff, is on hand to provide local knowledge for what is Sri Lanka's first series on English soil in eight years. Sri Lanka last played Test cricket in April but they do have recent experience of upsetting the odds after defeating India 2-0 in a three-match one-day international series earlier this month.

"We have an experienced batting order," Jayasuriya, a dynamic batsman who pulverised England

attacks in all formats, told ESPNcricinfo. "Dimuth Karunaratne, Kusal Mendis, Angelo Mathews, Dhananjaya de Silva, Dinesh Chandimal - they have all played a lot of cricket." This year marks the 40th anniversary of Sri Lanka's first Test in England, a match where Sidath Wettimuny made a superb 190 - one of several hundreds for the tourists - in a highly creditable draw at Lord's.

And Jayasuriya believes the timing of the current campaign could favour Sri Lanka. "The fact that we have got a late-summer tour is great," he said. "It's more similar to our conditions than the early summer tours." — AFP



Kuwait basketball team wins second place in Gulf Cup

DOHA: Kuwait national team for basketball won second place in the Under-15 Gulf Basketball Association (GBA) Cup after a defeat in the final match against Bahrain 58-70 in a tournament hosted in Doha, Qatar. In his remarks to KUNA, the head of the Kuwaiti mission to the championship Owaid Al-Anzi reassured the players and congratulated them for their performance and competition. The Championship kicked off on Thursday, and concluded earlier in Doha. — KUNA

Shanto hopes Shakib shines despite political setback

RAWALPINDI: Bangladesh's cricket captain on Tuesday was confident that ace allrounder Shakib Al Hasan will compete at his best in a Test against Pakistan this week, after protests over the former lawmaker's inclusion.

Shakib, 37, was a member of the now dissolved Bangladesh parliament led by ex-premier Sheikh Hasina, who was forced to flee the country at the start of the month following mass protests.

The interim government last week gave permission for Shakib, who has not commented on the political crisis, to feature in the two Tests against Pakistan, the first of which starts Wednesday.

"He has played this game for so long so he knows his role and how to prepare himself. I am not thinking about his political career," Bangladesh skipper and

Steven Smith says he has no plans to wind down

MELBOURNE: Veteran Australia batsman Steve Smith says he has no plans to wind down his cricket career having signed a long-term deal to play in the Big Bash League (BBL) with the Sydney Sixers. The 35-year-old inked a three-year contract with the Sixers and could squeeze in four BBL games during the home summer between the final test against In-

dia and the tour of Sri Lanka. Smith was overlooked for Australia's Twenty20 World Cup squad for the tournament in the United States and the Caribbean but remains committed to playing all formats. "I don't have any plans, I'm just enjoying playing at the moment. I'm pretty relaxed and I'm looking forward to this summer," he told reporters on Tuesday.

"I think I'll get a few (BBL) games in this year and then we'll see where we go from there. Every chance I get, I jump at it." Following David Warner's retirement from tests after the Pakistan series during the last home summer, Smith opened the batting for Australia in series against West Indies and New Zealand.

He made 171 runs in eight innings at an average of 28.25, well below his career average of 56.97. Smith

said he had no idea whether he would open in the five-test series against India, which starts on Nov. 22 at Perth Stadium, though he suggested his team mates wanted him back at number four where he has played much of his test career.

"The conversations I've had so far are that we'll go to England and the boys will have the T20s, and then I'm there for the one-dayers and we'll make a decision after that," he said. "Those conversations are happening in the background. I saw some comments that Usman (Khawaja) made and I think he said he likes me down at number four, and I think Marnus (Labuschagne) is of a similar thought pattern. I'm happy wherever and I'll bat anywhere for the team. For me it's just a position." — AFP

Injured Wallabies centre Paisami out of Argentina tour

MELBOURNE: Australia centre Hunter Paisami has been ruled out of the Argentina tour due to injury in another blow for Joe Schmidt's side following back-to-back losses to South Africa in the Rugby Championship.

Paisami suffered an apparent knee injury and came off the field early in the Wallabies' 30-12 loss to the Springboks in Perth at the weekend. He was omitted from the 35-man squad named on Tuesday for the two-test series against the Pumas starting in La Plata on Aug. 31, joining a long injury list that includes winger Filipo Daugunu and loose forwards Fraser McReight and Liam Wright.

Uncapped ACT Brumbies midfielder David Feliuai has been included in the squad to replace Paisami, while hooker Brandon Paenga-Amosa has returned to the national setup following a three-year stint with Montpellier in France.

Lock Josh Canham has also made his first Wallabies squad for the season. "It's been a challenging couple of weeks but as a coaching group we are keen to continue trying to help a mostly consistent group go forward," Schmidt said in a team media release.

"The Pumas have a talented and robust squad, which, along with the travel, will require further improvement from our squad." Prop Tom Robertson has been recalled, while New South Wales Waratahs loose forward Langi Gleeson returns to

captain Najmul Hossain Shanto said at a press conference. Asked if the political setback would affect Shakib's performance, Shanto said: "I don't think so because he is a professional cricketer, we all treat him as a cricketer, to be honest."

"I hope he will do something special in this series," he added. Shakib is Bangladesh's key allrounder with 4,505 runs in 67 Tests and as a spinner got 237 wickets — the most of any Bangladesh bowler in Test cricket. Bangladeshis in Dhaka protested over Shakib's continued inclusion in the team, with former Bangladesh Cricket Board member Rafiqul Islam criticizing him for staying silent as protesters died in clashes with security forces. Shakib joined the squad in Pakistan last week, after featuring in the Global T20 League in Canada, where Bangladeshis also chanted slogans against him.

The unrest in Dhaka stopped the team from assembling for practice sessions. The tourists got some reprieve after the Pakistan Cricket Board invited them to arrive four days early to make up for their lack of preparations.

Still, Shanto hoped that Bangladesh could overturn a dismal Test record against Pakistan, having lost 12 of the last 13 Tests, with just one draw. "We



PERTH: Australia's Tate McDermott (front), Hunter Paisami (back), and Corey Toole (left) stretch during their team's captain's run at Perth Stadium in Perth ahead of the Rugby Championship match between Australia and South Africa. — AFP

the squad after recovering from an ankle injury.

Australia squad:

Forwards - Allan Alaalatoa, Angus Bell, Angus Blyth, Josh Canham, Matt Faessler, Nick Frost, Langi Gleeson, Tom Hooper, Isaac Kailea, Josh Nasser, Brandon Paenga-Amosa, Tom Robertson, Lukhan

Salakaia-Loto, James Slipper, Carlo Tizzano, Taniela Tupou, Rob Valetini, Jeremy Williams, Harry Wilson.

Backs - Ben Donaldson, David Feliuai, Josh Flook, Jake Gordon, Len Ikitau, Max Jorgensen, Andrew Kellaway, Marika Koroiwete, Noah Lolesio, Tom Lynagh, Tate McDermott, Dylan Pietsch, Hamish Stewart, Corey Toole, Nic White, Tom Wright. — AFP



LAHORE: Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan talks with bowling coach Mushtaq Ahmed (L) during a practice session. — AFP

have a balanced side and I hope we play some good cricket," said Shanto. "I think the record can be changed, it's not easy but we believe that we can do some special things." The Rawalpindi Test is under threat from bad weather, with rain predicted on all five days. The second Test will be played in the same stadium from August 30. — AFP

De Silva hope to make most of Stokes injury

MANCHESTER: Sri Lanka captain Dhananjaya de Silva believes Ben Stokes' injury could help his side upset the odds in their Test series against England. De Silva is skipping the tourists in their first red-ball campaign in England for eight years, with Sri Lanka heading into the first of a three-match contest at Old Trafford starting Wednesday on the back of a defeat by a novice England Lions team in their lone warm-up fixture.

Sri Lanka have won just three of their previous 18 Tests in England, while England come into this series following a 3-0 home rout of the West Indies. But star all-rounder Stokes is now set to miss the whole of the Sri Lanka campaign with a hamstring tear suffered while playing in the Hundred.

His absence has led England to appoint a new captain in Ollie Pope and recall paceman Matthew Potts, a Durham team-mate of Stokes. "He is the balance of their side," said De Silva of Stokes while speaking during a pre-match press conference at Old Trafford on Tuesday. "He's the key player for them, when it comes to bowling, batting, everything." — AFP

Sports

Juventus give Motta perfect start against Como, Atalanta thrash Lecce

Today was a reality check, we need to be better: Fabregas

MILAN: Juventus made light work of Como on Monday with a 3-0 win on Thiago Motta's Serie A debut with the Turin giants, while Atalanta brushed aside transfer upheaval with a 4-0 thumping of Lecce. Impressive first-half strikes from promising youngster Samuel Mbangula, a surprise starter on the left flank, and Timothy Weah before a thumping Andrea Cambiaso finish in stoppage time gave Juve and Motta a perfect start against promoted Como, who were playing their first top-flight match in over two decades.

"Como are a good team and we had the right attitude tonight, when we had the ball we did really well all throughout the match," said Motta to DAZN. Juve could have easily won by a larger margin at the Allianz Stadium as the hosts created a series of chances against Como who were outclassed on the night.

Dusan Vlahovic had a particularly unlucky evening up front for Juve as he struck the woodwork in each half and had what looked like a perfectly good headed goal ruled out just after half-time. The Serbia striker was baffled as to why his strike was chalked off but Cambiaso had strayed offside earlier in the move, denying him a goal.

Motta, who arrived in the close season after guiding Bologna to the Champions League, already has Juve playing a brand of football which is easier on the eye than was played under his predecessor Massimiliano Allegri. That is despite Juve being a work in progress as a clutch of Allegri's favourites, including Italy forward Federico Chiesa, have been sidelined in order to make space for players deemed more suited to Motta's style of play.

Cesc Fabregas's Como, an ambitious club backed by tobacco giant Djarum active in the summer transfer window, will get a better indication of their

chances of staying in the division in their next two fixtures at Cagliari and Udinese.

"Today was a reality check. We need to be better," said Fabregas to DAZN. "What I sure was a difference in quality... They were devastating when they took the ball off us and we gave away too many easy balls. That's not tactics, that's down to individual quality."

'Perfect' Atalanta debuts

New boys Marco Brescianini and Mateo Retegui gave Europa League holders Atalanta a hugely impressive start at Lecce after turbulent summer which has featured long-term injuries and star players agitating for transfers.

Brescianini, who only arrived from relegated Frosinone on Friday, opened the scoring on the rebound 10 minutes before half-time and confidently rolled home the fourth in the 66th minute. The 24-year-old's strikes topped and tailed a near-perfect away performance as Italy striker Retegui netted with a bullet header on the stroke of half-time before winning and then scoring a penalty just before the hour mark.

"It's better than even I could have imagined," said Brescianini, who is from just outside Bergamo, where Atalanta are based. "I'm really happy to be wearing this jersey and I hope to repay the faith the club and fans have shown in me."

Atalanta have since been hit with serious injuries to both Gianluca Scamacca and star defender Giorgio Scalvini, with a clutch of other players also sidelined. Meanwhile coach Gian Piero Gasperini was without Teun Koopmeiners and Europa League final hat-trick hero Ademola Lookman, both dropped as they try to leave before the end of the summer trans-



TURIN: Juventus' Italian defender #27 Andrea Cambiaso scores his team's third goal during the Italian Serie A football match between Juventus and Como at The Allianz Stadium in Turin. — AFP

fer window. "No-one expected to be in this situation," Gasperini told Sky Sport. "I have to play it by ear right now... I don't know what's going to happen in the coming 10 days but our job is to build as much as we can." However before kick-off Atalanta CEO Luca Percassi left the door open for

reconciliation with the want-away pair, with Paris Saint-Germain reportedly interested in signing Nigeria forward Lookman. "Our idea is that for the first time in our history to not let our big players go," Percassi told Sky Sport. "We can't wait for this transfer window to close." — AFP



STUTTGART: (FILES) Germany's midfielder #21 Ilkay Gundogan (R) celebrates with teammates after scoring his team's second goal during the UEFA Euro 2024 Group A football match between Germany and Hungary. — AFP

Gundogan retires from international football

BERLIN: Germany captain Ilkay Gundogan announced his retirement from international football on Monday after leading his country at Euro 2024, citing "a certain tiredness" both physically and mentally. "After a few weeks of reflection, I have come to the conclusion that it is time to end my national team career," Gundogan wrote on social media.

"I look back with great pride on 82 international matches for my home country - a number that I could never have dreamed of when I made my debut for the senior national team in 2011." His retirement follows those of Toni Kroos and Thomas Mueller. Kroos hung up his boots for good after Euro 2024, while Mueller called time on his Germany career last month.

Gundogan, who turns 34 in October, skipped the Germany team that reached the Euro 2024 quarter-finals before losing to eventual champions Spain after extra time. Despite the pain of that defeat Germany demonstrated they are a force to be reckoned with again after the disappointment of successive World Cup group-stage exits either side of a last-16 loss to England at Euro 2020.

"My highlight was clearly the huge honour of being able to lead the team as captain at our home European Championship last summer," said the Barcelona midfielder. Gundogan, who won five Premier League titles and the Champions League in seven seasons with Manchester City before moving to Barcelona last year, admitted to feeling the effects of a busy schedule before the start of Euro 2024.—AFP

Vardy strikes as Leicester hold misfiring Spurs

LEICESTER: Ange Postecoglou admitted "wasteful" Tottenham lost their composure as Jamie Vardy's second-half equalizer gave Leicester a 1-1 draw against his profligate team on Monday. Promoted Leicester survived a series of costly Tottenham misses either side of Pedro Porro's first-half opener for the visitors at the King Power Stadium.

Vardy made Tottenham pay for their erratic finishing with a typically predatory header, capping his surprise appearance just days after he had been ruled out by Steve Cooper after suffering a pre-season injury. The 37-year-old has now scored nine Premier League goals in 17 appearances against Tottenham, who trudged off wondering how they had failed to demolish Leicester during their dominant first-half display.

Tottenham finished fifth in Postecoglou's first season following a campaign in which the Australian's commitment to all-out attack was eventually exposed at the cost of Champions League qualification. Once again, Tottenham were hampered by poor finishing and unfocused defending.

Dominic Solanke was especially culpable on the striker's debut after moving from Bournemouth for a fee that could rise to £65 million (\$84 million). "Disappointing night for us. First half excellent and controlled the game but wasteful in front of goal. Once Leicester scored, the crowd lifted and we lost our composure," Postecoglou said.

"It was an issue we had last year as well. We need to keep working hard and be a bit more ruthless in front of goal. At times we made poor decisions. The dominance is great but if you don't score it is meaningless. We have to be stronger in our mindset in the front third. To be that wasteful is disappointing. We just weren't clinical."

Leicester are back in the Premier League after winning the Championship to end their one-year absence. Amid reports the Foxes could face a points deduction for breaking financial rules, new boss Cooper needs to hit the ground running if they are to avoid relegation and this gritty display was an encouraging start. "I was as fit as a fiddle until I got to about 65 minutes if I'm honest!" Vardy said. "Tottenham are a really good team but we have them too much respect. We started getting after them and it changed the momentum. When we are at the top of our game we can give anyone a run for their money." Tottenham went close to an early lead when Wilfred Ndidi cleared Rodrigo Bentancur's effort off the line before Mads Hermansen saved Brennan Johnson's fierce effort from the rebound. Solanke's diving header was straight at Hermansen before Cristian Romero nodded Porro's cross just wide. — AFP

Atletico twice fight back in Villarreal draw

VILA-REAL: Diego Simeone's Atletico Madrid shared an entertaining 2-2 draw with Villarreal as they began their La Liga campaign on Monday. The Rojiblancos revamped their squad over the summer after struggling to a fourth-place finish but had to settle for a point at Villarreal's Estadio de Ceramica, twice coming from behind.

Alvaro Morata, Stefan Savic, Memphis Depay and others have departed while Atletico brought in Julian Alvarez, Alexander Sorloth and Robin Le Normand, who all made their debuts. The latter two started on Spain's east coast and Norwegian striker Sorloth netted what proved to be the goal to earn his team a point.

"I think we played a good game, we had some individual areas where we have to improve, but as a group we were committed," said Simeone. Villarreal took the lead through Arnaut Danjuma in the 18th minute with the forward starting his team's La Liga opener after spells on loan at Tottenham and Everton.

The Dutch winger beat Axel Witsel for pace to run on to a pass and then worked some space to squeeze a low shot across goal and into the far corner. Atletico reacted instantly, scoring little over a minute later when Antoine Griezmann played in Marcos Llorente who rifled into the roof of the net.

Samuel Lino hit the post for the visitors before Villarreal moved back ahead when Jan Oblak failed to claim a cross and the ball bounced in off the unfortunate Koke. Atletico levelled through Sorloth, nodding home against his former side in first half stoppage time, his header squirming under goalkeeper Diego Conde, who should have kept it out.

Former Manchester City striker Alvarez, signed for an estimated 85 million euros (\$93 million), came on for his Atletico debut in the final stages with the second half evenly fought. New Villarreal arrival Nicolas Pepe hit the crossbar with a looping free-kick late on but the teams could not be separated.

"We conceded very quickly, too easily, and that gives you an uphill struggle," Atletico midfielder Llorente told Movistar. "We got back level, which is the hard thing, and we went and let in another goal, and in the end when you let in two it's very hard to turn the game around and we didn't do it today." — AFP



LEICESTER: Tottenham Hotspur's Brazilian striker #09 Richarlison (C) heads this late header wide during the English Premier League football match between Leicester City and Tottenham Forest at King Power Stadium in Leicester. — 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
Ayoum Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Hospitals

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

Change of Name

I, **HUSAIN**, holder of Indian Passport No. U0746371 issued at Embassy of India, Kuwait. I am a permanent resident of Dungarpur Rajasthan, India and presently residing in Kuwait, I hereby declare my given name as HUSAIN and surname is TEKRIWALA.

(19/08/2024)

I **Jagdeesh Singh**, holder of Indian Passport No. W4657421, S/o Nek Singh, R/O VPO Nathuwala West. Teh Baghapurana Dist, Moga have changed my name to Jagdish Singh.

(6151#, 19/08/2024)

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Sinner wins Cincinnati Open

Sabalenka downs Pegula to win WTA Cincinnati Open



MASON: Jannik Sinner of Italy poses with the Rookwood Cup after defeating Frances Tiafoe of the United States. — AFP photos



MASON: Tournament Director Bob Moran presents Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus the Rookwood Cup after defeating Jessica Pegula of the United States during the women's final of the Cincinnati Open.

CINCINNATI: World number one Jannik Sinner on Monday lifted his third ATP Masters trophy as the world number one beat Frances Tiafoe 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 to win the Cincinnati Open. The Italian top seed warmed up for next week's US Open in style, bidding his time in a hard-fought first set before breaking the match open in the second.

Tiafoe, whose game faded after losing the first-set tiebreaker, still made an impression. The American, who moves into the ranking top-20, saved three match points before Sinner claimed his 15th career title. Cincinnati is the fifth trophy of 2024 for the 23-year-old Italian, who began the season with an Australian Open crown in Melbourne. "I'm happy, this was a very difficult week," Sinner said. "It was tough mentally but I tried to do my best."

"Frances and I were both tired from the (Sunday) semi-finals and there was a lot of tension. I'm just glad I kept my level in the important moments. I handled the situations on court well. "There were

many ups and downs, but that's normal. At the big moments of each match I played well."

Sinner heads to the August 26 start of the US Open as a major favorite, standing more than 2,000 points clear of world number two Novak Djokovic. "I'm confident, but it's important to be able to recover to be ready for New York," the Italian said afterwards.

"That is the main goal of this US Open swing. "I'm happy to be in the position I'm in. I have the hunger to keep playing. I hope to show good tennis in New York." Against Tiafoe, Sinner hit 29 winners, including 13 aces and broke the American twice from eight attempts.

"I'm really tired," Tiafoe told Sinner at the net afterwards. "I'm not used to playing so many matches like you big guys. Well-played." The pair duelled for nearly an hour in the opening set, with the Italian making 10 aces on the way into a tiebreaker.

One crack in Tiafoe's defence was enough to

hand Sinner two set point chances, with the first converted by the top seed for the early lead. Tiafoe dropped serve to start the second as his reserves began to run dry. Sinner achieved a double break in a fifth game lasting for more than 10 minutes with seven deuces.

With a 4-1 lead, the Italian still had to fight, with Tiafoe saving three match points to climb to 5-2 before the top seed completed his work a game later. Sinner is the youngest champion here since Andy Murray in 2008.

Aryna Sabalenka thrust herself into US Open title contention on Monday with a 6-3, 7-5 defeat of Jessica Pegula to win the ATP/WTA Cincinnati Open. The third seed who missed Wimbledon with a shoulder injury won a trophy for the first time since collecting her second Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January.

Sabalenka had it all her way against the American sixth seed until the closing stages when she

lost serve for the first time leading a set and 5-4. But a quick re-break and another hold of serve solved that problem and produced a first Masters-level trophy on hardcourt since 2021 for the Belarus player.

"I really couldn't have wished for more — it was a really great day at the office," Sabalenka said afterwards. "Just super happy with the level I played in the final and I was able to get this title. It's really important going into the US Open."

Sabalenka — beaten in last year's US Open final — has now defeated Pegula, champion last week in Toronto, in five of seven matches. The winner will move to second in the world in the WTA rankings and has emerged as a serious contender when the Open begins in New York next Monday. "I'm sure Jess and I will have more battles in the future," Sabalenka said. "Let's keep it up." The win marked Sabalenka's sixth WTA 1000 title and the 15th of her career. — Agencies

Three Kuwaiti athletes to participate in Paris '24 Paralympic Games

KUWAIT: The Head of the Kuwait Paralympic Committee, Mansour Al-Sarheed said on Tuesday that Kuwait was set to compete in the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games with three athletes. The Kuwaiti delegation includes Faisal Al-Rajhi, Faisal Sorour, and Dhari Al-Butti, who would be competing in track and field events. In a statement to KUNA, Al-Sarheed said that Al-Rajhi would compete in the wheelchair racing competitions in the T54 category, Sorour would participate in the Shot Put competition in the F42 category, Al-Butti would also compete in the Shot Put competition, but in the F37 category.

Al-Sarheed emphasized that the committee has diligently prepared the three athletes, who qualified for the Games through impressive performances in global and regional championships. He added that the aim was to achieve the best possible results and raise Kuwait's flag in one of the largest multi-sport event in the world. He also noted that Sorour and Al-Butti were currently undergoing intensive training in Turkey under Coach Ahmad Harbi, while Al-Rajhi was training in Sharjah, UAE, under Coach Nizar Ramadan.

Meanwhile, athlete Faisal Sorour expressed his and his teammates' readiness to achieve top positions and reach the podium, thanks to the excellent training camps they have attended both locally and abroad. Sorour, who won a bronze medal at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, said that he was determined to secure another medal for Kuwait in Paris. On his part, Nizar Ramadan, Kuwait's coach



Faisal Sorour



Dhari Al-Butti

for wheelchair racing, affirmed that Al-Rajhi was training intensively, twice daily, with great enthusiasm to win a Paralympic medal.

Ramadan noted that Sharjah was chosen for the training camp due to its excellent facilities, which have helped Al-Rajhi improve his performance, he was optimistic that the Kuwaiti team would win several medals despite the strong competition. Kuwait first participated in the Paralympics in 1980 and earned a total of 52 medals, 12 gold, 18 silver, and 22 bronze, and this year, the Kuwaiti delegation hope to win more at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, which would be taking place from August 28 to September 8 and would feature 23 different sports events.

The Paralympic Games, organized by the International Paralympic Committee, are held every four years following the Olympic Games and in the same host city, they feature athletes with physical disabilities, including muscle weakness, limb deficiency, paralysis, leg length difference, short stature, and visual impairment. — KUNA



Faisal Al-Rajhi and his coach Nizar Ramadan in Sharjah's camp

Kuwait SC defeat Fahaheel in Zain Football League

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: In the final match of round 2 of Kuwait Zain Football League Kuwait Sports Club Football team did not wait long before scoring the opening goal by a header from Mohammad Marhoun that ended in the net of Fahaheel Club.

Fahaheel resorted to attacking and left open areas in the back enabling Kuwait to score their second goal in a similar fashion of the first goal but this time it was a header from Yousuf Nasser.

The third goal was initiated by a long kick from Kuwait goal keeper Abdulrahman Kameel enabling Yousuf Nasser to score past Fahaheel goal keeper Ahmad Al-Dousary.

Kuwait with its 3-0 win has (6) points on top of



Kuwait SC and Fahaheel Club players in action.

the standings in goal difference with Al-Arabi. Kuwait is followed by Al-Arabi (6) points, Salmiya third with (3) points, Fahaheel (3) points, Qadisi-

ya (3) points, Kazma (3) points, Khaitan (3) points, Tadhamon (1) point, Yarmouk (1) point and Al-Nasr (0) points.

Adrian Del Castillo (6 RBIs), D-backs top Marlins

PHOENIX: Rookie catcher Adrian Del Castillo, a Miami native playing his first pro game in his hometown, slugged a grand slam and drove in six runs, leading the Arizona Diamondbacks to a 9-6 win over the host Marlins on Monday night.

Del Castillo went 2-for-4 with a walk and his first career stolen base. He also threw a runner out attempting to steal second. Brandon Pfaadt (8-6) earned the win despite allowing nine hits, two walks and four runs in 5 1/3 innings. The Diamondbacks have won five straight games in which Pfaadt has pitched. Nick Fortes had a solo home run and a sacrifice fly as Miami lost for the fourth time in five games.

Mets 4, Orioles 3

Francisco Alvarez hit a walk-off homer — the first of his career — in the ninth inning for host New York, which took the opener of a three-game series against Baltimore. Edwin Diaz (4-1) logged a perfect ninth inning for the Mets, who won for the fourth time in 10 games to move within 1 1/2 games of the idle Atlanta Braves in the race for the final National League wild-card spot. Ramon Urias and Ryan Mountcastle had two hits apiece while combining to score all three runs for the Orioles, who fell a half-game behind the idle New York Yankees in the race for first place in the American League East and the top overall seed in the AL.

Rangers 4, Pirates 3

Corey Seager slammed two home runs to account for all of Texas' offense as the Rangers earned a win against Pittsburgh in the opener of a three-game series at Arlington, Texas. Marcus Semien had two hits and scored a run for the Rangers, who have won two in a row for the first time since a five-game winning streak from July 21-25. Jose Urena (4-8) pitched four innings of shutout relief for the win. Jared Triolo hit a three-run homer as the Pirates fell for the 12th time in 14 games. Pittsburgh starter Luis L. Ortiz (5-4) gave up four runs and five hits in six innings.

Reds 6, Blue Jays 3

TJ Friedl had a solo homer among his three hits as visiting Cincinnati defeated Toronto. Ty France added two hits and two RBIs for the Reds, who ended a three-game losing streak. Cincinnati right-hander Julian Aguiar made his major league debut and allowed two runs and four hits in four innings. Tony Santillan (1-1) earned the win. Vladimir Guerrero Jr. and Ernie Clement hit solo home runs for the Blue Jays in the opener of a three-game series that begins a seven-game homestand. — Reuters