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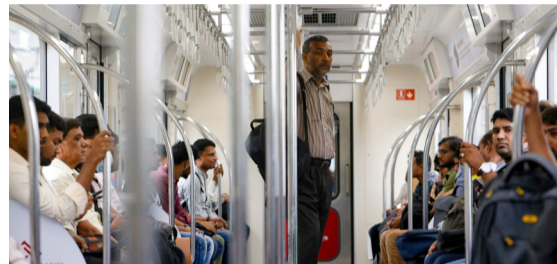
**5** Tent demos turn West Bank eviction into rallying cry



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## Four new ministers in Cabinet

Amir issues decree to reshuffle Council of Ministers

### Over 65,000 iqama violators benefited from grace period



Brig Yousef Al-Ayoub

**KUWAIT:** Over 65,000 residency violators benefited from the grace period offered by the authorities, adjusting their status in the country, an interior ministry official said on Sunday. In an interview with KUNA, Director of the General Department of Residency at the Interior Ministry Brig Yousef Al-Ayoub revealed that the grace period offered to residency violators from March 14 to June 30, 2024 was in line with the state's humanitarian ethos to enable violators to amend their status and follow legal procedures.

Most of the violators were in the areas of Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, he revealed, adding that the interior ministry would continue its efforts to crack down on those violating residency laws. Since the grace period ended, some 4,650 people have been apprehended, Ayoub said, noting that violators would be unable to return to Kuwait once deported.

He noted that sponsors of residency violators would be subjected to a block and they would be notified through the Sahel application of their sponsored individuals' arrest and subsequent legal procedures against them. Violators with no travel documents will be issued emergency travel papers before being deported, Ayoub affirmed.

The interior ministry had intensified its efforts in the last three months to track down residency violators and implement the law concerning the matter. The grace period was offered to allow violators to seek legal means to stay in the country. The issue of residency violators has had an impact on the fabric of society, with some individuals seeking illicit activities to make ends meet. The campaign also sends a message to sponsors bringing people into the country and leaving them to their own devices, creating some degree of lawlessness and confusion.

The interior ministry has also deported a number of expats who overstayed their visit visas along with their sponsors after arresting them. It said in a statement last month that a number of expat women working in Kuwait had issued family visit visas for their husbands and children, but the visitors exceeded the duration stipulated in the visas. If visitors overstay, they and their sponsors will be listed under a special security tracking system run by the detectives of the residency affairs department and legal measures will be taken against them, the ministry had warned. — Agencies



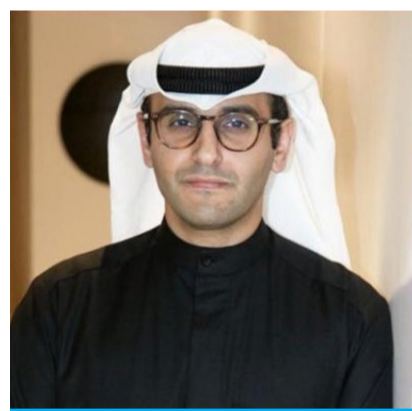
Noura Al-Fassam



Khalifa Al-Ajeel



Dr Nader Al-Jallal



Abdullahif Al-Meshari

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** A decree was issued by HHI the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Sunday reshuffling the government, appointing new finance and commerce ministers and amending some of the existing portfolios. Four new faces were added to the Cabinet while two others were left out, according to the Amiri decree. The current government was formed in May.

Noura Al-Fassam, a top banker, was appointed as minister of finance and minister of state for economic affairs and investment, replacing Anwar Al-Mudhaf, also a top banker, who stayed in the post for just over seven months. Mudhaf was pushing for financial reforms including raising charges on public services, reforming huge government subsidies and also introducing strict policies to control public spending to reduce budget deficits.

Khalifa Al-Ajeel, a top government financial official, was appointed minister of commerce and industry, which was held by Omar Al-Omar, who remained in the Cabinet but as a minister of state for communications affairs. Abdullahif Al-Meshari was appointed as minister of state for housing and minister of state for municipality affairs,

portfolios which were held by the ministers of public works and social affairs.

Dr Nader Al-Jallal, an academic, was appointed minister of higher education and acting minister of education, partly replacing Adel Al-Adwani. Jallal was also appointed acting education minister until a new education minister is appointed.

In addition, a number of changes were introduced to the portfolios of five ministers. Information Minister Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi was also appointed as minister of state for youth affairs. Noura Al-Mashaan remains only minister of public works, losing the municipality affairs ministry, while Amthal Al-Huwailah lost the ministry for youth affairs and remains minister of social affairs only.

The state ministry for housing was taken from Mahmoud Bushehri, who remains as minister of electricity and water and renewable energy. Omar Al-Omar lost the ministry of commerce and industry and remains as minister of state for communications affairs. The Cabinet, headed by HHI the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, now has 15 members excluding him and is expected to have a new member later when a new education minister is appointed.

### Zionists, Hezb exchange major missile barrage

**JERUSALEM:** The Zionist entity launched air strikes into Lebanon on Sunday, saying it destroyed "thousands" of Hezbollah rocket launchers and thwarted a major attack, while the Lebanese group insisted it had been able to deliver a drone and rocket barrage of its own. The result was perhaps the biggest exchange of fire in 10 months of a war in Gaza and has triggered both new violence on the Lebanon-Zionist entity border and fears of a broader conflagration in the Middle East.

The Zionist military said around

100 of its fighter jets had destroyed launchers aimed towards the Zionist entity's north and center. Hezbollah, the powerful Iran-backed Lebanese armed group, denied that thousands of launchers had been destroyed and countered the Zionist entity was making "empty claims" of having thwarted a larger attack, while boasting that its own operation "was completed and accomplished".

Hezbollah said it had fired 320 Katyusha rockets towards the Zionist entity in what it called the first phase of its retaliation. Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah said the main target of his group was Gilot, "the main (Zionist) military intelligence base" near Tel Aviv. The Zionist military said there were "no hits" on that base. Zionist media reported that Gilot hosts the

Continued on Page 6



ACRE: A resident checks the damage caused by a rocket fired from Lebanon in this Zionist coastal town on Aug 25, 2024. — AFP

### Can Harris win back Michigan's key Muslim vote?

**DEARBORN, Michigan:** In key US swing state Michigan, Democratic voters of Arab and Middle Eastern heritage say Kamala Harris is going to have to win them back, after they were alienated by President Joe Biden's handling of the Zionist entity's military offensive in Gaza. The town of Dearborn, home to 110,000 people and a cultural hub for Arab Americans, could play a decisive role in deciding the fate of the battleground state in November's presidential election.

Members of the community interviewed by AFP said they were willing to hear what the vice president had to say and weigh their options — a marked change from the outright hostility towards Biden. "We are in listening mode right now," said Osama Siblani, publisher of The Arab American News. Accepting the Democratic presidential nomination at the party's convention on Thursday, Harris pledged to get a Gaza ceasefire "done" and ensure Palestinians realize their right to "dignity, security, freedom and self-determination".

But there was outrage among pro-Palestinian del-



DEARBORN: Osama Siblani, publisher of The Arab American News, poses at the newspaper's office on June 18, 2024. — AFP

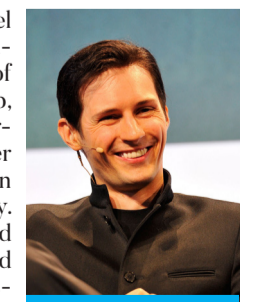
egates that their request for a speaker spot at the convention was rejected. The group Muslim Women for Harris-Walz said the decision sent a "terrible message" and announced it was disbanding and withdrawing its support from the campaign. Harris, who has vowed "not to be silent" about the suffering of Palestinians, recently met with members of the national "Uncommitted" movement that led the charge against Biden during the Democratic primary process. Although she made no firm promises, leaders said she impressed them with a show of empathy.

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### Telegram founder Durov arrested on arrival in France

**PARIS/MOSCOW:** Pavel Durov, the Russian-born billionaire founder and owner of the Telegram messaging app, was arrested at Le Bourget airport outside Paris shortly after landing on a private jet late on Saturday and placed in custody. The arrest of the 39-year-old technology billionaire prompted on Sunday a warning from Moscow to Paris that he should be accorded his rights and criticism from X owner Elon Musk who said that free speech in Europe was under attack.

There was no official confirmation from France of the arrest, but two French police sources and one Russian source who spoke on condition of anonymity said that Durov was arrested shortly after arriving at Le Bourget airport on a private jet from Azerbaijan.



Pavel Durov

Continued on Page 6





## Local

# Islamic conference underlines women's role in promoting cultural, religious awareness

## 'Islam has given women great attention that has never been seen in history'

CAIRO: Participants of the 35th International Conference of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, hosted by Cairo on Sunday, stressed the importance of women's role and status in building cultural and religious awareness and promoting values of coexistence and tolerance. Saudi Minister of Islamic Affairs Dr Abdullah Al-Sheikh said in his speech during the opening session of the two-day conference, held under the slogan 'Women and Building Awareness', that "Islam has given women great attention that has never been seen in history."

He added that "women's rights and duties were explained by Allah Almighty in His Holy Book and His Messenger (PBUH) in his Sunnah. Islam preserved their dignity and ordered them to be dutiful as mothers, protect them as sisters and daughters, and fulfill their rights as wives and partners in building the family on which the structure of society is based."

He stressed that "those who contemplate the religious texts will find in them a sophisticated treatment of women and an order to take care of them without arbitrariness or injustice," warning that it is not permissible to apply personal practices or societal customs and traditions that involve injustice or

arbitrariness against women.

Al-Sheikh expressed his pride in the Saudi experience in this field, saying that Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and with the support and follow-up of the Crown Prince and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Saudi Arabia, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, has preserved the rights of women who have been honored and have received their share in education, health, financial rights, job opportunities, and leadership, noting that today they "compete in the fields of construction."

He reviewed a number of prominent models that Saudi women have achieved in various fields, whether governmental, scientific, medical, in the field of space, as well as in the field of human rights, at the level of ambassadors, in international forums and organizations, and also at the level of the Shura Council and in the economic fields.

In his speech, Omar Al Darei, Chairman of the General Authority of Islamic Affairs, and Zakat in the Emirates, said that women are "the impregnable dam against sweeping currents," stressing that

"the role of women is essential and must be activated to be a bridge of thought throughout history, as they are the guardians of moderation, tolerance, and education and transmit the national identity to generations. He added that "extremist groups target women not because they are the weaker party, but because their determination is strong and their will is strong," stressing that to achieve the purpose of this awareness, "we must bring to mind pioneering female scholars in various fields" so that these models can be inspiring.

Al Darei stressed the need to support women and their issues and confront customs and traditions that diminish their value, pointing to the importance of digital worlds, which "have become a complex reality that targets our families and people with unsuitable intellectual and religious content. He stressed the importance of being aware of the dangers facing women."

For his part, the Palestinian Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Dr Muhammad Najm, said in his speech that Palestinian women have a role in spreading religious awareness, stressing that Palestinian women are inspiring and have taught

their sons to love their homeland and will not submit no matter how many of their sons, fathers, or husbands are killed.

They are an example to be emulated in the Islamic nation and a great model for women. Najm stressed the importance of qualifying scholars and preparing them for the science of fatwa, especially preachers or exhorters, adding that "the Prophet (PBUH) showed us that we should focus on the role of women and that they should be qualified for every specialty required of them by legal or other authorities."

He explained that a preacher should understand the objectives of Sharia and its consequences and should understand that love of the homeland is part of faith, pointing out that women have a role in achieving local security and peace, whether in their homeland or in the entire nation. The 35th International Conference of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs is being held in Cairo over two days under the patronage of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, with the participation of about 60 countries and more than 100 dignitaries, including ministers, muftis, representatives of Islamic bodies, councils, and institutions in countries around the world. — KUNA



Chief of the Army General Staff, Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain listens to a detailed briefing on the duties assigned to the Military Education Authority. — KUNA photos



Bandar Al-Muzain during an inspection visit to the Military Education Authority.

## Army chief stresses the importance of academic qualification

KUWAIT: Chief of the Army General Staff, Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain, stressed on Sunday the importance of scientific achievement, qualification, keeping pace with the latest curricula and teaching methods, and developing training programs to raise the level of individual and collective perfor-

mance to ensure the readiness of army personnel to face future challenges.

This came in a press release issued by the Chief of Staff following a visit by the team to the Military Education Authority, where he listened to a detailed briefing on the duties entrusted to the authority, the quality of curricula and scientific courses, and the achievements of the educational plan. According to the statement, Al-Muzain called for overcoming all difficulties and obstacles and providing the most efficient educational plans, which will benefit the army personnel, praising the efforts of the Authority's employees, which were reflected in the outputs and their role in planning.



## Governor lauds Farmers Union

KUWAIT: The governor of Asimah Governorate, Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabate, has praised the efforts made by the Kuwait Farmers Union in meeting the needs of Kuwait's

market. The governor received the president of the Kuwait Farmers Union, Jaber Al-Azmi, Vice President Majid Al-Huwailah, Director General Ayed Al-Muwaizri, Secretary Mohamed Al-Otaibi, and Board Member Fahd Al-Damak. The governor reviewed with the union a number of issues related to agricultural affairs and ways to improve agricultural services, facilitate procedures for farmers, and meet their needs.

## Officials inspect facility for people with disabilities

KUWAIT: The Acting Director General of the Public Authority for People with Disabilities, Al-Humaidi Al-Mutairi, the Deputy Director General for Psychological, Social, and Medical Services and Care Homes, Amer Al-Enezi, and the Deputy Director General for Financial and Administrative Affairs, Khaled Al-Harbi, toured the auditors' halls to inspect the progress of work and ensure that the halls are fully operational after the automated system stopped for several days due to power outages in the Hawally area.

Al-Humaidi praised the efforts of the Authority's employees in receiving patients with disabilities and their families, which exceeded the daily capacity, as the number of transactions received by the Insurance and Housing Counter reached 180 cases. Also, the financial allocation counter recorded 120 cases,



the caregiver counter (125 cases), and the medical records counter (257 cases), among others. They also visited Terminal No 2.



## PAAET and Kuwait Airways sign deal

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) and Kuwait Airways signed on Sunday a cooperation protocol to develop a new academic program for graduate students under the name "Aviation Sciences and Air Transport" at the headquarters of the Higher Institute of Communications and Navigation. In a press statement after the signing ceremony, the Director General of PAAET, Dr. Hassan Al-Fajam, stressed the Authority's keenness to consolidate the bonds of cooperation and joint integration with various state agencies and open labor markets by developing programs and specializations for high school graduates.

Al-Fajam explained that the aim of the protocol is to provide the entities with a highly professional national workforce and to develop a new diploma program (Aviation Sciences and Air Services) to be offered in the second semester of the academic year 2024/2025. Al-Fajam added that this cooperation is a distinguished start with Kuwait Airways and evidence of the Authority's constant endeavor to open

new horizons for high school graduates through the development of new programs and specializations.

For his part, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways, Abdul Mohsen Al-Faqan, said in a similar statement that this cooperation includes the implementation of field training for students in the company's operational facilities, indicating that Kuwaitia will provide the Higher Institute of Communications and Navigation with all modern technologies to keep pace with the latest technical developments in the field of aviation sciences and air transport.

Al-Faqan explained that the administration will also organize and prepare programs, visits, and workshops to exchange technical expertise and implement joint scientific and applied research in areas that serve the development of specialization between the two sides. He added that Kuwait will also have job opportunities for students and graduates. In a similar statement, Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, Deputy Director General for Training at the Authority, said that the Applied Authority is in the process of developing three other new programs with the aim of strengthening Kuwaiti cadres with a constellation of distinguished people in various fields in the labor market. — KUNA



Director General of PAAET, Dr Hassan Al-Fajam and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways Abdul Mohsen Al-Faqan take a photo after signing the agreement. — KUNA photos



Local

# Biographies of the new ministers

**KUWAIT:** Amiri Decree No (140) of 2024 issued on Sunday included the appointment of four new ministers in the government of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, formed in accordance with Decree No (73) of 2024. Here are the biographies of the new ministers:

**Khalifa Abdullah Dhahi Al-Ajeel Al-Askar  
Minister of Commerce and Industry**

He holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the College of Administrative Sciences, Kuwait University in 2002. He held the position of Chairman of the Financial Controllers Authority from 2019 until now. A member of the Board of Commissioners at the Capital Markets Authority from April 2014 to September 2019. Chairman of the Board of Directors of Osos Holding Company from May 2013 to April 2014. Chairman and Managing Director of Al-Waseet Financial Services Company from November 2008 to April 2014. Regional Manager - Brokerage Sector at Kuwait and Middle East Investment Company (KAMFIK) from October 2006 to September 2007. He held memberships in several boards of directors of companies in the local private sector from 2003 to 2014.



**Khalifa Abdullah Dhahi Al-Ajeel Al-Askar**

**Abdullatif Hamed Hamad Al-Meshari  
Minister of State for Municipal Affairs,  
Minister of State for Housing Affairs**

He holds a Master's degree in Architecture from Harvard University in 2009 and a Bachelor's degree in the same specialization from the University of Southern California in 2006. He worked as an advisor to the Kuwaiti Council of Ministers and a member of the technical team for the investment land development project in the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Bridge Project. Vice Chairman of the Population and Urban Development Committee Member of the Vision Realization Committee for the Five Islands Development Project within the Vision (New Kuwait 2035). Member of the Supreme Committee for the Master Plan and Major Projects in the Council of Ministers from 2014-2017. Housing Projects Coordination Committee at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare from 2015-2017. Member of the Arbitration Committee at Boston Architectural College in 2008 and Kuwait University from 2010 until now. Member of the Technical Team of the Silk City Development Follow-up Agency.



**Abdullatif Hamed Hamad Al-Meshari**

**Dr Nader Abdullah Mohammed Al-Jallal  
Minister of Higher Education and Scientific  
Research and Acting Minister of Education**

Born in Kuwait in 1957. Holds a PhD in Organic Chemistry from the University of Reading in England in 1984. Master's degree from Kuwait University in Inorganic Chemistry in 1981. Bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Kuwait University in 1979. He served as Director of Kuwait University from 2002 to 2006. Secretary-General of Kuwait University from 1999 to 2002. Dean of the College of Graduate Studies at Kuwait University from 1994 to 1999. Member of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training in 1999. Professor in the Department of Chemistry at the Faculty of Science at Kuwait University in 1996. Member of the Board of Directors and Secretary of the Kuwait Chemical Society from 1987 to 1992. Head of the Chemistry Department at Kuwait University from 1991 to 1992. Visiting Professor at the Chemistry Department at the University of Bahrain from 1990 to 1991.



**Dr Nader Abdullah Mohammed Al-Jallal**

**Noura Suleiman Salem Al-Fassam  
Minister of Finance and Minister of  
State for Economic Affairs, Investment**

Holds a Master's degree in Business Administration from Kuwait University. Bachelor's degree in Industrial and Systems Engineering with honors from Kuwait University. She held several leadership positions during her career and has experience in the financial, banking and investment sectors, which she spent in several governmental and private entities such as the Public Investment Authority, the National Bank of Kuwait, the National Investments Company and Boubyan Bank. Al-Fassam is considered the first Kuwaiti figure to obtain approval from the Central Bank of Kuwait for the position of Head of Strategic Planning at Boubyan Bank at the level of Kuwaiti banks, due to her extensive investment experience over 25 years. She participated in membership of the boards of directors of local and regional companies, in addition to her professional dealings with senior executives in global and regional banks. She also managed deals in the private equity sector and established companies worth \$1 billion.



**Noura Suleiman Salem Al-Fassam**



**KUWAIT:** Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Sunday the UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Matar Al-Neyadi. They discussed bilateral relations and means of cooperation and joint coordination between the two brotherly countries. — KUNA

## Interior Ministry busts drug gang

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Interior announced on Sunday the arrest of an international criminal network of five suspects who were smuggling drugs into the country.

They were found in possession of 60 kilograms of marijuana and hashish, with an estimated value of KD 750, 000 (around \$2.4 million). The General Department of Public Relations and Security Media at the Ministry in a press statement praised the security personnel for their vigilance. Security officials were able to dismantle a criminal network that specialized in smuggling drugs from a European country into the country through Kuwait International Airport.

Two of the suspects work in the General Department of Customs and exploited their position to facilitate the smuggling of narcotics. The banned substances were seized, and all the suspects were arrested and referred to prosecution for necessary legal measures. — KUNA

## Size of labor force increases by 3.6%

**KUWAIT:** The latest labor force statistics in Kuwait issued by the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) as of the end of Q1 2024, indicate that the size of labor force in Kuwait increased by 3.6 percent and reached 2.147 million employees excluding household workers (2.073 million workers as of the end of Q1 2023), if that increase is correct and true, that contradicts all the goals of the demographic adjustments.

Adding the household labor - family sector - which is about 789,000 workers, the total would be 2.936 million workers (2.853 million workers as of the end of Q1 2023). Household workers constitute nearly 26.9 percent of total labor force in Kuwait as of the end of Q1 2024 (27.3 percent of the total labor force as of the end of Q1 2023). The average monthly wage of Kuwaiti male workers in the public sector is KD 1,953 (KD 1,929 end of Q1 2023).

The Kuwaiti female wage average is KD 1,375 (KD 1,350 end of Q1 2023), a difference of 42.0 percent in favor of men's wages. The monthly salary average of non-Kuwaiti males in the public sector scored KD 805 (KD 787 end of Q1 2023). For non-Kuwaiti females, the average wage is KD 721 (KD 698 end of Q1 2023) with a 11.6 percent difference in favor of males. The gender gap is more equitable in the case of non-Kuwaitis.

The average monthly wage for Kuwaitis of both genders in the public sector is KD 1,607 (KD 1,583 end of Q1 2023). The same average for non-Kuwaitis is KD 762 (KD 742 end of Q1 2023), with a 110.8 percent difference in favor of Kuwaitis. The monthly average wage of Kuwaiti males in the private sector is KD 1,643 (KD 1,589 end of Q1 2023), less by 15.9 percent versus that of males in the public sector.

The average for Kuwaiti females in the private sector is KD 1,066 (KD 1,001 end of Q1 2023), that is -22.5 percent less than that of their female colleagues in the public sector. Undoubtedly, the government support leads to reduce the gap between Kuwaiti employees in the private and the public sector. The monthly average wage of non-Kuwaiti males in the private sector is KD 308 (KD 305 end of Q1 2023), this equals 38.2 percent of the average salaries of their non-Kuwaiti colleagues in the public sector.

The average monthly wage for non-Kuwaiti females in the private sector is KD 423 (KD 425 end of Q1 2023), which is higher than the average salary of non-Kuwaiti males in the private sector by 37.6 percent, but lower than the average rate of non-Kuwaiti females in the public sector by -41.3 percent. In case of the overall wage average in both the public and private sectors, the monthly average wage of Kuwaiti males is KD 1,892 (KD 1,862 end of Q1 2023) and KD 1,334 for Kuwaiti females (KD 1,304 end of Q1 2023), with a 41.8 percent difference in favor of males.

The monthly average wage for non-Kuwaiti males is KD 320 (KD 318 end of Q1 2023) and KD 479 for non-Kuwaiti females (KD 481 end of Q1 2023), a 49.7 percent difference in favor of females. The average monthly wage for male and female Kuwaitis in the two sectors is KD 1,568 (KD 1,538 end of Q1 2023) and KD 340 for non-Kuwaitis (KD 337 end of Q1 2023). Note that the figures above do not include household labor that would have a significant downward impact on the non-Kuwaiti wage rates if taken into consideration, nor do they include the governmental support allocations to Kuwaiti workers in the private sector.

The number of Kuwaiti employees in the government sector according to the CSB is 384,000 workers and rising by 2.9 percent (373,000 workers by end of Q1 2023), while the number of Kuwaiti employees in the private sector is 73,600 workers (71,700 workers by end of Q1 2023). The Kuwaiti workforce is distributed between 83.9 percent in the public sector and 16.1 percent in the private sector. About 48.7 percent of Kuwaitis working in the public sector are university graduates, 4.8 percent have postgraduate degrees, 13.3 percent have diplomas above high school but below university degrees, and 20.1 percent are holders of high school certificates or equivalent. This shows that about 86.9 percent of government employees are holders of high school certificates and above. That is because the main reason of salary increase is the level of the certificate held, without taking into account the need for it or the authenticity of said certificate. — Al-Shall Report



## KFF chief inspects Shaddadiya center for hazardous materials

**KUWAIT:** Acting Chief of Kuwait Fire Service Force (KFSF) Major General Khaled Fahad on Sunday visited the Shaddadiya Fire Station for hazardous materials and inspected the work of firefighters

and how to deal with hazardous materials in case of accidents. KFF said in a press statement that Major General Fahad conveyed the greetings of First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah to the center's staff.

Major General Fahad discussed issues related to the handling of chemical, biological, and radiological accidents and explosions, pointing out that the

center is fully equipped with equipment and devices for monitoring gases from a distance, inspection devices for unknown materials to determine the type of material, advanced mechanisms to stop leaks, and special mechanisms to deal with all accidents of hazardous materials. The KFF chief expressed his sincere thanks to those in charge of the center, including officers and non-commissioned officers, calling on them to exert more effort and to protect lives and properties. — KUNA



**Acting Chief of Kuwait Fire Force, Major General Khaled Fahd inspects the work of firefighters on hazardous materials. — KUNA photos**



## Direct Aid Society performs 400 eye surgeries in Taiz

ADEN: Kuwait's Direct Aid Society concluded on Sunday a free medical camp for eye surgeries in the city of Al-Mokha in Taiz Governorate, southwest of Yemen, as part of the "Kuwait by Your Side" campaign, which has been ongoing for the ninth year in a row. The regional director of the Direct Aid Society's office in Yemen, Ali Batit, told KUNA that the medics carried out 400 cataract surgeries and lens implants, examination of about 3,078 beneficiaries, laboratory and internal examinations and distributed 1,011 awareness brochures on eye diseases and prevention. He added that the camp also provided medicines to 1,200 beneficiaries and distributed free sunglasses to 1,210 beneficiaries.

### Surging malnutrition

Meanwhile, a United Nations task force on Sunday warned of soaring child malnutrition in Yemen's government-controlled areas, reporting "extremely critical" levels of malnutrition in parts of the country's south for the first time. "The number of children under the age of five suffering acute malnutrition, or wasting, rose by 34 per cent compared to the previous year ... affecting over 600,000 children, including 120,000 children who are severely malnourished," UNICEF said of the latest report by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) initiative, of which it is a part.

Yemen has been engulfed in a devastating conflict since 2014 between the internationally recognized government, supported by a Saudi-led military coalition, and the Iran-backed Houthi rebels. The turmoil has plunged the country, already the poorest in the Arabian Peninsula before the war, into one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. "The sharp rise is driven by the compounded effect of disease outbreaks (cholera and measles), high food insecurity, limited access to safe drinking water, and economic decline," the UN children's agency added.

The IPC data covers 117 government-controlled areas, all of which are expected to experience high levels of malnutrition between July and October. Some areas have been categorized as having "extremely critical" levels of acute malnutrition, the most severe rating with a prevalence above 30 percent, for the first time. "The report confirms an alarming trend," said UNICEF representative in Yemen, Peter Hawkins, as several international organizations have scaled back their operations in the country due to a lack of funding. — Agencies

### Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: The sun and its sunspots are pictured over Kuwait City on August 24, 2024. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# Violations in Gaza: The root cause of worsening crises in the region

## GCC chief urges international community to confront occupation

RIYADH: Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi stressed on Sunday that the occupation of Palestine and the ongoing violations in Gaza are the root causes of the worsening crises in the region. In his speech at the Alpbach Forum 2024, which is being held in the Austrian city of Alpbach from August 24 to 26, Al-Budaiwi called on the international community to take a serious stand to confront the occupation and hold it accountable for its ongoing violations and support the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital according to the 1967 borders.

He also renewed the GCC's call to hold an international conference in which all concerned parties will participate to discuss ways to end the occupation and establish an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. Al-Budaiwi also called for reforming and supporting the role of the United



GAZA: An elderly man holds a child by the hand as he walks past a building leveled by Zionist bombardment in the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza Strip on August 25, 2024. — AFP

Nations and its agencies in maintaining international peace and security and ensuring that they are not marginalized in an era that is witnessing unprecedented global instability, expressing the GCC's belief that collective support for the United Nations is necessary to overcome these difficult times and adhere to the principles of global governance.

The Secretary-General pointed to the new challenges facing regional and international security, indicating that the use of armed proxies by states, the increased risk of nuclear proliferation, and the development of artificial intelligence in information warfare are factors that exacerbate tensions. He stressed the importance of diplomatic solutions to prevent conflicts, reviewing the GCC vision for regional security adopted in 2023.

Al-Budaiwi explained that diplomacy and in-

ternational cooperation represent the main pillars of the strategy to maintain regional and international stability and ensure sustainable peace and security, noting that the GCC countries continue to support peaceful solutions to conflicts. He added that the recent Council's initiatives work to enhance the appropriate conditions for negotiations, affirm international law, and adhere to the principles of the United Nations Charter on sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Secretary-General stressed the GCC's continued provision of humanitarian assistance, recognizing the severe impact of these conflicts on food security and the well-being of civilians in affected areas and pointing to the Council's efforts in Yemen, Sudan, and other crisis areas, which confirm its commitment to alleviating human suffering. — KUNA

## Kuwait fifth aid-loaded plane departs to Sudan

KUWAIT: Kuwait's fifth plane carrying 30 tons of relief aid, donated by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), departed to Sudan on Sunday to help those affected by the war and floods. In a statement to KUNA, KRCS Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi said that Kuwait continues its humanitarian aid to help and stands by their brotherly Sudanese people by supporting them through these hard times.

The shipment consists of relief material and food supplies to reduce the suffering of those affected by the humanitarian situation Sudan is going through. Al-Hasawi reiterated that the association would spare no effort to provide any help to those in need. He also expressed his deep gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, and the Kuwaiti Air Force for their efforts in coordinating and following up on the delivery of relief aid to those in need. — KUNA



Kuwait's fifth plane carrying relief aid departs to Sudan. — KUNA



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**Mpox surge in Central Africa exposes the most vulnerable**

## Indian billionaire Adani's slum revamp struggles to secure land

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**NABATIEH:** A medic provides medical care to a man injured in a Zionist strike in the Wadi Al-Kafur area of the southern Lebanese Nabatieh district on August 17, 2024. — AFP photos



**BEIRUT:** A nurse checks on supplies at the Rafik Hariri Hospital in Beirut on August 22, 2024, as part of the Lebanese Health Ministry's emergency plan.

# Lebanon's hospitals brace for war

## Health ministry readies emergency plan as country grapples with crippling economic crisis

**BEIRUT:** In Lebanon's biggest public hospital, nurses are busy honing their life-saving skills as the specter of all-out war looms, 10 months into intensifying clashes between Hezbollah and the Zionist entity over the Gaza war. "We are in a state of readiness for war," nurse Basima Khashfi said as she gave emergency training to young nurses and other staff at the hospital in Beirut.

"We are currently training employees — not just nurses, but also administrative and security staff. With our current capabilities, we're almost prepared" in case of a wider war, she told AFP. Lebanon has been settling in motion public health emergency plans since hostilities began, relying mostly on donor funds after five years of grueling economic crisis.

The Zionist entity launched air strikes into Lebanon on Sunday, saying it had thwarted a large-scale Hezbollah attack, while the Lebanese group announced its own cross-border strikes to avenge the killing of a top commander, Fuad Shukur, in a Zionist strike last month. Fears have spiked since Shukur's killing that the cross-border violence could degenerate into all-out conflict between Hezbollah and the Zionist entity, who last fought a devastating war in

the summer of 2006. "We're training to handle mass casualty incidents and to prepare for disasters or war," said Lamis Dayekh, a 37-year-old nurse undergoing training. "If war breaks out, we'll give everything we have."

### 'Red zone'

The cross-border violence has killed nearly 600 people in Lebanon, mostly Hezbollah fighters but including at least 131 civilians, according to an AFP tally. On the Zionist side, including in the annexed Golan Heights, 23 soldiers and 26 civilians have been killed, army figures show. Annexation of the Golan heights is not recognized internationally, although the US Trump Administration did so unilaterally in March 2019. Since 1967, the United Nations has recognized the Golan Heights as Syrian territory under a Zionist military occupation.

In a building next to the hospital, where the emergency operations center is located, health ministry officials are busy typing away, making calls and monitoring news of the war in Gaza and south Lebanon on large television screens. "This is not our first war and we have been ready every time," said Wa-

hida Ghalayini, who heads the center, active since hostilities began in October.

She cited a massive 2020 Beirut port explosion, Hezbollah and the entity's 2006 conflict and Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war. The health ministry's plan includes a helpline for those already displaced by war, an assessment of hospital needs, disaster training for staff and a mental health module.

The emergency room coordinates with rescue teams and hospitals in Lebanon's south. The plan prioritizes hospitals based on their location. The "red zone", at high risk of Zionist strikes, comprises Hezbollah's strongholds in the country's south, east and Beirut's southern suburbs. But despite Lebanon's long history of civil unrest and disasters, the public health sector now faces an economic crisis that has drained state coffers, forcing it to rely on aid.

### 'Learn' from Gaza

"We need lots of medical supplies, fuel, oxygen ... the Lebanese state has a financial and economic problem," said Ghalayini. The state electricity provider barely produces power, so residents rely on expensive private generators and solar panels. Most

medical facilities depend on solar power during the day, she said, pointing to panels atop the adjacent hospital's roof and parking lot.

Lebanese Health Minister Firass Abiad said the country had enough drugs and medical supplies to last at least four months in case of a wider war. "Efforts to increase readiness follow the enemy entity's threat of expanding its aggression," Abiad said in a statement. Last month's strike that killed a top Hezbollah commander targeted a densely packed residential area, killing five civilians and wounding scores more. It tested the readiness of Beirut hospitals in the high-risk Hezbollah stronghold, Ghalayini told AFP. As the Zionist entity threatens full-scale war, Lebanon is also looking to health workers in Gaza for emergency planning strategies, she said.

"We are observing the Gaza emergency center ... to learn from them," she said, pointing at television footage of bloodied patients at a hospital in Gaza, where the death toll has sparked mounting concerns. For 25-year-old nurse Mohamed Hakla, the prospect of war is frightening but "our job is to help others. I will not deprive people of this (help) because of fear". — AFP



**BEIT JALA, Palestine:** Activists confront settlers in Al-Makhroun in the occupied West Bank near Beit Jala on August 22, 2024. — AFP



**A Zionist border policeman pushes an activist near Beit Jala.**

## Encampment keeps Beit Jala family strong in face of settler attacks

**BEIT JALA, Palestine:** Flanked by smart-phone-wielding peace activists, members of an evicted Palestinian family marched onto land seized by armed Zionist settlers, shouting "Out! Out!" as they livestreamed the confrontation on Instagram. After Zionist security forces turned them away, they retreated to their makeshift base: a fast-growing tent encampment for supporters of the family — the Kisiyas — that has spotlighted their plight amid widening settler attacks in the Zionist-occupied West Bank.

At least 640 Palestinians have been killed by Zionist troops and settlers since the onset of the Zionist Gaza war, according to an AFP tally based on Palestinian health ministry figures. At least 19 Zionists have also died by Palestinians during the same period, according to Zionist officials.

Yet weeks of demonstrations at the tent near the Kisiyas' home in Beit Jala, south of Jerusalem, have made their story stand out, attracting anti-settlement activists, lawmakers, rabbis and Palestinians from other communities facing similar incursions. The daily gatherings feature meals, prayer, singalongs and lessons on non-violent resistance, usually followed by a caravan to the site to demand that the settlers leave.

During one such encounter last Thursday, Kisiya family members grabbed whatever they could — mattresses, electrical cables, fruit from a pomegranate tree — while activists tried to tear down set-

ter-erected fences. On Friday, 70 Jews held Shabbat services at the encampment and spent the night there. It is the kind of show of solidarity that was once more common but has become vanishingly rare during the war, organizers said. "We will stay here until we get back our land," 30-year-old Alice Kisiya told AFP. The settlers "took advantage of the war. They thought it would end in silence, but it didn't."

### 'Example to show the world'

Some details of the Kisiyas' story have helped turn it into a rallying cry. They are one of the area's few Christian families, and the land's stepped agricultural terraces sit in one of its few accessible green spaces. Yet Knesset member Aida Touma-Suleiman told AFP that while the mobilization around their struggle might be unusual, the challenges the Kisiyas face are common. "I wish we can be able to stand near each family like this, but maybe this can be an example to show the world what is happening," she said.

Earlier this month, Zionist Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich announced the approval of a new settlement in the same area of the Kisiya encampment that the United Nations says would encroach on the UNESCO World Heritage site of Battir. The news drew international outcry, with Washington and the United Nations saying the settlement known as Nahal Heletz would jeopardize the viability of a Palestinian state.

All of the Zionist entity's settlements in the West Bank, occupied since 1967, are considered illegal under international law, regardless of whether they have Zionist planning permission. The Kisiyas have for years been threatened by settlement activity, and in 2019 the civil administration demolished the family's home and restaurant. The latest run-in occurred on July 31, when settlers from a nearby outpost ac-

companied by soldiers "raided the land, assaulting members of the Kisiya family and activists trying to force them to leave the area", according to anti-settlement group Peace Now.

### 'Is it dangerous?'

The Kisiyas joined with activists to form the encampment just over a week later, although it got off to a slow start. "I wish there was a camera when we first started. We were just sitting with chairs, had nothing in here. And we were discussing, like, 'What are we doing?'" said Palestinian activist Mai Shahin of Combatants for Peace. "The first week was really hard," she said, with people, initially hesitant to join the encampment, calling to ask her: "Is it dangerous?"

As it has grown in size, Palestinians from elsewhere have come to see the encampment as a safe space. "I have a lot of trauma from wearing my own keffiyeh and wearing my identity for everyone to see," said Amira Mohammed, 25, of Jerusalem. In the encampment "we were able to actually be ourselves, wear our keffiyehs, sing our songs in our language with our ... counterparts".

But some activists point out that despite the energy in the encampment, the current Zionist government appears set on expanding settlement activity. "No ... anti-Zionist decision will stop the development of settlements," Smotrich, who himself lives in a settlement, posted on X this month. "We will continue to fight against the dangerous project of creating a Palestinian state by creating facts on the ground." Activist Talya Hirsch said such statements leave her with "no hope for this land" and "no vision of a better future". "But I don't move from this place. I have no hope but I have a high sense of responsibility." — AFP

## After Zionists destroy university, Gaza student determined to study

**KHAN YUNIS:** Shahed Abu Omar, 20, was in her third year studying computer science at Gaza's Al Azhar University when it was reduced to rubble by the Zionist entity's military campaign in the Palestinian territory. She is now one of 90,000 university students left stranded in a war with no end in sight that has damaged or destroyed all 12 of the higher education institutions in the Gaza Strip, according to Palestinian official data.

However, Abu Omar is determined to keep studying, braving a perilous daily journey to reach a stable Internet connection that allows her to learn online. "We cannot go to our university or study away from it," she said, alluding to the difficulty of remote learning with such poor Internet connection.

Perched in the rubble of a destroyed house, Abu Omar studies from her mobile phone. Her mother, Hanin Sarour, said they had come to the area to reach an Internet connection. The connection, vital to downloading pre-recorded lectures and communicating with professors, was still weak, she said. "Every step is dangerous and difficult," Sarour added.

Most of Abu Omar's professors are in the Gaza Strip as well, she said, facing the same difficulties their students do. Abu Omar's final exams are in just two weeks. She fears she will only fall further behind. "I am sure we will lose more than the year that we've lost already," she said.

She dreams of returning to university, sitting in a classroom, and meeting with professors and friends. The war, now in its 11th month, has also interrupted education for Gaza's estimated 625,000 school-aged children, leaving them unable to attend classes.

The uncertainty for Abu Omar and students across the small coastal enclave is likely to persist. Even after the war ends, students do not know when universities will reopen, she said. Despite all the difficulties, Abu Omar will continue to study in the hopes of not losing a whole year. "We are trying to achieve something," she said. — Reuters



**GAZA:** A young Palestinian pulls a wheel cart past the heavily damaged building of Al-Azhar University in this file photo. — AFP



## International

## 36 dead in 2 Pakistan bus crashes

## Accidents follow a bus crash which killed 28 Pakistanis in Iran last week

**RAWALPINDI, Pakistan:** At least 36 people were killed in two separate bus accidents in Pakistan on Sunday, including 12 pilgrims who had been trying to reach Iran, rescue and police officials said. All 24 people on board a bus were killed when it plunged into a ravine near the town of Azad Pattan on the border between Punjab province and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. "I have lost three members of my family," Tara Zafar, who travelled to the hospital after hearing about the accident, told AFP. Her father, sister and one-year-old nephew were among the dead. "I hoped that at least one of them had survived. It's doomsday for my family."

Umar Farooq, a senior government official from Sudhanoti district, where the bus started its journey, told AFP at the crash site "24 were travelling in the bus and all 24 have died". Around 20 villagers helped to retrieve bodies before officials arrived. "We carried the bodies out of the ravine wrapped in shawls and scarves," Manazir Hussain, a 44 year old retired army soldier told AFP.

In a separate incident, 12 men died when their bus crashed into a ravine on the Makran Coastal Highway in Balochistan, after being prevented from crossing into Iran. An army crane helped to remove

the bus from the ravine and no further bodies or wounded people were found. "This is a particularly treacherous tract of road, with many twists and turns. The driver was speeding and the bus fell into a deep ravine," police official Aslam Bangulzai, who was at the scene, told AFP.

The accident occurred in a mountainous area, around 100 kilometers (62 miles) from the nearest town of Uthal and 500 kilometers from the Iran border town of Pishin. "The bus was carrying pilgrims on its way to Arbaeen (pilgrimage) but was turned back at the Iran border because their documents had some problems," said Hamood Ur Rehman, a senior government official in the nearby district of Gwadar.

Road accidents with high fatalities are common in Pakistan, where safety measures are lax, driver training is poor and transport infrastructure often decrepit. On Saturday, the bodies of 28 pilgrims who died in a bus crash in Iran were returned to Pakistan. The bus was carrying 51 Pakistani pilgrims who were passing through Iran to attend the Arbaeen commemoration in Iraq, one of the biggest events of the Shiite calendar, when it overturned and caught fire in front of a checkpoint in Yazd province on Tuesday night, Iranian state TV reported. — AFP



**KAHUTA, Pakistan:** Rescue personnel inspect the site of a bus accident that killed 23 people after it plunged into a ravine at Soon village near Kahuta, Punjab province on August 25, 2024. — AFP

## Indian billionaire Adani's slum revamp struggles to secure land

**MUMBAI:** A joint-venture led by billionaire Gautam Adani is struggling to secure land to rehabilitate poor residents of one of Asia's largest slums in Mumbai, a government official said, posing a fresh challenge for the ambitious reconstruction plan. The Dharavi slum, about three-quarters of the size of New York's Central Park, featured in Danny Boyle's Oscar-winning 2008 movie "Slumdog Millionaire". Its open sewers and shared toilets, close to Mumbai's international airport, stand in contrast to India's development boom.

After winning the \$619 million bid last year, Adani Group plans to convert the 240 hectare (594 acre) slum into a modern city hub, but it has already faced protests from opposition political parties who say it received undue favors from the state government in awarding the contract. The group has denied the allegations.

Now there is a new challenge. Only those who lived in Dharavi before the year 2000 will get free homes in the redevelopment and a lot of the land needed to rehabilitate people — at least 580 acres for now — will be to provide housing to the roughly 700,000 people considered ineligible.

To build homes for those ineligible people, the Adani

joint venture applied to various local and federal agencies for more land, but has yet to secure any, SVR Srinivas, head of the Dharavi Redevelopment Authority, said. That's because such government agencies have their own plans for land they own and are not willing to part with it, he added. "In Mumbai, getting land is the toughest of things. Physically not a single inch of land has come to us," said Srinivas.

Asked if he was worried that land acquisition delays will affect the project timeline, he said: "Yes, without land, the project cannot take place, so that is a very critical factor for doing the project on time."

The Adani Group, which holds a majority stake in the joint venture with the Dharavi Redevelopment Authority, did not respond to an email seeking comments. The project, which aims to rehouse a million people, is a critical and high-profile project for Adani, who last year faced allegations of business mismanagement and stock manipulation in a scathing report by short-seller Hindenburg Research which he denied.

The project started in March with a survey to determine eligibility and its backers are aiming to complete construction in seven years. Mumbai is one of India's most expensive real estate markets where real estate prices are sky-high and land is scarce. Adani's group has acknowledged that rebuilding Dharavi presented "colossal" challenges - though he has said he hoped the area in future would produce "millionaires without the slumdog prefix". — Reuters



**MUMBAI:** A general view of the Dharavi slums with high rise buildings seen in the background in Mumbai in this file photo. — AFP

## Reuters journalist missing in Russian strike on Ukraine hotel

**KRAMATORSK, Ukraine:** A member of the Reuters news agency was missing and two others were wounded in a strike on a hotel in the east Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk, the agency said Sunday, with Russian attacks killing 15 civilians across the country in the last 24 hours. In another deadly day in the two-and-a-half year war, six civilians were also killed in Ukrainian strikes on Russian border regions, Russian officials said.

The attacks came as Kyiv mounts an incursion into Russia's Kursk region, which has rattled Moscow but not slowed its advance in eastern Ukraine. Ukrainian officials said attacks on Saturday said Sunday killed 15 civilians in the war-battered Donetsk, northeastern Sumy and the southern Kherson regions.

In the east Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk, a

search and rescue operation was underway after a strike late on Saturday on the Hotel Sapphire, where Reuters said six of its crew covering the war were staying. Kramatorsk — the last major city under Ukrainian control in the Donetsk region — is often used as a base for aid workers and foreign journalists. "One of our colleagues is unaccounted for, while another two have been taken to hospital for treatment," Reuters said, adding that it was "urgently seeking more information".

The agency said "three other colleagues have been accounted for" and said it was "working with the authorities in Kramatorsk, and supporting our colleagues and their families." The head of the Donetsk region, Vadym Filashkin, said earlier two journalists were wounded while one was missing, saying the strike happened "in the middle of the night." He said a rescue operation was ongoing and "the rubble was being cleared".

## "Scary to go to bed"

Ukrainian prosecutors said the hotel was hit by a Russian Iskander missile at 10.35 pm on Saturday,

with the strike also damaging the building next door. AFP saw authorities giving out plywood to locals for them to board their windows. Kramatorsk lies around 20 kilometers (13 miles) from the frontline, with fears over the city rising as Russian forces continue their push into eastern Ukraine.

Many local residents were going to bed at the time of the strike. "I was watching a film on my phone and then... there was such a noise and the glass started smashing," 66-year-old Natalia told AFP, crying. She said she had already been evacuated once after a similar experience but came back, and now will "think about" leaving again. "It's scary to go to bed," she said, her voice breaking. Another resident, 84-year-old Vasily who lives close to the hotel, was fixing plywood onto his window frames after the glass smashed during the strike. "We worry all the time ... and now our turn has come," he said, adding: "It's about how lucky you get."

## 15 dead across Ukraine

Officials said Russian strikes that hit outside the city of Kherson killed three people and wounded

six, including a one-year-old boy who was left with shrapnel injuries. Russian attacks on frontline towns in the Donetsk region killed eight people in the last 24 hours, Donetsk leader Filashkin said.

Officials said large-scale attacks on the Sumy region - from where Kyiv had launched its surprise incursion on August 6 - also killed four people on Saturday. Ukrainian police said Russia had shelled some 50 settlements in the Sumy region. Kyiv said Russia also attacked the Kharkiv region at night, wounding eight people in the city of Kharkiv.

In Russia, officials said attacks on the Belgorod border region killed six civilians. Belgorod governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said five people were killed in a strike on the village of Rakitnoye, in an attack that also wounded a dozen people. He said 13 others were wounded, with six in a "serious condition", including a 16-year-old in intensive care. Gladkov later said a man was killed by a Ukrainian drone attack in the village of Solovyevka further south. Ukraine has pushed into parts of the Kursk region after an incursion that has seen more than 130,000 people displaced. — AFP

## Zionists, Hezb exchange major...

## Continued from Page 1

headquarters of the country's Mossad spy agency. Hamas said Hezbollah's Sunday attack was "strong", hailing it as "a slap in the face" for the Zionist entity.

Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his cabinet the strikes were "not the final word" in the campaign against Hezbollah. A soldier in the Zionist navy was killed in combat and two more wounded, the military said, with an official telling AFP their boat may have been hit by one of their own side's air-defense interceptors.

The office of the United Nations special coordinator for Lebanon, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, and the UNIFIL peacekeeping force urged "all to cease fire and refrain from further escalatory action". Hezbollah has traded near-daily cross-border fire with Zionist forces throughout the Gaza war, in a campaign Hezbollah says is in support of Palestinian ally Hamas.

But fears of a wider regional conflagration soared after attacks in late July blamed on the Zionist entity killed Iran-aligned militant leaders, including a top Hezbollah commander, Fuad Shukur, prompting vows of revenge. Hezbollah said its militants launched "a large number of drones" and "more than 320" Katyusha rockets targeting "enemy positions" across the border.

The Lebanese movement said its attack was an "initial response" to Shukur's killing, adding that it had "ended with total success". An AFP photographer in Acre, 20 km from the border, reported damage to three homes from a Hezbollah rocket that struck a roof, with shrapnel smashing windows and destroying a bed. "There were explosions in the area of Haifa," said Abigail Levy, a resident of the city south of Acre. "I was stopped and was told not to go to the beach."

AFP TV footage from early Sunday showed dozens of interceptor rockets being launched into dense clouds above the Upper Galilee in the Zionist entity's north, while an AFP photographer saw a Hezbollah drone exploding into a huge fireball as it was inter-

cepted by the Zionist air force.

Hezbollah announced two of its fighters had been killed, while its ally the Amal movement also reported the death of a member. Military spokesman, Nadav Shoshani, said Hezbollah's strikes were "part of a larger attack that was planned and we were able to thwart a big part of it this morning". Zionist authorities declared a 48-hour state of emergency but later relaxed most of the restrictions. There was some disruption to flights in the Zionist entity and Lebanon.

Yemen's Houthi rebels, among Iran-backed groups that have been drawn into the Gaza war's periphery, hailed the Hezbollah attack and declared that their own response for a Zionist strike on a Yemeni port last month was "definitely coming". The fighting between Zionist forces and Hezbollah has killed hundreds, mostly in Lebanon, and displaced tens of thousands of residents on both sides of the border.

Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati told an emergency cabinet meeting he was in contact with "Lebanon's friends to stop the escalation". At US President Joe Biden's direction, "senior US officials have been communicating continuously with their (Zionist) counterparts," US National Security Council spokesman Sean Savett said in a statement. The United States is the Zionist entity's top military supplier.

Shukur's death last month and an attack hours later that killed Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran ratcheted up concerns that the Gaza war could spiral into a broader conflict. Western and Arab diplomats have sought to head off a broader response to the killings, stressing the urgency of reaching a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release deal.

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, whose officials have been mediating Gaza truce talks for months, with the US and Qatar, "warned of the dangers of a new front opening in Lebanon" and called for progress in the talks to enable a "path to calm and stability in the region" his office said. An official from Netanyahu's office said a decision would be made later about whether Zionist spy chiefs would attend planned talks in Cairo on Sunday.

Hamas has said a delegation would go to Cairo but only to meet Egyptian officials, rather than participate in the discussions. — Agencies

## Telegram founder Durov arrested...

## Continued from Page 1

One of the two French police sources said that ahead of the jet's arrival police had spotted he was on the passenger list and moved to arrest him because he was the subject of an arrest warrant in France.

Durov, who has dual French and United Arab Emirates citizenship, was arrested as part of a preliminary police investigation into allegedly allowing a wide range of crimes due to a lack of moderators on Telegram and a lack of cooperation with police, a third French police source said. A cybersecurity gendarmerie unit and France's national anti-fraud police unit are leading the investigation, that source said, adding that the investigative judge was specialized in organized crime.

Telegram and senior Telegram managers did not respond to repeated requests for comment. The French Interior Ministry, police and Paris prosecu-

tor's office had no comment. Durov faces possible indictment on Sunday, according to French media. Russian lawmaker Maria Butina, who spent 15 months in US prison for acting as an unregistered Russian agent, said Durov "is a political prisoner - a victim of a witch-hunt by the West". Durov's arrest led news bulletins in Russia.

Telegram, based in Dubai, was founded by Durov, who left Russia in 2014 after he refused to comply with demands to shut down opposition communities on his VK social media platform, which he has sold. The encrypted application, with close to one billion users, is particularly influential in Russia, Ukraine and the republics of the former Soviet Union. It is ranked as one of the major social media platforms after Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok and WeChat.

Durov, who is estimated by Forbes to have a fortune of \$15.5 billion, said in April some governments had sought to pressure him but the app should remain a "neutral platform" and not a "player in geopolitics". Durov came up with the idea of an encrypted messaging app as a way to communicate while he faced pressure in Russia. — Agencies

## Can Harris win back Michigan's...

## Continued from Page 1

At the forefront of concerns are the Zionist entity's 10 months of military operations in Gaza, which have devastated the Palestinian enclave. Michigan, home to the "big three" automakers — Ford, General Motors and Chrysler — has long been an essential stop for White House aspirants. Economic downturns in the 1970s led many to leave the so-called "Rust Belt" state, just as unrest in the Middle East brought new waves of Lebanese, Iraqi, Yemeni and Palestinian immigrants.

"We're a global city, where nearly 55 percent of our residents are of Arab background," said Dearborn Mayor Abdullah Hammoud in a recent interview. "For many of us, when you talk about what's happening in

Gaza, these are our family and our friends." Famous as the birthplace of Henry Ford, Dearborn appears at first glance just like any small US city, with its wide thoroughfares and strip malls.

But it is also home to the Islamic Center of America — the largest mosque in the country — and countless Middle Eastern supermarkets, eateries and coffee shops. When Sibani first started his newspaper in the mid-1980s, he remembers the then-mayor campaigned on a platform to address the "Arab problem". But as the community's numbers grew, and the children of blue-collar factory workers took up positions as lawyers, doctors and businesspeople, so too did their political influence.

Historically socially conservative, Arab and Muslim Americans heavily favored George W Bush in the 2000 election. Years of the US "War on Terror" — which saw wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan and Muslim American communities put under stricter law enforcement scrutiny — swung them firmly to the Democratic camp. — AFP



## International

# SpaceX comes to Boeing's rescue

## Astronauts on flawed Boeing mission to spend 8 months, instead of 8 days in space

HOUSTON: Two US astronauts who arrived at the International Space Station aboard Boeing's Starliner will have to stay six more months and return home with rival SpaceX, NASA said Saturday, in a fresh public relations blow to the crisis-hit aviation giant. The return of Barry "Butch" Wilmore and Sunita "Sun" Williams had already been delayed for weeks by thruster malfunctions of the Boeing spacecraft, and NASA administrator Bill Nelson announced they will return to Earth in February, while Starliner will return uncrewed. "Space flight is risky even at its safest and even at its most routine," Nelson told reporters. "A test flight, by nature, is neither safe, nor routine."

He said the decision to keep the astronauts on the ISS and return the Starliner uncrewed "is the result of our commitment to safety," adding, "Our core value is safety." The new approach will allow the space agency and Boeing to continue gathering data on Starliner during its homeward flight in early September "while also not accepting more risk than necessary for its crew," NASA said in a statement. SpaceX echoed that phrase in a post by its president, Gwynne Shotwell, on social media platform X.

The development creates yet another headache for Boeing, as the two astronauts will have to spend a total of eight months in orbit, not eight days as originally planned. Officials have said the astronauts on the ISS have plenty of supplies and are trained for extended stays. But Nelson said NASA had not lost confidence in Boeing and plans to continue working with it so the space agency will have two vehicles capable of ferrying astronauts to and from the ISS. He said he was "100 percent sure Boeing will launch Starliner again with a crew on board."

## China says it rescued Filipino personnel after clash in disputed sea

BEIJING: China's coast guard said it rescued Filipino "personnel" who fell overboard Sunday after a Philippine vessel collided with one of its ships near a disputed shoal in the South China Sea. The Philippines slammed China's claims as "completely unfounded".

The two nations have had repeated confrontations in the waters in recent months, and on Saturday Manila accused China of recently twice firing flares at one of its patrol aircraft. China has continued to press its claims to almost the entire sea and has ignored an international tribunal ruling that its assertions have no legal basis.

Beijing accused the Philippine vessel of "deliberately" colliding with a Chinese Coast Guard ship. It said the collision took place near the disputed Sabina Shoal, 140 kilometers (86 miles) west of the Philippine island of Palawan and about 1,200 kilometers from Hainan island, the closest Chinese landmass.

China Coast Guard spokesman Gan Yu said the collision occurred when a Philippine vessel refused to comply with "control measures" after attempting to deliver supplies to another vessel "illegally stationed" near Xianbin Reef in the Nansha Islands — using the Chinese names for the Sabina Shoal and the Spratly Islands also claimed by Manila. "China warns the Philippines to immediately cease its infringing actions, otherwise the Philippines will bear all consequences resulting from this situation," Gan said.

## French police arrest synagogue arson suspect

LA GRANDE-MOTTE: French police have arrested a man suspected of trying to set a synagogue ablaze in the southern French city of la Grande-Motte on Saturday, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said. About 200 police officers had been hunting for the suspect, Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said earlier, adding that

## Mpox surge in Central Africa exposes the most vulnerable

KANYARUTSHINYA CAMP, Democratic Republic of Congo: Justine Munguiko could not recall the name of the disease she had been warned about. She knew only that her baby Fidele had painful sores similar to those suffered by other children at the displacement camp near the eastern Congolese city of Goma. Democratic Republic of Congo is the epicenter of an mpox outbreak that the World Health Organization declared to be a global public health emergency. Communities like Munguiko's are among the most exposed and in need of support.

She and other mothers at the camp decided to treat their children in a traditional way for dealing with fevers and rashes: washing them in boiled salty water and rubbing their skin with the soft leaves of the Kitamatama plant. "This disease of skin lesions, comes from I don't know where ... We've been told it comes after eating bushmeat, but neither I nor my child have eaten bushmeat," the 24-year-old said, after trying to soothe her crying baby, who still had crusty sores on his wrists and feet.

As the international community struggles to source enough vaccines, Munguiko's experience highlights the amount of work needed to ensure the most vulnerable have the knowledge and resources to protect themselves from the viral infection that is usually mild, but can kill. Communicating with people about what they should do is critical, said Ebere Okereke, associate fellow at Chatham House's Global Health Program. "We need to get the right information out to the people who are immediately at risk," she told Reuters.

There have been around 27,000 cases and more

**Return on hold**  
After years of delays, Starliner finally lifted off on June 5 carrying the two veteran astronauts to the ISS. But a day later, as Starliner was approaching the space station, "NASA and Boeing identified helium leaks and experienced issues with the spacecraft reaction control thrusters," the space agency said.

Amid intense efforts to diagnose the problem and fashion a possible fix, NASA had to put the astronauts' return on indefinite hold. The big concern was that Starliner might not have the propulsive power to wrest itself out of orbit and begin the descent toward Earth.

NASA officials met with Nelson before their announcement Saturday, finally agreeing on the highly unusual option of bringing the astronauts back from the flying laboratory not on their own craft, but aboard a previously scheduled SpaceX vehicle in February. "It was just too much risk with the crew," said senior NASA official Steve Stich. Norm Knight, another agency official, added that the astronauts "support the agency's decision fully."

Under the new plan, the SpaceX Crew-9 mission will take off in late September — after the Starliner has headed earthward, freeing a docking port on the ISS — but it will carry only two passengers instead of the originally planned four. NASA and SpaceX are working to reconfigure seats on the Crew-9 Dragon, "and adjusting the manifest to carry additional cargo, personal effects, and Dragon-specific spacesuits for Wilmore and Williams," the space agency said. The SpaceX vehicle in February will bring back its own crew members plus their two stranded colleagues.

### Boeing vs SpaceX

The approach represents a further blow to the already tarnished image of US giant Boeing, whose



IN SPACE: NASA's Boeing Crew Flight Test astronauts (from top) Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams are seen in this undated handout photo by NASA. — AFP

airplane arm has been beset in recent years with concerns about safety and quality control. Ten years ago, following the retirement of the Space Shuttle, NASA ordered new vessels from both Boeing and SpaceX that could ferry astronauts to and from the ISS.

With two such vehicles available, NASA rea-

soned, there would always be a backup available. But Elon Musk's SpaceX beat Boeing to the punch and has been the lone vehicle used to taxi astronauts for the past four years. This year's crewed Starliner flight, which followed years of delays during the craft's development, was meant to be a last test of the vehicle before it enters regular operations. — AFP



AT SEA: A Chinese coast Guard ship (right) is seen in a collision with the Philippine Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources vessel in disputed waters of the South China Sea in this screen grab from a handout video by the Philippine Coast Guard. — AFP

The Philippines said that its ships encountered "aggressive and dangerous maneuvers" from the Chinese side when they were on a humanitarian mission to resupply Filipino fishermen with diesel, food and medical items. The Chinese vessels "made close perilous maneuvers that resulted in ramming, blasted horns, and deployed water cannons", leading to an early termination of the resupply operation after their ship experienced engine failure, a statement from Manila's Nation-

al Task Force on the West Philippine Sea said.

"These unprofessional, aggressive, and illegal actions posed serious risks to the safety of the Filipino crew and the fishermen they were meant to serve," the statement said, adding that no one was harmed. Footage released by the Philippine Coast Guard showed a Chinese ship approaching and ramming the left side of its vessel. Another clip showed a Chinese vessel travelling parallel to the Philippine ship, just meters away. — AFP

the attacker had set fire to several entry doors to the synagogue and several cars nearby.

BFM TV said the suspect was a 33-year-old Algerian. Local police declined to give details. The anti-terrorism prosecutor's office, which was put in charge of the investigation, said early on Sunday that a suspect had been arrested in Nîmes on Saturday evening. "Before the police could intervene, (the suspect) opened fire on the (police), which returned fire. The man was wounded in the face," the office said in a statement, adding that two other people were taken into custody.

A policeman was slightly injured when a gas bottle exploded as police secured the site of the attack

than 1,100 deaths, mainly among children, in Congo since the current outbreak began in January 2023. The virus has also spread to nearby countries. Around 750,000 people are living in camps after fleeing conflict, including seven-year-old Sagesse Hakizimana and his mother Elisabeth Furaha. He is one of more than 100 children to have been infected by mpox in one area near the city of Goma, in north Kivu, according to doctors.

"Imagine fleeing a war and then losing your child to this illness," said Furaha, 30, rubbing ointment on her son's rash and adding that his symptoms were easing. He was being treated last week in a repurposed Ebola treatment center. "We need a vaccine for this disease. It's a bad disease that weakens our children."

At Kanyarutshinya camp, residents gathered in an open area between the rows of tents to hear a health worker from aid organization Medair explain how to avoid infection. They received a colorful leaflet with pictures showing the risk of close contact with infected animals or people.

The challenge in Congo and other African countries is compounded by a lack of funding for research, said Helen Rees, co-chair of South Africa's mpox incident management team. "We still globally do not have a good understanding of mpox ... outbreaks, how it spreads, how many asymptomatic cases we have for every case that we find with symptoms," she told Reuters.

The country's administration is another part of the problem. Grappling with conflict and multiple competing disease outbreaks, its government has yet to ask officially for vaccine supplies and took months to talk to donor governments. Its medicines regulator only approved the two main vaccines in June.

Denmark's Bavarian Nordic, one of two key companies making mpox shots, and Congo are still discussing pre-shipment requirements necessary to ensure

proper storage and handling, said a spokesperson for USAID. The vaccines have to be kept at -20C, for example, Bavarian Nordic said this week it needs orders now to produce vaccines in volume this year.

Even when shots arrive, questions remain about how to use them: Bavarian Nordic's vaccine — the most widely used worldwide — is only available for adults. The other vaccine, made by Japan's KM Biologics, can be given to children but is more complex to administer.

Adding to those questions, scientists have not yet agreed what groups should be vaccinated first, although a likely strategy is ring vaccination, where contacts of known cases are prioritized. "We saw with COVID-19 that the vaccine was available but the population didn't want it," says Jean Jacques Muyembe, co-discoverer of the Ebola virus and director of the Institut National de Recherche Biomédicale (INRB) in Kinshasa. — Reuters

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KAVUMU: A woman dries her baby suffering from a severe form of mpox at the Kavumu hospital, 30 km north of Bukavu in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, August 24, 2024. — AFP

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## Suspect in German stabbing believed to have Islamic State ties

FRANKFURT: A suspect in German police custody following a stabbing rampage in the city of Solingen that killed three people and injured eight is a 26-year-old Syrian man, authorities said on Sunday as they looked into his possible links with Islamic State. The incident, along with the militant group's claim of responsibility, sparked concern among some politicians who urged enhanced security, tighter curbs on weapons, stiffer punishment for violent crimes, and limits to immigration.

The attack occurred during a festival on Friday evening in the Fronhof, a market square, where live bands were playing to celebrate Solingen's 650-year history. Mourners have made a makeshift memorial near the scene. The suspect turned himself in late on Saturday and admitted to the crime, Duesseldorf police and prosecutors said in a joint statement early on Sunday. "The involvement of this person is currently under intensive investigation," they said.

Friedrich Merz, a prominent politician who leads the opposition, center-right CDU party, urged that the country stops admitting further refugees from Syria and Afghanistan. "It's enough!" he said in a letter on his website. The suspect came from a home for refugees in Solingen that was searched on Saturday, North Rhine-Westphalia's interior minister, Herbert Reul, said.

Der Spiegel magazine, citing unidentified security sources, said the suspected had moved to Germany late in 2022 and sought asylum. German federal prosecutors have taken over the case and are investigating whether the suspect was a member of Islamic State, a spokesperson for the prosecutors said.

The group described the man who carried out the attack as a "soldier of the Islamic State" in a statement on its Telegram account on Saturday. It did not provide evidence for this assertion and details of the suspect's possible membership of the group were not immediately known. — Reuters



# NIC launches its first sustainability report

## The report aligns with the company's strategy and follows international standards

**KUWAIT:** The National Investments Company (NIC) has launched its first sustainability report, which particulars the company's performance across its various activities for 2023 as part of its commitment to sustainability as a critical pillar for building its corporate strategy. The report focuses on different economic, social, and environmental axes. It highlights the company's success in achieving its goals in sustainable development by launching many qualitative and selected initiatives to be a first step towards changing the approach and culture, as well as keeping pace with the company's environmental strategy.

Fahad Al-Mukhaizim, Board Member and Chief Executive Officer of NIC, said: "The first sustainability report reflects our determination to achieve sustainable and responsible progress towards insti-



**Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Mukhaizim:**

- Our commitment to sustainability forms a cornerstone of our long-term corporate strategy.
- Driving sustainable and responsible innovation to enhance social awareness and foster positive change in society and the national economy forms a key objective.
- NIC is guided by a policy that protects and respects shareholders' rights, upholding the principles of transparency and equality

reducing conflicts of interest by adhering to the application of all standards, and enhancing the role of shareholders in participating in key decision-making processes related to everything related to their investments. This has contributed to achieving our corporate goals, meeting the needs of our customers, developing their assets in the long term, and following our strategy and clear vision with the best standards and business practices.

### Explicit strategy

"Referring to the strategic context of ESG, our report includes a comprehensive overview of NIC performance supported by documented data that is compliant with the international standards of the 'New Kuwait' Vision, the Boursa Kuwait Sustainability Index, CMA decisions - and international ESG standards, including the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) 2021 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)", said Al-Mukhaizim.

### Transparency and governance

Al-Mukhaizim reviewed the sustainability re-

port, emphasizing NIC's commitment to robust governance driven by the strong performance of its board members. This performance is anchored in accountability, data management, information security, transparent disclosures, risk control, and a dedicated approach to ESG, alongside ethical practices in the company's investment operations. He also highlighted that NIC adheres to a policy that protects shareholders' rights, upholding the principles of transparency, equality, and strict compliance with all relevant laws, regulations, and guidelines to safeguard the rights of all stakeholders.

### Leadership in human resources

Al-Mukhaizim also said that the report provides an overview of the company's efforts to create an interactive work environment for its employees, which is the fundamental pillar behind its success. It showcases its enthusiasm for providing all national cadres with equal job tasks. "NIC has reached a 55.10 percent Kuwaitization percentage at all levels."

In addition, NIC has adopted a variety of community-focused initiatives to encourage working

within the investment sector while providing training programs in cooperation with the right expertise to enhance and develop career paths. The aim is to train 100 percent of the employees with specialized training programs.

Concerning women's empowerment, NIC has collaborated with a specialized organization to design a unique training program (Shift) aimed at developing women's practical skills and supporting their career path. This has brought the percentage of female cadres working at the National Investments Company to 24.48 percent.

### Corporate social responsibility

The National Investments Company has supported various events and activities effectively through contributions to voluntary and charitable work, such as providing aid to needy families during the month of Ramadan, sponsoring university student clubs, and supporting field training for nine students during different periods in addition to promoting sports events that aim to create a positive impact on the society, last but not least, the company has encouraged volunteering initiatives and halted developing its employees' skills and hobbies through various activities.

### Environmental sustainability

Highlighting environmental governance, Al-Mukhaizim said that the company had made great strides in reducing its carbon effect through specific initiatives, energy efficiency improvements, and the adoption of renewable energy, with measurable reductions in particular metrics and line with the regulations and requirements of the Ministry of Electricity and Water. The company is committed to reducing water usage, waste management, and recycling solutions systematically, efficiently, and in line with sustainability practices and regulations.



شركة الإستثمارات الوطنية  
NATIONAL INVESTMENTS COMPANY

tutional innovation and raising social awareness. It also clarifies our investment goals and social responsibilities in full transparency to all relevant parties. The National Investments Company has been keen to invest in social and economic initiatives within the reporting period, such as good governance, developing human energies and skills, creating new job opportunities, and enhancing the work environment.

This reflects the company's endeavor to positively and constructively change society and the national economy. The report includes our efforts in the field of sustainability throughout 2023 while protecting shareholders' rights, preserving investment value,

## India OKs assured pension scheme for state employees

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian government approved on Saturday a pension scheme which will guarantee federal government employees 50 percent of their base salary as a pension, moving away from a current scheme where the payout is linked to market returns. The Modi government has been forced to reassess the current pension system, adopted after a significant fiscal reform in 2004, as some states switched back to the older, fiscally straining system of fully funding a guaranteed pension.

The Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for India's over two million federal government employees is set to be implemented from April 1, 2025, said Ashwini Vaishnaw, a cabinet minister. He said it will ensure 50 percent of the base salary drawn during the last 12 months before retirement as a pension for government employees who complete a minimum of 25 years of service. The current National Pension Scheme requires employees to contribute 10 percent of their base salary and the government 14 percent. The eventual payout depends on the market returns on that corpus, which is mostly invested in federal debt. Trade unions and opposition parties have been advocating for a guaranteed minimum pension for government employees, and it was a major political issue in the recent general elections.

The financial implication of the UPS on the government exchequer is expected to be about 62.5 billion rupees (\$745 million) in the fiscal year 2024-25, with the annual cost varying each year depending on the number of retiring employees, the minister said. — Reuters

## Canada labor board orders end to work stoppages at railways

**MONTREAL:** The Canada Industrial Relations Board ordered on Saturday a halt to work stoppages at the country's largest railways, signaling an end to an unprecedented service disruption at both main freight rail carriers that threatened to hammer Canada's export-driven economy. The independent labor tribunal made the decision after Canada asked it on Thursday to end an impasse in separate talks between more than 9,000 Teamsters members, and Canadian National Railway and Canadian Pacific Kansas City.

The Teamsters said in a statement that workers' rights were "significantly diminished" with the ruling and that it would appeal in federal court. The board's decisions are the latest twist in the labor disputes at CN and CPKC, which locked out Teamsters members on Thursday, triggering a simultaneous rail stoppage that business groups said could inflict hundreds of millions of dollars in economic damage.

Canada, the world's second-largest country by area, relies heavily on trains to transport a wide range of commodities and goods. Canadian Labour Minister Steven MacKinnon said on social media site X that he expects "railway companies and employees will resume operations at the earliest opportunity." The decision will restart railway operations at CPKC where workers had been both locked out and on strike, by 00:01

ET (0401 GMT) on Monday, the railway said in a statement.

A Teamsters spokesperson said workers would not come back earlier, despite CPKC's request for employees to return on Sunday. "We anticipate it will take several weeks for the railway network to fully recover from this work stoppage and a period of time beyond that for supply chains to stabilize," CPKC said. The labor board's decision averted a planned strike on Monday by locomotive engineers, conductors and other workers at Montreal-based CN just days after Canada's largest railway ended a lockout and began restoring service. The Teamsters confirmed its CN workers would not strike on Monday after the CIRB decision.

Along with ordering an end to the stoppage, the board implemented government requests to impose binding arbitration on the parties to reach new deals and to impose a continuation of the existing contracts until new agreements are reached. "This decision by the CIRB sets a dangerous precedent," said Paul Boucher, president of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference. "It signals to corporate Canada that large companies need only stop their operations for a few hours, inflict short-term economic pain, and the federal government will step in to break a union."

A CN spokesperson said the com-



**DELTA, Canada:** A Canadian National Railway (CN) engine and railcars with containers sit idle near the Roberts bank Super Port after a strike by railway workers on August 23, 2024, in Delta, British Columbia, Canada. — AFP

pany would have preferred a negotiated agreement, but "we are satisfied that this puts an end to the labor stoppage." The disruption could have drastically affected farmers and agriculture companies in both Canada and the United States.

Wade Sobkovich, executive director of the Western Grain Elevator Association, which represents grain companies, said they had urged the government for weeks to refer the matter to the CIRB.

"It means that the government has really listened to what Canadians were telling them," he said. "We can't take a self-inflicted wound on the economy." Mike Steenhoek, executive director of the US Soy Transportation Coalition said the Canadian government had to inter-

vene to help farmers who rely on seamless cross-border trade.

"We have not taken a side between railroads and railroad workers," Steenhoek said. "However, we are on the side of the American farmer." On Thursday, MacKinnon, said his decision to refer the matter to the CIRB would survive a court challenge given his broad power under the country's labor code.

The Teamsters union wants its members' working conditions and pay to be determined by bargaining, despite disputes with CN and CP over scheduling, shift duration and availability. CN, for example, wants employees to work up to 12-hour shifts, compared with 10 hours in the current agreement, a move opposed by the union. — Reuters

## OPEC+ faces moment of truth on planned output increase

**LONDON:** In the next few weeks, Saudi Arabia and its OPEC+ allies must take a delicate decision about whether to proceed with planned production increases from October, or postpone them because of an uncertain economic outlook. The recent slides in front-month Brent futures prices, calendar spreads and refinery margins, amid concerns about the outlook for petroleum consumption, have dramatized the danger of getting it wrong. Boosting production despite downward revisions to consumption growth and a continued output increases from rivals in the United States, Canada, Brazil and Guyana risks another accumulation of inventories and slump in prices.

But postponing risks conceding even more market share to western hemisphere rivals and tempting some OPEC+ members to break ranks and increase output unilaterally. Saudi Arabia and other OPEC+ members are enforcing three separate tranches of production cuts put in place since late 2022 to drain excess petroleum inventories and support prices. All OPEC+ members are supposed to be participating in an official collective cut of 2 million barrels per day (b/d) agreed in October 2022 at a time of uncertainty about the economic and oil market outlook.

In addition, some members are meant to be enforcing an additional voluntary cut of 1.66 million b/d agreed in April 2023 and another voluntary cut of 2.2 million b/d agreed in November 2023 to support market stability. In June 2024, ministers agreed to unwind the last of these

voluntary cuts gradually - beginning in October 2024 and finishing by September 2025. They also agreed to permit the United Arab Emirates to increase its output progressively by an extra 300,000 b/d - starting in January 2025 and also finishing by September 2025. Under this plan, total OPEC+ production is scheduled to increase by roughly 180,000 b/d each month in the fourth quarter of 2024 and then by 210,000 b/d each month in the first nine months of 2025.

From the beginning, however, ministers emphasized the scheduled production increases were conditional and could be "paused or reversed subject to market conditions". In the next few weeks, OPEC+ must decide whether to proceed, or modify or postpone these increases in the light of renewed concerns about the health of the global economy and oil demand.

Oil prices and spreads are currently about the same or weaker than they were when ministers agreed to the second set of voluntary cuts in November 2023. Inflation-adjusted front-month Brent futures have averaged \$79 per barrel so far in August 2024 (42nd percentile for all months since 2000) down from \$84 in November 2023 (49th percentile). Brent's six-month calendar spread has traded in an average backwardation of \$2.50 this month (73rd percentile) somewhat stronger than \$1.63 in November (57th percentile).

But inflation-adjusted refinery margins for making two barrels of gasoline and one barrel of distillate from US crude have been \$22 this month (43rd percentile) down from \$24 in November (50th percentile). With the exception of calendar spreads, which are moderately bullish, other price indicators are consistent with a rough balance between production and consumption at the moment.

Every one of these indicators has weakened materially since ministers made the provisional decision to increase production in June 2024.



**VIENNA:** Representatives of OPEC member countries attend a press conference after the 45th Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee and the 33rd OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meeting in Vienna, Austria in this file photo. — AFP

### Global inventories

Commercial stocks of crude and refined products in the advanced economies belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development amounted to 2,761 million barrels at the end of June.

Stocks were 120 million barrels (-4 percent or -0.71 standard deviations) below the ten-year seasonal average and the deficit had almost doubled from 66 million (-2 percent or -0.44 standard deviations) in November 2023. The deficit was the widest for almost two years since September 2022, according to data from the US Energy Information Administration (EIA). Since late June, US commercial crude inventories have continued to decline further and faster than usual, adding to evidence of a tightening market. US crude inventories declined in seven of the eight weeks since June 21 by a total of 35 million barrels, according to the EIA.

US crude inventories typically decline over July and August as refineries ramp up processing to meet elevated

demand for gasoline during the summer vacation period. But the seasonal depletion this year was the second-largest in the last decade after 2017, indicating global supplies likely continued to tighten at the start of the third quarter. US crude inventories were 9 million barrels (-2 percent) below the ten-year average on Aug. 16 down from a surplus 6 million barrels (+1 percent) on June 21.

In recent weeks, fund managers have reduced their positions in response to increased uncertainty about the outlook for the major economies and global oil consumption.

It is unclear to what extent they have also reduced positions in anticipation OPEC+ would proceed with scheduled output increases, and therefore how much of the increase if any is already discounted in prices. If the scheduled increase has been fully discounted, deferring some or all of it could spark a sharp rally in prices, accelerated and amplified as fund managers try to rebuild positions. — Reuters



NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

# Powell hints 'the time has come for rate cut' as inflation softens

## Fed cut hopes boost euro against dollar, eurozone picks up growth

**KUWAIT:** Global markets saw significant developments this week, driven by central banks and new economic data. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell gave the strongest indication yet that US borrowing costs will soon decrease at the Jackson Hole Symposium, with the FOMC's July meeting minutes also revealing strong support for rate cuts. Recent data, including jobless claims of 232,000 and a significant downward revision in job creation for the year to March 2024, further bolster the case for reducing rates. In Canada, inflation moderated to 2.5 percent y/y in July, while the Reserve Bank of New Zealand's unexpected rate cut to 5.25 percent surprised markets.

### The eurozone's composite PMI

France's services sector PMI surged to 55.0, largely due to a temporary boost from the Paris Olympics, while Germany's manufacturing sector extended its 27-month streak of contraction, with manufacturing PMI coming in at 41.2. The ECB's July minutes highlighted September as pivotal for reassessing monetary policy, with potential rate cuts on the table amid inflation and uncertain economic signals. Meanwhile, UK business activity improved in August, with the S&P Global Composite PMI rising to 53.4, driven by easing cost pressures and strong performances in both services and manufacturing sectors. In Asia, China's PBOC held rates steady amid weaker industrial growth and a persistent three-year property market slump. Overall, markets are navigating a complex landscape of data and shifting central bank policy stances amidst ongoing volatility.

### US and Canada

Federal Reserve Chair Jay Powell signaled that "the time has come for policy to adjust", indicating a potential reduction in borrowing costs as early as September. Powell emphasized, "the direction of travel is clear, and the timing and pace of rate cuts will depend on incoming data, the evolving outlook, and the balance of risks" and stated that the Fed would do "everything we can to support a strong labor market as we make further progress towards price stability". Powell highlighted the Fed's focus on balancing inflation control with supporting the labor market, and stated "confidence has grown that inflation is on a sustainable path". Equities rallied and Treasury yields fell following Powell's speech.

### September cut plan

The FOMC meeting minutes from July also indicated substantial support among Federal Reserve officials for a potential interest rate cut in September, driven by recent data showing slower job growth and easing inflation. Although the Fed maintained rates at 5.25-5.50 percent during the July meeting, there was broad consensus that a reduction might be warranted if economic conditions aligned with expectations. This view has been since bolstered by weaker-than-expected labor market data, including a downward

revision of job growth by 818,000 for the year to March 2024. With inflation showing signs of improvement and the September meeting occurring just six weeks before November's US presidential election, the Fed's decision will be crucial for ensuring economic stability and shaping market expectations. DXY was last seen at 100.602.

### US jobless claims increase

US jobless claims increased by 4,000 to 232,000 in the week ending Aug 17 in line with expectations. The four-week average declined to 236,000. As of Aug 10, 1.86 million Americans were receiving unemployment benefits, up by 4,000 from the prior week. While claims averaged 213,000 from January to May, they rose to 250,000 in late July, reflecting the impact of high interest rates. Despite this recent increase, claims are stabilizing, suggesting the labor market is cooling gradually rather than deteriorating rapidly. This trend, combined with dampening business activity and falling home loan rates, supports expectations of a US rate cut next month.

In August, the US S&P Global Composite PMI slightly decreased to 54.1 from 54.3 in July, reflecting continued robust expansion in the private sector and surpassing the expected 53.5. Meanwhile, the S&P Global Manufacturing PMI fell to 48.0 from 49.6, signaling ongoing contraction, while the Services PMI rose to 55.2 from 55.0. Economists interpret this data as indicative of strong GDP growth, potentially exceeding 2.0 percent annualized for Q3, and a normalization of inflation, which eases recession concerns and supports expectations for lower interest rates. Notably, the US services sector sustained its momentum from the first half of the year, marked by significant expansion in business activity driven by increased new orders, resulting in increased hiring and optimistic growth projections.

### Canada's CPI

Canada's annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 2.5 percent in July, matching expectations and easing from June's 2.7 percent. Monthly CPI increased by 0.4 percent, while core CPI, which excludes food and energy, rose by 0.3 percent. The Bank of Canada's Core CPI showed a 1.7 percent y/y increase, slightly down from June's 1.9 percent rise. The current policy rate in Canada stands at 4.50 percent, following a recent 25 bps cut. Markets are anticipating additional easing, currently pricing three more 25 basis point reductions by year-end, potentially bringing the target rate down to 3.75 percent. USD/CAD was last seen at 1.3507.

### Europe and UK

The euro surged to a one-year high against the dollar driven by expectations that the Fed will cut interest rates faster than the European Central Bank. The British pound also reached its highest level since July 2023 amid a weak-

er dollar, following the release of Fed meeting minutes. This came as market participants anticipated that Powell's speech at the Jackson Hole symposium this week would reinforce the case for lowering borrowing costs substantially in the coming months, whilst growth concerns in Europe also support the case for further reductions there. The euro's advance, up 3.6 percent this month, reflects these shifting monetary policy bets. EUR/USD was last seen at 1.1190.

### Mixed inflation signals in eurozone

The ECB's July meeting minutes suggest a potential interest rate cut in September, despite persistent inflationary pressures. Core inflation held steady at 2.9 percent, and services inflation slightly decreased to 4.0 percent from 4.1 percent in June. Officials expressed openness to further rate adjustments, noting that September could be an opportune moment to reassess monetary policy. The ECB kept its deposit rate at 3.75 percent in July, following a 25bps reduction in June. Eurozone negotiated wage growth slowed to 3.6 percent in Q2 from 4.7 percent in Q1, reinforcing the case for easing. Mixed economic data and nascent concerns about stagflation are influencing ongoing discussions about future monetary policy, with the final decision contingent on upcoming data releases.

In August, the eurozone experienced stronger-than-expected growth in private sector activity, with the Composite PMI Index rising to 51.2 from 50.2 in July, its highest level in three months. This expansion was primarily driven by the services sector, notably in France, where the Services PMI surged to 55.0 due to the Olympic Games. Despite this, euro area manufacturing continued to contract, with the Manufacturing PMI Output Index falling to 45.6, an eight-month low. Germany's economic conditions worsened, with its Composite PMI Output Index dropping to 48.5, below expectations, and the manufacturing PMI declining to 42.1, marking the 27th consecutive month of contraction. Weak demand and ongoing economic challenges suggest that underlying issues may persist.

UK business activity showed notable improvement in August, with the S&P Global Composite PMI climbing to 53.4 from 52.8 last month, the highest since April and surpassing forecasts. This uptick suggests steady economic growth moving into the latter half of 2024. Cost pressures on businesses have eased to their lowest level in over three years, contributing to a favorable economic outlook. The services PMI rose to 53.3, its highest since April, while the manufacturing PMI improved to 52.5, marking the best performance since June 2022 and signaling robust job creation. Despite lower inflationary pressures, interest rate cuts are anticipated to be cautious, with one expected in November. GBP/USD was last seen trading at 1.3209.

### Asia-Pacific

In July, Japan's core inflation rate rose to 2.7 percent y/y,

driven by higher electricity costs and exceeding the central bank's 2 percent target. This marks the third consecutive month of acceleration. However, the core-core index, excluding fresh food and energy, slowed to a gain of 1.9 percent, versus 2.2 percent in June. The end of government subsidies for electricity and gas in May, which resumed in August, significantly impacted CPI. Utility costs surged 22.3 percent y/y, while educational and entertainment expenses increased 5.6 percent. Although overall inflation showed a slight uptick, the trend is slowing when excluding policy effects. Yen weakness and higher labor costs remain concerns. USD/JPY was last seen at 144.37.

Minutes from the Reserve Bank of Australia's August meeting showed that policymakers considered hiking rates due to high underlying inflation entrenched in the economy but ultimately settled on holding. Policymakers had contemplated raising the cash target rate from its current level of 4.35 percent due to persistent inflation concerns.

The central bank is trying to strike a balance between combating elevated inflation and supporting the labor market. The RBA opted to hold rates steady, citing the risk of inflation not reaching its 2 percent to 3 percent annual target by late 2025 and doubts about whether current monetary conditions were sufficiently restrictive. AUD/USD was last seen at 0.6792.

### PBOC maintains loan prime rates

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) has kept its one-year and five-year Loan Prime Rates (LPR) unchanged at 3.35 percent and 3.85 percent, respectively, following 10bps cuts in July. This decision aligns with expectations as the PBOC aims to balance economic support with market stability. Despite recent mixed economic data, including a modest recovery and improved consumer confidence, lending activity remains subdued. July's rate cuts had spurred a decline in government bond yields, prompting cautious market reactions. The PBOC's current stance reflects its intent to support economic growth toward its 5 percent target for 2024, while avoiding market overheating. USD/CNY was last seen at 7.1244.

The Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ) delivered the first rate cut in over four years, reducing rates by 25bps and taking the cash rate down to 5.25 percent and surprising some economists and market participants. The central bank signaled that more cuts are likely as inflation nears the target range of 1.0 percent to 3.0 percent. RBNZ Governor Adrian Orr stated that growth has weakened substantially since May, and the central bank expects the country this year to tip into a technical recession, two consecutive quarters of economic contraction. Markets are currently pricing in 75 bps of additional cuts by year-end, which would take the cash rate down to 4.50 percent. NZD/USD was last seen at 0.6232.

### Kuwait

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30490.



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار  
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

## KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 22 AUGUST 2024

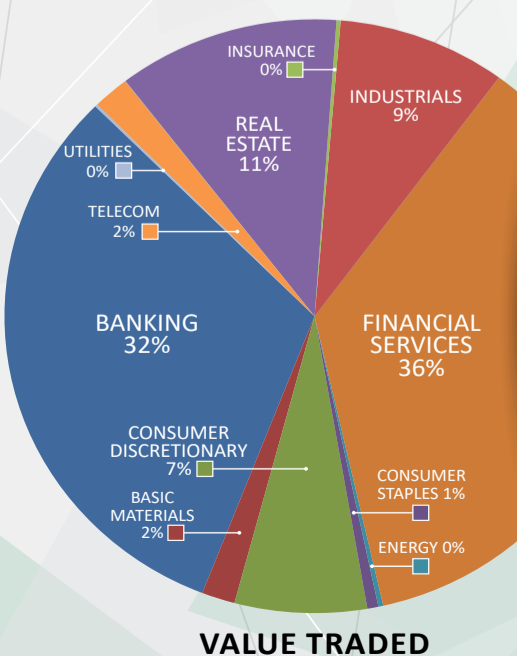
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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	35,816	7,801.35	0.9%	-1.2%	4.3%	626,065,630	172,603,656	41,866	17.7	1.5	82.3%
Main Market	7,715	6,065.65	0.4%	0.0%	8.9%	621,125,843	80,386,781	37,845	12.0	0.9	17.7%
All Share	43,531	7,164.16	0.8%	-1.0%	5.1%	1,247,191,473	252,990,437	79,711	13.9	1.0	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	26,636	1,771.14	0.4%	-1.8%	7.5%	221,654,712	79,951,028	16,730	17.4	1.4	61.19%
Basic Materials	449	791.69	5.0%	5.6%	6.1%	7,165,123	4,388,349	1,221	8.6	1.9	1.03%
Consumer Discretionary	1,204	1,745.56	3.8%	3.1%	8.8%	58,204,963	17,433,684	5,629	13.0	1.3	2.77%
Consumer Staples	314	1,028.81	3.2%	4.7%	56.2%	2,185,531	1,455,288	367	26.8	1.6	0.72%
Energy	215	1,052.09	-1.2%	-2.0%	10.9%	6,474,586	642,570	541	9.5	0.8	0.49%
Financial Services	4,863	1,386.22	1.6%	1.6%	14.4%	581,616,331	91,855,287	28,414	12.4	1.0	11.17%
Health Care	228	468.00	0.0%	0.0%	-2.9%	200	87,000	1	48.1	1.5	0.52%
Industrials	2,641	777.08	2.6%	-1.0%	-14.4%	129,638,393	22,236,433	10,192	14.5	1.0	6.07%
Insurance	877	2,135.59	-6.4%	-10.0%	-6.9%	4,195,003	548,857	779	8.7	1.1	2.01%
Real Estate	2,861	1,345.52	1.7%	0.9%	10.9%	223,725,127	29,275,215	13,116	13.9	0.7	6.57%
Technology	23	1,673.25	1.3%	-12.2%	189.3%	192,617	43,066.92	42	697.0	1.9	0.05%
Telecommunications	3,052	994.30	0.9%	0.2%	-10.0%	10,054,850	4,842,294	2,413	15.5	1.3	7.01%
Utilities	168	400.00	0.7%	-5.6%	-12.1%	2,084,037	318,278	266	15.6	1.3	0.39%

Top Gainers					Top Losers						
Stock	Last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades	Stock	Last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
EQUIPMENT	43.3	34.47%	59,649,683	2,508,902.121	2,755	KHOT	148	-14.94%	17,800	2,698	12
ALSAFAT	99.7	29.65%	41,392,187	3,713,048	1,894	GINS	1,380	-14.29%	3,750	5,014	30
UNICAP	200	15.61%	28,549,712	5,619,796	1,959	TAMINV	950	-13.64%	4,035	3,950	20
MARAKEZ	57.8	15.60%	3,448,682	184,246	340	SANAM	178	-6.32%	5,935,092	1,098,367	565
SENERGY	36.2	14.20%	2,380,582	85,123	161	THURAYA	100	-4.76%	174,399	17,086	50

Top Volume					Top Value						
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades	Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
GFH	102	4.08%	84,645,416	8,610,601	2,129	KFH	719	0.42%	34,507,568	24,742,588	7,318
KPROJ	101	1.41%	71,386,953	7,217,994	1,161	IFA	316	10.10%	69,075,436	22,158,428	5,445
IFA	316	10.10%	69,075,436	22,158,428	5,445	GBK	318	3.92%	58,612,382	18,384,327	1,623
EQUIPMENT	43.3	34.47%	59,649,683	2,508,902	2,755	NBK	882	-0.56%	12,766,453	11,237,020	2,369
GBK	318	3.92%	58,612,382	18,384,327	1,623	KRE	235	-1.67%	41,380,213	9,700,093	2,463



**Market Summary:**

- Premier market volume increased by 3%, while value dropped by 10%. Main market volume and value increased by 45% and 35%, respectively.
- Intraday trading is growing in the Main market, leading to high volume and value. Premier index buying pressure is increasing, but prices have yet to peak.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 7,164, with support levels at 7,141, 7,105, and 7,085, while resistance is at 7,178. The Premier index closed at 7,801, with support levels at 7,767, 7,737, and 7,716, while resistance is at 7,811. The Main index closed at 6,065, with support levels at 6,058, 6,023, and 5,990, while resistance is at 6,083.



# Weyay Bank announces its new multicurrency card

## New digital card is convenient for purchases during travel and online transactions

KUWAIT: Weyay Bank, a leading provider of innovative digital banking solutions, on Sunday announced the launch of its new multicurrency prepaid card. The new digital card empowers the bank's app users to conveniently pay for purchases during travel and make online transactions using the currency they want. The multicurrency card eliminates the hassle and hidden fees typically associated with currency exchange when traveling or shopping internationally. The cardholders can simply select their preferred currency within the Weyay app and make payments directly from their account balance, avoiding the need to carry physical cash or worry about exchange rates.

"We are thrilled to introduce this transformative

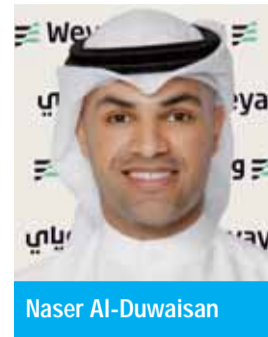
multicurrency digital card that will revolutionize the way our customers manage their finances while on the move or making online purchases," said Naser Al-Duwaisan, Product Owner at Weyay Bank. "By providing this seamless and secure payment solution, we are empowering our users to confidently explore the world and make purchases with the utmost convenience."

Some of the key features of the Weyay multicurrency card include:

- Instant digital banking card creation.
- Support for 15 of the most popular currencies around the world.
- Instant currency conversion within the bank's mobile app.

- Secure contactless card payments via Apple Pay and Samsung Pay.
- Real-time transaction tracking.
- Competitive exchange rates.
- Full transparency without unexpected hidden fees of currency conversion.

As Weyay Bank continues to revolutionize banking by leveraging its enhanced app, the multicurrency prepaid card



Naser Al-Duwaisan



is introduced to provide one of the most secure, convenient, and innovative digital financial services to Weyay customers.

## Nestle shares fall after CEO's surprise exit

PARIS: Nestle shares fell Friday after the surprise departure of chief executive Mark Schneider, which followed slowing sales growth and bad headlines at the Swiss food group. The company announced after markets closed Thursday that Schneider would step down on September 1 after almost eight years in charge and be replaced by Nestle's Latin America chief, Laurent Freixe.

Nestle shares fell more than three percent in early deals on the Swiss stock exchange but pared down those losses later in the morning for a 1.5 percent drop. In a conference call with investors on Friday, chairman Paul Bulcke acknowledged that the decision "may come as a surprise for many of you" but that it was "time ... for a change" at the company.

He added that "different qualities" were needed. Nestle, whose brands range from Nespresso coffee capsules to Purina dog food and Haagen-Dazs ice cream, lowered its sales growth outlook for 2024 last month as it slowed its price increases in the first half of the year. The global packaged-food giant and its rivals had logged high sales growth in the past three years as they raised prices to make up for higher costs due to soaring inflation. The company has also faced controversy in recent years, with Swiss NGO Public Eye accusing Nestle of selling baby food with high levels of added sugar in low-income countries but not in wealthier nations.

Nestle has countered that it had "no double standard" and applied the same nutrition and health principles everywhere. It has also scrambled to ease any concerns over its Perrier brand after France's food safety watchdog recommended stricter monitoring of sites where Nestle extracts mineral water following the discovery of traces of "faecal" contamination.

The company has since said it has stepped up monitoring of the sites, and Schneider has said the group's water was safe to drink. Schneider's departure "does not come as a major surprise given that both Nestle's operational and share price performances have proved disappointing over the past 2 and a half years", Swiss bank UBS said in a note. "Furthermore, the company suffered through an unusually high number of negative headlines," it said. Freixe, a Frenchman who joined Nestle in 1986, told investors on Friday that his "big focus" will be on sales growth and "market share gains". — AFP

## Dealmakers ponder what's next after Biden antitrust years

NEW YORK: President Joe Biden's skeptical approach to corporate mergers has been a hallmark of his administration's business policy — a stance generally expected to ease if Donald Trump returns to the White House. Biden appointees like Lina Khan, chair of the Federal Trade Commission, and Assistant Attorney General Jonathan Kanter have broadened the scope of government antitrust oversight to consider issues such as a deal's impact on workers and on potential new market entrants.

Dealmakers have complained of added costs from this heightened scrutiny, while Khan and Kanter insist they have deterred problematic deals. But with the clock ticking on Biden's tenure, the antitrust and dealmaking universes have begun to ponder what comes next as voters weigh the candidacies of Vice President Kamala Harris and former president Donald Trump. While a Trump win is broadly expected to result in less antitrust enforcement and more dealmaking than a Harris victory, even that outcome is not certain, as today's Republican coalition includes not just corporate interests but figures like Trump's running mate Senator JD Vance, who has praised Khan.

"There is a lot of uncertainty there," said New York University Professor Harry First. He said the populist tilt of some members of Trump's coalition "makes it hard to predict what will happen."

A Trump election win would be "slightly positive to very positive" for dealmaking, predicted a Wall Street banker, who spoke on condition that he not be identified. He cautioned that optimism over a potential shift under Trump should be tempered by worries over a renewed US-China trade war.

Biden set an adversarial tone toward dealmaking early in his presidency, saying that too many big companies were "consuming their competitors." An executive order he signed in July 2021 promoted competition and included tougher antitrust enforcement. Biden cast the approach as a needed pivot from a failed 40-year "experiment of letting giant corporations accumulate more and more power."

The appointment of Khan sent a clear message to the business world, including tech behemoths.

Khan shot to prominence following a 2017 academic article on Amazon that criticized antitrust enforcement for overlooking key priorities such as a



WASHINGTON: Federal Trade Commission Chair Lina Khan (left) and Assistant Attorney General for Antitrust Jonathan Kanter participate in a discussion on antitrust reforms at the Brookings Institution in this file photo. — AFP

deal's impact on workers and the potential for big companies — not yet monopolies — to discourage new competitors from emerging. Khan and Kanter have signaled the importance of these issues, including in merger guidelines finalized in December 2023. They have scored some litigation wins, including the unwinding of Illumina's acquisition of Grail in a case involving cancer detection tests; and a ruling this month that Google's search engine constituted a monopoly in a case originally brought by the Trump administration.

But the Biden administration has also suffered some major setbacks, losing a challenge to Microsoft's takeover of Activision Blizzard and to UnitedHealth Group's acquisition of Change Healthcare.

Former FTC enforcement official Ryan Quillian has pointed to data that the current commission actually has filed fewer lawsuits than its predecessors. He argued in an October 2023 paper that the Biden administration's "rhetoric outpaces" its enforcement numbers. Quillian, now a partner with Covington & Burling, said the agencies were focused on "rhetoric and process to deter" merger activity.

CEOs considering transactions now weigh the chance of antitrust enforcement "at the beginning

of a deal," said the Wall Street banker, adding that "there is no question that clients think two or three times more about deals that are on the line." The American Investment Council, a trade group for the private equity industry, has sharply criticized a Biden administration proposal to significantly increase pre-merger notification disclosures.

The proposed changes to the Hart-Scott-Rodino Act would include details about the rationale of a transaction, projected revenue streams and corporate relationships.

The proposed rule "will make it far more costly to consummate such deals," slowing the American economy "to the detriment of the very consumers whom the antitrust laws are intended to benefit," the council said in September 2023 comments.

Those changes have yet to be finalized. The next administration will need to decide whether to uphold this policy, along with the 2023 merger guidelines, which would need to be adopted by US courts to have teeth. Other questions concern pending lawsuits against tech giants Apple, Amazon, Google and Facebook parent Meta, and whether to proceed with litigation or take another route, such as settlement or dismissal. — AFP

## Bangladesh metro back on track after closure

DHAKA: Bangladesh's metro railway in the notoriously congested capital Dhaka resumed Sunday, more than a month after it was closed during the peak of student-led protests that eventually toppled the prime minister.

Much in the troubled South Asian nation remains in political turmoil since the revolution that ousted Sheikh Hasina and ended her 15-year-long iron-fisted rule, but on Sunday, the trains at least were back on track. Dhaka is one of the world's most densely populated cities, and the railway is a critical transport link in the sprawling megacity of some 20 million people.

Banker Shaheen Sultana said she was delighted her commute to work was a "relaxed" affair after weeks of car-clogged gridlock on the roads. "I am very happy that it is working again," 40-year-old Sultana said, as she exited a station near her workplace in the city's commercial heart. "It is a great relief." The elevated train network was closed in mid-July during the student-led protest.

In the deadly violence - which would see hundreds of people killed until Hasina quit and fled the country by helicopter on August 5 - the stations were vandalized by a mob.

The resumption of metro services is a key sign of a return to normal daily life. Its reopening was ordered by the new caretaker government, led by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus, 84.

"In the absence of the metro I had to take the bus to work," said Kaosar Khan, a speech therapist at a private hospital in the city. "I faced massive traffic snarls," Khan, 25, added. "It used to take two hours on the bus, but with the metro, I can reach my destination in 15 minutes".

Hasina's government was accused of widespread abuses, including the mass detention and extrajudicial killing of political opponents. But Dhaka's metro, inaugurated in 2022, is seen by many as one of the most significant infrastructure endeavors of Hasina's otherwise tarnished tenure.



DHAKA: Passengers arrive at a metro train station in Dhaka on August 25, 2024. — AFP

It was an instant hit in the congested city where commuting by road is a source of massive frustration. Local researchers say the capital's economy loses upwards of \$3 billion each year in lost work time due to traffic jams, often worsened by regular street protests and monsoonal downpours.

Pictures released by Hasina's office while she was still in office showed her weeping at the sight of a vandalized metro station in an outlying Dhaka suburb. Hasina had called the line a "matter of great pride" when she opened it in December 2022, and during the protests, she was furious that it had been attacked. "Who has benefited... Do I ride on the metro?" she asked at the time.

But others said Hasina's government had exploited the attack on the metro, to shut it down as a warning. "They wanted to say if you go against us, you will have to suffer the consequences," said Mohammad Hriday, 28, a technology worker waiting at the platform.

"The shutdown seemed more deliberate than necessitated by circumstances." On Sunday, some passengers said the metro attack was a blot on the reputation of the protesters.

"Why hurt the nation and destroy public property?" said Sharmin Sultana, 55, a housewife travelling with her young daughter, a yellow scarf covering her head. "We should protect our national property, irrespective of party politics." — AFP

## WALL STREET WEEK AHEAD

## Nvidia earnings stand to test searing AI trade

NEW YORK: The rally in US stocks faces an important test next week with earnings from chipmaking giant Nvidia, whose blistering run has powered markets throughout 2024. The S&P 500 has pared a sharp drop it suffered after US economic worries contributed to a sell-off at the beginning of the month and again stands near a fresh all-time high.

Nvidia, whose chips are widely seen as the gold standard in artificial intelligence, has been at the forefront of that rally, jumping by more than 30 percent since its recent lows. The stock is up some 150 percent year-to-date, accounting for around a quarter of the S&P 500's 17 percent year-to-date gain.

The company's Aug. 28 earnings report, coupled with guidance on whether it expects corporate investments in AI to continue, could be a key inflection point for market sentiment heading into what is historically a volatile time of the year. The S&P 500 has fallen in September by an average of 0.78 percent since World War Two, the worst performance of any month, according to CFRA data.

"Nvidia is the zeitgeist stock today," said Mike Smith, a portfolio manager at Allspring Global Investments, which holds the company's shares in its portfolios. "You can think of their earnings four times a year as the Super Bowl." Some investors are getting ready for fireworks. Traders are pricing in a swing of around 10.3 percent in Nvidia's shares the day after the company reports earnings, according to data from options analytic firm ORATS. That's larger than the expected move ahead of any Nvidia report over the last three years and well above the stock's average post-earnings move of 8.1 percent over that same period, ORATS data showed.

The results come at the end of an earnings season during which investors have taken a less forgiving view of big tech companies whose earnings failed to justify rich valuations or prodigious spending on AI. Examples include Microsoft, Tesla and Alphabet,

whose shares are all down since their July reports.

Nvidia's valuations have also climbed, as the stock soared about 750 percent since the start of 2023, making it the world's third-most valuable company as of Thursday, while also drawing comparisons to the dotcom bubble of more than two decades ago. The company's shares trade at about 37 times forward 12-month earnings estimates, compared with a 20-year average of 29 times, according to LSEG Datastream.

Market sentiment could depend as much on Nvidia's guidance as its results. Evidence that it sees robust demand will be a bullish sign that companies are continuing to invest rather than pull back in anticipation of an economic slowdown, said Matt Stucky, chief portfolio manager, equities, at Northwestern Mutual Wealth Management. Nvidia's "connection to the largest companies in the US stock market makes this a must-watch event," he said. "The biggest piece that investors want to know is whether there is sustainability and what demand will look like in '25 and '26," he said. The trajectory of monetary policy and the US economy also looms large for investors. In a Friday morning speech in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell offered an explicit endorsement of interest rate cuts, saying further cooling in the job market would be unwelcome.

Investors will be watching US labor market data on Sept. 6 for evidence of whether last month's unexpected downshift in employment carried over to August. Signs that employment is continuing to weaken could bring back the recession fears that rocked markets earlier this month.

A tight presidential race between Vice President Kamala Harris, a Democrat, and Republican former President Donald Trump may also whip up market uncertainty in the weeks ahead. The August surge in stocks may make it difficult for markets to make much more headway in the near term even if Nvidia's earnings impress Wall Street, said John Belton, a portfolio manager at Gabelli Funds, which holds shares of the chipmaker. The S&P 500 trades at 21 times expected earnings, far above its long-term average of 15.7. "The stock market as a whole is still trading at stretched valuations so the bar remains high," Belton said. — Reuters



MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2024



## 'BEES STARVING' in disastrous year for French honey

This photograph shows the beehive's Queen bee (red) amongst honey bees in a beehive. — AFP photos



Honey bees in their beehive at honey producer La Ruche des Puits in Saint Ours, Auvergne.



Honey bees in their beehive at honey producer La Ruche des Puits.



A beekeeper tends to beehives at honey producer La Ruche des Puits.

**B**eekeepers across France say it has been a disastrous year for honey, with bees starving to death and production plummeting by up to 80 percent. Mickael Isambert, a beekeeper in Saint-Ours-les-Roches in central France, lost 70 percent of his honey and had to feed his colonies sugar to help them survive after a cold, rainy spring. "It has been a catastrophic year," said Isambert, 44, who looks after 450 hives. A beehive typically produces 15 kilos (33 pounds) of honey a year, but this time, Isambert said his farm had only produced between five and seven kilos. When it rains, bees "don't fly, they don't go out, so they eat their own honey reserves," said his co-manager and fellow beekeeper Marie Mior. Low temperatures and heavy rainfall have prevented bees from gathering enough pollen, and flowers from producing nectar - which the insects collect to make honey.

### 'Some died of hunger'

Bad weather has affected honey producers countrywide, with spring production dropping by 80 percent in some regions - figures that summer harvests will struggle to offset, said the French national beekeeping union (Unaf). Rainfall rose by 45 percent on the yearly average, Unaf said in a letter to its local branches. "With weather conditions that have been catastrophic in many regions with abundant rain... and low temperatures until late, many beekeepers' viability is under threat," said Unaf.

Temperatures stagnated below 18 de-



Beekeepers tend to beehives at honey producer La Ruche des Puits.

grees Celsius (64 Fahrenheit), the minimum temperature needed for flowers to produce nectar, said Jean-Luc Hascoet, a beekeeper in Brittany in western France who lost about 15 colonies. "For some of my colleagues it was worse," he said. "In June, the bee population increases and the needs of the colonies grow but as nothing was coming in, some died of hunger," said Hascoet.

### 'Black year'

French beekeepers had already been reeling from dealing with several seasons of scorching heat and delayed frosts, according to Unaf president Christian Pons, making this "black year" even worse. "Ten years ago, I



A worker processes a honeycomb frame to extract honey.

made one and a half to two tons of honey per site, compared to 100 kilos today," said Pons, a beekeeper in the southern Hérault region. Honeymakers earlier this year protested against "unfair competition" by foreign producers, which led to the government releasing five million euros (\$5.6 million) in aid. French consumers eat on average 45,000 tons of honey per year, about 20,000 tons of which is produced in France, according to the left-wing Peasants Confederation union. — AFP



This photograph shows full to empty honeycomb frames from the same hive.



Beekeepers use a smoker as they tend to beehives.



A worker processes a honeycomb frame.



A worker processes a honeycomb frame to extract honey.





Social workers at NGO Sujag Sansar take part in a theatre practice ahead of their performance, intending to create awareness on dangers of child-marriages at the NGO office in Johi, Dadu district of Sindh province.



Villagers gather to view a video on a social media platform at Khan Muhammad Mallah village, Dadu district in Sindh province. — AFP photos

# 'Monsoon brides': Extreme weather fuels Pakistan child marriages



Shamila (left) and Salma Zameer, monsoon brides who were married underage look on at Khan Muhammad Mallah village, Dadu district in Sindh province.

**A**s monsoon rains were about to break over Pakistan, 14-year-old Shamila and her 13-year-old sister Amina were married off in exchange for money, a decision their parents made to help the family survive the threat of floods. "I was happy to hear I was getting married... I thought my life would become easier," Shamila told AFP after her wedding to a man twice her age in hope of a more prosperous life. "But I have nothing more. And with the rain, I fear I will have even less, if that is possible."

Pakistan's high rate of marriages for underage girls had been inching lower in recent years, but after unprecedented floods in 2022, rights workers warn such weddings are now on the rise due to climate-driven economic insecurity. The summer monsoon between July and September is vital for the livelihoods of millions of farmers and food security, but scientists say climate change is making them heavier and longer, raising the risk of landslides, floods and long-term crop damage.

Many villages in the agricultural belt of Sindh have not recovered from the 2022 floods, which plunged a third of the country underwater, displaced millions and ruined harvests. "This has led to a new trend of 'monsoon brides'," said Mashooque Birhmani, the founder of the NGO Sujag Sansar, which works with religious scholars to combat child marriage.

"Families will find any means of survival. The first and most obvious way is to give their daughters away in marriage in exchange for money," Birhmani said since the 2022 floods, child marriage has spiked in villages in Dadu district, one of the worst-hit areas that for months resembled a lake. In Khan Mohammad Mallah village, where Shamila and Amina were married in a joint ceremony in June, 45 underage girls have become wives since



NGO Sujag Sansar's founder Mashooque Birhmani (right) claps during a theatre practice ahead of their performance.

the last monsoon - 15 of them in May and June this year.

"Before the 2022 rains, there was no such need to get girls married so young in our area," said village elder Mai Hajani, 65. "They would work on the land, make rope for wooden beds, the men would be busy with fishing and agriculture. There was always work to be done". Parents told AFP that they hurried the marriage of their daughters to save them from poverty, usually in exchange for money.

Shamila's mother-in-law, Bibi Sachal, said they gave 200,000 Pakistan Rupees (\$720) to the young bride's parents — a major sum in a region where most families survive on around one dollar a day.

**'I thought I would get lipstick'**

Najma Ali was initially swept up in the excitement of becoming a wife when she married at 14 in 2022 and began living with her in-laws, as is tradition in Pakistan. "My husband gave my parents 250,000 rupees for our wedding. But it was on loan (from a third party) that he has no way of paying back now," she said. "I thought I would get lipstick, makeup, clothes and crockery," she told AFP, cradling her six-month-old baby. "Now I am back home with a husband and a baby because we have nothing to eat."

Their village, which lies on the banks of a canal in the Main Nara Valley, is barren and there are no fish left in the polluted water — its



Girls create artworks at NGO Sujag Sansar's office in Johi.



Mehtab learns to sew at NGO Sujag Sansar's office in Johi.



Women learn to sew at NGO Sujag Sansar's office in Johi.



Women learn to sew at NGO Sujag Sansar's office in Johi, Dadu district of Sindh province.



This aerial photograph shows a settlement along the banks of a canal at Khan Muhammad Mallah village.



Villagers ride a boat along a canal as they return to Khan Muhammad Mallah village.



Lifestyle



Children pose after rain, at an agriculture land in the aftermath of monsoon floods at Johi, Dadu district in Sindh province.



Hakim Zaadi (center), village matron and mother of Najma Ali (right), a monsoon bride who was married underage, distributes flatbread to children outside her hut at Khan Muhammad Mallah village.



Hakim Zaadi (left), village matron and mother of Najma Ali (not pictured), a monsoon bride who was married underage, rides a boat with her husband Babiho Mallah (right), along a canal at the Khan Muhammad Mallah village.



Dildar Ali Sheikh (third right) sits beside his eldest daughter Mehtab (second right), who was to marry underage during monsoons, as they pose for a photo with their family at NGO Sujag Sansar's office in Johi.



Newly married underage monsoon brides with their husbands arrive at the Khan Muhammad Mallah village.

stench overwhelms the area. "We had lush rice fields where girls used to work," said Hakim Zaadi, 58, the village matron and Najma's mother. "They would grow many vegetables, which are all dead now because the water in the ground is poisonous. This has happened especially after 2022," she added. "The girls were not a burden on us before then. At the age girls used to get married, they now have five children, and they come back to live with their parents because their husbands are jobless."

'I want to study'

Child marriages are common in parts of Pakistan, which has the sixth-highest number of girls married before the age of 18 in the world, according to government data published in December. The legal age for marriage varies from 16 to 18 in different regions, but the law is rarely enforced. UNICEF has reported "significant strides" in reducing child marriage, but evidence shows that extreme weather events put girls at risk.

"We would expect to see an 18 percent in-

crease in the prevalence of child marriage, equivalent to erasing five years of progress," it said in a report after the 2022 floods. Dildar Ali Sheikh, 31, had planned to marry off his eldest daughter Mehtab while living in an aid camp after being displaced by the floods. "When I was there, I thought to myself 'we should get our daughter married so at least she can eat and have basic facilities'," the daily wage labourer told AFP. Mehtab was just 10 years old.

"The night I decided to get her married, I couldn't

sleep," said her mother, Sumbal Ali Sheikh, who was 18 when she married. An intervention from the NGO Sujag Sansar led to the wedding being postponed, and Mehtab was enrolled in a sewing workshop, allowing her to earn a small income while continuing her education. But when the monsoon rains fall, she is overcome by dread that her promised wedding will also arrive. "I have told my father I want to study," she said. "I see married girls around me who have very challenging lives and I don't want this for myself." — AFP

New Coppola film trailer axed for using fake movie reviews

A trailer promoting Francis Ford Coppola's new film "Megalopolis" has been withdrawn after it was found to have incorporated fake movie reviews, reportedly generated by artificial intelligence. Coppola's wildly ambitious, decades-in-the-making movie, which hits theaters next month and stars Adam Driver, has starkly divided critics. A trailer released this week drew parallels to earlier works by the revered Hollywood director that also initially left some professional reviewers cold before going on to become classics - suggesting "Megalopolis" can do the same.

"True genius is often misunderstood," a voiceover began, before quotes from famous critics calling "The Godfather" a "sloppily self-indulgent movie" and "Apocalypse Now" a "spectacular failure" were presented on the screen. The problem? None of those quotes were real. Instead, the trailer appears to have used AI-generated imitations of the type of withering put-downs associated with renowned reviewers such as Pauline Kael. In at least one case, a criticism appears to have been lifted from a review of an entirely different film.

The trailer was quickly recalled, with Hollywood studio Lionsgate offering "our sincere apologies to the critics involved and to Francis Ford Coppola" for an "inexcusable error in our vetting process." "We messed up. We are sorry," said a statement. Lionsgate has since parted company with the marketing consultant behind the trailer, trade outlet Variety said Friday. Meanwhile Deadline reported that the quotes were generated by AI. The furor comes at a time when Hollywood is roiled by the encroaching impact of AI. Fears the technology could replace entertainment industry jobs - from actors to writers - were central to last summer's devastating strikes.

The trailer episode is just the latest controversy to hit "Megalopolis," an already hugely divisive epic. Legendary director Coppola has said he spent \$120 million of his own money to make the film, selling a stake in his California vineyard. But its much-hyped world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival left the industry confounded. Critics' responses ranged from "a true modern masterwork" to a "catastrophe." Driver stars as a seemingly magical architect whose efforts to rebuild a decaying city into a futuristic utopia are thwarted by its



(From left) Romanian cinematographer Mihai Malaimare Jr., US screenwriter Roman Coppola, Cosima Mars, US actress Romy Mars, US singer Grace Vanderwaal, US actress Talia Shire, US actor Jon Voight, British actress Nathalie Emmanuel, US actor Giancarlo Esposito, US director Francis Ford Coppola, US actor Laurence Fishburne, US actor Adam Driver and US actress Aubrey Plaza pose during a photocall for the film "Megalopolis" at the 77th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. - AFP

resentful mayor (Giancarlo Esposito).

The movie also stars Aubrey Plaza, Shia LaBeouf and Dustin Hoffman. It receives its North American premiere at the Toronto film festival next month, before being released in US theaters on September 27. The controversy has provoked theories among some Hollywood observers that the entire unseemly

debacle could have been staged to provoke headlines. Lionsgate did not respond to an AFP request for comment. But a source familiar with the marketing plan told AFP the studio did not deliberately fabricate the quotes, and removed the trailer as soon as it became aware of the situation. — AFP

Whaling: Why the practice will not go away

The detention in Greenland of anti-whaling campaigner Paul Watson pending possible extradition to Japan has turned the spotlight on the widely condemned practice of hunting whales. A 1986 moratorium on commercial whaling allowed numbers to recover following centuries of hunting that decimated the population to near-extinction. Today three countries still permit the practice - Japan, Norway and Iceland. Beyond the moral case against whaling, as made in campaigns such as Watson's, what is the science driving the arguments both for and against the practice?

'Scientific' whaling?

In 2019 Japan quit the International Whaling Commission moratorium and resumed commercial whaling inside its territorial waters and exclusive economic zone. Before this, Japan had been pursuing "scientific research" whaling since 1987, arguing some data could only be collected from dead carcasses. But the evidence to support the claim was thin, Paul Rodhouse, fellow of the Marine Biological As-



NGO Sea Shepherd Conservation Society founder, Paul Watson of Canada, poses on board of the "Brigitte Bardot", a Sea Shepherd multihull moored in Paris, on January 15, 2015. — AFP

sociation in Britain, told AFP. "There seems to be very little justification for scientific whaling and few worthwhile scientific studies," he said.

A study published in Marine Policy in 2016 found that whaling and non-whaling countries had produced similar numbers of scientific papers on whales between 1986 and 2013. If we consider all the whales captured "and compare them to the very, very small number of scientific publications produced, we say to ourselves it really wasn't worth it and the scientific objectives were certainly not the priority of this activity", Vincent Ridoux, a marine megafauna

researcher at La Rochelle university in France, told AFP. There is also plenty of non-invasive research being carried out on living whales using increasingly sophisticated technology. Those tools include satellite transmitters attached to the mammals, passive acoustic devices in submarine vessels, satellite imagery and artificial intelligence.

Are whales still endangered?

Overall, the moratorium has been successful in enabling the whale population to recover. But there remain sharp variations between regions and species. Japan hunts Bryde's, minke and sei whales, and wants to expand its list to include fin whales as well. The government says the species are "abundant" and that catching them around Japan in limited numbers is sustainable. The Bryde's and common minke are listed as being of "least concern" on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Red List, but globally the sei is "endangered", and fin whales are listed as "vulnerable". Whales also face other threats besides hunting, including ship collisions, entanglements with fishing nets and rising ocean temperatures.

Whales and ecosystems

"Conserving biodiversity is not just a case of saving 'charismatic macrofauna' but maintaining balanced ecosystems for the continued health of nature and humans," Rodhouse said.

Abundant whales in an ecosystem "contribute to enriching the surface layers with mineral salts and mineral elements such as iron", said Ridoux. Those elements are a key source of nutrients for some organisms. Because whales breathe at the surface, they release much of what they consume there, providing a food source for surface-dwelling marine organisms.

'Disturbing' development

In May, Japan launched a new "motherhip" for its whaling fleet to replace its previous lead vessel, retired in 2023. Weighing in at nearly 9,300 tons, the "Kangei Maru" is a substantial upgrade and has raised alarm in the scientific community. "It is very disturbing because it is a ship of large dimensions, it can go very far and therefore has probably very high operating costs," said Ridoux. "If you want to use a boat like this in a commercial logic, you need big quotas to balance the operating costs and there has to be a market for that."

Tokyo argues that eating whale is part of Japanese culture and an issue of "food security" in the resource-poor country, which imports large amounts of animal meat. But whether or not there is a big appetite in Japan for the meat is an open question. Consumption has declined significantly in recent decades to around 1,000 or 2,000 tons per year compared to around 200 times that in the 1960s. — AFP



## Sports

# Mehidy, Shakib lead Bangladesh to maiden Pakistan Test win

## Victory dedicated to people who were killed in political turmoil

**RAWALPINDI:** Spinners Mehidy Hasan Miraz and Shakib Al Hasan took seven wickets between them to secure Bangladesh's maiden win over Pakistan in five-day cricket, a stunning 10-wicket victory in the first Test in Rawalpindi on Sunday.

Mehidy grabbed 4-21 and Shakib 3-44 to trigger a Pakistan collapse on the fifth day, with the home side dismissed for 146 runs in 55.5 overs. That left Bangladesh a target of just 30 runs, which openers Zakir Hasan and Shadman Islam reached in 6.3 overs. Zakir (15) hit the winning boundary, with Shadman at the other end unbeaten on nine, as their squad celebrated a memorable victory. Mohammad Rizwan top-scored for Pakistan in the second innings with 51, including six boundaries, but the home team were staring at defeat on 108-6 at lunch.

A holiday crowd of nearly 5,000 expected Pakistan to fight out a draw but Mehidy bowled Rizwan and trapped last man Mohammad Ali for a duck in successive overs. Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto dedicated the win to people who were killed in political turmoil that resulted in the ouster of premier Sheikh Hasina this month after weeks of student-led protests.

"We are paying tribute to the individuals who recently passed away in our nation during the protest and praying for their souls," he said.

"Thanks Almighty for the win. It was very special to win on my special day," said Najmul, who celebrated his 26th birthday on Sunday. Pakistan skipper Shan Masood described the loss as "disappointing".

"Yes, it is a very disappointing loss," said Masood who has lost four successive Tests as skipper. "We did not take Bangladesh lightly but the pitch did not play as we expected."

Bangladesh, criticized for their lack of Test wins, now have one win each over Australia, England and Pakistan. The win in Rawalpindi was only their sixth in 143 Tests. Pakistan's batting crumbled on a pitch that had been unresponsive over the first four days until small cracks started to appear that were exploited by Bangladesh's spinners.

The hosts also paid for not including a frontline spinner as they fell to the fifth defeat in their past nine home matches, with four draws. Their leading batsmen also failed, with Babar Azam making only 22 and skipper Masood 14. First innings century-maker Saud Shakeel fell for a fourth-ball duck.

Pakistan trailed by 117 on the first innings and resumed at 23-1, only to lose Masood in the second over to pace bowler Hasan Mahmud.

It could have been 28-3 had wicketkeeper Liton Das not dropped a regulation catch off fast bowler Shoriful Islam to give Azam a first-ball reprieve.

Azam hit three boundaries to raise hopes of a Pakistan fightback but was bowled by an inside edge off Nahid Rana for the right-arm pacer's only wicket of the match. Shakib, whose participation in the Test drew protests at home over his political ties to Hasina, had Shakeel stumped and Shafique caught off a miscued shot before lunch.

Agha Salman then fell to off-spinner Mehidy for a



**RAWALPINDI:** Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan (L) is clean bowled as Bangladesh's wicketkeeper Liton Das watches during the fifth and final day of the first Test cricket match between Pakistan and Bangladesh. — AFP

first-ball duck, leaving Pakistan in tatters at 105-6. Mehidy then dismissed Shaheen Shah Afridi and Naseem Shah cheaply in the space of seven runs. Pakistan won 12 of the previous 13 Tests against Bangladesh, six by an innings, with one draw. The

second and final Test will also be played at Rawalpindi from Friday, with the series part of the World Test Championship (WTC). Pakistan slumped to eighth in the nine-team WTC table after their defeat, with Bangladesh climbing to sixth. — AFP

## Arab tennis is in the right direction: Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber

**TUNIS:** Competitions of the Arab Juniors Tennis Championship that was hosted by Tunis concluded on Saturday evening with an unprecedented participation of Arab teams.

Chairman of the Board of the Arab Tennis Federation Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah handed the winners their medals and prizes during the closing ceremony at the Tennis Club in Tunis in the presence of Minister of Youth and Sports Kamel Deguiche, Kuwait Ambassador Mansour Al-Omar, Saudi Ambassador Dr Abdulaziz Al-Saqer and several diplomatic and sports dignitaries.

As for the results Egypt won first place in both genders categories for the under 14 years, while Syria won the 12 years for boys while Tunis won first place for girls. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber was pleased with the success of the tournament and lauded the efforts of Tunis Tennis Federation under the leadership of Dr Salma Mouelhi who was keen on all means of success for this Arab event.

Al-Jaber said the tournament witnessed exciting competition and outstanding levels by all participating teams which indicates that Arab tennis is in the right direction.

He thanked Tunis, for hosting and organizing the



**TUNIS:** Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with sports dignitaries and the winners.

tournament and thanked the Tunis Tennis Federation for an outstanding closing ceremony.

Al-Jaber appreciated the keenness of Arab countries to participate in "this brotherly gathering despite challenges and the difficult circumstances facing some countries". He said the participation of

more than 100 players from 10 Arab countries is unprecedented in the juniors championships.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber thanked Egypt's Tennis Federation for granting the winners of the tournament a wild card to participate in the International Tennis Federation that will be held in Egypt.

## England's Wood out of last two Tests against Sri Lanka

**MANCHESTER:** England fast bowler Mark Wood has been ruled out of the remainder of the Test series against Sri Lanka after scans confirmed a right thigh muscle strain, team management announced Sunday. Wood, whose career has been blighted by fitness issues, suffered the injury during Friday's third day of England's five-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the first Test at Old Trafford.

The 34-year-old express quick left the field just two balls into his 11th over. He didn't feature on Saturday as England went 1-0 up in the three-match series by winning with more than a day to spare, although there were times, on a slow pitch, when they missed the point of difference provided by Wood's speed.

Leicestershire's 20-year-old left-arm pacer Josh Hull has received his first senior call-up to replace Wood in the squad for the remaining two Tests at Lord's, starting on Thursday, and at The Oval commencing September 6.

The 6ft 7in (2 m) Hull has been a key figure in Leicestershire's bowling

attack of recent seasons and starred in their 2023 One-Day Cup final triumph. England already have another fast bowler in their squad in Olly Stone, who could now be in line to play his first Test in three years.

Hull only turned 20 earlier this week and has played just nine first-class matches, taking 15 wickets at an expensive average of 58.06. Under coach Brendon McCullum, the current England regime have shown a willingness to select on potential and skill-set rather than figures. Earlier this month, Hull made his debut for the second-string England Lions, taking 5-74 in a seven-wicket win over Sri Lanka.

### 'Special moment'

But he was not expecting a call-up to the senior squad, with the towering Hull telling BBC Radio Leicester: "It was about half nine (2030 GMT) last (Saturday) night when I got the call from Brendon McCullum. It's a very special moment. "It's come around pretty quickly, I didn't think it would happen this fast, but I am really ex-



**MANCHESTER:** England's Jamie Smith plays a shot on day four of the first Test cricket match between England and Sri Lanka at Old Trafford. —AFP

pected to be joining them. "I was happy with how I performed (for the England Lions) but I never thought it would lead to a call this early.

"They've got Olly Stone there as the first replacement, so it will be a great opportunity to join up and be part of that environment." England are rejuvenating their pace attack follow-

ing the retirements of veterans Stuart Broad and James Anderson, with Gus Atkinson making an exciting start to his Test career. England have had to alter the balance of their side after regular captain Ben Stokes was ruled out of the Sri Lanka series by a torn hamstring, with Ollie Pope appointed as stand-in skipper. — AFP

## Mayweather dominates Gotti in Mexico City exhibition fight

**MEXICO CITY:** Former world boxing champion Floyd Mayweather outmatched John Gotti III, the grandson of the late New York crime boss, in an exhibition fight Saturday that left the Mexico City crowd unimpressed.

Mayweather, 47, retired from boxing in 2017, unbeaten in 50 bouts, but continues to appear in fights that do not count towards his career record. The 31-year-old Gotti, who had a 5-1 record in MMA fights before switching to boxing, is the grandson of John Gotti, the head of the Gambino crime family who died in prison in 2002.

Mayweather has also fought reality television stars and YouTube fighters in

some of his exhibitions. He dominated Gotti from start to finish despite confusion when a round-ending bell did not sound and when the referee left the ring mid-fight. The eight-round bout included two-minute rounds with two-minute rest periods.

Gotti, the first to enter the ring in an arena packed with more than 22,000 spectators, showed little effort during the fight, provoking the audience's disdain. Mayweather came out throwing rights to Gotti's head in the first round, Gotti limiting himself to containing the punishment.

There was a moment of confusion after two minutes because the bell did not ring and the fight continued until complaints

were heard from Gotti's corner. There was more bewilderment in the second round when, after a forbidden punch by Mayweather, Panamanian referee Hector Afu left the ring, apparently annoyed by Mayweather's actions.

Mexican referee Alfredo Uruzquieta then took over. Mayweather easily eluded Gotti in the third round and unleashed on his rival, who he had against the ropes. It was not until the fourth that Gotti threw some serious punches to Mayweather's body, although with little effect. The crowd began to show their displeasure with whistles over Gotti's lack of combativeness towards the end of the round. Mayweather rained blows on Gotti, who did little to defend himself, in the sixth and seventh rounds, leaving fans even more annoyed.

Mayweather cornered Gotti in the final round but his opponent held on until the final bell. There was no official winner



**MEXICO CITY:** US boxer Floyd Mayweather Jr. (R) fights with US boxer John Gotti III during an exhibition fight at the Arena Ciudad de Mexico. — AFP

because the bout was an exhibition match. Mayweather and Gotti fought their first exhibition in South Florida in June 2023, a

fight that was stopped in the sixth round because of insults between both fighters that caused a melee in the ring. — AFP

## Bradley leads Scott by one stroke in BMW Championship

**LOS ANGELES:** Keegan Bradley birdied the 18th hole to take a one stroke advantage over Australia's Adam Scott into Sunday's final round of the PGA Tour's BMW Championship at Castle Pines, Colorado. Surprise leader Bradley, who sneaked into the top 50 for the second event in the FedEx Cup playoff series thanks to his final round last week, carded a 2-under round of 70 after a challenging round in windy conditions.

The 2025 USA Ryder Cup captain shot six bogeys and seven birdies as he jousting with Scott and Sweden's Ludvig Aberg at the top of the leaderboard. "It was tough out there today. It was really windy, a lot of elevated tees that were into the wind, which makes it really tough," said Bradley after sinking a nine-foot putt on the final hole to regain the solo lead.

"I played some brilliant golf but I hit also some terrible shots, too. I guess that's the way of the world. But I'm proud of the way I fought there in the end," he said. Bradley's round was in danger of falling apart on the back nine where he made three straight bogeys between 11 and 13.

But he bounced back with successive birdies and did the same again after a bogey on the 16th. Bradley's status as Ryder Cup captain, despite being only 38 and an active member of the tour, has meant chants of 'USA, USA' around the course.

"It's just incredible. Being the Ryder Cup captain is such an honor, and it comes with such a heavy weight of the world, the United States, the players out here. "But when you get to feel that energy from the fans, it's really special. I haven't felt that since I played in the Ryder Cup or Presidents Cup, what I felt out there today. That was really cool," he said.

Scott, who made his PGA Tour debut at Castle Pines 24 year ago, shot a 2-over 74, the day after his course record equalling 63. The Australian made a poor start, with a bogey on the first where he drove out of bounds, double bogey on the par-4 third and another bogey on the fourth.

But he ended with birdies on the 16th and 17th and said his woes had been due to his failure to adjust to the harder greens. "I kind of felt like I made a meal of that, and I didn't feel like I did that much wrong. A couple of drives were just not quite right, and a three-putt, and all of a sudden I'm kind of chasing," he said.

"I really struggled mostly on the greens today. They were just so different from yesterday's round speed-wise and firmness and look and everything. Felt like I was on a different course almost, and I just battled that most of the round," he added.

The Swedish pair of Aberg and Alex Noren were tied in third place, two strokes behind Bradley. Aberg said he had to deal with nosebleeds due to the high altitude, getting blood on his shirt at one stage.

"There was a lot of things happening, I think. First hole I was kind of handling a little nosebleed incident on the fairway. But felt like I was being aggressive all day," he said after his 71. — AFP



Sports

# Inter Milan see off Lecce as AC Milan crash at promoted Parma

‘Our secret is who we have in the squad’

**MILAN:** Inter Milan got their Serie A title defence up and running on Saturday with a straightforward 2-0 home win over Lecce, while rivals AC Milan crashed to a 2-1 defeat at promoted Parma.

Matteo Darmian nodded Inter ahead in the fifth minute before Hakan Calhanoglu made sure that the majority of the around 70,000 fans at the San Siro went home happy with his 70th-minute penalty.

Simone Inzaghi's team are level with three other teams on four points, including Parma and Genoa who were 1-0 winners at Monza, after their first two matches of the new campaign. "Winning is hard but staying up there is even harder. We had to bounce back after drawing at Genoa and we managed to do that," said Darmian to Sky Sport.

"Our secret is who we have in the squad. At Inter there is a lot of competition and that internal competition is good for everyone."

Inter were far from their thrilling best but didn't need to be against sorry Lecce who are pointless, have conceded six and are yet to score after two fiendish opening fixtures against the champions and Atalanta. Without injured captain and star striker Lautaro Martinez, Mehdi Taremi made his first start for Inter since signing last month after being released by Porto.

The Iran forward had a hand in Darmian's opener, getting a slight touch on a cross and diverting the ball to the Italy defender who made no mistake with an angled header.

Taremi also had claims for a penalty waved away shortly after the break following a clash with Kialon-

da Gaspar in a bit of penalty box chaos, which led to Marcus Thuram having a close-range shot saved by Wladimiro Falcone. It was Thuram who earned Calhanoglu the chance to seal the points from the spot when as he challenged for a cross Gaspar bundled over the France forward, and Turkey midfielder Calhanoglu confidently stroked home.

### Milan 'problems'

Matteo Cancellieri pushed home the decisive goal 13 minutes before the end of an entertaining encounter at the Stadio Ennio Tardini in which Parma defied their newly-promoted status against leaky Milan.

The 22-year-old winger perfectly met Pontus Almquist's low cross to score his first goal since being loaned to Parma by Lazio, who lost 2-1 at Udinese. Milan have collected one point from their first two league matches under Portuguese Fonseca, whose team looked set to go on and take the win when in the 66th minute Christian Pulisic levelled Dennis Man's early close-range finish.

They didn't really wake up until after the half-hour mark when they tested Zion Suzuki three times in the space of a few minutes but and even though Milan were mostly on top they were repeatedly cut open by Parma's counter-attacks.

"I can't hide that it's my responsibility, but it seems clear to me that we have a problem with defending and being aggressive," Fonseca told DAZN.

"We had a good pre-season, but the truth is that this is where we are." Parma were dangerous



PARMA: AC Milan's Dutch midfielder #14 Tijani Reijnders (C) fights for the ball with Parma's players during the Italian Serie A football match between Parma Calcio 1913 and AC Milan. — AFP

every time they went on the counter-attack and could have been out of sight by half-time had their finishing not been so wayward.

Coach Fabio Pecchia celebrated his 51st birthday with a brilliant win which put his team on four points.

"We took on Milan with personality and always had in our heads the idea that we could win," Pecchia

told reporters. "I want to thank the boys because they gave me a great present today."

On Sunday, Antonio Conte's Napoli try to bounce back from a humiliating opening defeat at Verona when they host Bologna, while Roma face Empoli with talisman Paulo Dybala whose expected move to Saudi Arabia fell through. — AFP

## Lewandowski secures Barca win over Athletic

**BARCELONA:** Robert Lewandowski shrugged off a string of missed opportunities to earn Barcelona a 2-1 win over Athletic Bilbao on Saturday in La Liga.

The 36-year-old striker twice hit the woodwork, among other wasted chances, but kept his cool to slot home a 75th-minute winner for the Catalan giants. Teenage starlet Lamine Yamal put Barcelona ahead with a deflected effort but Oihan Sancet pulled Athletic level from the penalty spot before half-time. Lewandowski's strike earned Barcelona their second win from two league matches under new coach Hansi Flick.

"Especially in the first half he could have scored one or two goals...but in the end this is a goal getter, a striker, who scores goals," Flick told reporters.

"The second goal was the winner, three points, perfect." The former Germany and Bayern Munich boss had hoped to utilise new arrival Dani Olmo but with Barcelona unable to register him because of their financial difficulties, the former RB Leipzig playmaker could only watch from the stands.

Pedri started in midfield after injury, along with 17-year-old Spain star Yamal, who shared a joke with his compatriot Nico Williams, a Barcelona target this summer. The winger is set to stay with Athletic this season and some Barcelona fans whistled him during his engaging battle with Jules Kounde. Barcelona drew first blood, with Yamal's effort from the edge of the box deflecting home off Inigo Lekue's head. "I'm very happy for the win, it's important to win at home," Yamal told DAZN. "For my goal I saw a bit of space, I saw Nico coming, who is not very intense when it comes to defending, and when I found the space, I shot."



BARCELONA: Barcelona's French defender #23 Jules Kounde and Athletic Bilbao's Mexican goalkeeper #26 Alex Padilla (bottom) vie for the ball during the Spanish league football match between FC Barcelona and Athletic Club Bilbao. — AFP

Williams whipped a dangerous cross inches wide of the far post at the other end as Athletic threatened. Barca striker Lewandowski, who netted twice at Valencia in their La Liga opener, struck the post after more good work by Yamal and Raphinha.

Athletic pulled level shortly before the break when young centre-back Pau Cubarsi clumsily fouled Alejandro Berenguer in the area. Sancet sent Marc-Andre ter Stegen the wrong way from the penalty spot to send the teams in tied at the break.

Polish veteran Lewandowski hit the woodwork a second time, heading Raphinha's free-kick against the far post from point-blank range. The Brazilian teed up the forward again with an inviting cross but Athletic goalkeeper Alex Padilla made a superb save. Barcelona were turning the screw and got their reward when Lewandowski fired home his third goal of the campaign in the 75th minute. Raphinha played in Pedri, whose cross was palmed out by Padilla into Lewandowski's path and this time he made no mistake. — AFP

## Charismatic German coach Daum dies

**BERLIN:** German coach Christoph Daum, who led Stuttgart to the Bundesliga title in 1992, has died from lung cancer at the age of 70, the German Football League (DFL) confirmed on Sunday. "German football is in mourning after the death of Christoph Daum. The former Bundesliga-winning coach has died at the age of 70 from long-term cancer," the DFL said in a statement.

Daum, who also coached Cologne and Bayer Leverkusen before winning titles in Turkey and Austria, went public with his cancer battle in October 2022, saying he wanted to raise awareness of the illness.

"I try to live my life and not let cancer dominate," Daum said. As was typical during his decades-long career in football, the former coach was bullish in his fight, saying "cancer chose the wrong body". "Christoph Daum has left a significant mark on German football," German FA (DFB) boss Bernd Neundorfer said in a statement.

"He was a pioneer of the modern game and he was combative and passionate until the end." A colourful character, who missed out on the chance to coach Germany after failing a cocaine test, Daum twice guided Cologne to runners-up spots in the Bundesliga in the 1980s, both times behind Bayern Munich, before taking Stuttgart to the title in 1992. Moving to Leverkusen, Daum finished runners up three times, losing the title to Bayern on the final day of the season with a loss at Unterhaching, when a draw would have brought the club a debut top-flight victory.

Bayern Munich proved to be his nemesis and the frequently outspoken Daum often butted heads with Bayern powerbroker Uli Hoeness. After Euro 2000, Daum agreed to take over the head coaching position with the German national team but was implicated in a cocaine scandal before starting the job, fuelled by public accusations from Hoeness.

To prove his innocence, Daum offered to take a hair test—but the results found traces of cocaine. The DFB's contract with Daum was torn up, forcing the coach abroad. Having already won the Turkish title with Besiktas in 1994, he won two more with Fenerbahce, and also picked up a winners' medal in the Austrian Bundesliga with Austria Vienna.

Daum's final coaching post was as manager of the Romanian national team in 2016-17. Hoeness was one of the first to offer condolences on Sunday, revealing the two "made our peace years ago", adding "the news of his death affects me deeply". — AFP

## Duplantis sets new pole vault world record of 6.26m

**CHORZOW, Poland:** Olympic champion Armand Duplantis improved his own pole vault world record by a centimeter at Sunday's Diamond League Silesia meeting, posting a mark of 6.26 meters on his second attempt. Duplantis broke the mark of 6.25m he set when defending his Olympic title in Paris earlier this month.

It is the 10th time the 24-year-old Swede has set a new world mark since he first became the world record holder with a vault of 6.17m in Torun, Poland, in February 2020. — AFP



CHORZOW: First placed Sweden's Armand Duplantis poses next to a board displaying his new 6.26-meter world record after the men's pole vault event of the Silesia Diamond League athletics meeting on Aug 25, 2024. — AFP

# Classifieds

### Clinics & Hospitals

#### Clinics

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

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

#### Hospitals

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

### Change of Name

**I, Husain**, holder of Indian Passport No. X2745991, having permanent address Ward No. 5 Bohra Mohalla Ratangarh, Neemuch Pin: 458226, Madhya Pradesh, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given name) Husain and (surname) Najmi. (25/08/2024)

**I, Tasneem Bohra**, holder of Indian Passport No. X5355352, having permanent address Ward No. 5 Bohra Mohalla Ratangarh, Neemuch Pin: 458226, Madhya Pradesh, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby

declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given name) Tasneem and (surname) Najmi. (25/08/2024)

**I, Shabbir**, holder of Indian Passport No. X5355907, having permanent address Ward No. 5 Bohra Mohalla Ratangarh, Neemuch Pin: 458226, Madhya Pradesh, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given name) Shabbir and (surname) Najmi. (25/08/2024)

**I, Insiya**, holder of Indian Passport No. V9369805, having permanent address

Ward No. 5 Bohra Mohalla Ratangarh, Neemuch Pin: 458226, Madhya Pradesh, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given name) Insiya and (surname) Najmi. (25/08/2024)

**I, MAHAMMAD UMER**, holder of Indian Passport No. U0189191 having permanent address Nayuduvaripalli Etamaripuram Rajampet Tq, YSR District Pin:516128, Andhra Pradesh India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) MOHAMMAD UMAR. (6157#, 23/08/2024)



## Madueke nets treble as rampant Chelsea crush Wolves for six

Arne Slot will take charge of his first Premier League home game as Liverpool boss



WOLVERHAMPTON: Chelsea's Portuguese striker #14 Joao Felix (R) has an unsuccessful shot during the English Premier League football match between Wolverhampton Wanderers and Chelsea. — AFP

**LONDON:** Noni Madueke hit a hat-trick as Chelsea crushed Wolves 6-2 to give Enzo Maresca his first Premier League win as Blues boss, while Newcastle rescued a controversial 1-1 draw at Bournemouth on Sunday.

Maresca suffered a 2-0 loss against Manchester City last weekend in his first game since arriving from Leicester to replace Mauricio Pochettino in the close-season. Chelsea got off the mark under Maresca with a UEFA Conference League play-off victory against Servette on Thursday, but that low-key success was only the prelude to their goal spree at Molineux.

Maresca's side made the perfect start after just 98 seconds when Mathew Cunha could only flick his attempted

clearance from a corner towards Nicolas Jackson, who was left unmarked to head in from six yards.

Jackson's goal infuriated Wolves fans already angry with Chelsea after Madueke posted and then deleted a critical review of Wolverhampton just hours before kick-off. Madueke shared his location, which was Wolverhampton, in the post, which read "this place is s\*\*t".

He later shared: "Damn wrong Instagram account. You lot are too fast." Cunha hauled the hosts level in the 27th minute as the Brazilian forward tormented the Blues again after last season's hat-trick at Stamford Bridge.

Chelsea's Moises Caicedo carelessly lost possession and Rayan Ait-Nouri drove forward before teeing up Cunha,

whose fierce strike flashed past Robert Sanchez and sparked a samba-dancing goal celebration. Cole Palmer restored Chelsea's advantage in the 45th minute, the England forward taking Jackson's flick and lobbing a sublime finish over Wolves keeper Jose Sa.

### Chelsea run riot

The Blues made a hash of clearing Ait-Nouri's free-kick seconds before the half-time whistle and Toti headed it across to Jorgen Strand Larsen, who poked home from close-range. But the rollercoaster clash switched back in Chelsea's favour in the 49th minute as Palmer found Madueke and his shot deflected in off Ait-Nouri.

Madueke struck again nine minutes

later, slotting a composed finish through Sa's legs after Palmer's run unhinged the creaky Wolves defence. The 22-year-old completed his treble with a carbon copy of his two previous goals, once again finishing off another Palmer assist to silence the Wolves boo-boys.

Joao Felix came off the bench to cap the rout in the 80th minute as the Portugal forward marked his debut for Chelsea following his permanent move from Atletico Madrid earlier in the week. Felix, who spent the second half of the 2022-23 season on loan at Chelsea, blasted into the top corner after former Wolves forward Pedro Neto picked him out.

At the Vitality Stadium, Newcastle trailed when Joelinton carelessly lost possession and Antoine Semenyo's low

cross was touched in by Marcus Tavernier in the 37th minute. Eddie Howe's team equalized in the 76th minute as Harvey Barnes floated in a cross that Anthony Gordon slotted home from close-range.

Bournemouth were furious to be denied a stoppage-time winner when VAR ruled Dango Ouatarra had handled before heading in. Arne Slot will take charge of his first Premier League home game as Liverpool boss against Brentford later on Sunday.

Slot was hired from Feyenoord to replace Jurgen Klopp after the German stepped down at the end of last term following nine successful years at Anfield. The 45-year-old started his reign with a 2-0 win at Ipswich in Liverpool's opening league match last weekend. — AFP

## Brilliant Norris stuns Verstappen to win Dutch Grand Prix

**ZANDVOORT:** McLaren's Lando Norris stormed to victory at the Dutch Grand Prix Sunday, a superb drive consigning home favourite Max Verstappen to his first-ever loss in front of his "Orange Army" fans. The British driver claimed his second career chequered flag after winning in Miami in May, closing Verstappen's lead over him in the world championship to 70 points, with the Dutchman coming second.

Despite raucous encouragement from a packed Zandvoort circuit, Verstappen could not extract enough from his Red Bull to compete with a recently upgraded McLaren that is beginning to look like the car to beat in Formula One.

"It feels amazing... The pace was very strong and the car was unbelievable today," said Norris, who also secured a point for the fastest lap. The start was critical. Questions have been asked of the starting ability of Norris, who has three times this season failed to convert pole position into a first lap lead.

And again Norris was sluggish off the line, allowing Verstappen to power around the outside to huge cheers from the crowd, who saw their man take a 0.9-second advantage into the second lap. Buoyed by the fast start, Verstappen clocked the quickest lap in lap two, putting clear daylight between him and the McLaren of Norris.

But the McLaren had been the fastest car in the paddock all race weekend and Norris started slowly but surely eating into Verstappen's lead. By lap 17 out of 72, Norris was only a few tenths of a second behind Verstappen, the Dutchman complaining on his team radio of a lack of grip from his tyres.

### 'I can't go faster'

Norris passed him a lap later on the outside at turn one, Verstappen powerless to prevent the overtake and quickly falling further behind. "I can't go faster,



ZANDVOORT: (From L) Second-placed Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen, first McLaren's British driver Lando Norris and third-placed Ferrari's Monegasque driver Charles Leclerc celebrate during the podium ceremony. — AFP

The car is not responding to my inputs," a desperate Verstappen told his engineers as Norris stretched his advantage to more than four seconds.

On lap 25, Verstappen decided enough was enough and he needed a new set of tyres. Norris pitted the lap after, his team taking 0.6 seconds longer than the Red Bull for the pit stop. Nevertheless, Norris emerged from the two stops five seconds ahead of his rival and promptly produced the fastest lap of the race on his new set of tyres.

By lap 40, Norris had extended the advantage to more than 10 seconds over the three-time champion and just had to stay out of trouble to take the chequered flag. His eventual margin of victory was 22.896 seconds, with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc holding off Norris's McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri to claim the third podium spot after a thrilling battle.

Red Bull's struggling second driver Sergio Perez

finished in sixth position, meaning the gap in the constructors' championship also narrowed from 42 points to 30. "I wouldn't say a perfect race because of lap one again, but afterwards it was beautiful," said Norris.

"I expected Max to start pushing and get a bit of a gap. And he never did. So from that point, I knew we were in with a good fight," added Norris. "But he seemed to just keep dropping off. And my pace was getting better. So it's a nice feeling inside the car. And especially when I got past, you know, I could just get comfortable." The F1 circus now moves on to the famous Monza track in Italy next weekend, round 16 of 24 with everyone snapping at Verstappen's heels. Verstappen has not won a Grand Prix since Barcelona in June, his longest barren spell since 2020 and while it is premature to talk of panic stations at Red Bull, the Dutch weekend will have given some cause for concern. — AFP

## Kuwait wins gold, bronze at Arab Water Sports Championship

**CAIRO:** Kuwait's national swimming team won gold and a bronze medal on Sunday on the first day of the 3rd Arab Water Sports Championship hosted by Cairo. Head of the team's delegation and member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Water Sports Federation Faisal Abu Al-Hassan told KUNA that swimmer Mohammad Zubaid won the gold medal in the 50m butterfly race (15-16 age group) with a time of 24.68 seconds, setting a new Arab record, while his teammate, swimmer Hamoud Al-Hamoud, won the bronze medal in the same race (13-14 age group) with a time of 27.80 seconds.

Abu Al-Hassan praised the players' efforts to achieve distinguished accomplishments and climb the podiums, expecting the Kuwaiti team to achieve positive results in the championship, which will continue until next Wednesday.

He added that the third Arab Water Sports Championship in Cairo will be attended by the most prominent Arab swimmers from 17 countries, expressing his hope to achieve more victories to raise the name of Kuwait high in various international forums.

He stressed his determination to continue supporting Kuwaiti players and encouraging them to achieve more accomplishments that contribute to developing the game and raising the Kuwaiti flag on various platforms. The Kuwaiti swimming team delegation participating in the Arab Championship includes 27 swimmers (boys and girls) competing in three categories (13-14 years), (15-16 years) and (17-18 years) in two morning and evening sessions at the (Swimming Pools Complex) in (Cairo International Stadium). — KUNA