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# Kuwait executes six convicts

Blood money saves woman from gallows • MoI warns of int'l fraud gang

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Kuwait extends oil cuts

**VIENNA:** Eight members of the OPEC+ group of oil-producing nations agreed Thursday to extend their voluntary supply cuts until the end of November, postponing a planned output increase amid falling crude prices. The eight OPEC+ nations are Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, UAE, Kazakhstan, Algeria and Oman. Their voluntary supply cuts of 2.2 million barrels per day (bpd) will be extended "for two months until the end of November 2024", the alliance said. — AFP (See Page 8)

### Winter vaccinations available

**KUWAIT:** The health ministry announced on Thursday that vaccinations against winter illnesses are available at 43 medical centers and 14 hospitals throughout the country. In the Capital health zone, vaccinations are provided at 15 centers. It listed six centers in Hawally, 10 centers in Farwaniya, eight in Ahmadi, six in Jahra and four in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, in addition to immunizations provided at several hospitals in the Al-Sabah health zone. — KUNA (See Page 3)

### Iraq to buy 14 military choppers

**BAGHDAD:** Iraq reached an agreement on Thursday to purchase 14 military helicopters, including a dozen H225M (Caracal) multi-role combat aircraft, from European aviation giant Airbus. Defense Minister Thabet Al-Abbassi attended the signing ceremony for the deal in Baghdad alongside French Ambassador to Iraq Patrick Durel and a representative of Airbus Helicopters. — AFP

### Madrid to ban e-scooters

**MADRID:** Madrid will ban e-scooters rented through mobile apps after the city's three licensed operators failed to implement limits on their clients' circulation or control their parking, Mayor Jose Luis Martinez-Almeida said in a statement. He said the licenses of Lime, Dott and Tier Mobility would be cancelled from October and that the city has no plans to grant new licenses to any other operators. — Reuters

## Amnesty urges war crimes probe over Zionists razing Gaza

**PARIS:** Amnesty International Thursday urged a war crimes probe into the Zionist entity razing homes and farms in eastern Gaza to expand a so-called buffer zone between it and the Palestinian territory. "Using bulldozers and manually laid explosives, the (Zionist) military has unlawfully destroyed agricultural land and civilian buildings, razing entire neighborhoods, including homes, schools and mosques," it said. The London-based rights group said the levelling since the start of the war on Oct 7 "should be investigated as war crimes of wanton destruction and of collective punishment".

Continued on Page 6

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** A Kuwaiti woman convicted of murdering her friend was saved from the gallows early on Thursday after a last-minute pardon by the victim's relatives as authorities executed six male convicted murderers in the first hangings in the country in two years. The hanged men included two Kuwaitis, three Iranians and a Pakistani. Some of the men were on death row for as long as five years.

Two hours before the woman was supposed to be hanged, relatives of the victim pardoned her be-

fore the police, accepting blood money. The public prosecutor then halted the execution. The woman was convicted of premeditated murder of her female friend at the victim's house by stabbing her several times after having breakfast together. The reason for the murder was not revealed.

Two of the Iranians hanged were convicted of killing a member of the Al-Sabah ruling family, a Kuwaiti man in his 70s and an Indonesian maid in Salwa for robbery. The men committed the crime in 2016 and were handed the final conviction in 2019. Dozens

of men and women are on death row as Kuwait has slowed down the pace of executions over the past two decades under pressure from rights groups calling for a freeze on executions.

Meanwhile, the interior ministry warned on Thursday of a new style of fraud by an international gang posing as security men through video calls. The ministry said in a statement that it does not communicate with the public through video call applications. It urged the public to ignore such calls even if the callers pose as policemen.

## Kuwaiti artistes earn historic Grammy nod

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti musicians Ghazi Al-Mulaifi and Amin Abdal have made history as the first Kuwaitis and Gulf musicians to receive a Grammy nomination in the "Best Latin Jazz Album" category for their album Ana Mashoof. The album blends traditional Kuwaiti Bahri music with global jazz, a fusion inspired by Mulaifi's academic studies and his mentor, the late Sulaiman Mayouf Mejally. This cross-cultural mix be-

came the foundation of Boom.Diwan.

In an interview with Kuwait Times, Mulaifi expressed his excitement and gratitude for the nomination. "When we found out we were nominated, it was an incredible moment," he said. "We realized we were the first Khaleeji musicians and recording engineers ever recognized at the Grammys, and it validated years of hard work and dedication."

Despite challenges recording across different countries, the nomination brings international attention to Kuwaiti music. The duo hopes to continue promoting their musical traditions globally, with upcoming performances and a new album in the works. (See Page 13)



Kuwaiti musicians Ghazi Al-Mulaifi and Amin Abdal.

## UAE completes Arab world's first nuclear plant

**DUBAI:** The oil-rich United Arab Emirates on Thursday announced the completion of the Arab world's first nuclear power plant, calling it a "significant step". Abu Dhabi's Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant will produce 40 terawatt-hours of electricity annually after its fourth and final reactor has entered commercial operation, the state-owned

Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation (ENEC) said in a statement.

It will generate 25 percent of the electricity needs of the hot, desert Gulf state, where air-conditioning is ubiquitous — nearly the equivalent of New Zealand's annual consumption, ENEC said. The station will power companies including the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), one of the world's biggest oil producers, Emirates Steel and Emirates Global Aluminium, ENEC said.

Barakah, which means "blessing" in Arabic, started operations in 2020 when the first of its four reactors went into service. Saudi Arabia, the

Continued on Page 6



A handout picture shows the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant in the Gharbiya region of Abu Dhabi on Feb 13, 2020. — AFP

## Bahrain pardons 457 prisoners

**MANAMA:** Bahrain has pardoned hundreds of inmates, the second major amnesty in months. Scores of prisoners were released from a Bahrain jail on Thursday following a royal pardon issued late Wednesday concerning 457 inmates. Videos shared on social media showed tearful reunions in a courtyard outside Jau prison, where black-clad women waited to spot their sons and husbands among those freed. Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa

Al-Khalifa's royal amnesty was aimed at fostering "social cohesion" and to celebrate his 25 years on the throne, the official Bahrain News Agency said late on Wednesday. The move came five months after a pardon of more than 1,500 inmates — the biggest in years.

Families of the freed inmates were contacted by authorities to inform them of the releases — but even those who didn't receive a call made their way to the prison hoping their loved ones would also walk free. Bahrain is a key regional ally of the United States and is home to the US Navy's Fifth Fleet. — AFP



MANAMA: Relatives embrace on Sept 5, 2024 as scores of prisoners were released from jail following a royal pardon. — AFP

## Pope, Indonesian imam warn against religious conflicts

**JAKARTA:** Pope Francis appealed for religious unity Thursday as he addressed tens of thousands of people at a football stadium after meeting faith leaders at Southeast Asia's biggest mosque. "I encourage you to sow seeds of love, confidently tread the path of dialogue, continue to show your goodness and kindness... and be builders of unity and peace," he told more than 80,000 devotees packed into the sta-

dium in the Indonesian capital.

The 87-year-old pontiff earlier met Grand Imam Nasaruddin Umar at Jakarta's Istiqlal Mosque, where they signed a declaration warning against using religion to stoke conflict and appealed for action against climate change. Francis's packed schedule on Thursday capped the first stop of a grueling Asia-Pacific tour, the

Continued on Page 6



JAKARTA: Grand Imam of Istiqlal Mosque Nasaruddin Umar and Pope Francis attend a meeting with religious leaders at Istiqlal Mosque on Sept 5, 2024. —



# Kuwaiti charities plan to boost humanitarian work

Organizations detail achievements worldwide as they mark International Day of Charity



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti charities have helped people across the world through hundreds of projects, addressing social, educational, health activities and cultural needs. — KUNA photos

**KUWAIT:** The State of Kuwait, within the framework of celebrating the International Day of Charity (September 5), is further boosting its leading role in relieving the needy on the global stage. Practically, the Kuwaiti authorities are offering various forms of support for philanthropic associations and workers in the sector, coordinating charitable tasks at the internal and external levels and handling hurdles facing the personnel.

These authorities, namely the ministries of social affairs, information, defense, foreign affairs and others, are involved in the tasks of relieving peoples in need, without discrimination, everywhere, thus earning Kuwait its global and much acclaimed reputation for aiding peoples in need or victims of crises and catastrophes.

Advocating objectives of the International Day of Charity, namely encouraging NGOs and identical associations to help others through volunteering and relief action, the workers in the Kuwaiti philanthropic sector are keen on implementing such goals through diverse actions such as the launch of campaigns and working out agreements to speed up execution of charitable projects and delivering aid to the afflicted communities.

Abdulaziz Al-Obaid, Director General of Kuwait Relief Society, said in an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the association, hinging on the state's support, is moving ahead in charitable intervention and accomplishing various relief activities in communities and countries afflicted with disasters and humanitarian crises, alluding particularly to the Gaza Strip, Sudan, Yemen, Lebanon, North Syria, Somalia and Bangladesh, among other nations.

Obaid affirmed that the execution of the projects at this level is done through agreements and cooperation with local and international partners, notably foreign establishments and organizations. He explained that the work involves health aid, providing shelter, food, launching development ventures, offering education and various other kinds of action aimed at aiding people suffering from hunger, poverty, diseases and illiteracy.

Kuwait Relief Society, between 2023 and 2024, carried out 11 charitable campaigns in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Lebanon, he said, indicating at help for poor Lebanese and Syrian refugees during winter times. The involved teams had also scrambled to assist victims of earthquakes in Syria and Turkey. Al-Obaid also mentioned humanitarian missions in Morocco, Libya, Gaza and Sudan. Revealing specific



details, Obaid said 19 states benefited from the campaigns, over the past two years, with 177 executed projects, more than 1.7 million beneficiaries and 8.5 million spent dinars. Up to 45 charitable and private associations, companies and public departments had taken part in the campaigns. Obaid added. The society aims, by the end of next year to expand coordination and partnerships with leading local and international levels, increase benefits for those in need and enhance speedy intervention, Obaid revealed.

Chairperson of the Union of Kuwait Charity Organizations (UKCO) Saad Al-Otaibi has said the federation continues to offer aid for humanitarian cases across the world through coordination and cooperation with charities and philanthropic associations in Kuwait. The UKCO has exerted effort to pursue charitable action, including campaigns, conventions, meetings, forming voluntary teams and devising future plans for improving the charitable sector, Otaibi said.

The federation has recently organized several conventions, addressing in part education for refugees and prospects of providing sustainable teaching in countries witnessing conflicts namely Palestine, Yemen, Syria and Jordan. Moreover, it has coordinated field efforts by the Kuwaiti associations for helping the Rohingya in the regions where they have taken up refuge.

Abdulatif Al-Dawas, Director of Resources and Media at Sheikh Abdullah Nouri Charity, said Kuwaiti charities have become a landmark and civ-



icon in the country's history due to the political leadership's support and the innate trait of the Kuwaiti people of doing good deeds and development of the sector. Nouri Charity, since its launch, has been able with support of the Kuwaiti community, local and external partners, to provide humanitarian support in many countries, soothing suffering of the stricken, and aiding the poor and the needy, Dawas said in remarks to KUNA.

Dawas disclosed that the association, earlier this year, executed several charitable projects, aiding 400,840 people in Gaza, building residential towns in Kenya, Yemen and the Kyrgyz Republic. The houses were particularly built for widows and orphans. Furthermore, the society had launched medical programs for treating patients of eye illnesses, building hospitals and providing treatment for 91,250 patients. Additionally, medical camps had been erected in the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan where 850 patients received care. Ramadan iftar meals and Eid slaughtered livestock had been provided to some 775,000 people in 30 countries, he said, adding that wells had been dug to secure water for nearly 50,000 people and 28,571 individuals benefited from financial allocations for mosques and donations.

Abdulaziz Al-Kandari, in charge of communications and information technology at Namaa charity, said in a statement to KUNA that the national philanthropic institutions are "prime partners" of sustainable development, improving life quality ad

social solidarity. As to Namaa charity, the association has succeeded in expanding scope of its tasks covering many countries and regions in dire need, soothing suffering of millions of afflicted peoples and paving the way for hundreds of thousands of the impoverished to work and produce.

In 2023, Namaa provided at the local level treatment to more than 150 cancer patients, education to 2,366 youngsters, distributed 211 air-conditioning sets, sponsored 1,100 orphans, supported 479 university-level students, distributed 2,674 food parcels, cared for 137 special needs' cases, distributed 5.85 million water battles, granted monthly financial aid to 3,229 families. Outside Kuwait, also during the same year, it built 198 mosques, 29 Islamic centers, 838 water wells, conducted 1,600 eye surgeries, carried out 300 development projects, built five orphanages and four medical centers, in addition to other good deeds.

"While we celebrate the International Day of Charity to back up its message, encourage the associations and educate the masses about significance of charity, we gratefully recall the giving by the good doers, the charity activists and the volunteers in this realm," he said, while also lauding the State of Kuwait's supreme leadership for guiding this sector and promoting its effective role.

Dr Adnan A-Haddad, the deputy director general for communications and marketing at the International Rahma Society, said the association is celebrating its pioneering charitable role on this distinguished occasion under the theme "42 years of giving," affirming that the society aims to expand its societal role for promoting public awareness of the philanthropic and volunteering actions. It is seeking to improve the sector by means of dedicating attention to the quality of its programs and projects, targeting the segments in need throughout the globe, he said, pointing out that the Kuwaiti relief bodies have set an example to follow in relieving peoples suffering from catastrophes and crises, latest of which was the crisis in Gaza.

In 2023, the association achieved, with support from donors, 3,578 social ventures, 1,003 relief projects, 131 educational ones, 114 health activities, 66 cultural ones and 91 seasonal ventures, after sponsoring 7,673 individuals in need in several countries. Haddad expressed gratitude to the charitable associations, the relevant ministers, the workers, the volunteers and the donors who have "made the Kuwaiti charitable work a shining star in the humanity's sky." — KUNA



MALINDI: The Sahabat Amal volunteer team pose for a photo with locals during their trip.



## Sahabat Amal team brings aid, support to Kenyan communities

**KUWAIT:** A group of 30 volunteers from various Gulf countries embarked on a humanitarian mission to Kenya from August 24 to September 1, 2024. The Sahabat Amal volunteer team visited three regions — Nairobi, Mombasa and Malindi — bringing aid and support to vulnerable communities.

The volunteers visited schools, orphanages and shelters, meeting scholars of Islamic jurisprudence and the Holy Quran, widows and impoverished families. They provided much-needed assistance, distributing 200 food baskets, school supplies, clothes and toys to local children, and organized a marathon. In one of their efforts, the team built a small shop for a widow supporting seven children, helping her achieve financial independence.

The team's work extended beyond material aid. They painted classrooms, assessed the needs of schools and shelters, and made a special visit to a



girls' shelter for victims of harassment, offering emotional support. A full-day medical camp was organized, where the volunteers — many of whom work in the medical field — examined, treated and provided medicine to villagers. Additionally, donations collected from generous individuals helped fund the purchase of sewing machines for destitute women, enabling them to earn a living through sewing.

While the trip focused on humanitarian efforts, the team also explored Kenya's cultural landmarks and ancient sites, and participated in local artistic



events, balancing their work with moments of leisure, including safaris and visits to waterfalls and the sea. The success of this mission was made possi-

ble through the generosity of individual donors and sponsors, whose contributions allowed the team to make an impact on the communities they served.

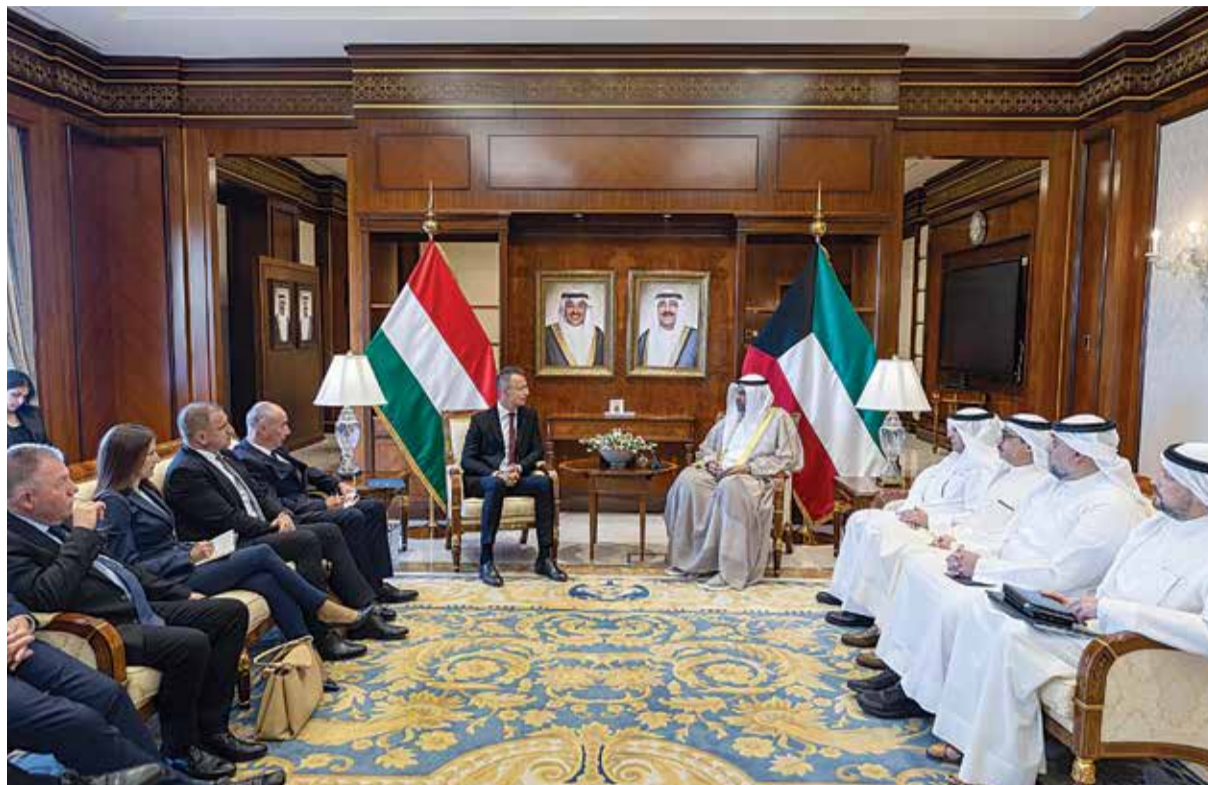
Local

# Kuwait, Hungary ink cybersecurity deal

The two countries sign several accords, including for a 4-year cultural cooperation program



KUWAIT: Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya (right) and his visiting Hungarian counterpart, who is also the Minister of Commercial Affairs, Peter Szijarto are seen in conversation flanked by officials.



Hungarian and Kuwaiti officials sit for discussions at the headquarters of Kuwait's foreign ministry. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait and Hungary on Thursday signed a number of accords for cooperation in various fields namely cybersecurity. The agreements were inked during a meeting that grouped the Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya and his visiting Hungarian counterpart, who is also the Minister of Commercial Affairs, Peter Szijarto, at the ministry headquarters.

The two sides discussed the solid relations bonding the two friendly countries and means of promoting the ties in various sectors. Moreover, the two sides talked about current regional and international developments. Following the meeting, the Kuwaiti and Hungarian sides inked a number of accords and memos, "depicting the resolve of the two friendly countries to enhance the mutual cooperation in diverse vital fields," a statement said.

One of the inked memoranda of understanding deals with cybersecurity cooperation and

an executive program for cultural cooperation for the period (2024-2027). Another was signed between Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute and the Hungarian Diplomatic Academy. On Wednesday, Minister Al-Yahya received Szijarto and his accompanying delegation upon their arrival at the airport, starting an official visit which ended Thursday.

### Rekindling ties

The Hungarian-Kuwaiti relationship and diplomatic connections date back to 1964, with the two countries celebrating 60 years of relations this coming December. Hungarian Ambassador to Kuwait Andras Szabo told Kuwait Times after his appointment late last year that his country was committed to strengthening diplomatic ties with Kuwait, which was the first in the region to establish diplomatic relations with Hungary. The Hungarian ambassador, reflecting on

the historical trajectory of bilateral relations, highlighted the zenith during the '80s and '90s when around 10,000 Hungarian citizens thrived in various sectors in Kuwait, notably in medical and sports domains.

However, with Hungary's shifting focus to Europe, particularly after joining the European Union in 2004, ties experienced a decline. He expressed a commitment to rekindling these relations and his dedication to advancing economic cooperation between the two countries.

The trade volume between the two countries stands at \$30 million, Szabo said at the time. According to the Hungarian Ambassador, Foreign Minister Szijarto was due to visit Kuwait in March 2024 to sign the cybersecurity deal. It's not clear why the visit was delayed by six months. The Hungarian-Kuwaiti Joint Economic Committee, which meets every two years, is set to meet in 2025 in Hungary, he said.



Minister Al-Yahya and Minister Szijarto shake hands after signing several memoranda of understanding Thursday.

## PAAET, Scientific Center ink deal to provide jobs for grads

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) signed on Thursday a memorandum of understanding with the Scientific Center to enhance cooperation between the two sides in the scientific and knowledge fields.

The Director General of the Authority Dr Hassan Al-Fajam, said in a press statement after the signing that the main purpose of this cooperation is to achieve common goals and provide job opportunities for graduates, in addition to activating participation in scientific and environmental events.

Director General Al-Fajam explained that this comes in line with the goals and objectives of the authority's strategy and the belief of its management in the importance of activating partnerships and strengthening relations with all parties related to the educational system to build an ideal educational environment to achieve the goals of improving the quality of education and training. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Officials sign a memorandum of understanding between the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) and the Scientific Center. — KUNA

## Winter vaccine drive officially begins in Kuwait

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health declared on Thursday that vaccines against winter illnesses are available at 43 medical centers and 14 hospitals across the country. The ministry announced last Sunday the seasonal vaccination campaign this year against influenza and lung infections. Health Minister Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi received his vaccine this week and called on people in Kuwait to do the same to get the necessary protection against infectious diseases that spread mostly in the winter season.

The vaccines offered include those against the flu and bacterial pneumonia, the minister had said in a statement to KUNA. Dr Al-Awadhi urged people to

get their vaccines to protect those most vulnerable in society. Groups most at risk include the elderly over the age of 65, children as young as five years old, and people who suffer from chronic diseases such as heart and lung diseases and diabetes. This is in addition to the individuals with immunodeficiency or people taking immunosuppressive medications. Pregnant women and health sector workers who are in direct contact with patients are also at risk. Flu causes the death of about half a million people annually worldwide. Pneumococcal bacteria causes several diseases, including pneumonia, bacterial meningitis, bacterial blood poisoning, and even otitis media. About 40 people die due to Pneumococcal bacteria annually in Kuwait alone, Abdullah Al-Sanad, the Ministry of Health's official spokesman told media this week. Seasonal winter microbes are active in the country from mid-September to May and are at their peak from October to March.

### Where to get your vaccine

In Al-Assima health region, the vaccinations are

provided at 14 centers including the preventive medical ward at Al-Amiri Hospital. Other centers that have the service in Al-Assima are Hamad Al-Sagr in Adailiya, Abdullah Abdul-Mughni in Al-Faiha, Al-Ahqaqi in Al-Daiya, Jaber Al-Ahmad Block 3, Al-Rawda, Sheikhan Al-Farsi and Shareefah Al-Awadhi in Surra, Munira Al-Ayyar in Kaifan, Doha Center, North Sulaibikhat and Jaber Al-Ahmad.

In Hawally, five centers offer the vaccines, including Mubarak Hospital, in addition to the Salwa specialized health center, the MoH west Salmiya, Rumaithiya, Nasser Saud Al-Sabah and the MoH west Hawally clinics. There are nine centers vaccinating people in Al-Farwaniya, including Manahi Al-Osaimi Health Center, North Ardiya Health Center and the MoH South Jleeb Clinic. Seven centers are offering vaccines in Al-Ahmad, including the Fahabel Specialist Center and the Egaila clinic. Five clinics offer it in Jahra, including the Sulaibiya, Naeem and Al-Oyoon clinics and three in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, including Al-Adan Hospital. Immunization is also provided at several hospitals including Al-Sabah and Ibn Sina. — KUNA



LONDON: Kuwaiti band "Seen" performs different types of Kuwaiti music, using various instruments and clapping techniques at the Theater Royal Drury Lane as part of the Kuwait Cultural Week celebrating the 125th anniversary of Kuwait-UK relations. — KUNA photos

## Musical evening celebrates Kuwaiti, UK intertwined history

LONDON: Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah underlined Wednesday the significant role of cultural activities in strengthening ties with the United Kingdom. Speaking to KUNA after attending, on behalf of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the "Rhythms of Kuwait" concert at the Theater Royal Drury Lane in London, Sheikh Jarrah highlighted the rich cultural heritage of both countries and lauded the successful organization of the concert. The concert is held as part of the Kuwait Cultural Week currently organized in the United Kingdom and is sponsored by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled. It was also attended by several senior UK dignitaries and officials as well as foreign diplomats in the British capital London.

At the musical evening, Kuwaiti band "Seen" performed different types of Kuwaiti music, using various instruments and clapping techniques. The band was established in 2022 with the aim of creating valuable cultural and high-level entertainment content. Kuwaiti Maestro Khaled Nouri prepared



an innovative musical piece especially for this occasion called Tashabok, which reflects the strong historical relationship between Kuwait and the United Kingdom by exploring various types of music representing both nations.

Tashabok, which means intertwining, features a range of musical instruments unique to Kuwait and the United Kingdom, including traditional Kuwaiti instruments such as the "Jarbah," the bagpipe, the "rababah," which is the spiked fiddle, the "safqa," which is clapping, and western wind instruments. The ceremony was attended by the Dean of the Arab Diplomatic Corps, Bahrain's Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khalifa, several senior officials, and a huge crowd of the public.



Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (right) is seen at the event.

Sheikh Jarrah commended the deeply-rooted relations between the State of Kuwait and the United Kingdom. He pointed out that the Kuwaiti-UK relations date back to 1899 when Sheikh Mubarak Al-Kabeer signed the Anglo-Kuwaiti agreement. To celebrate the 125th anniversary of their relations, the two governments declared 2024 the year of Kuwaiti-British partnership, as per an agreement signed on sidelines of an official visit by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, then Crown Prince, to the UK on August 29, 2023. — KUNA



## Kuwait, GCC body discuss unified Gulf statistical system

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) discussed Thursday with a high-level delegation from the GCC Statistical Center (GCC-Stat) enhancing cooperation between the two entities and the development of statistical work in the Gulf countries. The visit comes as the two sides hope to join efforts and unify visions on the development of the Gulf statistical system in a way that contributes to supporting the decision-making process and raising the efficiency of statistical agencies in the GCC countries.

In statements to KUNA, the two sides stressed the importance of unifying statistical standards among the GCC countries to ensure accurate and reliable data comparison and analysis and facilitate evidence-based decision-making. The two sides also agreed on the importance of exchanging experiences and knowledge between the Gulf statistical agencies and benefiting from the best international practices in the field of data collection and analysis.

Acting Director General of the Central Statistical Bureau, Wafa Al-Yahya, stressed the bureau's keenness to strengthen cooperation and strategic partnership with GCC-Stat, noting that this cooperation contributes to upgrading and raising the efficiency of statistical work in the State of Kuwait and the Arab Gulf region.

Director General of GCC-Stat Intisar bint Abdullah Al-Wahaibia, praised the efforts made by CSB in developing statistical work, stressing the commitment of GCC-Stat to provide the bureau with any necessary support. The two sides discussed a wide range of issues of common interest, including ways to develop the statistical infrastructure in the GCC countries, including data collection, analysis and dissemination systems, with the aim of providing high-quality statistical data in a timely manner.

GCC-Stat and CSB representatives stressed the importance of investing in capacity building and developing statistical human cadres through continuous training and qualification and the provision of specialized expertise. The two sides also discussed the efforts of CSB in working to implement the ministerial recommendations for providing data on the GCC common market project. Such data published by other GCC countries include indicators of the performance of the common Gulf market, such as statistics on the extent to which citizens of the GCC countries benefit from the decisions related to Gulf economic citizenship and the common market. — KUNA



DOHA: GCC officials are seen during the 36th meeting of the Gulf Technical Committee for Food and Agricultural Standards. — KUNA

# Gulf region's reliance on imports threatens food security: Official

## GCC discuss strategies to support agriculture, achieve self-sufficiency

**DOHA:** Qatari Minister of Municipality Abdullah Al-Attiya said Thursday that food security is one of the key challenges to the Gulf countries amid climate change, population growth pressure, and global market volatility. The Qatari minister made the remarks while addressing the 36th meeting of the Gulf Technical Committee for Food and Agricultural Standards, held in the Qatari capital of Doha, with the State of Kuwait participating.

Kuwait's Acting Director of the Public Authority of Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Asmaa Al-Otaibi affirmed Kuwait's support for all efforts in the GCC tackling issues in the field of food security, stressing that it is considered as part of the long-standing cooperation between the states.

Minister Al-Attiya underlined that it is essential to adopt holistic national and regional strategies to shore up self-sufficiency and secure food sustainability amid heavy reliance upon imports to answer



Asmaa Al-Otaibi

food needs, a thing that subjects the Gulf countries to foreign volatility. He also called for developing policies that buttress sustainable agriculture, stimulate investments in local farming, and introduce modern

agricultural technology that could result in boosting production and cutting consumption. Otaibi said the meeting discussed a unified system aimed at protecting aquatic creatures and setting a framework for utilization of this resource in GCC countries, in addition to the guide for collecting and transporting animal samples between GCC countries.

Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi said the member countries attach paramount significance to food security which has become the main concern of many countries in the region and worldwide. Speaking at the pan-Gulf gathering, he said the GCC Secretariat General, through all its strategic partnerships with the region's countries and blocs, makes this significant issue one of its top priorities. The GCC chief touted blueprints, distinguished programs, and earnest steps being taken by all the GCC countries in order to ensure food security. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Officials cut a ceremonial ribbon marking the start of LuLu Hypermarket's 'Let's Eatalian 2024' promotion.

## LuLu Hypermarket launches 'Let's Eatalian 2024'

**KUWAIT:** LuLu Hypermarket has launched the 'Let's Eatalian 2024' promotion, celebrating Italian 'bella vita' or the 'beautiful life', with special offers and discounts on all Italian branded products and authentic Italian foods. The promotion, which takes shoppers on a gastronomic journey to the heart of Italy, runs from 4-10 September at all outlets of the hypermarket.

Inauguration of the Italian festival was held at the LuLu Hypermarket Qurain outlet, with the esteemed presence of the Italian Ambassador Lorenzo Morini. Displays of iconic Italian monuments created a captivating ambiance that transported shoppers to

the picturesque streets of Italy, while the sounds of Italian music filled the air, adding to the festive atmosphere. The promotion offers a unique opportunity for food enthusiasts to discover the sterling flavors of Italian cuisine. From classic pizzas and pastas to regional specialties, the Italian food street stalls offer a wide selection of original dishes.

LuLu Hypermarket has also curated a special selection of Italian branded food products, offering shoppers the opportunity to taste Italy's delicacies at irresistible prices. Also on offer were gourmet ingredients and household essentials at incredible prices, allowing shoppers a wide selection of products that cater to their preference.

The week-long journey through Italy's piquant culinary world not only tickled the taste buds of shoppers but also deepened their appreciation for Italian cuisine. With each dish savored and new products discovered, shoppers have truly experienced a slice of Italy, right in Kuwait. Until next time, 'ciao' to a gastronomic voyage that has brought the essence of Italy closer to home.



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Thousands of Rohingya flee to Bangladesh as Myanmar violence rages

## Macron names former Brexit negotiator Barnier as PM

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JENIN: Mourners carry the body of one of the five men killed in the Tubas area south of Jenin in a Zionist strike. (Right) Members of the family of Ahmed Abu Dawas mourn during his funeral. — AFP photos

# Multi-day raids leave West Bank Palestinians trapped 'in prison'

## Palestinian medics say 5 killed as Zionists raid West Bank's Tubas

JENIN: Palestinian man Adnan Nagnaghia has been holed up at home for eight days as Zionist entity forces were carrying out raids, battling militants and making arrests in the occupied West Bank. "It's like a prison," said the 56-year-old father of five, a resident of the Jenin refugee camp in the northern West Bank, an area targeted in a series of major Zionist entity operations since Aug 28.

Palestinian medics said on Thursday an air strike targeting a car in the occupied West Bank killed five people on Thursday. "Five killed and (one) seriously wounded in a strike (on) a car in Tubas," the Palestinian Red Crescent Society said in a statement, referring to an area that has been a focus of Zionist entity operations for more than a week.

Zionist entity has occupied the West Bank since 1967, and its forces regularly make incursions into Palestinian communities, but the current raids as well as comments by Zionist entity official mark an escalation, residents say.

The ongoing raids in the northern West Bank have killed 36 Palestinians since last week, according to

the Palestinian health ministry. Zionist entity forces have also arrested dozens of Palestinians. In the latest violence, the health ministry said on Thursday five people were killed in a strike on a car in the Tubas area south of Jenin, with the military saying it had targeted "armed terrorists".

The presence of Zionist entity troops, in their longest operation in decades against West Bank militants, has brought life in Jenin to a standstill, said Nagnaghia. "They force you to stay inside the house instead of going out and living a normal life".

Venturing out has become so perilous that Nagnaghia was speaking to an AFP correspondent by phone even though they were both in the Jenin camp, just 600 meters (yards) apart. In the camp's narrow alleys, armored vehicles and bulldozers have left behind a trail of destruction amid the battles.

Most residents "already left", seeking safety elsewhere, said Nagnaghia. Jenin city and the adjacent refugee camp have long been a bastion of Palestinian armed groups fighting against Zi-

onist entity. While Hamas does not have a strong presence in the West Bank, opinion polls suggest its popularity has grown among Palestinians during the Gaza war. Other militant groups like Islamic Jihad are particularly active in the northern West Bank.

Years of repeated raids have made Jenin camp residents "experts" at waiting them out, said Nagnaghia who had stocked up food for days. But now he fears it may not last long enough.

"We plan for two-three days, not one or two weeks," he said. On Monday Zionist troops searched the family home where about 20 of Nagnaghia's relatives including children were staying.

A large number of Zionist entity troops stormed the Al-Faraa refugee camp in Tubas governorate, where explosions were heard, eyewitnesses told AFP. "One martyr was shot by the occupation (Zionist entity) forces in Al-Faraa camp," the Palestinian health ministry said. Driver Iyad Dagharmeh, 34, said there was "intense Zionist entity warplane activity over Tubas city for the first time". — AFP

## 14-year-old boy kills four in US school shooting

WINDER, US: A 14-year-old boy killed four people, including two students, and wounded nine more when he opened fire at a high school in the US state of Georgia on Wednesday, law enforcement said. The suspected shooter — also a student at the school — had been brought to the FBI's attention more than a year ago for threats to commit a school shooting, the agency said.

He was taken into custody after Wednesday's shooting and will be tried as an adult on murder charges, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation said. Two teachers were also among the dead.

After the latest chapter in America's gun violence crisis — nearly 400 mass shootings this year alone, by one tally — people gathered at a sports field outside Apalachee High School, some forming a circle with their arms linked. "Our school resource officer engaged him," county sheriff Jud Smith told reporters, referring to law enforcement officers employed to work at US schools.

"The shooter quickly realized that if he did not give up that it would end with an OIS — an officer-involved shooting. He gave up, got on the ground,

and the deputy took him into custody."

Smith said police did not yet know if the shooter singled out specific people as targets, adding later that the nine wounded were expected to recover. The two students killed were also 14 years old, authorities said.

After the suspected shooter was brought to the attention of the FBI, the county sheriff's office interviewed his father and the then 13-year-old suspect, who denied the threats, before flagging the child to school officials for monitoring. Georgia Bureau of Investigation director Chris Hoesey said the shooter used an "AR-platform style weapon" and that authorities were investigating how he brought the gun into the school.

Some in the school initially thought it was just another shooter drill, one student told AFP, referring to the exercises common in US schools. "Everyone just thought it was a fake drill until my teacher said we didn't get an email," Alexandra Romeo said.

"She got us all in a little corner and everyone was just hugging each other, I had some of my friends crying. Until two police officers came in with their guns and told us that this is not a drill and that we're still not safe." Another student, 17-year-old Stephanie Folgar, described hearing "loud bangs" and panicking students hiding in the bathrooms and closet.

"It's scary knowing that that could've been you," she said. One student told local media that he saw blood on the floor and a body as he was led out of the building by authorities. The shooting occurred

widely opposed by Republicans — as she addressed a rally in New Hampshire.

Trump, himself the target of an assassination attempt by a gunman in July, said the victims "were taken from us far too soon by a sick and deranged monster." Security has been beefed up on the trail. Harris spoke Wednesday at a brewery south of Portsmouth on a stage protected on three sides by bullet-proof glass, an apparent first for her, while Trump too used such reinforced protection during a recent outdoor event.

Harris, who has revived Democratic hopes with just 61 days until the Nov 5 vote, unveiled proposed tax breaks for small businesses as she fleshed out her economic policy. In a rare break with Biden, she proposed a 28 percent tax rate on capital gains, lower than the 39.6 percent planned by the president, in her latest attempt to appeal to centrist voters.

"We know when the government encourages investment, it leads to broad-based economic growth, and it creates jobs, which makes our economy stronger," Harris said. Team Trump meanwhile blasted the plans, saying in a statement that Harris's various pro-



WINDER, US: A mother and her children bow their heads in prayer at a vigil for the victims of the Apalachee High School shooting at Jug Tavern Park in Winder, Georgia, on Sept 4, 2024. — AFP

near the town of Winder, about 45 miles (70 kilometers) northeast of Atlanta, the state capital. Earlier, school authorities were reported to have sent a message to parents saying they were enforcing a "hard lockdown after reports of gunfire."

After the all-clear was given, parents were invited to the school to be reunited with their children, with long lines of vehicles visible outside. School shootings have become a sadly regular occurrence in the United States, where about a third of adults own a firearm and regulations on purchasing even powerful military-style rifles are lax. — AFP

posals would lead to tax hikes "on almost 26 million small businesspeople in America."

Trump himself participated in a pre-recorded town hall event that airs at 9 pm (0100 GMT Thursday) on conservative-leaning Fox News in Pennsylvania. The appearance came after the Republican's notable campaign trail absence over the US Labor Day weekend, traditionally the start of the final sprint.

Then on Tuesday, millions of American voters will finally see Harris and Trump do battle in-person during their debate on primetime television. "She's had her honeymoon period. People are learning who she is," Trump told a local New Hampshire radio station Wednesday. "We can't go another four years with a dumb president."

Harris, 59, has upended the race since Biden dramatically quit as the Democratic candidate after the 81-year-old's disastrous performance in a debate against Trump exacerbated fears about his age and mental acuity. America's first female, Black and South Asian vice president has swiftly erased Trump's poll lead and forced the ex-president and convicted felon to rethink his campaign. — AFP

## Putin backs Harris for US president, with wry smile

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin said Thursday he supported Kamala Harris in November's US presidential election, an apparent wry remark a day after the United States issued indictments accusing Moscow of vote interference. Putin often comments on political and social issues in the United States, often in a mocking way.

He said last year that the US political system was "rotten" and that Washington could not lecture other countries about democracy. US officials have repeatedly warned of efforts by foreign powers to meddle in the upcoming US election, accusing Moscow of seeking to influence US ballots dating back to the 2016 contest between Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton.

"Firstly, (US President Joe) Biden recommended all his supporters support Mrs Harris," Putin said during a question and answer session at Russia's Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok.

Biden withdrew from the race in July amid concerns about his age and health, endorsing Vice President Harris to top the Democratic Party's ticket. "Here, we are going to do that too, we're going to support her," Putin told the audience, with a wry smile. "She laughs so contagiously that it shows that everything is fine with her," the Russian leader said. — AFP

## Harris, Trump hit campaign trail as debate looms

PORTSMOUTH, US: Kamala Harris and Donald Trump returned to the US campaign trail Wednesday, with new polls showing the White House race remains on a knife-edge less than a week before their crucial first debate. As they buckled down for the final two-month sprint to Election Day, the latest spasm of gun violence rippled through the United States, with four people killed by a 14-year-old student at a high school in the southern state of Georgia.

Vice President Harris, condemning the "senseless tragedy" of the shooting, urged a halt to the "epidemic of gun violence" plaguing the United States. She also reiterated her call for a ban on assault weapons — a position

وزارة التجارة والصناعة

RECALL INFORMATION

Recall No 69RR

Audi A3 2010- 2011

RECALL REASON

REMEDY

CONTACT

This recall is run pursuant to articles 42,43,44,45,46,47,48 of no. 27/2015 Issuing the executive by laws of law no. 39/2014 on Consumer protection.

## International

# France's Macron names former Brexit negotiator Barnier as PM

## Two months of political deadlock after snap polls ends

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday named the European Union's former Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier as new prime minister, following almost two months of political deadlock after snap polls, the presidency said. Barnier, 73, the oldest premier in the history of modern France, has been tasked with forming "a unifying government in the service of the country", it said.

Since Wednesday, politicians and media in France had raised expectations that a new head of government would finally be announced to succeed Gabriel Attal, after the elections in July resulted in a hung parliament. A left-wing coalition emerged as France's biggest political force but with not enough seats for an overall majority. Macron's centrist faction and the far right make up the two other major groups in the National Assembly.

Conservative ex-minister Xavier Bertrand and former Socialist prime minister Bernard Cazeneuve had been seen as the initial favorites. But both fig-

ures fell by the wayside with the mathematics of France's new parliament stacked against them. In France, the president names the prime minister, who can then be censured by parliament.

Both Bertrand and Cazeneuve risked facing a no-confidence motion that could garner support from both the left bloc and the far right. Barnier, a right-winger and the European Union's former negotiator on Brexit, was seen emerging from talks at the Elysee with Macron to make a return to frontline politics as premier. He has been all but invisible in French political life since failing to win his Republicans (LR) party's nomination to challenge Macron for the presidency in 2022.



Michel Barnier

The veteran former foreign minister and EU commissioner is "Macron-compatible" and would not be immediately voted out by parliament, an advisor to the president told AFP, asking not to be named.

A minister in the outgoing government, who also asked not to be named, said he was "very popular with right-wing members of parliament without being an irritant on the left". Macron appears to be counting on the far-right National Rally (RN) of three-time presidential candidate Marine Le Pen not to block the appointment of Barnier. The party's deputy leader Sebastien Chenu, speaking to BFM TV, appeared to indicate the RN would not automatically back a vote of no confidence against Barnier, as it would for Bertrand and Cazeneuve.

RN party leader Jordan Bardella said Barnier would be judged "on evidence" when he addresses parliament. Greens leader Marine Tondelier countered: "We know in the end who decides. Her name is Marine Le Pen. She is the one to whom Macron

has decided to submit."

Macron's decision comes under the gun of a deadline to submit a draft 2025 budget for France's strained government finances before Oct 1. It also marks his attempt to acknowledge rejection of his seven-year rule without giving up on hard-fought reforms, chief among them last year's widely resented increase to the official retirement age to 64 from 62.

After the July election deprived Macron of his relative majority in parliament, the centrist president has drawn out the appointment of a new prime minister for a period unprecedented since World War II, through the July-August Olympic Games and beyond. Throughout the chaos, Attal, who made history this year as France's youngest and first openly gay head of government, has stayed in office as a caretaker. Speaking to Le Figaro daily and using rugby parlance, he expressed hope his successor could "convert the try" of the policies whose implementation he could not complete. — AFP

## Dutch couple on trial for 'caging', 'abusing' foster daughter, 10

THE HAGUE: A couple went on trial on Thursday accused of locking their 10-year-old foster daughter in an electrified cage and throwing her downstairs, in a harrowing case that has shocked the Netherlands. The girl was taken to hospital in May, unconscious, in a filthy state, with several broken bones and badly malnourished, reportedly weighing just 22 kilograms (50 pounds).

She emerged from her coma in July but is unable to sit up independently or communicate, prosecutors said as the trial opened in Rotterdam. They said she would probably need intensive medical care for the rest of her life.

The couple, named only as Daisy and John, both 37, stand charged of attempted manslaughter for throwing or pushing her down the stairs, among other charges. They held their foster daughter captive in the house and abused her for months, prosecutors alleged. "They locked her in her room, handcuffed her arms and legs and covered her mouth with tape. They placed her in a homemade cage with electrical wires attached to it," the public prosecutor told the court.

Neither suspect was present in court to hear the accusations. A lawyer for the couple said they denied pushing her down the stairs, arguing that she jumped down the stairs herself.

The case of the "Foster Girl From Vlaardingen", the harbor town just outside Rotterdam where she lived, has been headline news in the Netherlands, with question over how authorities could have missed the alleged abuse. Dutch media said the girl had reported the alleged abuse several times. — AFP

## Murdered Kolkata doctor's father says cremation was rushed

KOLKATA: The father of the doctor who was raped and murdered in India's Kolkata city said late Wednesday night that police rushed the family into cremating her even though they wanted to keep her body for some time. Officers from Kolkata police did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment. The Aug 9 attack at the R G Kar Medical College and Hospital had triggered nationwide protests as people demanded justice for the trainee doctor, who was killed in a classroom where she was resting during a grueling 36-hour shift. A police volunteer has been arrested for the crime and is in judicial custody.

Protesters are also demanding better security at government hospitals that they say lack basic amenities like resting rooms for doctors, closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, and security personnel. "We wanted to keep the body of our daughter but extraordinary pressure was mounted on us and the body was cremated," the woman's father said as he joined doctors protesting at the college on Wednesday night.

He also alleged that a senior police officer had taken him aside and offered him money when his daughter's body was brought home after an autopsy and before cremation.

"I gave him a piece of my mind and refused to take any money," he said, without specifying why the money was offered. The officer accused of making the offer did not respond to calls and messages seeking comment. The victim cannot be named under local laws.



KOLKATA: Health professionals along with nursing students hold lit candles during a demonstration to condemn the rape and murder of a doctor, at the R G Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on Sept 4, 2024. - AFP

West Bengal Women and Child Development Minister Shashi Panja said on Thursday that the government would not conduct a "postmortem" of the parents' comments. "We respect what the family is saying, they have lost their daughter," she said at a media briefing where she also urged the federal police, who took over the probe last month, to conclude the investigation quickly and "reveal the truth".

Reuters reported earlier this week that the West Bengal government had, in 2019, promised to take

measures to ensure better security at hospitals in the state, but failed to implement these on the ground. The federal police has also arrested the former principal of R G Kar Medical College, his close aide, and two vendors of hospital supplies for alleged graft. The incident has once again put the spotlight on the lack of safety for women in India, who activists say continue to suffer sexual violence despite tougher laws being introduced after the 2012 gang-rape and murder of a woman in a moving bus in Delhi. — Reuters

## Uncovering of mass rape trauma saved my life: French woman

AVIGNON, France: A French woman whose husband is accused of enlisting dozens of strangers to rape her while she was drugged told his trial on Thursday that police had saved her by uncovering the crimes.

"The police saved my life by investigating Mister P's computer", Gisele P told the court in the southern city of Avignon, referring to her husband — one of 51 of her alleged abusers on trial. Gisele P, now 71, had remained stoic and silent through the three first days of the high-profile case, communicating only through her lawyers.

But she revealed her emotion on the stand on Thursday when she recounted the moment in November 2020 when investigators first showed her the images of a decade of sexual abuse orchestrated and filmed by her husband Dominique P. "My world is falling apart. For me, everything is falling apart. Everything I have built up over 50 years," Gisele P said. "Frankly, these are scenes of horror



AVIGNON, France: Gisele P (center) listens to her lawyer Stephane Babonneau (second right) addressing media as she leaves the courthouse on Sept 5. — AFP

for me," she said of the pictures, while her husband listened with his head bowed.

"I'm lying motionless on the bed, being raped," added the woman of the "barbaric" footage.

"They treat me like a rag doll," she told a panel of five judges, adding that she had only plucked up the courage to watch the footage in May 2024. "Don't talk to me about sex scenes. These are rape scenes," she said, stressing that she had never practiced swinging or any other form of libertine sex.

Lawyers for some of the defendants questioned on Wednesday whether the couple had had a libertine relationship, or whether it was credible that Gisele P had noticed nothing for the entire decade of the abuse. The line of questioning appeared to upset the plaintiff, although she stayed put when her three children briefly left the courtroom in disgust.

"Of course she was offended," said her lawyer, Antoine Camus. "She wanted to respond. We felt her bobbing up and down behind us, saying, 'I want to answer. I just have to answer' and we told her, 'Tomorrow!'" Gisele P has insisted that the trial take place in public so the full facts of the case can emerge. Nevertheless, there will be "extremely difficult moments" for her as she testifies, said Stephane Babonneau, her other lawyer.

Gisele P's husband, Dominique, is accused of abusing his wife between 2011 and 2020, drugging her with sleeping pills and then recruiting dozens of strangers to rape her, lead investigator Jeremie Bosse Platiere told the court on Wednesday. Dominique P was exposed by chance when he was caught filming up women's skirts in a local supermarket. On Tuesday, he answered "yes" when asked if he was guilty of the accusations against him. The 71-year-old father of three documented his actions with meticulous precision on a hard drive with a folder labeled "abuse".

That enabled French police to track down more than 50 men suspected of raping Gisele P, while she was drugged. A third of them were identified using facial recognition software, Bosse Platiere said.

The senior police chief for the Hautes-Alpes region said he had hand-picked investigators "who had the stomach" to face videos and images of abuse. Police drew up a list of 72 individuals suspected of abusing Gisele P. The investigators counted around 200 instances of rape, most of them by Dominique P., and over 90 by strangers enlisted through an adult website.

The assaults took place between July 2011 and October 2020, mainly in the couple's home in Mazan, a village of 6,000 people in the southern region of Provence. Most of the suspects face up to 20 years in jail for aggravated rape if convicted. Eighteen of the 51 accused are in custody, including Dominique P.

Thirty-two other defendants are attending the trial as free men. The last suspect, still at large, will be tried in absentia. The trial is expected to last four months until December 20 - "a totally awful ordeal" for Gisele P, Camus said. "For the first time, she will have to live through the rapes to which she was subjected for 10 years", of which she has "no memory", he said. — AFP

## UAE completes Arab world's first...

Continued from Page 1

world's top oil exporter, has also said it plans to build nuclear reactors. Emirati President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan hailed Barakah's completion as a "significant step on the journey towards net zero". "We will continue to prioritize energy security and sustainability for the benefit of our nation and our people today and tomorrow," he said in a post on social media platform X.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the plant "will have to be disassembled at the end of its useful life, in around 60-80 years". The UAE, which is made up of seven emirates, including the capital Abu Dhabi and economic hub Dubai, is one of the largest oil producers in the OPEC cartel. The country was largely built on oil but is spending billions to develop enough renewable energy to cover half of its needs by 2050.

Last year, it hosted the COP28 UN climate talks which resulted in an agreement to "transition away" from fossil fuels. The UAE lies across the Gulf from Iran which has a Russian-built nuclear power plant outside the coastal city of Bushehr, as well as a controversial uranium enrichment program. The UAE has repeatedly said its nuclear ambitions are for "peaceful purposes" and ruled out developing any enrichment program or nuclear reprocessing technologies. — AFP

## Pope, Indonesian imam warn against...

Continued from Page 1

longest of his papacy, that will take him to Papua New Guinea on Friday and then to East Timor and Singapore. He appeared to be in good spirits despite fears over his health as he addressed excited Catholics, who make up about three percent of the population of Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority country. Anastasia Ida Ediaty, a 59-year-old notary who went to the stadium with 200 other members of her parish, said she was filled with joy that she was lucky enough to be invited.

With President Joko Widodo in attendance, the pope entered Indonesia's national football stadium in a tactical vehicle built by an Indonesian state-run defense company. The crowd had arrived on packed buses hours before, many of them wearing t-shirts showing the pope and taking group photos with the huge stadium in the background.

Pope Francis stood up to speak and start the mass despite humid conditions. He had not traveled abroad since visiting Marseille in France in September last year and, as standard procedure, has been accompanied by his personal doctor and two nurses. Unity between faiths has been the central theme of his trip and the declaration signed at the Istiqlal Mosque, Southeast Asia's largest, called for "religious harmony for the sake of humanity".

"The global phenomenon of dehumanization is marked especially by widespread violence and conflict. It is particularly worrying that religion is often instrumentalized in this regard," it read. "The role of religion should include promoting and safeguarding the dignity of every human life." Francis underlined his message of unity in a speech before leaders of Indonesia's six recognized religions — Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism. "We are all brothers, all pilgrims, all on our way to God, beyond what differentiates us," he said.

The pope was welcomed to the mosque by a percussion band often used in Islamic ceremonies. Once seated, he and Nasaruddin listened to a passage from the Holy Quran recited by a young blind girl and a passage from the Bible. Francis also visited a "tunnel of friendship" that links the mosque to Jakarta's cathedral across the street, signing a section of the tunnel. The declaration signed with Nasaruddin also pinpointed the environmental crisis as a threat to human civilization and called for "decisive action" to counter global warming. "The human exploitation of creation, our common home, has contributed to climate change," it read.

It said climate change had led "to various destructive consequences such as natural disasters, global warming and unpredictable weather patterns". Francis has made several visits to Muslim-majority countries. He signed a document on human brotherhood with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sunni Islam's prestigious seat of learning, on a 2019 visit to the United Arab Emirates. The trip to Indonesia is the third by a pope and the first since John Paul II in 1989. — AFP

## Amnesty urges war crimes probe ...

Continued from Page 1

An Amnesty investigation, which examined satellite imagery and videos posted by Zionist soldiers between October and May, showed "newly cleared land along Gaza's eastern boundary, ranging from approximately 1 to 1.8 km wide", the group said.

The expanded buffer zone covers around 58 sq km, or about 16 percent of the Gaza Strip, it said. More than 90 percent of buildings within that zone appeared to have been destroyed or severely damaged, it said. More than half of the agricultural land in the area showed "a decline in health and intensity of crops due to the ongoing conflict", it added.

"Our analysis reveals a pattern along the eastern perimeter of Gaza that is consistent with the systematic destruction of the entire area," said Amnesty's Erika Guevara-Rosas. "The homes were not destroyed as the result of intense fighting. Rather, the (Zionist) military deliberately razed the land after they had taken control of the area," she added. "(Zionist) measures to protect (Zionists) from attacks from Gaza must be carried out in conformity with its obligations under international law."

Amnesty investigator Barbara Marcolini said the level of destruction was unprecedented. — AFP

## International

# Thousands of Rohingya Muslims flee to Bangladesh as Myanmar violence rages

## Myanmar junta chief warns of 'counterattacks' in opponent-held areas

**DHAKA:** Around 8,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled to Bangladesh in recent months, escaping escalating violence in Myanmar's western Rakhine state, according to Bangladeshi officials. The violence has intensified as fighting between Myanmar's ruling junta and the Arakan Army, a powerful ethnic militia drawn from the Buddhist majority, continues to worsen.

"We have information that around 8,000 Rohingya crossed into Bangladesh recently, mostly over the last two months," said Mohammad Shamsud Douza, a senior official in charge of refugees for the Bangladeshi government. "Bangladesh is already overburdened and unable to accommodate any more Rohingya," he told Reuters on Wednesday.

The Bangladesh government has not previously provided any estimate of how many Rohingya have crossed over in the last few months. The government will hold a "serious discussion at the cabinet" within the next two to three days to address the crisis, Bangladesh's de-facto foreign minister, Mohammad Touhid Hossain, told reporters late on Tuesday. While expressing sympathy for the Rohingya, Hossain said that the country no longer has the capacity to provide humanitarian shelter to additional refugees. "It is not possible to fully seal the border," he said, adding that efforts will be made to prevent further infiltration.

Tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh held rallies in camps on August 25, marking the seventh anniversary of the 2017 military crackdown that forced them to flee Myanmar, demanding an end to violence and safe return to their homeland. Over one million Rohingya currently live in overcrowded camps in southern Bangladesh, with little hope of returning to Myanmar, where they are largely denied citizenship and other basic rights. The recent surge in violence is the worst the Rohingya

have faced since the 2017 Myanmar military-led campaign, which the United Nations described as having genocidal intent. Rohingya who recently fled to Bangladesh have urged the government to provide them with shelter.

"How long can we stay with relatives in such a cramped space?" said a Rohingya refugee who fled to Bangladesh last month with his wife and parents. "We appeal to the government to provide us with shelter and ensure we receive food and other essential assistance."

Last month, Hossain told Reuters Bangladesh cannot accept more Rohingya refugees and called on India and other countries to take greater action. He also urged the international community to apply more pressure on the Arakan Army to cease attacks on the Rohingya in Rakhine state.

Meanwhile, Myanmar's embattled junta chief has warned civilians in territory recently captured by ethnic minority armed groups to prepare for military counterattacks, state media reported on Wednesday. The military has lost swaths of territory near the border with China in northern Shan state to an alliance of armed ethnic minority groups and "People's Defense Forces" battling to overturn its 2021 coup. The groups have seized a regional military command and taken control of lucrative border trade crossings, prompting rare public criticism by military supporters of the junta's top leadership.

Junta troops "will... launch counterattacks", junta chief Min Aung Hlaing said on Tuesday in the Shan state capital Taunggyi, according to the Global New Light of Myanmar. He accused the alliance of using "administrative buildings and innocent civilians as human shields", according to the newspaper. "Therefore, the people residing in towns and villages where the terrorists unlawfully occupied should be



**MEULABOH:** Newly arrived Rohingya refugees rest at the shelter initially allocated for them in Meulaboh, West Aceh, in this March 23, 2024 photo. — AFP

aware of security so as not to face exploitation."

The junta is battling widespread armed opposition and its soldiers are accused of bloody rampages and using air and artillery strikes to punish civilian communities. It announced this week that the three main ethnic minority armed groups battling the military in Shan state had been officially declared "terrorist" organizations.

The declaration will not affect the fighting against the Arakan Army (AA), Myanmar National Demo-

cratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), however those found supporting or contacting them can now face legal action. The alliance and PDF groups have battled closer to the second city of Mandalay, home to around 1.5 million people and the military's central command. Opponents of the military launched a rocket attack on Mandalay on Tuesday, damaging buildings and wounding one person, local media reported, in a rare attack on an urban area. — Agencies

## Rare twin elephants take first steps in Myanmar

**PHAYARGYI, Myanmar:** Baby elephant twins born last week on a timber camp in Myanmar are thriving after a wobbly first few days in the world, officials told AFP on Thursday. Pearl Sint was born a few minutes before her brother Kyaw Pearl last week at the 60-acre Wingabaw elephant camp in the Bago region operated by state-run Myanmar Timber Enterprise.

At about two feet and six inches tall, the pint-sized twins were around four inches shorter than the average calf, said Myo Min Aung, the camp's assistant manager. This meant they were not tall enough to reach their mother's teat and feed. "We helped them by putting small wooden blocks under their front legs and bringing their heads up to their mother's breast," he said.

On the third day, they were able to feed themselves and quickly showed their personalities. "The little male likes to wander around and play with

humans rather than stay with his mother," said Myo Min Aung. "He is not feeding as much as the female little one does."

Another official at the camp, who did not want to give his name, said he hoped the twins would not take after their father, a bull elephant named Aye Hlike. "He was badly behaved. He used to attack the other elephants and people," he said. Pearl Sandar, the twins' mother, "has a kind heart", the official said. "She doesn't attack others... we are training the twins to be well-behaved, not like their father."

The arrival of the twins takes the population of the elephant camp up to nine, the official said.

Previously around 3,000 elephants were used for labor at state timber enterprises in Myanmar, the majority dragging freshly cut trees through the dense jungle to transport hubs and mills. But now those at the Wingabaw camp, like many others, carry humans instead of logs and earn their keep as



**A mother elephant stands next to its baby elephant twins at Wingabaw Elephant Camp, Myanmar's Bago region, on Sept 5, 2024. — AFP**

a tourist attraction. Fewer than 50,000 Asian elephants remain in the wild, and fewer than 2,000 of them are found in Myanmar, according to 2018 figures from environmental group WWF. "This is

my first time personally experiencing an elephant twin birth," said Myo Min Aung. "I am happy to take care of the little twin elephants, but it is also a big responsibility." — AFP

## Indonesia to deport fugitive former Philippines mayor

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia will on Thursday deport a fugitive former Philippine mayor accused of human trafficking and links to Chinese organized crime, an Indonesian police official said. Alice Leal Guo, a former mayor of a town north of the capital Manila, has been on the run since she was linked to a Chinese-run online gambling centre where hundreds of people were forced to run scams or risk torture.

Philippine authorities seeking her extradition accused the former Bamban mayor of involvement in the illicit operation — and of being a Chinese national masquerading as a Filipina in order to run for office.

"She (Alice Guo) will be handed to the Philippines authorities and picked up directly by their interior minister and head of the police," Krishna Murti, head of the Indonesian national police's international relations division, told reporters. "She will be flown back to Manila tonight."

She was arrested in the Indonesian capital Jakarta on Tuesday, according to the Philippine Department of Justice. Guo is also wanted by the Philippine Senate for refusing to attend hearings on her alleged ties to scam farm operations in Bamban. She faces charges of graft, money laundering and human trafficking in relation to the scam farm raid in Bamban. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos thanked the Indonesian government for their assistance in the arrest. "Let this serve as a warning to those who attempt to evade justice: Such is an exercise in futility. The arm of the law is long and it will reach you," Marcos said on social media Wednesday. — AFP



**DHAKA:** Demonstrators wave Bangladesh's national flag during Martyr March, a rally organized by Students Against Discrimination to mark one month to the ousting of the country's former PM Sheikh Hasina, in Dhaka on Sept 5, 2024. — AFP

## Bangladesh ex-PM should 'keep quiet' until trial: Yunus

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh's ousted premier Sheikh Hasina should "keep quiet" while exiled in India until she is brought home for trial, interim leader Muhammad Yunus told Indian media on Thursday. Hasina, 76, fled to India by helicopter one month ago as protesters marched on her palace in a dramatic end to her iron-fisted rule of 15 years.

An interim government led by Nobel laureate Yunus has been under public pressure to demand her extradition and trial over the hundreds of demonstrators killed during the weeks of unrest that toppled ultimately her. "If India wants to keep her until the time Bangladesh wants her back, the condition would be that she has to keep quiet," Yunus, 84, told the Press Trust of India news agency. "Sitting in India, she is speaking and giving instructions. No one likes it. It's not good for us or for India."

Hasina has remained in India, her former government's biggest patron and benefactor, since her August 5 overthrow, inflaming tensions between the two South Asian neighbors. She gave a public statement the week after her arrival calling for Bangladeshis to gather in Dhaka to mark the 1975 assassination of her father, independence hero Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Hasina's comments were seen as a provocative effort to galvanize members of her Awami League party and undermine law and order in the fragile first days after Yunus took office. It was prevented by a counter-demonstration outside her childhood home in the capital by a mob that beat suspected Awami League supporters with sticks and rods.

Yunus did not say whether a formal extradition request had been made to India. His government has avoided committing itself to demanding her return. Hasina's government was accused of widespread human rights abuses, including the mass detention and extrajudicial killing of her political opponents. Numerous criminal cases have been lodged against Hasina and senior Awami League figures over the deaths of protesters in a police crackdown on the student-led uprising that ultimately ousted her. — AFP

### News in Brief

#### UK-bound Air India plane makes emergency landing in Moscow

**MOSCOW:** An Air India Boeing 787-800 passenger plane en route from India to Britain made a precautionary landing in Moscow on Wednesday due to "technical problems", Sheremetyevo Airport said. The plane, en route from New Delhi to Birmingham, landed safely without any injuries to all 258 passengers and 17 crew members. The scheduled departure time of the flight was set for 2135 Moscow time (1835 GMT). In July, an Air India plane operating from Delhi to San Francisco made a precautionary landing in the Russian region of Siberia after the cockpit crew detected a potential issue in the cargo hold area. — Reuters

#### Cambodia says China to hand over two warships

**PHNOM PENH:** Cambodia said Thursday that China will soon hand over two warships to improve its defense capabilities, despite US fears about Beijing boosting its military influence in the strategic Gulf of Thailand. Cambodia is a close ally of Beijing and Washington has long harbored concerns about the Chinese-funded renovation of the kingdom's Ream naval base. Maly Socheata, a spokeswoman for the Cambodian defense ministry, told AFP that China would send the two new so-called Type 056C corvettes next year, at the earliest. — AFP

#### India hands back Bangladesh teen shot dead on border

**GUWAHATI:** Indian officers handed the body of a 14-year-old girl back to Bangladesh on Thursday after she was found shot dead near the border, with a top Indian official vowing to stop "infiltration". Neighboring relations have been strained by the student-led uprising that toppled Bangladesh's leader Sheikh Hasina, who fled to India on August 5. Since Hasina's ousting, Indian security forces have detained or sent back dozens of Bangladeshis accused of trying to sneak across the border. — AFP

#### New French nuclear reactor enters automatic shutdown

**PARIS:** France's newest nuclear reactor, plagued by massive delays and cost overruns, shut itself down automatically Wednesday just a day after starting up for the first time. The European Pressurised Reactor (EPR) in Flamanville, Normandy is going through a "long and complex startup process requiring many trials and tests, and that can induce shutdowns like this," a spokeswoman for state-owned energy giant EDF told AFP. — AFP

#### Small meteor lights up Philippine sky

**MANILA:** A small, bright meteor lit up skies over the northern Philippines early Thursday as it burned up entering the Earth's atmosphere, the European Space Agency and witnesses said. The one-meter (3.3-foot) space rock, named 2024 RW1, collided with the Earth's atmosphere shortly after midnight (1639 GMT Wednesday) and caused a "harmless" but "spectacular fireball" over the Philippines' Luzon island, the ESA said. — AFP

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2024

# Kuwaiti investors, firms strengthen presence in Saudi Arabian market

## KIA decision to open office in kingdom boosts bilateral investment ties

**JEDDAH:** Over recent years, many Kuwaiti companies have markedly proved their presence in the Saudi market by means of running investments in various sectors, contributing to the Saudi economic growth, diversification and prosperity. Kuwaiti companies are generally active in such sectors as construction, transportation, logistics, food, technology and retail, thus enabling them to play a distinguished and pioneering role in the investment and economic development domain.

This development, in fact, is the outgrowth of recently adopted development and investment policies and measures in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia aiming at creating an effective and attractive economic atmosphere. In this context, the decision made by the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) in June to open a representative office in the kingdom with a view to propping up economic and investment relations between both countries, showed the kingdom's economic development.

Speaking to KUNA, several Kuwaiti investors said that clear-cut insights and facilities offered to entrepreneurs and investors have greatly contributed to drawing investments to the Saudi market. Abyat Company's CEO Mohammad Abul said the Saudi market has attracted investors from everywhere, particularly Kuwait due to geographical



Mohammad Abul



Abdullah Al-Mefarrej



Abdularazaq Al-Mutawa

proximity and close ties and firm bonds between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Speaking highly of the Saudi economy as being the largest Gulf one, Abul said the kingdom's 2030 Vision has brought favorable benefits to the economy, chiefly a congenial legislative atmosphere, streamlined facilities, and investment incentives.

He underlined that Kuwaiti investors, including major companies and funds, are willing to enter the Saudi market in pursuit of investment openings in industrial, commercial, and service sectors. The fact that Riyadh is set to play host to world events like Riyadh Expo 2030 and World Cup 2034, to-

gether with several international exhibitions and conferences, reflects the kingdom's vibrant economy, he said.

Abul pointed out that Abyat, which has been present in the Saudi market since 2012 with investments exceeding KD 50 million (about \$160 million), intends to inject fresh investments in various domains in the Saudi market. Aldhahiya Juice's Board Chairman Abdullah Al-Mefarrej said Kuwaiti investors have been interested in investment in Saudi Arabia since it launched an unequivocal, earnest and holistic vision in 2015 aiming at encouraging and roping in Gulf and foreign investments. He said that his company had thus decided to enter the Saudi market in 2017 following field visits to the capital, Riyadh to assess the restaurant and food market. Since 2018, the kingdom has been drawing big investments from small and medium-sized firms of all sectors, leading to growing competition at the Saudi market, Abul remarked.

Ghaliah Company's General Manager Abdularazaq Al-Mutawa commended the Saudi market as being promising and attractive at both Gulf and international levels. He regarded the kingdom's economic growth and development as part of Gulf economic growth in general thanks to government interest in promoting the business environment and diversifying income sources. The recent wide-scale reforms and steps taken by the Saudi leadership have placed the kingdom on the list of major countries that are able to draw foreign capital and investments, Al-Mutawa added.

The presence of Kuwaiti investors and businessmen in the Saudi market undoubtedly reflects the strong relationship between both countries' governments and peoples, along with continued partnership between both sides' private sectors, he remarked. Kuwaiti investments in the kingdom are now estimated at 35 billion Saudi riyals (around \$9.3 billion) and cover various investment sectors, Al-Mutawa said, citing official figures announced during the forum "Invest in Saudi Arabia" held in Kuwait last year.

He lauded the Kuwait-Saudi railway project as one of the most significant projects in the Gulf transportation sector as serving all sectors and markets and cutting transportation charges. — KUNA

## US weekly jobless claims fall amid dropping layoffs

**WASHINGTON:** The number of Americans filing new applications for jobless benefits declined last week as layoffs remained low, which could help to allay fears that the labor market was deteriorating. The weekly jobless claims report from the Labor Department on Thursday, the most timely data on the economy's health, also showed unemployment rolls shrinking to levels last seen in mid-June. It reduces the need for the Federal Reserve to deliver a 50 basis points interest rate cut this month.

Most economists expect the US central bank to kick off its easing cycle with a quarter-point rate reduction as domestic demand remains solid. A step-down in hiring, which pushed the unemployment rate to a near three-year high of 4.3 percent in July rattled investors and fanned concerns that a recession was stalking the economy. "The jobless claims data remain consistent with a gradual increase in unemployment, rather than the sharp jump reported for July," said Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics. Initial claims for state unemployment benefits dropped 5,000 to a seasonally adjusted 227,000 for the week ended Aug. 31, the lowest level since early July. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast 230,000 claims for the latest week.

Claims had been bouncing around the 230,000 level since pulling back from an 11-month high in late July as seasonal distortions from the automobile industry and Hurricane Beryl faded. Unadjusted claims fell 3,352 to 189,389 last week, with a sizeable increase in Massachusetts more than offset by declines in Texas, New York and elsewhere. The data echoed the findings in the Federal Reserve's "Beige Book" report on Wednesday, which described employment levels as "generally flat to up slightly in recent weeks."

It noted that "a few (Fed) districts reported that firms reduced shifts and hours, left advertised positions unfilled, or reduced headcounts through attrition, though accounts of layoffs remained rare." It



**POTTERVILLE, US:** Workers hang a "JOBS! JOBS! JOBS!" banner on the stage where Republican presidential nominee, Donald Trump is to speak. — AFP

added, however, that "candidates faced increasing difficulties and longer times to secure a job."

The number of people receiving benefits after an initial week of aid, a proxy for hiring, decreased 22,000 to a seasonally adjusted 1.838 million during the week ending Aug. 24, the lowest level since mid-June, the claims report showed.

The claims data has no bearing on the employment report for August, which is scheduled to be released on Friday, as it falls outside the survey period. Non-farm payrolls likely increased by 160,000 jobs last month after rising by 114,000 in July, according to a Reuters survey of economists. The unemployment rate is forecast to slip to 4.2 percent from 4.3 percent in July. There is, however, a potential downside risk to that forecast. The ADP National Employment Report on Thursday showed private payrolls increased

by 99,000 jobs in August, the smallest gain since January 2021, after rising by a downwardly revised 111,000 in July. Economists had forecast private employment would advance by 145,000 positions after a previously reported gain of 122,000.

The ADP report, jointly developed with the Stanford Digital Economy Lab, however, has a spotty record as a guide to private payrolls in the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) more comprehensive employment report. Initial prints of the ADP employment report have mostly understated private payroll growth this year. "While this report may lower the bar to what constitutes an upside surprise in tomorrow's employment situation report, there is no useful relationship between this payroll measure and the BLS measure," said Conrad DeQuadros, senior economic advisor at Brean Capital. — Reuters

## UK meets bridge milestone on new high-speed rail track

**MAPLE CROSS, UK:** Britain on Thursday finished building its longest-ever rail bridge after fitting the final segment of the Colne Valley Viaduct for the new high-speed HS2 train line, company bosses announced. The curved 3.4 kilometer-long structure northwest of London is set to carry high-speed trains running to and from the capital at speeds of up to 320 kilometers per hour, HS2 Ltd said in a statement.

It surpasses in length the 3.3-kilometre Tay Bridge linking Fife and Dundee in Scotland, a record that stood since 1887. "Lowering the Colne Valley Viaduct's final deck segment into place today marks the culmination of more than 10 years of planning, design and construction," said HS2 senior project manager Billy Ahluwalia.

The bridge is made of 1,000 pre-cast segments which support its 54 arches and that will carry the high-speed line up to 10 meters above land and water. The HS2 project has been mired in controversy owing to spiraling costs that saw the previous Conservative government axe key legs of the railway planned for northern England. Originally to have run between London in southeast England and Manchester in the north, the project was drastically altered last October.



**Workers look at the final deck segment of HS2's 2.1-mile as it is fixed on the viaduct crossing the Colne Valley, in Maple Cross, north-west of London, on Sept 5, 2024. — AFP**

That came after the project's costs almost trebled to more than an estimated £100 billion (\$132 billion), in part owing to a surge in inflation. The remaining route, linking London to Birmingham, is not expected to open until 2029 at the earliest — and could still end up costing £67 billion, according to an official estimate made in February. At the same

time, parliament's cross-party Public Accounts Committee strongly criticized the scaled-down plans, claiming they delivered "very poor value for money". High Speed 2 is Britain's second such fast track, after the line that carries Eurostar trains from London to the Channel Tunnel, which in turn links the country with France. — AFP

## OPEC+ nearing agreement to delay output hike

**LONDON:** OPEC+ is nearing an agreement to delay a planned October oil output increase after crude prices hit their lowest in nine months, two sources from the producers group told Reuters on Thursday.

Oil prices have been falling along with other asset classes on concerns about a weak global economy and soft data from China, the world's biggest oil importer. "It is likely that the countries will take action to balance the market by delaying the increase," one of the sources said. The second source said OPEC+ was "almost there" on getting an agreement. Oil prices rose on the possible delay, with benchmark Brent crude rising to \$73 a barrel on Thursday but remaining close to its lowest level since December. The planned increase was for 180,000 barrels a day, part of some 5.86 million bpd in output OPEC+ is holding back equivalent to about 5.7 percent of global demand.

Last week, OPEC+, which is made up of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies led by Russia, was set to proceed with the increase. Fragile oil market sentiment over the prospect of more supply from OPEC+ and an end to a dispute halting Libyan exports, coupled with a weakening demand outlook, have raised concern within the group. HSBC said in a report that any decision by OPEC+ might be taken negatively by the market.

"Raising production would tip the market into a meaningful surplus from the first quarter 2025 onwards. On the other hand, holding off may be interpreted as a belated admission by OPEC that oil demand is weak," RBC Capital analyst Helima Croft said in a note that it may be prudent for OPEC+ to wait until December before returning extra barrels. — Reuters

## Goldman: Harris' tax plan may cut corporate profits 5%

**NEW YORK:** Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris' proposed corporate tax hike could reduce S&P 500 company earnings by about 5 percent, with additional taxes potentially hitting profits harder, Goldman Sachs analysts said. Last month, Vice President Harris outlined plans to raise the corporate tax rate to 28 percent from 21 percent, in order to ensure "big corporations pay their fair share."

Goldman analysts said in a note late on Wednesday that at a 28 percent taxation rate, they estimate earnings of S&P 500 companies would take a 5 percent hit. However, the brokerage has said earlier that the broader economy would get the biggest boost in the next two years if Democrats win the White House and Congress. Economic output would take a hit next year under a Republican administration, mostly from increased import tariffs and tighter immigration policies, it has previously said. On Wednesday, Harris said Trump's plans would cut off federal programs that offer loans to small businesses, cut the corporate tax rate and push the US deficit higher.

"The current US statutory corporate tax rate on domestic income is 26 percent, but the total effective tax rate paid by the typical S&P 500 company is 19 percent," the brokerage said. "While each presidential candidate has proposed changes to the corporate tax code, changes are not a given," analysts led by Ben Snider wrote in a note. Polls showed that Trump had built a lead over Biden but Harris has since edged ahead of the Republican candidate in some national opinion polls.

Adding taxation on foreign income and an increase in the alternative minimum tax rate to 21 percent from 15 percent could reduce earnings by as much as 8 percent if Harris won, they said. Trump's proposed relief on the federal domestic corporate tax rate to 15 percent from the current 21 percent would "arithmetically" boost S&P 500 earnings by about 4 percent, they added. — Reuters



Business

# NBK advises vigilance, asks customers to verify chalet booking sites before making payments

## As part of bank's ongoing support to 'Let's Be Aware' campaign

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) remains steadfast in its support of the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, an initiative launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) in collaboration with Kuwaiti banks and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA). This campaign aims to foster banking culture within the community and improve financial literacy.

enhance awareness across all segments of society, educating them about different fraud methods and effective prevention strategies.

Through this campaign, NBK highlights the deceptive tactics used by fraudsters to access customer data or steal money through fake reservations for hotel apartments or chalets. Unscrupulous companies

different property than what was advertised.

NBK warns against engaging with unreliable companies and websites for booking hotels and chalets. The bank emphasizes the importance of verifying the credibility of any company, site, or broker involved in the rental process. Customers are advised to inspect the property directly before finalizing the reservation and making any payments to avoid falling victim to fraud.

The bank urges caution before clicking on payment links, as fraudsters often send bank links from outside the country using numbers that appear local, employing advanced artificial intelligence (AI) techniques to deceive victims. NBK plays a crucial role in educating diverse segments of society about financial literacy and maximizing the use of its services. The bank utilizes its extensive network of branches and its highly engaged online channels to lead in educating and informing customers, setting a benchmark among Kuwaiti banks. NBK's commitment to customer education is a cornerstone of its strategy. The bank emphasizes the importance of adhering to general security guidelines to prevent electronic fraud, including regularly updating passwords and not sharing them with anyone claiming to be from the bank. The "Let's

Be Aware" campaign stands as the region's largest initiative dedicated to elevating banking and financial literacy among customers. It tackles crucial topics



such as preventing fraud, understanding high-risk investments, optimizing the use of banking services, and fostering a culture of savings and investment.

NBK is a key supporter and partner in all Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) campaigns and initiatives focused on enhancing financial awareness and banking education across the society. As the largest financial institution in Kuwait and the region, NBK actively organizes a range of events aimed at educating the community on vital banking issues and offers numerous training courses to its employees to strengthen their expertise in fraud prevention and combating financial crimes.

- NBK warns customers not to be tempted by enticing offers and low prices for chalet rentals advertised on social media.
- The bank maintains its commitment to offering advice and guidance through its most widely followed digital channels in Kuwait.
- Scammers use AI techniques to send bank payment links from outside Kuwait, making them appear as if they come from local numbers.

The bank is ramping up its efforts to spread educational materials and awareness content through various communication platforms and through its extensive digital channels. This includes sharing videos, text messages, and practical tips. Additionally, NBK is republishing Central Bank of Kuwait's messages to

often lure customers by showcasing videos of luxurious chalets with stunning sea views on social media at unrealistically low prices. They require a substantial advance payment to secure the reservation, only for customers to discover later that the reservation was made through a fictitious company or for a completely

## China, US climate envoys to meet

BEIJING: As climate envoys from the world's top two greenhouse gas producers meet in Beijing this week, experts say China's emissions may finally be nearing their peak. US climate envoy John Podesta will be looking to solidify Beijing's commitments - which include topping out its planet-warming emissions by 2030 - as he meets this week with counterpart Liu Zhenmin.

But with Beijing installing renewable capacity at record speed, and a construction slump dragging down emissions-heavy steel production, there are signs China could hit the peak early, though uncertainties remain.

"So much clean electricity... is being added that China can peak its emissions right now, if those additions are maintained and if overall energy demand growth moderates," said Lauri Myllyvirta of the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). China is building almost twice as much wind and solar energy capacity as every other country combined, data showed earlier this year.

That breakneck installation saw it hit a target for wind and solar capacity in August, six years ahead of schedule. And while coal remains king in China's

electricity system, there are signs the world's second-biggest economy may be weaning itself off the fossil fuel. Coal power permits fell 83 percent in the first half of this year, and no new coal-based steel-making projects were approved in the same period.

China is the world's top emitter and biggest consumer of coal, making its progress central to global climate goals, said Myllyvirta. "Whether China's emissions growth continues or turns into a decline is absolutely decisive for our ability to peak global emissions and start reducing them towards net zero," he told AFP.

In addition to solar and wind, China's clean energy mix includes a significant amount of hydro and nuclear power. China is the world's fastest growing nuclear power producer, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, and last month alone approved plans for 11 new nuclear reactors.

But despite the growth in non-carbon energy sources, China's demand for coal still jumped last year, helping drive a global increase.

And coal-fired power generation is projected to grow again this year in China, albeit at the lowest rate in almost a decade, according to the International Energy Agency. "However, there is significant uncertainty concerning the availability of hydropower and the growth in power demand," it warned.

Even as coal permits fell, construction began on more than 41 gigawatts of coal projects during the first half of 2024, CREA and Global Energy Monitor said.

That nearly equalled 2022 levels and accounts for

over 90 percent of new coal construction worldwide.

The continued build-out reflects China's "cautious approach to its clean electricity transition," said Muiji Yang, senior electricity policy analyst at energy think tank Ember. That strategy is "characterized by 'establishing before breaking', first building a robust clean electricity system before phasing down fossil fuels", Yang told AFP. China has already seen drought hit hydropower output, something that is likely to become more frequent with climate change.

But as it builds out other renewable and non-carbon alternatives, its reliance on coal to plug gaps should decline, said Yang. "China is fast approaching this critical juncture."

There are other headwinds, including grid and market reforms, and "opposition from vested interests", warned Myllyvirta. That could mean even massive renewable growth is insufficient to cover increasing demand. And it remains an open question whether a peak in China's emissions would be followed by a progressive decline, or merely a plateau.

Still, the direction of travel and signals from top leadership offer cause for some optimism, analysts say. A survey of 89 experts last year found the majority expected China to peak carbon emissions before 2030. However, China has declined to sign a global pledge to reduce methane emissions by at least 30 percent from 2020 levels by 2030.

Podesta is expected to press his counterpart on



NANTONG, China: Employees work on a wind turbine part for export at a factory in Nantong, in eastern China's Jiangsu province. — AFP

efforts to reduce the potent greenhouse gas. The talks may also cover ongoing rows over China's domination of green manufacturing, which has sparked tariffs from Washington and elsewhere. "Those countries that don't want to be reliant on China for that supply still need to sort out their supply chains," Myllyvirta said. "They have a long way to go in that respect." — AFP

AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

### KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2024

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No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance										Valuation Multiples *				
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	873	874	876	865	11	13,206,831	-4	-0.46%	2.65%	870	879	13.0	1.66	3.9%	1.05
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	316	306	316	302	14	38,852,194	-11	-3.47%	14.34%	303	310	18.4	1.44	3.7%	1.28
104	Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait	Banking	288	289	289	281	8	14,583,159	3	1.05%	30.24%	279	292	14.7	1.15	3.0%	0.97
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	187	186	187	183	4	12,195,675	1	0.54%	27.72%	180	186	14.6	0.68	2.6%	1.08
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	193	197	202	190	12	10,057,447	4	2.07%	20.26%	197	202	17.9	0.69	3.0%	1.32
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	729	724	729	720	9	37,349,814	-3	-0.41%	8.70%	715	725	20.2	2.09	2.6%	1.11
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	588	588	591	585	6	4,853,021	0	0.00%	3.88%	585	593	29.9	2.43	1.3%	1.15
201	Kuwait Investment	Financial Services	166	165	168	160	8	4,258,770	-1	-0.60%	29.92%	160	168	10.1	0.75	6.1%	2.01
204	National Investments	Financial Services	237	231	239	228	11	13,040,550	-5	-2.12%	-3.35%	227	232	32.2	1.00	6.5%	2.03
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	103	100	103	99.4	3.6	36,024,308	-3	-2.91%	-4.76%	100	103.0	NM	0.56	0.0%	0.94
212	Arzan Financial Group	Financial Services	183	202	208	182	26	159,193,430	22	12.22%	0.04%	202	208	22.8	1.10	1.0%	1.24
222	Aayan Leasing and Investment	Financial Services	158	153	159	151	8	11,793,263	-5	-3.16%	-12.07%	151	155	8.4	1.02	4.9%	1.62
252	Al Imtiaz Investment	Financial Services	46.4	49.7	50.5	45.6	4.9	14,351,523	3.4	7.34%	-12.04%	49.1	51.9	NM	0.34	0.0%	1.34
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	236	236	240	232	8	41,525,956	0	0.00%	22.03%	229	237	17.0	1.53	1.6%	1.15
404	Salhia Real Estate	Real Estate	439	426	440	425	15	3,449,167	-7	-1.62%	4.27%	424	434	17.9	1.41	3.3%	0.58
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	860	848	860	848	12	4,389,610	-10	-1.17%	6.63%	838	856	18.0	1.87	1.6%	0.94
418	The Commercial Real Estate	Real Estate	152	155	159	152	7	11,808,165	2	1.31%	55.00%	150	156	15.5	0.94	2.5%	0.68
501	National Industries	Financial Services	224	229	229	224	5	18,146,154	6	2.69%	17.87%	226	232	12.9	1.03	2.1%	1.60
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	1,625	1,705	1,718	1,625	93	2,392,127	101	6.30%	30.15%	1,692	1,730	18.2	1.39	3.9%	1.12
506	HEISCO	Industrials	880	860	880	850	30	2,245,512	-8	-0.92%	4.88%	858	870	19.1	2.17	3.5%	0.91
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	660	641	660	638	22	5,224,279	-14	-2.14%	9.57%	633	655	19.5	1.31	9.3%	0.91
603	Agility	Industrials	256	256	257	251	6	20,329,801	0	0.00%	-49.71%	253	260	8.2	0.74	7.9%	1.58
605	Zain	Telecommunications	468	475	486	468	18	30,728,108	8	1.71%	-6.31%	473	480	11.1	1.79	7.4%	0.54
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	2,667	2,741	2,754	2,667	87	617,680	76	2.85%	-15.33%	2,675	2,750	8.8	3.60	12.2%	0.61
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	233	229	233	228	5	683,796	-4	-1.72%	27.22%	227	236	14.2	0.94	0.0%	1.19
654	JAZEERA	Consumer Discretionary	969	1,027	1,047	953	94	3,512,673	57	5.88%	-26.06%	1,021	1,050	85.3	7.92	2.8%	1.36
813	GFH Financial Group	Financial Services	103	104	107	102	5	55,014,761	1	0.97%	36.30%	102	104	11.0	1.28	4.8%	1.32
821	Warba Bank	Banking	197	194	199	191	8	22,759,043	-3	-1.52%	10.56%	192	195	26.8	1.06	0.0%	1.08
822	Kuwait Telecommunications	Telecommunications	539	549	550	536	14	3,437,134	10	1.86%	-2.49%	548	565	16.2	2.41	6.4%	0.71
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	918	910	950	892	58	1,756,299	18	2.02%	58.26%	879	949	20.9	2.58	2.1%	0.46
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	559	558	574	551	23	3,009,759	3	0.54%	9.41%	555	567	28.2	2.32	3.6%	0.75
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	2,050	2,124	2,127	2,030	97	953,030	74	3.61%	23.20%	2,094	2,125	25.0	7.14	3.5%	1.35
830	AL GHANIM	Consumer Discretionary	1,131	1,106	1,142	1,088	54	2,068,440	-25	-2.21%	4.73%	1,069	1,123	10.2	3.57	6.4%	0.83
831	Beyout Investment	Financial Services	453	453	453	429	24	2,922,453	3	0.67%	#VALUE!	440	455	17.3	2.57	0.0%	NULL

\* As of end of week closing

## Business

# China's Xi promises \$50 billion for Africa over next three years

## African countries secure deals in infrastructure, agriculture, mining, trade and energy

BEIJING: Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Thursday pledged over \$50 billion in financing for Africa over the next three years, promising to deepen cooperation in infrastructure and trade with the continent as he addressed Beijing's biggest summit since the pandemic. More than 50 African leaders and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres are attending this week's China-Africa forum, according to state media. African leaders already secured a plethora of deals this week for greater cooperation in infrastructure, agriculture, mining, trade and energy.

Addressing the leaders at the forum's opening ceremony in Beijing's ornate Great Hall of the People on Thursday, Xi hailed ties with the continent as in their "best period in history". "China is ready to deepen cooperation with African countries in industry, agriculture, infrastructure, trade and investment," he said.

"Over the next three years, the Chinese government is willing to provide financial support amounting to 360 billion yuan (\$50.7 billion)," Xi said. Over half of that will be in credit, he said, with \$11 billion "in various types of assistance" as well as \$10 billion through encouraging Chinese firms to invest. He also promised to help "create at least one million jobs for Africa". The Chinese leader pledged \$141 million in grants for military assistance to the continent as well.

Beijing would "provide training for 6,000 military personnel and 1,000 police and law enforcement officers from Africa", Xi said. Also addressing the meeting, UN chief Guterres told African leaders that growing ties between China and the continent could "drive the renewable energy revolution". "China's remarkable record of development — including on eradicating poverty — provides a wealth of experience and expertise," he said.

China, the world's number two economy, is Africa's largest trading partner and has sought to tap the

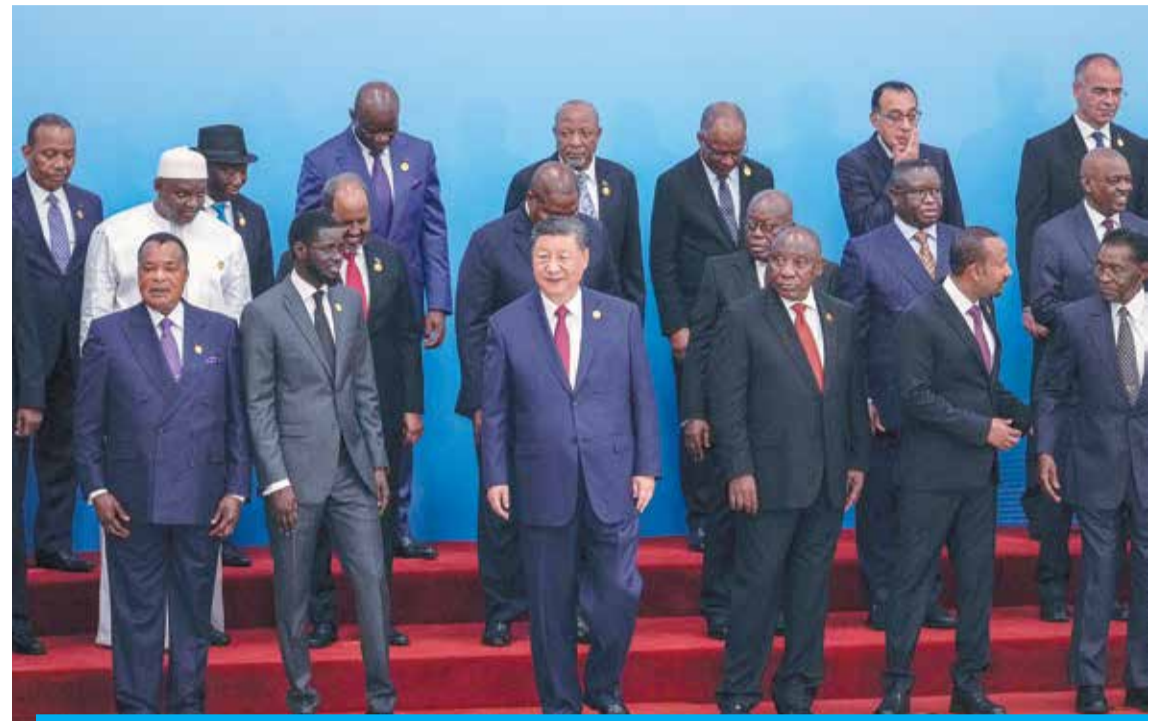
continent's vast troves of natural resources including copper, gold, lithium and rare earth minerals. It has also furnished African countries with billions in loans that have helped build much-needed infrastructure but sometimes stoked controversy by saddling governments with huge debts. Analysts say that Beijing's largesse towards Africa is being recalibrated in the face of economic trouble at home and that geopolitical concerns over a growing tussle with the United States may increasingly be driving policy.

But bilateral meetings held on the sidelines of the summit delivered a slew of pledges on greater cooperation in projects from railway to solar panels to avocados. Following meetings on Wednesday, Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema said he had overseen a deal between the country's state-owned power company ZESCO and Beijing's PowerChina to expand the use of rooftop solar panels in his country.

Nigeria — one of Beijing's biggest debtors on the continent — and China inked a joint statement agreeing to "deepen cooperation" in infrastructure, including "transportation, ports and free trade zones".

Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan, in turn, obtained a commitment from Xi to push for new progress on a long-stalled railway connecting his country to neighboring Zambia. That project — which Zambian media has said Beijing has pledged \$1 billion towards — is aimed at expanding transport links in the resource-rich eastern part of the continent. Zimbabwe also won promises from Beijing for deeper cooperation in "agriculture, mining, environmentally friendly traditional and new energy (and) transportation infrastructure", according to a joint statement by the two countries.

The southern African nation and Beijing also agreed to sign a deal that would allow the export of fresh Zimbabwean avocados to China, the joint statement said. And Kenyan leader William Ruto said Xi



China's President Xi Jinping (C) stands with leaders from African countries as they gather for a group photo session before the opening ceremony of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on September 5, 2024. — AFP

had promised to open up China's markets to agricultural products from his country.

The two sides agreed to work together on the expansion of the country's Standard Gauge Railway — built with finance from Exim Bank of China — which connects the capital Nairobi with the port city of Mombasa. And Ruto also secured a pledge for great-

er cooperation with China on the Rironi-Mau Summit-Malaba motorway, which Kenyan media has said is expected to cost \$1.2 billion.

Ruto last year asked China for a \$1 billion loan and the restructuring of existing debt to complete other stalled construction projects. The country now owes China more than \$8 billion. — AFP

## Greek economy on rebound but many still struggling

ATHENS: Greek barista Kyriakos Giannichronis has seen the headlines about his country's newly booming economy after years of recession — but he does not feel the wealth. The Athens resident only has about 150 euros (\$170) to spare at the end of the month, and that is despite getting a good deal on rent and making a little more than minimum wage.

Many Greeks face similar challenges — which is why Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis is widely expected to announce new benefits in a keynote speech this weekend. "I am responsible enough for what I make, but... everything is going up and up. And the amount we get paid is around the same each year," he said.

"Things look like they're getting better, but it doesn't seem like it," the 27-year-old told AFP.

Living standards in Greece remain low despite the Mediterranean country's substantial rebound which has the economy growing at two percent — a higher rate than in much of Europe. The reason for the two sides of the coin is that Greece has significant ground to make up after a near-decade economic crisis and pandemic recession.

The economy "is growing and all the right measures are improving, but starting from a very low basis," economist Nikos Vettas told AFP. "Even if you have an increase now, this improvement is not enough to catch up," said Vettas, who heads the Greek foundation for economic and industrial research IOBE think-tank.

To further complicate matters, housing and food prices had gone up because of inflation, which only now is on its way down. "The cost of living actually neutralized part of the increase in the wages that we had, and as a result the real incomes of many households are suffering," Vettas said.

Mitsotakis' conservative government — which is dipping in the polls — has blamed the high cost of living on soaring energy prices that followed the war in Ukraine. His New Democracy party is currently polling at around 22 percent, a far cry from the 40.56 percent it won in national elections last year. Mitsotakis is expected to announce a new round of benefits in the prime minister's annual economy speech in Thessaloniki this weekend.

Last year, the country of just over 10 million people had the second lowest GDP per capita in purchasing power within the European Union. Only Bulgaria fared worst, according to EU data agency Eurostat. It also found that average annual income in Greece was half the European average in 2023.

And the Greek minimum wage is 830 euros, some 900 euros below that of France. "So how are you supposed to live, if you have to rent a house with 500 euros?" asked Athens hairdresser Christina Massiou. "Life is so expensive that you can't set aside money for emergencies," the 24-year-old added. She and her friend Alexandra Siouti, who works at a PR agency, spoke from under a palm tree at a beach near Athens.

They had gone to relax and "escape from reality", Massiou said. "I have seen the older generations say that things are getting better. For them maybe," Siouti, also 24, told AFP. "But younger people don't have many opportunities here to start their life and invest in their dreams."

Last month, the economy ministry said household net disposable income had risen in recent years, putting Greece in 16th place in the European Union. The data confirmed the "significant progress our country has achieved in the last five years", the ministry said in a statement. But the ministry acknowledged that it was not cause for celebration or a reason to "underestimate the real difficulties that many of our fellow citizens face". "It is obvious that Greece has not turned into Switzerland or Sweden," it said. — AFP

## 'Business is business' at China-Africa summit

BEIJING: Hundreds of African political and business leaders filed into China's Great Hall of the People on Thursday eager to forge new partnerships, sign contracts and make industry connections. "Business is business, we'll buy from anywhere. In China, the price is right," Abakar Tahir Moussa, a Chadian construction firm owner, told AFP, showing off the business card of a potential new Chinese partner.

He hoped to use the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which ends on Friday, to partner with Chinese firms on road and bridge projects.

"I'm here to make contacts and get more business," Moussa said after he joined thousands of delegates from more than 50 countries at the forum's colorful opening ceremony. A housing developer from Burkina Faso, who asked not to be identified, said Chinese products were "cheaper than elsewhere". "We buy everything from China: lights, air conditioning, wires... The only thing we get elsewhere is cement," he told AFP outside the hall. "If you want quality you can get quality (in China), and even the quality things are cheap," he said, kicking off his shoes and clutching a smartphone with a gold case.

The atmosphere was hopeful and friendly ahead of meetings that many Africans hoped would spur much-needed development and investment back home. Leaders and their entourages from across Africa have flown in to Beijing since Saturday, keeping President Xi Jinping busy with bilateral meetings all week. South African leader Cyril Ramaphosa and Nigerian president Bola Ahmed Tinubu heaped praise on their Chinese hosts, even over the food served at a lavish banquet thrown by Xi on Wednesday evening.

Broad-shouldered security guards in dark sunglasses kept watch outside the hall as delegates entered through airport-style X-ray machines. Security around the capital has been tight all week with the

## Oil slick sparks outcry as spills tarnish Ecuador Amazon

GUIYERO, Ecuador: A thick slick of oil covers part of an estuary in the Ecuadorian Amazon, where the Indigenous Waorani people are imploring authorities to stop drilling for the black gold that keeps spilling into their environment.

Black sludge also coats the vegetation alongside a road leading to the village of Guiyero in Yasuni National Park, one of the most diverse biospheres in the world. "It's time to say enough! They've abused us," Ene Nenquimo, vice president of the Waorani Nationality (Nawe) organization, told AFP, wearing a headdress of multi-colored feathers. The oil spill occurred in June, according to environmentalists, the latest of many in the reserve.

State-owned oil company Petroecuador admitted that an undetermined amount of oil leaked into the environment from one of its blocks, contaminating water sources in several towns and reaching the

## German factory orders rise but outlook gloomy

FRANKFURT: German industrial orders rose for a second consecutive month in July, official data showed Thursday, but analysts said it was not enough to brighten the outlook for struggling Europe's top economy. New orders, closely watched as an indicator of future business



BEIJING: Delegates from Burkina Faso prepare to enter the main hall before the opening ceremony of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing's Great Hall of the People on Sept 5, 2024. — AFP

steady arrival of heads of state. Passengers arriving at Beijing train stations have faced enhanced security checks, while authorities have increased scrutiny of vehicles entering the city through checkpoints. Hotels have been booked out all week and surrounded by armed guards and new metal fences.

Bars in Sanlitun, a central shopping and nightlife district, have been packed with visitors from across Africa. Xi pledged more than \$50 billion in financing for Africa over the next three years — more than half of it in credit — telling delegates at the opening ceremony that China was "ready to deepen cooperation

with African countries". China is Africa's largest trading partner and its loans have helped build much-needed infrastructure, but they have sometimes also stoked controversy by saddling governments with huge debts.

Yet many delegates seemed hopeful that China, which seeks to tap Africa's vast natural resources, could help their countries develop. The Burkina Faso developer said Chinese investment had been "good for the economy" and "improved people's lives", while increased trade meant there were "many more things for people to buy". "I hope the forum will improve relations even further and bring more cooperation." — AFP

Napo River, a tributary of the Amazon. "Big lizards died," lamented Pablo Ahua, 44, one of the nearly 100 Indigenous people who live in Guiyero, near one of the reserve's oil wells.

Yasuni National Park was thrust into the international spotlight last year after Ecuadorans voted to stop drilling in one block in the reserve, a move hailed as a historic example of climate democracy. The reserve stretches over one million hectares (2.5 million acres) and is home to at least three of the world's last uncontacted Indigenous populations and a bounty of plant and animal species.

The referendum required the government to stop extracting from Block 43 by August — however, only one of its 247 wells have been shut down. The government estimates that it will take at least five years to cut all production from the block, which produces 50,000 barrels per day, about 10 percent of the total output in the country. Nenquimo said the Ecuadoran state "must respect" the referendum, "like it or not."

Some locals, like Nenquimo, want to stop all oil extraction in the reserve and elsewhere in the Ecuadorian Amazon. The oil spills leave "an immense impact that no one can remedy," said Nenquimo.

"They say (the oil) is for the development of com-

activity, climbed 2.9 percent month-on-month, according to federal statistics agency Destatis, following an upwardly revised increase of 4.6 percent in June. But the July rise was driven by large orders, notably an 86.5-percent jump in orders for planes, ships and trains. Without those big-ticket items, orders for July would have been down 0.4 percent.

Germany's crucial manufacturing sector has been hit hard by higher energy costs in the wake of Russia's war in Ukraine and cooling demand from abroad, contributing to a wider downturn that saw the country's economy shrink in 2023. With a hoped-for recovery yet to materialize, incoming orders were "likely to remain a lonely



QUITO, Ecuador: A Waorani indigenous takes part in a protest in Quito. — AFP

munities and there is no development. All it leaves is environmental damage." However, others support the oil companies and the benefits that economic growth have brought to their villages. In 2023, Ecuador estimated losses of \$16.47 billion over two decades if it were to close Block 43 — one of 80 blocks in the part of the Amazon that falls in the country. Oil exploitation has been one of the pillars of Ecuador's economy since the 1970s. — AFP

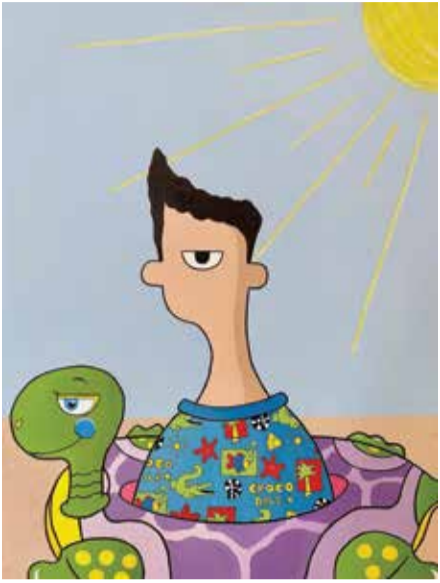
island in a sea of weak data", said LBBW economist Jens-Oliver Niklasch.

The economy ministry was equally gloomy. Recent data pointed to continued "weak foreign demand", it said in a statement, while confidence indicators in the manufacturing sector "recently deteriorated again". "Industrial activity is therefore likely to remain subdued in the coming months," the ministry added. The German government has forecast 0.3 percent growth this year but that figure is looking increasingly ambitious.

The Ifo economic institute on Thursday lowered its full-year outlook for the country. It now expects the German economy to stagnate in 2024, after previously predicting 0.4 growth. — AFP

# Weekender

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2024



عالمنا (2023)



Flawless (2021)



Kuwaiti artist Yousef Al-Sharrad



All eyes on me (2022)

## Storytelling through art

Kuwaiti artist and teacher **Yousef Al-Sharrad** captures life's moments



For Gaza (2023)



By Sahar Moussa

**Y**ousef Al-Sharrad is a 23-year-old artist and art teacher whose paintings vividly bring his personal experiences to life. With a passion for depicting the various situations he has encountered, Yousef's work offers a unique blend of storytelling and artistic expression, resonating deeply with both his students and audience. His journey as an artist began in his youth, and his dedication to his craft has only grown stronger over the years. Kuwait Times spoke to Al-Sharrad to learn more about his art.

**Kuwait Times:** What inspired you to pursue painting, and how has your artistic style evolved over the years?

**Yousef Al-Sharrad:** I've been painting for as long as I can remember, but I only took it seriously after I graduated from high school. That's when I started experimenting and fell in love with the characters I created in January 2021.

**KT:** Are there any particular artists or movements that have influenced your work?

**Al-Sharrad:** I don't have one in particular, but I very much appreciate the way Khalifa Al-Qattan lived his life, both as an artist and as a museum owner.

**KT:** How do you pass that knowledge on to your students? And which school of art do you follow?

**Al-Sharrad:** I like to let them be authentically themselves and come up with whatever concepts they want. I paint whatever I want, too, and I think that's what I'm teaching.

**KT:** In much of your artwork, the eyes seem to have a strong presence. What significance do eyes

hold for you, and why do you emphasize them in your work?

**Al-Sharrad:** This specific shape of the eye is something I've been drawing ever since I was a kid, and I

wanted to keep it with me because I liked how it looked.

**KT:** We've observed that many of the figures in your artwork resemble you. Are these self-portraits, or is there a deeper meaning behind this resemblance?

**Al-Sharrad:** Most of them are, and



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some of them are people I've encountered in my life. The shapes of the characters are all me in some way.

**KT:** In one of your paintings, you depict Palestine and the water-

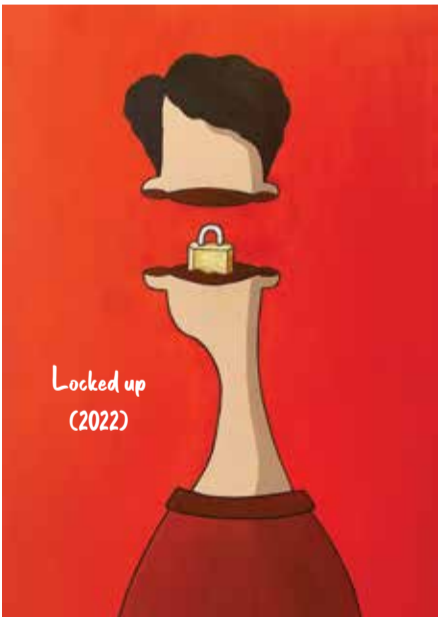
to help the cause in any way I can, no matter how small.

**KT:** What is your favorite painting among those you've created, and what makes it special to you?

"I think the Palestinian cause should matter to every human, not just artists. It was obvious to me to help the cause in any way I can, no matter how small."

**Al-Sharrad:** The first one will always be important because of what came after it. I still haven't shared it with anyone or posted it. However, my painting titled "Nostalgia" is my favorite.

**Al-Sharrad:** I think the Palestinian cause should matter to every human, not just artists. It was obvious to me



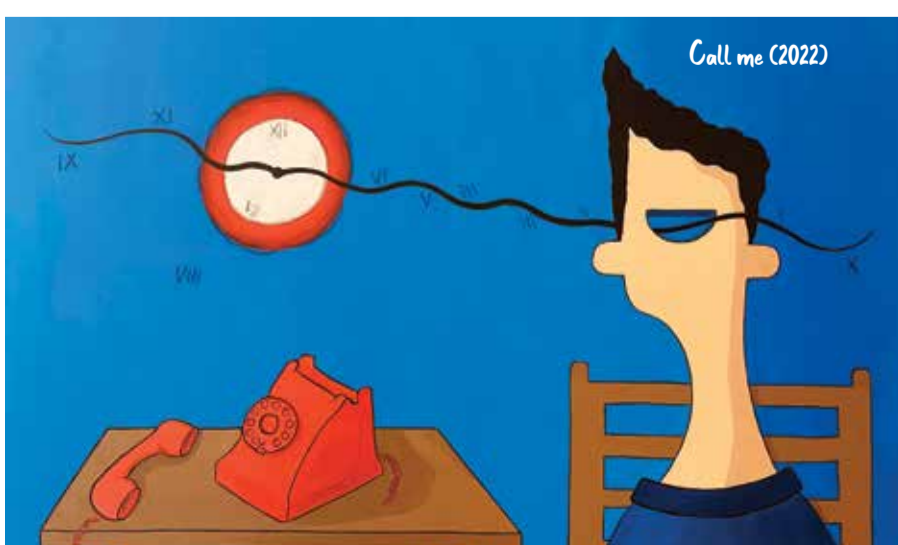
Locked up (2022)



Untitled (2023)



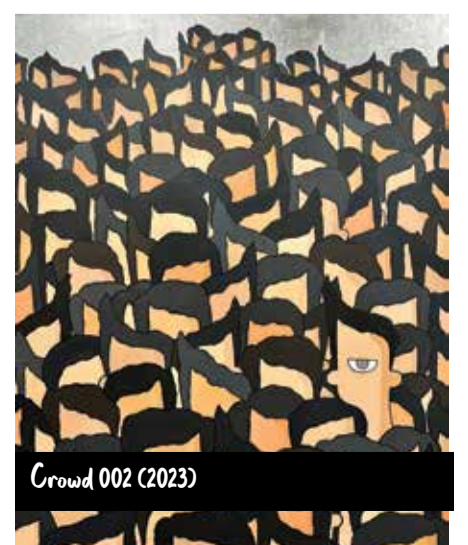
Still waiting (2023)



Call me (2022)



Nostalgia (2021)



Crowd 002 (2023)

A scene from old Kuwait.



## THE DESERT BLOOMS

A glimpse into rapidly modernizing Kuwait in the 1960s through the eyes of Margaret Luce

By Mahmoud Zakaria

**M**argaret Luce was the wife of Sir William Luce, the British governor and political resident in the Gulf and Aden from 1956 to 1966. He filled both positions with great distinction, winning the trust and friendship of Arab leaders in the area. Luce kept occasional personal diaries, mostly documenting trips to outlying places in the region. In January 1962, she began her journey to Kuwait, traveling between the city and Ahmadi.

Here are some interesting excerpts from her memoirs:

**January 26, 1962**

The oil transformation scene here has been more rapid and on a larger scale than anywhere else. Oil was originally found before the war, and the oil revenue is now about 3.5 million a week, with an average of 250 tankers loading each month.

illuminated Qurans.

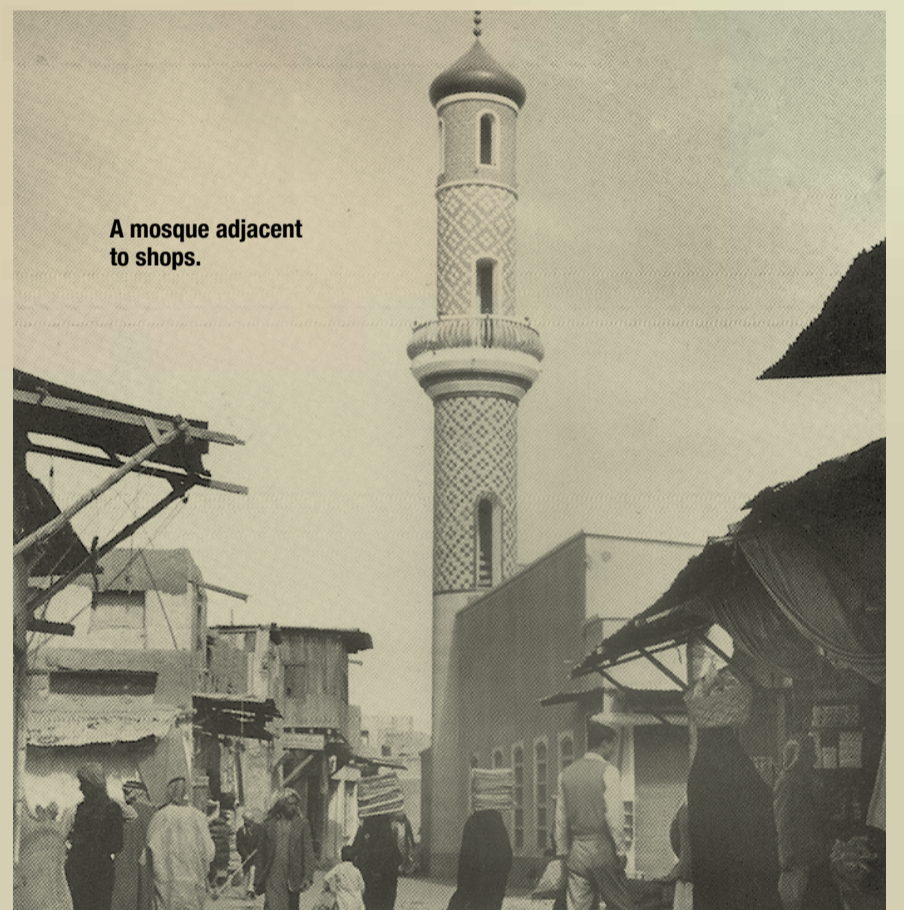
It was family day, and I noticed many young Arab women casually unveiled, strolling hand in hand with their partners. Many of these visitors were probably Jordanians, Palestinians and Egyptians. My companion, Diana Richmond, mentioned that the influx

two years ago. Dickson has taken a job with an oil company, managing guests and showing them around. She lives in their old Arab house on the edge of the sea and is a splendid character — large, weather-beaten, slightly shy, and likely to know more about Kuwait than almost anyone else.

Often, she spends weekends in the desert by herself; she had just returned from a few days in southern Kuwait with the Bedouins, leaving her white tent with them. I asked how she found them again, given their nomadic lifestyle. She simply drove her Land Rover around until she came across her friends with the tent. She is not formidable; she looks gentle and is a great personal friend of the ruler and all the leading Arabs here. She published a book on desert wildflowers. I loved her house with its veranda and garden filled with desert flowers, home to six cats. She also has a grey horse that she still rides around Kuwait each morning, regardless of the heavy traffic.

**Dinner with the Amir**

The night we dined with the ruler, Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, everyone was in good spirits, despite the absence of alcohol and sleepiness. The Amir's palace is a single-storey building, surround-



A mosque adjacent to shops.



Margaret Luce (left) with Diana Richmond in Violet Dickson's home garden.

Ten years ago, Kuwait was a small desert pearl-trading country with no particular natural advantages. The Kuwaitis were seafaring or camel-owning Bedouins.

The pale yellow desert turns faintly green with soft grass after the rain, making it look a little like Salisbury Plain. The real development has occurred in the last five years; Kuwait City is now about five miles across, apart from further suburbs and outskirts with the largest traffic roundabout in the world. Old streets have been swept away by bulldozers, making way for new shops, hotels, cafes and private villas. Most of the architecture is Egyptian or Lebanese.

**At the Museum**

In the afternoon, we walked over to see the museum, which has been enterprisingly started by a Kuwaiti. It features lovely models of various types of Arab dhows, rooms on pearl diving, undersea life, birds and the excavations of an island once occupied by the Greeks. There are also exhibits on education, the old and new ways of life in Kuwait, old and new buildings and beautifully

of wealth has recently encouraged many women to emerge from purdah, a trend that I believe will spread fairly quickly to the rest of the Gulf.

**Dickson and the Bedouins**

We returned to have elevenses with Violet Dickson. Her husband was originally the political agent here, then he stayed on, wrote a book on Kuwait and passed away

**Dame Violet Dickson in her car.**



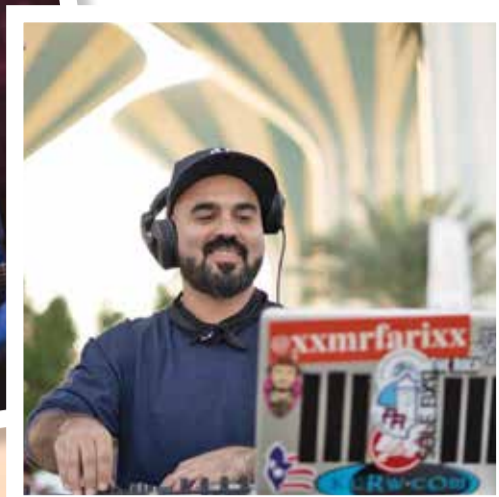
Houses for oil company staff in Ahmadi.



Employees of British Oil Company in Ahmadi meet to follow up on the implementation of some recreational activities for workers.



Ghazi Al-Mulaifi



Amin Abdal

# KUWAITI MUSICIANS

## earn historic Grammy nod



By Faten Omar

**G**hazi Al-Mulaifi and Amin Abdal have made history as the first musicians from Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf to be nominated for a Grammy in the Best Latin Jazz Album category. Kuwait Times spoke with Mulaifi to learn more.

**Kuwait Times:** How did the ensemble react when you learned that "Ana Mashooof" was nominated for a Grammy?

**Ghazi Al-Mulaifi:** When we found out, we felt grateful for the recognition of our hard work. It was an incredible moment, especially because we realized we were the first Khaleeji musicians and recording engineers ever

trade along the Swahili Coast, India and beyond. During my doctoral studies, I interviewed the late Sulaiman Mayouf Mejally, who is also featured on this album. In my studio, while surrounded by guitars and pianos, he suggested that I merge my jazz background with Bahri music. That suggestion sparked what later became Boom.Diwan. Both Bahri music and jazz are cosmopolitan genres, shaped by trade and cultural

must practice it. To give it meaning, I conduct ethnographic interviews with its caretakers. To ensure its survival, I teach it, as I do with the Modern Khaleeji Ensemble at NYU Abu Dhabi, where I am a professor of Arab music.

**KT:** What does this nomination mean for Kuwaiti music on the global stage, and how do you envision it impacting the music scene in Kuwait?

**Mulaifi:** Our goal is to inspire future generations to engage with Kuwaiti musical traditions and help them evolve. The main Bahri diwanias in Kuwait have limited opportunities to share their traditions outside of heritage events. Global musicians we've collaborated with are always amazed by our rich musical heritage and wonder why they haven't heard of it before. This nomination gives us the platform to showcase our music internationally. We've invested a lot of energy into promoting Boom.Diwan without backing from Kuwaiti cultural institutions. Our biggest advocate has been Bill Bragin, the Artistic Executive Director of The Arts Center at NYU Abu Dhabi. We've also relied on the support of musicians like eight-time Grammy Award-winning artist Arturo O'Farrill.

**KT:** Are there any new projects or collaborations in the works?

**Mulaifi:** The Grammy nomination has solidified our position on the global stage. We hope to collaborate with more world-class artists and continue pushing boundaries. In October, we'll perform at WOMEX (the world music expo), where we'll be the first Khaleeji musicians ever represented.



**KT:** How do you manage to preserve Kuwaiti culture while blending traditional music with contemporary global genres?

**Mulaifi:** Everything starts in the diwaniya. My greatest mentor, the late Sulaiman Mayouf Mejally, opened his diwaniya to me and taught me Bahri music. He allowed me to explore our music's place in a global context. He performed with me many times, both in Kuwait and internationally. His trust in Boom.Diwan ensured our work was firmly grounded in Bahri musical traditions.

**KT:** What was the most challenging aspect of recording "Ana Mashooof"?

**Mulaifi:** The biggest challenge was coordinating recordings across different parts of the world. This required a lot of trust and coordination. None of this would have been possible without the dedication of my dear friend, Amin Abdal. Amin has been with Boom.Diwan since our first concert in 2017. He set up a mobile recording studio with over eight microphones to capture live performances in a traditional diwaniya in Kuwait. He also led the recording sessions that con-

nected our live music with jazz artists recording from New York.

**KT:** Are you considering any new opportunities or changes in direction?

**Mulaifi:** We don't foresee any major changes at the moment. We're just beginning our journey. This year, we'll be releasing a new album called "Live at the Khaleej" by Ghazi & Boom.Diwan, featuring Arturo O'Farrill. We recorded it at The Arts Center of NYU Abu Dhabi with support from the Afro-Latin Jazz Alliance Belongó. We also have upcoming performances in Manchester, the US and possibly Scotland next year.

**KT:** What message do you hope to convey through your music, especially to listeners unfamiliar with Kuwaiti music?

**Mulaifi:** Music has always connected people. It's essential to show how Bahri music can revitalize our culture and society. Instead of seeing it as an outdated art form, we embrace it and integrate it into modern life. Our aim is to evolve as a community while preserving and sharing our rich musical heritage with the world.

**KT:** What role do you see Boom.Diwan playing in the global music scene, especially after the Grammy recognition?

**Mulaifi:** It's amazing to see Boom.Diwan reaching new audiences in Kuwait, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and New York. After our shows, people who have never heard Kuwaiti music often express how deeply it resonated with them. Our music connects with people on a spiritual and emotional level. One audience member in New York told me, "I felt that. It touched dormant parts of me, and you brought them to life."

## Bridging traditional Bahri music and global jazz, Ghazi Al-Mulaifi and Amin Abdal nominated in Best Latin Jazz Album category

nominated. The Grammy doesn't have much reach in our region, so it was both surprising and exciting.

**KT:** What inspired you to blend traditional Kuwaiti sea music with global jazz, and how has your academic background influenced this fusion?

**Mulaifi:** My academic work focuses on Kuwait's maritime music and its connection to pearl diving and maritime

exchange, so Boom.Diwan is a natural extension of Bahri music.

**KT:** How do you balance your roles as a musician, professor and cultural ambassador? What challenges do you face in preserving and innovatively presenting Kuwaiti music to the world?

**Mulaifi:** I don't feel the need to balance these roles, as they all inform each other. To understand Bahri music, I



### WHAT'S ON IN KUWAIT

**Event:** Bugsha 'Back to School'  
**Location:** Kuwait International Fairground - Hall 4A  
**Date:** September 5-7, 2024

**Event:** The International Aesthetic Show  
**Location:** The Arena  
**Date:** September 5-7, 2024

**Event:** The Warehouse Series - Music  
**Location:** OTB Warehouse  
**Date:** September 6, 2024

**Event:** Kids Club  
**Location:** Art N Dine  
**Date:** September 6-7, 2024

**Event:** Muscle Movement  
**Location:** Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre  
**Date:** September 6-7, 2024

**Event:** Handmade Necklace Workshop  
**Location:** Moishi Kaifan  
**Date:** September 7, 2024

**Event:** Bint Ebjad Exhibition  
**Location:** Sadu House  
**Date:** September 7-21, 2024

## Sports

# Ugandan athlete Cheptegei dies after set on fire by boyfriend

## 'Her injuries were extensive and covered most parts of her body'

NAIROBI: Outrage and sorrow greeted the death on Thursday of Ugandan Olympian Rebecca Cheptegei, who succumbed to severe burns after being doused with petrol and set on fire by her boyfriend.

It was the latest horrific act of gender-based violence in the East African country, where activists have warned of a rising femicide epidemic. Cheptegei's death has been described as "senseless" and "a despicable crime". The 33-year-old long distance runner died at about 5:30 am (0230 GMT), the doctor treating her at a hospital in Eldoret in western Kenya told reporters.

"Her injuries were extensive and covered most parts of her body. It led to multiple organ failure," said Kimani Mbugua, head of the intensive care unit at the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital. "We tried our best but we did not succeed. Looking at her age and the over 80 percent burns she suffered, the hope of recovery was slim." Police have said the man who carried out the attack in her home in Endebs in the western county of Trans-Nzoia was a Kenyan man identified as Cheptegei's partner, Dickson Ndiema Marangach.

Kenyan media reports said her two young daughters had witnessed the brutal assault. It took place just weeks after Cheptegei had made her Olympic debut in the women's marathon at the Paris Games, where she finished in 44th. Marangach was also injured in the incident, sustaining 30 percent burns. His current condition is not known.

### 'Vicious attack'

The attack on Cheptegei made global headlines and has been widely condemned by the athletics community and women's rights groups. Kenyan Sports Minister Kipchumba Murkomen said it was a

"stark reminder" that more must be done to combat gender-based violence.

The Paris Olympics organizers voiced their "profound indignation and sadness" at her death. "This despicable crime reminds us of the alarming reality of violence affecting too many women in society," Uganda Olympic Committee chief Donald Rukare described it as a "vicious attack by her boyfriend".

"This was a cowardly and senseless act that has led to the loss of a great athlete." The Kenya National Olympic Committee also described her death as a "profound loss". "Rebecca's talent and perseverance as Uganda's Women's Marathon record holder and a Paris 2024 Olympian will always be remembered and celebrated." Police said Marangach had sneaked into Cheptegei's home near the border with Uganda on Sunday afternoon while she was at church with her two children.

A police report said they were a couple who "constantly had family wrangles". Her father Joseph Cheptegei has called for justice for his daughter. He told reporters Thursday that the property where she lived with her sister and daughters was the source of the problems between the pair. He had told Kenyan media earlier this week that Marangach had bought five litres of petrol and hid out in a chicken coop before the attack. "He poured the petrol and lit her on fire. When she called her sister to help, he threatened her with a machete and she ran away."

### 'I cried for help'

Kenya's The Standard newspaper reported that Cheptegei's daughters, aged nine and 11, had witnessed the assault. "He kicked me while I tried to run to the rescue of my mother," it reported one of the girls as saying. "I immediately cried out for help,



Rebecca Cheptegei

attracting a neighbor who tried to extinguish the flames with water, but it was not possible."

The attack has again thrown a spotlight on domestic violence in Kenya. In October 2021, record-breaking Kenyan runner Agnes Tirop, 25, was found stabbed to death at her home in the renowned Rift Valley running hub of Iten in a killing that shocked Kenya and the world of athletics. Her estranged husband is on trial over her murder and has denied the charges. In April 2022, Kenyan-born Bahraini athlete Damaris Mutua was also found dead in Iten. Her partner is suspected of the killing. Joan

Chelimo, athlete and cofounder of Tirop's Angels, a group set up to combat gender-based violence after Tirop's death, said on Instagram she was "deeply shaken and outraged" by the attack on Cheptegei. "This senseless violence must end."

Latest figures from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics published in January 2023 found that 34 percent of women had experienced physical violence since the age of 15. In 2022 alone, Kenya recorded 725 femicide cases, according to a UN report, the highest number since data collection began in 2015. — AFP

## Kuwait to host MATP for coaches

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait will host the regional special Olympics Motor Activity Training Program (MATP) to prepare coaches of activities program. The program will be organized by Kuwait Special Olympics under the supervision of International Special Olympics for MENA region, as trainers from GCC and Arab countries will participate including special Olympics MATP Global Technical Advisor Dr Eleni Rossides, Special Olympics MATP senior manager Dr Niamh Mourton, MENA Special Olympics Head of Sports and Training sector Dr Emad Mohyelddeen, Head of Games and competitions Dr Shareef Al-Fouly and Director of Leader Players Program Nuha Jaballah.

The program will last three days including lectures and practicals. National Director of Kuwait Special Olympics Rihab Bouresli said the event is being hosted by KSO out of its keenness to keep up with the latest developments in the field of training and home trainers skills to improve the sports and motor aspect of the mentally challenged persons, and affirming the role of Special Olympics and its active presence regionally and internationally.

Bouresli lauded the experience of participating lecturers from Arab and Western countries, and the turnout of trainers from MENA region. Bouresli expressed confidence in Kuwait cadres from Tomooh Club and Special Olympics to get the program organized as required and that fits Kuwait's care for the disabled.



Rihab Bouresli

## Buttler ruled out of Australia Twenty20 series

**LONDON:** England captain Jos Buttler has been ruled out of the upcoming Twenty20 series against Australia, with Phil Salt stepping up to lead the side. The 33-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman has not played since the T20 World Cup in June because of a calf injury and a recent setback has extended his lay-off.

Salt, who deputized for Buttler at Manchester Originals in this season's Hundred tournament, will lead England for the first time in Southampton on September 11, before games in Cardiff and at Old Trafford. England have been forced to juggle the captaincy in recent months across different formats.

Ollie Pope has taken charge of the Test team against Sri Lanka in the absence of skipper Ben Stokes, who suffered a torn hamstring. Harry Brook has served as Pope's vice-captain and is expected to be named as captain for the one-day internationals against Australia should Buttler's absence continue.

The five-match ODI series starts at Trent Bridge on September 19. England have tweaked their squads to cover for Buttler, adding Surrey all-rounder Jamie Overton to the T20 group and naming Jordan Cox as cover for the 50-over matches.

Marcus Trescothick will serve as interim head coach against Australia, with Test head coach Brendon McCullum taking over all formats in the new year. — AFP

## McCullum ready to be 'judged on results' as white-ball coach

**LONDON:** Test coach Brendon McCullum says he is ready to be judged on results when he takes charge of England's white-ball teams in a major leadership shake-up. The New Zealander has reinvigorated England's Test set-up alongside captain Ben Stokes since 2022 and will seek to bring his attacking "Bazball" approach to the limited-overs sides.

McCullum, 42, has extended his contract until the end of 2027, officially taking over the one-day international and Twenty20 sides in January to coincide with a tour of India and the Champions

Trophy in Pakistan. He will succeed Matthew Mott, sacked as coach of England's white-ball teams in July following lacklustre defences of their 50-over and Twenty20 World Cup titles.

"It's going to be an added workload that's for sure, but some bets are worth it, right?" McCullum said at the Oval on Thursday ahead of the third Test against Sri Lanka. McCullum, who said he had spoken to his wife before extending his contract and enhancing his role, added: "A couple of years ago I didn't have a whole lot of knowledge about English cricket, relationships. But fast forward two years and I've had a great time, I absolutely love being in the position I am in."

"I have a lot more knowledge about the talent that sits in English cricket. Ultimately I looked at the opportunity and thought what a great chance to have a good crack." England start a Twenty20 series against Australia on September 11 - just 24 hours after the last scheduled day of the third Test—and the

congested programme demonstrates why they opted to split coaching duties.

Former England batsman Marcus Trescothick will be in caretaker charge for the Australia series. But the workload is set to become more manageable ahead of the next T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka in 2026 and the 50-over equivalent in southern Africa in 2027.

"I think if we look at the schedule, it is easing," said McCullum. "The last two years would have been impossible, hence we went down the split coaches route. "Now with it easing — I say slightly — it can have one person in the role. We'll have to be smart with stepping (down) players and support staff, including myself, but I don't see it being a problem."

"I'm happy to be governed by results and be in the gun if things don't work out. "There's opportunities for other coaches to step up and run the team, just like Trescothick against Australia." — AFP

## Duplantis beats Warholm in exhibition 100m

**ZURICH:** Pole vault king Armand Duplantis beat 400m hurdles master Karsten Warholm in a one-off 100m exhibition race in Zurich on Wednesday. Pitched as "100m to settle it all, a battle of legends", Sweden's Duplantis used all his raw runway speed to belt out to an incredible start he never ceded.

Norway's Warholm, in lane six, one outside the Swede, never looked like reeling in his opponent, who won in 10.37 seconds. Duplantis, the newly-crowned double Olympic champion who has broken the pole vault world record an incredible 10 times, even threw across a cheeky peak to his right as he went through the line.

"I'm pretty fired up," said Duplantis. "I feel very, very good." Warholm clocked 10.47sec in second and as loser will don one of Duplantis' Sweden tops in competition in Thursday's Diamond League programme proper. "He had a great start, congrats," Warholm said of Duplantis.

The two track stars raced off at the Letzigrund Stadium to make good on some training ground banter that has escalated all the way to a sprint-off. Organizers managed to pack around 2,500 fans into the main tribune, tickets selling for up to 100 Swiss francs (106 euros).

The rivalry commenced after a joint training session between Warholm and Duplantis in the run-up to last year's Monaco Diamond League meet. "He was saying that I looked fast, and I was like, 'Let's race,'" Duplantis said.

## NFL breaks new ground with game in Brazil

**SAO PAULO:** The National Football League breaks new ground in its global expansion strategy on Friday when the Philadelphia Eagles and Green Bay Packers face off in the first ever grid-iron game staged in Brazil.

For one night only, the land of Pele and 'The Beautiful Game' will get a rare glimpse into the bone-crunching world of American football as the Packers and Eagles collide at Sao Paulo's Neo Quimica Arena, the 46,000-seat home of soccer club Corinthians.

The regular season fixture is part of the NFL's increasingly ambitious plans to spread America's most popular sport to new territories following previous international fixtures in London, Munich, Frankfurt, Toronto and Mexico City.

Spain will host a regular season game in 2025 at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium, home of European



ZURICH: Swedish pole vaulter Armand Duplantis (L) presents a Sweden jersey to be worn by Norwegian hurdler and sprinter Karsten Warholm after winning a head-to-head exhibition 100m sprint race on the sideline of the IAAF Diamond League "Weltklasse" athletics meet. — AFP

Warholm accepted the challenge after Duplantis claimed he could win. "With my ego and how highly I think of myself, I needed to accept," explained the Norwegian, the reigning 400m hurdles world record holder, an Olympic gold and silver medallist and three-time world champion.

### Clean scrap

On the night, each athlete was welcomed onto the track at the 50m mark in a glitzy walk-on worthy of prize fighters. Warholm came out wearing a boxer's red dressing gown, hood pulled up over a cap. His

coach Leif Olav Alnes followed, dressed in a skin-tight blue and white all-in one with "Fat by choice" written on his back, and also toting a Viking horn hat.

Duplantis wore a boxer's blue dressing gown, accompanied by an array of athletes including US sprinter Fred Kerley, who has been helping with his block training. "No biting, no kicking, no pulling of vests," said emcee Colin Jackson. "Shake hands and a good clean scrap," the former 110m hurdles world record holder said. There was only one winner of the "scrap" as Duplantis exploded out of the blocks and never looked back. — AFP

football giants Real Madrid. The NFL has said there are around 38 million American football fans in Brazil, of whom 8.3 million are described as avid. That makes Brazil the second largest international fan base after Mexico, according to the league.

The NFL has made it clear that it sees Brazil as a regular venue for games in the future, with Friday's game effectively establishing a beachhead for the sport. "The fundamental strategy is really a focus on becoming a true global sports property and growing the game and the fan base around the world," the NFL's executive vice-president of international events Peter O'Reilly said.

"We've seen when we've gone to a market with a game like Germany a few years ago, where we've committed to play, you've seen the demand, the passion and then the impact."

### 'Connecting year-round'

No sport, however, is likely to dethrone football as Brazil's national obsession, and Friday's NFL game will be competing for attention with Brazil's 2026 World Cup qualifying game against Ecuador in Curitiba.

Yet the South American country has a long record of embracing American culture, with the NBA increasingly regarding Brazil as a key international

market. In the NFL's case, the sport's profile was also boosted by quarterback icon Tom Brady's 13-year marriage to Brazilian supermodel Gisele Bundchen.

But the buzz around Friday's fixture in Sao Paulo has not been shared by some of the participants, with Philadelphia players A.J. Brown and Darius Slay revealing that they had been advised not to leave the team hotel due to concerns over crime.

Slay said that while he was looking forward to the fixture, he did not want to go Brazil. "They already told us not to leave the hotel. They told us we can't do too much going on, because the crime rate is crazy," Slay said.

"I'm like 'NFL, why would you want to send us somewhere with a crime rate this high?'" Slay later apologized for the remarks, insisting he had not meant to cause offence. "I'm looking forward to playing in your beautiful country," he wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

In purely sporting terms, Philadelphia coach Nick Sirianni will be looking for a fast start from new signing Saquon Barkley, while hoping to see his team adjust following the retirement of center Jason Kelce and defensive tackle Fletcher Cox.

Green Bay coach Matt LaFleur meanwhile will look to rising star quarterback Jordan Love to lead a young Packers team to victory. — AFP

Sports

# Bahrain stun 10-man Australia, Japan thrash China 7-0 in WCup qualifying

## Palestine give South Korea scare in stalemate

**GOLD COAST:** Bahrain stunned Australia 1-0 away on Thursday thanks to an 89th-minute Harry Souttar own goal in a major upset to start the third round of Asian qualifying for the 2026 World Cup. With the hosts down to 10 men, the match was headed for a scoreless draw on the Gold Coast until the defender Souttar deflected a shot from Abdulla Al-Khalasi into his own net.

It was Bahrain's first victory against Australia, who are ranked 56 places higher. The Socceroos struggled for fluency against their defensively minded opponents and their hopes nosedived after a red card in the 77th minute to striker Kusini Yengi for a high kick to the neck of defender Sayed Baqer.

The top two from each of the three Asian groups will be guaranteed a place at the expanded 48-team World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Japan, Saudi Arabia, China and Indonesia are in Group C alongside Australia and Bahrain.

Australia play Indonesia in Jakarta on Tuesday. The Socceroos were hot favorites having won all six previous matches against Bahrain, including a 2-0 friendly win earlier this year. Australia romped through the second qualifying round with maximum points and without conceding a goal.

They scored 22 goals in that phase, playing with flair and an aggressive style that coach Graham Arnold wanted replicated against Bahrain. Australia started with purpose and their first foray resulted in a long-range shot from Alessandro Circati that was tipped over the bar by goalkeeper Ebrahim Lutfalla.

But Bahrain held their own, effectively utilizing the right wing to mount several dangerous counterattacks. The game moved into a lull late in the first half before Craig Goodwin threatened with several piercing crosses into the box, only to be left frustrated by errant finishing. Bahrain continued to defend after the interval as Arnold turned to 18-year-old substitute Nestory Irankunda, who recently joined Bayern Munich.

Irankunda provided some energetic bursts, but failed to spark a game that became mired in stoppages as tempers flared. Yengi's send off rattled Australia, who were left stunned by the late winner as Bahrain celebrated a famous victory.

Meanwhile, Premier League stars Kaoru Mitoma and Wataru Endo both scored as Japan thrashed

China 7-0 on Thursday to start the third round of Asian World Cup qualifiers with a statement win. Brighton winger Mitoma, who has missed a chunk of this year with injury, was making his first appearance for Japan since the Asian Cup in January.

He announced his return in emphatic style in front of more than 50,000 fans in Saitama, scoring with a first-half header after Liverpool's Endo had given Japan the lead. Takumi Minamino added two more goals after the break to put Japan on cruise control against a China side looking to qualify for their first World Cup since 2002.

Junya Ito, who was also playing for Japan for the first time since the Asian Cup, scored another before late goals from Daizen Maeda and Takefusa Kubo capped a dominant performance from Hajime Moriyasu's side.

It was a night to forget for China, who squeezed into the third qualifying round thanks to a superior head-to-head record over Thailand. Japan gave China an early scare when Ritsu Doan powered a header at goal that goalkeeper Wang Dalei had to turn round the post. But the warning went unheeded as Endo found himself completely unmarked to head home the opener from the resulting corner. Japan doubled their lead on the stroke of half-time when Mitoma nodded home Doan's cross at the back post in injury time.

Minamino got Japan off to a flying start to the second half when he skipped past a defender into the China box and curled a shot past Wang and into the net. The Monaco forward struck again six minutes later, again cutting through the Chinese defence and lashing the ball past Wang.

Ito marked his return to the team with Japan's fifth goal after coming on as a substitute. The Reims winger had not featured since he left the Asian Cup squad after a Japanese magazine published allegations that he sexually assaulted two women in a hotel in Osaka last year.

Japanese prosecutors dropped charges against the player last month and he has denied any wrongdoing. Maeda scored Japan's sixth with a back-post header in the 87th minute. Japan and China have also been drawn with Australia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Indonesia in a tricky-looking Group C.

The top two are guaranteed a place at the World Cup, with the third and fourth-placed sides going



**GOLD COAST:** Bahrain's Mahdi Abdul Jabar Hasan (L) and Australia's Aiden O'Neill (R) compete for the ball during the 2026 FIFA World Cup AFC qualifiers football match between Australia and Bahrain at Cbus Super Stadium on the Gold Coast on September 5, 2024. — AFP

to a further round of qualifying.

Earlier, Palestine gave South Korea a major scare in an entertaining 0-0 away draw on Thursday as they attempt to reach the World Cup for the first time. Making their debut in the third stage of Asian qualifying and 96 in FIFA's rankings to South Korea's 23, Palestine refused to be overawed for much of an open contest in Seoul.

Palestine play their home matches abroad, usually in the Middle East, because of the war in Gaza. The local league has been suspended and many of the players are without a club. Despite those obstacles, they thought they had taken the lead in the 22nd minute at the 66,000-capacity Seoul World Cup Stadium, only for the goal to be correctly ruled out for off-side.

The hosts, under their fourth coach this year with Hong Myung-bo, looked shaky at the back and were struggling to get their talisman and skipper Son Heung-min into the game. Their best chance of an even first half fell to Lee Kang-in, but Palestinian goalkeeper Rami Hamadeh just about kept out the Paris

Saint-Germain player's well-struck close-range effort. The Palestinians appeared to tire in the second half and were restricted to rare breakaways.

Lee was again guilty of missing a glorious chance when he shot wildly, then was denied with a 74th-minute freekick that Hamadeh tipped over the bar. Oday Dabbagh then went close for the visitors on the break, before Spurs star Son rattled the outside of the post in the dying minutes.

But Palestine held on for a precious point and were good value for the draw. Under their Tunisian coach Makram Daboub the Palestinian team have reached new heights this year. At this year's Asian Cup, they won a game for the first time in the history of the competition, defeating Hong Kong 3-0.

That put them into the knockout rounds of the tournament, another first, before going down 2-1 to hosts and eventual champions Qatar. The squad trained in Malaysia for the South Korea game and will return there to prepare for their next qualifier, against Jordan in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday, in what is nominally a home match. — AFP

## Tournament expansions pose serious threat to player welfare: Union

**PARIS:** Global footballers' union FIFPro believes the sport's governing bodies are "failing to meet their duty of care" towards players, denying them sufficient rest and imposing extra games with the expansion of tournaments such as the Champions League and Club World Cup.

The organization released a report Thursday calling for safeguards to be introduced for players who already face excessive workloads amid a constantly growing calendar. The report on player workload in men's football underlines concerns over "growing intrusion into their private lives, and a lack of player care by football governing bodies," FIFPro says.

The union suggests bringing in a guaranteed minimum amount of time off, and even the introduction of a maximum number of games for players. The report is published just before the start of the new, expanded UEFA Champions League which now involves up to four extra games for participating clubs.

The season in Europe is also due to finish with the first edition of FIFA's expanded Club World Cup in the United States, featuring 32 teams. It is due to take place from mid-June to mid-July, a time when players can usually expect to have some time off in years with no major international tournament.

"The physical and mental well-being of players must be a priority if we want to maintain the integrity of the game," said Stephane Burchkalter, FIFPro's acting General Secretary. "The cannibalization of the competition calendar is pushing players beyond their limits and is encroaching on their private lives."

"We need safeguards for players to limit their travel, ensure rest periods, and provide adequate recovery so they can reach peak performance," FIFPro's study surveyed 1,500 players and found that 54 percent were already exposed to what it called "excessive or high workload demands".

### Defining season

It cites the example of Julian Alvarez, who played in 75 games for club and country last season, including appearing at both the Copa America and Olympics for Argentina. In total he was included in 83 matchday squads, travelling and preparing for these



Stephane Burchkalter

matches even if he did not always appear.

Maheta Molango, CEO of England's Professional Footballers' Association, cited the fine starts to this season of Manchester City's Erling Haaland and Liverpool's Mohamed Salah — who did not go to Euro 2024 or the Copa America — as examples of the benefits of having a proper break between seasons. "It is very nice to go to a dressing room and hear someone say how much they missed training," Molango said. "It was very telling when you see the feedback from people who have not had that rest. — AFP

### Paris Paralympics medals table

Medals table after the seventh day of competition at the Paris Paralympics on Wednesday:

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
China	62	46	27	135
Great Britain	33	25	16	74
USA	25	26	12	63
Netherlands	16	7	5	28
France	15	17	18	50
Brazil	15	15	27	57
Ukraine	13	18	21	52
Italy	13	10	23	46
Australia	11	12	18	41
Spain	7	8	17	32
Germany	6	7	13	26
Uzbekistan	6	5	4	15
India	5	9	10	24
Japan	5	6	10	21
Thailand	5	6	6	17

## US Paralympic track star Malone credits mum for his success

**PARIS:** Noah Malone, one of several young and charismatic stars of the US Paralympic athletics team, credits his mother for pushing her reluctant son to his goals, admitting "I did not even like (the sport) at first."

So it was to his family — there are seven of them in Paris including his mother LaTasha Sturdivant — that a beaming Malone ran straight to after winning the T12 400 metres silver medal on Thursday as rain bucketed down at the Stade de France.

The 22-year-old had already won 100m gold — upgraded from silver after the Turkish winner was disqualified — and could add a third medal in the 4x100m relay. Malone — who aged 13 was diagnosed with Leber's hereditary optic neuropathy (LHON), a rare, incurable genetic disease that leads to central vision loss — already had relay gold and 100m silver from the Tokyo Games three years ago.

Growing up, his mother had noticed how fast he ran round the garden at their home in Indiana and although he was much more interested by basketball, she took him to a track and field club. "Yeah, back in fourth grade," said Malone, who has also found time to write a book, "Losing Vision Not Dreams", about his teenage years.

"She was the one who got me into track. I didn't even like it at first, but she kept pushing me towards my goals." Malone says it was gratifying for him to have his nearest and dearest in the stadium after they were absent in Tokyo because of COVID restrictions.

They have been pivotal to his journey to becoming a star, he says. "That's why I went straight to them after the race," he said after finishing second to Mouncef Bouja of Morocco in a time of 49.35sec. "I didn't want to see anyone else, so I went straight to them. They were huge supporters." "When I was stressed out, we'd go out to dinner. This was the first major competition where I had everyone here. "They helped me. They're like the real winners in my eyes. I'm just here. "They're the ones who really got me here."

Malone's love of basketball still seems to burn bright because he admitted being part of a team made him a lot less nervous for the upcoming re-

lay. The individual events were "just really, really, really hard," he said.

### Rollercoaster ride

"I'm just relieved that it's over... Now it's a team aspect. I don't really get as nervous because it's a team. "But when I'm out there fighting by myself, the nerves heighten." Malone, along with compatriots and winners of two gold medals in their respective categories, Ezra Frech, 19 (in the 100m and high jump), and 20-year-old Jaydin Blackwell (100m and 400m), promise a great future for the USA in the years to come, especially with the next Paralympics taking place in Los Angeles.

"Jaydin, Ezra, myself. There's a lot," said Malone. "I think it's a young team. I think Team USA is re-



**SAINT-DENIS:** Silver Medallist US' Noah Malone celebrates on the podium during the medal ceremony for the Men's 100m T12 athletics Final at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. — AFP

ally doing well with the medal count, with the people who are getting the medals, really talented." Malone said he "can walk away with my head held high" but conceded racing in three events barely left him time to breathe.

"It was a rollercoaster ride," he said. "A lot of ups, a lot of downs, a lot of exciting and stressful moments. "When you're at the Games and you have six total races, there's not really many moments to just enjoy the moment. "Because you're always looking to the next one." However, he said he was one of the fortunate ones. "At the same time, you've got to enjoy it," he said. "Not everybody can be here. This only happens every four years (and) not everyone medals. "So it is a win." — AFP

# Classifieds

## Clinics & Hospitals

### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804

Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

### Hospitals

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

## Change of Name

**I, SUWEL ABDUL RAHIMAN KHAN**, holder of Indian Passport No. M3188531 having permanent address at Post Sagwe Tal Rajapur Dist Ratnagiri MS, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) SOHAIL A RAHIM and (surname) KHAN. (#6163 06/09/2024)

**I, SHAJI JOB**, holder of Indian Passport No P1094284 having permanent address 42/827 Thekkiniyath house, Chiyaram P.O 680026 Thrikkur Kerala, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) Shaji and (surname) Varghese. (#5917 05/09/2024)

## Sinner faces Draper for final spot

World number one Swiatek knocked out of US Open by Pegula



NEW YORK: USA's Jessica Pegula serves to Poland's Iga Swiatek during their women's quarterfinals match on day ten of the US Open tennis tournament at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City. — AFP

NEW YORK: Jannik Sinner closed in on his second Grand Slam title of 2024 on Wednesday when he reached his maiden US Open semi-final as Jessica Pegula stunned Iga Swiatek to complete a rollercoaster Grand Slam year for the world number one.

Top seed Sinner defeated 2021 US Open champion and two-time runner-up Daniil Medvedev 6-2, 1-6, 6-1, 6-4. He will take on 25th-ranked Jack Draper for a place in the final after the British player made his first semi-final at the Slams with a 6-3, 7-5, 6-2 win over Australia's Alex de Minaur.

Sinner, 23, is the only top-10 man to make the semi-finals with number 12 Taylor Fritz due to face US compatriot Frances Tiafoe, ranked 20, in Friday's other last-four duel. Sixth-ranked Pegula booked a place in the last-four of a Grand Slam for

the first time by sweeping past Swiatek 6-2, 6-4. On Thursday, she will tackle Karolina Muchova who saw off Beatriz Haddad Maia of Brazil 6-1, 6-4. Emma Navarro of the US tackles world number two and Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka in the other women's semi-final.

### 'Very physical'

"It was very tough, I knew it would be very physical," said Sinner, who had also beaten Medvedev to capture the Australian Open. "It was strange in the first two sets, whoever got the break started to roll." Medvedev had to save 10 of 15 break points while his dream of making a 10th Slam semi-final was undermined by 57 unforced errors. Draper pulled off the victory over 10th-ranked De Minaur despite taking a medical timeout early in the second set to have his right thigh bandaged.

"It's amazing. My first time on Arthur Ashe Stadium, it means the world to me," said Draper, who had lost three times in three meetings with De Minaur before Wednesday. "I played a solid match and I feel the best, fitness-wise, that I have felt in a long time."

Draper is the first British man to make the last four since Andy Murray won the title 12 years ago. He has made the semi-finals without dropping a set as he continued an impressive summer run which saw him capture his first ATP title in Stuttgart and then defeat Carlos Alcaraz at Queen's Club.

Draper sent down 11 aces among his 40 winners while forcing De Minaur to fend off 14 of 20 break points. The British player enjoys a 1-0 lead over Sinner in the pair's head-to-head record although that win at Queen's came three years ago. Pegula has now won 14 times in 15 matches on US hard courts this summer.

land Garros courts, she had to settle for the bronze medal.

"Finally I can say I'm a semi-finalist. I lost so many of these damn things," said the American after her fourth career win against Swiatek. Before Wednesday, she had lost six times at the quarter-final stage at the majors.

### 'Was so tight'

"Thanks to the crowd. I sent over a 65mph second serve (on a third match point) because I was so tight." Swiatek was undone by 41 unforced errors and was left to ponder an uneven season at the Grand Slams.

There was the high of a fourth French Open triumph but that was sandwiched by third-round exits at the Australian Open and Wimbledon. At the Paris Olympics, played on her favourite Ro-

land Garros courts, she had to settle for the bronze medal.

"It's hard to have low expectations when everybody is expecting something from you," said Swiatek. Muchova's win over Haddad Maia came despite having to sprint to the bathroom early in the second set, a dash which caught everyone on the hop.

"I had a problem that I wouldn't like to comment on," said the 28-year-old. "I really didn't have any other choice." After losing to eventual champion Coco Gauff in the 2023 semi-finals, Muchova suffered a serious wrist injury which sidelined her until June this year. A former world number eight, now ranked at 52, Muchova has yet to drop a set, knocking out two-time champion Naomi Osaka and this year's French Open and Wimbledon runner-up Jasmine Paolini. — AFP

## Vio gets fresh chance for gold at Paralympics

PARIS: Italian Paralympic superstar Bebe Vio has a chance for redemption on Thursday as she goes for gold in the wheelchair fencing team event after failing in her individual title defence, while the USA must beat Canada to reach the men's wheelchair basketball final.

In one of the biggest shocks of the Paris Games, Vio—one of the faces of Nike's marketing campaign for the event—lost her semi-final in the women's foil category B on Wednesday. The Italian, who uses prosthetic arms after having all four limbs amputated when she contracted meningitis at the age of 11, was visibly furious with herself after she lost to Xiao Rong of China.

She regained her poise to win a bronze medal as Saysunee Jana of Thailand defeated Xiao to take the title. Vio, 27, put a brave face on the outcome. "(Xiao) deserved to get to the final for the gold, she was better than me, she was better prepared physically and mentally. As for me, I was there but not as much as she was," she said.

The bronze medal meant "a lot, it's worth a lot, it's beautiful, I'm really, really happy", she said. On Thursday she joins her Italian teammates as they start their quest for gold against the USA in the ornate surroundings of the Grand Palais.

### USA v Canada basketball battle

Italy are seeking to improve on their silver medal from the Tokyo Games three years ago. Another global face of the Paralympic movement, Oksana Masters, won her second gold of these Games as the Ukrainian-born US cyclist took the H5 road race title. Masters now has eight Paralympic golds.

In other sports, the USA men's basketball team are



PARIS: Spain's Ignacio Ortega #24 (L) fights for the ball with US' Trevor Jenifer #16 (R) during the Men's Preliminary Round Group B of the men's Wheelchair Basketball match between USA and Spain. — AFP

aiming to emulate their Olympic counterparts by winning gold—but Canada stand in their way in the semi-finals. The Canadians are appearing at this stage for the first time since they won the gold medal at London 2012. The USA have won the two editions since and will be aiming to make it three in a row.

Britain face Germany in the other semi-final, with the Britons hoping to reach the final for the first time since Atlanta 1996. History was made in wheelchair tennis, when Guo Luoyao and Wang Ziyang won a first ever medal for China at a Paralympics when they took bronze in the women's doubles at Roland Garros.

Paris 2024 chief organiser Tony Estanguet said

on Thursday that Sunday's closing ceremony of the Paralympics, which is billed as a giant concert featuring the best of French electronic music, would be a highly symbolic end to a summer of Olympic and Paralympic sport in Paris.

"We really want this summer to end in the best way with a really great closing ceremony, for the Paralympics, but in fact what we are celebrating on Sunday evening is the end of the whole of Paris 2024."

China were clear leaders in the medals table on 64 golds with Great Britain second on 33 and the USA third with 25, with the evening session still to come on Thursday. — AFP

## Endo vows to fight for Liverpool place

LONDON: Japan's out-of-favour Liverpool midfielder Wataru Endo said Thursday he believes he still has a future at Anfield. Endo was linked with a move away from the club over the summer and new boss Arne Slot has used him just once—as a 90th-minute substitute—in three Premier League games this season.

The Japan captain opened the scoring in a 7-0 thrashing of China in a World Cup qualifier in Saitama and said afterwards he was "not so worried" about his club situation. "When the international break is finished there is a run of games so I'll get more chances," said the 31-year-old.

"You can't just use 11 players when you have a lot of games. I'm sure I'll get my turn." The hard-working Endo won over the Liverpool fans after his low-profile arrival from German side Stuttgart last year. He was instrumental as Liverpool beat Chelsea in last season's Carabao Cup final to give outgoing coach Jurgen Klopp his final trophy with the club.

"My physical condition won't be a problem," said Endo. "I've been training well and I'm not worried about it." Endo said he believes he can maintain his form for his country despite his lack of minutes for Liverpool.

Japan face Bahrain away in their next World Cup qualifier on Tuesday. "At my age I have experience so getting a feel for games isn't a problem," he said. "I feel I can perform well in this round of World Cup qualifiers. The important thing is to train and prepare well." — AFP