

R₊
RIDE SAFE

BOOK YOUR RIDE NOW

DOWNLOAD THE APP NOW

@ridesafe.app

2 Kuwaiti Olympian shares her story of perseverance



8 Microsoft exec: AI bots must learn to say 'help!'



13 George Clooney, Brad Pitt are lone 'Wolfs' at Venice



16 Liverpool demolish Man Utd to maintain perfect Slot start



27% of expat workers domestics

Outdoor work ban ends • Delivery licenses open • Car transfer now on Sahel app

Bader Al-Kharafi gifts Volvo car to Paralympic medalist Faisal Al-Rajhi



PARIS: (Left) Kuwaiti athlete Faisal Al-Rajhi poses with the bronze medal in the men's 5000m - T54 event at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. (Right) Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi gifted a Volvo car to Rajhi after his win.

KUWAIT: Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi gifted a brand new Volvo vehicle to Kuwait's Faisal Al-Rajhi for winning the bronze medal in the men's 5000m - T54 contest at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. Rajhi expressed joy on winning the first medal for Kuwait at the Games. The event saw fierce competition in the preliminary stage and the final, he told KUNA on Saturday.

Rajhi dedicated the achievement to HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people. He promised to do his utmost in the future and make more achievements to raise Kuwait's flag high on the podium. On Sunday, Rajhi

came in sixth in the 400m - T54 race, but he will still be competing in the 1500m qualifiers.

Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi praised Rajhi on Sunday for winning the bronze medal. Mutairi said in a statement to KUNA that Rajhi's achievement reflects the strength and dedication in various sports fields of people with disabilities, noting that Rajhi has won many medals in international competitions.

Continuous support for Kuwaiti sports by HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah contributes to the achievements of Kuwaiti players.

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: A statistical report said on Sunday that domestic workers in Kuwait increased 1.1 percent at the end of the first quarter of 2024 to 789,000 and formed 26.9 percent of the expat workforce in the country. Citing official figures by the Central Statistics Bureau, Al-Shall Economic Consultants said female domestic helpers numbered 423,000, while males totaled 366,000.

Filipinas topped the list of female domestic helpers at the end of the first quarter with 175,000, a sharp drop from the previous year's 205,000. The slide appears to be the result of the labor rift between Kuwait and the Philippines, which was resolved recently. Indian males top the list with 248,000, a slight increase from 247,000 a year ago, the report said.

But Indian males and females together make up

44.7 percent of all expat domestic workers in the country (around 352,000) followed by the Philippines at 22.5 percent (177,500). Domestic workers from India, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh together make 93.3 percent of all domestic workers in Kuwait, Al-Shall said.

According to the report, Indian workers in all sectors increased to 889,000 at the end of the first quarter this year compared to 858,000 a year ago, making up 35.9 percent of all expat manpower and 30.3 percent if Kuwaiti manpower is added. Indian homemakers and other dependents are not included in the report.

Egyptian workers came second at 476,000 or 19.2 percent of expat manpower, compared to 489,000 a year ago, the report said. Kuwaiti manpower came third at 458,000 or 15.6 percent of total manpower, increasing from 445,000 a year ago.

Continued on Page 6

Minister discusses Mubarak Port with Chinese delegation

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works Noura Al-Mashaan affirmed that a meeting with a visiting Chinese delegation to Kuwait comes within the framework of Amiri directives on speeding up the implementation of major projects. This came in Mashaan's statement to KUNA, following her meeting with the Chinese delegation in the presence of Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Sameeh Hayat, Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Zhang Jianwei, senior officials from the ministries of public works and foreign affairs, and specialized engineers at ports and the municipality.

Mashaan confirmed seven agreements were signed with the Chinese government, the first of which concerns the completion of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project, indicating that the completion rate is about 50 percent of the first phase. She



KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works Noura Al-Mashaan gives a memento to a Chinese delegation official on Sept 1, 2024. — KUNA

stressed keenness of Chinese government companies and institutions in implementing the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project in all its stages, explaining that China is very prominent in the fields of construction, management and operation of ports. She pointed to the ongoing talks with the Chinese government side on means of strengthening bilateral economic relations and ways to developing them. — KUNA

NEWS IN BRIEF

Raisi chopper crashed in fog

TEHRAN: Iran's final investigation into the May helicopter crash that killed President Ebrahim Raisi has found it was caused by bad weather, the body investigating the case said Sunday. The main cause of the helicopter crash was the "complex climatic and atmospheric conditions of the region in the spring", the special board investigating the dimensions and causes of the helicopter accident said. It added that "the sudden emergence of a thick mass of dense and rising fog" caused the helicopter's collision into the mountain. — AFP

2-day curfew for Iraq census

BAGHDAD: Iraq will impose a two-day curfew in November for the country's first census in 27 years, the authorities announced on Sunday. The "curfew will be imposed in all provinces of Iraq on November 20 and 21 to conduct a population census", Prime Minister Mohamed Shia Al-Sudani said in a statement. The last general census was held in 1997 in 15 Iraqi provinces — excluding the three northern provinces that made up the autonomous Kurdistan region. The authorities have partnered with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for the upcoming census. — AFP

Zionists keep up Gaza genocide, West Bank raids

JENIN/GAZA: The Zionist entity's main union on Sunday ordered a nationwide general strike after soldiers recovered the bodies of six dead captives from the Gaza Strip where the military is battling Palestinian fighters. The remains of the six were recovered Saturday "from an underground tunnel in the Rafah area" in southern Gaza, the military said.

Qatar-based Hamas official Izzat

Al-Rishq said the six were "killed by Zionist bombing", an accusation the military denied. A senior Hamas official told AFP on condition of anonymity that "some" of the six had been "approved" for release in a potential hostage-prisoner swap as part of a deal yet to be agreed. Critics in the Zionist entity have accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of prolonging the war for political gain.

"Netanyahu is responsible for the killing of (Zionist) prisoners," senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters. "The (Zionists) should choose between Netanyahu and the deal."

Continued on Page 6



GAZA: A health worker administers the polio vaccine to a Palestinian child in Zawayda in the central Gaza Strip on Sept 1, 2024. — AFP

Major Qatar plant to double solar capacity by 2030

DOHA: A large new solar plant planned in Qatar will double the Gulf state's previously projected renewable energy capacity by 2030, Qatari Energy Minister Saad Al-Kaabi announced on Sunday. The photovoltaic farm, which will be built in the Dukhan area some 80 km west of the capital Doha, will increase the gas-rich state's solar production capacity to four gigawatts by the end of the decade, Kaabi said.

The plant "that will be established in Dukhan area will produce 2,000 megawatts, which is twice more than the capacity of Qatar's production of solar energy of the current projects," the minister, who is also chief executive of state-owned QatarEnergy, said. In Oct 2022, Qatar inaugurated its first large-scale solar farm at Al-Kharsaah, west of Doha. The state announced in August of the same

year another solar project with two plants at Ras Laffan in the north. Through the combined projects, including at Dukhan, Qatar would achieve "4,000 megawatts of clean energy by 2030", Kaabi said. This will "constitute 30 percent of the total production of energy of the state of Qatar" with a yearly reduction of "4.7 million tons of CO2 emissions," he added. Kaabi said the existing projects should produce 1.7 gigawatts of energy "in first quarter of next year, or early next year".

The energy minister also announced plans to more than double Qatar's urea production making the country the largest producer of the fertilizer in the world by the end of the decade. He said Qatar would "maximize the production of chemical fertilizers" through "a complex with global standards" which would "increase our production capacity from 6 million tons annually to more than 12.4 million tons annually".

Qatar is one of the world's top liquefied natural gas producers alongside the United States, Australia and Russia. Natural gas is a major ingredient in urea manufacturing. In February, Qatar announced plans to expand its output from its North Field project, saying it will boost capacity to 142 million tons per year before 2030. — AFP

قطر للطاقة
QatarEnergy



DOHA: Qatar's Energy Minister and CEO of QatarEnergy Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi speaks during a press conference on Sept 1, 2024. — AFP



Local

Kuwaiti athlete shares her story of perseverance en route to Olympics

'An athlete's journey should be a national project, not just an individual effort'



Fatemah Al-Habib, founder of Qesati, hosts the event with athlete Amal Al-Roumi.

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: After becoming the first Kuwaiti woman to qualify for the 800m event at the Paris 2024 Olympics, track and field athlete Amal Al-Roumi described the experience alone as a goal she had checked off her list. "It didn't fully hit me until I was at the Olympics village that I was on the same start line next to world-class athletes. That's when I realized I had made it," said Al-Roumi.

She believes that for Kuwaiti athletes to achieve their goals, support from all relevant parties, including both government and private sectors, is much needed. "Reaching the semifinals isn't as easy as people think," said Al-Roumi, who fell short of making it to the semifinals. "An athlete's journey should be a national project, not just an individual effort."

Her thoughts were shared during a side interview with Kuwait Times at an event hosted by "Qesati", where she shared her athletic story themed "Perseverance," on Saturday at Volvo Studios. With all its ups and downs, Al-Roumi explained how resilience and strength have been central to her journey in a sport she describes as both emo-



Amal Al-Roumi

tionally and physically demanding. "Working with the human body is different from working with a machine; it doesn't always perform as expected," she said. Even if she puts her all into training, sometimes the results don't align with her efforts. That's when she reminds herself that success may take time, and that the rewards of her hard work will come eventually.

"I've come a long way since 2016, and I'm com-

mitted to continuing this journey and not giving up easily," said Al-Roumi. However, she noted that this requires strict adherence to a disciplined lifestyle, including a calculated diet, rigorous training schedule, and adequate recovery time. "It feels like your life is not your own; you give up everything for the sport."

As female's sports have been recently introduced in Kuwait, she feels her potential is often underestimated simply because of her gender. "There

is a stereotype about Kuwaiti women that they are incapable or too spoiled," she said, noting that this perception sometimes leads men to refuse to train with her. "The sport can feel very lonely, especially since I train alone without other girls at my level."

She aims that with her achievement, she could push the women's sports forward in Kuwait. "I hope that if they see that I made it to the Olympics, they might believe they can too." Al-Roumi's Olympic experience followed a remarkable career where she set national records in the 1500m, 3000m, and 5000m, and won multiple medals at the GCC, West Asian, and Arab championships. Ranked among the top 4 in Asia, her next ambitions are to set a new Kuwaiti national record in the 800 meters and secure a medal at the Asian Championships.

Qesati, founded by Fatemah Al-Habib, is a Kuwait-based community that provides a platform for people to connect through various forms of storytelling. It features guest speakers from diverse backgrounds and fields, including athletes, doctors, and artists, who share their inspiring experiences. Each story is crafted to highlight a key message, reflecting the speaker's personal journey and insights.

In my view

The shortest way to fail

Dr Khalid A Al-Saleh

local@kuwaittimes.com

When I was 14, my Arabic language teacher, who was an exceptional educator, convinced me to participate in the short story contest. I used to love this type of literature and love to read always, so I wrote on both sides of a paper I tore from a booklet. The paper had on its cover the picture of Kuwait Amir, the father of its constitution, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem (May Allah bestow His mercy on him). My handwriting was not good, and if it were not for the lines on the paper, my writing would have gone up and down.

I went to submit my paper, only to see a student from another class presenting a beautiful colored file for the same contest. His handwriting was beautiful and tidy. I almost went back with my paper. The results were announced two weeks later, and my story won the first position. The story of my friend, which had the beautiful writings, took the third place. That was the most important lesson for me. His family cared about teaching him good handwriting and helped him in beautifying his project, and he won despite his lack of literary talent.

Today, while I remember the outstanding students, I remember that most of them used to come to school well groomed, wearing well-pressed clothes and shiny shoes. Some of them did not have the intelligence that made them stand out, but they looked nice and decent. Many intelligent students did not find a caring family, so they became miserable and did not care about their looks. They have a negative impression, and their grades dropped.

It is this educational issue that we understood later in our practical lives. Many leaders do not have leadership qualities, and these contributed to their failures. How do we train better teachers and students? And how do we convince our leaders to search for true talents who will run the country regardless of their family connections or the money in their bank accounts? Successful countries hunt for the best brains, while failed states hunt for pockets and physical appearances.

The current generation glorifies the brands they wear, where they reside, their origins, and their relations. These generate the slope of backwardness. We don't need a nation that will be run by the weakest brains and the least talented people. We hope that the good news in our new homeland will continue and that teachers will contribute their quota in training and bringing out the best from their students.

1. Do you often seek local brands rather than foreign ones?



Mixed support for local brands amid consumer concerns

By Hussain Al-Salman

KUWAIT: Consumerism is a concept that is increasingly prevalent in many people's minds today, particularly the idea that one should be mindful of the establishments they choose to support. Simply put, no one wants to endorse a system that undermines values they hold dear. This could involve striving to bolster the local economy or avoiding transactions that may harm others abroad.

In recent times, there has been a growing concern about making purchases that could contribute to the Palestinian apartheid. Instead of scrutinizing each brand to establish a clear link to the apartheid, many find it easier to support local brands. However, issues arise, especially considering how long people have been purchasing from specific foreign brands. This concern particularly applies to disposable products

Kuwaiti-Emirati joint committee promotes coordination, ties

ABU DHABI: Kuwait's Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, Jamal Al-Ghunaim, underscored Sunday the importance of the fifth edition of the joint Kuwaiti-Emirati committee meeting in boosting relations and promoting high-level coordination on bilateral, Arab, and international issues. The joint committee will be held on Monday in the capital city of Abu Dhabi and will be chaired on the Kuwaiti side by Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and the Emirati side by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nahayan.

Ambassador Al-Ghunaim told KUNA that the meeting will examine a number of agreements, MoUs, and programs. The Kuwaiti Foreign Minister will also be meeting with the President of the UAE, Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahayan,

2. Why do you seek local brands



— items that are bought daily, such as coffee and fast food, which can be consumed multiple times a day.

Kuwait Times conducted a survey on social media platforms frequented by local youth, with 25 respondents participating. These surveys provide insight into the motivations and hesitations regarding support for local brands. The first question revealed that a majority of respondents either do not support local brands or do so only occasionally. A common reason cited was the perception that local brands are expensive.

Kuwait Times also explored the notion that local brands might be exploiting consumers due to ongoing crises. A majority of respondents were either convinced of this or uncertain. To gain a more personal perspective, several people were interviewed in a crowded mall. Jean Reyes, 39, from the Philippines, expressed that local brands are usually unique and culturally fitting. When asked about the difficulty of supporting local brands, she said, "It's not hard because the local brands have a foreign touch."

Tim Richards, a 43-year-old British expatriate, stated, "Sometimes stock can vary, but they're readily available most of the time, and usually cheaper." This suggests that the perception of local brands is generally positive among foreigners in Kuwait, and there is hope that support for

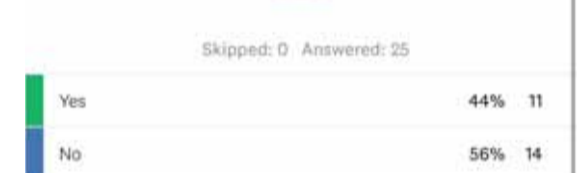
and engaging in bilateral talks with Emirati officials, he detailed. The Ambassador commended the coordination and cooperation as well as the strategic partnership between the two fraternal nations, taking note of several agreements over the course of the past month, including an agreement on double taxation and another on exporting crude material.

Highlighting Emirati-Kuwaiti exchanged investments, the Ambassador mentioned that 15 percent of total direct investments in Kuwait come from the Emirates. Minister Al-Yahya's visit will also include the official opening of new Kuwaiti diplomatic mission headquarters, where he will be doing so with his Emirati counterpart, he added. — KUNA

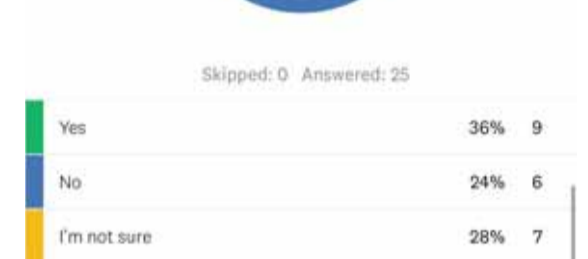


Jamal Al-Ghunaim

3. Do you find it hard to support local brands? If you do, please specify why



4. Do you feel that local brands exploit customers based on ongoing crises?



local businesses will increase. However, Kuwaitis seem divided on this issue. For instance, 21-year-old Kuwaiti Essa Haitham described local brands as reliable, while 24-year-old Bodour Al-Deshti disagreed, stating, "Restaurants are a bit overpriced and are exploiting the ongoing crises."

Suhail star to be spotted on Sept 4

KUWAIT: Al-Ojeiri Center said on Sunday that "Suhail Star" would be spotted on September fourth based on Al-Ojeiri Calender, indicating improvement in weather, lengthening of shadow, and shorter daytime. The center clarified to KUNA that Suhail Star was one of the most notable stars in the Arabian Peninsula, and described it as red-colored and luminous. It further explained that the star's delayed appearance in Kuwait's sky is due to its geographic location north of the Peninsula, as it first appears in the south and makes its way upward. — KUNA



Local

Institute uses innovative means to stem diabetes complications

Dasman Diabetes Institute conducts scientific research



Researcher and Head of Bioenergy and Neurosciences at Dasman Diabetes Institute Dr Fawaz Al-Zaid.

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Dasman Diabetes Institute is a leading national establishment devoted to avert and control diabetes through diverse means. The institute conducts scientific research, works out innovative programs, and provides comprehensive education for improving the lives of the patients and stemming the spread of the disease in the country, said Dr Fawaz Al-Zaid, Senior Scientist and Head of Bioenergetics and Neurometabolism, in a statement to KUNA.

Dr Al-Zaid, recently designated as a member by the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD), which consists of 10 members from various countries, re-

vealed that work was underway to look into how immunity issues lead to type-2 diabetes. These researches, including laboratory imaging and genetic sequencing, are intended to fathom the relationship between immunodeficiency and diabetes, he said, indicating an aspiration to adopt new treatment methods to stem infections and side-effects of the disease's second type, such as cardiac and liver illnesses.

Other studies in the process look into the impact of stress, anxiety, and depression on the response to treatment of type 1 diabetes, Dr Al-Zaid said. Turning to his EASD membership, Dr Al-Zaid said he was

honored with this title in admiration of the significant contributions he had made in the diabetes research at the global level. "This membership gives me a unique opportunity to contribute to recommendations in the realm of diabetics' care and the research at the international level. "I look forward to contributing to the association tasks at the international level, representing Kuwait and the Gulf region in this sector."

He revealed that the EASD had formed an international board to broaden its task in the diabetes research, deepen cooperation at the international level, and establish bonds with all stakeholders at the national

and regional levels. Dr Al-Zaid said that his election is evidence of the institute's commitments to boost research to find new treatments for diabetes. The doctor added that he would seek to enhance the communications with the relevant regional and international organizations.

The senior scientist said that he has been focusing on the interaction between immunity and metabolism in the advanced stage, where the disease affects adipose tissues, the liver, and the nervous system. Dr Al-Zaid is holder of an HDR from the Royal College of Physicians, London, and a member of several European medical associations. — KUNA

What is soul food for Kuwait youths?

By Jiye Back

KUWAIT: In a world where modernity often overshadows tradition, today's generation connects to their rich culture through Kuwaiti food. The bite of machboos or tashreeb represents heritage, familial bonds, and cultural identity. This food is more than just a plate; it fills the very soul, reminding young Kuwaitis of who they are and where they come from. The expression "soul food" originates in the cooking of enslaved people in the Southern United States. The term "soul" symbolized African American pride and identity. Nowadays, soul food describes any cuisine that is deeply connected to one's roots and evokes a sense of comfort, nourishing both the body and the spirit.

In Kuwait, food is tied to family. Nasser Bouarki, a 17-year-old Kuwaiti, said that "people have memories of their parents or grandparents cooking specific meals." Traditional food is not sought at restaurants but at home. Although every family has their own take — or even version — of machboos, they share a way of eating the food. On Fridays, families get together at their parents' homes for lunch and tea, known in the Kuwaiti dialect as "zwar."

Most families eat on the floor; "they would put a plastic wrap on the floor, have a big dish of food, and each person would just grab with their hands," Nasser says. By sharing the food that they've made in this way, Kuwaiti people cherish this moment. Athbah Almutawa, 19 years old, feels "a sense of familiarity through the love we share for the food."

Perhaps, because these young people have grown with the food, they put a high value on both its cultural and personal effects. "Soul food in Kuwait applies to the food that their ancestors ate. It is what people ate in the '70s or '80s, what parents would make for their children and what people consider as theirs. It is something our culture has developed, created, and wants to preserve," Bouarki added.

Almutawa eats Kuwaiti soul food often because it fosters community and connection with her ancestors, emphasizing how they adapted to the various conditions,



including climate. For instance, Kuwaitis have traditionally consumed rice as part of their diet not only due to its historical trade connections with India and Persia but also its versatility and freshness for long periods, which is ideal for the region's desert climate.

Additionally, Kuwaiti soul food is tied to its religious practices, such as Ramadan. Dishes like harees and saffron-infused rice are integral to the communal breaking of the fast. These meals, prepared with care among family and friends, reinforce the Kuwaiti identity. From a different perspective, it brings people together. By offering to have lunch or dinner, families get together, invite people over, and spread the warm hospitality that food offers. Bouarki reminisces about the past through these memories. Also, they serve as a space to transmit folktales, family stories, and every other table talk.

As food takes a meaningful portion in the daily lives of Kuwaiti youth, its place will always exist — whether it is the lamb machboos next to a Western buffet at weddings or luqaimats at ghabgas. These small and big dishes will be passed on through generations and become a long-lasting legacy.



Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Jassem Al-Budaiwi

GCC chief discusses 40 years of success

KUWAIT: Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi said that GCC member states had successfully overcome various obstacles. This came during a lecture at Sheikh Saud Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute titled "The GCC: Four decades of achievements towards integration and facing challenges", attributing the achievement to the guidance and wise leadership of founding and current GCC's leaders.

The event was attended by Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and a host of diplomats. Al-Budaiwi discussed the historical motivations behind the establishment of the Council, noting that the primary objective was to unify efforts in addressing regional and global challenges. He further explained that the geographic location of GCC countries has placed them in a dynamic environment, characterized by numerous regional challenges and changes, which



Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and a number of diplomats. — KUNA photos



necessitated a united front in strengthening and harmonizing Gulf efforts to overcome and adapt to.

Al-Budaiwi also highlighted several current and future joint Gulf projects, underscoring their positive impact on the peoples of the GCC states and

the relationships between the six-member bloc and countries and organizations worldwide. The GCC was established in 1981 and held its first summit meeting on May 25 of the same year in Abu Dhabi, UAE. — KUNA

Vaccination campaign boosts health, reduces seasonal infection

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Health Minister Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi affirmed on Tuesday that the winter vaccination campaign will boost health and reduce the spread of seasonal diseases. This came in a statement after the launch of the winter vaccination campaign at the Sayed Abdulrazaq Al-Zalzalah health center. After being vaccinated, Minister Al-Awadhi affirmed that this campaign came as part of the Ministry's keenness on preserving the health of all members of the community and providing the necessary protection against infectious diseases that spread mostly in the winter season.

He pointed out that this campaign contained important and necessary vaccines such as flu and bacterial pneumonia, and those vaccines are located in 57 different precautionary departments in hospitals and health centers all over the country. He noted that this



Health Minister launches the winter vaccination campaign. — KUNA photos

campaign was important to limit the spread of these diseases and protect the groups most vulnerable to infection. He added that the groups at risk include the elderly over the age of 65, children as young as five years old, and people who suffer from chronic dis-

eases such as heart and lung diseases and diabetes. Others include individuals with immunodeficiency or people taking immunosuppressive medications, pregnant women, and health sector workers who are in direct contact with patients, he added. — KUNA



Kuwait's Health Minister Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi with doctors.

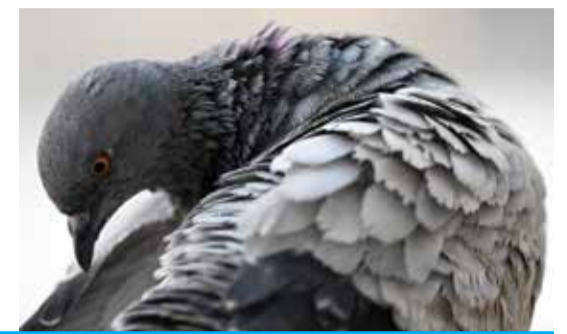
9th air bridge flight departs for Sudan

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced its ninth air bridge mission from Abdullah Al-Mubarak Air Base, transporting 30 tons of food, relief supplies, and wheelchairs to Port Sudan Airport to support displaced individuals in Sudan affected by ongoing conflicts, heavy rains, and floods. Speaking to KUNA, Director of Disaster and Emergency Department at KRCS Yousef Al-Maraj emphasized that the mission reflects Kuwait's constant humanitarian efforts and dedication to helping those affected by natural and man-made disasters.



Al-Maraj confirmed KRCS' commitment to continuing aid for flood and storm victims as directed by the country's political leadership and expressed deep gratitude to Kuwait's donors. The relief shipment included essential supplies such as food, medicine, and wheelchairs, which are crucial for supporting affected people and helping medical staff and rescue teams treat the injured and displaced Sudanese. He noted that the local population requires urgent additional relief, including shelter, food, and medical supplies, to cope with the catastrophic impacts of the rains, floods, and current humanitarian crisis. Al-Maraj also expressed gratitude to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense for their continuous support in facilitating aid delivery. — KUNA

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: Pigeons frolic in Kuwait City. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

NBK opens registration for 3rd season of the Bankee program

In partnership with Ministry of Education, Anti-Corruption Authority 'Nazaha'

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has officially opened registration for the third season of the Bankee program. This initiative is designed to enhance financial inclusion among students, with the goal of achieving lasting improvements in financial literacy across the community. In partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Anti-Corruption Authority "Nazaha," the Bankee program is NBK's pioneering initiative in Kuwait. This program is designed to familiarize students with fundamental economic concepts and practices, including earning, spending, saving, and financial obligations.



Manal Al-Mattar

The program also seeks to instill essential values in students, such as honesty, integrity, personal development, responsibility, and cooperation. It aims to foster teamwork and raise a generation of Kuwaiti youth who appreciate the importance of financial stability and independence. By equipping them with the necessary financial skills and knowledge, the program contributes to the sustainable development and economic well-being of individuals and society.

Commenting on the launching of the third season of Bankee Program, Manal Al-Mattar, Head of Corporate Communications Group at NBK, said, "The program experienced exceptional success and strong engagement from schools, students, and parents last season. This enthusiasm led numerous pub-



lic and private schools to sign up for the program this season, prompting us to increase the number of participating schools to 60."

The program also features a classroom economy, a system that models the school as a microeconomy mirroring real-world economic systems. Bankee has also launched a new platform and website in both Arabic and English. This innovative and interactive approach utilizes a digital platform where students and teachers can conduct financial transactions using virtual currency called Bankoz.

"This setup enriches students' understanding of the value of work, money, and the importance of making informed financial decisions." "The executive management team at NBK has underscored the program's significance through their school visits and oversight of its various phases over the past two seasons. These visits have been met with enthusiastic participation from parents, who have expressed great satisfaction with the noticeable improvements in their children's behavior and financial literacy," she added.

Al-Mattar emphasized that NBK is dedicated to leveraging its efforts and resources for effective col-

laboration with state institutions and civil society. The goal is to advance social development and enhance human resources, which are crucial for fostering growth and prosperity. The bank remains firmly committed to supporting the development of education through comprehensive support. In its commitment to enhance the program's offerings, the program now has a presence on various social media platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. This expansion is designed to ensure that all participants can easily access and benefit from the program's content, activities, and events throughout the year.

NBK firmly believes in the significance of private sector initiatives and their role in partnering with government entities to provide young people with essential knowledge and skills. These efforts are vital for the well-being and prosperity of both individuals and society. NBK received the Bronze Award from Qorus in the Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) category for Bankee Program. This accolade recognizes the bank's commitment to integrating sustainability and ESG standards into its activities.



Scan & Subscribe
KD 20 a year

For Individuals Only



Scan Now

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First English Daily in the Arabian Gulf



Tel: 24833199 Ext: 220



GCC officials take a group photo after the 27th meeting of the Committee of Undersecretaries of Civil Service and Administrative Development Agencies. — KUNA

GCC undersecretaries discuss ways to advance civil service system

DOHA: The 27th meeting of the Committee of Undersecretaries of Civil Service and Administrative Development Agencies in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries kicked off in the Qatari capital Doha on Sunday with the participation of Kuwaitis. The Civil Service Bureau Acting Director General of the Qatari Civil Service and Government Development Bureau, Saif Al-Kaabi, stressed in a speech during the opening of the meeting the importance of exchanging expertise and visions and continuing joint work to advance the civil service system and enhance the capabilities of its employees.

Al-Kaabi said that the agenda of this session in-

cludes several topics, including initiatives related to joint training programs, agreements, and memoranda of understanding, unifying the purchase of licenses for human resources systems in the GCC countries, and honoring competencies in the civil service sectors in the Gulf countries. For his part, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Development Affairs at the GCC Secretariat General Khaled Al-Sunaidi said in a similar speech that the agenda includes topics in the fields of civil service and administrative development that were studied by the Technical Committee for Civil Service Affairs and Human Resources.

Al-Sunaidi added that the committee meeting will review a number of topics and issue appropriate decisions aimed at achieving coordination, integration, and interconnection in the field of civil service and human development in the GCC countries. The delegation of the Kuwaiti Civil Service Bureau was headed by Acting Undersecretary of the Bureau, Diaa Al-Qabandi. — KUNA



In war-fatigued east Ukraine, Zelensky loses his shine

Trash overwhelms Cuba's capital

Page 6

Page 7



AL-ZAWAYDA: A health worker administers the polio vaccine to a Palestinian child in Al-Zawayda in the central Gaza Strip on September 1, 2024. — AFP

Gazans rush to immunize kids against polio amid war

640,000 children to get vaccine during 8-hour humanitarian pauses in 67 centers across Gaza

AL-ZAWAYDA, Palestine: Ghadir Hajji rushed to a clinic on Sunday in hopes her five children would be among the first to get vaccinated against polio, which has re-emerged in war-ravaged Gaza. "They absolutely have to be vaccinated," she told AFP as the family waited in line for a vaccine drive announced after health officials reported last month the first case of polio in the besieged territory in a quarter of a century. "We received text messages from the ministry of health and we showed up right away."

She was joined by thousands of other Gazans whose fear of polio — which is highly contagious and potentially fatal — trumped concerns for their personal security and rumors the vaccine would not be safe or effective.

Poliovirus is highly infectious and most often spread through sewage and contaminated water — an increasingly common problem in Gaza with much of the territory's infrastructure destroyed by the Zionist entity. The disease mainly affects children under the age of five. It can cause deformities and paralysis and is potentially fatal.

At one clinic alone in Deir el-Balah nearly 2,000 children were vaccinated on Sunday, said Louise Wateridge, a spokeswoman for the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA. The agency had mobile teams going from tent to tent, marking kids' thumbs with ink once they received their doses, Wateridge said.

The first doses were administered on Saturday to an unspecified number of children in the southern city of Khan Yunis, ahead of Sunday's large-scale rollout. The campaign aims to vaccinate more than 640,000 children in the besieged Palestinian territory, devastated by almost 11 months of war.

'Anxious'

The World Health Organization (WHO) has delivered at least 1.26 million doses to Gaza already. The health ministry in Gaza has identified 67 vaccination centers — mostly hospitals, smaller health centers and schools — in central Gaza, 59 in southern Gaza and 33 in northern Gaza to administer the doses. The second dose of the vaccine must be

given four weeks after the first.

On Thursday, the WHO said the Zionist entity had agreed to a series of three-day "humanitarian pauses" in northern, southern and central areas to facilitate vaccinations. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu however has insisted that these pauses were not amounting to any kind of ceasefire in overall fighting in Gaza. "There are a lot of drones flying over central Gaza and we hope this vaccination campaign for children will be calm," Yasser Shaaban, medical director of Al-Awda hospital in central Gaza, said on Sunday.

The humanitarian pause was meant to last from 6:00 am (0300 GMT) until 2:00 pm, according to a statement issued Saturday by COGAT, the Zionist defense ministry body which oversees civilian affairs in the Palestinian territories. Wateridge said she heard some gunfire in central Gaza after 6:00 am, but after that the area remained calm.

"It's very hard to go from living in absolute fear for every second of your waking and even sleeping day to then suddenly be assured, 'Oh no it's fine now,'" said the UNRWA spokeswoman.

"We're also anxious to see what happens after 2:00 pm. If the bombing continues after 2:00 pm this is of course going to impact the vaccination campaign ... The only way to do this is a ceasefire."

The war in Gaza erupted after Hamas's October 7 attack on the Zionist entity which resulted in the deaths of 1,205 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Zionist official figures. The Zionist retaliatory military campaign has so far killed at least 40,738 people in Gaza, according to the territory's health ministry. The UN rights office says most of the dead are women and children.

The devastation of Gaza's health sector exacerbated global alarm after the Ramallah-based Palestinian health ministry said in August that tests in Jordan had confirmed polio in an unvaccinated 10-month-old baby from central Gaza. Palestinian mother Basma Al-Batsh told AFP on Sunday she was "very happy" the vaccination drive was underway. "I want to protect my children because I was afraid that they would be affected and become disabled," she said. — AFP

New restrictions at Columbia as protests return to campus

NEW YORK: The new school year is still days away, but student protesters have already made a noisy return to Columbia University's New York campus, the epicenter of a pro-Palestinian protest movement that spread to schools around the world this spring. Blowing whistles and banging drums, pots and pans and the iron railings of the closed campus gates, about 50 protesters marched on the sidewalk on Sunday evening and belted pro-Palestinian chants. A New York Police Department surveillance drone hovered over their heads.

Inside the gates, more than 1,000 new Columbia undergraduates had gathered for a convocation ceremony. Dr Katrina Armstrong, Columbia's new interim president, was able to make herself heard over the protesters' din, describing to the new students her vision of the campus as a place of open debate where no one feels excluded. Columbia administrators are hoping to avoid a repeat of the protests that roiled the university earlier this year, which culminated with hundreds of armed police officers sweeping the campus in April to arrest more than 30 student protesters who had barricaded themselves inside an academic building.

Since the spring, college administrators across the US and beyond have grappled with tent encampments inspired by the Columbia protests spreading to their own campuses, followed by pro-Zionist counterprotests. Some administrators also called in police; a minority have reached agreements over demands to sever financial ties with the Zionist entity. "Effectively managing protests and demonstrations allows us to advance our educational and

research missions while enabling free speech and debate," Armstrong, the dean of Columbia's medical school, wrote in a campus-wide email last week.

She has been interim leader since Minouche Shafik resigned as president earlier this month after facing criticism over handling of the protests, including a vote of no confidence by Arts and Sciences faculty angered by her decision to call in police to arrest students. The pro-Palestinian protests have been led by Columbia University Apartheid Divest (CUAD), a coalition of student groups demanding the school end its investments in weapons manufacturers and other companies that support the Zionist occupation of Palestinian territories.

Over the summer, mediators had little success trying to revive negotiations between Columbia administration and CUAD, according to Mahmoud Khalil, a Palestinian graduate student who is one of the main negotiators on behalf of CUAD. "The university should actually deal with the students as students, not as a threat to Columbia and the Columbia brand," he said. Columbia declined requests to interview administration officials and a spokesperson declined to answer questions about the talks with CUAD.

Changes to campus

As faculty and students return to Columbia ahead of classes resuming on Tuesday, they are already noticing new restrictions and other changes to its campus. The hedge-lined south lawns that had been yellowed by tent encampments are now lush and green, with public safety officers guarding the entrances and new signs noting that camping is banned by school rules.

Gates to the campus that have been kept open for decades to the surrounding city streets are closed under a new system restricting access, with guards allowing in only those with Columbia ID and pre-registered guests. Most days, CUAD students set up a small table draped with a Palestinian flag to the side of one of the main campus entrances, handing out flyers and pamphlets, some



NEW YORK: Security officers check a person's ID before entering the Columbia University campus as people attend a protest outside the university. — AFP

designed with new students in mind.

Across campus, officials have set up fences and gates on wheels which can be rolled across walkways to cordon off small areas. A group of senior officers from the New York Police Department inspected the cordons during a campus tour last week. Mariam Jallow, the incoming elected president of the Columbia College Student Council, said she was optimistic about the new leadership. "It's a fresh start that we really need," Jallow, a history major, said of Armstrong. "She doesn't have a lot of the burdens that President Shafik had, and there's still a lot of grievances and grudges held from last year." Jallow, who is not a part of CUAD, said it was not easy representing a diverse group of students, but noted that the main demands of CUAD, which was formed in 2016, had long had broad support among students at Columbia's main undergraduate school. — Reuters

Far-right regional election win spells setback for Scholz

BERLIN: The Alternative for Germany (AfD) was on track on Sunday to become the first far-right party to win a regional election in Germany since World War Two, exit polls showed, but was almost certain to be excluded from power by rival parties. The AfD was projected to win 33.5 percent of the vote in the state of Thuringia, comfortably ahead of the conservatives' 24.5 percent, broadcaster ZDF's exit poll showed. In the neighboring state of Saxony, the conservatives led on 32 percent, just half a percentage point ahead of the AfD.

The left populist Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW), which like the AfD demands sharper controls on immigration and wants to stop arming Ukraine, came third in both states, though significantly underperformed earlier polls.

Casting her vote early in Erfurt, the capital of Thuringia, Sandra Pagel said she was "really afraid" of a victory of the AfD. "I'm very nervous to see what happens today ... because I think there's a very high risk that the AfD will win and that scares me. For my grandchildren and also for me," the 46-year-old sterilization processing facility manager told AFP.

Created in 2013 as an anti-euro group before morphing into an anti-immigration party, the AfD has capitalized on the fractious three-way coalition in Berlin to rise in opinion polls. In June's EU Parliament elections, the party scored a record 15.9 percent overall and did especially well in eastern Germany, where it emerged as the biggest force.

In a post on social media platform X on Sunday, AfD co-leader Alice Weidel urged voters to choose the AfD to "not only change the future in Saxony and Thuringia, but also bring about a political turnaround throughout Germany".

Saxony is the most populous of the former East German states and has been a conservative stronghold since reunification. Thuringia meanwhile is more rural and the only state currently led by the far-left Die Linke, a successor of East Germany's ruling communist party. A third former East German state, Brandenburg, is also due to hold an election later in September, where polls have the AfD ahead on around 24 percent.

With a year to go until Germany's national election, the results look punishing for Chancellor Olaf Scholz's coalition, though his Social Democrats looked to have cleared the 5 percent threshold for staying in the parliaments of both states. However, his coalition partners, the Greens and the business-friendly Free Democrats looked less secure in both parliaments, in a development that could herald yet more conflict in Scholz's already fractious coalition government. All parties including the BSW have pledged not to allow into coalition an AfD they regard as anti-democratic and extremist. — Agencies

International

Trash overwhelms Cuba's capital

Garbage collection staggers in Havana due to shortage of fuel, truck parts

HAVANA: Cuba's iconic capital Havana is drowning in a sea of uncollected trash as a critical shortage of fuel and vehicle parts affects garbage collection on the island crippled by sanctions and economic woes. Mountains of rubbish on the streets give off a foul odor and attract clouds of flies in several parts of the city of 2.1 million people, which has three open-air landfills.

For a lack of bins, residents leave their trash bags in the street, exacerbating the stench already emanating from overflowing sewage pipes. "My kitchen looks out on the garbage dump," Lissette Valle, a 40-year-old homemaker, told AFP. "We have to cover everything. If we don't, we end up eating flies, mosquitos ..."

Official data show more than 30,000 cubic meters — about 1,000, 20-foot shipping containers — accumulate on the streets of Havana every day. A year ago, it was less than a third as much. According to the provincial directorate of municipal services, the capital has just over half the equipment it needs for waste collection, with 100 garbage trucks.

But the vehicles, which were a donation from Japan, started breaking down last year. Due to US sanctions, the communist country cannot obtain the parts it needs to repair its ramshackle fleet of trucks, local authorities were quoted as telling state mouthpiece Granma.

Add to this the fuel shortages that have plagued Cuba since 2023. "This is something that hits us hard: fuel," municipal official Miguel Gutierrez Lara told Granma, also lamenting the shortage of workers in

the sector due to low wages. "We expose ourselves to bacteria" for a minimum monthly salary equivalent to \$17, complained a 30-year-old garbage collector who did not want to give his name.

He said he does not even have gloves to do his work. The city "is full of micro dumps," said the collector as he pushed a rickety garbage cart. Health inspector Jesus Jimenez told AFP the problem "has become uncontrollable," with mosquitos and other carriers of diseases such as dengue and oropouche fever propagating freely.

'Abundant' trash

Cuba's tourist-magnet waters are not faring much better. On Guanabo beach outside the capital, Reiner Fuentes emerges from the crystal waves gripping his diving fins in one hand, with rusting tin cans and diverse waste in the other. "On the beaches there are companies dedicated to cleaning ... but in the ocean there is no one," said Fuentes, president of an NGO that removes rubbish from the seabed along the coast.

Havana's natural resources boss Solvig Rodriguez conceded that an "abundant" accumulation of metal waste on beaches posed a major challenge. For Dulce Buego, president of the Cuban National Commission of UNESCO, part of the solution lies in greater individual responsibility. "If you come to the beach with four bags, you should leave with all four bags — even if the fourth bag is full of trash. And that should never be left on the beach," she said. — AFP



HAVANA: Cubans collect raw material from a large amount of garbage on a street in Havana on August 23, 2024. — AFP

Amazon rainforest fires in August reach 14-year high

SAO PAULO: The number of fires in Brazil's Amazon rainforest region for the month of August surged to the highest level since 2010, government data showed on Sunday, after a record drought that has been plaguing the biome. Last year's rains came late and were weaker than usual because a weather pattern, known as El Nino, was supercharged by climate change, leaving the rainforest especially vulnerable to this year's fires.

Satellites detected 38,266 fire hotspots in the Amazon in August, more than double compared to the previous year and the largest number for that month since 2010, data from Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (Inpe) showed. The August data reaching a 14-year high comes after last month's fire hotspots in the region surged to a two-decade high.

While the data is the fastest indicator of the state of fires in the region, which often peak between August and September, it does not indicate the intensity. Fires in the naturally wet and humid biome often start on cattle ranches where locals are converting the jungle into pastures for cattle ranching.

Warmer air and drier vegetation have created conditions where fires can spread more rapidly as well as burn more intensely and for longer. Deforestation has also reduced the rainforest's ability to produce rain and humidity, Helga Correa, a conservation specialist at WWF-Brazil, said in an initial assessment of the August data last week that the fires were driven by a combination of weather, climate change and human actions.

"The region where we detected concentrated smoke in August coincides with the so-called Arch of Deforestation, which includes the north of Rondonia, the south of Amazonas and the southwest of Para," she said. "This indicates that, in addition to climate change and El Nino, changes in land use produced by humans play a central role in the increase in fires," she said. — Reuters

Brazil's modernist capital chokes on wildfire smoke

BRASILIA, Brazil: Brasilia's iconic futuristic buildings, designed by architect Oscar Niemeyer, have been engulfed in a thick haze of smoke in recent days. Several parts of Brazil are suffocating due to raging wildfires, but the fumes are new to the modernist capital, whose residents are used to expansive blue skies and clean air during the dry season. "I have lived in Brasilia for 30 years, this is the first time I have seen this kind of smoke," said Moacir do Nascimento Santo, 47, a driver with two young children. "(It) compromises our breathing, our vision, and it is worrying for the children — they suffer with all this smoke," he told AFP.

Situated in the center of the country, Brasilia was carefully planned from scratch on an empty plateau to become the capital in 1960, and is now home to 2.8 million people. Its wide avenues, organized neighborhoods and green, open spaces are a world apart from other Brazilian cities such as Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paulo — and much less polluted.

Forest fires have been raging for several weeks in Brazil, particularly in the Amazon rainforest in the north and the immense Pantanal wetland in the center-west of the country. The smoke engulfing Brasilia is a result of fires near the capital, but also winds bringing in smoke from other regions, particularly the southeastern state of Sao Paulo, several hundred kilometers away, where bushfires devastated thousands of hectares of agricultural land last week. Authorities say most fires are human-caused.

'At war against fire'

Many residents of Brasilia have resorted to using protective masks when venturing outside. "This time of year is usually dry, but this is the first time I've seen the cloud of smoke," said Isaac Tomas, a civil servant in the Chamber of Deputies. "It's very worry-



BRASILIA: The National Congress is seen shrouded in smoke caused by forest fires, in Brasilia, Brazil, on August 27, 2024. — AFP

ing. I already have problems with rhinitis during the drought, but now, with the smoke, it's even worse."

The Brasilia Environmental Institute on Sunday said the air quality was "very poor." The situation had improved by Wednesday but not in all parts of the city. Local health services reported a spike in cases of rhinitis, asthma attacks, pneumonia and conjunctivitis. At Santa Lucia Hospital, the number of patients treated for respiratory problems on Monday was twenty times higher than average, according to Lucas Albanaz, a manager at the facility. The doctor said patients were "suffering from coughing, red eyes, dry mouth or skin, and symptoms of dehydration."

Brazil has long struggled with fires, largely linked to slash-and-burn techniques used for illegal agricultural expansion. An extreme drought, linked by experts to climate change, has exacerbated the situation this year. Environment Minister Marina Silva said this week that Brazil was "at war against fire and crime." Due to the drought and "extreme temperatures," the government on Tuesday extended an order that requires organizers of concerts, festivals and other large events, including football matches, to provide free drinking water to spectators. The measure first came into force last November, after the death of a 23-year-old woman at a Taylor Swift concert in Rio amid a heatwave. — AFP

27% of expat workers domestics...

Continued from Page 1

Bangladeshi workers came in fourth place at 266,000 and workers from the Philippines came in fifth place with 240,000, dropping from 274,000 at the end of the first quarter of 2023, Al-Shall said.

Meanwhile, the Public Authority of Manpower announced on Sunday that the three-month ban on working under the sun during the hot summer months has ended and that it cited over 200 violations. Introduced in 2015, the ban prohibits workers from doing any work under the direct heat of the sun from 11 am to 4 pm between June 1 and August 31. The authority issues citations against violating companies for each worker asked to work under the sun.

The ban was introduced to save the lives of workers as temperatures in summer in Kuwait top 50 degrees Celsius in the shade and well above 60 degrees under the direct sun, which endangers the lives of workers. Acting director of the authority Marzouq Al-Otaibi said the authority launched search campaigns during the ban and issued 205 citations to companies for violating the ban. As many as 213 workers were present at the sites. Otaibi said 129 of the sites had committed the violation for the first time. He said that 119 sites rectified the violation on the second visit, while only seven sites continued to violate the ban.

Separately, the ministry of interior reopened licensing for consumer delivery and logistics services companies under new conditions, which include setting the minimum number of cars that each company can operate at five and the maximum at 30. The model year of each car should not be older than three years from the manufacturing date at the time of licensing, and the car should be taken out of service after completing seven years from the manufacturing date.

Each company can add up to 15 motorbikes after meeting the five-car minimum requirement, according to the new conditions. The model year of each bike should not be older than two years from the manufacturing date at the time of licensing, and the bike should be taken out of service after completing four years from the manufacturing date.

The interior ministry also announced Sunday adding the car ownership transfer service to the Sahel app, enabling people to transfer the ownership of vehicles they sell to new buyers online. The service is available under the traffic services under the interior ministry section in the services tab. Currently, the app's interface is only available in Arabic.

Zionists keep up Gaza genocide...

Continued from Page 1

US President Joe Biden said he was "devastated and outraged" by their deaths, but told reporters he was "still optimistic" a truce and hostage release deal could be reached. The Biden administration has been involved in ceasefire mediation efforts along with Qatar and Egypt.

Campaign group the Hostages and Missing Families Forum said a negotiated "deal for the return of the hostages" was urgently needed. "Were it not for the delays, sabotage and excuses" in months of mediation efforts, the six hostages "would likely still be alive", a statement said. The families called for a nationwide general strike to force the government to reach a deal to secure the release of the remaining captives.

Shortly afterwards, the head of the Zionist entity's powerful Histadrut trade union ordered a "complete strike" for Monday in support of the hostages. "I have come to the conclusion that only our intervention can shake those who need to be shaken," Histadrut chairman Arnon bar David said in a statement. "Starting tomorrow at six in the morning, the entire (Zionist) economy will go on complete strike. A deal is not progressing due to political considerations and this is unacceptable."

In the occupied West Bank, as soldiers pressed day five of coordinated raids targeting Palestinian militants, Zionist police said a "shooting attack" killed three officers. The attack near Hebron added to surging violence in the territory where at least 24 Palestinians have been killed by the military since the Zionist raids began on Wednesday.

One 20-year-old Zionist soldier was killed Saturday in the raids. On Sunday, a "shooting attack" near the Tarqumiya checkpoint in the Hebron area in the southern West Bank killed three Zionist police officers. The military said it "eliminated" the suspected attacker after surrounding a house in Hebron.

In the northern West Bank, an AFP photographer saw Zionist bulldozers in Jenin city center, a day after an official said soldiers had destroyed most of the streets and power and water had been cut off in the adjacent refugee camp. Later on Sunday an AFP



JENIN: A Palestinian man with a child cycles while carrying bread on a street torn up by bulldozers during a Zionist raid in this occupied West Bank city on Sept 1, 2024. — AFP

photographer heard loud explosions near the camp and saw black smoke over the city. The United Nations said Wednesday that at least 637 Palestinians had been killed in the territory by Zionist troops or settlers since the Gaza war began.

In the besieged Gaza Strip, "humanitarian pauses" in the nearly 11-month war between the Zionist entity and Hamas were due to take place to facilitate a massive polio vaccination drive which a health official told AFP had begun in earnest Sunday. The Zionist offensive has killed at least 40,738 people in Gaza, mostly women and children.

The fighting has devastated Gaza, repeatedly displaced most of its 2.4 million people and triggered a humanitarian crisis. Water, sanitation and medical facilities have been ravaged, contributing to the spread of preventable disease. The World Health Organization has said the Zionist enti-

ty agreed to a series of three-day "humanitarian pauses" to facilitate the vaccination campaign that aims to reach some 640,000 children, after the first confirmed case in Gaza in 25 years.

On Sunday, it was formally launched at three health centers in central Gaza, said Yasser Shaaban, director of Al-Awda hospital. "We hope this vaccination campaign for children will be calm," said Shaaban, noting there were "a lot of drones" flying overhead. Louise Wateridge, a spokeswoman for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, later said nearly 2,000 children were vaccinated initially Sunday.

But she added that they were anxious about later: "If the bombing continues after 2:00 pm this is of course going to impact the vaccination campaign... The only way to do this is a ceasefire." On Sunday, rescuers in the Gaza Strip said 10 people had been killed in Zionist bombardment and an air strike. — AFP

International

In war-fatigued east Ukraine, Zelensky loses his shine

Donetsk residents blame leader for failing to prevent Russian invasion, being out of touch

KLEBAN-BYK, Ukraine: Olena Semykina, the owner of a village shop in east Ukraine, voted for President Volodymyr Zelensky five and a half years ago, hoping the fresh-faced political newcomer would end the fighting unleashed by Russian proxy forces in 2014. The screech of an artillery shell over her leafy village in the war-battered Donetsk region and the plumes of dark smoke billowing on the horizon suggested that her hopes for his first term had fallen short. "We expected the war to end, like he promised. But the war hasn't ended. There's even more fighting. It seems to me that it's become even more intense," the 43-year-old told AFP in the village of Kleban-Byk, where invading Russian forces are fast approaching.

Across the industrial Donetsk region some war-fatigued residents, like Olena who voted for Zelensky in 2019, have lost faith in the 46-year-old leader as Russia's invasion grinds through its third year. The former comedian won respect internationally and drew comparisons with Winston Churchill when he stayed in Kyiv in February 2022 to lead his country in a David-versus-Goliath battle against Russian forces. But in interviews with AFP, Donetsk residents blamed him for failing to prevent the full-scale invasion in the first place, for daily speeches that felt empty or for being out of touch with Ukrainians living near the front lines.

'I don't listen to him anymore'

Donetsk has been partially controlled by Russian proxy forces since they wrested control over swathes of the industrial territory in 2014. Zelensky swept to victory five years later, promising to end the bitter fighting and stamp out systemic corruption among Soviet-style political elites.

Polling in September 2019 — just months after his inauguration — showed the former TV star was riding high with around 80 percent approval ratings. Those figures plummeted before Russia invaded in 2022, but skyrocketed to around 90 percent as Russian missiles began raining down on Ukrainians.

Now his ratings are falling precipitously again,

standing at 55 percent, according to polling by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS). "To be honest, I don't listen to him at all anymore. It's pointless. I don't believe in anything he says. He talks a lot but does little," said Vadim, a miner in Selydove, another Donetsk-region town in Russia's sights. "You have to be here to understand what's going on here and how people live," added the 42-year-old, who earlier sent his family to Kyiv for safety from Russian bombardments.

Zelensky's first five-year term officially ended earlier this year. Under martial law, Kyiv cannot host elections, which would anyway face myriad obstacles with millions of Ukrainians abroad, living under Russian occupation or near active hostilities.

Zelensky 'deserves respect'

KIIS polling suggested that least 70 percent of Ukrainians oppose holding any ballot with the war raging — but there is still a clear appetite for change, said the institute's Executive Director Anton Grushetsky. "It is obvious that the request from ordinary Ukrainians is for more and more competent, decent people to hold the most important government positions," he wrote in an analytical note alongside the poll findings.

Some in Donetsk were more sympathetic to Zelensky and his bid to unite Ukrainians and Kyiv's allies abroad to end the largest war in Europe since World War II. Zelensky has persuaded skeptical Western leaders to send advanced battle tanks and F-16 fighter jets for his military, put Ukraine on the path to European Union membership and rallied dozens of countries behind his vision for ending the war.

At a military field hospital near Pokrovsk, an army doctor who identified himself as Lyubystok praised Zelensky for having remained at the helm as Russian forces were gunning for the capital in February 2022. "This is very strong, very right and deserves respect," the 26-year-old told AFP before rushing to aid bloodied servicemen brought from the nearby front. In Novogrodovka, a mining town that is falling under Russian control, businesswoman Iryna Cherednychenko, said Zelensky was a



AVDIIVKA: President Volodymyr Zelensky records a video address in front of a sign reading "Avdiivka is Ukraine" in the town of Avdiivka, Donetsk region in this file photo. — AFP

"good man" and admired him for making several visits to her frontline region.

'Save the country'

The 62-year-old also voted for Zelensky but said she was disappointed that corruption remained a problem and that the cabinet and parliament should step up to strengthen the rule of law. "We expected him to have a very professional team but our expectations were not met," Cherednychenko said, the sounds of distant shelling echoing out. "Corruption, the irresponsibility of the authorities and weak laws are finishing us off. People lost faith," she told AFP.

adding that officials in Kyiv were out of touch with soldiers and civilians impacted by fighting.

Political analyst Volodymyr Fesenko told AFP that Ukrainian presidents generally lose support in their first year and Ukrainians tend to distrust state and political institutions. He said that while Zelensky's rating would likely never rebound, there was more the president could do on some domestic issues, particularly corruption. "Zelensky now needs to think not about ratings, but about how to save the country and get it out of the war with the least losses," Fesenko added. "In any case, he will remain in Ukrainian history as one of the most striking and unusual political figures." — AFP

Arrest of Telegram boss marks shift in policing tech world

PARIS: The investigation into Telegram boss Pavel Durov that has fired a warning shot to global tech titans was started by a small cybercrime unit within the Paris prosecutor's office, led by 38-year-old Johanna Brousse. The arrest of Durov, 39, last Saturday marks a significant shift in how some global authorities may seek to deal with tech chiefs reluctant to police illegal content on their platforms.

The arrest signaled the mettle of the J3 cybercrime unit, but the true test of its ambitions will be whether Brousse can secure a conviction based on a largely untested legal argument, lawyers said. In an unprecedented move against a major tech CEO, prosecutors argued Durov bears responsibility for the alleged illegality on his platform, placing him under formal investigation on organized crime charges. He is suspected of complicity in running an online platform that allows the posting of child sex abuse images, drug trafficking and fraud.

Durov's lawyer said on Thursday it was "absurd" for him to be held responsible and that the app abided by European laws, echoing an earlier statement by Telegram itself. Being placed under formal investigation in France does not imply guilt or necessarily lead to trial, but indicates judges consider there is enough evidence to proceed with the probe. Investigations can last years before being sent to trial or dropped. Durov is out on bail, but barred from leaving France.

Brousse's unit began investigating Durov earlier this year after seeing his app being used for countless alleged crimes and growing frustrated by the "almost total lack of response from Telegram to judicial requests", Paris Prosecutor Laure Beccuau said on Wednesday. Brousse declined to comment.

In an interview with newspaper Liberation in January, Brousse said her office was overseeing a growing number of probes involving Telegram and rival messaging app Discord, adding that

tackling crime on them was "one of my battles". Jason Citron, Discord's CEO, did not respond to a request for comment.

Brousse's J3 cybercrime unit is France's most important, with licence to prosecute nationwide. But it also is small, with just five prosecutors, well below the 55-60 cybercrime prosecutors in Switzerland, a 2022 parliamentary report found. With limited resources, they "prioritize the most serious crimes", Brousse told Le Figaro last year.

Brousse said in a 2022 podcast appearance she wanted to be tough "so cybercriminals believe that if they attack France, they will be judged and punished very severely". "We want people to be prosecuted, either in their country ... or in France through arrest warrants," she said. Her office was used to "extremely sensitive cases", she added. "Sometimes, legal and geopolitical issues intersect."

Patrick Perrot, who coordinates AI-assisted probes at the French gendarmerie and advises the Interior Ministry's cybercommand unit, said the J3 had been innovative in seeking to prosecute cases that set an international precedent. "I think it shows that you can't do whatever you want with these platforms," he told Reuters. "It's a real question for the future, because these platforms won't stop multiplying, so the challenge of regulation is essential."

Tough legal ground

Brousse has led the J3 since 2020, which has given her oversight of one of the most important - and controversial - French cybercrime cases ever. In late 2020, the J3 took charge of the probe into Sky ECC, which alongside Encrochat was one of the main encrypted communications services used by gangsters to buy drugs and weapons, or murder rivals. A few years earlier, French, Dutch and Belgian police had hacked into their servers, which were housed in northern France, giving French prosecutors jurisdiction over many of the resulting probes.

There have been more than 6,500 arrests since the takedown of Encrochat in 2020, according to Europol, with the legality of the intercepts challenged in appeals courts across Europe. Paul Krusky, the Canadian Encrochat boss, was extradited in February from the Dominican Republic to France, where he now awaits trial. Lawyers for Sky ECC's Jean-François Eap are

velop procedures and drugs to effectively brain-wash people. Experiments were conducted in Britain, Canada and the United States, subjecting people — including Indigenous children in Montreal — to electroshocks, hallucinogenic drugs, and sensory deprivation. "They wanted to erase us," said Kahentimetha.

A leading figure in the Indigenous rights movement who has traveled to Britain and the United States to denounce colonialism, she called this fight "the most important of (her) life." "We want to know why they did this and who's going to take the blame for it," she said.

Sniffer dogs

In the fall of 2022, the mothers obtained an injunction to suspend work on a new university campus and research center at the site — a project worth Can\$870 million (US\$643 million). Fellow activist Kwetio, 52, who also uses just one name, said they insisted on arguing the case themselves without lawyers, "because in our ways, no one speaks for us."

Last summer, sniffer dogs and specialized probes were brought in to search the property's expansive and dilapidated buildings. They managed to identify three areas of interest for excavations. But, according to McGill and the government's Societe Quebecoise des Infrastructures (SQI), "no human remains have been discovered."



MOSCOW: A man lays a paper plane as a reference to the logo of Telegram outside France's Embassy in central Moscow on August 25, 2024, in support of Pavel Durov. — AFP

contesting his French arrest warrant.

Stephane Bonifassi, Eap's lawyer, said his client was innocent, adding that "Sky ECC was not conceived as a tool for criminals, nor commercialized as such". Krusky's lawyer did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Two other French lawyers who have worked on Sky ECC and Encrochat cases told Reuters that these earlier probes gave prosecutors the ambition — and a blueprint — to target Durov.

Robin Binsard, who has fought Encrochat cases at France's top court, said prosecutors would need to prove that Durov knew and approved of the criminality on the app, calling their argument "totally questionable". The fact that Telegram didn't comply with law enforcement requests "does not automatically make one an accomplice to a criminal project", he added.

Binsard said it was clear "France is pursuing encrypted messaging providers", and that other operators of such apps, such as Signal, "should be concerned about whether or not they are in compliance with French regulations. Because the message is clear if they are not, legal action will take place". Signal did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A source at the Paris prosecutor's office said the Sky ECC probe had no links to the Telegram investigation. — Reuters



MONTREAL: Anthropologist Philippe Blouin, Mohawk Mothers Kahentimetha and Kwetio pose for a photo. — AFP

The Mohawk mothers accuse the university and the government infrastructure agency of breaching an agreement by selecting the archaeologists who did the search and then ending their work too soon. "They gave themselves the power to lead the investigation of crimes that were potentially committed by their own employees in the past," says Philippe Blouin, an anthropologist working with the mothers. Even though their appeal was dismissed earlier this month, they have vowed to continue their fight. — AFP

France-Algeria ties still tense decades after independence

ALGIERS: The fraught relations between France and its former colony Algeria had eased a little in recent years, but a new rift over Paris backing Morocco's autonomy plan for disputed Western Sahara has sent rapprochement efforts into a tailspin. Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, who is seeking a second term in presidential elections on September 7, was set to travel to France for a state visit, but this has been rescheduled twice and it is now doubtful in will happen at all.

In July, Algiers withdrew its ambassador to Paris after French President Emmanuel Macron said Morocco's autonomy plan was the only solution for the territory. Algeria, which backs the territory's pro-independence Polisario Front, denounced this as a "step that no other French government had taken before".

France colonized Algeria in 1830 and the North African country only gained independence in 1962, after a war that authorities say killed more than 1.5 million Algerians. French historians say half a million civilians and combatants died during the war for independence, 400,000 of them Algerian. While France has made several attempts over the years to heal the wounds, it refuses to "apologize or repent" for the 132 years of often brutal rule that ended in the devastating eight-year war.

Experts now accuse both countries of exploiting the war for present-day political ends. "The national narrative about the Algerian war is still dominant and during a campaign like the presidential election, Algerians are sensitive to these issues in their internal policy choices," Hasni Abidi of the Geneva-based CERMAM Study Center told AFP. Abidi said Tebboune now needed to "readjust his electoral speeches to protect himself from criticism on foreign policy" after the "complete fiasco" of failed attempts to restore relations with Macron.

'Reopening old wounds'

Recently, Algeria marked its Moudjahid National Day commemorating war combatants with a speech by Tebboune, in which he said France wrongly "believed it could stifle the people's revolution with iron and fire". In 2022, the two countries set up a joint commission of historians in an attempt to mend historical differences and appease tensions. But, according to Abidi, the commission didn't work fast enough and "did not succeed in freeing itself from political supervision".

The expert said France's latest move backing Morocco's plan in Western Sahara "will deal another blow to the issue of memory" at the risk of "reopening old wounds and stigma from the colonial past". What followed France's conquest of then Ottoman ruled Algiers was the destruction of its socio-economic structures, mass displacement, and the bloody repression of numerous revolts before the war erupted in 1954. This chapter in the two countries' history has been "exploited according to their issues and interests of the moment", historian Hosni Kitouni told AFP. — AFP

Indigenous mothers fight to search Canada CIA experiment site

MONTREAL, Canada: A group of Indigenous women are hoping to stop the bulldozers at a former Montreal hospital which they believe could hold the truth about children still missing from a grisly half-century-old CIA experiment. They have spent the last two years trying to delay the construction project by McGill University and the Quebec government. "They took our children and had all kinds of things done to them. They were experimenting on them," said Kahentimetha, an 85-year-old activist from the Mohawk community of Kahnawake, southwest of Montreal, who goes by just one name.

The activists are relying on archives and testimonies that suggest the site contains unmarked graves of children formerly interned at the Royal Victoria Hospital and Allan Memorial Institute, a neighboring psychiatric hospital. In the 1950s and 1960s, behind the austere walls of the old psychiatric institute, the US Central Intelligence Agency funded a human experiments program called MK Ultra.

During the Cold War, the program aimed to de-

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2024

African leaders descend on Beijing eyeing big loans and investment

China-Africa forum to be Beijing's largest diplomatic event since COVID-19



BEIJING: Chinese honor guards walk past as Mali's interim president Assimi Goita arrives at Beijing Airport on Sept 1, 2024 ahead of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. — AFP

BEIJING: African leaders descend on China's capital this week, seeking funds for big-ticket infrastructure projects as they eye mounting great power competition over resources and influence on the continent. China has expanded ties with African nations in the past decade, furnishing them with billions in loans that have helped build infrastructure but also sometimes stoked controversy by saddling countries with huge debts.

China has sent hundreds of thousands of workers to Africa to build its megaprojects, while tapping the continent's vast natural resources including copper, gold, lithium and rare earth minerals. Beijing has said this week's China-Africa forum will be its largest diplomatic event since the COVID-19 pandemic, with leaders of South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and other nations confirmed to attend and dozens of delegations expected.

African countries were "looking to tap the opportunities in China for growth", Ovigwe Eguegu, a policy analyst at consultancy Development Reimagined, told AFP. China, the world's number two economy, is Africa's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade hitting \$167.8 billion in the first half of this year, according to Chinese state media.

Beijing's loans to African nations last year were their highest in five years, research by the Chinese Loans to Africa Database found. Top borrowers were Angola, Ethiopia, Egypt, Nigeria and Kenya. But analysts said an economic slowdown in China has made Beijing increasingly reluctant to shell out big sums. China has also resisted offering debt relief, even as some African nations have struggled to repay their loans — in some cases being forced to slash spending on vital public services.

Since the last China-Africa forum six years ago, "the world experienced a lot of changes, including Covid, geopolitical tension and now these economic challenges", Tang Xiaoyang of Beijing's Tsinghua University told AFP. The "old model" of loans for "large infrastructure and very rapid industrialization" is simply no longer feasible, he said.

The continent is a key node in Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative, a massive infrastructure project and central pillar of Xi Jinping's bid to expand China's clout overseas. The BRI has channeled much-needed investment to African countries for projects like railways, ports and hydroelectric plants.

But critics charge Beijing with saddling nations with debt and funding infrastructure projects that

damage the environment. One controversial project in Kenya, a \$5 billion railway — built with finance from Exim Bank of China — connects the capital Nairobi with the port city of Mombasa.

But a second phase meant to continue the line to Uganda never materialized, as both countries struggled to repay BRI debts. Kenya's President William Ruto last year asked China for a \$1 billion loan and the restructuring of existing debt to complete other stalled BRI projects.

The country now owes China more than \$8 billion. Recent deadly protests in Kenya were triggered by the government's need "to service its debt burden to international creditors, including China", said Alex Vines, head of the Africa Programme at London's Chatham House. In light of such events, Vines and other analysts expect African leaders at this week's forum to seek not only more Chinese investment but also more favorable loans. In central Africa, Western and Chinese firms are racing to secure access to rare minerals. The continent has rich deposits of manganese, cobalt, nickel and lithium—crucial for renewable energy technology.

The Moanda region of Gabon alone contains as much as a quarter of known global reserves of man-

ganese, and South Africa accounts for 37 percent of global output of the metal.

Cobalt mining is dominated by the Democratic Republic of Congo, which accounts for 70 percent of the world total. But in terms of processing, China is the leader, at 50 percent. Mounting geopolitical tensions between the United States and China, which are clashing over everything from the status of self-ruled Taiwan to trade, also weigh on Africa.

Washington has warned against what it sees as Beijing's malign influence. In 2022, the White House said China sought to "advance its own narrow commercial and geopolitical interests (and) undermine transparency and openness". Beijing insists it does not want a new cold war with Washington but rather seeks "win-win" cooperation, promoting development while profiting from boosted trade.

"We do not just give aid, give them help," Tsinghua University's Tang said. "We are just partners with you while you are developing. We are also benefiting from it." But analysts fear African nations could be forced to pick sides. "African countries lack leverage against China," Development Reimagined's Eguegu said. "Some people... think you can use the US to balance China," he said. "You cannot." — AFP

AI chatbots must learn to say 'help!' says Microsoft exec

SAN FRANCISCO: Generative AI tools will save companies lots of time and money, promises Vik Singh, a Microsoft vice president, even if the models must learn to admit when they just don't know what to do.

"Just to be really frank, the thing that's really missing today is that a model doesn't raise its hands and say 'Hey, I'm not sure, I need help,'" Singh told AFP in an interview. Since last year, Microsoft, Google and their competitors have been rapidly deploying generative AI applications like ChatGPT, which produce all kinds of content on demand and give users the illusion of omniscience.

But despite progress, they still "hallucinate," or invent answers. This is an important problem for the Copilot executive to solve: Singh's corporate customers can't afford for their AI systems to go off the rails, even occasionally. Marc Benioff, CEO of Salesforce, this week said he saw many of his customers increasingly frustrated with the meanderings of Microsoft's Copilot.

Singh insisted that "really smart people" were trying to find ways for a chatbot to admit "when it doesn't know the right answer and to ask for help."

A more humble model would be no less useful, in Singh's opinion. Even if the model has to turn to a human in 50 percent of cases, that still saves "tons of money." At one Microsoft client, "every time a new request comes in, they spend \$8 to have a customer service rep answer it, so there are real savings to be had, and it's also a better experience for the customer because they get a faster response." Singh arrived at Microsoft in January and this summer took over as head of the teams developing "Copilot," Microsoft's AI assistant that specializes in sales, accounting and online services.

These applications have the gargantuan task of bringing in revenue and justifying the massive investments in generative AI. At the height of the AI frenzy, start-ups driving the technology were promising systems so advanced that they would "up-



Vik Singh

lift humanity," in the words of Sam Altman, head of OpenAI, which is mainly funded by Microsoft.

But for the time being, the new technology is mainly used to boost productivity, and hopefully profits. According to Microsoft, Copilot can do research for salespeople, freeing up time to call customers. Lumen, a telecom company, "saves around \$50

million a year" doing this, said Singh.

Singh's teams are working on integrating Copilot directly into the tech giant's software and making it more autonomous. "Let's say I'm a sales rep and I have a customer call," suggested the executive. Two weeks later, the model can "nudge the rep to go follow up, or better, just go and automatically send the email on the rep's behalf because it's been approved to do so."

In other words, before finding a solution to global warming, AI is expected to rid humanity of boring, repetitive chores. "We're in the first inning," Singh said. "A lot of these things are productivity based, but they obviously have huge benefits."

Will all these productivity gains translate into job losses? Leaders of large firms, such as K Krithivasan, boss of Indian IT giant TCS, have declared that generative AI will all but wipe out call centers. But Singh, like many Silicon Valley executives, is counting on technology to make humans more creative and even create new jobs. He pointed to his experience at Yahoo in 2008, when a dozen editors chose the articles for the home page.

"We came up with the idea of using AI to optimize this process, and some people asked 'Oh my God, what's going to happen to the employees?'" said Singh. The automated system made it possible to renew content more quickly, thereby increasing the number of clicks on links but also the need for new articles. "In the end," said the executive, "we had to recruit more editors." — AFP

UK govt promises new law to boost workers' rights

LONDON: Britain's Labour Party announced plans to deliver the most "packed legislative agenda" for a new government in decades, including the introduction in the autumn of laws to improve employees' rights and greater protection for renters. With parliament due to return from its summer recess on Monday, the Leader of the House of Commons Lucy Powell said in the next few months the government will introduce legislation intended to tilt the power from employers to workers and to allow tenants to challenge unreasonable rent increases. The Employment Rights Bill will prohibit zero-hour contracts, with about 1 million people in Britain on employment contracts that do not specify a minimum number of hours they can work and pay only for the hours they are on shift, and outlaw fire and rehire tactics.

The Renters' Rights Bill will remove the threat of arbitrary evictions and make it illegal for landlords to discriminate against families with children. In the next week, the government also wants to pass legislation to gradually re-nationalize the passenger rail network and strengthen the role of the country's official budget watchdog. On Thursday in the House of Commons, lawmakers will have their first opportunity to debate the British Energy Bill to set up a publicly-owned company backed by 8.3 billion pounds (\$10.89 billion) to co-invest in green technologies.

"This new Labour Government is full of energy, full of ideas and full of drive to deliver our mandate for change," Powell said. "That's why we've announced a packed legislative agenda." Over the next few months, the government also plans to introduce legislation to tighten rules on second jobs for lawmakers and make water bosses face personal criminal liability for lawbreaking if their companies repeatedly flout sewage regulations. — Reuters

Algeria joins the BRICS New Development Bank

ALGIERS: Algeria has been approved for membership in the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB), the country's finance ministry has announced.

The decision was taken on Saturday and announced by NDB chief Dilma Rousseff at a meeting in Cape Town, South Africa. By joining "this important development institution, the financial arm of the BRICS group, Algeria is taking a major step in its process of integration into the global financial system," the Algerian finance ministry said in a statement.

The bank of the BRICS group of nations — whose name derives from the initials of founding members Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — is aimed at offering an alternative to international financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF. Algeria's membership was secured thanks to "the strength of the country's macroeconomic indicators" which have recorded "remarkable performances in recent years" and allowed the North African country to be classified as an "upper-tier emerging economy", the finance ministry said.

Membership in the BRICS bank will offer Algeria — Africa's leading exporter of natural gas — "new prospects to support and strengthen its economic growth in the medium and long term", it added. Created in 2015, the NDB's main mission is to mobilize resources for projects in emerging markets and developing countries. It has welcomed several country as new members, including Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Saudi Arabia. — AFP

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

Fed shifts its focus towards supporting US labor market

Eurozone inflation drops; China's industrial profits grow

KUWAIT: Consumer confidence in the United States climbed to 103.3 in August according to the Conference Board index, surpassing both expectations and the previous reading. The better-than-expected print is a continuation of a series of positive economic data that showcase lower inflation, a softening market, and improved sentiment. It likely further reinforces and supports the market narrative and Fed signals of an imminent rate cut in September. Markets are currently pricing in 100 bps cut by year-end, and a 25 bps cut in the September meeting by the Fed.

The US economy grew at a robust 3 percent annual rate in the second quarter of 2024, driven by strong consumer spending and business investment. This marks an upgrade from the previously estimated 2.8 percent growth and a significant acceleration from the 1.4 percent growth in the first quarter. Consumer spending, which makes up about 70 percent of economic activity, increased by 2.9 percent, while business investment rose by 7.5 percent, with equipment investment jumping 10.8 percent. Additionally, unemployment claims slightly decreased by 2,000 to 231,000 last week, indicating a healthy labor market despite high interest rates.

Core PCE Price Index

In July, inflation in the US edged higher, with the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index rising by 0.2 percent for the month and 2.5 percent year-over-year, matching expectations. Core PCE, which excludes food and energy prices, also increased by 0.2 percent monthly and 2.6 percent annually, slightly below the 2.7 percent forecast. Core inflation has remained steady, with shelter costs continuing to rise, offsetting declines in other areas. Personal income grew by 0.3 percent, while consumer spending rose 0.5 percent, even as the personal savings rate fell to its lowest since June 2022. Goods prices fell slightly, while services prices increased.

The Federal Reserve is expected to go ahead with its first interest rate cut in over four years, with markets pricing in a high likelihood of a quarter-point reduction in September. Fed officials, including Chair Jerome Powell, have expressed confidence in inflation returning to the 2 percent target, shifting focus towards supporting the labor market. The unemployment rate remains low at 4.3 percent but has been trending upward, with slower hiring expected. Attention now turns to the upcoming August nonfarm payrolls report, which is expected to show an increase of about 175,000 jobs. The US dollar Index was last seen trading at 101.698.

Eurozone inflation

Eurozone inflation fell to 2.2 percent in August, its lowest level in three years, largely due to lower energy costs. This drop aligns with expectations and brings inflation closer to the European Central Bank's (ECB) 2 percent target, following three years of higher-than-target inflation. Core inflation, excluding food and energy, eased slightly to 2.8 percent. However, services inflation increased, driven partly by temporary factors like the Olympic Games in Paris, which might concern ECB policymakers due to its potential link to wage growth. Despite the decline, the ECB is expected to cut interest rates in September, with ongoing discussions about further easing in October due to moderating inflation, weaker economic growth, and a softer labor market. Markets are anticipating more rate cuts than the ECB's projections, reflecting greater optimism about the inflation outlook. However, rapid wage growth in the services sector remains a key concern for the ECB.

EUR/USD closed last week at 1.1047.

Inflation in Australia

Inflation in Australia has dropped to its lowest level since March, largely due to a 5 percent annual reduction in electricity prices, helped by government rebates. The Australian Bureau of Statistics

Rates - 1st Sep, 2024

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1186	1.1043	1.1201	1.1047	1.0850	1.1140	1.1092
GBP	1.3210	1.3106	1.3266	1.3126	1.3020	1.3200	1.3136
JPY	144.23	143.43	146.24	146.16	145.20	147.40	144.34
CHF	0.8480	0.8398	0.8510	0.8498	0.8400	0.8700	0.8412

reported a 3.5 percent increase in consumer prices for the year to July, down from 3.8 percent in June. However, this is slightly higher than the 3.4 percent expected by economists, indicating that interest rate cuts may still be some time away. Despite the overall decrease in inflation, fruit and vegetable prices surged by 7.5 percent in July, up from 3.6 percent in June, while alcohol costs also rose by 3.7 percent, compared to 3.4 percent in the previous month.

China's industrial profits

China's industrial profits grew by 3.6 percent year-on-year to CNY 4,099.17 billion in the first seven months of 2024, slightly up from the previous 3.5 percent increase. The growth occurred despite challenges like weak domestic demand, disinflation risks, and prolonged property sector issues. Profits rose notably in sectors like non-ferrous metal smelting, communications, and food, while declines were seen in non-metallic minerals, coal mining, and machinery. Some industries, including petroleum and ferrous metal smelting, shifted from profits to losses. The Bureau of Statistics highlighted that the recovery still requires further stabilization. On a

monthly basis, July profits rose 4.1 percent, up from 3.6 percent in June.

Tokyo core CPI

Core inflation in Tokyo accelerated for the fourth consecutive month in August, reaching 2.4 percent, above the central bank's 2 percent target. This rise, driven by the phase-out of government subsidies on utility bills and increasing rice prices due to extreme heat, suggests more interest rate hikes may be ahead. A broader index, excluding both fresh food and fuel, rose to 1.6 percent, indicating persistent inflation pressures. Despite the one-time factors boosting inflation, underlying trends are expected to moderate in the coming months. However, anticipated wage growth could sustain inflation, increasing the likelihood of further rate hikes by the Bank of Japan. Meanwhile, Japan's industrial output rose by 2.8 percent in July, leading to an upgrade in the government's outlook, although future production remains uncertain. The BOJ has already taken steps to tighten monetary policy, ending negative interest rates in March and raising the short-term rate to 0.25 percent in July. BOJ Governor Ka-

zuo Ueda indicated that further rate hikes are possible if inflation remains on track to meet the 2 percent target. USD/JPY closed last week at 146.16.

WTI crude oil

WTI crude oil futures continued to decline due to concerns about weaker global demand and economic uncertainty. Major banks have lowered their price forecasts, particularly because of reduced fuel consumption in key markets like China and Europe. In China, economic struggles and the shift to electric vehicles are curbing demand, while in Europe, diesel demand is expected to fall below pre-pandemic levels due to weak manufacturing and changes in the car fleet. These bearish factors are outweighing previous gains from geopolitical risks and supply concerns. Additionally, US crude oil inventories dropped by 0.846 million barrels last week, less than the expected 3-million-barrel decline. WTI was last seen at \$73.55.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30480.



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 29 AUGUST 2024

(965) 22 675 140
Al-Safat Tower, Hawalli, Beirut St.
alsafatinvest.com
research@alsafatinvest.com
alsafatinvestment
al-safat-investment-company

Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	36,008	7,822.04	0.3%	-1.0%	4.6%	664,460,676	236,509,162	48,303	17.5	1.4	82.3%
Main Market	7,743	6,070.67	0.1%	0.0%	9.0%	702,913,383	87,150,785	37,740	12.3	0.9	17.7%
All Share	43,751	7,180.92	0.2%	-0.8%	5.3%	1,367,374,059	323,659,947	87,043	14.0	1.0	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	26,824	1,778.77	0.4%	-1.4%	8.0%	259,191,611	118,277,464	18,654	18.0	1.4	61.31%
Basic Materials	464	816.80	3.2%	8.9%	9.5%	13,308,568	8,690,219	1,789	8.6	1.9	1.06%
Consumer Discretionary	1,227	1,773.43	1.6%	4.7%	10.6%	48,132,906	21,908,895	6,253	14.0	1.4	2.80%
Consumer Staples	303	991.85	-3.6%	0.9%	50.6%	2,403,572	1,574,466	349	26.9	1.6	0.69%
Energy	225	1,099.05	4.5%	2.4%	15.8%	31,983,344	3,304,289	2,479	9.7	0.9	0.51%
Financial Services	4,915	1,398.45	0.9%	2.5%	15.4%	606,620,696	95,254,082	26,327	12.3	1.0	11.23%
Health Care	213	468.00	0.0%	0.0%	-2.9%	80,002	57,841,482	5	47.4	1.4	0.49%
Industrials	2,593	760.82	-2.1%	-3.1%	-16.2%	149,905,901	31,922,956	12,539	14.6	1.0	5.93%
Insurance	809	1,961.68	-8.1%	-17.4%	-14.4%	3,760,861	677,963	640	8.6	1.1	1.85%
Real Estate	2,865	1,343.66	-0.1%	0.8%	10.8%	217,665,876	26,811,231	13,490	14.6	0.7	6.55%
Technology	22	1,600.50	-4.3%	-16.0%	176.7%	311,138	66,763.19	67	666.7	1.9	0.05%
Telecommunications	3,120	1,013.62	1.9%	2.1%	-8.3%	30,417,670	14,560,639	4,093	15.7	1.4	7.13%
Utilities	170	402.63	0.7%	-5.0%	-11.6%	3,591,914	553,139	358	15.7	1.3	0.39%

Top Gainers

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
MARAKEZ	96	66.09%	21,675,608	1,731,110,110	1,178
INOVEST	170	13.33%	36,428,274	5,777,671	1,691
KHOT	166	12.16%	25,599	3,984	7
ENERGYH	88.8	11.00%	21,996,878	1,961,539	1,558
KMEFIC	98.5	10.67%	298,246	27,848	93

Top Losers

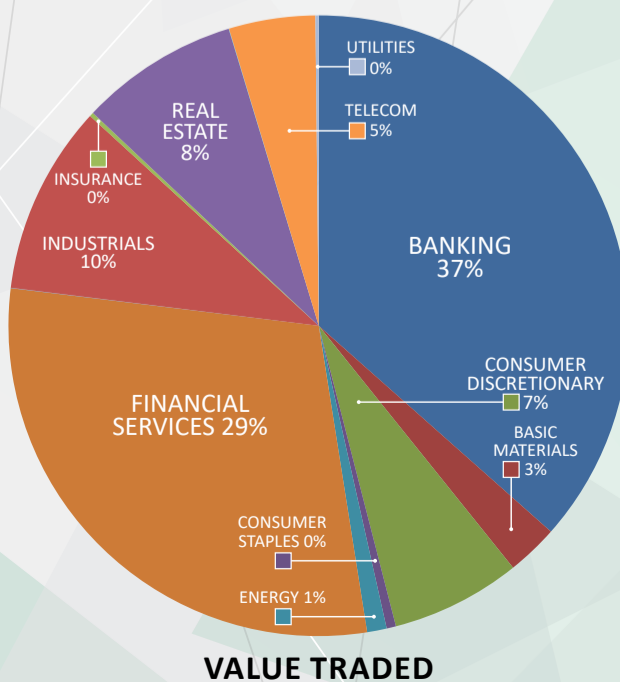
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
GINS	1,160	-15.94%	31,051	37,764	74
CABLE	1,604	-11.14%	7,282,396	11,797,919	2,839
MIDAN	723	-9.51%	80,002	57,841	5
BEYOUT	450	-8.16%	4,644,162	2,155,610	750
CGC	633	-7.59%	1,849,666	1,223,662	361

Top Volume

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
ALSAFAT	105	5.32%	93,871,812	9,759,952	3,351
GFH	103	0.98%	80,994,555	8,383,665	1,412
KFH	727	1.11%	73,977,171	53,555,308	7,259
IFA	343	8.54%	65,532,419	22,355,249	3,656
WARBABANK	197	1.03%	61,557,296	12,187,265	2,282

Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	727	1.11%	73,977,171	53,555,308	7,259
NBK	878	-0.45%	28,367,167	24,935,751	3,330
IFA	343	8.54%	65,532,419	22,355,249	3,656
WARBABANK	197	1.03%	61,557,296	12,187,265	2,282
ZAIN	467	1.97%	25,993,404	12,142,327	2,907



Market Summary:

- Premier and Nain markets' volume and value increased by 6%, 37%, and 13%, 8%, respectively.
- The Main market has yet to overcome the resistance level due to high volatility, while the Premier index is showing strength and is on the verge of overcoming a critical resistance level.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 7180, with support levels at 7178, 7162, and 7141, and resistance at 7214. The Premier index closed at 7822, with support levels at 7811, 7767, and 7737, and resistance at 7834. The Main index closed at 6070, with support levels at 6058, 6023, and 5990, and resistance at 6083.

Business

As UN climate talks near, countries still far apart on COP29 finance goal

New funding target to help developing countries remains a biggest task

BRUSSELS: With less than three months until this year's COP29 UN climate negotiations, countries remain far from agreement on the summit's biggest task: to agree a new funding target to help developing countries cope with climate change.

A negotiations document published by the UN climate body set out the splits between nations, ahead of a meeting in Baku next month, where negotiators will attempt to inch forward some of the stickiest issues. The document suggests seven options, reflecting countries' competing positions, for a possible COP29 deal. The new target will replace wealthy nations' current commitment to provide \$100 billion each year in climate finance to developing countries.

Vulnerable and developing countries want a far larger funding goal. Donor countries such as Canada and the 27-nation European Union say stretched national budgets mean a huge jump in public funding is unrealistic. "We have come a long way but there are still clearly different positions we need to bridge," said incoming COP29 summit president Mukhtar Babayev.

Babayev, who is Azerbaijan's minister of ecology and natural resources, said the COP29 presidency would organize intensive negotiations on the finance goal ahead of the COP29 summit in Baku in Novem-

ber. One option in the document sets out a target for developed countries to provide \$441 billion each year in grants, combined with an aim to mobilize a total \$1.1 trillion in funding from all sources, including private finance, annually from 2025 to 2029.

That option reflects Arab countries' position. Another option, reflecting the EU's negotiating stance, sets a global climate-funding target of more than \$1 trillion each year - including countries' domestic investments and private funding - inside which would be a smaller amount provided by countries "with high greenhouse-gas emissions and economic capabilities".

The EU has demanded that China - the world's biggest polluter and second-biggest economy - contribute to the new climate-funding goal. China is classed as a developing country by the UN under a system developed in the 1990s that is still used today. Beijing rejects the idea that it should be on the hook to pay for climate finance, the money mostly paid by rich countries to poor ones. Negotiators expect the issue of who should pay to be one of the biggest hurdles to agreeing a finance deal at COP29. Another option in the document, reflecting Canada's position, suggests contributors to the target should be determined on per-capita emissions and income - a measure that could also add the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and others. — Reuters



BERLIN: UAE's Special Envoy for Climate Change Sultan Ahmed Al-Jaber (left), Azerbaijan's Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources and COP29 President Mukhtar Babayev (second left), Azerbaijan's President Heydar Aliyev (center), German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (second right) and German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (right) are seen at the beginning of the second and last day of the Petersberg Climate Dialogue (Petersberger Klimadialog) meeting in Berlin, Germany on April 26, 2024. — AFP

Low eurozone inflation sets up ECB for cut

FRANKFURT/TALLINN: Inflation in the eurozone fell to its lowest level in three years in August, setting the stage for a further cut in the European Central Bank's interest rates next month despite an Olympics-driven surge in the price of services. The ECB has started winding down a two-year campaign against high inflation that followed the brisk reopening of the economy after the COVID-19 pan-

dem and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Inflation in the 20 countries sharing the euro currency fell to 2.2 percent this month, the slowest pace since July 2021 and closing in on the ECB's 2 percent target, according to a flash reading by the European Union statistics office, Eurostat. While the fall was mostly driven by lower energy prices and may even reverse later this year, it was still likely to seal the deal on a second ECB rate cut on Sept 12 after a first move in June.

"The significant drop in headline inflation in August makes the September cut a foregone conclusion," said Tomas Dvorak, a senior economist at Oxford Economics. Even ECB board member and prominent policy 'hawk' Isabel Schnabel appeared to open the door to more easing on Friday, saying

further gradual rate cuts might not derail the disinflation process as some policymakers had feared.

Still, the report showed price growth in the services sector - which is closely watched by policymakers because it better reflects domestic demand rather than external conditions - accelerated to 4.2 percent from an already high 4.0 percent. This was the probable result of a boost from the Olympic Games in Paris, but also greater spending power by workers after some recent pay increases.

"This likely reflects a relatively tight job market, as the decrease in the unemployment rate in July shows," said Gian Luigi Mandruzzato, senior economist at EFG Asset Management.

For now, markets see about six rate cuts before the end of next year, roughly one more cut than is baked into the ECB's own economic projections, indicating that markets are more optimistic about the price outlook than the ECB. This is partly because market economists see a bigger dip than the ECB's own staff in inflation this autumn.

Policymakers say they will not be confident in the inflation outlook until wage growth slows, with Germany's central bank especially vocal about this risk.

Still, with inflation now within a whisker of the ECB's target, the euro zone's central bankers were likely to broaden their debate from the single-minded focus on inflation to take into account signs of economic weakness. Wage growth has slowed sharply and unemployment is already rising in around a quarter of the euro zone's 20 countries. Survey data among firms and households suggest there is further labor market deterioration in store.

Lending has dwindled to a trickle since the ECB jacked up rates last year, causing investment to dry up and hampering sectors that rely on it, such as construction and manufacturing.

This has left euro zone economic growth barely humming along for over a year, with weakness in industrial powerhouse Germany only partly offset by strength in services-oriented countries such as Spain. "We think the ECB is already behind the curve, fixated too much on current and narrow measures of inflation while not paying enough attention to weak growth, with potential long-term damaging impacts," Oxford Economics' Dvorak said. — Reuters

Maldives bonds at record low after Fitch downgrade

MALE: The bonds of the Maldives plunged to a record low on Friday following a second ratings downgrade since June and amid concerns over a potential default and escalating liquidity worries. Fitch downgraded its rating on Thursday to 'CC', citing intensified pressures from the country's recently deteriorating external financing and liquidity metrics and stating that "a default event was more likely within the rating horizon".

A 'CC' rating indicates very high levels of credit risk. The Maldives' 2026 Islamic Bond, or sukuk - its only listed international fixed income instrument - dropped to 67.88 cents in the dollar, having lost more than 15 cents since the Aug 23 close. Tradeweb data showed. Bonds trading below 70 cents in the dollar are widely considered as distressed. The sharp tumble comes after the Bank of Maldives - the country's state-owned commercial bank - announced on Sunday that it would suspend or limit foreign transactions on cards linked to Maldivian rufiyaa accounts, flagging escalating usage of foreign currency spending. The bank reversed the curbs within hours following instructions from the local regulator. "Bond investors were alarmed by conflicting reports regarding foreign-currency restrictions, even as they worried about the country's fiscal deficit, debt and upcoming financing needs," said Hasmain Malik, a Dubai-based strategist at Tellimer.

The debt crunch comes amid political change for the archipelago. Maldives voters had handed President Mohamed Muizzu's party a landslide win in parliamentary elections in April, an outcome set to shift the Indian Ocean island nation closer to China and away from traditional partner India. "The episode highlights that neither is the Muizzu-led government implementing much needed fiscal consolidation nor is it enjoying harmonious relations with all of its own business community," Malik said. The Maldives, which has pegged its currency to the US dollar and whose main source of foreign exchange revenue is tourism, has struggled to preserve its precious foreign currency reserves. — Reuters

US hotel workers strike in Boston and Greenwich

NEW YORK: Nearly 1,100 hotel workers in the US cities of Boston and Greenwich are on a three-day strike after contract talks with hotel operators Marriott International, Hilton Worldwide, and Hyatt Hotels reached an impasse, the Unite Here union said on Sunday. The strikes, which began on Sunday, may spread to other cities across the US during the Labor Day weekend, as more hotel workers prepare to join the walkout. Marriott and Hilton did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. Hyatt previously told Reuters that it has contingency plans for a strike so that hotel operations are not affected. Thousands of hotel workers will be on strike as 9 percent more Americans travel domestically over Labor Day weekend compared to last year, according to AAA booking data.

Unite Here, which represents workers in hotels, casinos, and airports across the United States and Canada, said disappointed hotel workers may strike in other major cities as they struggle to agree with hotel operators on wages and on reversing pandemic-era job cuts. "Strikes have also been authorized and could begin at any time in Baltimore, Honolulu, Kauai, New Haven, Oakland, Providence, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, and Seattle," the union said in a statement.

The strike comes as 40,000 Unite Here hotel workers across 20 cities face expiring contracts this year. About 15,000 of those workers have authorized strikes in 12 markets from Boston to Honolulu.

Workers have been in negotiations for new four-year contracts since May. "We won't accept a 'new normal' where hotel companies profit by cutting their offerings to guests and abandoning their commitments to workers," Unite Here President Gwen Mills said, demanding a better deal. — Reuters



FRANKFURT: A pedestrian is seen crossing a street near the headquarters of the European Central Bank (ECB) in Frankfurt am Main ahead of an ECB press conference on the Euro-zone's monetary policy. — AFP

Wall Street Week Ahead

Broadening US stock rally boosts investor optimism

NEW YORK: A broadening rally in US stocks is offering an encouraging signal to investors worried about concentration in technology shares, as markets await key jobs data and the Federal Reserve's expected rate cuts in September. As the market's fortunes keep rising and falling with big tech stocks such as Nvidia and Apple, investors are also putting money in less-loved value stocks and small caps, which are expected to benefit from lower interest rates. The Fed is expected to kick off a rate-cutting cycle at its monetary policy meeting on Sept 17-18.

Many investors view the broadening trend, which picked up steam last month before faltering during an early August sell-off, as a healthy development in a market rally led by a cluster of giant tech names. Chipmaker Nvidia, which has benefited from bets on artificial intelligence, alone has accounted for roughly a quarter of the S&P 500's year-to-date gain of 18.4 percent.

"No matter how you slice and dice it you have seen a pretty meaningful broadening out and I think that has legs," said Liz Ann Sonders, chief investment officer at Charles Schwab. Value stocks are those of companies trading at a discount on metrics like book value or price-to-earnings and include sectors such as financials and industrials. Some investors believe rallies in these sectors and small caps could go further if the Fed cuts borrowing costs while the economy stays healthy.

The market's rotation has recently accelerated, with 61 percent of stocks in the S&P 500 outperforming the index in the past month, compared to 14 percent outperforming over the past year. Charles Schwab data showed. Meanwhile, the so-called Magnificent

Seven group of tech giants - which includes Nvidia, Tesla and Microsoft - have underperformed the other 493 stocks in the S&P 500 by 14 percentage points since the release of a weaker-than-expected US inflation report on July 11, according to an analysis by BofA Global Research. Stocks have also held up after an Nvidia forecast failed to meet lofty investor expectations earlier this week, another sign that investors may be looking beyond tech. The equal weight S&P 500 index, a proxy for the average stock, hit a fresh record this week and is up around 10.5 percent year-to-date, narrowing its performance gap with the S&P 500. "When market breadth is improving, the message is that an increasing number of stocks are rallying on expectations that economic conditions will support earnings growth and profitability," analysts at Ned David Research wrote.

Value stocks that have performed well this year include General Electric and midstream energy company Targa Resources, which are up 70 percent and 68 percent, respectively. The small-cap focused Russell 2000 index, meanwhile, is up 8.5 percent from its

lows of the month, though it has not breached its July peak. Next Friday's non-farm payrolls report could help bolster the case for a broader market rally if it shows the labor market is cooling at a steady, though not alarming pace, said David Lefkowitz, head of US Equities for UBS Global Wealth Management.

The jobs report "tends to be one of the more market moving releases in general, and right now it's going to get even more attention than normal."

Investors are unlikely to turn their back on tech stocks, particularly if volatility gives them a chance to buy on the cheap, said Jason Alonzo, a portfolio manager with Harbor Capital. Technology stocks are expected to post above-market earnings growth over every quarter through 2025, with third-quarter earnings coming in at 15.3 percent compared with a 7.5 percent gain for the S&P 500 as a whole, according to LSEG data. "People will sometimes take a deep breath after a nice run and look at other opportunities, but technology is still the clearest driver of growth, particularly the AI theme which is innocent until proven guilty," Alonzo said. — Reuters



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

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2024



Chidimma Adetshina, the winner of the Miss Universe Nigeria 2024, reacts during the Miss Universe Nigeria 2024 held at the Eko Hotel Convention Centre. — AFP photos



Top 10 finalist, Nyekachi Douglas (center), representing Rivers, poses in her evening gown.

BEAUTY QUEEN WINS MISS NIGERIA AFTER SOUTH AFRICA ROW



Chidimma Adetshina, the winner of the Miss Universe Nigeria 2024, reacts during the Miss Universe Nigeria 2024.

A former Miss South Africa contestant hounded over a nationality row was crowned Miss Universe Nigeria on Saturday, capping a difficult few weeks for the beauty queen. Born to a Nigerian father in South Africa, 23-year-old Chidimma Adetshina withdrew from the country's competition "for the safety and wellbeing of my family and I" after a backlash that exposed anti-foreigner sentiment in South Africa.

"This journey has been a tough journey for me and I am so proud of myself and I'm really grateful for the love and the support," Adetshina told AFP minutes after being crowned in Nigeria's commercial capital of Lagos. "This is something that I've always wanted, and I'm really glad that I have a second shot as well at achieving it," Adetshina said.

Her Nigerian heritage attracted vicious xenophobic attacks and sparked controversy when she was announced as a Miss South Africa finalist in July,

while the government said it was investigating a claim that her mother may have stolen the identity of a South African woman. Despite not being in the country in 20 years, organizers of the Nigerian contest invited her to join their final, saying it was a chance for her to "represent your father's native land on an international stage".

"We all need to stop with the xenophobia... with the tribalism," first runner-up Paula Ezendu told AFP. "We're all one family. We're all human beings," she added. The nationality controversy notwithstanding, Adetshina insisted she loved South Africa and was grateful for the support from the country. She will represent Nigeria at the international Miss Universe competition in November. "I know we are going to win," she told reporters. — AFP



Chidimma Adetshina, winner of the Miss Universe Nigeria, poses in her evening gown.



A general view of the contestants in their evening gowns at the Miss Universe Nigeria 2024.



Peace Ayegbidun, representing Kwara state, walks on on the catwalk.



Paula Ezendu, who represented Anambra, receives a cheque during the Miss Universe Nigeria 2024.



Edeifo Aikhuele, one of the contestant representing Edo, poses in her evening gown.



Ufa Dania, representing Kwara state, poses during the Miss Universe Nigeria 2024.

Eiffel Tower to keep Olympic rings after Games: Paris mayor

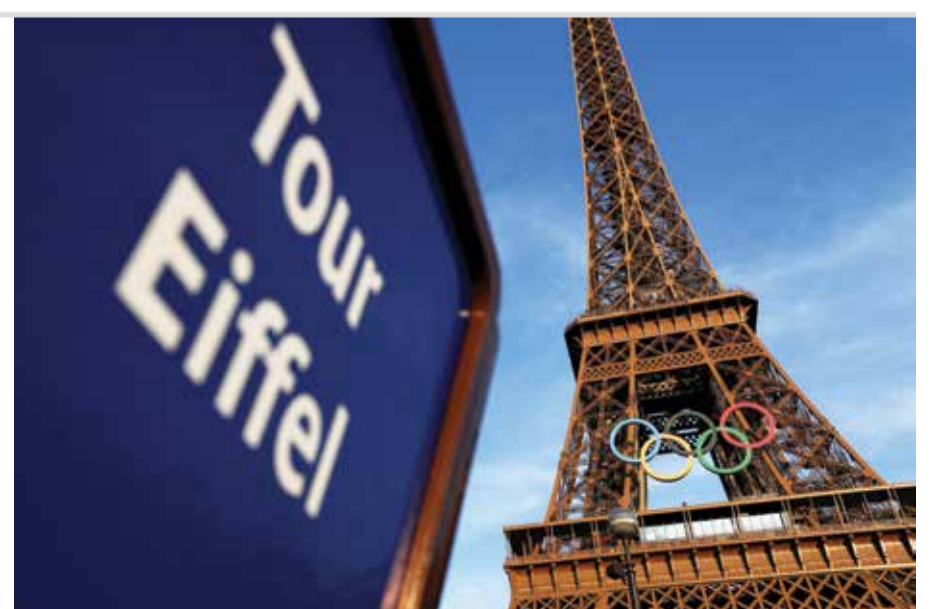
The Eiffel Tower will keep the Olympic rings that have adorned it since June after the ongoing Paralympic Games, Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo said on Saturday. "As mayor of Paris, the decision is up to me and I have the agreement of the IOC (International Olympic Committee)," Hidalgo told French daily Ouest-France. "So yes, they (the rings) will stay on the Eiffel Tower," she said, without specifying for how long. She said five lighter rings of the same size would replace those

fixed on the French capital's most emblematic monument because the current ones are "too heavy" to hold out for a long time.

Hidalgo also repeated her wish to see the Olympic cauldron stay in the Tuileries Gardens, but President Emmanuel Macron will have the final say as the site is state property. Organizers have won widespread domestic and international praise for the smooth running of the games with Paris' most iconic monuments providing a pic-

turesque backdrop. Hidalgo hailed a success where the French people "fell back in love with Paris" which "will never be the same again", citing plans to reauthorize swimming in parts of the River Seine by summer 2025. — AFP

This photograph shows a bus sign with the Eiffel Tower in the back, decorated with the Olympic rings for the upcoming Paris 2024 Olympic Games, in Paris. - AFP





Bubble tea vlogger Stacy Chen recording footage for her vlog at her company in Hangzhou, in eastern China's Zhejiang province. — AFP photos



Drinks waiting to be picked up at a Mixue Bingcheng chain shop in Beijing.

Penny-pinching youth transforming China's bubble tea craze



Drinks waiting to be picked up at a CHAGEE milk tea shop in Hangzhou.



People drinking at bubble tea chain Mixue Bingcheng's shop at an office building in Beijing.



Employees of bubble tea chain Mixue Bingcheng preparing drinks for customers in Hangzhou.

Sweet, milky and colorful - bubble tea is wildly popular in China, where people sipping through straws from large plastic cups is a common sight in high streets and shopping malls across the country. But there's fresh competition brewing in the vast market, characterized by ultra-cheap products that are striking a chord with China's increasingly frugal young consumers.

Bubble tea - which classically includes tapioca balls and comes in a wide range of flavors, with or without milk - has gained huge popularity in China, coinciding with an economic boom in recent decades that propelled living standards upwards. Post-pandemic headwinds, however, have hit the economy hard, with consumers reluctant to dip into their pockets and Chinese authorities struggling to get people spending. Many of today's biggest bubble tea chains once built followings with premium products priced around 25 to 40 yuan (\$3.50 to \$5.50) and flashy branding that made them status symbols of contemporary urban life in China.

But the sector - which last year was estimated to be worth more than \$21 billion - has been jolted by a new wave of low-cost disruptors, some offering drinks for \$1 or less. "The existing market is saturated," Stacy Chen, a bubble tea vlogger based in the eastern city of Hangzhou, told AFP. "Reducing prices is the only feasible way (for companies) to highlight their market competitiveness." Chen has forged an online following of bubble tea enthusiasts who watch her videos on lifestyle app Xiaohongshu and Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, where she has about 180,000 followers.

In her videos, she sits in front of a row of beverages, testing them and comparing them before offering her viewers a frank assessment of their appearance, taste and cost. Chen showed AFP the breadth of options available to consumers on a commercial street outside her office, where uniformed deliverymen on wheeled hoverboards whisked away orders from over a dozen tea shops, all within a short walk of one another. "There are so many milk tea brands on the market now, and they release new products very quickly," Chen told AFP. "We milk tea and coffee vloggers can't shoot all the content."

Spoilt for choice

China's bubble tea industry has flourished in recent years, with countless brands now accounting for an estimated half million shops across the country. Chief among the budget upstarts is Mixue Bingcheng, founded by a



A woman drinking bubble tea outside office buildings in Beijing.



People buying bubble tea at a bubble tea shop at a night market in Hangzhou.

pair of brothers in 1997 as a humble shaved ice shop in the hinterland province of Henan.

The company - whose name translates as "honey snow ice city" - has expanded rapidly, with its smiling snowman mascot and bright red signs adorning about 32,000 stores in China and around 4,000 more in 11 other nations as of last year. "Current consumer sentiment (in China) is seeing many restaurants and cafes lower their prices to match spending behavior," Evelyn Chang, market analyst at China Skinny, told AFP. Mixue "has the first-mover advantage in the low-price milk tea segment", said Chang, adding that "stiff competition and product homogeneity" have led to a price war in the sector.

A highly anticipated post-COVID economic recovery in China has not yet materialized, with property sector woes and heightened

trade tensions weighing on consumer confidence. Retail sales growth has remained sluggish and unemployment rates have stayed stubbornly high, fueling concerns about a prolonged economic downturn.

Bang for buck

For many young professionals looking to pinch pennies while working in China's top-tier cities, new companies such as Mixue have become more attractive. "Other milk teas are too expensive," 21-year-old Guo Jun told AFP outside a Mixue shop in Beijing. Guo, who hails from the northern province of Hebei but now lives and works in the capital city, said she had just purchased an iced lemonade using a discount on Douyin for a total of 2.8 yuan (\$0.40). "Work stress is high, the current economic environment is not good, things like salary are not great, so (young people) may choose to be more practical," said Guo.

Chen, the vlogger in Hangzhou, says that the low-cost bubble tea trend was due at least in part to the soaring popularity of domestic coffee chains offering bargain alternatives to more premium-oriented foreign firms like Starbucks. This, according to Chen, affected Chinese consumers on a psychological level, causing them to expect more bang for their buck. "Before, we all fundamentally saw coffee as an imported or luxury product," she said. "Now I can buy a luxury product for 9.9 yuan (\$1.40) or 8.8 yuan (\$1.20). "Why should I spend more than 20 yuan to buy a cup of milk tea?" — AFP

Hunt for rare bird shows how Ecuador narco violence impedes research

Biologist Cesar Garzon was searching for a small, endangered parakeet in southern Ecuador when he was warned he may be kidnapped, highlighting the danger for scientists in the biodiverse country engulfed in narco violence. "Do your work somewhere else because it is dangerous here," he said a man told him in April, in the troubled mining town of Camilo Ponce Enriquez. That night, the town's mayor was shot dead. Earlier this month, a clash between criminal groups in the town left five dead, two of whom were found decapitated, and one burned.

Garzon, a bird expert at the state-run National Institute of Biodiversity (Inabio), tried to continue his research in a neighboring town, whose mayor was also killed. Tired of the ever-present danger, he packed his bags and returned to Quito. Garzon has been studying the El Oro parakeet for two decades, working for its conservation and supporting the sustainable management of its habitats. Mostly green, with a red forehead, the bird is endemic to Ecuador and has only been seen in the country's southwest provinces of Azuay and El Oro. With only an estimated 1,000

specimens remaining, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) lists it as in danger of extinction. Garzon visited Camilo Ponce Enriquez, in Azuay province, to track down and study the endangered parakeet.

But the gold-rich town is in the grips of the Los Lobos drug trafficking gang, which finances its activities with illegal mining. "We are left with uncertainty and frustration (...) There is a lack of information on that site," he told AFP. He said the violence was a blow to conservation as there "could be important areas that are home to endemic or threatened species and we can't do anything."

'Windows of opportunity'

Sandwiched between Colombia and Peru — the world's top cocaine producers — once-peaceful Ecuador has seen violence explode in recent years as enemy gangs with links to

Mexican and Colombian cartels vie for control. As the gangs have gained ground, homicides in Ecuador soared from six per 100,000 inhabitants in 2018 to a record 47 per 100,000 in 2023. Mario Yanez, another biologist from Inabio, said his current work revolves around finding "windows of opportunity" to continue researching despite the violence.

Scientists work closely with local communities and authorities and do shorter field trips or focus on similar species located in less risky areas. "The levels of violence have led to total restrictions in certain areas of the country," especially on the coast and where there is mining, said Yanez. These places carry the "stigma" of the violence and that "unfortunately is limiting international cooperation funds to be able to carry out conservation actions," he added.

The private Lalo Loor reserve in southwestern Manabi is one of Ecu-

dor's last intact remnants of a unique ecosystem known as a coastal dry forest, home to many endemic species. The province is also a drug trafficking stronghold. Due to the security crisis, American universities cancelled an annual visit of researchers and students to the reserve, a major source of income for Lalo Loor. Their continued absence could force the reserve's administrative office to shutter, manager Mariela Loor said.

Judith Denking, a German biologist at the private Universidad San Francisco de Quito, told AFP that since 2022 she has put on hold her two decades of research into humpback whales on the coast of the conflict-ridden northwestern province of Esmeraldas, bordering Colombia. She has been unable to gather photographic or acoustic records of the humpback whales that come to the equatorial Pacific to mate and give birth.

She also highlighted the plight of fishermen — who she often works with at sea. "Pirates, who are usually drug traffickers, come and threaten them, hijack their boat or steal their motor or kidnap them" to force them into drug trafficking, she said. Daniel Vizuete, a specialist in Social Studies of Science and Technology at the Flacso University in Quito, said research related to the environment was "perhaps the most eroded precisely because it occurs ... in places where institutions are weaker." "That means that even the lives of researchers can be at risk," he added. He also points to other possible effects of criminal violence on science such as a "setback in terms of participation of women." — AFP



Biologist César Garzón speaks during an interview with AFP in Quito on August 15, 2024, at the museum facilities of the National Biodiversity Institute. — AFP photos



National Institute of Biodiversity (INABIO) Director Mario Yanez speaks during an interview with AFP in Quito.

Lifestyle



Actors George Clooney (center) and Brad Pitt (right) arrive at the Casino pier during the 81st Venice International Film Festival at Venice Lido. - AFP photos



Actors Brad Pitt (right) and George Clooney arrive at the Casino pier during the 81st Venice International Film Festival.

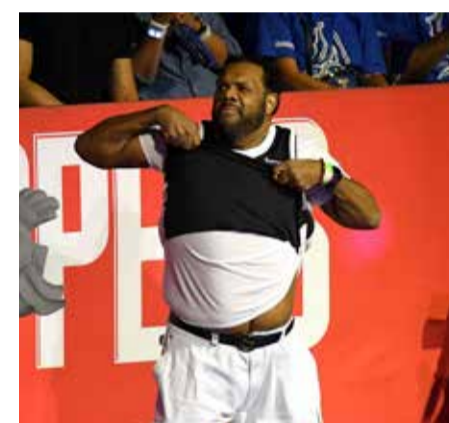


US actor Adrien Brody (center) poses with actor Joseph Alwyn, actress Raffey Cassidy, director Brady Corbet, Mona Fastvold, actor Isaac De Bankole, actress Felicity Jones, actress Emma Laird, actress Stacy Martin, actor Alessandro Nivola and actor Guy Pearce during the photocall of the movie "The Brutalist" presented in competition during the 81st International Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido.

US rapper Fatman Scoop dies after collapsing on stage

US rapper Fatman Scoop has died, his family and manager announced Saturday, after the 53-year-old artist suffered a medical emergency while performing on stage, prompting a wave of tributes from the world of hip-hop. Scoop, best known for the hit tracks "Be Faithful" and "It Takes Scoop," collapsed on stage at Hamden Town Center Park, Connecticut and was taken to hospital where doctors were unable to revive him, US media reported. Medical staff apparently attempted to administer CPR while he was still on the stage, according to a video of the incident obtained by celebrity news site TMZ. He was then carried away on a stretcher.

In a post on his Instagram account, his family wrote that "it is with profound sadness and very heavy hearts that we share news of the passing of the legendary and iconic Fatman Scoop." "Fatman Scoop was known to the world as the undisputed voice of the club. His music made us dance and embrace life with positivity," they wrote. Scoop's manager Birch Michael confirmed his death on Facebook, writing: "I love you Scoop. Thank you so much for everything you gave to me." — AFP



US Rapper Fatman Scoop performs during a time out in the second half in game four of the Western Conference Finals between the Phoenix Suns and the LA Clippers at Staples Center in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

GEORGE CLOONEY, BRAD PITT ARE LONE 'WOLFS' AT VENICE

Hollywood's two top leading men — George Clooney and Brad Pitt — promise to set the Venice Film Festival alight on Sunday with the premiere of their new film "Wolfs". The action comedy, pitting one professional "lone wolf" fixer against another, is one of the highlights of the 10-day festival, where it is playing out of competition on the glamorous Lido. Fans will be sure to await the arrival of the dashing movie stars by water taxi from Venice, with a world premiere scheduled for Sunday evening.

The 81st edition of the world's oldest film festival has been awash with stars

this year, with Clooney and Pitt following on the red-carpet Nicole Kidman, Cate Blanchett and Angelina Jolie — Pitt's ex-wife. Expected Monday will be Julianne Moore and Tilda Swinton, starting in a new film from Spain's Pedro Almodovar, while Lady Gaga and Joaquin Phoenix will dominate Wednesday's festivities with the premiere of the sequel to "Joker", "Joker: Folie a Deux". In the Apple TV+ production from US director Jon Watts, Clooney and Pitt play professional "lone wolf" fixers forced to work together when both are called in to clean up after a high-profile crime.

More than colleagues, Clooney and

Pitt are accomplices, with an easy rapport and self-deprecating humor that the Coen brothers tapped in 2008's "Burn After Reading", or on display in the trilogy of heist films "Ocean's Eleven" (2001-2007). With "Wolfs", the characters "find their night spiraling out of control in ways that neither one of them expected", explains the production, which has already announced a sequel. Watts comes to "Wolfs" after directing the "Spider-Man: Homecoming" trilogy starring Tom Holland and Zendaya.

The film will have only a limited theatrical release before going to streaming around the world on Apple TV+ Septem-

ber 27. Sunday's offerings also include the premiere of "The Brutalist" from US director Brady Corbet, a three-and-a-half-hour film that sees Adrien Brody play a Hungarian Jewish architect embarking on a life-changing project. On Monday, Almodovar returns to the Lido with his first full-length film in English, "The Room Next Door", with Moore and Swinton, while Daniel Craig is the star of Tuesday's premiere of "Queer", an adaptation of the William Burroughs novel set in 1940s Mexico City. — AFP



(From left) Screenwriter Zach Baylin, Canadian actor Phillip Lewitski, actor Tye Sheridan, actor Jude Law, director Justin Kurzel, actress Jurnee Smollett, actor Nicholas Caradoc Hoult and actor Matias Lucas attend the red carpet of the movie "The Order" presented in competition during the 81st International Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido, on August 31, 2024. — AFP

Jude Law on the hunt for white supremacists in Venice film

Jude Law's latest movie at the Venice Film Festival, a true story of white supremacists plotting a race war, is one that "needed to be made now", its star said Saturday. "The Order", directed by Australian director Justin Kurzel, stars the British actor as a gruff FBI agent in the Pacific Northwest confronted with a splinter group of the Aryan Nations which is building a militia to wage war on the American government. "Sadly, the relevance I think speaks for itself," Law told journalists ahead of the movie's premiere Saturday. "It felt also like a piece of work that needed to be made now. It's always interesting looking back but it's also interesting finding a piece from the past that has some relationship to the present day," said the actor.

The film — one of 21 competing for the top Golden Lion prize at the prestigious festival — is based on the real-life group of the same name which operated in Washington and Idaho in 1983-1984 under its leader Robert Mathews. "What amazed me was that it was a story I hadn't heard of before," confessed Law, known for a string of leading roles including "The Young Pope" and "The Talented Mr. Ripley".

'Dangerous ideology'

The threat from violent, extremist far-right groups is in the forefront this year after a summer of anti-immigrant violence and riots in Britain, the worst since 2011. There are also concerns of a repeat of the January 6, 2021 Capitol Hill attack — whose rioters included white nationalists and other extremist groups — if former US President Donald Trump loses the election in November. The 40-year-old true story provided the filmmakers with a way to "have a conversation with today's politics" given that the film is about "an ideology that's incredibly dangerous and how it can quickly take seed," said director Kurzel. Kurzel, whose most recent "Nitram"

won a 2021 Best Actor award at Cannes for actor Caleb Landry Jones, has called his latest film "a manhunt into the depths of that hate, a foreshadowing of a divided America, a warning shot of what has been and what may come." That hate is seen straight away at the top of the film when a Denver radio talk show host berates a caller who has been goading him for being Jewish. "You're too inept to get by in the world so you try to curtail the enjoyment of others," says host Alan Berg, who will later become a victim of The Order as part of their quest for racial purity.

Meanwhile, the group has been robbing banks and printing counterfeit money to build its army against the state. FBI agent Terry Husk (Law) makes a connection between "White Power" flyers going up in town and the robberies and armored car heists, realizing he is up against a dangerous splinter group with Butler as its young, charismatic leader, played by Nicholas Hoult. With a young sheriff deputy Jamie Bowen (Tye Sheridan) at his side, Husk begins tracking the elusive leader, who has in his sights far more serious crimes, from attacks on government institutions to assassinations.

"What was shocking to me and I think to all of us here was there were so many comparisons and I think so many things within the film were the seed and the germination of today and many of the challenges we face," said Kurzel of his latest film. "I think we live in a time now that was reflected in the film where there is division and there's a lot of conversation about the future and ideologies," he said. The Order's leader Mathews, who died in a fire in a stand-off with law enforcement officers in December 1984, had a particular ability of "speaking to the disenfranchised, those who feel invisible, who are unheard," said Kurzel. "That voice... can very dangerously start to exploit that vulnerability. I think that's a timeless thing." — AFP

UK, Ireland Oasis reunion concerts sell out after fans face online woes

Oasis' reunion concerts in the UK and Ireland next year have sold out, the British music legends said late Saturday, after a day-long struggle for millions of frustrated fans. The chaotic scramble for the prized tickets followed the announcement Tuesday that brothers Noel and Liam Gallagher had ended their infamous 15-year feud and were reuniting the 1990s-founded band for a worldwide tour. "Oasis Live '25 UK and Ireland tickets have now SOLD OUT," the group said at 1800 GMT, some 10 hours after they first went on general sale. "Please be aware of counterfeit and void tickets appearing on the secondary market."

Tickets for the 17 UK and Ireland performances next July and August — kicking off what has been billed as a global tour — were expected to sell out within minutes. But with millions of fans flooding online for a chance to see the band play live for the first time since 2009, several sales websites struggled with the sheer volume of eager buyers. Hundreds of thousands were left waiting for hours in online queues for each of the different dates — or just to join the official waiting list. Others were unable to even access one of the sales websites and were instead greeted with an error message, while some encountered infuriating glitches. An AFP reporter at the end of the purchase process after waiting online for several hours was abruptly dumped to the back of the queue for one date, behind nearly 200,000 others. The reporter did not succeed on subsequent attempts.

Memes

By mid-afternoon, Ticketmaster's Irish site said tickets for two mid-August concerts in Dublin had sold out. A company spokesperson insisted the UK site had not crashed and that "millions of fans" were "moving along" its queue for the 15 events there. But exasperated fans were unimpressed, with social media full of memes and mockery. "Unfortunately, Oasis have split up while you were in the queue," joked one X account. "Can we just go back to the old days of queuing outside the record shop or gig venue to buy tickets please?" said another.

Some lucky fans snagged a small number of tickets in a Friday pre-sale, after success in a heavily oversubscribed ballot. But some of those tickets promptly appeared on resale sites at heavily inflated prices, some as high as £6,000 (\$7,875). That prompted Oasis to warn on X that "tickets sold in breach of the terms and conditions will be cancelled". The group behind hit songs including "Wonderwall", "Don't Look Back In Anger" and "Champagne Supernova" will stage concerts in Cardiff, Manchester, London, Edinburgh and Dublin.

The eagerly-awaited Tuesday announcement also promised concerts in "continents outside of Europe later next year". Tickets for their UK events started at around £75 (\$98), rising to around £150 for standing in front of the stage. Some complained Saturday that "in demand" standing tickets cost as much as £360. The most expensive at London's Wembley stadium — which include extras such as a pre-show party — set buyers back more than £500.

'Spark'

Formed in Manchester, northwest England, in 1991, Oasis helped create the Britpop era of that decade, enjoying a fierce rivalry with London band Blur. The Gallagher brothers became notorious for their public fights, which came to a head at a 2009 Paris festival, when Liam broke one of Noel's guitars. That was the last time they played together, although each has regularly performed the group's hits to sold-out crowds.

The reunion tour will take place 30 years after Oasis's 1995 album "(What's the Story) Morning Glory?", which received international critical and commercial acclaim. It will kick off over two nights at the Principality Stadium in the Welsh capital Cardiff from July 4, 2025, followed a week later by five gigs at Heaton Park in their hometown, Manchester.

Oasis will then play Wembley — on July 25, 26 and 30 as well as August 2 and 3 — before three nights at Murrayfield Stadium in the Scottish capital Edinburgh, on August 8, 9 and 12. Two more performances at Dublin's Croke Park are scheduled in mid-August. The band has promised sets "full of wall-to-wall classics", showcasing the "charisma, spark and intensity that only comes when Liam and Noel Gallagher are on-stage together". British hoteliers and pub owners are among those hoping for a boom in business, akin to the economic boost in numerous places set off by Taylor Swift's recent tour. — AFP



Ian Alcock, performs as Liam Gallagher as the Oasis tribute band 'Definitely Mightbe' plays at Swarcliffe Working Mens Club in Leeds, northern England.



A fan uses a smart phone to access an online ticket sales website to purchase tickets for Oasis' "Live '25" tour taking place in 2025, at home in Marsden, northern England on August 31, 2024. — AFP photos

Sports

Australia fight back, tame Pumas

First Rugby Championship win since 2022



LA PLATA: Australia's Wallabies flanker Carlo Tizzano (left) is tackled by Argentina's Los Pumas flanker Marcos Kremer during the Rugby Championship Test match between Argentina and Australia at the UNO Jorge Luis Hirschi Stadium in La Plata, Buenos Aires Province, on August 31, 2024. — AFP

LA PLATA: Australia fought back to earn a nail-biting 20-19 away victory over Argentina on Saturday to snap an eight-match losing streak in the Rugby Championship. Replacement fly-half Ben Donaldson landed the winning penalty in injury time as Australia came from 10-0 down to claim their first Rugby Championship win since stunning South Africa 25-17 in 2022. Tries by Wallabies scrum-half Jake Gordon and flanker Rob Valetini cancelled out an early one for Argentina by No 8 Juan Martín González.

"It honestly feels so good. We stayed in there, that second half was a tough grind," Australia captain Harry Wilson told Sky. "It was obviously pretty stressful in the last few minutes, but I just loved how composed we were at the end — going through our pick-and-drives and just really trying to grind there until we got a penalty." After back-to-back home defeats to the Springboks last month, Australia head coach Joe Schmidt was rewarded for bleeding fresh

talent in his squad. Western Force centre Hamish Stewart made his debut in Australia's midfield, the 15th new cap this season for the Wallabies.

"I'm really proud," Schmidt told reporters. "We made a few things hard for ourselves, giving them a head start at home with a loud crowd and often put ourselves straight back under pressure, which was frustrating. "But we built our way forward, scored a couple of good tries and created a couple of other chances. We have a lot of work to do but we're pleased to get the four points." Despite Australia shading the territory and possession in the first half at the Estadio Uno, a football stadium in La Plata near Buenos Aires, the Wallabies were 13-7 down at the break.

Fly-half Santiago Carreras landed an early penalty and converted a try after González touched down, mauled over the line by the Pumas pack as Argentina took an early 10-0 lead. Australia struck back quickly when full-back Tom Wright punched

a hole in the defense before Gordon took an inside pass to cross under the posts. Carreras extended the hosts' lead with a penalty after the break, but the Wallabies narrowed the margin to 16-14 when Valetini barged over for a try. Australia took the lead for the first time with 20 minutes left when fly-half Noah Lolesio landed a penalty.

The visitors had a massive let off when Pumas prop Thomas Gallo picked up from a close-range ruck and charged over, but lost control of the ball as he dived over the line. Replacement back Tomas Alborno restored the Pumas lead to 19-17 with 10 minutes to go in pouring rain when he stroked a penalty between the posts. Veteran hooker Agustín Creevy, 39, earned loud applause when Argentina's most capped player came off the bench in the final stages for his 110th and final appearance for Los Pumas. Argentina conceded a penalty in front of the posts as time ran down and Donaldson — on for Lolesio — held his nerve to land the winning kick. — AFP

South Africa edge New Zealand in Rugby Championship thriller

JOHANNESBURG: Scrum-half Grant Williams scored a 75th-minute try to give South Africa a dramatic 31-27 comeback victory over New Zealand in a Rugby Championship thriller in Johannesburg on Saturday. The All Blacks had looked likelier winners for much of the match, but conceded two tries in the final 11 minutes after replacement prop Ofa Tu'ungafasi was yellow carded. Less prone to errors, New Zealand scored four tries and built a 27-17 lead on 53 minutes against rivals struggling to click in a rematch of the 2023 Rugby World Cup final won by South Africa.

But the spirit of the Springboks told in a tense finish as they scored 14 unanswered points, with fly-half Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu converting tries by flanker Kwagga Smith and Williams. Hooker Bongani Mbonambi was the other Springboks try scorer and Feinberg-Mngomezulu contributed 16 points from two conversions and four penalties. Winger Caleb Clarke twice, hooker Codie Taylor and centre Jordie Barrett were the New Zealand try scorers and fly-half Damian McKenzie slotted two conversions and a penalty. Victory lifted South Africa to 14 points after three matches in the annual southern hemisphere championship. New Zealand have six and Argentina four while Australia are pointless.

New Zealand were awarded a penalty within 25 seconds of the kick-off, which they put into touch close to the South Africa try-line, and this set the scene for relentless All Blacks pressure. Brilliant Springbok defending against numerous multi-phase assaults kept the visitors at bay until the seventh minute when Taylor broke the deadlock with a try. Down to 14 men after full-back Apelele Fassi had been sin-binned for fouling flanker Ethan Blackadder, South Africa could not stop a New Zealand drive off a line-out and Taylor scored.



JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's scrum-half Grant Williams (right) dives across the line to score a try during the Rugby Championship Test match between South Africa and New Zealand at the Ellis Park Stadium in Johannesburg on August 31, 2024. — AFP

Struggling

McKenzie, who had succeeded with 12 of 13 kicks at goal in the first two rounds of the Championship, converted and the All Blacks were seven points ahead. South Africa were battling to settle in front of a capacity 62,000 crowd and Feinberg-Mngomezulu sent the kick-off after the try directly into touch, conceding a scrum.

The Springboks desperately needed a boost and it came, controversially, after 17 minutes with another try from a hooker, this time Mbonambi. South Africa won a line-out and Mbonambi used sheer strength to surge forward and dot down, but replays suggested that he may have knocked the ball on in the process of scoring. Only two points separated the titans and South Africa edged ahead on the half

hour mark when Feinberg-Mngomezulu slotted a 50-metre penalty for an 8-7 lead.

But it took New Zealand just three minutes to regain the advantage as flanker Ben-Jason Dixon was dispossessed in midfield and slick handling sent Clarke over. McKenzie failed to convert, his kick drifting wide of the far post. At the other end of the field, Feinberg-Mngomezulu kicked a close-range penalty. A first half as fiercely contested as anticipated finished with the All Blacks leading 12-11 — the scoreline by which they lost the 2023 World Cup final in Paris. An intercept try by Barrett and a second from Clarke, one of which McKenzie converted, took the All Blacks 10 points clear. Then came the fight-back from the Springboks, who will face their greatest rivals again next Saturday in Cape Town. — AFP

Groves wins stage 14; Roglic survives puncture scare

MADRID: Australian rider Kaden Groves edged Wout van Aert in a thrilling sprint to win stage 14 of the Vuelta a Espana on Saturday as Primoz Roglic survived a late puncture scare to remain in contention for the title. Overall leader Ben O'Connor, who had a horror day in the saddle on Friday, had a smoother ride on the longest stage of the tour, a 200km route between Villafranca del Bierzo and Villablino. He will go into Sunday's 15th stage still wearing the leader's red jersey, 1 minute 21 seconds ahead of Roglic. Saturday, however, belonged to Alpecin-Deceuninck rider Groves who added this win to his victory in stage two. Van Aert, who was aiming for a fourth victory in this Vuelta, had his Visma-Lease a Bike team riding all day to control and recapture the breakaway, and secure a good position in the sprint.

The Belgian kicked first, as he likes to do, but in the dash to the line, it was the 25-year-old Queenslanders who crossed the line first, just centimeters ahead of his rival. "To win a man on man sprint against Wout is pretty awesome," Groves told Eurosport at the finish. "I didn't hesitate. I think I did a pretty good sprint, and it felt like a bit of a drag race against Wout but in the end it was good enough to beat him. "My third Vuelta and my sixth win, it's good to see the consistency paying off." Van Aert still heads the green jersey classification 109 points ahead of Groves.

O'Connor dropped nearly two minutes to Roglic on Friday but had a more comfortable ride this time and almost snatched a couple of bonus seconds when Roglic suffered a puncture 14 kilometres from the finish. His Red Bull-Bora-hansgrohe car was on hand to ensure a quick bike exchange, however, and the Slovenian was able to rejoin the peloton. Roglic and O'Connor will both be aware that Sunday's stage 15 could well decide the outcome of the Vuelta. It is a mountainous 142.9 kilometre ride with the riders tackling the Alto de Santo Emiliano and a double ascent of the Alto de la Colladiella before the Cuitu Negro with a vicious steep finale. — AFP

Sinner avoids Open trapdoor as Swiatek moves into last 16

NEW YORK: Jannik Sinner avoided plunging through the US Open trapdoor which claimed Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz when he stormed into the last 16 on Saturday as fellow world number one Iga Swiatek stayed on course for a second New York triumph. Australian Open champion Sinner raced past 87th-ranked Christopher O'Connell 6-1, 6-4, 6-2. The 23-year-old Italian's win came a day after four-time champion Djokovic was sent spinning to his earliest loss in New York in 18 years by Alexei Popyrin.

One day earlier, 2022 winner Alcaraz was defeated in the second round by Dutch journeyman Botic van de Zandschulp. "I knew I had to play very solid. My serve worked well so I am happy with my performance," said



NEW YORK: Jannik Sinner of Italy serves against Christopher O'Connell of Australia during their Men's Singles Third Round match on Day Six of the 2024 US Open at USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center on August 31, 2024. — AFP

Sinner after firing 15 aces in his 46 winners past outclassed O'Connell of Australia. Sinner did not face a single break point in his one-hour 53-minute victory which took him into the last 16 for a fourth successive year. "There have been some upsets in the tournament so let's see what's coming. I'm happy to still be here and play as many matches as possible," added Sinner whose comfortable afternoon on Arthur Ashe Stadium saw tennis legend Serena Williams amongst the spectators.

Sinner will take on 14th seed Tommy Paul for a quarter-final place after the American defeated Canadian qualifier Gabriel Diallo in four sets. There were 14 breaks of serve in that tie with Diallo, ranked a lowly 143 in the world, undone by 77 unforced errors. Four-time French Open champion Swiatek was equally dominant as Sinner as the top-seeded Pole eased into the fourth round with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova. The 23-year-old will face another Russian, Liudmila Samsonova for a quarter-final place. "I like the night sessions but it's noisy so I need to focus on my job and stay inside my bubble," said Swiatek who shot a long hard stare at her opponent when a ball was speared towards her early in the second set. With Djokovic and Alcaraz heading home to Europe, Daniil Medvedev finds himself as the only former champion left in the men's tournament. The eccentric Russian, seeded five, swept past Flavio Cobolli, the world number 31 from Italy, 6-3, 6-4, 6-3.

Medvedev famously shattered Djokovic's bid for a rare calendar Grand Slam when he captured the 2021 title in New York. "I said before the match that for me the upsets don't matter. The conditions here are tricky and the favorites have fewer margins," said Medvedev after making the fourth round for the sixth straight year. He'll face unseeded Nuno Borges of Portugal who saved three match points in a five-set triumph over Czech teenager Jakub Mensik. Britain's Jack Draper reached the last 16 for a second successive year by defeating Alcaraz's conqueror Botic van de Zandschulp 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.

'I'm a fan'

There will be at least one Australian man in the quarter-finals with Alex de Minaur and Jordan Thompson setting up a fourth round clash. De Minaur defeated an ailing Dan Evans 6-3, 6-7 (4/7), 6-0, 6-0 with the Briton hardly able to walk in the closing stages, a legacy of playing the longest match in US Open history in the first round. Thompson defeated Italy's Matteo Arnaldi in straight sets.

Meanwhile, 2023 semi-finalist Karolina Muchova, who knocked out two-time champion Naomi Osaka in the second round, cruised through by beating Anastasia Potapova 6-4, 6-2. She next faces French Open and Wimbledon runner-up Jasmine Paolini, the fifth-seeded Italian, who beat Yulia Putintseva 6-3, 6-4. Paolini has now made the fourth round of all four Slams this year having previously never got beyond the second round in 16 attempts. — AFP

China's Lu ends badminton title drought

SEOUL: China's Lu Guangzu won his first title on badminton's world tour in six years when he beat Taiwan's Lee Chia-hao in the Korea Open final on Sunday. World number 13 Lu, the tournament's number seven seed, came through a hard-fought tussle 21-16, 20-22, 21-18 to lift his first trophy since the Canada Open in 2018. World number 30 Lee was unseeded in Seoul. China's world number one Shi Yuqi was eliminated in the quarter-finals, while Denmark's Viktor Axelsen, who won his second straight Olympic gold in Paris last month, did not compete.

In the women's tournament, South Korea's number seven seed Kim Ga-eun won by walkover against second-seeded Chinese opponent Wang Zhiyi. In mixed doubles, Malaysia's number four seeds Chen Tang Jie and Toh Ee Wei beat China's unseeded Guo Xinwa and Li Qian 17-21, 21-13, 21-13. Indonesia's seventh-seeded Leo Rolly Carnando and Bagas Maulana upset South Korean top seeds Kang Minhyuk and Seo Seung-jae in the men's doubles final, winning 18-21, 21-9, 21-8. In women's doubles, South Korea's sixth-seeded Jeong Na-eun and Kim Hye-jeong beat Malaysian number four seeds Pearly Tan and Muralitharan Thinaah 21-12, 21-11. — AFP



NEW YORK: Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia plays a backhand return against Russia's Anna Kalinskaya at the end of their women's singles third round match on day six of the US Open tennis tournament on August 31, 2024. — AFP

Haddad Maia books US Open last 16 after video review row

NEW YORK: Beatriz Haddad Maia booked her place in the US Open fourth round on Saturday after winning a controversial video review which derailed her opponent Anna Kalinskaya of Russia. Kalinskaya was 2-0 ahead in the opening set of the third round clash on Louis Armstrong Stadium when she called for a video review, claiming that her Brazilian opponent had won a point off a double bounce.

Chair umpire Miriam Bley consulted her tablet screen and decided that the shot was legitimate and the point was allowed to stand. Kalinskaya never recovered her composure and won only two of the next 14 games as the Brazilian left-hander set-up a last-16 clash with former world number one Caroline Wozniacki. The US Open introduced video replays last year and expanded it for 2024 to cover eight courts.

When it was first used in 2023, it failed to function in the men's match between Andy Murray and Corentin Moutet after the French player requested a review. Amongst the decisions that can be challenged are double bounces and hindrances. There have been widespread calls for the review system to be used at all tournaments after a series of controversies. At the recent Cincinnati Masters, Britain's Jack Draper scored a victory over Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime on a dubious linecall without technology review.

The chair umpire was unable to make a clear call on a ball that looked to have hit the court on the Briton's side of the net just as Draper's racquet met the ball at the same instant, landing a winner. While both men were agreeable to a replay, officials could not make a ruling without the benefit of a video review capacity. After several minutes of discussion at the chair, the shot by Draper, on match point, was allowed to stand. US Open champion Coco Gauff also demanded the system be used at the French Open after a clash with the umpire over a disputed line call in her semi-final with Iga Swiatek. — AFP

Sports

Barca trounce Valladolid 7-0

Raphinha bags hat-trick in La Liga

BARCELONA: Brazil winger Raphinha scored a hat-trick as Barcelona thrashed Real Valladolid 7-0 on Saturday to make it four wins from four in La Liga under new coach Hansi Flick. While bitter rivals Real Madrid have stumbled early following the much-trumpeted arrival of Kylian Mbappe, Barcelona are off to a flying start despite their continued financial difficulties.

They are also missing Frenkie de Jong, Gavi and Ronald Araujo but have a maximum 12 points heading into the international break, leaving them seven clear of Madrid who face Real Betis on Sunday. "We're growing as a team. I think it's a very good start to the season," said Barcelona captain Marc-Andre ter Stegen. "I'm proud of how things are going... hopefully we can continue like that in the next weeks."

Barcelona's best start to a La Liga campaign came in 2013-14 when they started the season with eight straight wins, although they were pipped to the title that year by Atletico Madrid. Raphinha opened

the scoring for Barcelona at the Olympic Stadium on 20 minutes as he chested down a pass from Pau Cubarsi and flicked elegantly into the far corner with the outside of his left boot. Robert Lewandowski soon doubled the lead when he latched onto a ball through from Lamine Yamal and squeezed a shot past Valladolid goalkeeper Karl Hein, on loan from Arsenal.

Jules Kounde made it three before half-time when a corner dropped to the France defender inside the area and he stabbed into the top corner while off-balance. Raphinha had a simple tap-in from close range just past the hour, with Lewandowski and Yamal involved before the ball broke kindly for the Brazilian. He completed his treble on 72 minutes following a brilliant burst forward from Yamal, who then slid through a delightful pass for Raphinha to stroke home.

Dani Olmo, who got the winner mid-week at Rayo Vallecano, on his debut, struck with his final touch after twice hitting the post and having a goal disallowed

for offside. The Spain international danced past a series of defenders and rolled in Barcelona's sixth. He missed Barcelona's first two games this term with the club unable to register him as they struggled to meet La Liga's strict financial rules. Raphinha rounded off a glittering performance with the assist for Ferran Torres as Barcelona hit a seventh, fizzing in a cross from the left for the substitute to steer home in clinical fashion.

Atletico snatched a 1-0 victory away to Athletic Bilbao as Angel Correa scored in stoppage time to send Diego Simeone's side up to second, four points adrift of Barcelona. Espanyol came from behind to win 2-1 at home to Rayo Vallecano with Tottenham loanee Alejo Veliz striking in the sixth minute of added time. Ayoze Perez's equalizer ensured Villarreal remained unbeaten, but they had to settle for a 1-1 draw against a Valencia side that had lost each of their first three games. Mallorca picked up their first win of the season by beating Leganes 1-0. — AFP



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Brazilian forward #11 Raphinha jumps over Real Valladolid's Estonian goalkeeper #13 Karl Jakob Hein during the Spanish league football match. — AFP

Suarez scores twice as Inter Miami crush Chicago Fire

MIAMI: Luis Suarez struck twice to take his season tally to 16 goals in 20 Major League Soccer games as Inter Miami cruised to a 4-1 win over Chicago Fire on Saturday. Miami, once again without Lionel Messi who continues to be sidelined by an ankle injury, have already secured their place in the playoffs and remain in top place for the regular season 'Supporters' Shield'.

But there was no sign of Gerardo Martinez's side easing off as Uruguay's Suarez continued his impressive scoring form. The 37-year-old former Barcelona striker made Miami's opener in the 25th minute when his shot was parried by Chicago keeper Chris Brady only to fly into the net off the helpless defender Tobias Salquist.

Suarez was on target a minute into the second half when he beat Brady with a low left-foot shot at the near post after a smart exchange with Diego Gomez. The veteran striker made it 3-0 with a close-range finish after a low ball into the box from his former Barcelona team-mate Jordi Alba. Giorgios Koutsias pulled a goal back for Chicago in the 82nd minute but Miami completed a convincing win when Leon-

ardo Campana broke down the right and slipped the ball to substitute Robert Taylor with the Finnish winger making no mistake.

Defending champions Columbus Crew, fresh from their Leagues Cup triumph, look well placed to join Miami in the Eastern Conference post-season after two stoppage-time goals earned them a 4-2 win over New York City. Algerian Mounsef Bakrar looked to have earned New York a point when he finished off a swift counter-attack to make it 2-2 in the 86th minute. But in the third minute of stoppage time DeJuan Jones took advantage of some hesitant New York defending to poke home and then Jacen Russell-Rowe made it 4-2 for the Crew, who are third in the East.

FC Cincinnati, without suspended Argentine Luciano Acosta, remain a spot ahead of the Crew after a 4-1 win over Montreal with another Argentine, Luca Orellano, scoring twice. Orellano's second goal, in the 57th minute, to make it 3-0, was a spectacular strike from inside his own half. In the Western Conference, second-placed Los Angeles FC suffered a surprise 2-0 home defeat to seventh-placed Houston Dynamo. Ezequiel Ponce put the visitors ahead in the 28th minute, turning home from inside the six-yard box after LAFC failed to clear their lines. Substitute Lawrence Ennali made it 2-0, two minutes after coming on as a 70th-minute substitute.

Ennali showed electric pace as he burst down the left, cut inside and rounded Hugo Lloris to slot into an empty net. Colombian Juan Mosquera's 54th-minute



CHICAGO: Luis Suarez #9 of Inter Miami dribbles the ball against Arnaud Souquet #2 of Chicago Fire in the second half at Soldier Field on August 31, 2024. — AFP

strike won the Pacific North West derby for Portland Timbers against Seattle Sounders. Portland, Houston and Seattle are all on 40 points in the tight battle for the top seven spots and automatic qualification to the playoffs with the Sounders currently eighth on goal difference. — AFP

Greenwood double sends Marseille top of Ligue 1

PARIS: Two goals in the space of a minute by former Manchester United striker Mason Greenwood provided the fuel for Marseille to burn off Toulouse 3-1 on Saturday and climb to the top of Ligue 1. The 22-year-old Greenwood, who scored twice on his Marseille debut against Brest a fortnight ago and once against Reims last week, pounced in the 16th minute in Toulouse before adding a second a minute later to make it five goals in three games.

Greenwood arrived last month from Old Trafford, where his career began in promising fashion before he was suspended in January 2022 following allegations of attempted rape and sexual assault. Prosecutors dropped charges in February 2023 and he went on to spend last season in Spain at Getafe. Toulouse's task was made harder by the red card handed out to forward Frank Magri in the 27th minute for a foul on Geoffrey Kondogbia.

Brazilian forward Luis Henrique provided the assists for both Greenwood goals and thought he had got himself on the scoresheet seven minutes into the second half but Marseille's third was later awarded as an own goal to Charlie Cresswell. Just before the end, Toulouse did find some consolation when the Gabon striker Shavy Babicka ran on to a through ball from Djibril Sidibe before sidestepping Geronimo Rulli and sliding the ball into the empty net.

"We had a good first half, scoring two goals," Marseille coach Roberto De Zerbi told DAZN after the match. "It gave us an advantage to have an extra player and we relied on our strength in one-on-ones, particularly Greenwood, to score the brace.



TOULOUSE: Marseille's Moroccan midfielder #11 Amine Harit fights for the ball with Toulouse's Moroccan forward #07 Zakaria Aboukhallal during the French L1 football match on August 31, 2024. — AFP

"We still need to improve the speed and mentality of this team. We shouldn't have conceded the goal, should have won 3-0."

De Zerbi's side now top the table with seven points, level with Nantes who won 3-1 away at Montpellier. Mathis Abline put Nantes ahead after 24 minutes before Akor Adams leveled on the half-hour. A Moses Simon penalty in added time at the end of the first half restored the visitors' lead before Mostafa Mohamed made sure of the three points with the third five minutes from time. "Seven points

out of nine, that's brilliant. We are super happy," said a delighted Nantes coach Antoine Kombouare.

Brest secured their first win of the season with a 4-0 hammering of newly-promoted Saint-Etienne. Mahdi Camara and Romain Del Castillo from the penalty spot put Brest two-up at half-time and they cruised to a comfortable win with further goals in the second half from Ludovic Ajourque and another penalty from Kenny Lala. Reigning champions Paris Saint-Germain, who have six points, can go top of the table with victory at Lille on Sunday. — 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

Change of Name

I, Basha Peerzade Sayed Sameer Sayed, holder of Indian Passport No. M9914793, having permanent address Dakhni Mohalla, Manki, Karwar, Karnataka - 581348, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given name) Sayed Sameer and (surname) Peerzade.

(02/09/2024)

I, Yashoda, holder of Indian Passport No. V9394108, having permanent address # 1-81/16 Janani, Pankumar Kulur, Mangalore, Dakshina Kannada - 575013, Karnataka, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given name) Yashoda Krishna and (surname) Bangera.

(02/09/2024)

HIRING

PART-TIME CHEF

Requirements:

- Male or Female
- Speaks and reads in English
- 2 Years experience in professional cooking
- Specialized in various cuisines

Good Salary

To Apply, send a whatsapp message to 99740010

Liverpool rout woeful Man United

Chelsea held by Palace • Newcastle punish profligate Tottenham



MANCHESTER: Liverpool's Dutch midfielder #38 Ryan Gravenberch vies for the ball with Manchester United's English midfielder #37 Kobbie Mainoo during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Liverpool on September 1, 2024. — AFP

LONDON: Luis Diaz starred as Liverpool routed archrivals Manchester United 3-0 to extend their perfect start under new boss Arne Slot, while Chelsea suffered fresh frustration in a 1-1 draw against Crystal Palace on Sunday. Hired from Feyenoord to succeed Jurgen Klopp in the close-season, Slot has overseen three successive wins in a flying start to the new era at Liverpool.

The Reds sit second in the Premier League, behind champions Manchester City on goals scored, after handing United an embarrassing loss that finished with thousands of empty seats at Old Trafford. Diaz and Mohamed Salah were United's chief tormentors as the Liverpool forwards tore Erik ten Hag's side to pieces with their pace and predatory finishing. Diaz put Liverpool ahead with a 35th-minute header from Salah's cross after United midfielder Casemiro carelessly conceded possession.

Casemiro was guilty of surrendering the ball too easily again when Diaz converted another Salah assist with a cool finish seven minutes later. Salah put the result beyond doubt in the 52nd minute, netting

for the third time this season with a fierce strike from Dominik Szoboszlai's pass. The Egypt star has scored 10 goals in nine appearances at Old Trafford for Liverpool in all competitions. Slot is the first permanent Liverpool manager to win his first league game against United since Bob Paisley in 1975.

The Dutchman is also the first manager to win each of his first three Premier League games without conceding a single goal since Sven-Goran Eriksson at Manchester City in 2007. While Slot soaks up his dream start, United boss Erik ten Hag is under pressure after a woeful display that came hot on the heels of their 2-1 defeat at Brighton last weekend. Ten Hag survived a close-season review into his job, which included United speaking to former Bayern Munich boss Thomas Tuchel about potentially replacing him.

But while last season's surprise FA Cup final win over Manchester City saved his job, he cannot afford another poor league campaign after finishing eighth in 2023/24. Enzo Maresca's Chelsea have won only once in the first three league games of the Italian's reign after a chaotic close-season. Beaten by

Manchester City on the opening weekend, Chelsea powered to a 6-2 win at Wolves last weekend before scraping into the UEFA Conference League group stage after a 2-1 loss at Servette on Thursday. Former Leicester boss Maresca insists his expensive Chelsea rebuild, featuring a host of new signings, is ahead of schedule despite their inconsistent start.

Maresca fumes

But Chelsea failed to kill off Palace after Noni Madueke picked out Cole Palmer and his pass was slotted home by Nicolas Jackson in the 25th minute. Maresca was furious after Palace midfielder Will Hughes avoided a second yellow card for a foul on Palmer. Looking for their first point this season, Palace made the most of that escape to draw level in the 53rd minute.

England midfielder Eberechi Eze unfurled a superb curling finish that flashed past Chelsea keeper Robert Sanchez from 20 yards. "If they had been with 10 I think the game would have completely changed," Maresca said of the Hughes incident. "It

was clear for all of us it was a second yellow card. The only one that thinks in a different way is the referee." At St James' Park, Newcastle punished profligate Tottenham with a 2-1 victory. Newcastle took the lead in spectacular fashion in the 37th minute when Lloyd Kelly pulled the ball back to Harvey Barnes, who unleashed a sublime volley into the far corner from 10 yards.

Tottenham equalized in the 56th minute as Newcastle defender Dan Burn accidentally diverted the ball into his own net while trying to clear after Brennan Johnson's cross eluded Nick Pope. The Magpies went back in front in the 78th minute when Jacob Murphy ran onto Joelinton's defense-splitting pass and laid on a tap-in for Alexander Isak. Unbeaten Newcastle's second win in three league games condemned Tottenham to a first defeat this term. "It's massive, isn't it?" Newcastle boss Eddie Howe said. "You need to win at any stage but I think when there's difficult moments - and this transfer window has been tough for us - then it's even more important." — AFP



MONACO: Lens' Ecuadorian midfielder #13 Jhoanner Chavez (left) fights for the ball with Monaco's Brazilian defender #02 Vanderson during the French L1 football match between AS Monaco and RC Lens on September 1, 2024. — AFP

Monaco's perfect start to Ligue 1 season ends

PARIS: Monaco's perfect start to the Ligue 1 season ended on Sunday as Przemyslaw Frankowski's stoppage-time penalty earned Lens a 1-1 draw in searing heat in the principality. It looked as if Monaco were going to claim a third win in as many matches this season when Denis Zakaria headed them in front with only six minutes remaining at the Stade Louis II. That goal was a harsh blow for Lens, who had seen Adrien Thomasson and Wesley Said strike the same post seconds apart in the first half, and had a Remy Labeau Lascary goal disallowed for a handball after the break.

But their luck was in when Zakaria deflected a shot with his hand in his own area, and the referee gave Lens a spot-kick after a VAR check. Polish international Frankowski stepped up to convert the

penalty four minutes into stoppage time, and both sides are level on seven points in the fledgling table, behind leaders Marseille on goal difference.

The final result was a boost for Lens after they were knocked out of the UEFA Conference League during the week, losing to Panathinaikos in Greece in their play-off tie to miss out on a place in the league stage. Monaco will be in the Champions League after finishing last season as runners-up in Ligue 1, and the principality side will begin their campaign at home to Barcelona on September 19. Marseille are top after Mason Greenwood scored twice in Saturday's 3-1 win at Toulouse.

Reigning champions PSG go to Lille later, with both sides knowing a win will allow them to go clear at the summit. Elsewhere on Sunday, Nice claimed their first win of the season as Evann Guesand scored twice in a 4-1 victory at Angers, who have lost all three matches since returning to the top flight. Le Havre came from behind to beat Auxerre 3-1 in Normandy, while Japan's Junya Ito and Ivory Coast forward Oumar Diakite found the net as Reims recovered from the loss of an early goal to defeat Rennes 2-1. — AFP

Paralympics sprint stars enter fray after triathlon postponed

PARIS: The stars of the Paralympic sprint world entered the fray at the Paris Games on Sunday but organizers were forced to delay the triathlon events by 24 hours due to concerns about the water quality of the River Seine after heavy rain. The 11 triathlon races were to take place early Sunday but after heavy rain on Saturday which can stir up pollution in the Seine, organizers and governing body World Triathlon decided to postpone by a day.

"The latest analysis shows a deterioration in the water quality of the Seine following heavy rainfall over the past two days," the organizers said. "It was decided to schedule the 11 medal sessions of the Para triathlon on September 2," they added. The triathlon was originally scheduled to take place over two days - September 1 and 2.

The issue also caused disruption to the Olympics triathlon and open-water swimming events earlier this summer, with several practice sessions being cancelled due to high levels of pollution caused by heavy rainfall. Of 11 days of events and training scheduled in the river during the Olympics, only five got the green light. Despite a 1.4 billion euros (\$1.5 billion) upgrade to improve the Paris sewerage and water treatment system, the Seine has been dogged by pollution concerns, notably for its levels of enterococci and E.coli bacteria.

Amputee speed merchants

The scene was set at the Stade de France for the entry into the competition of the amputee sprinters later Sunday. The heats of the T64 100m event features arguably the deepest field in any event on the Paralympics track and field program. Reigning champion Felix Streng of Germany has a fight to defend his title in the face of the challenge from two-time champion Jonnie Peacock of Great Britain and US athlete Hunter Woodhall. Woodhall, 25, is one half of an Olympic-Paralympic super couple with his wife Tara Davis-Woodhall, who was crowned Olympic women's long jump champion in

the same stadium just weeks ago. Peacock though says at 31 he has the major championship experience and is approaching a return to full form after a low-key two years, although he did win bronze in Tokyo three years ago.

"I know people in that race who consistently run fast times outside the championships but I am the person who every time turns up at championships and runs faster times in them," Peacock said before the Games. "Provided I do not make too many mistakes, touch wood, I know I can do that again but the question is how many of the guys can as well." The blind football competition kicked off at the foot of the Eiffel Tower with the players guided by a rattle in the ball.

Colombia beat Japan 1-0 in the opening match of the men's tournament before Morocco and Argentina drew 0-0. Brazil, who have not lost a single match since the event was introduced in 2004, face Turkey later Sunday. China added more golds in early action to move to 24 golds at the top of the medals table, but a rush of medals in the velodrome, including from James Ball in the men's B 1000m time trial, kept Great Britain in touch in second place on 16 golds at the midway point on Sunday. — AFP



PARIS: This photograph taken on September 1, 2024, shows the Seine river from the Alexandre III bridge, after the cancellation of the para-triathlon competition. — AFP