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## Kuwait slams Zionist Aqsa call

Gazans flee Zionist massacres • Settlers kill Palestinian in West Bank, strike kills 5 others



GAZA: A boy carries a humanitarian aid package provided by UNRWA in central Gaza City on Aug 27, 2024. — AFP

**KUWAIT/GAZA:** Kuwait on Tuesday voiced condemnation and denunciation of recent remarks by a Zionist occupation minister calling for establishing a synagogue at Al-Aqsa Mosque in a bid to wipe out the religious identity and legal status of the holy site. Zionist National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir had told Army Radio that if it were possible, he would build a synagogue at the Al-Aqsa compound, known to Jews as the Temple Mount.

In a press statement, the Kuwaiti foreign ministry termed this aggressive behavior as provoking sentiments of all Muslims, while calling on the international community to take up its responsibility to put an end to the Zionist occupation's obvious violations and breaches of international law and safeguard the religious and historical identity of Al-Aqsa Mosque.

In the Gaza Strip, Palestinians displaced by fighting crowded onto the seashore as Zionist forces continued to battle Hamas fighters in central and southern areas, freeing one captive in an operation in the south of the enclave on Tuesday. Gaza's health officials reported that at least 22 Palestinians had been killed by Zionist military strikes across the territory.

As ceasefire talks were continuing in Cairo with little sign of a concrete breakthrough over key issues separating the sides, the Zionist entity said it had rescued Qaid Farhan Alkadi, a Bedouin citizen of the

Zionist entity, after a "complex operation" in southern Gaza. It said his medical condition was normal.

In recent days, the Zionist entity has issued several evacuation orders across Gaza, the most since the beginning of the 10-month war, prompting an outcry from Palestinians, the United Nations, and relief officials over the reduction of humanitarian zones and the absence of safe areas. Residents and displaced families in the southern city of Khan Younis and Deir Al-Balah, in central Gaza, where most of the population is now concentrated, said they have been pushed to live in tents now packed on the beach.

"Maybe they should bring ships, so next time they order people to leave we can jump there, people are now on the beach near the seawater," said Aya, 30, a displaced woman from Gaza City, who now lives with her family in western Deir Al-Balah. "Every day they say talks are progressing, an agreement is close, then all falls like dust. Do negotiators know that every day more families get wiped out by (Zionist) bombardment? Does the world understand that every day more costs us more lives?" she told Reuters via a chat app.

Palestinian health officials said Zionist strikes killed nine Palestinians in Bureij and Maghazi, two of Gaza's eight historic refugee camps, while another strike killed five people in Khan Younis and a third

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### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Power usage hits record

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait registered a new record for maximum electricity consumption at 17,640 MW, recorded at 2:00 pm Tuesday as the temperature reached 50 degrees Celsius, the ministry of electricity, water and renewable energy announced.

#### No monopoly on uniforms

**KUWAIT:** Schools are not allowed to demand that students buy their uniforms from a single store or seller, the Kuwaiti Competition Protection Agency said in new guidelines released to maintain competitiveness in the field.

#### Mawlid holiday on Sept 15

**KUWAIT:** The Cabinet, in its weekly meeting on Tuesday, announced Sunday, Sept 15 as a public holiday on the occasion of the Prophet's (PBUH) Birthday. The Cabinet noted bodies with work of a special nature will decide their own holiday, taking public interest into account. — KUNA

#### UAE seeks access to Durov

**DUBAI:** The UAE said Tuesday it had requested consular services for Telegram's Pavel Durov after the Dubai-based tech boss was arrested in France over alleged failings to curb criminality on the app. "The UAE is closely following the case of its citizen Pavel Durov, founder of Telegram, who was arrested by the French authorities in Paris-Le Bourget Airport," the state's foreign ministry said in a statement. — AFP

#### India's Shah to be ICC chief

**NEW DELHI:** India's cricket chief Jay Shah has been elected unopposed as chairman of the sport's world body, the International Cricket Council, it said Tuesday. "I am committed to working closely with the ICC team and our member nations to further globalize cricket," Shah said. — AFP (See Page 14)

### UN chief issues 'global SOS' over fast-rising Pacific

**NUKU'ALOFA, Tonga:** United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres sent out a global climate "SOS" at a Pacific islands summit on Tuesday, unveiling research that shows the region's seas rising much more swiftly than global averages. "I am in Tonga to issue a global SOS — Save Our Seas — on rising sea levels. A worldwide catastrophe is putting this Pacific paradise in peril," he said.

Sparingly populated and with few heavy industries, the Pacific islands

collectively pump out less than 0.02 percent of global emissions every year. But this vast arc of volcanic islands and low-lying coral atolls also inhabits a tropical corridor that is rapidly threatened by encroaching oceans. The World Meteorological Organization has been monitoring tide gauges installed on the Pacific's famed beaches since the early 1990s.

A new report released by the top UN climate monitoring body showed seas had risen by around 15 cm in some parts of the Pacific in the last 30 years. The global average was 9.4 cm, according to the report. "It is increasingly evident that we are fast running out of time to turn the tide," said the forecasting agency's top official, Celeste Saulo.

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KANOKUPOLU, Tonga: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres poses for a photo with Tongan youth after a visit to Hihifo on Aug 27, 2024. — AFP

### Iraq issues arrest warrants for 'heist of the century'

**BAGHDAD:** An Iraqi criminal court on Tuesday issued arrest warrants for a businessman and a former government official wanted over their alleged involvement in stealing \$2.5 billion of public funds. The scandal, dubbed the "heist of the century", sparked widespread anger in Iraq, which is ravaged by rampant corruption, unemployment and decaying infrastructure after decades of conflict. The criminal court issued the warrants for businessman Nour Zuhair and

Haitham Al-Juburi, a former adviser to then prime minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi, state news agency INA reported. The two suspects are among several facing a trial which opened in mid-August, but are on the run and failed to appear in court. According to the tax authorities, the defendants allegedly expropriated the \$2.5 billion between Sept 2021 and Aug 2022 through 247 cheques cashed by five companies.

The money was subsequently withdrawn — in cash — from the firms' accounts. The owners of those accounts — most of whom are also on the run — have also been subject to arrest warrants. Around 30 suspects are facing trial, INA reported, including six already behind bars or awaiting extradition to Iraq, the national anti-fraud agency has said. In Oct 2022, Zuhair was arrested at Baghdad airport as he was trying to leave the country.

A month later he was released on bail after giving back

more than \$125 million and pledging to return the rest in installments. Juburi also returned \$2.6 million of the allegedly embezzled funds before disappearing, a judicial source told AFP. The current whereabouts of both men is unknown. However, wealthy businessman Zuhair was back in the news over the few days after he reportedly had a car crash in Lebanon, following an interview he gave to an Iraqi news channel. "The Nour Zuhair affair is a scandal... that concerns the entire political system," Iraqi journalist and commentator Hamed Al-Sayyed told AFP. He blamed the authorities for releasing him on bail two years ago, allowing him "to flee". "His release from jail, at a time when he was being investigated, shows that the political system, at the highest echelons, is complicit," Sayyed added. Corruption is endemic in Iraqi state institutions, with the top echelons of power often evading accountability. — AFP

### Australia to cap foreign student numbers at 270K

**SYDNEY:** Australia plans to cap foreign student numbers from next year, the government said Tuesday, curbing a multi-billion dollar industry as it faces political heat on immigration. New international student numbers for university, higher education and vocational training will be limited to 270,000 in 2025, Education Minister Jason Clare told a news conference. "It will mean that some universities will have more students this

year than next year. Others will have less," Clare said as he unveiled the plan, which will require legislation.

Official data show that foreign students were worth more than Aus\$42 billion (US\$28 billion) to Australian universities and vocational education centers in 2023. Australian authorities granted more than 577,000 international student visas in the fiscal year to June 30, 2023. Clare said the change would mean about the same number of international students starting a course next year as there was before the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2025 breakdown will be 145,000 new foreign students for universities, 30,000 for other higher

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MELBOURNE: Women walk past signage advertising Australian universities in the central business district in this June 10, 2020 file photo. — AFP



# Arabs condemn Zionist minister's preposterous remark on Al-Aqsa

## GCC denounces extremist and provocative statements

**RIYADH:** Secretary General of the GCC, Jassem Al-Budaiwi, stressed that the outlandish and preposterous statement made by a Zionist minister on Al-Aqsa mosque confirmed the desire to continue inflaming the situation and ensuring that stability was not achieved in the region. According to a statement issued by the GCC, the Secretary General also expressed his complete rejection, condemnation, and strong denunciation of such extremist and provocative statements, which called for the establishment of a synagogue in Al Aqsa Mosque, emphasizing the need to respect Islamic sanctities and to stop these attempts aimed at Judaizing Al-Aqsa Mosque.

He also called on the international community to take immediate action and assume its responsibilities in halting these violations. He reiterated the firm positions of the GCC states regarding the Palestinian cause as the foremost concern for Arabs and Muslims and reiterated support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state within the borders of June 4, 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Meanwhile, the Arab Parliament issued a strong condemnation on Tuesday in response to comments made by extremist Zionist Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir. In a statement, the Arab Parliament described Ben-Gvir's remarks as provocative and dangerous, asserting that they pose a direct threat to the historical and legal status quo in Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The statement emphasized that such comments were part of ongoing efforts by the occupation to alter the Arab character of Jerusalem and undermine the rights of the Palestinian people.

The Parliament warned of the serious consequences these actions could have on regional peace

and stability, particularly in light of efforts to achieve a ceasefire in Gaza. The Arab Parliament called on the international community and relevant institutions to intervene urgently to halt these actions and statements, which it warned could escalate the conflict and heighten tensions in the region. The Parliament also called for international protection for the Palestinians, their holy sites, and a just, lasting, and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The GCC Secretary-General has reiterated that the ever-escalating tensions in the Middle East stem from two main reasons: Zionists' unjust occupation in Palestine and their countless international law violations in Gaza. During his address at the 'European Forum Alpbach 2024' in Austria, Al-Budaiwi called on the international community to hold Zionists accountable for their abhorrent war crimes and international law violations, as he restated the GCC's backing of establishing an independent state of Palestine according to the 1967 borders.

Al-Budaiwi renewed the GCC's invitation to hold an international conference with all concerned parties attending to settle this conflict and achieve a permanent ceasefire. The Secretary General pointed to the soaring global challenges and highlighted the significant role of diplomacy and international cooperation to collectively find solutions that ensure global peace and stability. He added that recent initiatives by the GCC aim to create favorable conditions for smooth negotiations, guided by international law and the UN Charter.

Al-Budaiwi affirmed the GCC's ongoing efforts to



**JERUSALEM:** A Super blue moon rises behind the Dome of the Rock mosque in Old Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque compound. — AFP

provide humanitarian aid to affected countries, particularly their efforts in Yemen and Sudan, affirming their commitment to relieve the civilians from the suffering of conflicts. The European Forum Alpbach

2024, organized from August 24th to August 26th, 2024, by the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs, is part of the UN-Austria initiative on multilateral partnerships. — KUNA

## What is behind the decline of marriage?

By Ghadeer Ghloom

**KUWAIT:** Although marriage is a natural instinct inherent in human nature, the avoidance of marriage has become a widespread phenomenon among today's youth. To understand the reasons behind this phenomenon, which contradicts human nature, Kuwait Times spoke with psychological and social counselor Abdullah Ben Hasan, who discussed the issue from several perspectives.

According to Ben Hasan, social factors, as commonly recognized, include high dowries, insufficient income, and so on. However, the potential psychological factor is fear. "Fear is the strongest emotion that drives a person to avoid doing anything. It is not necessary for one to experience a negative event to develop this fear. It is enough for people to "witness negative experiences around them, which can plant the seeds of fear toward something that is inherently positive but is practiced incorrectly," he explained.

Ben Hasan further elaborated that poor choices are the main cause of unsuitability. Thus, the psychological factor in this avoidance to marriage may be due to seeing a flood of previous negative experiences that likely resulted from incorrect choices rather than issues with marriage itself. He said: "This is compounded by the unfairness of not considering different positive experiences. In cognitive therapy, this is known as mental filtering, which means I am biased toward negative facts while ignoring posi-



**Abdullah Ben Hasan**

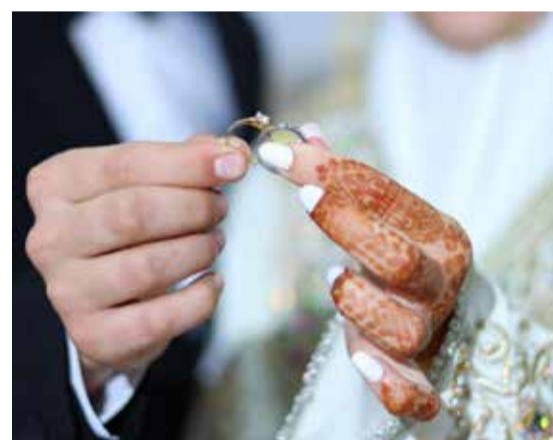
tive ones related to the same issue. This distorts the true concept of marriage for individuals on both sides."

Moreover, Ben Hasan highlighted that having a life partner is considered a fundamental factor for psychological stability, balance, and emotional fulfillment, as well as for forming an independent family and having children, describing them as natural

needs. Without them, an individual may end up feeling lonely and emotionally needy for a partner and children to share daily life and experiences with.

People who refrain from marriage might immerse themselves in various social events and interact with many people as a compensatory behavior for their loneliness. However, they will often find that their external environment is also preoccupied with forming families and raising children. Alternatively, they might engage in different compensatory activities to make up for emotional needs, but without achieving actual emotional fulfillment.

"This is known as "source shifting," where they seek emotional satisfaction from inappropriate sources, like excessive emotional eating. Here, the true source of satisfaction is shifted to another source," Ben Hasan said. Chronic emptiness is one of the major challenges faced by those who refrain from marriage according to Ben Hasan: "From



a purely psychological perspective, and without delving into legal aspects or housing matters, the biggest challenge is chronic emptiness. For example, during joyful occasions like holidays and celebrations, most people are busy with their families. Those who refrain from marriage and are at a certain age may find themselves without anyone to share these moments with, leading to feelings of emptiness and emotional neediness".

"Emotional problems become more pronounced for individuals who experience loneliness in such situations. Additionally, reaching a certain age may create a need for a permanent partner to exchange affection, love, and mutual care, which results from companionship and love. Especially in later life stages, this age group may experience a heightened sense of emptiness and a mistaken belief that they could be a burden to others, such as friends and colleagues, who are not responsible for them," he added.

## European Council chief tours Gulf region ahead of EU-GCC summit

**KUWAIT:** The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, will visit the Arabian Gulf region on August 27-29, the European Council of the European Union (EU) said Monday. According to a press release, the "President will hold consultations regarding the first-ever Summit between the European Union (EU) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) taking place on October 16, 2024 in Brussels, as well as on a broad range of issues, from the crisis in the Middle East to Russia's war against Ukraine, and all relevant aspects of bilateral cooperation."

The statement noted, "While visiting Doha, the President will meet with Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani as the current rotating presidency of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The President will meet in Riyadh with Saudi Arabia Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," the statement said.

"While in Riyadh, the President will also meet with Jassem Al-Budaiwi, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Going forward, the President will continue engaging with the other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council as part of the preparations for the upcoming summit," the statement noted. "As relations between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council have grown significantly in recent years, the EU-GCC Summit will be an opportunity for the Leaders of the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council to confirm their joint commitment to work together in many spheres of their cooperation to further build a partnership based on sustainable prosperity and stability for both sides," the statement concluded. — KUNA



**Charles Michel**

## Ministry speeds up housing projects

**KUWAIT:** Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullah Al-Mishari stressed on Tuesday the importance of combining all efforts to accelerate the mechanism of implementing housing projects and launching new ones in commitment to providing houses care for citizens. Al-Mishari said after meeting with leaders of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare that the work plans that the Authority will follow the directives from the political leadership through combining efforts with relevant government agencies to accelerate the pace of completion and implementation of existing projects.

He stressed the need to develop a work plan that meets the needs of citizens with existing housing requests so that it can be implemented according to the aspirations and directives of the political leadership, which contributes to achieving the country's development plan and its goals. He pointed out the importance of coordination with relevant agencies to quickly complete all required services in new cities. He praised the efforts made by the employees to develop the transaction system and convert



a large part of it into digital services that facilitated citizens' implementation through the government's (Sahel) application.

### Electricity supply

Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Housing Welfare announced on Tuesday the completion of supplying electricity to 1,018 residential plots in the two suburbs (N5 and N12) in Al-Mutlaa City, representing 23 percent of the number of plots in the two suburbs. The Housing Authority said in a press statement that the mentioned plots are the

first group of plots for the two suburbs within the Corporation's contract for the supply and extension of medium and low voltage cables.

The plots that have been connected to electricity are distributed between 544 plots in the suburb (N12) and 474 plots in the suburb (N5) in coordination with the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy. The Corporation has completed the excavation, extension, and connection of the cables for these plots, while the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy has completed the inspection of the cables. — KUNA

## KRS and ASPN to rehabilitate Gaza's agricultural sector

**AMMAN:** The Kuwait Relief Society (KRS) on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Jordanian Arab Society for the Protection of Nature (ASPN) to implement projects aimed at rehabilitating the agricultural sector in the Gaza Strip, with support from the Kuwaiti Direct Aid Society (DAS). Director General of the Kuwait Relief Society Abdulaziz Al-Obaid told KUNA that the MoU comes within the framework of the Gaza Strip farms revival project launched by the Jordanian Society for the Protection of Nature (SPSN) in March.

Al-Obaid added that the project aims to provide

support to Palestinian farmers after the Zionist occupation systematically targeted agricultural facilities and destroyed vegetable farms, depriving the residents from benefiting from the agricultural products. For his part, Director General of the Direct Aid Society Dr Abdullah Al-Sumait told KUNA that the goal of this one-year project is to contribute to supplying agricultural products, fodder seeds, various vegetable seedlings, fertilizers, pesticides, and extending irrigation networks, greenhouse covers, and agricultural ponds in the Gaza Strip.

The Arab Society for the Protection of Nature in Jordan is an independent, non-profit civil society organization based in the Jordanian capital, Amman. It is concerned with protecting natural resources in light of the increasing challenges and dangers they face, especially those to which they are exposed as a result of conflicts, wars, and occupation. The Society for the Protection of Nature aims to rehabilitate and sustain environmental, agricultural, and food systems

in Arab regions that are affected by wars and conflicts in coordination with all Arab and international bodies and organizations. — KUNA



**GAZA:** Palestinian shepherds walk alongside their herd past destroyed buildings in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip on August 27, 2024. — AFP

## Arab League mourns ex-Secretary General

**CAIRO:** Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the Arab League Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi said Tuesday that the Arab world has lost a prominent figure. Former Secretary General Dr Nabil Al-Arabi was known for his dedication to serving the Arabs and for his tangible contributions to strengthening joint Arab action. In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Ambassador Al-Mutairi expressed his condolences to the family of the late Dr Nabil Al-Arabi, who passed away on Monday, asking God Almighty to accept the deceased with His vast mercy and to admit him to the highest heavens and to inspire his family and relatives with patience and solace.

Regarding his contributions during his tenure as Secretary General of the Arab League, Ambassador Al-Mutairi referred to the keenness shown by the deceased to support joint Arab action and belief in the Palestinian cause, which he defended. He praised the role Dr Nabil Al-Arabi played in mobilizing international support to issue a legal opinion from the International Court of Justice declaring the construction of the separation wall illegal and demanding its removal.

He also appreciated the role played by the deceased in resolving the crises that the Arab region went through during his tenure, relying on his legal background and belief in international law in dealing with crises and implementing United Nations resolutions in a way that serves Arab issues, recalling the virtues of the deceased in strengthening Arab cooperation with effective regional blocs. Egypt on Monday mourned its former Foreign Minister and former Secretary General of the Arab League, who passed away at the age of 89. The Arab League also mourned its former Secretary General. — AFP

Local

# Ministry of Health inaugurates Umm Al-Maradem Island Clinic

Part of efforts to provide basic medical services to island's visitors, workers

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Health announced on Tuesday the opening of the Umm Al-Maradem Island Clinic as part of the efforts of the Medical Emergency Department to provide basic medical services and first aid to the island's visitors and workers, under the directives of Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi and in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior represented by the General Department of Coast Guard.

The Ministry said in a press statement that this step comes within the context of the continuous efforts to provide basic health care to various segments of society and to enhance health services and expand their reach to various regions of the country. She added that the clinic is affiliated with the Ahmadi Health Ambulance District, which contributes to enhancing its readiness to deal with emergency cases, noting that in the event of any emergency requiring urgent intervention, patients are quickly transported by helicopter (air ambulance) or speedboats and directed to the nearest general or specialized hospital to complete the necessary treatment.

The Ministry explained that the clinic reflects the keenness and commitment to providing integrated and comprehensive medical services in various parts of the country, including islands and remote areas, and also reflects the importance of cooperation between various government agencies to achieve health development goals and ensure the highest levels of safety and comfort for visitors to coastal areas and islands. — KUNA



Integrated medical equipment at Umm Al-Maradem Island Clinic. — KUNA photos

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islands and remote areas, and also reflects the importance of cooperation between various government agencies to achieve health development

goals and ensure the highest levels of safety and comfort for visitors to coastal areas and islands. — KUNA



## Military chiefs discuss strategies, mechanism

**KUWAIT:** Commander of the Unified Military Command of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Lieutenant General Eid Al-Shalawi visited Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College on Tuesday. The Chief of Staff stated in a press statement that the Assistant Commander of Mubarak Al-Abdullah College for Joint Command and Staff, Brigadier General Abdullah Khalaf, received the Commander of the Unified Military Command of the Cooperation Council and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of his visit to the country. The team listened to a detailed briefing on the mechanism of the educational process, the curricula, lectures and exercises provided by the college to students from friendly countries during the training season. — KUNA



## KRCS lays foundation stone for fire, disaster control center in Turkey

**ANKARA:** The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) participated on Tuesday in laying the foundation stone for the project to establish a fire and disaster control center in the Turkish province of Antalya, with a contribution from the Kuwait Finance House. The center will serve the Turkish people in the Mediterranean region. The head of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society delegation to Antalya, Khaled Al-Mutairi, told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the value of the financial support provided by the Kuwait Finance House amounts to five million dollars under the direct supervision and follow-up of the Kuwait Red Crescent.

Al-Mutairi added that the Mediterranean region includes the provinces of Adana, Antalya, Mersin, Burdur, Hatay, Isparta, and Osmaniye, which are often exposed to natural disasters such as earthquakes, fires, floods, and landslides. Regarding the area of the center project, he said that it will be built on a land with a total area of about 38,000 square meters and a building area of about 13,000 square meters, noting that the number of beneficiaries of the center is about three million people.

The building consists of two floors. There will be a building for training its cadres and a building for rescue equipment. The project is expected to be completed within a period of time not exceeding two years. Al-Mutairi said that Kuwait is keen to continue providing support to Turkey in facing disasters, especially after the devastating earthquake that occurred last year and caused loss of life and property. In this regard, he referred to the Kuwaiti role in the official "Kuwait by Your Side" campaign, during which donations worth \$42.6 million were collected in the first six hours of its launch to support earthquake victims under the directives of the supreme political leadership to support the Turkish and Syrian people.

For his part, the Governor of Antalya, Turkey, Hulusi Sahin, praised, during the foundation stone-laying ceremony, Kuwait's contribution to the "vi-

tal" project that serves the Turkish people and the Mediterranean region, expressing his pride in hosting the Kuwait Red Crescent Society delegation in the coastal province. He expects the project to be completed within two years, and it will include two headquarters for the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (AFAD) and the Ministry of Interior, as well as a headquarters for training and qualifying AFAD cadres.

The Director General of the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (AFAD), Sadi Ergin, expressed in a similar speech his happiness at the launch of this project. Ergin appreciated the grant allocated to the project under the agreement signed between the Ministry of Interior, its affiliated agency (AFAD), and the Kuwait Red Crescent, which will enhance cooperation between the two countries, praising the fruitful cooperation between Turkey and Kuwait. — KUNA



Kuwait Red Crescent Society participates in laying the foundation stone for the establishment of a disaster center in Antalya, Turkey.— KUNA photos



Antalya governor Hulusi Sahin and head of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society Mission Khaled Al-Mutairi.

## CAN organizes trip for child cancer survivors

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** The Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) campaign organized an entertainment trip for children who recovered from cancer and their guardians to Bay Zero Water Park under the themed "our summer with CAN is more beautiful." CAN is keen to promote awareness about cancer in Kuwait and to assist the children and to make them happy. Research and studies have confirmed that psychological support is one of the most important factors in treating cancer patients because it helps raise the recovery rate. Chairman of the Board of CAN, Dr. Khalid Al-Saleh, said the number of cancer cases among children is 1,372 according to statistics from the Kuwait Cancer Control Center, which is 160 cases per year and represents 5.2 percent of all types of cancer.

Around 54.8 percent of cancer cases are under 10 years old, and 87.3 percent of the patients had their cancer under control. The most common cancer in children is leukemia, making 40 percent of children cancers, followed by brain tumors. He recommended that children have periodic exams when symptoms appear and urged people to keep away from risk factors that may cause cancer. Dr Al-Saleh lauded the role of the health care professionals. He called on parents to be aware of the signs that could be an indicator of children having cancer. These include weight loss, fever, headache attacks, bone pain, and sometimes bruises or bleeding and skin rashes. He emphasized the mother's role and her responsibility in checking the primary symptoms.



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In my view

Oh, how much we  
love the Blue Bird!

By Dr Khalid A Al-Saleh

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The "Blue Bird" is the symbol of Kuwait Airways. Bad establishments can bear the name of Kuwait and bring a bad image for the country, just like the cases in other Arab nations, but the influence will never be like that of Blue Bird which is a reflection of our homeland and a direction for us. Kuwait Airways has been subjected to many attacks, few of them are justified, and many had other intentions. Some of the attacks were meant for the country itself or an attempt to privatize it, yet Kuwait's Blue Bird is still resisting all attacks.

I was shocked while reading about the number of aircraft owned by Gulf countries. It stated that Kuwait Airways owns the least number of aircraft. I hope that in this new era, Kuwait Airways will receive the support it needs to expand and spread in the world's skies - carrying a positive image about Kuwait. It is necessary to avoid flaws. The best way to recognize these flaws is to give opportunity for people to express themselves and lay their complaints as feedbacks. They can separate the malicious complaints from the constructive criticisms that call for reform.

The management should address complaints and mistakes that are occurring frequently. There is no excuse to repeat mistakes. There are a lot of complaints about delays, price differences between classes and bad seats in some aircraft. Other complaints include the types of food, bad reception, and replies during booking as well as the pilot's efficiency. How do we strengthen the positives and reduce negatives?

The first rule is to acknowledge that mistakes are part of the dynamics, and no matter how successful you are, there will be drawbacks. Constructive criticisms should be tolerated so as to avoid common mistakes. The best solution for this syndrome is to follow up and re-strategize. Successful leaders create a follow-up system for feedbacks and sustainable growth. This will help in promoting Kuwait Airways and Kuwait's image.



The seventh aid relief plane by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society departs. – KUNA photos

KRCS sends 7th aid-loaded  
plane to troubled Sudan

Kuwait provides medicines, food, relief supplies, tents, ambulances

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced on Tuesday the departure of the seventh aid relief plane from Abdullah Mubarak Airbase, carrying onboard two ambulances heading to Port Sudan International Airport. KRCS' Director of Disaster Management and Emergency, Yousef Al-Miraj, said to KUNA that this contribution is an extension of KRCS' humanitarian role, given the current situation in Sudan, which is facing humanitarian conditions that require support at all levels.

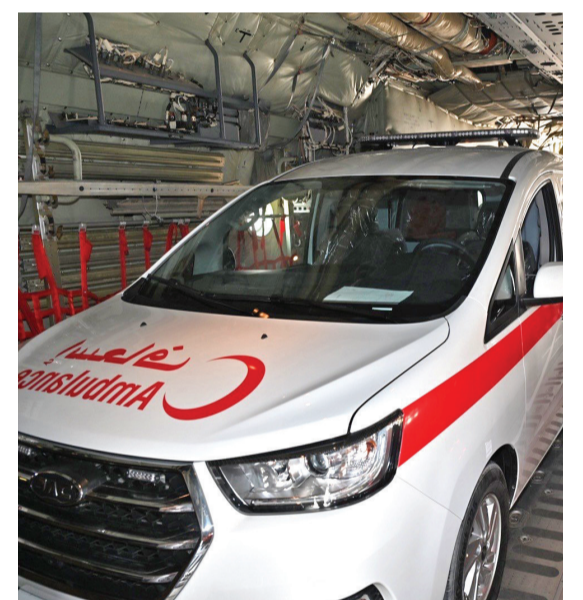
This support aims to enhance the emergency and ambulance capabilities in Sudan to remain able to provide emergency services to the Sudanese people, he added. Al-Miraj said that the donation would help save many lives as well as cover part of the hospitals' needs for ambulances, expressing hope that the ambulance would provide immediate support to improve health conditions for the Sudanese people.

He noted that KRCS provided various aids, including medicines, food, relief supplies, tents, and ambulances, reaffirming that Kuwait always stands

by Sudan. He expressed his deep gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, and Kuwait Air Forces, commanding their role in aiding and rescuing those affected worldwide, guided by the leadership of Kuwait.

Meanwhile, the sixth aircraft (part of the Kuwaiti airbridge) arrived in Port Sudan carrying 10 tons of humanitarian aid to relieve the affected Sudanese people. Dr Fahad Al-Dhafeeri, Kuwait's ambassador to Sudan, explained to KUNA that with the help of the Kuwait Relief Society, this batch included hundreds of tents and necessary equipment to aid the thousands of people displaced by the widespread flooding.

Al-Dhafeeri emphasized that these efforts are in line with the directives of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, reflecting Kuwait's solidarity with the Sudanese people. This airbridge is the second of its kind since the outbreak of conflict in Sudan in April 2023. The first airbridge included 16 aircraft and two ships, dedicated to delivering aid to the affected people. — KUNA

The unexpected rise  
of risky trend: Teens  
addicted to vaping

By Noor Akar

KUWAIT: Have you ever glanced at your phone, only to be struck by the sight of a group of teenagers casually vaping, clouds of vapor swirling around them as if it's the most normal thing in the world? In Kuwait, this scene has become increasingly common. Vaping is a trendy pastime among the youth, but they are not aware that smoking is a serious issue that could threaten not only their lives but also the well-being of future generations. But what's the reason that is driving them to use this device with different flavors?

## Why are teens drawn to it?

Teenage vaping in Kuwait is increasing as a result of a combination of social pressures, cultural influences, and accepted standards. Some teenagers are seeking attention: they want people to pay attention to what they do. They see themselves as "cool people." It could also be the curiosity about what smoking vapes looks like. Kossai Assad, a 17-year-old student in high school, stated, "It all started with me and my friends. We were discussing things that we wanted to try. One of our friends was joking and said something about trying vaping for the first time. So the next day, we bought one, and we all shared it, and we felt nothing until it became more than a habit. Every time we hang out, we buy one and share it."

Maha Ahmad, a 16-year-old student, started vaping while in the university. "The reason was because everyone surrounding me is vaping, but my parents would kill me if they knew about it. So, I am trying to vape when they are not around." Regarding the risks, Maryam Adnan, 18, was aware of the risks of vaping, saying, "Yes, I'm aware of the risks of vaping as I have read and written many articles about it. I have also watched visual and demonstrative videos to give me more in-depth knowledge on how it damages the lungs." Khaled Dafar, a 19-year-old university student, was asked if he tried to quit, he stated "I tried to stop smoking but it was not easy to quit. Every time I quit, I get stressed easily."

## The dangerous trend

Most adults, especially non-smokers, are mad when they see teenagers vaping on social media platforms.

Kuwait Times spoke with Yousef Odeh, a 37-year-old parent with two kids, to view his opinion on the vaping trend. "Youth these days are lost. All they think about is doing bad things. I will never encourage my kids to smoke," he said. As for 34-year-old Omar Ali, vaping is a bad habit. "Vaping among teens has become a trend that is spreading rapidly. I think there should be more awareness from the authorities on the risks. Teenagers must also know the seriousness of the issue. It is not a healthy habit," he added.



## Silent danger

Most of the teenagers think that vapes are safer than cigarettes. Vapes contain nicotine and chemicals more than cigarettes, which makes them more dangerous. According to a cardiologist, Hashem Abbas, short-term risks of smoking include breathing problems, recurrent bronchitis, an inability to perform tasks, rapid heartbeat, and poor appetite. Long-term risks include narrowing of the coronary arteries, lung cancer, and poor memory, which may develop into early Alzheimer's disease. Additionally, the arteries in the neck and brain may become narrowed, leading to an early stroke or heart attack at a young age. He advised teenagers to stop smoking. It's impossible to overlook the alarming trend of teenagers who are starting to vape in Kuwait. Vaping and smoking (in general) present serious risks to the health and wellbeing of young people, even though they may seem like a simple trend.

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New mpox strain changing fast

## Dozens dead in Sudan dam collapse

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DEIR EL-BALAH: A Palestinian youth pulls salvaged items in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip on August 27, 2024. — AFP

# Gaza war drives children to work

## Children struggle through destruction, displacement to cover basic needs as prices soar

**KHAN YUNIS:** Some crush rocks into gravel, others sell cups of coffee: Palestinian children in Gaza are working to support their families across the war-torn territory, where the World Bank says nearly everyone is now poor. Every morning at 7:00 am, Ahmad ventures out into the ruins of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza, picking through the rubble produced by steady Zionist bombardment.

"We gather debris from destroyed houses, then crush the stones and sell a bucket of gravel for one shekel (around 0.25 euros)," the 12-year-old said, his face tanned by the sun, his hands scratched and cut and his clothes covered in dust. His customers, he said, are grieving families who use the gravel to erect fragile steles above the graves of their loved

ones, many of them buried hastily. "At the end of the day, we have earned two or three shekels each, which is not even enough for a packet of biscuits," he said. "There are so many things we dream of but can no longer afford."

The Zionist entity has been bombing Gaza since October 2023, when a Hamas attack on the south of the entity left 1,199 people dead, most of them civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Zionist official figures. The entity's retaliatory military campaign has killed at least 40,476 people in Gaza, according to the territory's health ministry. The UN rights office says most of the dead are women and children. "Nearly every Gazan is currently poor," the World Bank said in a report released in May.

### 'Barefoot through the rubble'

Child labor is not a new phenomenon in Gaza, where the United Nations says two-thirds of the population lived in poverty and 45 percent of the workforce was unemployed before the war. Roughly half of Gaza's population is under 18, and while Palestinian law officially prohibits people under 15 from working, children could regularly be found working in the agriculture and construction sectors before October 7.

The widespread wartime destruction as well as the constant displacement of Gazans trying to stay ahead of Zionist strikes and evacuation orders has made that kind of steady work hard to find. Khamis, 16, and his younger brother, Sami, 13, instead spend their days walking through potholed streets and displacement camps trying to sell cartons of juice.

"From walking barefoot through the rubble, my brother got an infected leg from a piece of shrapnel," Khamis told AFP. "He had a fever, spots all over, and we have no medicine to treat him." Aid workers have repeatedly sounded the alarm about a health system that was struggling before the war and is now unable to cope with an influx of wounded and victims of growing child malnutrition.

### Money gone 'in a minute'

The paltry sums Khamis and Sami manage to earn do little to defray the costs of survival. The family spent 300 shekels (around 73 euros) on a donkey-drawn cart when they first fled their home, and later spent 400 shekels on a tent. At this point the family has relocated nearly 10 times and

struggles to afford "a kilo of tomatoes for 25 shekels", Khamis said.

Moatassem, for his part, said he sometimes manages to earn "30 shekels in a day" by selling coffee and dried fruit that he sets out on cardboard on the roadside. "I spend hours in the sun to collect this money, and we spend it in a minute," the 13-year-old said. "And some days I only earn 10 shekels while I shout all day to attract customers," he added.

That's a drop in the ocean for daily expenses in a territory where prices for goods like cooking gas and gasoline are soaring. In these conditions, "we only think about our basic needs, we have forgotten what leisure is, spending for pleasure," Moatassem said. "I would like to go home and get back to my old life." — AFP

## Meta CEO: US pressure on COVID posts was 'wrong'

**WASHINGTON:** Republicans cried victory on Tuesday after Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg said he now believes US government pressure on his social media platforms to take down certain COVID-19 content in 2021 was "wrong," and would resist similar attempts in the future. In a letter addressed to House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan and released by Republicans on the committee on Monday, Zuckerberg addressed a number of controversies centered on content moderation on his platforms.

He also asserted that he did not plan on repeating funding efforts for US election infrastructure ahead of the country's presidential poll this year, donations that had drawn sharp criticism from Republicans and used to stoke conspiracy theories. The letter was a submission to a committee led by the hard-charging Republican Jordan that over the past months has accused tech platforms of throttling conservative views and pushing a democratic agenda.

The submission comes just over two months out from a tightly contested US presidential election race, with the spotlight on widespread online misinformation about the candidates. Regarding the pandemic, the Facebook founder said President Joe Biden's administration had in 2021 "repeatedly pressured our teams for months to censor certain COVID-19 content, including humor and satire." "I believe the government pressure was wrong, and I regret that we were not more outspoken about it," Zuckerberg wrote. "I feel strongly that we should not compromise our content standards due to pressure from any administration in either direction — and we're ready to push back if something like this happens again."

### 'Big win'

Republicans took the letter as a victory, with the Republicans' House Judiciary Committee account on social media platform X, formerly Twitter, labeling it a "big win for free speech." The White House defended its actions during the pandemic, which killed more than a million people in the United States amid bitter political battles over vaccines and attempts to limit the spread of the virus.

"When confronted with a deadly pandemic, this administration encouraged re-

sponsible actions to protect public health and safety," a White House spokesman said Tuesday. "We believe tech companies and other private actors should take into account the effects their actions have."

Zuckerberg also said he would not be repeating his COVID-era push to fund nonprofits working to support US electoral infrastructure due to such donations being seen by Republicans as being partisan. "My goal is to be neutral and not play a role one way or another — or to even appear to be playing a role," he wrote. The donations have been seized upon by former President Donald Trump, who has falsely alleged that the donations helped throw the 2020 vote by helping fund the organization of elections in swing state counties. Trump has even opposed a potential US ban on Chinese-owned TikTok under the premise that it would only help the tech tycoon.

Seeing Zuckerberg regret his non-partisan personal donations under the pressure of Congress is both ironic and "a little disturbing to see," author and misinformation expert Renee DiResta told AFP. "Certain parts of the letter strike me as very much caring to right-wing pressure," she added.

Trump, who is seeking a return to power in November after losing his reelection fight to Biden in 2020, claimed that Zuckerberg's statement offered support for his conspiracy theory that the election was stolen. "This is what everyone's been waiting for — THE 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WAS RIGGED!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

The letter to Congress also touched on controversy regarding Facebook's handling of a story regarding US President Joe Biden's son Hunter that was published by the New York Post in 2020. Zuckerberg said the story, which purported to expose corrupt dealings by the Biden family, was "temporarily demoted" while Facebook fact-checkers probed the possibility of it being "a potential Russian disinformation operation." The Meta CEO said the story was ultimately found not to be part of such an operation and that the platform has changed its policy such that posts in the United States are no longer demoted while fact checkers investigate them. — AFP

## Directorate General of Civil Aviation State of Kuwait

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation announces the issuance of:

**Subject: Tender No. (2022/2021-2)**

**The Provision of Operations and Integrated Dynamic Management of Ground Handling Services, Construction and Maintenance of Related Facilities, and the Procurement of Necessary Equipment.**

Based on the request made by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Tender documents can be obtained from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation - Financial Affairs Department - Tenders and Contracts Section, Headquarters - Subhan - Kuwait International Airport, according to the details provided below:

### ANNOUNCEMENT

Tender Publishing	Tender Closing Date	Price of Tender Documents	Site Visit	Pre-Tender Meeting
Sunday, August 2024, 25	Sunday, November 24, 2024	KD 5,000	Sunday, September 29, 2024, at 10:00 AM	Monday, September 2024, 30, at 10:00 AM, at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation - Auditorium, Headquarters - Subhan

- Bidders must satisfy the following conditions and provide supporting documents; any bidder who does not meet these conditions will be excluded:
  - International experience in the domain of Ground Handling Services of not less than (10) International Airports and not less than 50 Million passengers in the year 2023.
  - The bidder must be international providing ground handling services in the country of registry and in other international airports in other countries and possessing the ISAGO certification (IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO)).
  - The Bidder must be registered with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation at the time of submitting the bid.
  - The price of tender documents mentioned above must be made using KNET, Visa, or MasterCard.
  - Provide a Bid bond of 1,000,000 KD, in the form of a bank guarantee issued by an accredited bank in Kuwait.
  - Tender documents shall be returned after filling in the required forms and enclosing the required and necessary

- documentation and must be submitted in an official envelope sealed with wax.
- The final deadline for submitting bids is Sunday, November 2024, 24, at 1:00 PM at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. Bids will not be accepted after the specified time.
- The final date for submitting queries is 5 working days after the pre-tender meeting, either by official letter addressed to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation or via email to tenders@dgca.gov.kw.
- The final date for submitting details of Bidders representatives to request access permits before the site visit is one week before Sunday, September 2024, 22.
- A letter from the Bidder authorizing its representatives for a site visit must be provided with the following:
  - copy of the Identification cards (local company - local agent)
  - copy of the passports
  - copy of the Kuwaiti entry visas
- Bids should be submitted to the Main Administrative Building in Subhan - Ground floor, Bids Receiving Room.

## International



**TANGASI:** Sudanese walk on a flooded street in the town of Tangasi, in Sudan's Meroe province, some 300 kilometers (200 miles) north of the capital Khartoum, on August 27, 2024.

# Dozens dead in Sudan dam collapse

Aid struggles to reach survivors as 118,000 displaced, 300,000 affected nationwide



**ARBAAT:** Damaged trucks buried in the mud after the collapse of the Arbaat Dam, 40km north of Port Sudan following heavy rains and torrential floods on August 25, 2024. — AFP photos

**ARBAAT, Sudan:** Emergency responders were scrambling on Tuesday to find out how many people remain missing after waters burst through a dam in eastern Sudan, resulting in the worst in a series of floods that have devastated a country already torn by 500 days of war. The collapse of the Arbaat Dam on Sunday killed 30 people and likely dozens more, in the latest in a series of inundations around the country as this year's rainy season hits heavier, and in places earlier, than in past years.

War-shattered Sudan is already suffering from the world's largest hunger and displacement crises, and the flooding has impeded aid delivery already disrupted by the conflict between the army and its rival, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. "Even before the dam burst people were

trapped by the flooding and couldn't get anything from Port Sudan. The aid coming in now can't get to the people," said Mohamed Othman, a leader from one of the flooded villages. "Children are hungry and the roads are closed."

A single excavator carried people and food across the water in Arbaat. Some 118,000 people have been displaced nationwide and more than 300,000 affected across the country, as the floods destroy homes and spread diseases including cholera. "We don't know how many are unaccounted for (in Arbaat). It's very difficult to get information out from there," said UN OCHA spokesperson Jens Laerke.

In the Darfur region, the flooding has blocked food deliveries, including the first shipment of supplies from the World Food Program to fam-

ine-threatened Kreinik since the re-opening of the Adre border crossing to humanitarians. The bridge leading to the town, where thousands of displaced people are sheltering with little food, was destroyed in the rains, said one local volunteer. WFP on Sunday said that the first shipments since mid-July had made it through the al-Tina border crossing into North Darfur, having been blocked by flooding there. In Tokar, also in Red Sea state, at least 500 households were displaced as of Sunday, as people waded through rivers in between damaged homes. Overnight, heavy rains hit several parts of Northern Sudan, with images on social media showing collapsed roofs and flooded neighborhoods, though little official information was immediately available on losses there. — Reuters

## Indian police fire teargas at hundreds of Kolkata protesters

**KOLKATA:** Police in India fired teargas and water cannon to disperse hundreds of protesters marching in the eastern city of Kolkata on Tuesday to demand the resignation of a top state minister in the wake of a gruesome rape and murder of a trainee doctor. Protesters led by university students broke through the iron barricades set up on the route of their march to the West Bengal state secretariat, television footage showed, resulting in a baton charge by the police, who had earlier declared the protest illegal.

The August 9 attack on the 31-year-old doctor has caused nationwide outrage, similar to the widespread protests witnessed after a 2012 gang-rape of a 23-year-old student on a moving bus in New Delhi, with campaigners saying women continue to suffer from high levels of sexual violence despite tougher laws. A police volunteer has been arrested for the crime and the federal police have taken over the investigation.

Junior doctors have refused to see non-emergency patients in many parts of the country since the incident at Kolkata's state-run R G Kar Medical College, as they launched protests demanding justice for the victim and greater safety for women at hospitals. India's Supreme Court has created a hospital safety task force and has requested protesting doctors return to work, but some have refused to budge, including in West Bengal, of which Kolkata is the capital.

On Tuesday, more than 5,000 policemen were deployed in Kolkata and the neighboring city of Howrah, a senior officer said, as the protests led by some university students took off, demanding the resignation of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Kunal Ghosh, a spokesperson for Banerjee's ruling Trinamool Congress Party, blamed the police crackdown on "lawlessness" created by workers of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, which is the main opposition party the state, as well as groups affiliated to it. The BJP has extended its support to the protesting students, while senior state leader Suwendu Adhikari told reporters that Banerjee's administration was trying to suppress the rape and murder incident — a charge the state government has denied. — Reuters



**KOLKATA:** Police use water canons to disperse activists carrying India's flag as they march towards the state secretariat demanding the resignation of the chief minister of the country's West Bengal state amid protests against the rape and murder of a doctor on August 27, 2024. — AFP

## UN chief issues 'global SOS' over...

Continued from Page 1

Some sites, particularly in Kiribati and Cook Islands, measured a rise that matched or was just under the global average. But other sites, such as the capital cities of Samoa and Fiji, were rising almost three times higher. In low-lying Pacific nation Tuvalu, land is already so scarce that throngs of children use

the tarmac at the international airport as their own makeshift playground.

Scientists have warned that, even under some moderate scenarios, Tuvalu could be almost entirely wiped off the map within the next 30 years. "It's disaster after disaster, and we are losing the capacity to rebuild, to withstand another cyclone or another flood," Tuvalu Climate Minister Maina Talia told AFP Monday on the summit's sidelines. "For low-lying island states, it's a matter of survival for us."

The plight of Pacific islands has been easily overlooked in the past, given their relative isolation and lack of economic might. But the region is increasingly seen by scientists as a climate canary in the

coal mine, hinting at the troubles potentially facing other parts of the planet. "This new report confirms what Pacific leaders have been saying for years," Australian climate researcher Wes Morgan told AFP. "Climate change is their top security threat. Pacific nations are in a fight for survival, and cutting climate pollution is key to their future."

Surrounded by millions of square miles of tropical ocean, the South Pacific is uniquely threatened by sea-level rise. The vast majority of people live within five kilometers of the coast, according to the United Nations. Rising seas are swallowing up scarce land and tainting vital food and water sources. Warmer waters are also fuel-

ing more intense natural disasters, while ocean acidification slowly kills the reefs that nourish key marine food chains.

Pacific nations are pushing for carbon polluting countries to cut emissions and fund climate resilience programs. The issue is expected to feature heavily in summit talks throughout the week. "The need for loss and damage finance is here today, and costs will only rise without urgent climate action now," said Rosanne Martyr, a senior scientist with the Climate Analytics policy institute. "In 2020, some Pacific Island nations including Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and Micronesia lost more than one percent of their GDP to rising seas." — AFP

## Kuwait slams Zionist Aqsa call...

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killed three others in Rafah. At the Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah, relatives of those killed in the Maghazi camp arrived to say farewell to their loved ones before burials.

"Suddenly we heard them saying that they (Zionists) struck the building, they struck the building, we started calling them on their mobile phone but no one was answering, then we called the neighbors and they told us that the building has been struck, the missile fell inside our son's house," said Palestinian woman Umm Mohamed Thabet. She said her daughter and her daughter-in-law had been killed, along with her 12- and five-year-old grandsons and a granddaughter, whose twin survived. "Those who are inside the house, look who they are, women and children, these are their targets."

Later on Tuesday, a Zionist air strike killed five Palestinians, including three children, in Khan Younis, medics said. More than 40,400 Palestinians have been killed in the war, according to Gaza's health ministry, mostly women and children. The crowded enclave has been laid to waste and most of its 2.3 million people have been displaced multiple times and face acute shortages of food and medicine, humanitarian agencies say.

Meanwhile, Zionist settlers shot dead one Palestinian and wounded three others in the occupied West Bank's

Bethlehem, while five others were killed in a Zionist strike on the Nur Shams refugee camp near the city of Tulkarem, the Palestinian health ministry said. Palestinians regularly accuse Zionist security forces of standing by and allowing groups of violent settlers to attack their houses and villages and the incidents have attracted increasing concern internationally.

On Monday, United Nations aid operations in Gaza ground to a halt after the Zionist entity issued new evacuation orders on Sunday for Deir Al-Balah, where the UN operations center was located, a senior UN official said. The evacuation order came as the UN has been preparing a campaign to vaccinate an estimated 640,000 children in Gaza against polio, after at least one case of the disease was identified. As the fighting continued, negotiators in Cairo continued meetings aimed at halting the fighting and bringing 109 Zionist and foreign captives home in an exchange deal for Palestinian prisoners. Although there has been optimism from the United States, which is supporting the talks along with Egypt and Qatar, Hamas and the Zionist entity have been trading blame for a lack of progress.

Among the main sticking points has been the Zionist entity's insistence on maintaining control over the so-called Philadelphia corridor on the border with Egypt, which the Zionist entity says has been used as one of the main routes for smuggling weapons into Gaza. The Zionist entity has also insisted on checks on people moving from southern and central Gaza into northern areas across the Netzarim corridor, running across the center of the Gaza Strip, saying it needs to ensure armed fighters cannot move north. — Agencies

## Australia to cap foreign student...

Continued from Page 1

education providers, and 95,000 for vocational education and training, the government said. The new limit aims to replace a recent policy of giving priority to students deemed to be at low risk of visa non-compliance — a system that has favored top-ranked universities while drastically slowing visas for other institutions.

Clare said the government would inform universities on their specific enrolment caps. The University of Melbourne said in a statement that it had received its indicative cap, without elaborating, and was assessing the financial and other implications. "The cap on international students will have detrimental consequences for our University, the higher education sector generally, and the nation for years to come," said its Vice-Chancellor Professor Duncan Maskell.

The University of Sydney also said it was studying the likely impact of the cap. "We'll continue to work collaboratively with governments and the sector on managed growth of international higher education, one of Australia's most valuable exports," it said in a statement. Universities Australia, the peak body for universities, said the government move would "apply a handbrake" to the sector.

"We acknowledge the government's right to control migration numbers but this should not be done at the expense of any one sector, particularly one as economically important as education," said Universities Australia chair David Lloyd. International students were Australia's second largest industry after mining, accounting for more than half of the growth in Australia's economy last year, Lloyd said. "Every dollar from overseas students is reinvested back into Australia's universities. Having fewer students here will only widen the funding gap at a time universities need greater support."

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said this month the industry was "absolutely vital" for Australia. But he said universities should not be overly reliant on overseas students, in part because of the implications for migration. About 69 percent of Australian respondents blamed immigration for high house prices, said an Essential poll for The Guardian published on Tuesday. About the same share of people — 42 percent on each side — described immigration as "generally positive" or "generally negative", it said.

Net migration to Australia surged 26.3 percent in calendar 2023 to 547,300, official figures show, with 751,500 people immigrating while 204,200 left. Australia's government also plans to protect the international education industry from "crooks who try to exploit it", the education minister said. More than 150 "ghost colleges" had recently been shut down, Clare said, describing them as "a back door" to let people work in Australia rather than get an education. — Agencies

International

# New mpox strain changing fast

## African scientists 'blindly' working to respond to disease

LONDON/CHICAGO: Scientists studying the new mpox strain that has spread out of Democratic Republic of Congo say the virus is changing faster than expected, and often in areas where experts lack the funding and equipment to properly track it. That means there are numerous unknowns about the virus itself, its severity and how it is transmitting, complicating the response, half a dozen scientists in Africa, Europe and the United States told Reuters.

Mpox, formerly known as monkeypox, has been a public health problem in parts of Africa since 1970, but received little global attention until it surged internationally in 2022, prompting the World Health Organization to declare a global health emergency. That declaration ended ten months later. A new strain of the virus, known as clade 1b, has the world's attention again after the WHO declared a new health emergency.

The strain is a mutated version of clade I, a form of mpox spread by contact with infected animals that has been endemic in Congo for decades. Mpox typically causes flu-like symptoms and pus-filled lesions and can kill. Congo has had more than 18,000 suspected clade I and clade 1b mpox cases and 615 deaths this year, according to the WHO. There have also been 222 confirmed clade 1b cases in four African countries in the last month, plus a case each in Sweden and Thailand in people with a travel history in Africa.

"I worry that in Africa, we are working blindly," said Dr Dimie Ogoina, an infectious diseases expert at Niger Delta University Hospital in Nigeria who chairs the WHO's mpox emergency committee. He first raised the alarm about potential sexual transmission of mpox in 2017, now an accepted route of spread for the virus.

"We don't understand our outbreak very well, and if we don't understand our outbreak very well we will have difficulty addressing the problem in terms of transmission dynamics, the severity of the disease, risk factors of the disease," Ogoina said. "And I worry about the fact that the virus seems to be mutating and producing new strains." He said it took clade 1b in Nigeria five years or more to evolve enough for sustained spread among humans, sparking the 2022 global outbreak. Clade 1b has done the same thing in less than a year.

### Mutating 'more rapidly'

Mpox is an orthopoxvirus, from the family that causes smallpox. Population-wide protection from a global smallpox vaccine campaign 50 years ago has waned, as the vaccinating stopped when the disease was eradicated. Genetic sequencing of clade 1b infections, which the WHO estimates emerged mid-September 2023, show they carry a mutation known as APOBEC3, a signature of adaptation in humans. The virus that causes mpox has typically been fairly stable and slow to mutate, but APOBEC-driven mutations can accelerate viral evolution, said Dr. Miguel Paredes, who is studying the evolution of mpox and other viruses at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in Seattle. "All the human-to-human cases of mpox have this APOBEC signature of mutations, which means that it's mutating a little bit more rapidly than we would expect," he said.

Paredes and other scientists said a response was complicated by several mpox outbreaks happening at once. In the past, mpox was predominantly acquired through human contact with infected animals. That is still driving a rise in Congo in clade 1 cases - also known as clade 1a - likely due in part to de-



BUKAVU: Doctor Robert Musole, medical director of the Kavumu hospital, visits patients recovering from mpox in the village of Kavumu. — AFP

forestation and increased consumption of bushmeat, scientists said. The mutated versions, clade 1b and 1c, can now essentially be considered a sexually transmitted disease, said Dr. Salim Abdool Karim, a South African epidemiologist and chair of the Africa CDC's mpox advisory committee. Most of the mutated clade 1b cases are among adults.

The virus also can spread through close contact with an infected person, which is likely how clusters of children have been infected with clade 1b, particularly in Burundi and in eastern Congo's displacement camps, where crowded living conditions may be contributing. Children, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems or other illnesses

may be at greater risk of serious mpox disease and death, say the WHO and mpox scientists.

Clade 1 has typically caused more severe disease, with fatality rates between four percent to eleven percent, compared to around one percent for clade 1a. Ogoina said data from Congo suggests few have died of the new 1b version, but he feared some data is being mixed up. More research is urgently needed, but three teams tracking mpox outbreaks in Africa say they cannot even access chemicals needed for diagnostic tests. Clade 1b can also be missed by some diagnostic tests. Planning a response, including vaccination strategies, without this is difficult, the scientists said. — Reuters

## Durov's Telegram: 'Weapon of war' under scrutiny

PARIS, France: The arrest of maverick entrepreneur Pavel Durov has drawn global attention to the importance of his messaging app Telegram for Russian troops and propagandists as Moscow's war against Ukraine grinds into its third year. Since the Kremlin invaded Ukraine in 2022, Telegram, which has over 900 million active users, has emerged as a crucial platform used by pro-war bloggers to justify Moscow's invasion and sow disinformation in Ukraine and the West.

It is also used as a tool by Ukraine - President Volodymyr Zelensky posts his daily nightly address on Telegram - although for Kyiv the app appears to lack the same military significance. Observers say that in the absence of a modern battlefield management system, Russian troops have also grown to rely on Telegram in their day-to-day operations, using the encrypted app for everything from the transfer of intelligence to course-correcting artillery attacks and guiding Iskander missile systems.

The arrest of the Russian-born Telegram chief in France has sent shockwaves among Russian authorities and war propagandists who fear the popular app will be compromised if Durov hands the encryption keys over to Western intelligence. "They're terrified," Ivan Filipov, who studies Moscow propaganda, said, referring to influential pro-

war bloggers with tens of thousands of followers. If Western intelligence gets a backdoor into Telegram "it would be an absolute disaster" for Russia, Filipov told AFP, summing up their thinking.

"It's about management on the ground," added Filipov, who runs a widely-followed Telegram channel. A self-proclaimed libertarian, Durov has championed confidentiality on the Internet. Moscow tried to block Telegram in 2018, but abandoned those efforts two years later. Pro-war blogger Andrei Medvedev said Telegram had emerged as the "main messenger" of Russia's invasion against Ukraine. "This is an alternative to classified military communications," Medvedev said.

Alexei Rogozin, head of the Centre for the Development of Transportation Technologies, said many joked that Durov's arrest was tantamount to "the arrest of the chief of communications

for the Russian armed forces - this is how troop battlefield management depends on Telegram today." "Intelligence transfer, artillery course-correction, video streaming from copters and many other things are indeed often carried out with the help of Telegram," said Rogozin, the son of the controversial former Russian space agency chief, Dmitry Rogozin.

Bulgarian journalist Christo Grozev, who has investigated Russian intelligence services and was close to Navalny, said Russian domestic security service FSB and the GRU military intelligence have used Telegram to recruit saboteurs and plot "terrorist acts". "I believe that France has no right to treat him any differently than anyone who runs a marketplace selling drugs and child porn, and refuses to remove such services," Grozev told AFP, referring to Durov. — AFP

## 8 stabbed, hundreds arrested at London's Notting Hill Carnival

LONDON: Eight people were stabbed, and police arrested hundreds during last weekend's Notting Hill Carnival, one of the world's largest street festivals held annually in West London. Updating on their policing operation late Monday, the capital's Metropolitan Police said five people were stabbed on the final day of the world-renowned three-day celebration of British Afro-Caribbean identity.

That followed three knifings on Sunday, with three of the victims of the violence over the long weekend left in life-threatening condition, the force said. Officers made at least 230 arrests on Monday, including 49 for possession of an offensive weapon, on top of scores of arrests the previous day. Three firearms were seized, and 35 officers were also injured during

the event, which attracts around a million people annually over the August bank holiday weekend.

The policing numbers were similar to last year when there were 10 stabbings and around 300 arrests. Hundreds of thousands of revelers packed the streets of West London for the carnival, filling the Notting Hill neighborhood and surrounding districts with color, costumes, dancing, and music. Around 7,000 officers were on duty for the event, which has repeatedly been marred by violence, particularly knife crime, but is enjoyed incident-free by the vast majority.

However, the Met's deputy assistant commissioner Ade Adelekan said he was "tired of saying the same words every year" after a woman attending the carnival with her child was among those stabbed. "We only very narrowly avoided a fatality," he added, urging carnival-goers to report any crimes they witness. The celebration of British Afro-Caribbean culture traces its roots back to the 1950s after the first surge in arrivals from former British colonies post-World War II. Feathered dancers, steel bands, and earth-shaking sound systems feature in the vibrant yearly event. — AFP



LONDON: Police officers make an arrest at the Notting Hill Carnival in west London on August 26, 2024. — AFP

## Spain to donate 500,000 mpox vaccines to Africa

MADRID: Spain will donate 500,000 mpox vaccine doses to countries in central Africa suffering from a surge in cases, the government said Tuesday. The doses amount to 20 percent of Spain's total mpox vaccine reserves, the health ministry said in a statement without specifying which nations in the region will receive the vaccines or when they will arrive.

Spain also urged its European Union peers to follow suit and also donate 20 percent of their mpox vaccine stockpile, saying it "makes no sense to stockpile vaccines where there is no problem," the statement added. France and Germany have both an-

nounced they will each donate 100,000 mpox vaccine doses to countries suffering from the emergency.

Formerly known as monkeypox, mpox is an infectious disease caused by a virus transmitted to humans by infected animals that can also be passed from human to human through close physical contact. It causes fever, muscle pains and skin lesions and in an increasing number of cases, death.

The disease's resurgence and the detection in the Democratic Republic of Congo of a new strain, dubbed Clade 1b, prompted the World Health Organization to declare its highest international alert level on August 14. Outbreaks have been reported in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda since July.

No mpox cases have yet been reported in Spain. Sweden's Public Health Agency announced earlier this month it had registered a case of the Clade 1b variant of mpox. While that was the first case in Europe, the patient had been infected during a visit to an affected African country. — AFP

From 28 August To 03 September 2024

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**KD. 1.795** From 29 to 31.08.2024  
~~KD. 1.695~~  
**KD. 1.695**

**Avocado Hass**  
(Australia) per kg



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**KD. 1.195**

**Tomato**  
(Jordan) Box



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**KD. 2.990**

**Local Kuwaiti Veal**  
Bone-in /kg



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**KD. 3.190**

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2024

# Starmmer warns Oct 30 budget will be 'painful', signals unpopular decisions

## UK PM suggests possible higher taxes on the wealthy

**LONDON:** UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer warned Tuesday that his new government's first budget in just over two months will be "painful", asking the country to "accept short-term pain for long-term good". Starmer, whose Labour Party won a landslide parliamentary majority on July 4, used his first major speech since then to lay the ground for the much-anticipated fiscal event on October 30.

He also used the address, from the Downing Street garden, to attack the ousted Conservatives, reiterating claims they had left a £22 billion (\$29 billion) "black hole" in the public finances.

"There is a budget coming in October, and it's going to be painful," Starmer said. "Those with the broadest shoulders should bear the heavier burden," he added, hinting at tax rises for some after Oct 30. Labour has pledged not to hike taxes on "working people", which would appear to rule out raising income tax, other social security and VAT rates.

But there is growing speculation that other taxes, like capital gains, could be targeted. Starmer insisted the UK must look beyond tinkering with taxes and that growing the economy remained the "number one mission". But he also cautioned that his government's fiscal inheri-

ance would not be "easily fixed".

"We're going to have to take tough decisions, I did not cater for a £22 billion black hole," he added. Political opponents have argued that the government was aware of the country's perilous financial plight months ago and is preparing the ground for unpopular announcements.

Labour has insisted the Tories misled the public and others on the issue, including the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). The independent fiscal watchdog has said it is investigating the last government's spending forecasts in light of Labour's black hole claims.

In his speech, Starmer also addressed the recent anti-immigration riots sparked by the deadly Southport knife attack. Officials have blamed far-right elements for helping to stir up the disorder, which targeted mosques and hotels housing asylum-seekers as well as police officers and other properties. Attempting to link the disturbances to the Conservatives' legacy, the UK leader said they "didn't happen in a vacuum" and had "exposed the state of our country". They "revealed a deeply unhealthy society... weakened by a decade of division and decline, infected by a spiral of populism which fed off cycles of failure of the last government". "Every time they faced a difficult prob-

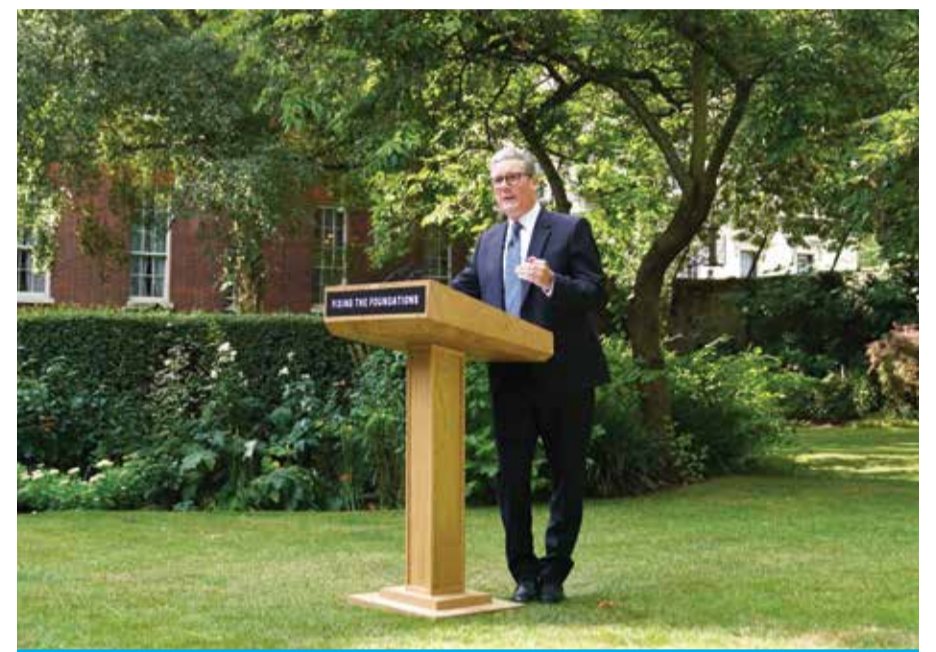
lem, they failed to be honest, they offered the snake oil of populism, which led to more failure," Starmer argued.

"We have inherited not just an economic black hole but a societal black hole and that is why we have to take action and do things differently. Part of that is being honest with people about the choices we face and how tough this will be," he said. "Frankly, things will get worse before we get better," he told the audience of apprentices, teachers, nurses, small business owners and firefighters.

The rose garden last made headlines after it was used by former Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his staff to hold parties during the COVID lockdowns, events that Starmer said had shattered the trust between the public and its politicians. Conservative leadership contender, Kemi Badenoch, who is also the party's policy chief for housing and communities, said the speech was based on a "dishonest analysis".

"The truth is that Keir Starmer is managing voters' expectations for a decade of decline," she said in a statement.

Finance minister Rachel Reeves has said the projected public finances overspend means having to cut billions of pounds of spending. "Those who made the mess should have to do their bit



**LONDON:** Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer speaks during a press conference in the Rose Garden at 10 Downing Street in central London on August 27, 2024. — AFP

to clean it up," Starmer said, referring to the water regulator's new ability to place tough fines on companies responsible for allowing sewage into lakes and rivers. "But just as when I responded to

the riots, I'll have to turn to the country and make big asks of you as well, to accept short term pain for long term good, difficult trade off, but the genuine solution." — Agencies

## Japanese scramble to buy beloved rice as shortages bite

**TOKYO:** The threat of a "megaquake", a series of typhoons, and a week-long national holiday have some Japanese scrambling to buy rice — the nation's cherished staple food — with the government warning Tuesday against panic buying. "We could only procure half the usual amount of rice this summer and bags of rice get quickly sold out," a clerk at a branch of the popular Fresco supermarket chain told AFP in the Japanese capital.

Rice shelves in some stores emptied or stocks were rationed after a government warning this month — since lifted — of a possible "megaquake", as well as several typhoons and the annual Obon holiday.

Other factors include lower harvests caused by hot weather and water shortages, as well as increased demand related to record numbers of foreign tourists. At one food store in Tokyo, a sign seen by AFP read: "In order for many customers to be able to buy, we ask you to purchase one (bag of rice) a day per family."

A worker at another store in Tokyo said: "We can't purchase any rice at all, and there's no prospect of buying anytime soon". The Fresco worker told AFP that daily stocks ran out by midday.

"Customers queue up before the store opens but



**TOKYO:** Empty shelves of rice are pictured in a supermarket with a notice written: "Due to shortage of resource materials, supply of rice has been unstable. In order for many customers to be able to buy, we ask you to purchase one (bag of rice) a day a family." — AFP

piles of bags, each of which contains 10 kilograms (22 pounds), are always sold out during the morning," he said. Farm minister Tetsushi Sakamoto appealed for calm Tuesday. "Please be cool-headed in your purchase activity by buying only the amount of rice you need," Sakamoto said, stressing "the supply shortage situation will be gradually resolved."

Rice is deeply ingrained in Japanese culture and its harvesting has shaped the nation's landscape — even being used as a currency in the 7th century. With an annual consumption of seven million tons

per year, it is by far the most consumed food staple in the country. Demand has been falling for some time, however, because of a declining population and changing eating habits by many Japanese as they opt for alternatives. The nation's stockpile in June was the lowest since 1999 when comparable data was first collected, but officials believe the inventory is sufficient.

A new harvesting season has started with 40 percent of the crop available by the end of September, a farm ministry official said. — AFP

## Oil, gold come off boil as Middle East risks; US rates in focus

**LONDON:** Gold prices were just shy of a record peak and oil prices leveled off on Tuesday after a surge over the past week, as investors sought safety amid geopolitical risks and looked ahead to Nvidia earnings and US inflation data later this week.

In New York, the main indexes were all slightly lower in early trading, while at mid-afternoon in London the FTSE 100 and Frankfurt's DAX were up slightly, with Paris's CAC 40 little changed. Oil prices gave up some of their recent gains, and the dollar remained under pressure from expectations of narrowing interest rate differentials. The markets are seeking "more clarity from US economic data about the amount that the Fed may be prepared to ease in September and in the coming months," Jane Foley, head of foreign exchange strategy at Rabobank London, told AFP.

After US Federal Reserve chairman Jerome Powell sent stock markets soaring and the dollar plunging Friday when he signaled that a rate cut was coming, attention this week has turned to how deep the cut could be. US second-quarter economic growth figures are due Thursday, followed by the Fed's preferred gauge of inflation on Friday and jobs data next week. Investors will pore over the figures for clues about the size of the promised rate reduction, which the Fed is expected to deliver at its next meeting on Sept 17-18.

Traders are also eagerly awaiting the latest earnings results from chip titan Nvidia, which will be released Wednesday and could provide more clues about demand for the hardware powering the AI boom. Patrick O'Hare, an analyst at Briefing.com, said the market could be "stuck in a rut" until the Nvidia results. — Agencies



**HONIARA, Solomon Islands:** An aerial view of a washed up shipwreck on the shoreline on the outskirts of Honiara, capital city of the Solomon Islands. — AFP

## Major Pacific sea mining project eyes 2026 start

**NUKU'ALOFA, Tonga:** A Nauru-backed company will forge ahead with contentious plans to start industrial deep-sea mining in 2026, a top executive has told AFP, vowing to overcome environmental criticisms that have dogged the project.

Canada-based The Metals Company is leading a contentious push to mine the sea floor underneath the Pacific Ocean, hoovering up lumps of rock studded with coveted metals. Through a subsidiary company backed by Pacific microstate Nauru, it is hoping to open up a vast offshore economic zone where initial testing is already under way.

"If everything went according to plan, we're still talking about 2026," The Metals Company chief executive Gerard Barron said on the sidelines of a key Pacific summit in Tonga late Monday.

Deep sea mining does not sit on the official agen-

da at this year's Pacific Islands Forum, but is expected to stir heated discussions behind closed doors. Nauru, Tonga and the Cook Islands sit at the forefront of the emerging industry, believing it holds the key to economic prosperity in a region where land is scarce and times are tough. Pacific neighbors Palau, Fiji and Samoa are opposed — pushing for lingering environmental questions to be cleared up before anyone takes the plunge.

Companies stand to earn billions by scraping the ocean floor for polymetallic rocks, or nodules, that are loaded with manganese, cobalt, copper and nickel — metals used to build batteries for electric vehicles. Barron attended the region's top summit wearing an official badge registered to Nauru.

"We're part of the Nauru delegation," he said. The Metals Company said it would lodge plans with the international regulator early next year, with a view to ramping up activity in 2026. Barron said if Nauru paved the way, other Pacific nations would swiftly follow. He said Pacific opposition had been fomented by environmental activists painting an alarming picture of its risks. "What Tonga are saying is, hey, we'd like a bit more progress on our block as well," Barron said. — AFP

## Pakistan eyes \$4bn from Mideast banks to plug fiscal gap

**KARACHI:** Pakistan aims to raise up to \$4 billion from Middle Eastern commercial banks by the next fiscal year, the country's central bank chief told Reuters on Tuesday, as the country looks to plug its external financing gap. In a wide-ranging interview, his first with any media organization since taking office in 2022, State Bank of Pakistan Governor Jameel Ahmad said Pakistan was also in the "advanced stages" of securing \$2 billion in additional external financing required for International Monetary Fund approval of a \$7 billion bailout program.

Pakistan and the IMF reached an agreement on the loan program in July, subject to approval from the IMF's executive board and it obtaining "timely confirmation of necessary financing assurances from Pakistan's development and bilateral partners". Ahmad said he expected the country's gross financing needs would be smoothly met — both over the next fiscal year and in the medium term.

In the past, Pakistan has relied on long-time allies such as China, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates to 'rollover' debt rather than force a repayment crunch. Ahmad said he expected similar assurances would be given for the next three years, giving the government more time to get its finances in order. In addition, Ahmad said the central bank reckoned Pakistan's gross financing needs for the coming years would be lower than the 5.5 percent of gross domestic product projected by the IMF in its latest country report in May. "Pakistan's external gross financing needs have been declining in the past few years," he said. "Since (the IMF's) assessment was based on a higher current account deficit than realized in fiscal 2024 and now projected for the next few years, we assess the ratio of gross financing needs to GDP to be lower than the 5.5 percent level."

Asked about monetary policy, Ahmad said recent interest rate cuts in Pakistan have had the desired effect, with inflation continuing to slow and the current account remaining under control, despite the cuts. Pakistan's annual consumer price index inflation was 11.1 percent in July, having fallen from highs of over 30 percent in 2023. "The Monetary Policy Committee will review all these developments," Ahmad said, adding that future rate decisions could not be pre-determined.

Pakistan's central bank cut rates for two straight meetings from a historic high of 22 percent to 19.5 percent, and will meet again to review monetary policy on Sept 12. There have been some concerns in markets that the government might take advantage of lower interest rates to borrow more, but the central bank chief said this was not his expectation. "We understand that the government will continue on the path of fiscal consolidation, notwithstanding the reduction in interest rates," said Ahmad.

Ahmad, who was appointed governor of Pakistan's central bank for a five-year term in August 2022, said his first year had been "quite difficult". In 2023, Pakistan faced an acute balance of payments crisis with only enough central bank reserves to cover a month of imports. After eight months of tough negotiations over fiscal discipline, the IMF threw Pakistan a lifeline in the form of a nine-month \$3 billion bailout program. "Last year was much better," said Ahmad. "Now everything is under control from an external account management perspective." Ahmad said the central bank would now focus on growth, digitalization and financial inclusion. "Those are also equally important for job creation and other socioeconomic issues," said Ahmad, noting the bank's mandate was to ensure price and financial stability before shifting its focus to growth. — Reuters



## Business

# German economy shrank in Q1

## Sluggish private consumption and drop in industrial investments hit growth

**FRANKFURT:** The German economy shrank by 0.1 percent in the second quarter, final data confirmed Tuesday, weighed down by sluggish private consumption and a drop in industrial investments. "After the slight increase in the previous quarter, the German economy slowed down again in spring," said Ruth Brand, head of federal statistics agency Destatis.

The quarter-on-quarter contraction confirmed an initial estimate released by Destatis at the end of July, which surprised analysts who had been expecting a small uptick in growth in Europe's largest economy. The April-to-June period noticeably saw a 4.1-percent plunge in investments in machinery and equipment, and a two-percent fall in investments in construction.

Household consumption was down 0.2 percent on the previous quarter, as were exports amid weak foreign trade. Germany, traditionally a driver of European growth, was the only major advanced economy to shrink in 2023 as it battled high inflation, an industrial slowdown and cooling export demand. A recovery was initially expected to get under way at the start of 2024,

but a string of disappointing data in recent months has suggested the rebound will take longer than initially thought.

"The German economy is currently back where it was a year ago: stuck in stagnation as the growth laggard of the entire eurozone," ING bank economist Carsten Brzeski said. The gloomy outlook was highlighted in the closely watched Ifo survey on Monday, which showed a further deterioration in business confidence in August — particularly among companies in the manufacturing sector.

While there was no immediate improvement in sight, Brzeski said there was "some optimism for the second half of the year" as robust wage growth could yet encourage German consumers to spend more in the months ahead. The German government expects the economy to expand by a modest 0.3 percent this year, lagging behind the wider eurozone which the European Union predicts will grow by 0.8 percent.

German consumers are feeling more pessimistic heading into September, a key survey showed Tuesday, as concerns about jobs and wages add to a gloomy outlook

for Europe's largest economy. The survey of around 2,000 people showed that consumer morale "suffered a severe setback" compared to a month earlier, according to pollsters GfK and the Nuremberg Institute for Market Decisions (NIM).

The forward-looking indicator fell by 3.4 points to minus 22 points for September, they said in a statement. The "euphoria" triggered by the European football championship hosted by Germany in July "dissipated after the tournament ended", said NIM consumer expert Rolf Buerkl.

"Slightly rising unemployment figures, an increase in corporate insolvencies, and downsizing plans by various companies in Germany are causing a number of employees to worry more about their jobs," he said. "Hopes for a stable and sustainable economic recovery must therefore be further postponed." The survey found that respondents were "noticeably" more downbeat about their wage prospects for the coming 12 months, and less likely than a month ago to make large purchases. Consumers' assessment of Germany's econom-



German Minister of Economics and Climate Protection Robert Habeck addresses a press conference on federal funding for industry and climate protection in Berlin. — AFP

ic outlook also worsened, erasing last month's gains. The darker mood comes after preliminary data showed that the German economy unexpectedly shrank in the second quarter, weighed down by cooling exports and an ongoing industrial slump.

Another closely watched survey, by the Ifo institute, showed on Monday

that German business morale deteriorated further in August, particularly among companies in the manufacturing sector. The German government expects the country's economy to expand by 0.3 percent in 2024, lagging behind the wider eurozone which the European Union predicts will grow by 0.8 percent. — AFP

## 'Hard to imagine' no Sept rate cut: US Fed official

**WASHINGTON:** It is "hard to imagine" the Federal Reserve not cutting interest rates next month, a senior bank official said Monday, in the latest signal that many policymakers favor a cut. The Fed hiked its key lending rate to a two-decade high last year as it battled to control runaway inflation after the COVID-19 pandemic and return towards its long-term two percent target.

Although inflation remains slightly above target, the cooling US labor market has led many Fed policymakers to conclude that its dual mandate to tackle both inflation and unemployment has now come into better balance, paving the way for a first cut. "The direction of change is down, and the time to adjust is now," San Francisco Fed President Mary Daly said in an interview with Bloomberg News on Monday.

It is "hard to imagine" not cutting interest rates in September, she added, in one of the firmest signs yet that officials intend to start cutting at the next Fed rate decision. Daly's comments come a few days after Fed chair Jerome Powell said "the time has come" to start cutting interest rates, setting the stage for a September start.

The Fed's decision to hold its benchmark lending rate at a 23-year high of between 5.25 and 5.50 percent has cooled down the world's largest economy, and kept the cost of borrowing high for businesses and consumers alike. If the Fed moves ahead with a rate cut in September, it will thrust the independent US central bank into the spotlight just ahead of November's presidential election.

But the Fed has long insisted that the timing and size of any cuts will be dictated by the data, not politics. Traders overwhelmingly expect the Fed to move ahead with a rate cut in September. But there's less clarity on how much the Fed will cut in September, or what the pace of cuts will be thereafter.

The data do not currently point to "any warning signs of weakness" in the labor market, Daly told Bloomberg on Monday, adding that the "most likely" scenario going forward was a gradual slowdown in inflation, and steady and sustainable growth in the labor market. "If those things happen, then adjusting policy at the regular, normal cadence seems reasonable," she said in response to a question about whether she favored a 25 or a 50 basis point cut. "If we should see deterioration or any signs of weakness, then being more aggressive to ensure that we don't see that, it would be appropriate," she added. — AFP

## Gulf Bank employees join forces in blood donation campaign

**KUWAIT:** In its ongoing commitment to promoting sustainability, Gulf Bank, in partnership with Kuwait Blood Bank, organized a blood donation campaign for its employees. The campaign aimed to increase the blood donation pool and support humanitarian efforts to save lives in critical situations. The initiative received a remarkable response from Gulf Bank employees, who eagerly answered the call of humanitarian duty. This strong participation highlighted the significant role of both the bank and its employees in supporting the community.

The Human Resources Department at Gulf Bank expressed gratitude to all the bank's employees who participated in the campaign, commending their dedication to the humanitarian cause and their efforts in saving lives. Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at



large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience. Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments

in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

## Oil bears focus on lackluster demand and output boost

**LONDON:** Investors have remained resolutely bearish about the outlook for petroleum prices despite increasing confidence the US Federal Reserve will cut interest rates to stimulate consumer and business spending. Fund managers reverting to selling oil futures and options last week as the short-covering rally the week before rapidly ran out of momentum and negative sentiment returned.

Hedge funds and other money managers sold the equivalent of 48 million barrels in the six most important futures and options contracts over the seven days ending on Aug 20. Funds have been sellers in six of the last seven weeks, reducing their position by a total of 346 million barrels since the start of July, according to records filed with exchanges and regulators.

The combined position had been reduced to just 178 million barrels, the fourth-lowest on record in weekly data going back to 2013, down from a recent high of 524 million on July 2 (40th percentile).

In the most recent week, managers sold European gas oil (-20 million barrels), NYMEX and ICE WTI (-18 million), Brent (-9 million) and US diesel (-4 million), and only purchased US gasoline (+3 million). Positioning had become extremely bearish across the complex, with the limited exception of WTI, where it was just bearish.

Positions in middle distillates, the most sensitive to the business cycle, were the most negative since the mid-cycle slowdown in 2015/16. Increasing confidence the Federal Reserve and other major central banks will cut interest rates to stoke consumer spending and business investment had not dispelled concerns about weak growth in oil consumption. Traders were also concerned about pending output increases by Saudi Arabia and its OPEC+ allies from the start of October, which if carried out might boost inventories and further depress prices. There was still considerable potential for short-covering and the rebuilding of bullish positions to help propel prices higher if sentiment becomes more bullish or at least less bearish.

For now, however, price increases have been capped by lingering doubts about the economic outlook and fear about OPEC+ adding more oil to the market. Portfolio investors lifted their position in US gas slightly as the combination of hotter-than-normal temperatures

and ultra-low fuel prices for power generators continued to whittle away excess inventories. Hedge funds and other money managers purchased the equivalent of 163 billion cubic feet (bcf) of futures and options linked to the price of gas at Henry Hub in Louisiana.

Short-covering accounted for all the buying as funds repurchased 164 bcf of previous short positions over the week ending on Aug 20. As a result, the combined position was boosted to a net long of 515 bcf (46th percentile for all weeks since 2010), the highest for seven weeks.

Working gas inventories have accumulated by only 100 bcf over the last six weeks, the smallest seasonal increase since at least 2010. Inventories were still +378 bcf (+13 percent or +1.21 standard deviations) above the prior 10-year seasonal average on Aug 16. But the surplus has narrowed from +538 bcf (+20 percent or +1.44 standard deviations) as recently as July 5 as generators maximized the opportunity to use cheap gas to meet strong airconditioning demand.

With airconditioning season more than half over, it is virtually certain inventories will still be above average when the winter heating season starts on Nov 1. But the surplus is progressively eroding and is on course to be eliminated entirely before the end of winter 2024/25. — Reuters

## 'Life is impossible': Burundians battle crippling shortages

**BUJUM, Burundi:** Gerard walks despondently around his small pharmacy in the centre of Burundi's main city Bujumbura, surveying the many empty shelves. "Patients are dying due to a lack of access to certain treatments," says the pharmacist, who is in his 60s. One of the world's most impoverished nations, Burundi is plagued by crippling shortages of basic necessities — vital medicines as well as fuel and sugar, electricity and water.

And, Gerard says, prices for the rare medicines he is able to stock have skyrocketed. "Ventolin, which cost 12,000 Burundian francs (\$4.2) last year, now costs 49,000 francs (\$17)," he says, speaking on condition of anonymity for safety reasons, like others interviewed by AFP. The landlocked country in the Great Lakes region of Africa has witnessed several similar shortages since 2015.

That year, then president Pierre Nkurunziza defied the constitution to run for a third term, triggering bloody political turmoil that led to the deaths of at least 1,200 people, while 400,000 more fled the country. The United States and the European Union responded to the crisis by slapping sanctions on the nation of almost 13 million people, while development aid was cut. Washington and Brussels have since restored aid, citing some progress on Burundi's dismal rights record under Nkurunziza's successor President Evariste Ndayishimiye.

But today "the situation is worse", says Felix, a doctor in Matana, a village about 70 kilometers

(40 miles) southwest of Bujumbura. "Before, we had shortages that lasted two or three days, now we have been waiting for two weeks and we still have no delivery date." With more and more basic necessities becoming impossible to find in many parts of the country, the limited supplies are being sold at exorbitant prices on the black market.

Long queues stretch outside petrol stations; shop shelves are empty. "Life has become impossible for the inhabitants of Bujumbura," complains Andre, a young executive living in a working-class district in the north of the city. "We have to walk kilometers (miles) every day to go to work because there are no buses due to the fuel shortage," he says. "And when we come back in the evening exhausted, we can't even take a shower because there is also a water shortage, nor watch TV because there is often a lack of electricity."

Serge, a 30-year-old farmer in the northern province of Ngozi, says he is finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. In just a few months, the price of salt and palm oil have more than doubled, says the father of four. "The oil to light our homes is far too expensive, even if we manage to find some," says Serge, noting also that "months can go by without seeing beer in the local bars".

According to the World Bank, 87 percent of Burundi's population live on less than \$1.9 a day in a country where agriculture accounts for 40 percent of gross domestic product and 80 percent of jobs. Global credit insurer and risk management company Coface said Burundi had foreign exchange reserves equivalent to just 0.7 months of imports in December 2023, warning that "the shortage of foreign currency remains a major cause for concern".

To try to remedy the situation, Burundi eased foreign exchange restrictions in December to reduce the gap between official and black-market rates.



BUJUMBURA, Burundi: People gather while waiting to get fuel at a petrol station in Bujumbura. — AFP

But most goods are brought in at the black-market rate — except oil, medicine and fertilizer imports which are controlled by the state — so the reforms have proved "only moderately effective". Coface said in a July report, Burundi's economy, said one local economist, is mired in "too many dysfunctions, and too dependent on aid". "The sectors which generated foreign currency, whether agriculture or the mining sector, are in distress today."

The dearth of foreign currency means it is increasingly difficult to import products. In his phar-

macy, Gerard says he has "had to fall back on medicines of sometimes dubious origin from India and Bangladesh". And the nation's leaders seem to be hard-pressed to tackle the crisis. Questioned by MPs about the shortages earlier this year, Prime Minister Gervais Ndirakobuca acknowledged that he had "no solution to submit to you here".

Michel, a Bujumbura civil servant in his 40s, was pessimistic. "Personally, I have lost all hope of seeing the situation improve, despite President Evariste Ndayishimiye's promises of a bright future." — AFP

## Business

# Weyay Bank launches Pot Pro with up to 1% annual rate and flexibility at its best

## Innovative tool that is designed to help customers boost their savings

**KUWAIT:** In response to the demand for encouraging saving habits among the community, especially the youth, Weyay Bank, the first digital bank in Kuwait, announced the launch of the Pro Pot, an innovative saving tool that is designed to help customers boost their savings with a competitive annual percentage rate.

The new Pro Pot is now available to the Weyay app users. They can create up to 5 pots, mixed between regular and Pro, and access their customized pots effortlessly through a seamless in-app journey and start topping them up with the ease of a tap. The more money they keep in their Pro Pots, and the longer it stays there, the more interest they get over time. The new tool allows customers to earn monthly interests on their savings while enjoying unparalleled flexibility and convenience, provided with a couple of key features:

- **Competitive annual rate:** Customers will receive their interest monthly, so they can maximize their

savings; hence, their earnings.

- **No minimum balance:** There's no minimum amount to start with, which makes this tool accessible for everyone.
- **Flexible withdrawals:** Customers can withdraw their balances at any time, ensuring full access to their funds. Their interest calculations will be adjusted accordingly.
- **Repeat transfers:** Customers will be able to set automatic weekly or monthly transfers from their Weyay account to their Pro Pots, ensuring consistent saving growth.
- **Full transparency:** The upgraded tool ensures full transparency, providing the app users with a comprehensive visualization calculator to see how their savings grow over time and what accrued interest is being earned.
- **Personal customization:** Customers can customize their pots using their preferred name and image and set personalized saving targets to reach,

which helps them stay motivated and track their progress.

"The Pro Pot, a tool that has been designed with our customers' needs in mind," mentioned Amal Al-Duwaisan, Head of Weyay Bank. "Our goal is to empower our customers to grow their savings effortlessly while maintaining complete flexibility and control over their funds."

The new Pro Pot reflects the Weyay Bank's commitment to introduce innovative and customer-centric solutions. By offering an interest-bearing saving option that is both flexible and transparent, Weyay Bank continues to en-



Amal Al-Duwaisan



hance the financial well-being of its customers. For more information about the new Pro Pot, visit [www.weyaybank.com](http://www.weyaybank.com) or download the Weyay Bank mobile app.

## News in Brief

### UK's Harbour Energy to close Wintershall Dea asset deal

**LONDON:** Britain's Harbour Energy said on Tuesday it expects to complete the acquisition of Wintershall Dea's assets in early September, versus its previous forecast of early in the fourth quarter of the year. Harbour's shares were up 7.2 percent at 301.10p in morning trade. The largest British North Sea oil and gas producer said it has made considerable progress on satisfying the conditions for completion, including regulatory approvals in Mexico. Harbour develops and produces oil and gas reserves on the United Kingdom and Norwegian continental shelves, Indonesia, Vietnam and Mexico. Harbour had, in December, agreed to acquire the German oil and gas company's non-Russian oil and gas assets in a \$11.2 billion deal with co-owners BASF and LetterOne, which would create one of the world's biggest independent producers. — Reuters

### Ukraine needs extra \$15bn to cover 2025 budget gap: PM

**KYIV:** Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said on Tuesday that Ukraine needed an extra \$15 billion to cover its budget deficit in 2025. He said that Ukraine estimated the total budget gap for next year to be \$35 billion, with plans in place to cover \$20 billion. The deficit was about \$38 billion in 2024, according to Ukrainian government estimates. Shmyhal said the government planned tax increases and more borrowing on the domestic debt market to raise additional funds for its war against Russia. Parliament is due to debate these proposals in September. As part of efforts to raise additional funds, the prime minister also pledged to work to reduce the shadow economy and boost tax revenues. — Reuters

### UN warns Libya faces economic collapse amid central bank crisis

**TRIPOLI:** The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) issued a statement late on Monday expressing deep concern "over the deteriorating economic situation in Libya resulting from unilateral decisions." Disputes over control of Libya's Central Bank have raised alarms about the potential misuse of the country's financial resources. "UNSMIL is convening an emergency meeting for all parties involved in the Central Bank of Libya crisis in order to reach a consensus based on political agreements, applicable laws, and the principle of the central bank's independence," the statement said. The UN mission has called for the suspension of unilateral decisions, the lifting of force majeure on oil fields, the halting of escalations and use of force, and the protection of Central Bank employees. — Reuters

### Airline LATAM cancels 36 flights in Colombia over fuel shortage

**BOGOTA:** Latin America's largest airline, LATAM, has canceled 36 flights in Colombia scheduled for Tuesday as the country grapples with a shortage of jet fuel due to an electrical failure at a refinery. The airline said in a statement Monday that the emergency measure was due to "restrictions on the supply of Jet A1 aviation fuel in some airports" due to a failure at a refinery. Avianca, the largest Colombian airline, had earlier expressed "concern" about fuel supplies at some airports and anticipated "adjustments in itineraries." State oil company Ecopetrol said there had been an "electrical failure" that affected production at the Cartagena Refinery (Reficar) between August 16 and 18. Ecopetrol announced that it would import 100,000 barrels of aviation fuel that will arrive "next weekend." This could lead to an increase in ticket prices, according to the transport ministry. — AFP

## Nevada's housing market weighs on US presidential poll

**RENO, US:** Brittne Aguirre grew up in Nevada and has always wanted to build her American Dream there: owning a home with her husband and three kids. But rocketing prices wrought by a years-long real estate boom, have priced her — and many middle-class Americans — out of the market, an issue that could weigh heavily in November's presidential election. "We make the most we've ever made in our lives, but we struggle more than we really ever have, just because the cost of living is absolutely through the roof," Aguirre told AFP.

"It's not even just housing. I mean, have you seen the price of groceries, of gas?" Aguirre, 29, and her 31-year-old husband live and work in Reno, a fast-growing city in the western state of Nevada. The state, which President Joe Biden won by just 33,000 votes over Donald Trump in 2020, carries a relatively meager six electoral college votes out of the 270 required to win the White House. But in this year's knife-edge contest between Kamala Harris and Trump, it is one of a handful of battleground states expected to decide who triumphs.

And American politics is nearly always dominated by the economy, making voters like Aguirre important. She lived with her in-laws for a year-and-a-half to save for a deposit. But even then — and with property prices continuing to rise — more than half the \$71,000 post-tax annual family income would be swallowed by a \$3,000 monthly mortgage.

Although Aguirre voted for Biden in 2020, disappointment over family finances will play into her decision this year. "I've never really been a political person until this last year where we have just struggled so much with the economy," she said. "This time, I want to do more research on the political parties to make a well-informed decision."

Reno — nicknamed "The Biggest Little City in the World" — is a must-win territory for Harris. The glitzy big city of Las Vegas to the south leans Democratic, while the rolling rural areas of the rest of the state are reliably Republican. With the two blocs largely cancelling each other out, winner-takes-all Nevada could come down to Washoe County, where Reno sits. The population here has doubled since 1990, swelled in

## Two Brazil sugar producers report impact from fires

**SAO PAULO:** Two of the largest sugar and ethanol producers in Brazil late on Monday disclosed initial estimates of damages from fires that have burned sugarcane fields in the country's top state for sugar production. Four men have been arrested on suspicion of setting the fires, which spread quickly amid extremely dry conditions across thousands of hectares of cane fields, burning into the weekend in Sao Paulo state, the largest sugar producing state in the world's top producer and exporter of the sweetener.

Brazil's largest sugar group Raizen estimated that about 1.8 million tons of its sugarcane, including what it sources from suppliers, had been affected by the fires, or about 2 percent of the total expected for its 2024/25 crop. In a securities filing, Raizen said it did not expect the fires to lead to material losses to its results as it is prioritizing the crushing of the affected sugarcane to mitigate adverse effects.

The burned sugarcane can still be harvested and processed, said Caio Carvalho, a sugar expert with

## Mining giant BHP says profits slide, China to sway outlook

**SYDNEY:** Australian mining giant BHP reported a sizeable hit to net profit Tuesday and warned of "volatility" ahead in global commodity markets buffeted by China's economy. Revenue climbed three percent to US\$55.7 billion in the financial year to June 30, it said, citing record deliveries and rising prices for iron ore.

But net profit slumped 39 percent to \$7.9 billion, trimmed by the multi-billion costs related to a 2015 Brazilian dam collapse and the temporary suspension of nickel mining operations in Western Australia due to a glut in the market, it said. BHP chief execu-



An aerial view of Reno, Nevada. — AFP

recent years by an influx of tech workers, following tax breaks to lure employers like Tesla, Panasonic and Apple. Coming from California, swathes of that workforce have been delighted to find how much more they can afford. The average house price in Cupertino, California — where Apple is headquartered — is over \$3 million, according to Zillow. A single-family home in Washoe, Nevada is \$550,000.

For Matt Mireles, who runs an AI start-up, leaving San Francisco for Reno was "a slam dunk." At 43, he bought himself a 1,900-square-foot (170-square-meter) apartment, with a view of the river in the heart of Reno, for \$635,000. "When you come from California, everything's on sale," he said.

But the bulk of first-time buyers in Reno are from out of state, says realtor Sam Britt.

"And the locals are angry," he adds. While new arrivals might consider \$550,000 reasonable for a home, that figure is double what it used to be a decade ago. Add to that the fact that interest rates are near 20-year highs — the result of central bank action to curb inflation — and it puts home ownership out of reach for many. Fellow realtor Sean Burke notes that a seven percent interest rate on a 30-year

mortgage is affecting Americans everywhere.

"The middle class has been priced out of a lot of the homes," he said. "It definitely could weigh on the ballot box." In 2022, the median age of first-time buyers in the United States hit 36, a record, according to the National Association of Realtors. While the White House has no control over interest rates, and little real influence over inflation, voters tend to blame the sitting administration for their economic difficulties. And having been Biden's understudy during more than three years that many Americans have seen the promise of home ownership slip out of reach, that might be bad news for Harris. Andres Villa, who works for Tesla, says he is faced with steep monthly payments for his own home and is tempted by the alternative. "When Trump was in office, he said a lot of crazy things," he said.

"But it seemed like the economy was running a little bit better." As Election Day approaches, the latest economic indicators, including decreasing inflation and a likely Federal Reserve rate cut, are increasingly positive. That could bring a few voters like Villa back to Harris — and in a swing state, that's all she might need. — AFP



## LuLu Hypermarket launches 'crazy sale' shopping promotion

**KUWAIT:** LuLu Hypermarket welcomed customers returning after the summer-break with the 'LuLu Welcome Back' promotion, which launched on August 28 and will run to Sept 3, across all outlets of the retailer in Kuwait. Shoppers will be greeted with a wide range of discounts and offers on various product categories. Customers can enjoy up to 50 percent off on essential items like groceries, fruits, vegetables, fish, meat, health and beauty products, and more.

The 'LuLu Digital crazy sale' promotion also features incredible discounts on electronics, mobiles, home appliances, IT and accessories, linen and home furnishing, household items, toys, stationeries, and luggage, among other categories. Shoppers will be treated to amazing discounts that would be simply too good to miss. The incredible deals are a highlight of the promotion, attracting customers eager to take advantage of the savings. As the new school year approached, LuLu Hypermarket also introduced exclusive back-to-school offers, catering to the needs of parents and students.

LuLu Hypermarket's commitment to providing exceptional value and customer satisfaction was evident throughout the event.

Mike Henry said the company had nevertheless delivered a "strong" set of results, with underlying profit — a measure that strips away non-recurring costs — up two percent to \$13.7 billion.

"In the near term, we expect volatility in global commodity markets, with China experiencing an uneven recovery among its end-use sectors," he said. China is a major consumer of Australian commodities, notably of Australia's biggest export earner, iron ore.

Australia's government warned this month, however, that the "softness" of China's economy and tumbling iron ore prices could hurt the nation's budget. BHP's boss said the group had a "pipeline" of copper projects under development in Chile and Australia after its copper plans suffered a setback this year. In May, BHP said it had walked away from a proposed \$49 billion takeover of British rival Anglo American that would have created a global copper titan. — AFP

# Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2024

## Japan is next level for retro game collectors

US tourist David Madrigal is over the moon after paying \$200 for a "vintage" console at a busy Tokyo store that is tapping into booming global demand for retro gaming kit. "When I came into this store, I was like a kid walking into a candy shop," Madrigal, 23, told AFP at Super Potato in the Akihabara district famous for its Japanese pop culture shops. "This stuff is my passion. I love older consoles," he said. The PS Vita, a console released in 2011, that he bought "would usually cost me about \$600 in the US."

Super Potato has three floors packed with Game Boy cartridges, Sega Dreamcast consoles wrapped in plastic and antiquated arcade machines where nostalgic customers can play "Street Fighter II" again. Prices can be eye-watering. A handheld Nintendo Game & Watch electronic game from the 1980s — featuring "Zelda" — was priced at 250,800 yen (\$1,750). Around 70-80 percent of customers are foreign tourists, who have flocked to Japan in record numbers this year, store manager Komura, who only gave his surname, told AFP.

### Soul gaming

Part of the appeal, Madrigal said, is that many modern games are a bit "more of the same" compared to ones when he was growing up. "There was a different kind of innovation,"



One of the rooms contains vintage video games owned by game collector "Proudrou", at his home in Kasumigaura, Ibaraki prefecture. — AFP photos



Vintage video game collector "Proudrou" plays a vintage video game at his home in Kasumigaura, Ibaraki prefecture.



A visitor browses the shelves at "Super Potato".



Vintage video game collector "Proudrou" poses for a photo at his home.



Visitors walk past a Super Mario statue while shopping at "Super Potato".

he said. "Companies weren't afraid to think outside the box. They were willing to take risks." Video game historian Hiroyuki Maeda said that additional demand from collectors comes from the fact that some consoles were marketed differently outside Japan. Nintendo's Famicom and Super Famicom consoles for example were released abroad under alternative names, and with different and more colorful designs, he said.

"If you come to Japan and see a machine you've never seen before, you want to buy it. It stimulates the collector's soul," said Maeda, who has written dozens of books on gaming history. "The definition of retro gaming varies, depending on the era that the people who engage in it are nostalgic for," Maeda told AFP.

### 'Super collector'

Amid rice fields and lotus fields two hours north of Tokyo, Proudrou (his online persona) has amassed a vast treasure trove of video game relics. The "super collector" has stuffed an old building opposite his family home with several thousand vintage games and consoles, as well as arcade machines in full working order. "The appeal of collecting retro games is really the nostalgia of childhood memories in games shops or spending time playing at friends' houses," the 50-year-old collector said.

"To be honest, I don't really play games," he added. "Being surrounded by games, their sounds, their atmosphere, looking at them and dreaming, that's enough to keep me happy."

### Stuffed into bins

Proudrou has spent lavishly to build his collection. Retro games can reach sky-high prices: a still-wrapped version of the game "Super Mario Bros.," released in 1985, sold in 2021 for \$2 million. Until the late 1990s, however, old games were virtually worthless, according to historian Maeda. "They were crammed into bins in shops" and sold for as little as 10 yen (seven US cents today), he said. Proudrou says he travelled around Japan 20 years ago looking for collectables in toy shops and bookstores.

"There were often stocks of Super Famicom or Game & Watch in a corner, covered in dust. The elderly people who ran these shops would tell me to take them away to clear them out," Proudrou said. "As I work in vegetable wholesale, I would give them a crate of onions or potatoes, and everyone was happy. "To-

day that would no longer be possible. These shops have disappeared, and with the Internet, everyone has started to resell," he added.

Wanting to share his passion with others, Proudrou founded an association of retro gaming enthusiasts and is delighted at the interest shown by people from around the world.

"But to be honest, I also think that Japanese products should stay in Japan. It's a bit like Japanese woodblock prints in the past, which were taken abroad where they were more appreciated, before being bought back by Japan," he said. His country, he laments, "is slow to realize the value" of its works. — AFP



A large Game Boy arcade game at a retro gaming arcade on the top floor of "Super Potato".



Vintage computer and gaming brochures at the office of video game historian and game history book author/publisher Hiroyuki Maeda at his office in Tokyo.



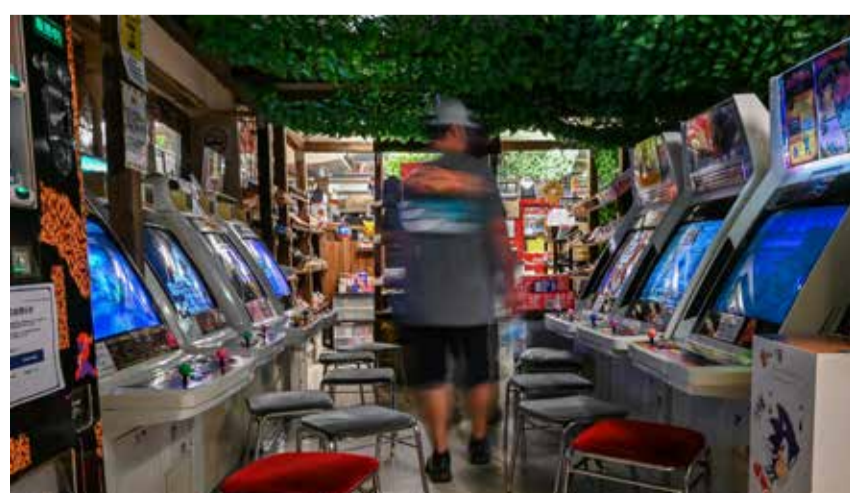
Video game historian and game history book author/publisher Hiroyuki Maeda displays a prototype of a Nintendo "Game and Watch" at his office in Tokyo.



Shop manager Komura-san poses with a signed Metal Gear box, at "Super Potato".



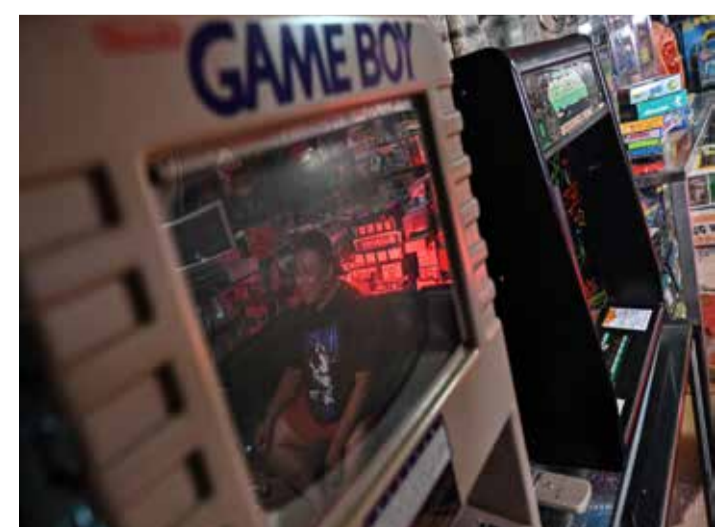
Vintage video game collector "Proudrou" walks through one of his lotus fields near his home.



A customer walks through a retro gaming arcade on the top floor of "Super Potato", a shop selling vintage video games and memorabilia in the popular electronics shopping area of Akihabara.



Video game historian and game history book author/publisher Hiroyuki Maeda displays various vintage gear at his office in Tokyo.



Vintage video game collector "Proudrou" (center) reflects on the screen of a large Game Boy as he speaks at his home.

## Lifestyle



## Cohousing lets Mexicans grow old among friends

This aerial view shows the premises of a cohousing community in Malinalco, state of Mexico. — AFP photos

Retired teacher Tessa Martinez and her husband swapped their home in the bustling city for a new life in Mexico's first cohousing project for silver-haired citizens. It was a decision motivated in part by a wariness of nursing and retirement homes in a country whose family-oriented culture means relatives have traditionally cared for the elderly. On a plot of land surrounded by forests and mountains, a group of 30 senior citizens have built six houses in Malinalco, a peaceful tourist town about 100 kilometers (62 miles) from Mexico City.

Six of them already live at "La Guanacha" — where there are plans to build nine more houses — while the rest come and go, but hope to eventually spend the rest of their lives there. "In my working life I gave and devoted myself because I received a salary. Now it's different because it's about collaborating," said Francisco Vigil, the husband of Martinez. "I've learned that giving is much more satisfying than I could have imagined," the 61-year-old former automotive industry

worker said. In front of a large shared garden and a swimming pool, Vigil said the couple wanted their children to have lives of their own. And they themselves want to grow old in more comfort than their parents. The elderly "never get the care they need — they're very alone," said Martinez, 65.

### Sharing problems

The project was launched in 2009 by social sciences academic Margarita Maass, aiming to improve the quality of life of older adults. Maass teamed up with acquaintances to buy the plot of land where, years later, its current owners-built houses with walls of straw and clay. They installed solar heaters for the water, which comes from rain and a canal fed by rivers. They planted mango, mamey, orange, guava and lemon trees. "Cohousing is a very good solution for people who are alone," Maass said.

"People without much money share expenses and people with health problems share a doctor," she added. Unlike with a nursing home,

the group "decides how they want their home, where they want it, how big it is, the people and the financial resources," Maass said. The concept of cohousing emerged in Denmark in the 1960s and has since spread to other countries.

There are a dozen such projects in Mexico, where children have traditionally taken on much of the responsibility for care of the elderly. It is a trend that could continue due to population aging in the nation of around 129 million. While Mexico is still a relatively young country, the proportion of the population aged 60 and over increased from 12.3 percent to 14.7 percent between 2018 and 2023, according to official figures. The fertility rate meanwhile fell from 2.07 to 1.60 children per woman on average.

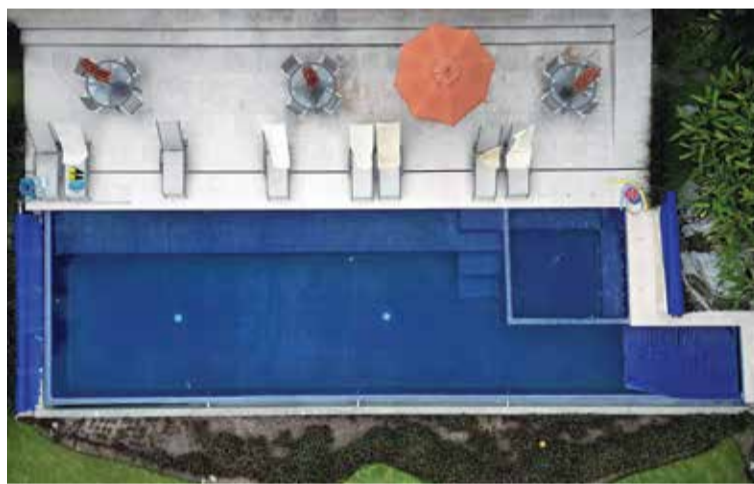
Juan Manuel, a 20-year-old student, is among those who does not plan to have children. He worries about not having "enough support or a place to live" when he gets older. Maass thinks collaborative housing could be the answer. She recalled a resident who had Alzheimer's disease and enjoyed his time at "La



Mexican businessman Francisco Vigil (left) and Mexican researcher at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Sciences and Humanities, Margarita Maass Moreno, walk in the garden at the cohousing community where they live, in Malinalco, state of Mexico.

Guanacha" playing dominoes, watching films or swimming. Martinez has also tried to integrate herself into the local community in Malinalco, where about two-thirds of people live in poverty. She teaches English and is

involved in a ceramics workshop — all part of what she calls her "new life" among friends. — AFP



This aerial view shows a swimming pool at a cohousing community in Malinalco, state of Mexico.



One of the houses of a cohousing community in Malinalco, state of Mexico.



Mexican businessman Francisco Vigil speaks with AFP inside his house at a cohousing community in Malinalco.

## South Africa's national zoo frees its last elephant

The last elephant in South Africa's national zoo has been released into a reserve by a wildlife rights group, which said it is pushing the country's only other zoo with the animals to do the same. The 42-year-old elephant called Charlie was removed from the national zoo in Pretoria and transported to a reserve in the northern Limpopo province, where he was released on Monday by the EMS Foundation. This was a result of years of negotiation with the South African government which was provided with scientific evidence that elephants suffer in zoos, the foundation said in a statement.

Captured from his herd in Zimbabwe when he was around two years old, Charlie was sold to a circus to perform tricks and moved to the Pretoria Zoo in 2001. "The science is clear that elephants are defined by space and should not be in captivity," executive director Michele Pickover told AFP.

The only other zoo in South Africa with elephants is Johannesburg's city-run zoo, which has three, she said. "We are litigating against Johannesburg over those," she told AFP. The release of Charlie did not necessarily mean the government had decided to stop all exhibitions of elephants in its zoos, but it did not appear to have plans to get more, Pickover said. — AFP



(From left) Canadian actor Simu Liu, US actress, comedian, rapper Awkwafina, US director Paul Feig and US actor and wrestler John Cena arrive at the premiere of "Jackpot" at the TCL Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles, California, USA, 13 August 2024. — AFP

## 'JACKPOT' MOVIE INSPIRED BY JACKIE CHAN

For director Paul Feig, the comedy film "Jackpot" is what he calls "the Lost Jackie Chan movie," referring to the work of the famous Hong Kong actor and martial artist. "His (Jackie Chan's) characters are always classically somebody who didn't want to be in the situation, in over their head, trying to get out of it, not being aggressive, just trying to fight their way out of something," said Feig. "And that just checked every box for me. And his movies are really funny too, but they also have danger and art. So, there it was," he added.

"Jackpot" is an Amazon MGM Studios action-comedy starring Awkwafina and John Cena as their characters Katie and Noel work together in a dystopian Los Angeles where a "Grand Lottery" winner can be legally murdered before sundown by someone wishing to claim their multibillion-dollar jackpot. The movie arrives in U.S. theaters on Thursday. One thing that helped bring the action-packed story to life was Cena, who is also a

wrestler, being able to do some of his own stunts. "I'm not taking anything away from our stunt team or my tremendously talented double, Spencer Thomas, but the action in 'Jackpot' was a lot of the skills that I can offer a coordinator," Cena told Reuters.

"This one was throwing big haymakers and tossing people around, and a lot of the stuff I do on WWE as well as a lot of stunt driving, which I love driving, too," "The Suicide Squad" actor added. While his previous experience came in handy when filming "Jackpot," there was no time for Cena to bond with co-lead Awkwafina before they began shooting. "We did not have time to build rapport before filming, but we actually ended up building great rapport while we filmed," Cena said. Similarly, Awkwafina found that getting to know Cena while creating the movie was fulfilling. "I loved working with John Cena. He's really one of the most professional guys I've ever worked with," the "Crazy Rich Asians" actor said. — AFP

## Dolphin bites spark warning on Japanese beaches

Authorities in central Japan are urging beachgoers to steer clear of dolphins after a sharp increase in biting incidents, with one expert saying the culprit may be a single overly playful individual. This year has so far seen 18 swimmers bitten at several beaches in the Fukui region, according to the local Tsuruga coastguard, which logged just a handful of injuries related to dolphins in each of the past two years. Most of the bites were minor — some were little more than scratches — but in one recent incident, an elementary school child wound up requiring 20 to 30 stitches, coastguard official Shoichi Takeuchi told AFP.

At Suishohama Beach — also known as "Diamond Beach" — a local tourism association is calling for vigilance, issuing warnings on its website and handing out fliers advising people not to approach or touch the animals. "Dolphins are usually calm creatures, but they can make you bleed by biting you with sharp teeth, drag you under water and, in the worst-case scenario, threaten your life," the association warns online. The coastguard said it was unclear whether a single dolphin was behind the incidents or whether there were multiple culprits.

One expert, however, thinks one rogue dolphin may be responsible for the incidents, given identifying characteristics such as its dorsal fin and scars. "It is probably the work of the same individual," Tadamiichi Morisaka, a professor of cetology at Mie University, told broadcaster NHK. "Instead of trying to harm humans, it might be seeking to interact with humans the way it does with fellow dolphins." — AFP



## Buenos Aires 'taxi dancers' glide tourists through daunting tango scene

**F**or many people, dancing the tango while on a visit to Buenos Aires is on the bucket list. The only problem: the steps are tricky to learn and venturing unversed onto a "milonga" dance floor can be a brutal experience. Enter the Argentine capital's "taxi dancers" — professionals who accompany novice dancers for a night out on the town. Without insider help, the experience can be "intimidating," taxi dancer David Tolosa, 35, told AFP. "The dance floor... is like a showcase. People are constantly watching you. There are many dancers, well-known dancers, who are sitting and watching the floor... You feel observed, you feel that pressure."

Experienced dancers can be impatient and "a little cruel" to outsiders new to the scene, said Tolosa, adding that the unschooled might get elbowed out of the way or have their toes stepped



on. For women who are by themselves, it can be a frustrating experience, having to wait — as is the custom — for a dance invitation that may never come. "Women prefer to hire me... because they can spend hours sitting" and waiting if they do not have a guaranteed

partner, said Tolosa.

His clients are almost exclusively foreigners, "mostly women, mainly Asian, Japanese, Chinese, but also French and British" who pay about \$50 per hour. His busiest time is August, when Buenos Aires hosts an annual Tango Festival.

Even outside of the festival, regular "milongas" — social events where people gather to dance tango — are held year-round across the city.

### 'Learn by practicing'

Most taxi dancers like Tolosa work independently, but the capital is also home to agencies such as TangoTaxi-Dancers, with 17 years of experience. It offers private lessons but also accompanied dance outings, promising on its website: "Do not sit and wait — dance and enjoy." Just knowing the steps is not enough to enjoy a tango night out, say those in the know. For this, you also need to know the art of "cabeceo," a non-verbal invitation to dance using just a head movement.

"There are certain codes in tango, such as how to... ask someone to dance," explained taxi dancer and teacher Laura Florencia Guardia, 28. "There are still some traditional as-



Professional "Tango Taxi dancers" David Tolosa and Laura Florencia Guardia pose for a picture during a milonga at the Marabu tango saloon.



Professional "Tango Taxi dancers" David Tolosa and Laura Florencia Guardia (left) dance during a milonga at the Marabu tango saloon. — AFP photos

pects, such as inviting someone to dance with a look from one table to another... People also need to learn this. That's why it's good for them to hire dancers to show them this world."

Guardia skillfully avoided the feet of Salvador Bolanos, a Mexican tango enthusiast attending one of her lessons, boasting laughingly that she had "never had a client step on my toes!" Bolanos, a 37-year-old systems engineer, said he was in Buenos Aires to "learn about the music, in particular. I am learning about tango: the culture, the composition." He said he enjoyed the "melancholy of the tango, but at the same time the strength it has." Tango tourists get something from "taxi dancers" that they might otherwise miss: real-world experience in a traditional setting, said Guardia. "At first they are shy, then they gain courage," she said. — AFP



Gem (left), Noel Gallagher (second left), Andy Bell (second right) and Liam Gallagher, members of the British rock band "Oasis" hold a photocall in Hong Kong on February 25, 2006. — AFP photos



Lead guitarist of British rock band Oasis Noel Gallagher performs in Hong Kong, February 25, 2006.

## Oasis announces 2025 worldwide reunion tour kicking off in UK

**B**ritish rock legends Oasis announced Tuesday they will reunite for a worldwide tour, as brothers Liam and Noel Gallagher ended an infamous 15-year feud. The band behind hit songs including "Wonderwall", "Don't Look Back In Anger" and "Champagne Supernova", will play an initial 14 gigs next year in Cardiff, Manchester, London, Edinburgh and the Irish capital, Dublin, starting in July. Oasis also plan to play in "continents outside of Europe later next year," according to a statement posted on their website. Formed in Manchester, northwest England, in 1991 and credited with helping create the Britpop era of that decade, they will be the first Oasis gigs since 2009 after the Gallagher brothers fell out.

The guns have fallen silent. The stars have aligned. The great wait is over. Come see. It will not be televised," Oasis said, as it announced the reunion alongside the first details of the tour. The announcement capped days of hints and fevered speculation the band was set to play again. However, there was no announcement regarding the release of any new music, while Oasis will reportedly not play next year's Glastonbury festival despite widespread speculation.

### 'Hottest tickets'

"Oasis today end years of feverish speculation with the confirmation of a

long-awaited run of UK and Ireland shows forming the domestic leg of their Oasis Live '25 world tour," the online statement added. The tour will begin over two nights at the Principality Stadium in the Welsh capital Cardiff from July 4, 2025, followed a week later by four gigs at Heaton Park in their hometown, Manchester. Oasis will then play London's Wembley Stadium - on July 25 and 26 as well as August 2 and 3 - before taking to the stage over two nights at Murrayfield Stadium in the Scottish capital Edinburgh.

The UK and Ireland gigs will conclude with two performances at Dublin's Croke Park in mid-August. "Their only shows in Europe next year, this will be one of the biggest live moments and hottest tickets of the decade," the statement said.



This combination of pictures created shows British singer Liam Gallagher (left) and Noel Gallagher.

A press release said there had been "no great revelatory moment that has ignited the reunion - just the gradual realization that the time is right". It promised "a set full of wall-to-wall classics".

Tickets for the UK dates will go on sale from 9am (0800 GMT) on Saturday, with Dublin tickets available from 8am the same day. Social media was abuzz with the news, with the band's post racking up hundreds of thousands of likes and fans sharing their excitement. "Last time I saw Oasis live was 1996 Loch Lomond. Alarm set for Saturday morning," said one fan.

### 'Never say never'

Oasis has long been synonymous with '90s Britpop music, when it enjoyed a fierce rivalry with London band Blur, co-founded by Damon Albarn. The Manchester outfit was also notorious for public fights between Liam and Noel. The sibling tensions came to a head during a spat at a 2009 Paris festival, when Liam broke one of Noel's guitars.

The brothers have not played together since - but both have still regularly played the band's hits to sold-out crowds. Until now, they had largely communicated in public through taking swipes at each other on social media. The brothers have teased at a reconciliation before, with Noel last year saying "never say never" — AFP

## 'DEADPOOL' STILL HAS A PULSE, AGAIN LEADING NORTH AMERICAN BOX OFFICE

**D**isney/Marvel superhero comedy "Deadpool & Wolverine" clawed its way back to the top of the North American box office this weekend, taking in an estimated \$18.3 million, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported Sunday. The Ryan Reynolds/Hugh Jackman vehicle has now topped the box office for four of its five weekends out, logging impressive total ticket sales of \$577.2 million domestically and \$634 million internationally. Last weekend's leader, sci-fi horror film "Alien: Romulus" from 20th Century Studios, slipped to second, earning \$16.2 million for the Friday-through-Sunday period.

The tale of a terrifying encounter between space colonists and a face-eating alien is directed by Uruguayan filmmaker Fele Alvarez. Cailee Spaeny, David Jonsson, Archie Renaux and Spike Fearn star. Sony's "It Ends With Us," a romantic drama based on a popular Colleen Hoover novel, had \$11.9 million in ticket sales. Blake Lively stars and co-produced the film, which has performed unexpectedly well for the genre, taking in a global total so far of \$242 million. "It's among the highlights of the summer," said analyst David A. Gross, adding that "it's another sign of

the industry's improving health."

New psychological thriller "Blink Twice," from MGM Studios, placed fourth, at \$7.3 million. The story of a cocktail waitress (Naomi Ackie) who visits the mysterious island of a tech billionaire (Channing Tatum) was directed by actress Zoe Kravitz (daughter of singer Lenny Kravitz and actor Lisa Bonnet) in her directorial debut.

Given the glutted field of crime thrillers, Gross said, how well such films perform is "almost always cast-driven." In this case the cast, along with Ackie and Tatum, includes Christian Slater, Kyle MacLachlan, Haley Joel Osment and Geena Davis. And in fifth was Sony's new biblical drama "The Forge," at \$6.6 million, not a bad opening for a movie that cost \$5 million to make. A spinoff from 2015's inspirational drama "War Room," it tells the story of a floundering, directionless 19-year-old who finds motivation to get himself together. Rounding out the top 10 were:

- "Twisters" (\$6.2 million)
- "Coraline" (re-release, \$5 million)
- "The Crow" (\$4.6 million)
- "Despicable Me 4" (\$4.4 million)
- "Inside Out 2" (\$2.1 million). — AFP



Ryan Reynolds (left), who co-wrote and acted in 'Deadpool & Wolverine,' joined friend and actor Hugh Jackman to discuss their new film at a Comic-Con panel in San Diego, California. — AFP

## Sports

# Door not closed on Bairstow's white-ball career: Selector

## Stone replaces injured Wood for England

LONDON: England chief selector Luke Wright said Jonny Bairstow's international white-ball career is not over despite the 34-year-old's omission from the upcoming series against Australia. Bairstow and fellow veterans Moeen Ali and Chris Jordan were overlooked with five uncapped players selected for the three T20s and five ODIs in just 19 days between September 11 and 29.

An integral part of England's 50-over World Cup success in 2019, Bairstow has struggled for form since he returned from breaking his leg two years ago. "One of Jonny's great strengths is how much he wants to play," said Wright. "We just want him back to being one of the best players in the world. He had that horrific injury, and that's been the message. Can we get you back to where you were pre-injury?"

"He understands that. He doesn't like it. One thing Jonny will do is fight back, and I hope he does and gets himself back in the team." Matthew Mott was sacked as England's limited over head coach last month following disappointing ODI and T20 World Cup campaigns with Marcus Trescothick to take interim charge.

Left-arm seamer Josh Hull, all-rounder Jacob Bethell and pace bowler John Turner were the uncapped players selected in both formats, while Dan Mousley and Jordan Cox come into the T20 group. "Now feels like the right time to have a few more picks in there and look probably for the future," added Wright. "It's certainly not an experiment. These guys



Olly Stone

are top cricketers. The one thing we don't lack in England is the amount of talent that's around. "With the schedule, it gives us the opportunity to look at some wider squads, and gives us the opportunity to look at some of those younger lads who sometimes wouldn't get that opportunity."

Jos Buttler is expected to shrug off a calf injury to remain captain for the series against the Aussies.

However, he is contemplating giving up his wicket-keeping role, at least for the T20 series, to concentrate on rediscovering his best form at the top of the order. "I think it's something he's open to. It's something that could easily happen in this Australia series," said Wright. Meanwhile, Olly Stone has been recalled to the England side for the first time in three years as the replacement for Mark Wood in the only change

for the second Test against Sri Lanka. Wood has been ruled out for the remainder of the series after suffering a thigh injury during England's five-wicket win in the first Test at Old Trafford. Stone, a Nottinghamshire seamer, has got the nod over 20-year-old left-arm pacesman Josh Hull, who received his first call-up to the squad after Wood's injury.

Stone has had to battle back from his own injuries, including an anterior cruciate ligament tear suffered when celebrating a wicket. "Unfortunately with the nature of being a bowler, you are going to pick up injuries here and there. It's been disappointing, stop-start throughout my career," said the 30-year-old.

"This year especially, I've tried to just not look too far ahead. I love playing the game and I just knew that if I go out there and produce those performances, this call might come." England are rejuvenating their pace attack following the retirements of veterans Stuart Broad and James Anderson. England have also lost captain Ben Stokes for the series with a torn hamstring suffered during The Hundred. Stone, though, is hoping to replace the express pace that Wood has offered so far this summer, including a 3-0 series win over the West Indies. "It's been pretty frightening the way he's been bowling," added Stone. "Hopefully, I can go out there and try and touch his speeds. He's obviously up there with the fastest in the world so I'm not sure if I'll match it but I'll give it a good shot." The second Test of the three-match series begins at Lord's on Thursday. — AFP



NEW YORK: Dominic Thiem of Austria returns against Ben Shelton of the United States during their Men's Singles First Round match on Day One of the 2024 US Open. — AFP

## Dominic Thiem faces retirement without 'high' of winning

NEW YORK: Dominic Thiem admitted he will miss the "high" of winning after his Grand Slam career came to an end at the US Open on Monday on the same Arthur Ashe court where he won his only major in 2020.

The injury-plagued former world number three went down to a 6-4, 6-2, 6-2 defeat to American 13th seed Ben Shelton, his eighth first round exit at his last 10 Slams. Thiem had already announced his intention to retire from tennis on home ground in Vienna in October, giving up on his fruitless battle to fully recover from a persistent wrist injury. "I think that the thing I will miss the most is the feeling after winning a great match, it's not really comparable to anything else," said Thiem. "You don't really get this feeling, in my case, in life outside of tennis, because it's like, a real high. It's like being on drugs a little bit, I guess."

When Thiem captured his first Slam by defeating Alexander Zverev from two sets down in the 2020 US Open final, it appeared that he was finally poised to challenge the likes of Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal at the highest level. It also ended a sequence of three defeats in three Slam finals — to Nadal at the 2018 and 2019 French Open and against Djokovic in five sets at the 2020 Australian Open. However, his career went into a tailspin in the summer of 2021 when he suffered a wrist injury at the Mallorca ATP tournament. Thiem suffered serious ligament damage and was forced to sit out the rest of 2021. He played just two Slams in 2022 and his ranking fell to outside the top 100 for the first time in over a decade.

### 'It was weird'

"I just want to say thanks for all the support. It's been 10 years since I first played here, I had my greatest success on this court," said Thiem whose 2020 triumph was witnessed by just a handful of people with the tournament played out at the height of the Covid pandemic. "But when I won in 2020, it was weird. It was under very strict conditions and I had my success without any of you here. So I am super-happy to get the chance to play in front of you and on this court. Thanks to you for making up the time that we missed."

Heading into the US Open, Thiem had won just two main draw matches all year, the most recent was at Estoril in the first week of April. He needed a wildcard to play in New York with his ranking having slipped further to 210. "I'm here now retiring pretty young but I'm really happy with the career I had. I never expected that it's going to be that successful, so I don't have really any regrets, and I'm good with that," he added. Shelton was full of praise for Thiem, the winner of 17 career titles and more than \$30 million in prize money.

The pair exchanged warm words at the net before Shelton guided the crowd to applaud his rival. "I want to say congrats to Dom for an outstanding career. Four Grand Slam finals and a title, it's the kind of things kids dream of sitting at home on the couch," said 21-year-old Shelton. — AFP

## India's Jay Shah to be cricket world body chairman: ICC

NEW DELHI: India's cricket chief Jay Shah has been elected unopposed as chairman of the sport's world body, the International Cricket Council, it said Tuesday. Shah will take over the role from December, after current Chair Greg Barclay decided not to seek a third term. "I am committed to working closely with the ICC team and our member nations to further globalize cricket," Shah said, adding he was "humbled" by the appointment. "Our goal is to make cricket more inclusive and popular than ever before."

From being the chief of the world's richest cricket board to leading the ICC, the 35-year-old's meteoric

rise illustrates India's domination of the sport's global administration. In a country where the sport and politics go hand in glove, Shah is best known for being the son of home minister Amit Shah, the right-hand man of Hindu-nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Shah, the powerful Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India since 2019, becomes the youngest ICC chairman. Top cricketers in India enjoy superstardom with millions of die-hard fans, most lucrative playing contracts, and endorsement deals not seen anywhere else in global cricket.

By some counts, Indian cricket on average generates more revenue than Bollywood. More than 90 percent of the sport's billion-plus worldwide fans are in the Indian subcontinent, according to a 2018 ICC study. The ICC is the global governing body for cricket, with more than 100 members, and is responsible for staging global events such as the World Cup. Shah said he wanted to "embrace fresh thinking and innovation to elevate the love for cricket worldwide". — AFP

## Van Aert lands third stage win of debut Vuelta

BARCELONA: Wout van Aert won the 10th stage of the Vuelta a Espana on Tuesday to seal a hat-trick of victories on his debut in the Spanish Grand Tour. The Belgian Visma-lease a Bike rider worked with Quentin Pacher on the way to the finish in Galicia, with the French rider leading out but soon accepting defeat against the sprint king.

Australian Ben O'Connor keeps the overall lead from Primoz Roglic on a relaxed afternoon for the red jersey rider, as the peloton rolled in five-and-a-half minutes down on Van Aert. It was a tricky 160 kilometre ride from Pontareas to Baiona, with four categorized climbs, as the race moved north after Monday's rest

## African players in Europe: Salah sinks Brentford

PARIS: Egypt captain Mohamed Salah made it two goals in as many games to start the Premier League season by grabbing the second in Liverpool's 2-0 home victory over Brentford at the weekend. The two-time African Footballer of the Year struck on 70 minutes at Anfield after also completing the scoring in a 2-0 opening-round win at Ipswich last weekend. Here, AFP Sport highlights some of the Africans who starred in the major European leagues at the weekend.

### ENGLAND

#### Mohamed Salah (Liverpool)

The Egyptian sealed Liverpool's 2-0 win against Brentford with a clinical strike. With the Reds leading 1-0, Salah took Diogo Jota's pass in his stride in the 70th minute and cleverly adjusted his body position before steering his shot into the far corner from 12 yards. That wrapped up new Liverpool manager Arne Slot's first home league victory since succeeding Jurgen Klopp and extended the 100 percent start to his reign.

#### Yves Bissouma (Tottenham)

The Mali midfielder got back in favour with Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou after his superb strike inspired a 4-0 rout of Everton in north London. Bissouma was back in the Tottenham team after being suspended for their season-opening draw at Leicester after posting a social media video of himself inhaling laughing gas. Postecoglou was furious with the former Brighton star, but a head injury to Rodrigo Bentancur opened the way for Bissouma to play. He made the most of his reprieve with a brilliant finish into the top corner from the edge of the area in the 14th minute.

### SPAIN

#### Brahim Diaz (Real Madrid)

The Moroccan international came off the bench to score the second goal and create the

third as La Liga title-holders Real Madrid defeated Real Valladolid 3-0 in the Spanish capital. Diaz netted with a neat lob on 88 minutes, then set up Endrick to complete the scoring deep in added time.

### GERMANY

#### Amine Adli (Bayer Leverkusen)

He may have come on with only eight minutes to go, but the Moroccan winger played a crucial role as defending Bundesliga champions Bayer Leverkusen won 3-2 at Borussia Moenchengladbach. Replacing Nigeria striker Victor Boniface, Adli troubled the Gladbach defence with his speed. As the game went into the 10th minute of added time, he was fouled in the box and although Florian Wirtz had his penalty saved, the German converted the rebound for the match-winner.

## Vlahovic fires Juventus to second win

MILAN: Dusan Vlahovic scored twice as Juventus made it two convincing wins to start the Serie A season with a 3-0 victory at Verona on Monday. Thiago Motta's side, who started the campaign with a 3-0 win over Como, are the only team boasting a 100 percent after two matches and sit top of the early table. Juventus are hoping to challenge for a first Scudetto since 2019/20. Motta has taken over as head coach following Massimiliano Allegri's sacking after his outburst in the aftermath of their Italian Cup final win in Juve. Juve slipped away last season to come third in Serie A, although that was their highest finish in four years. Vlahovic gave The Old Lady the lead at Verona just before the half-hour. Nicolo Savona, a 21-year-old defender making his full debut for the club, headed home Juve's second goal before half-time from Samuel Mbangula's cross.

Belgian Mbangula now has a goal and two assists in his first two games for the senior team since being promoted from the youth ranks. Vlahovic made the points safe with a penalty just eight minutes into the second period. "He is certainly working hard on our aggression and our attitude," Vlahovic told DAZN of new boss Motta. "We all agree that our attitude is the key to everything, if we have the right mentality, it all works better. We play for each other, but also there are tactical changes that we know about." Juventus will likely face their biggest test of the early weeks of the campaign when they host Roma on Sunday. Earlier, Como came from behind to secure their first Serie A point since 2003 thanks to former AC Milan forward Patrick Cutrone's second-half equalizer in a 1-1 draw at Cagliari.

"I am happy, because this is a difficult place to play, but at the same time we need to improve and as soon as possible get used to the Serie A tempo," said Como coach Cesc Fabregas. — AFP



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's Egyptian striker #11 Mohamed Salah (2L) celebrates with teammates after scoring the team's second goal during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Brentford. — AFP

### Samuel Essende (Augsburg)

Close-season arrival Essende continued an excellent start to his Augsburg career, scoring on his Bundesliga debut in a 2-2 home draw with Werder Bremen. The former Paris Saint-Germain youth-team player, who netted in the German Cup opener last weekend, leapt to head in a Tim Breithaupt cross to give the hosts a 2-1 lead before half-time.

### FRANCE

#### Achraf Hakimi (Paris Saint-Germain)

The full-back who led Morocco to bronze medals at the Paris Olympics earlier this month was among the goals as the French champions trounced Montpellier 6-0 to maintain a perfect start to the Ligue 1 season. Hakimi claimed the fifth goal on 59 minutes with a sidefoot volley at the far post off a Nuno Mendes cross. — AFP

Sports

# Paris Paralympics to showcase disability sport in City of Light

New generation of Paralympians will join seasoned veterans competing in many venues

**PARIS:** The Paris Paralympics begin on Wednesday with a spectacular opening ceremony in a city still on a high after the highly successful Olympics. A new generation of Paralympians will join seasoned veterans competing in many of the same venues that hosted Olympic sports.

A total of 18 of the 35 Olympic venues will be used for the Paralympics, which run until September 8, including the Grand Palais which scored rave reviews for its hosting of the fencing and taekwondo under an ornate roof.

The La Defense Arena is back as well, hosting the 141 gold-medal events in para-swimming, as is the Stade de France where track and field again takes place. The Games will open with a ceremony in Place de la Concorde, the square in the centre of Paris where skateboarding and other 'urban' sports took place during the Olympics.

Just as for the Olympics ceremony on the River Seine, the ceremony takes place away from the main stadium for the first time at a Paralympic. The Paralympic flame was lit at Stoke Mandeville hospital in England, the birthplace of the Games, and brought to France through the Channel Tunnel.

Theatre director Thomas Jolly, who also oversaw the Olympics opening ceremony, said there was a deep symbolism in putting the Paralympics ceremony in the centre of the French capital — a city whose Metro system, in particular, is completely unadapted to the needs of wheelchair users.

"Putting Paralympic athletes in the heart of the city is already a political marker in the sense that the city is not sufficiently adapted to every handicapped person," Jolly said. Organisers say Paris buses, in contrast, are wheelchair-friendly and they have laid on 1,000 specially adapted taxis as well. Sluggish ticket

sales have picked up since the Olympics and organizers say more than 1.9 million have now been sold.

**New stars, familiar faces**

Every Games creates new stars, and this edition will be no exception, so look to American above-the-knee amputee sprinter/high jumper Ezra Frech, who at 19 has already attracted a burst of publicity about his journey to Paris. More familiar names return too — British amputee sprinter Jonnie Peacock was one of the highest-profile athletes of London 2012 and dusted off his running blade last year to make a comeback in his bid to win a medal at a fourth consecutive Paralympics.

Away from the track, Iranian sitting volleyball legend Morteza Mehrzad, who stands 8ft 1in (2.46m) tall, will attempt to take gold again. The Paralympics though always have a far wider message than simply sport and International Paralympic Committee president Andrew Parsons told AFP earlier this year he hopes the Paris edition will restore the issues facing disabled people to the top of the list of global priorities.

Parsons believes the Games "will have a big impact in how people with disability are perceived around the world". "This is one of the key expectations we have around Paris 2024; we believe that we need people with disability to be put back on the global agenda," the Brazilian said.

He argued that disability had fallen behind sexual and gender identity in recent years. "We do believe people with disability have been left behind. There is very little debate about persons with disability."

Paralympic powerhouse China will send a strong squad—the Chinese dominated the medals table at the Covid-delayed Games in Tokyo three years ago



**SAINT-DENIS:** Technicians work on wheelchairs at the Ottobock prosthetic repair centre in the Paralympic athletes' village in Saint-Denis, ahead of the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. — AFP

winning 96 golds. Britain were second with 41 golds.

Riding the wave of its Olympic team's success, host nation France will be aiming for a substantial upgrade on the 11 golds it won in 2021. Ukraine, traditionally one of the top medal-winning nations at the Paralympics, will send a team of 140 athletes spread over 17 sports despite the challenges they face in preparing as the war against Russian forces rages.

The 96 athletes from Russia and Belarus will compete under a neutral banner but are barred from the opening and closing ceremonies. The Russian and Belarusian federations were both suspended following the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 but their competitors are allowed to compete as neutrals providing they have not shown any support for the war. — AFP

## Mehrzad, 'giant' lynchpin of Iran's volleyball team

**TEHRAN:** Iran's sitting volleyball star, Morteza Mehrzad, has battled countless challenges due to his towering height, but now he's ready to help propel his team to another victory at the Paris Paralympics. At an imposing 2.46 metres (8 ft 0.85 in), Mehrzad is the second tallest living man in the world and the tallest athlete ever to compete in the Paralympics, according to the International Paralympic Committee website.

In 2015, the 36-year-old has joined Iran's national sitting volleyball team after the coach spotted him on a reality TV show about people grappling with life difficulties. His life has since taken a turn for the better. "I have always been called the 'tall boy' even before joining the national team or the Paralympic Games," he told AFP after a training session at Iran's Sports Federation for the Disabled in Tehran.

"Playing sitting volleyball helped me a lot," he said. "The physique that I once considered as very bad has helped me in this game, and I could make good use of it." Along with his team, he is preparing for the 2024 Paris Paralympics which start on Wednesday.

**'Opportunities'**

Mehrzad was diagnosed at a young age with acromegaly, a rare condition due to excessive growth hormone. During his teenage years, he had a bicycle accident, injuring his pelvis and stunting the growth in his right leg which is now around six inches shorter than his left leg.

"I turned limitations into opportunities," said Mehrzad. "I cannot say those limitations totally went away, but they lessened over time since joining the team." He still recalls how "challenging" it was to attend his first international championship in China in 2016 and his first Paralympic Games in Rio that same year, where his team won gold.

"It was both difficult and interesting for me," he said. "The atmosphere there and the expectation from us to win gold were very difficult for me." Mehrzad's towering height has been a crucial asset for Iran's sitting volleyball team for years, compelling rival teams to reconsider their strategies.

He won gold medals in the 2016 and 2020 Summer Paralympics and earned the Gold Ball for the world's best player in 2019, 2021 and 2022. Iranian media has over the years hailed him as a



**CHIBA: (FILES)** Iran's Morteza Mehrzad Selakjani blocks the ball during the preliminary round pool B sitting volleyball match between Iran and Germany. — AFP

"fatal weapon" and "the kind giant". "I appreciate being called the best in the game, but I'm not," he said. "Each of our guys is the best... and we make the best team in the world."

**'The best are in Iran'**

Mehrzad says joining Iran's national sitting volleyball team has helped him through some personal crises including the death of his mother in 2019. The experience, he says, "was and still is painful... but volleyball helped me a lot, not to forget, but to move past it."

Iran has participated in the sitting

volleyball Paralympic Games since 1988 in Seoul, emerging as champions seven out of nine times, a remarkable record. Now, the team is putting the final touches to its Paralympics preparations before they face off against Ukraine, Brazil and Germany. "Our main rival is Bosnia... although we should not underestimate Brazil, Germany, and Egypt," said Mehrzad. In the 2022 world championship in Sarajevo, Iran beat Bosnia and Herzegovina 3-0. "The morale of the team is very high," said Mehrzad. "The guys are very good and prepared," referring to his teammates. "The best (players) are in Iran," he added. — AFP

## Paris organizers announce 2 million tickets sold

**PARIS:** Organizers of the Paris Paralympics announced Tuesday that over two million tickets have been sold as the Games prepare to open. "We have already sold around two million tickets, so that's good. There will be full stadiums," said Paris 2024 president Tony Estanguet at a press conference, alongside International Paralympic Committee (IPC) president Andrew Parsons.

There remain 500,000 unsold tickets for the Paralympics, which get underway on Wednesday with an opening ceremony in central Paris. The best-selling events are blind football, taekwondo, track cycling, shooting, triathlon and equestrianism. Organizers put more tickets on sale on Monday for the most in-demand events, which will take place in venues such as the Grand Palais — which proved a hit when hosting the fencing and taekwondo during the Olympics — and the grounds of the Palace of Versailles.

Many of these sites have been adapted since the Olympics to make them more accessible for people with reduced mobility. "Sometimes with Paralympic sports, the first reaction (of the spectators) is surprise... then this connection starts between what they see on the field of play (and them)," said Parsons.

Organizers are confident that more seats will be filled. "I know that we are going to continue selling tickets, even during the events and right up until the end, just like at the Olympics," said Estanguet. — AFP

## Golden Paralympics can boost Ukraine's disabled veterans

**PARIS:** The Paris Paralympics are hugely significant for powerhouses Ukraine as great performances can help maimed veterans come to terms with their new circumstances, Tokyo fencing silver medallist Artem Manko told AFP.

The 25-year-old says previous impressive medal hauls have raised respect for disabled people in Ukraine to the highest level it has ever been. However, for those who have suffered life-changing injuries on the battlefield since Russia invaded in February 2022, adjusting mentally is a challenge in itself.

Hence why Manko says it is imperative he and his teammates maintain Ukraine's pre-eminence when the Paralympics begin on Wednesday — they finished third in the medals table in Rio and sixth in Tokyo. "It not only helps boost morale back home,

it helps disability in society," Manko told AFP by phone from his training camp last week.

"After the last Paralympics Ukraine got so many medals we inspired the nation and I think we are now at the highest level of disability acceptance. "That is really important right now as there are a lot of injured soldiers without legs, hands and in wheelchairs.

"It is hugely important for them to feel disabled people are accepted in society." The challenge facing the Ukrainians though is many have had to cope with hugely disrupted preparations, just like many of their compatriots who experience hardship just going about their daily lives.

Manko has at least been able to train in Germany after he and his fencing teammates were first invited there two years ago by their German counterparts. Many though, like Tokyo bronze medallist swimmer Anna Hontar, a two-time world champion in the 50 metres freestyle, have not been so fortunate.

While the 20-year-old told AFP she was looking forward to her second Games — "the second big start in life" — she adds preparations have been tough. "Before the Paralympics, my team and I must train in one place to get equipment and so on," said Hontar.

"Every preparation for competitions is difficult and important, but this time it is more difficult, when there is a threat of missile attacks or shelling. "We are asked to leave the sports hall and go to the bomb shelter for our safety. "There are a lot of air raid sirens, and this affects your state of mind. "The explosions that I recently heard in Poltava scared me a lot and I could not sleep peacefully."

**'Unbreakable'**

Training outside the country also has drawbacks, as para-badminton star Oksana Kozyna has found. The 29-year-old, who says making history for her country in being crowned world champion in 2022 "brings tears to my eyes and gives me goosebumps", moved to France shortly after the invasion and lacked a sparring partner. However, it was leaving her family that hit Kozyna hard, especially as she has a brother fighting on the frontline. "Leaving your family is always difficult, especially if you have a good relationship, but I was forced to go to another country to defend my country in terms of sports," she told AFP.

"This is a sore subject for me, in fact, normally I don't talk about this to anyone. When leaving the

country, leaving my family, I realized I was repeating the fate of my parents, this is very unpleasant. "When I was born, my parents decided to leave me, and when I turned 15 they were found and when I left for another country, I realized that I was leaving them this time.

"I worry because a bomb could strike (them) at any time." Another unsettling factor for the Ukrainians is the presence of 96 Russians and Belarusians at the Paralympics, even though they are competing under a neutral flag and barred from attending the opening and closing ceremonies in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

"I am shocked," said Hontar. "This is outrageous, I do not know how it is possible to be near these opponents, and knowing that many of them support the attack on Ukraine. "When the war began, on the very first day I returned from Nikolaev to Kherson, and then two days later they captured Kherson and I was under occupation for a month. "I saw a lot and I will say that our people are unbreakable, strong, incredible." Kozyna is more phlegmatic. "For me, every opponent is like a Russian: I came, won and left," she said. — 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
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**Change of Name**

**I, Kuntal Bhattacharjee**, holder of Indian Passport No. N2358730 having permanent address Halisahar, Khasbati S S Lane P.O - Hazinagar, North 24 Parganas Pin: 743135, West Bengal, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given name) Kuntal and (surname) Bhattacharjee. (#6158 27/08/2024)

## US Open champs start with victories

Djokovic shines under the lights as Gauff rolls



NEW YORK: Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns the ball to Moldova's Radu Albot during their men's singles first round tennis match on day one of the US Open. — AFP

NEW YORK: Defending champion Novak Djokovic eased into the second round of the US Open with a straight-sets victory over qualifier Radu Albot on Monday as Coco Gauff launched her defence of the women's title with a convincing victory. Djokovic, seeking his 25th Grand Slam title and his first since his victory at Flushing Meadows last year, wasn't his sharpest self.

But he was more than a match for 138th-ranked Albot, breaking the Moldovan six times on the way to a 6-2, 6-2, 6-4 victory. He notched a men's record 78th match win on Arthur Ashe Stadium, where he said the "electric" energy of the night session was unlike any other.

"The night sessions here are best in the world," said Djokovic, who capped the action on a day that drew a record 74,641 spectators according to the US Tennis Association. That included a day-session crowd of 42,886 and a record-setting night-session crowd of 31,775. "There's an incredible energy, and with the new rule this year that the crowd can move around, there are a lot of things happening," the four-time champion said.

Seeded second behind Jannik Sinner, Djokovic is vying to become the first man to repeat in New York since Roger Federer won five straight US Opens from 2004-2008. He's coming off an emotional triumph at the Paris Olympics, but Djokovic has yet to capture a Grand Slam title this year.

He had 10 double faults among 40 unforced errors, but was nevertheless in full control throughout the two hour, seven minute contest that ended shortly before midnight. Gauff, meanwhile, powered into the second round with a 6-2, 6-0 victory over France's Varvara Gracheva.

The 20-year-old American fired 10 aces and needed just 66 minutes to beat 66th-ranked Gracheva. She saved eight break points — including two with aces in the final game. "It is definitely a lot of pressure this tournament but I'm just enjoying it," said Gauff, who is seeded third behind world number one Iga Swiatek and Aryna Sabalenka.

"Last year was incredible, so I'm just bringing those vibes and whatever happens, happens." Gauff has battled through an erratic season since capturing her maiden major last year and her tune-up tournaments saw her fall in the third round at Toronto before she crashed out of her first match as the defending champion in Cincinnati.

### A little tough

"The last few weeks have been a little bit tough," Gauff said. "But today was I think the best tennis I've played in a while." American Ben Shelton opened the action on Ashe with a 6-4, 6-2, 6-2 victory over 2020 champion Dominic Thiem.

Shelton's triumph marked an end to Thiem's Grand Slam career, the Austrian having announced he would retire at the end of 2024 after several injury-plagued seasons. "I just want to say thanks for all the support," Thiem told fans. "It's been 10 years since I first played here, I had my greatest success on this court."

Fourth-seeded Alexander Zverev of Germany needed four sets to get past lucky loser Maximilian Marterer 6-2, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-2. Sixth-seeded Andrey Rublev beat Brazilian Thiago Seyboth Wild 6-3, 7-6 (7/3), 7-5 and eighth-seeded Casper Ruud of Norway advanced with a 7-6 (7/2), 6-2, 6-2 win over China's Bu Yunchaokete.

Australia, 2000, as for Athena, Greece, 2004 Olympics they won six medals. Kuwait team did not win any medals in the Beijing, China, Paralympics and London, UK, but in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2016 Kuwait won one gold medal and in Tokyo, Japan, 2020 they won one silver medal and one bronze, in total Kuwait Disabled Sports Club secured 12 gold medals, 18 silver medals, and 22 bronze medals.

Kuwait Disabled Sports Club is preparing for the upcoming Paris, France 2024 Paralympics, which will be held from August 28 to September 8 with three participants in Athletics sports (running and throwing) after training in camps in Turkey and UAE to compete. On the Kuwaiti preparation, the board chairman of the Paralympics committee and the head of the Kuwait delegation Mansour Al-Sarhid told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), "We seek through the administrative and technical efforts of the team to complete the journey for Kuwait's champions who are participating in the Paralympics".

Al-Sarhid highlighted that Kuwait's team has a



Mansour Al-Sarhid



NEW YORK: USA's Coco Gauff celebrates match point over France's Varvara Gracheva during their women's singles first round tennis match on day one of the US Open tennis tournament at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City. — AFP

Ruud next faces French veteran Gael Monfils, who beat Diego Schwartzman 6-7 (2/7), 6-2, 6-2, 6-1 in the Argentinian's final Grand Slam appearance as he heads into retirement. Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka cruised into the second round with a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Australian qualifier Priscilla Hon.

Wimbledon champion Barbora Krejčíková, seeded eighth, eased into the second round with a 7-6 (7/3), 6-2 victory over Spanish qualifier Marina Bassols Ribera. Olympic women's singles gold medallist Zheng Qinwen of China, seeded seventh, rallied from a set down to beat Amanda Anisimova 4-6, 6-4, 6-2. — AFP

## Kuwait's swimming team win six medals at aquatics contest

CAIRO: Kuwait's national swimming team secured six medals on Monday which marks the second day of the Arab Aquatics competition in Cairo, raising Kuwait's medal count to 14.

Mohammad Zubaid's exceptional performance saw him claiming his third gold medal of the tournament in the 50 meters freestyle contest's 15-16 age group, setting a new Arab record of 26.60 seconds, said delegation chief Faisal Abualhassan. Kuwait's other representatives, Khaled Al-Otaibi, Saud Al-Enzi, and Abdullah Sultan all contributed to decorating Kuwait's flag by earning bronze medals, Abualhassan added. In the relay events, Kuwait continued to shine, winning a silver medal in the 4x100 meter freestyle relay for the 13-14 age group with the swimmers Hassan Zaid, Humoud Al-Humoud, Meshary Al-Haqan, and Abdullah Sultan clocking a time of 3:50.73 minutes.

The competition, which features separate categories for boys and girls across the 13-18 age group, pits athletes from 17 Arab countries against each other, and is set to continue until Wednesday. — KUNA

## Kuwait gearing for more accomplishments at Paris Paralympics

KUWAIT: Kuwait Disabled Sports Club has attained many Paralympic accomplishments since participating in 1980 until the last in Tokyo 2020, gathering 52 different medals throughout. The Disabled Kuwaitis champions participated in a variety of sports and won 11 competitions, including Archery, Swimming, Table Tennis, Weightlifting, Fencing, and others.

The history of participation began with the Kuwait Disabled Sports Club taking part in the Arnhem, Netherlands, 1980 Paralympics, winning two gold, two silver, and one bronze medals, as for the second competition in Stoke Mandeville, England, 1984 they won eight different medals consisting of one gold, three silver, and four bronze. Disabled Sports champions' participation in Seoul, South Korea, 1988 Olympics was considered the best after winning 17 medals including five gold, five silver, and seven bronze medals, and in Barcelona, Spain, 1992 Olympics they won one gold, three silver, and one bronze. Kuwait team won three medals in the Atlanta, US, 1996 Paralympics they also won five medals in Sidney,

high potential to compete in international and global competitions thanks to training camps, having sufficient time to exercise, and being supported by official bodies in the country such as Youth Public Authority and Public Authority for Sport. On his side, Athletics Paralympic champion Faisal Al-Sorour said that he insisted on achieving a high record to add to his sports accomplishments to enhance and develop Kuwait team athletic performance for any sports competitions.

Al-Sorour added, that he was trying his best to exercise in the training camps with the help of the head of the delegation and coaches to win an advanced position after winning in third place and getting a bronze medal in Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, hoping that he and his colleagues would win and make their country proud. Athletics Paralympic champion Ahmad Al-Mutairi added, on his part, that he was proud of Kuwait Disabled Sports Club for providing many accomplishments for disabled people in Kuwait by the administrative and technical staff.

Al-Mutairi noted that the staff efforts made it possible for him to win two medals in wheelchair racing, one of them a gold medal in the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Paralympics and the other one is silver medal in Tokyo 2020 Paralympics. In addition, Al-Mutairi won three global medals in events in Doha 2015, London 2017, and Dubai 2019 and he also achieved three world records in wheelchair racing. Al-Mutairi praised Kuwaiti athletes



Faisal Al-Sorour holds the Kuwaiti flag

and their sports capabilities, and the official bodies for removing obstacles, providing the needs for the champions, and most importantly giving them an active role in participating in international and global competitions to achieve different medals in various sports.

The Paralympic Games are for people with varying disabilities. It is not a sport only for people with physical disabilities, rather, there are the Special Olympics Global Games, which is a sporting event for athletes with mental disabilities, and the Special Olympics Kuwait won 21 medals - seven gold, 10 silver, four bronze - against seven thousand athletes around the world. — KUNA