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## Kuwait Amir congratulates Biden on US Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, July 4, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to US President Joseph Biden, on his country's 248th Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir commended the historic and strategic relations between the two countries, expressing both nations' keenness to bolster ties and cooperation in all possible domains to serve their mutual interests.

His Highness the Amir wished the American President good health and further progress and development for the United States and its friendly people.

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# Kuwait temperatures to reach 50°C this weekend

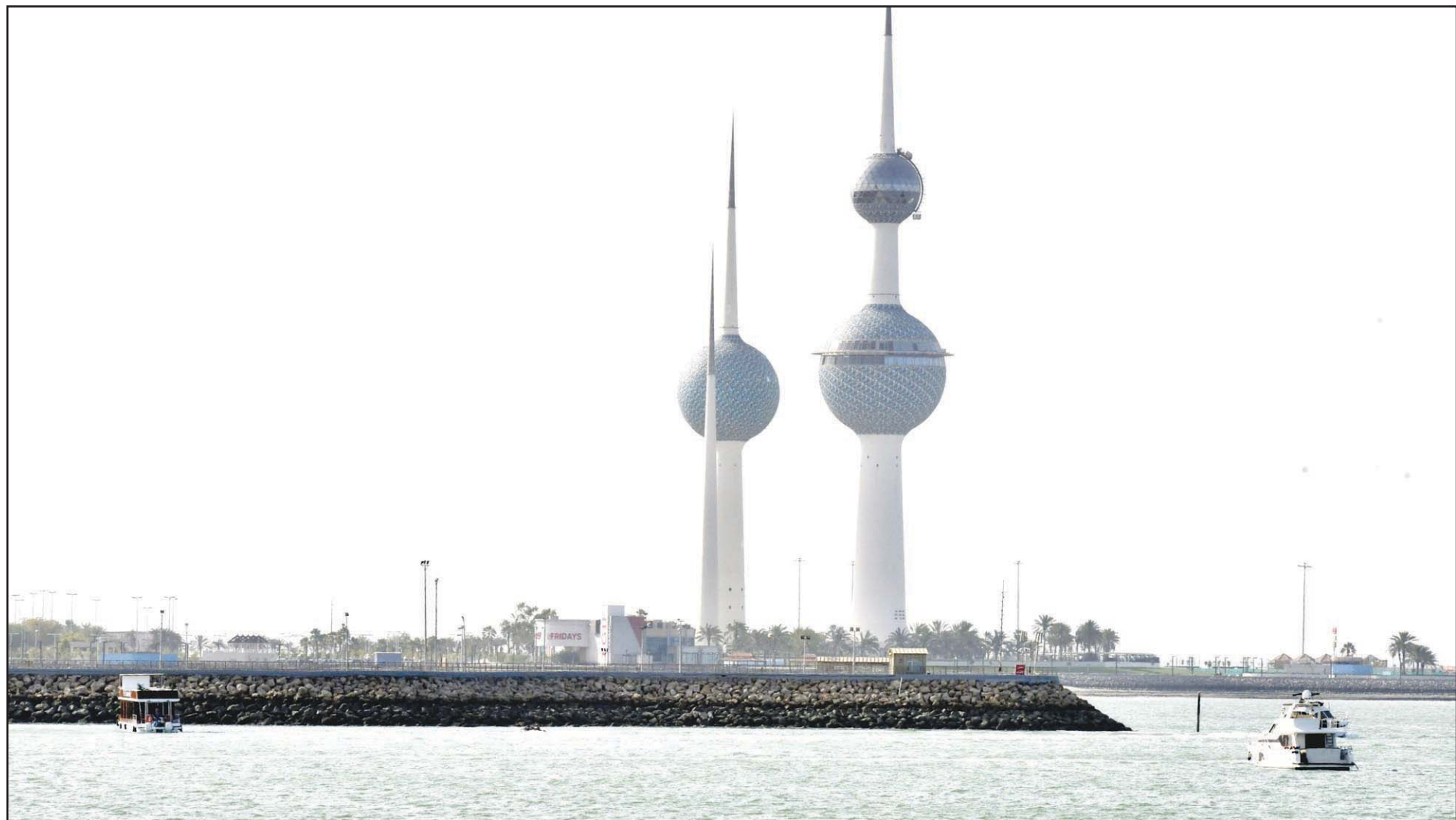


Photo by Mohamad Morse

Kuwait Towers gleam under scorching skies on Thursday afternoon as temperatures soar between 46°C and 48°C.

### Expect high winds, dust and intense heatwave

**KUWAIT CITY, July 4, (KUNA):** The weather in Kuwait during this period and over the weekend will be very hot during the day and warm to hot at night, according to the Meteorological Department.

Director Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi informed Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that weather maps and numerical models indicate the country will be affected by an extension of the seasonal Indian depression, bringing a hot and dry air mass and northwesterly winds.

These winds will be generally light to moderate in speed but sometimes active, causing dust.

Al-Qarawi explained that on Thursday, the weather will be very hot with northwesterly winds, light to moderate, sometimes active, ranging from 12 to 45 kilometers per hour. There is a chance of dust in exposed areas, and the expected maximum temperatures will range between 46 and 48 degrees Celsius. The sea will be light to moderate, with waves between 2 and 5 feet.

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### Banks in Kuwait to close Sunday

KUWAIT CITY, July 4, (KUNA): All local banks will close on Sunday, July 7, as an official holiday on the occasion of the new 1446 Hijri year, Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) announced Thursday.

KBA said in a press release that all banks will resume their work on Monday.

### NewsWatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** The Amiri Diwan voiced many thanks to all citizens and residents who offered condolence over the demise of Sheikha Soheira Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, widow of Sheikh Fahad Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, praying to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon her soul and grant her the highest place in paradise. (KUNA)

**KUWAIT CITY:** Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya and newly appointed Egyptian Foreign Minister Dr. Bader Abdulati discussed on Thursday the historic ties linking their two countries and ways to enhance them on all levels.

This came in a phone conversation between the two officials, said a statement by the Foreign Ministry.

Foreign Minister Al-Yahya congratulated Abdulati on assuming office, wishing him the best during his tenure.

The two officials also touched on the latest regional and international developments and exchange views on mutual issues. (KUNA)

**RIYADH:** Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah, received a phone call Wednesday from the United States Secretary of State, Antony Blinken.

During the call, Prince Faisal and Secretary Blinken reviewed developments in the regional arena, especially in the Gaza Strip and Sudan, the Saudi Press Agency reported. (KUNA)

**RAMALLAH:** The Israeli occupation military massacred some 58 Palestinians and injured 179 others in the latest act of bloodshed committed against the Gaza Strip the past 24 hours, said media sources on Thursday.

The Gaza Health Authorities pointed out that there were still people under the rubble caused by the Israeli onslaught, adding that the latest number brings the total of dead to 38,011 and injured to 87,445 since October 7, 2023.

On another development, the media office of the Gaza government indicated that fuel was running out at Al-Nasser Medical Complex, the last main hospital in Gaza, after the European hospital went out of service, leading to a shortage in health services in Khan Yunis and Rafah.

The statement laid responsibility upon the Israeli occupation and the US administration for allowing the humanitarian catastrophe to continue in the Gaza Strip, indicating that lives were on the line due to the lack of resources.

It called upon the international community and the UN to put a halt to the heinous Israeli crimes, which led to almost a complete halt of medical services. (KUNA)

**BEIRUT:** The Lebanese Hezbollah group said it launched over 200 rockets on Thursday at several military bases in Israel in retaliation for a strike that killed one of its senior commanders.

The attack by the Iran-backed militant group was one of the largest in the monthlong conflict along the Lebanon-Israel border, with tensions escalating in recent weeks.

The Israeli military said "numerous projectiles and suspicious aerial targets" had entered its territory from Lebanon, many of which it said were intercepted. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

It said about 200 "projectiles" were launched toward the occupied Syrian Golan Heights and over 20 dunes in Israeli territory, but that it had intercepted some of them.

Israel after Hezbollah's attack struck various towns in southern Lebanon. The Israeli military said it hit Hezbollah's "military structures" in the southern border towns of Rameh and Houla. (AP)



Abdulati

Photo by Mohamad Morse

### Kuwait forecasts KD 18.9 bln revenue

## Reforms key to avert KD 70bn deficit

By Najeh Bilal  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: Sultan Al-Jazzaf, a member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Economic Society and an economic researcher, has warned that Kuwait's budget could face losses of up to 70 billion dinars over the next decade due to the country's continued over-reliance on oil.



Al-Mudhaf

In a statement to Al-Seyassah, Al-Jazzaf emphasized that this reliance will lead to a persistent financial deficit unless proactive measures are taken to diversify income sources through the private sector, which currently contributes only 10% to the gross

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## Health minister commends Amiri Hospital's technology integration

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi commended the significant strides toward digital transformation and the automation of medical services at Al-Amiri Hospital.

He emphasized that this initiative aligns with the ministry's vision to enhance technology utilization in the health sector, aiming to improve service efficiency and the overall patient experience.

During his visit to the hospital, Dr. Al-Awadhi toured the central pharmacy and observed the smart dispensing technology in action. He praised the advanced technology, noting that it aims to minimize errors and enhance the speed and efficiency of medicine dispensation to patients.

In other news, Dr. Al-Awadhi em-

phasized the need for ongoing cooperation and coordination among all internal medicine departments to achieve their objectives and enhance healthcare services for citizens and residents. He commended the efforts of these departments across various hospitals. These remarks were made during a press statement issued by the ministry on Thursday following a meeting between Minister Al-Awadhi, the Internal Medicine Departments Council, Ministry Undersecretary Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Council Head Dr. Mohammad Al-Jarallah, and heads of internal medicine departments in the country's hospitals.

The statement highlighted that the meeting was part of the Minister of Health's and Undersecretary's plan to engage with technical department councils across various specialties.

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### Kuwait anticipates Schengen progress

By Fares Al-Abdan  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya has confirmed that the Schengen file for Kuwaitis is receiving significant attention from the European Union's envoy to the Gulf States, Luigi Di Maio.

Al-Yahya noted that results are expected after the summer, following the elections in Europe.

During his participation in the celebration held by the European Union Mission in Kuwait, marking the fifth anniversary of the

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MoFA photo  
Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya receives visiting European Union (EU) Special Representative for Gulf region Luigi Di Maio on Thursday. During the meeting, they reviewed the strategic partnership between Kuwait and the EU and ways to enhance them in various fields, as well as discussing topics of common interest and issues on a regional and international level, and developments in the region.

## Kuwait boosts efforts to curb 'human trafficking'

KUWAIT CITY, July 4, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi underlined commitment to improving Kuwait's rating in trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling, urging concerted national efforts in this regard.

The minister made the remarks to KUNA following the 12th meeting of the Permanent National Committee for Implementing the National Strategy for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants.

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Ministry of Justice photo  
Kuwaiti Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi during the meeting.



Photo by Ihab Qurtal  
Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya joins the European Union mission in Kuwait to celebrate the fifth anniversary of their new headquarters. - See Page 2



## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	03:18	Asr .....	15:26
Sunrise ..	04:53	Maghrib ..	18:51
Zohr .....	11:52	Isha .....	20:23

# Local

BIOMETRIC/FINGERPRINT APPOINTMENT: <https://meta.e.gov.kw/En/>

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas and some high clouds will appear.

## Weather

**By Night:** Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-38 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	47	34
Kuwait Airport	47	33

Abdaly	48	29
Jahra	48	32
Salmiyah	43	34
Nuwaisib	47	31
Wafra	47	30

## FM expresses Kuwait's pride in its cooperative relations with EU and European countries

# Kuwait marks 5th anniversary of EU delegation opening its mission

By Paul Francis X. Fernandes  
 Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: The Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Al-Yahya, expressed Kuwait's pride in its cooperative relations with the European Union (EU) and European countries during celebrations marking the fifth anniversary of the opening of the EU delegation mission in Kuwait.

He commended the EU mission's efforts in enhancing cooperation and expanding bilateral relations.

EU Ambassador Anne Koistinen, present at the event, expressed gratitude for the attendance of Luigi Di Maio, EU Special Representative for the Gulf region, and highlighted the significant progress made in EU-Kuwait relations over the past five years.

She underscored the increased engagements on mutual interests such as green initiatives, trade, economic diversification, security, and human rights.

Ambassador Koistinen credited Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the leadership of HH Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for their steadfast support.

She also recognized the collaboration of EU Member States' Ambassadors as crucial to their joint efforts.

Special Representative Luigi Di Maio praised the EU delegation's role in facilitating productive ex-



Kuwait FM Abdullah Al-Yahya and EU Ambassador Anne Koistinen. Photos by Ihab Qutal



EU Ambassador Koistinen and EU Special Representative for the Gulf region Di Maio with other guests.

changes since its inception and noted Kuwait's pivotal role in the Gulf region.

He emphasized strengthened ties following the EU's new Gulf strategy, highlighting visits by High Rep-

resentative Josep Borrell and mutual efforts in economic cooperation and regional security.

Di Maio highlighted Kuwait's reliability as a close ally amid regional challenges and discussed joint dip-

lomatic training initiatives for GCC and EU youth diplomats.

Looking forward, he pledged to advance discussions on diplomatic training partnerships between institutions in Kuwait and the EU.

In trade matters, Di Maio acknowledged Kuwait's interest in visa liberalization and affirmed efforts to resume Free Trade Agreement negotiations between the EU and GCC, aiming to bolster economic ties be-

tween the regions. The anniversary event underscored Kuwait and the EU's commitment to deepening their partnership across various sectors, marking a milestone in their collaborative journey.

## Amir condoles Venezuela over victims of hurricane

KUWAIT CITY, July 4, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences Thursday to Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, expressing sincere condolences over victims of the hurricane that struck the eastern country, leading to numerous casualties, as well as the destruction of public facilities and properties.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the injured a speedy recovery and hoped that Venezuelan officials will be able to overcome the effects of this natural disaster.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to President Nicolas Maduro, expressing sincere condolences over victims of the hurricane that struck country, causing numerous casualties, as well as the destruction of public facilities and properties.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of condolences to President Nicolas Maduro, expressing sincere condolences over victims of the hurricane.

# Kuwait keen to empower women, put them in top positions: official

3rd meeting of national panel over UNSC Resolution 1325 held

KUWAIT CITY, July 4, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait is keen on empowering women and also ensures that they were in positions of power, said an official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Thursday.

Speaking to KUNA after the third meeting of the national committee to execute UNSC Resolution 1325 women, peace, and security, Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah stressed the need to empower women in society to add to the country's highest potentials.

Ambassador Sheikh Jawaher Al-Sabah, also head of the committee, indicated that the goals of the meeting were in line with the leadership's guidelines and people aspirations.

Topics of the meeting included bolstering programs and policies aimed to protect women against violence, devising proper mechanisms in this regard, affirmed the diplomat.

She indicated that the idea of community policing was also on the agenda of the meeting, adding that the committee also celebrated recent feats in including more women in the police force and top security administrative positions throughout the country.

According to the UN, the Security Council adopted resolution on women and peace and security on October 31, 2000.

The resolution reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

Resolution 1325 urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts.

It also calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.

The resolution provided a number of important operational mandates, with implications for Member States and the entities of the United Nations system.



Ambassador Sheikh Jawaher in a group photo.

KUNA photo

## 'Durra' calls on co-ops union to open co's branches

### Kuwait to recruit Filipino domestics amidst reforms

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: Chairman of the Board of Directors of Durra Domestic Labor Recruitment Company Mohammad Ahmad Al-Olayan confirmed that Filipino domestic workers will be available to citizens as soon as the recruitment process begins, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a statement to the daily, Al-Olayan stressed this is in compliance with the directives of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf Al-Sabah.

ate the suffering of citizens.

He said the cost of recruiting a Filipino domestic worker will be KD700 including the travel ticket, while the cost for hiring a Sri Lankan domestic worker will be KD750 including the ticket; and the cost for hiring a domestic worker, driver and cook will be KD180 including the ticket.

He said the company has asked the Union of Cooperative Societies to open branches of the company in the governorates, affirming the union has been cooperating in this regard to better serve the citizens.

He added: "The company is keen on coordinating with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior and Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) to open markets

for recruiting domestic workers in other Asian and African countries." He praised the response of government agencies regarding this file, hoping it will yield positive results soon. He also lauded the efforts of the ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs, and PAM.

He thanked Kuwait Airways Corporation represented by the chairman of its board of directors, Kuwait Investment Authority represented by its managing director, Public Authority for Minors' Affairs represented by its director general, Public Institution for Social Security represented by its director general, and the Union of Cooperative Societies represented by its president for their unwavering support for the company.

## First session of bilateral consultations held

### Kuwait's Assistant FM stresses closer ties with Singapore

KUWAIT CITY, July 4, (KUNA): Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Hayat said Thursday that Kuwait is keen on promoting relations and cooperation with Singapore in all fields, including education.

The ambassador made the statement to KUNA following the first session of bilateral consultations at the level of senior officials of the foreign ministries of Kuwait and Singapore, saying that both sides are set to mark 40 years since their bilateral relations were established. He added that both sides share the same views on various issues, stressing continued communication, coordination and cooperation

## Deputy FM holds lunch banquet for EU rep

KUWAIT CITY, July 4, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held a lunch banquet in the honor of EU Special Representative for the Gulf region Luigi Di Maio

and his accompanying delegation on Thursday.

The two sides discussed enhancing cooperation between Kuwait and the EU, as well as the recent regional and international developments.

in this regard.

Hailing the bilateral consultations as "fruitful", the ambassador said they had discussed the bilateral relations between both friendly countries, ways of promoting and developing them in all areas and the latest regional and international

developments.

He also conveyed the greetings of Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, who looks forward to his Singaporean counterpart Vivian Balakrishnan's planned visit to Kuwait next year.



Photo by Mohammad Morse  
 People during the auction of the fish at the Souk Sharq Fish Market.

## Imported 'meed' price hits KD 8/kg

# Fishermen shortage leads to mullet scarcity in fish market

By Abdul-Nasser Al-Aslami  
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: The price of imported mullet, which is known locally as 'meed', has reached KD8 per kilogram; while it remains scarce locally due to the absence of fishermen.

It has been reported that the market for fishermen has become scarce, so the amount of catch has become scarce as well, especially with the opening of the mullet fishing season at the beginning of this month.

The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) announced that it will allow mullet fishing in Kuwaiti territorial waters from July 1 until Nov 30; except the Kuwait Bay, three miles of the coast and around the Kuwaiti islands.

Meanwhile, fish stall owner Abu Bader stated: "We hear about mullet but we have not seen it in the market due to the scarcity of fishermen who are mainly at sea and many of them have traveled. This happened despite the start of the mullet fishing season four days ago. Most of the mullet available in the local market are imported from Oman and the price is KD3 per kilogram. There is scarcity of local fish in general, even finned black sea bream and greasy grouper, as most fishermen fish for personal consumption and do not enter the market their catch. In addition, it is prohibited to fish stromateus until the middle of this month. Therefore, there is nothing other than imported fish from Iranian in particular and the price reached KD8 per kilo; while a kilo of local

greasy grouper costs KD7, spotter grouper costs KD10, finned black sea bream costs KD5 and silvery croaker around KD4. Some fishermen in Sharq Market confirmed that it was empty of fish after the seizure of fishing boats at Subiya dock. Most of the boats were unable to catch mullet in the places specified by authority, and some were unable to catch anything, so a small amount of fish was supplied."

In addition, the statement of PAAAFR in this regard excluded the eastern part within three miles of the coast of Bubiyan Island from Ras Al-Barsha in the South to Ras Al-Qaid in the North, unless this contradicts any other decisions.

The statement added that fishing around Miskan, Failaka and Awha islands within the three-mile area from the coast of these islands is also prohibited; reiterating the prohibition of catching and trading in mullet outside the fishing season.

The authority also stressed the necessity of applying a number of conditions and controls when fishing for mullet in the prohibited areas, such as obtaining a seasonal permit to catch mullet from the concerned department.

It also explained that the fishing hours are from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, indicating it has the right to withdraw the fishing permit once a violation is committed.

It called on everyone to adhere to the controls and laws, warning that anyone who violates this decision will be subject to penalties stipulated in Law No. 46/1980 regarding the protection of fish wealth.



## 'Urgency to adopt predictive maintenance in Arab culture'

"THE Arab mentality often leans towards postponing tasks and relying on divine intervention, sometimes excessively and negatively. This is reflected in numerous proverbs within Arab culture that emphasize such attitudes," columnist **Suad Fahd Al-Moajil** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Some phrases most often than not, highlight the tendencies towards complacency and resignation in various aspects of life, both personal and institutional.

"We frequently take pride in establishing the largest complexes, hospitals, towers, theaters, and residential buildings. However, we often fail to maintain these facilities against the ravages of time, environmental factors, and population growth.

"The recent power outage in parts of Kuwait is a case in point. Despite the quick restoration of power, the incident underscores a deeper flaw in Arab culture regarding the importance of maintenance, which is crucial beyond the initial construction, no matter how grand or costly.

"As the construction and utilities sector expands, a relatively new term, "predictive maintenance," has emerged in development strategies. This approach involves analyzing data and information to anticipate and address potential problems before they occur, rather than reacting to failures after they happen. Predictive maintenance helps determine when and how failures might occur, allowing teams to take proactive steps to prevent or mitigate them.

"Specialists, technicians, MPs, and even columnists have long warned about the increasing pressure on Kuwait's electricity system. Yet, the situation remained stagnant until last week's incident highlighted the absence of predictive maintenance from state priorities. Maintenance should be a continuous process, not triggered by emergencies or incidents.

"Unfortunately, maintenance as a concept is generally underappreciated in Arab culture, not just by governments and institutions, but also by individuals. Our belongings often suffer from neglect due to the lack of ongoing maintenance, whether in homes, clothing, or everyday items. This issue becomes starkly evident when compared to European countries, where clothes last longer and houses remain usable for extended periods due to regular upkeep.

"At the national level, their maintenance efforts surpass their construction activities, encompassing roads, buildings, lakes, rivers, soil, and transportation. Their proactive maintenance approach is economically beneficial, as it significantly reduces overall costs and unplanned downtime. Predictive maintenance represents a proactive strategy embraced by forward-thinking societies.

"Unfortunately, it remains largely absent from the Arab perspective. Despite its popularity and advancements through modern technology, it is still in its infancy in our societies that prefer the motto, "spend

what is in your pocket and what is unseen will come to you," and rely on the belief that "there is nothing but well-being".

### Also:

"The battle is approaching like a rolling stone. Following the escalation in the occupied territories, several countries have issued urgent warnings for their citizens to leave Lebanon, including Canada, according to news agencies," columnist **Fakhri Hashim Al Sayed Rajab** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"This is documented information, not mere analysis, indicating significant security disturbances. Developments in the north of the occupied territories have led to unprecedented combat readiness, with all combat units now on high alert and ready to engage in battle, far beyond mere maneuvers. Tension is palpable throughout the region.

"The entity appears to be plotting an attack. Strikingly, some countries that support the entity, despite claiming they do not want war, have publicly declared that they will fully support the entity if it goes to war.

"Regardless of differing policies and governments, there is a consistent belief in the West and some major countries: treating this entity like a spoiled child during such developments encourages the occupation government to take aggressive steps. This includes initiating war with advanced, possibly new weapons to strike southern Lebanon. Inevitably, Lebanon will respond quickly by targeting strategic areas deep within the occupied territories, marking the start of a real battle.

"Questions arise: Can the clash remain confined to geographical borders?

"The entity is currently focused on a 15 km border area, but caution is essential. Who can guarantee the Zionist entity won't expand its aggression? How can one trust the statements of an occupying entity?

"The goals are likely numerous, including re-invading Lebanon. The tension on the southern front is unprecedented, serving as both a deterrent and a threat. If war breaks out, the consequences will be catastrophic. The number of displaced persons will soar, and the destruction will be extensive. Wars inevitably result in devastation.

"But consider the displaced people of the entity state, who have been living in luxury hotels, while our people in Palestine endure life in paper tents. The coming war, if it happens, will be disastrous even for those in Haifa, now in clear danger after a small drone managed to penetrate their airspace and capture detailed images.

"Neither luxury nor shelter will be of any use then. Despite the killing and suffering, the Zionist anthem explicitly states: As long as there is a Jewish soul yearning forward toward the East, a thousand-year dream on our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem. Let our enemies tremble, let the inhabitants of Egypt and Canaan tremble, let Babylon tremble. Let panic and terror from us prevail over their skies, when we plant our spears in their chests, see their blood spilled, and their heads cut off. Then we will be the chosen people of God, as intended.

"Who are the real terrorists?"

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Suad Al-Moajil



The Kuwait Army's General Staff announced the conclusion of the fourth meeting of the team tasked with studying the organization of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) forces' participation with international forces, organizations, and humanitarian operations, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily. This meeting underscores joint efforts to strengthen and streamline unified military actions across the GCC.

## Bedoun gets death sentence for murdering his father in Firdous

Body of worker found on roof of under-construction house

By Jaber Al-Hamoud, Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, July 4: The Criminal Court sentenced a Bedoun to death for murdering his father in Firdous after he quarreled with his mother over breakfast.**

According to the case files, the accused, who is in his 20s, killed his 56-year-old father inside the family home by shooting him twice with a Kalashnikov machine gun, and then fled to an unknown destination.

Immediately after the Ministry of Interior's Operations Unit received a report about the murder, Farwaniya Governorate security officers and detectives rushed to the location.

□ □ □

**Indian worker's body found:** The body of an Indian man was found on the roof of an under construction house in Mutlaa.

According to a security source, Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received a report that the body of a worker was found on the roof of a house in Mutlaa. Security and medical emergency personnel rushed to the location.

Upon their arrival, it was found that the worker was a 44-year-old Indian who probably died while working. His body was referred to the Forensic Medicine Department to determine the cause of death.

A case was registered and investigations are ongoing to establish the circumstances leading to the worker's death.

□ □ □

**Gold items replaced with fake:** An employee of a gold shop in Jahra filed a case against an unknown woman who replaced three original gold items with the fake items with an estimated value of KD2,000.

A security source revealed that the shop's jeweler discovered that the original items were stolen and replaced with imitations after the woman left the shop.

A case was registered and investigations are underway to arrest the woman.

□ □ □

**Members of banned org held:** The state security service arrested citizens associated with a banned organization that seeks to undermine the basic systems of the country, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior said on Wednesday.

The detainees propagated the ideas of the organization on a social networking website and sought to travel abroad to join the organization, according to a statement from the Ministry's General Directorate of Security Relations and Media.

The detainees have been referred to the Public Prosecution as a prelude to taking legal actions against them, it added.

□ □ □

**MoJ to hire jr legal researcher:** The Ministry of Justice has announced vacancies for the position of Junior Legal Researcher, a role that qualifies for the position of Public Prosecutor (C), available to both Kuwaiti men and women, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The applications will be accepted from July 14 until August 15. Applications submitted after August 15, 2024, will be disqualified.

The daily added, the applicants must fulfill the following conditions:

**Education --** Applicants must hold a degree in Law or Sharia (specializing in Jurisprudence or the Principles of Jurisprudence) from Kuwait University or any other recognized university. The degree must be from the academic years 2022/2023 or 2023/2024 only.

**Academic Performance --** The overall GPA must be at least 2.67 on a four-point scale or 80 percent according to the percentage system, or an equivalent in other systems.

**Previous Applications --** Applicants must not have previously applied for this position.

**Age --** Applicants must be no older than 26 years at the time of obtaining their university degree.

**Employment History --** The university degree holders must not have worked for a government agency or in the private sector and must be registered with the General Organization for Social Insurance.

**Legal Standing --** Applicants must not have any previous disciplinary or criminal convictions for felonies or misdemeanors involving dishonor or dishonesty, and must demonstrate good behavior.

**Health --** Applicants must prove their fitness for the job.

**Assessment --** Applicants must pass a written test and a personal interview conducted by the selection committee. The written test must be successfully passed to qualify for the personal interview.

Those accepted into the civil service cadre will be appointed as Junior Legal Researchers and will receive the financial benefits and allowances stipulated for this position.

They will undergo a training course at the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies according to the decisions and regulations governing this matter.

After successfully completing the training course, they will be transferred from the position of Junior Legal Researcher to Public Prosecutor (C).

□ □ □

**Bid to improve fire extinguishing acts:** Acting Director of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Major General Khalid Fahd has disclosed that the linking of fire alarms in buildings to the Central Operations Department at KFF is aimed at improving the fire extinguishing process, contribute to saving lives and properties and to guarantee community safety, reports **Al-Shahed** daily.

Fahd confirmed the formation of a technical team to conduct a study on the above-mentioned project to expedite response to fire accidents and emergencies. He explained that the idea is to install fire alarm boards in almost 50,000 buildings in the country to be linked with the main alarm board in the Central Operations Department.

He said the project is divided into three stages -- modern buildings provided with fire alarm systems, old buildings with fire alarm systems and old buildings without fire alarm systems. He added the latter requires the installation of fire alarms first and then they will be linked to the department.

## Traffic officers issue 64,000 citations, nab 49 reckless motorists past week

**KUWAIT CITY, July 4:** The Traffic and Operations Sector, under the supervision of Major General Yousef Al-Khadda, Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for Traffic and Operations Affairs, has continued its comprehensive security and traffic campaigns across Kuwait's roads and governorates, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

Over the past week, these efforts have resulted in issuing 64,000 traffic tickets, arrest of 49 reckless motorists, in addition to impounding 112 vehicles and 421 motorcycles.

During the campaign the men in uniform also arrested 28 juveniles and referred them to the Juvenile Prosecution for driving without licenses.

Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Bu Hassan, Head of Public Relations and Awareness at the General Traffic Department, highlighted the extensive patrols conducted by traffic departments across all six governorates, including the Traffic Operations Department and Traffic Investigation Department.

During this period, the GTD patrols responded to 1,500 accidents, including 230 with injuries and 1,270 collisions.

Moreover, the patrols referred 17 security suspects with various legal issues to competent authorities, seized 93 vehicles wanted by security and judicial authorities, and dealt with cases including drug and alcohol offenses, individuals without identification and street vendors.

Also, the Rescue Police General Department carried out 1,342 security operations from June 23 to June 29, reports **Al-Shahed** daily.

These security operations led to the arrest of 52 individuals wanted by law for committing various crimes, impounding of 104 vehicles utilized in committing crimes as per judicial decisions, arrest of five expatriates with expired civil identification cards, arrest of 47 individuals for failure to present identification documents, settlement of 15 fights, provision of assistance to 285 individuals and registration of 14,024 traffic violations.

## FATF underscores potential risk of placing Kuwait on its grey list

**KUWAIT CITY, July 4:** The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has once again underscored the potential risk of placing Kuwait on its grey list due to concerns over money laundering and terrorist financing activities, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

The key points highlighted in the recent FATF report identifies weaknesses in Kuwait's Central Administration of Statistics and Ministry of Commerce in providing timely and accurate trade data. This data is crucial for monitoring and preventing illicit financial activities.

The FATF, established in 1989, monitors countries' implementation of its recommendations to combat financial crimes, encouraging cooperation among member states, regional bodies, and international organizations. This collaboration aims to exchange best practices and develop solutions to mitigate financial and political crimes.

The FATF's scrutiny highlights the urgency for Kuwait to strengthen its institutional frameworks and operational capacities to meet international standards.

By addressing these deficiencies, Kuwait can mitigate the risk of being placed on the FATF grey list, which would subject the country to increased monitoring and potentially damaging consequences for its financial reputation and stability.

The grey list mentioned by FATF refers to countries that are subject to increased monitoring due to deficiencies in their systems for combating money laundering, terrorist financing, and the proliferation of weapons.

Unlike countries on the FATF blacklist, which have significant strategic deficiencies in these areas, grey-listed countries are committed to implementing action plans to address their shortcomings within specified timeframes.

FATF is an intergovernmental organization comprising 200 countries, organizations, and regional financial action groups. Its mandate includes monitoring member countries' adherence to global standards aimed at combating financial crimes such as money laundering, terrorist financing, and the proliferation of weapons.

## Weak evidence, admin flaws cited

### Appeals Court acquits former PADA officer, others in KD 5mn fraud case

**KUWAIT CITY, July 4:** In the case details, the Public Prosecution charged former employees and directors of the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) with causing severe financial damage to the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) due to their negligence and dereliction of duty. The charges included the improper disbursement of disability pensions to ineligible recipients, resulting in a financial loss of KD 5 million, as outlined in the investigations.

The Public Prosecution based its charges on the Law on the Protection of Public Funds and the Penal Code, relying on witness testimonies and evidence listed in the prosecution's proof to establish the waste of public funds by the defendants.

Defense attorney Dr. Fawaz Khalid AlKhateeb from Taher Group Law Firm Co. defended the former director, arguing the absence of crime elements and the generalization of the accusation. He asserted that the defendant did not violate Law No. 8 of 2010 concerning the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, emphasizing that the authority responsible for disbursements was the PIFSS, which had reviewed the cases before approving the payments. This compliance with Article 66 of the Rights of Persons with Dis-

abilities Law demonstrated the correctness of the disbursement procedures and the necessity for PIFSS to review before disbursement.

In the rationale for the judgment, the Court of First Instance, upheld by the Court of Appeal, noted that it did not concur with the Public Prosecution's accusation. The review of the entire investigation and case documents revealed that the defendants' roles were part of an administrative system without clear mechanisms and did not rest solely on the employees. The judgment explained that the employees, including the defendant, received applicants and forwarded their requests along with the necessary documents to the PIFSS for the necessary action regarding the disbursement of pensions to eligible persons with disabilities. It also pointed out the ambiguity in the responsibilities of the defendants and the role of the PIFSS when eligibility criteria were not met.

Moreover, the judgment mentioned that the administration had indeed recovered some of these funds, indicating that the damage did not impede the authority's interests. Consequently, the court acquitted the defendants of the charges against them, and the Misdemeanor Appeals Court upheld the acquittal for the same reasons.

**WEDDINGS, UPTO 140**

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Proposals for speed bumps and sub-entrance sent back for review

Hawally Council approves key urban projects and site reallocations

**By Inaas Awadh**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff  
KUWAIT CITY, July 4: The Hawally Governorate Committee in the Municipal Council, headed by Nasser Al-Jadaan, held its second meeting for the third round on Wednesday.  
During the meeting, the commit-

tee approved the proposed reallocation of the sites of the Rescue Patrols General Department and Information Systems General Department in Zahraa-Block 7, as well as the request of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) to develop the Salmiya Boulevard Park.  
The committee returned the fol-

lowing to the executive branch for further study:  
■ Proposal of council member Dr. Hassan Kamal to establish speed bumps on the side street of King Abdulaziz Road; and to ask the General Traffic Department (GTD) and the Ministry of Public Works to update their response in this regard.  
■ Proposal of member Nasser Al-Jadaan to create a sub-entrance opposite Rumaithiya, and to address the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) about this.  
■ Letter of Kuwaiti Society for the Development of the Educational System about the unused vacant land in Salmiya.

■ Letter of the heirs of a citizen regarding the displacement of an electrical transformer site before construction, in Plot 57 in Mishref.  
The committee did not agree on the following:  
■ Request of the Indian Public School to relocate its headquarters from Salmiya, Block 12, Plot 11 to Block 10, Plot 28.

■ Letter of the Ministry of Health regarding the allocation of land in Hawally Governorate to establish a specialized dental center.  
■ Letter of Nasser and Bader Mohammad Nasser Al-Arbash regarding the property located in Salmiya, Block 7, Street 128, Building 32 about changing its purpose from investment to commercial.

Kuwait Municipality forms team to review advertisement regulations

Initiative aims to unify licensing mechanism

**By Inaas Awadh**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff  
KUWAIT CITY, July 4: Director General of Kuwait Municipality, Saud Al-Dubous, has issued an administrative decision to form a working team tasked with studying and reviewing the ministerial decision on advertisement regulations issued on December 28, 2023.

This initiative aims to unify the advertisement licensing mechanism across the service licensing departments in the municipality branches within the governorates.

The working team will be led by Dr. Muhammad Al-Shamroukh, Director of the Service Licensing Department at the Hawalli Branch.

The team members include Directors of Service Licensing Departments from the municipalities of the Capital, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Ahmadi, Farwaniya, and Mubarak Al-Kabeer: Nadia Al-Khabbaz, Saud Al-Harbi, Abdullah Al-Ajmi, Dr. Nader Al-Otaibi, and Ahmed Al-Daihani.

Advertisement licensing inspectors Enas Awad (Hawalli and Jahra), Yusef Al-Ajman, Muharib Al-Fadhli, Supervisor of Shops and Advertisements Bader Al-Bsisi, and Head of the Advertisement Licensing Department in Farwaniya, Khaled Al-Mutairi, will also contribute to the team.

The team's responsibilities, outlined in Article Two of the decision, include studying and reviewing the ministerial decision, coordinating with municipal branches and the committee overseeing advertising auction contracts, and unifying the advertisement licensing mechanism across municipal service departments.

According to Article Three, the team will meet outside official working hours, with meetings requiring a majority of members present to be valid. Decisions will be made by majority vote, and



Delegations of Arab countries participating in the General Assembly meeting of the Arab Civil Aviation Organization.

Kuwait elected member of ACAO Executive Council

The General Assembly of the Arab Civil Aviation Organization (ACAO) elected Kuwait Wednesday as a member of its Executive Council.

In its 28th session in Rabat, the General Assembly also elected Kuwait as a member in a number of the organization's technical committees for air transport, aviation security, and air safety.

Commenting on the election, Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, President of the Kuwaiti Civil Aviation told KUNA that this election reflects Arab countries' trust in Kuwait and the country's pioneering role in Arab civil aviation.

The session included participation from Arab member states, with Kuwait's delegation led by Sheikh Hamoud Mubarak Al-Hamoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah accompanied by Ambassador Abdulatif Al-Yahya.

The Arab Civil Aviation Organization (ACAO) is a specialized Arab organization affiliated to the Arab League which aims to strengthen cooperation and coordination among Arab countries in the field of civil aviation and its development. It was established on February 7, 1996, when its Agreement came into force, and its first General Assembly was held on the 5th June, 1996. Twenty two States have ratified the Convention. (KUNA)

meeting records, including any reservations expressed, will be maintained.

Article Four grants the team leader the authority to submit a comprehensive report to the Chairman of the Advertising Committee upon completing their duties. This report will be reviewed by the Advertising Committee before being forwarded to the Director General of the Municipality for further action.

Financial allocations for the team will be disbursed according to Civil

Service Council Resolutions No. 16/2011 and No. 40/2016, as mentioned in Article Five.

Article Six emphasizes the need for cooperation from all municipal sectors and employees to facilitate the team's work, including providing comments or amendments to the ministerial decision on advertisement regulations.

Finally, Article Seven specifies the team's work period, which will last three months from July 1 to October 1 of this year.

KISR nods to Shagaya complex plot transfer

Council OK's entertainment city in Doha

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: The Technical Committee in the Municipal Council has approved the request of the Ministry of Finance to allocate a plot measuring 2.650 million square meters in Doha for the establishment of the entertainment city, indicating the Amiri Diwan shall hand over the plot

to the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART), reports Al-Anba daily.

The committee linked the approval to certain conditions such as the provision of an alternative plot to establish Sheikh Zaid Park in coordination with the Public Authority for Agri-

culture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR).

It also approved the request for Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) to hand over the plot for the establishment of Shagaya complex for renewable energy production to the Ministry of Electricity and Water.

وزارة التجارة والصناعة

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Significant milestone

KU medical journal achieves Q1 status

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: Prof. Osama Al-Saeed, Acting Deputy Director of the Medical Sciences Center at Kuwait University, announced a significant milestone for the institution, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The Medical Principles and Practices Journal, affiliated with Kuwait University, has attained the highest classification category, Q1, in the latest ranking of scientific journals.

This achievement marks a historic moment for Kuwait University, placing its journal among the top ranks globally in the medical field.

The journal's elevation to Q1 status signifies its placement among the top 1% of the most influential and cited scientific journals worldwide, reflecting its abundant and high-quality research output.

Al-Saeed emphasized that this accomplishment enhances Kuwait University's standing in international scientific communities and contributes to its global rankings among universities.

He attributed this success to the dedicated efforts of the journal's management team, supported by the administrations of medical colleges, whom he thanked for their pivotal roles.

Established in 1989 at Kuwait University's Medical Sciences Center and published by the esteemed medical publisher Karger Publishing, the Journal of Medical Principles and Practices boasts a distinguished editorial board comprising leading scientists worldwide.

It is renowned for its commitment to publishing cutting-edge research and studies.

Al-Saeed concluded by expressing confidence that the journal's trajectory of success will continue, with ongoing efforts to achieve further scientific milestones in the future.



The Director General of the Kuwait National Library Siham Al-Azmi and the accompanying delegation with Ayhan Tuglu, the Director of the Turkish Nation's Library.

330 books donated

Cultural exchange key to global peace - Kuwait Library Director

ANKARA, July 4, (KUNA): Director General of the Kuwait National Library Siham Al-Azmi stressed the significance of exchange, coexistence, and interaction between global cultures, noting that it is the shortest path to fostering friendship, peace, and cooperation among nations.

Al-Azmi made these remarks to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Wednesday following her visit to the Turkish Nation's Library in Ankara. The visit was at the invitation of Ayhan Tuglu, the Director of the Turkish Nation's Library.

She highlighted that libraries continue to hold an essential place in the history of nations due to their role in preserving national, cultural, and scientific contributions, thereby maintaining the stature of nations worldwide.

She praised the Turkish Nation's Library for its dedication to preserving the rich and ancient history and civilization of Turkiye and ensuring its transmission to future generations. Al-Azmi described libraries as beacons of knowledge, culture, and civilization that reflect the progress of nations.

Al-Azmi also noted that the Kuwait National Library, for the first time at the end of April, hosted a special section for Turkish books, including 330 books across various fields of knowledge, donated by the Turkish Embassy in Kuwait.

Moreover, Al-Azmi expressed her aspiration that these activities would lead to future cooperation protocols between the Kuwait National Library and its counterparts in friendly and sisterly countries.

Kuwait eyes solar power amid energy crisis

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: The recent electricity crisis prompted the presentation of recommendations to develop alternative energy resources including solar energy, reports Al-

Jarida daily.

These recommendations include the installation of solar panels on the roofs of public buildings.

It has been reported that the total

number of public schools, clinics and mosques reached 3,220 buildings with an average space of 600 square meters. Experts in the field of electricity explained this means

that 1.5 million square meters can be provided to install solar panels on top of buildings to produce around 25 percent of the power needs of public buildings.



# Engineering a sustainable future through resilience, innovation and excellence.



Address by  
**Mr. S. N. Subrahmanyam**  
Chairman & Managing Director

### Dear Shareholders,

It gives me great pleasure to address you at my first Annual General Meeting as Chairman and Managing Director of the Larsen & Toubro Group. We are at an interesting stage in the development of the Country and the Company alike, and intend to make optimum use of the unfolding opportunities to grow in a sustainable manner.

India today stands tall as an oasis of opportunity amidst global turmoil and supply chain disruptions. The Government's continuous efforts to strengthen the domestic economy through increased capital spending, policy shifts towards improving the ease of doing business, and the creation of a world-class digital infrastructure and payments platform have all contributed to an annual GDP growth rate of at least 7% for the last three years, and over 8% in the year under review. The pursuit of 'Aatmanirbharta' (self-reliance) through innovative schemes like the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, the Start-Up India scheme, and the National Infrastructure Pipeline, has set a strong foundation to realise a *Viksit Bharat*.

During the year under review, the Company has benefitted from these positive policy interventions, as evidenced from its stellar financial performance.

**79<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING | JULY 4, 2024**

### A Portfolio of Excellence

The Company's journey has been one of resilience, innovation, and unwavering commitment to excellence. The diverse business portfolio comprises:

#### 1. EPC Projects (Construction & Energy):

The Company's expertise in executing large-scale EPC projects is unparalleled. Its indelible stamp of excellence graces iconic bridges, hydrocarbon facilities, large solar fields, and infrastructure across India and beyond. Notable recent achievements include the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL), Mumbai Coastal Road Phase 1 and Shree Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir in Ayodhya. Internationally, the Company delivered the 1.8 GWp Sudair Solar PV plant in Saudi Arabia, a gas compression facility in Algeria, and contributed to blue hydrogen infrastructure in The Netherlands, among various other projects.

#### 2. Hi-Tech Manufacturing (Heavy Engineering and Precision Engineering & Systems):

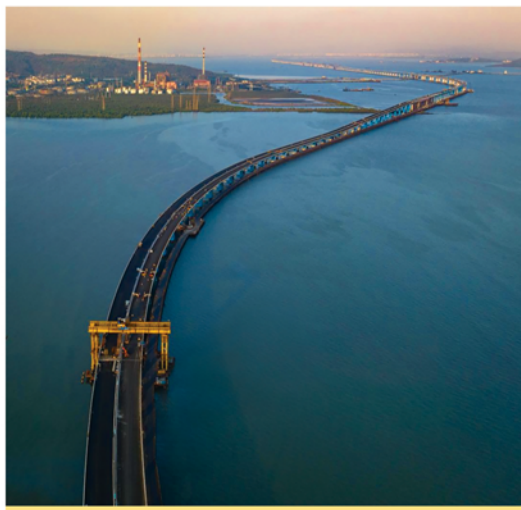
The Company's Heavy Engineering division remains a global leader, supplying bespoke industrial equipment. It is at the forefront of adopting Industry 4.0 techniques, ensuring efficiency and quality. The Precision Engineering & Systems business focuses on indigenous design and has proudly contributed to India's lunar programme through Chandrayaan-3.

#### 3. Services (IT, Engineering, Digital and Financial):

The Company's listed arms continue to play pivotal roles, creating shareholder value:

- **LTIMindtree:** India's 6<sup>th</sup> largest IT player and 5<sup>th</sup> largest by market capitalisation, bridging physical and digital realms.
- **L&T Technology Services (LTTS):** India's leading Engineering and Technology Services company, providing cutting-edge ER&D solutions globally.
- **L&T Finance (LTF):** Promotes financial inclusion by empowering millions with diverse financial products in the retail sector.

The Company's digital ventures, including L&T-SuFin (an integrated B2B marketplace), L&T Cloudfiniti (end-to-end data center and cloud services), L&T Semiconductor Technologies (focussed on fabless chip design) and L&T EduTech (bridging industry-academia skill gaps), showcase the Company's foresight and adaptability in the realm of modern business.



21.8 km Mumbai Trans Harbour Link - India's longest sea bridge

#### 4. Other Businesses:

- **L&T Realty:** Crafts integrated spaces, residential complexes, and commercial hubs. Over 50 million sq.ft. of properties are currently under development. Accolades such as 'Best Realty Brand 2024', among others, affirm its commitment to quality and timely completion.
- **Construction and Mining Machinery:** The Company's in-house Product Development Centre drives cost-effective solutions, with over 40,000 active machines in the market.
- **Others:** A global leader in tyre curing machinery and a valves business operating across 61 countries are sheer testament to the product reliability.

### New Milestones in Growth

This year, the Company crossed a historic milestone: annual Group Order Inflow surpassed ₹ 3 lakh crore, registering an impressive 31% growth year-on-year. This was achieved on

the back of major international order wins in Hydrocarbon and Infrastructure businesses. A large, growing, and diversified Order Book of ₹ 4,75,809 crore as on March 31, 2024, with a growth of 20% over the previous year, provides clear revenue visibility in the medium term. Revenues clocked in at ₹ 2,21,113 crore, while Profit After Tax reached ₹ 13,059 crore, registering 21% and 25% growth respectively.

The Company continues to focus on shareholder value creation by divesting non-core assets, capturing cost efficiencies, and leveraging technology for productivity gains. A strategically diversified business portfolio, geographical diversification, a healthy balance sheet, and a strong order book are definite markers for long-term value creation.

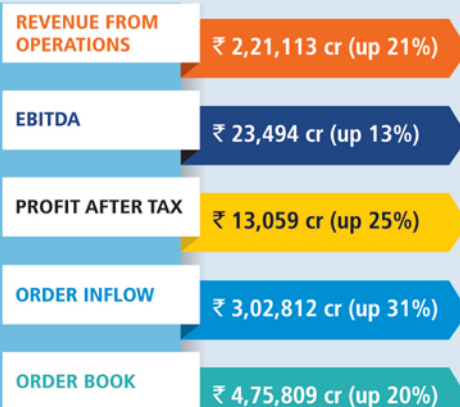
In line with its strategy to grow the core and exit from concessions, the Company successfully divested its 51% stake in L&T Infrastructure Development Projects Limited and monetised a commercial property in the Hyderabad Metro. Improved operations, capital restructuring, support from the State Government and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) monetisation are expected to make the Metro asset value accretive over a period of time.

In FY 2023-24, the Company outperformed the Nifty 50 growth index, achieving a stupendous growth of 77% compared to the index's 29%.



Oil Production Deck Module in Saudi waters

### Group Performance Overview for FY 2023-24



### Tech-ionic Shifts

The Company embarked on a journey to leverage technology for sustainable progress well ahead of its global peers. The proactive investment in digital technology and Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) to automate manufacturing processes paid off during the pandemic. As India's leading infrastructure player, the Company was among the first to realise the importance of digitalisation, beginning its digital acceleration journey as early as 2016.



Remote diagnosis and support

Today, the Company leverages a vast array of technologies across its various verticals, including AI, ML, VR/AR, Cloud, Big Data & Analytics, Drones, GPS, RFID & QR Codes, LiDAR, BIM, IoT, and 3D printing. Adoption of frontier technologies like advanced sensors, embedded software and robotics is in progress. The Company has

digitally connected over 15,000 assets across its global projects and manufacturing bases to a central IIoT platform. All these initiatives enable the Company to make project execution faster, safer, cleaner, economical and more sustainable.

### Tech-celerating Sustainable Progress

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) has emerged as a game-changer, and the Company is leveraging its power to enhance its processes across the project life cycle - from tendering to contract management to design, execution, and operation & maintenance. To fuel this innovation, the Company has launched a collaborative platform connecting aspiring data scientists with domain experts and technology champions to develop cutting-edge, future-proof solutions.

### Going Green

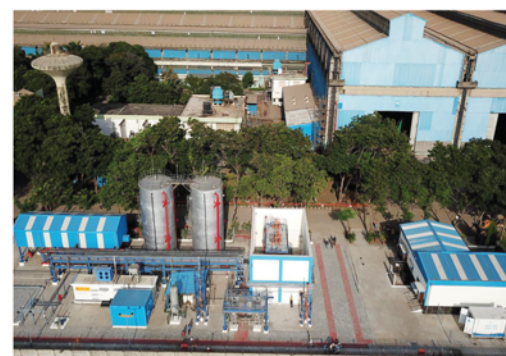
Aligned with its sustainability vision 'For A Better World', the Company has developed strong capability in executing projects for its customers in Clean Energy, Clean Mobility, Water & Sanitation, Green Infra, and other areas. Such projects help in lowering carbon emissions, improving water availability, recycling & reuse of water, scaling up energy efficiency, reducing air pollution, and enhancing resource conservation.

**Green Buildings** - The Company constructs green buildings which are LEED/IGBC/GRIHA-certified. In FY 2023-24, the Company created 14.8 million sq.ft. of Green Buildings infrastructure.

**Clean Mobility** - The Company completed the electrification of more than 3,400 track km of mass transit systems in FY 2023-24.

**Clean Energy** - The Company is involved in building Clean Energy projects, including renewable energy plants, primarily solar and hydro, as well as nuclear power plants. In FY 2023-24, the Company commissioned 2.2 GWp of solar capacity, 6.2 GW of nuclear power and 3.5 GW of hydel power, with additional capacity under construction at the moment.

During the year under review, the Company constituted a Green Energy Council with globally renowned energy sector experts to provide expertise and strategic guidance on technology trends in green energy.



Green Hydrogen Plant at L&T's A.M. Naik Heavy Engineering Complex in Hazira, Gujarat

### Growing Globally

In today's VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity) world, the key to mitigating geopolitical risk is through geographical diversification. The Company's policy of wider geographical dispersal aids broad-basing the portfolio, yielding positive results, and de-risking exposure to a particular region. At the Group level, apart from the 62% domestic share in the total order book, the Middle East accounts for 35%, while the rest of the world accounts for the balance 3%.



OxO Reactor for BASF Guangdong Integrated Project, China

### Giving Back

The Company believes in fostering inclusive growth and building long-term relationships with all its stakeholders. Its CSR initiatives across health, education, skill development and water & sanitation have benefitted more than 1.6 million people. The Company has planted 4 million saplings globally and helped build resilience in rural communities through its Integrated Community Development Programme (ICDP).



Health Camp being conducted as part of L&T's CSR activities

### Governance & Ethics

The Company is committed to the highest ethical standards in all business dealings, fostering transparency and accountability throughout the organisation. A robust governance framework ensures compliance with regulations and global best practices including adherence to international standards of Human Rights and Fair Business Practices.

### Creating Safer Workplaces

Safety remains a paramount concern for the leadership team, reflected in the Company's 'Mission Zero Harm' principle and the 'L.I.F.E.' (Live Injury-Free Everyday) framework. Enhanced supervision, more frequent safety briefings, extensive training (with AR/VR technology) and the use of robotics for hazardous operations are some of the initiatives that have further bolstered our safety performance.

### People Power

The Company's success is attributable to the dedication, adaptability and accomplishments of every member of Team L&T. People policies revolve around onboarding the right talent, providing a conducive work environment, nurturing talent, offering opportunities for learning and self-development, empowering collaboration and innovation, recognising and rewarding achievements, and such. These policies have enabled the Company to be rated as a Great Place to Work (GPTW) for the second consecutive year.

### Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The Company's transformation into a tech-driven conglomerate has improved its Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) quotient. Exclusive career-assisting schemes for females and women-friendly facilities in offices are moving the Company towards achieving the Lakshya target of women constituting 10% of the workforce by FY 2025-26.



Celebrating Women Power at L&T

### In Conclusion

Today, the Company stands tall in the midst of challenges, armed with strategic foresight, technological prowess, and an unyielding commitment to excellence. The future is bright, with the promise of sustained growth, innovation and value creation for all stakeholders.

I would like to thank our employees, our customers, supply chain partners and the Government for their contributions, directly and indirectly, to our growth. I also thank my fellow Board members for their invaluable support in guiding the Company through volatile times when there are multiple variables at play. My special thanks to you - my dear shareholders - for the trust you have reposed in us. You remain an invaluable pillar of strength, and I look forward to your continued support in our journey towards achieving higher levels of excellence.

For over eight decades, L&T has served as a cornerstone of India's infrastructure and industrial development, continuously pushing boundaries to ensure that the Nation remains at the forefront of global progress.

It is this very dedication to excellence that has earned the Company a reputation of a nation-builder, instrumental in shaping the landscape of a new, modern and aspiring India.

**L&T BUILDS THE THINGS THAT MAKE INDIA PROUD.**





## LOCAL



KUNA photo  
Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Monday the outgoing Czech Ambassador Jaroslav Siro.

## PIFSS expedites pension transactions in evening

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) has announced that the executive departments within the insurance affairs sector will now undertake overtime work in the evenings to expedite the processing of increasing retirement transactions and pension disbursements, reports Al-Qabas daily.

However, the visitor will be entertained during the morning hours only. In a statement PIFSS highlighted the necessity of these measures in light of recent amendments to the Social Insurance Law, which have raised minimum retirement pension

## Number of retirement cases surge

thresholds. The number of retirement cases in the first half of this year has surged compared to previous years, significantly increasing workload. In response, the organization has opted to assign executive departments within the insurance affairs sector to additional evening shifts to ensure the timely completion of all transactions and pension payments crucial to citizens' livelihoods.

## Kuwait Governors discuss service improvements

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Azbi Nasser Al-Sabah recently held the second coordination meeting with Hawally Governor Ali Al-Safar, Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salim Al-Ali, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Sheikh Sabah Bader Sabah Al-Salim, Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi and Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Homoud Jaber Al-Ahmad,

reports Al-Shahed daily.

They discussed issues concerning the six governorates, implementation of the Governors' Tasks Decree that is aimed at upgrading services, response to comments, referral of the citizens' complaints to the concerned institutions, following up these complaints, administrative problems, and the organizational structure of each governorate.

# MPW project to enhance Yarmoukh infrastructure

Team instructed to prioritize safety measures

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: The spokesman of the Ministry of Public Works, Ahmed Al-Saleh, announced that the Sanitary Engineering Affairs Sector has initiated a project to enhance the infrastructure of the Yarmoukh area.

The project encompasses several aspects, including the replacement of the sewage and rainwater networks, along with civil works for the telephone network, in coordination with the Ministry of Transport.

Furthermore, there are plans to replace lighting poles and their electrical extensions in collaboration with the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy.

Al-Saleh noted that the project will

## SCADA to keep watch on tunnels

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: The Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport (PART), announced the start of operating the SCADA system, which monitors the water pumping stations in the tunnels on a regular basis, as part of its early preparations for the rainy season,

reports Al-Seyassah daily.

PART said the new system will control the monitoring and operation of the pumps from the control room and the entry system, in addition to the presence of cameras to monitor the status of all the tunnels

also involve installing treated water lines to support the irrigation network in the area. Subsequently, the streets will be resurfaced with asphalt, and the sidewalks' tiles will be replaced.

He emphasized that the Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Dr. Noura Al-Mishaan, has instructed the project team to prioritize safety measures, particularly given the proximity of residential areas, schools, and vital facilities.

## Imams, preachers requested to follow schedule

15 minutes Friday sermon, prayer in hospital and market mosques urged

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: The Ministry of Endowments has asked the imams and preachers assigned in mosques located in hospital and market areas to adhere to the specified time for Friday prayers, so that the duration of the sermon and prayer does not exceed 15 minutes in order to ease the burdens of the visitors of Houses of Allah, reports Al-Rai daily.

Director of the Capital Mosques Department Abdul Hamid Al-Mutairi issued a circular stressing the need to adhere to the 15-minute Friday sermon and prayer in hospital and market areas. Addressing the imams and preachers, he stated: "We value your diligence to carry out the duty of imploring Allah, and to perform your job duties to the fullest. Like you, we bear the responsibility of serving public interest and taking into account the special circumstances and conditions of worshippers. The department decided to ease the burdens of the guests of the Houses of Allah in hospitals and markets. The imams, preachers and muezzins in charge of these areas are requested

## Al-Rifai hosts Morini

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: Lieutenant General Engineer Hashem Al-Rifai, the Undersecretary of the National Guard, hosted the Ambassador of the Italian Republic to Kuwait, Lorenzo Morini, along with the Deputy Military Attaché, at his office in the General Presidency, reports Al-Seyassah daily. The meeting, attended by senior leaders, focused on discussing mutual interests. Al-Rifai warmly welcomed his guests and emphasized the strong bilateral relations between Kuwait and Italy.

to follow the schedule, so that the duration of the sermon and prayer does not exceed 15 minutes, especially since most of the worshippers are working in the health and private sectors."

## Providing services through digital platforms

### KIB to be closed during Islamic New Year (1446H) holiday

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced that it will continue to provide its online banking services around the clock during the Islamic New Year (1446H) holiday. The Bank aims to meet the needs of its customers, whether inside Kuwait or abroad, during the holiday.

The Bank will be closed for business on Sunday, 7 July, 2024. Normal working hours will resume on Monday, 8 July, 2024.

KIB highlighted its commitment to serving its customers and enabling them to follow up on their financial affairs and complete their banking transactions with the

utmost efficiency and without disruption at all times. The Bank indicated that it will continue to provide its banking services through all its digital platforms 24/7 during the holiday, which includes the KIB Mobile smartphone application that allows customers to perform most basic banking operations, in addition to the Live Chat and KIB Online services on the Bank's website www.KIB.com.kw. Customers can also reach KIB via its Call Center, at 1866866



KIB new logo

for Local Calls and at +965 22957300 for International Calls, or through its WhatsApp account registered with the Local Bank No. 1866866 for general inquiries about products and services.

KIB also emphasized the readiness of the Bank's ATMs to accommodate the expected increased demand for cash withdrawals during the holiday, both in terms of providing sufficient liquidity and the number of machines available in different areas in Kuwait.

## Kuwait temperatures

Continued from Page 1

For Thursday night, the weather will be warm to hot, with northwesterly winds, light to moderate, sometimes active on coastal areas, between 12 and 40 km/h. The expected minimum temperature will be between 32 and 34 degrees Celsius, and the sea will be light to moderate, with waves sometimes rising between 2 and 6 feet.

On Friday, the weather will remain very hot with northwesterly winds, light to moderate, sometimes active between 12 and 45 km/h, and a chance of dust. The expected maximum temperatures will be between 47 and 49 degrees Celsius, with the sea light to moderate, and waves between 2 and 5 feet.

Friday night will continue to be warm to hot, with northwesterly winds, light to moderate, sometimes active between 10 and 45 km/h, and a chance of dust in exposed areas. The expected minimum temperature will be between 32 and 34 degrees Celsius, with the sea light to moderate and waves between 2 and 5 feet.

Al-Qarawi noted that Saturday will be very hot and dusty, with northwesterly winds, moderate to active, between 20 and 60 kilometers per hour. The expected maximum temperature will be between 48 and 50 degrees Celsius. The sea will be light to moderate, with waves sometimes rising between 2 and 6 feet.

Saturday night will be warm to hot, with northwesterly winds, light to moderate, sometimes active, between 10 and 42 kilometers per hour, and a chance of dust. The expected minimum temperature will be between 32 and 34 degrees Celsius, with the sea light to moderate, and waves sometimes rising between 2 and 6 feet.

## Kuwait Amir

Continued from Page 1

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to US President Joseph Biden, on his country's 248th Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled commended the historic and distinguished relations between the two friendly, wishing the American President good health and further progress and development for the United States and its friendly people.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a similar cable of congratulations to US President Joseph Biden, on his country's 248th Independence Day.

## Kuwait boosts

Continued from Page 1

He called for stepping up and unifying national efforts in this human field, especially towards revising relevant national legislation and making suggestions for introducing the necessary amendments and replying to international queries.

He also stressed that it is essential to apply the National Referral Mechanism to prevent trafficking in persons and scale up awareness and educational campaigns about labor rights.

The minister added that the permanent national committee monitors the clampdowns launched by the Interior Ministry to arrest violators of residency law nationwide following the expiry of a deadline on June 30, which was given to them to adjust their status or leave the country. He described the committee's meeting as part of Kuwait's fervent efforts in the field of fighting trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling.

## Health minister

Continued from Page 1

Discussions at the meeting focused on the challenges faced by internal medicine departments, emphasizing the importance of balanced distribution of medical staff to ensure comprehensive and high-quality healthcare services across all hospitals.

Additionally, the meeting addressed the coordination between internal medicine departments and other medical units, as well as inter-hospital coordination aimed at improving healthcare service quality for patients. Future plans for internal medicine departments were outlined to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness in healthcare delivery.

Deliberations also covered improvements to the shift system to ensure continuous patient care, optimization of outpatient clinic hours to better meet patient needs, and equitable distribution of doctors across hospitals. The meeting underscored the importance of training and preparing newly graduated doctors to assume responsibilities and deliver exemplary healthcare services.

## Reforms key

Continued from Page 1

domestic product (GDP). Al-Jazzaf highlighted the growing financial deficit faced by the state in recent years, noting a significant gap between stable revenues and increasing expenditures.

From 2017 to 2024, the total deficit grew to 35.6 billion dinars, while expenditures rose from 19 billion to 26 billion dinars during the same period. Despite Kuwait's oil production capacity of 2.693 million barrels per day, revenues are estimated at around 18 billion dinars annually, constrained by OPEC's production limits.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr. Anwar Al-Mudhaf said the projected revenues in the state budget of FY 2024-2025 amount to KD 18.9 billion (nearly USD 61.6 billion), down by 2.8 percent from the figures of the last year.

The projected expenditure in the new fiscal year tops KD 24.5 billion (USD 79.9 billion), down by 6.6 percent from the last year, he said in an interview with Kuwait TV on Wednesday.

## Kuwait anticipates

Continued from Page 1

EU Embassy's opening in the country, Al-Yahya expressed his happiness at the milestone event.

Regarding the upcoming Gulf-European summit scheduled for October, he stated, "We are always ready."

albander hotel & resort

# JULY

## Room Promotion

Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 60.984 net	BHD 136.198 net
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 76.230 net	BHD 170.247 net

Promo period from 23<sup>rd</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024

Terms & conditions apply\*



## World News Roundup

## Europe

## Thevenot attacked

## UK goes to polls in a national election

LONDON, July 4, (AP) — British voters are picking a new government Thursday in a parliamentary election that is widely expected to bring the Labour Party to power against a gloomy backdrop of economic malaise, mounting distrust in institutions and a fraying social fabric.

A jaded electorate is delivering its verdict on Prime Minister **Rishi Sunak**'s Conservative Party, which has been in power since 2010. Polls opened at 7 a.m.

Sunak made the short journey from his home to vote at Kirby Sigston Village Hall in his Richmond constituency. He arrived with his wife, Akshata Murty, and walked hand-in-hand into the village hall, which is surrounded by rolling fields.



Sunak

The center-left Labour Party led by Keir Starmer has had a steady and significant lead in opinion polls for months, but its leaders have warned against taking the election result for granted, worried their supporters will stay home.

"Change. Today, you can vote for it," he wrote Thursday on the X social media platform.

A couple hours after posting that message, Starmer walked hand-in-hand with his wife, Victoria, into a polling place in the Kentish Town section of London to cast his vote. He exited out a back door out of sight of a crowd of locals and journalists who had gathered there.

## Urged

The Conservatives have acknowledged that Labour appears headed for victory and urged voters not to hand the party a "supermajority."

In the final days of campaigning Sunak insisted "the outcome of this election is not a foregone conclusion."

But in a message to voters on Wednesday, Sunak said that "if the polls are to be believed, the country could wake up tomorrow to a Labour supermajority ready to wield their unchecked power." He urged voters to back the Conservatives to limit Labour's power.

Labour has not set pulses racing with its pledges to get the sluggish economy growing, invest in infrastructure and make Britain a "clean energy superpower."

But nothing has really gone wrong in its campaign, either. The party has won the support of large chunks of the business community and endorsements from traditionally conservative newspapers, including the Rupert Murdoch-owned Sun tabloid.

The Sun said in an editorial that "by dragging his party back to the center ground of British politics for the first time since Tony Blair was in No. 10 (Downing St.), Sir Keir has won the right to take charge," using the formal title for Starmer, who was knighted.

Former Labour candidate Douglas Beattie, author of the book "How Labour Wins (and Why it Loses)," said Starmer's "quiet stability probably chimes with the mood of the country right now."

## Plagued

The Conservatives, meanwhile, have been plagued by gaffes. The campaign got off to an inauspicious start when rain drenched Sunak as he made the announcement outside 10 Downing St. Then, Sunak went home early from commemorations in France marking the 80th anniversary of the D-Day invasion.

Several Conservatives close to Sunak are being investigated over suspicions they used inside information to place bets on the date of the election before it was announced.

It has all made it harder for Sunak to shake off the taint of political chaos and mismanagement that's gathered around the Conservatives since then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his staff held lockdown-breaching parties during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Johnson's successor, Liz Truss, rocked the economy with a package of drastic tax cuts and lasted just 49 days in office. There is widespread dissatisfaction over a host of issues, from a creaking public health care system to crumbling infrastructure.

But for many voters, the lack of trust applies not just to Conservatives, but to politicians in general. Veteran rouser of the right, Nigel Farage, has leaped into that breach and grabbed attention with his anti-immigration rhetoric.

The centrist Liberal Democrats and environmentalist Green Party also want to sweep up disaffected voters. "I don't know who's for me as a working person," said Michelle Bird, a port worker in Southampton on England's south coast who was undecided about whether to vote Labour or Conservative.

## Also:

**PARIS:** Just days before a high-stakes legislative election, French government spokesperson **Prisca Thevenot** was attacked on the campaign trail, officials said Thursday.

Thevenot, a candidate for the Macron-led centrist alliance Ensemble, her deputy and a party activist were putting up electoral posters near Paris on Wednesday night ahead of the July 7 legislative election when a group attacked them, Prime Minister **Gabriel Attal** said on the social media platform X.

Media outlets reported that Thevenot was not injured and will continue to campaign, but her deputy and the party activist were taken to a hospital. It was not immediately clear what type of injuries they suffered.

The prosecutor's office said it opened an investigation into an assault with a weapon against a public official, but provided no indication of what the motivation of the attack was.

Four people, including three minors, are in custody, prosecutors said.

**COPENHAGEN, Denmark:** A Polish man was charged on Wednesday with assaulting Danish Prime Minister **Mette Frederiksen** last month, his lawyer said.

A 39-year-old man walked up to Frederiksen in a downtown Copenhagen square on June 7 and punched her on her right upper arm. The prime minister suffered minor whiplash but was otherwise unharmed.

**Henrik Karl Nielsen**, a lawyer for the suspect, who has not been named, told The Associated Press in an email that he will not plead guilty. He said the suspect had no recollection of the episode.

Frederiksen was rushed to a hospital for a check-up soon after, and she canceled her work program for the following days, including her appearance at events connected to the European Parliament elections.

The man was charged with assault against a civil servant or a person carrying out a public duty, Nielsen said. If found guilty, the man faces fines or up to eight years in jail. A trial has been set for Aug. 6 and 7 in Copenhagen.



Heads of state and government of SCO states attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Astana, Kazakhstan on July 4. Inset: Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, and Chinese President Xi Jinping shake hands as they pose for photos during their meeting on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Astana, Kazakhstan on July 3. (AP)

## Leaders of China, Russia attend summit of regional security grouping

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday attended the summit of a security grouping created by Moscow and Beijing to counter Western alliances.

Putin and Xi joined the leaders of other countries that are members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization at its annual meeting in Kazakhstan's capital of Astana.

The grouping was established in 2001 by China, Russia and the four ex-Soviet Central Asian nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to promote regional security and economic cooperation. It was later joined by India, Pakistan and Iran. Russia's western neighbor and ally, Belarus, joined the SCO on Thursday.

Observer states and dialogue partners include

Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Addressing the summit, Putin emphasized the group's focus on ensuring security of its members and said the SCO will form a dedicated center that will coordinate response to various security challenges. He added that the group's members will also endorse a special program to fight separatism and extremism. (AP)

## US

## Trump, for now, ceding spotlight to Joe

## Defiant Biden vows to keep running

WASHINGTON, July 4, (AP) — A defiant President Joe Biden vowed Wednesday to keep running for reelection, rejecting growing pressure from Democrats to withdraw after a disastrous debate performance raised questions about his readiness to keep campaigning, much less win in November.

But increasingly ominous signs were mounting for the president. Two Democratic lawmakers have called on Biden to exit the race while a leading ally publicly suggested how the party might choose someone else. And senior aides said they believed he might only have a matter of days to show he was up to the challenge before anxiety in the party boils over.

"Let me say this as clearly as I possibly can as simply and straightforward as I can: I am running ... no one's pushing me out," Biden said on a call with staffers from his reelection campaign. "I'm not leaving. I'm in this race to the end and we're going to win."

## Feedback

In his private conversations, Biden was focused on efforts to course correct from his rocky debate and on the threat that, in his view, former President Donald Trump poses to the country, as he scoured for feedback on what went wrong last Thursday in Atlanta and took responsibility for his performance.

"We had a direct, open, clear-eyed conversation about the debate, his thoughts on what happened and why it wasn't his best evening or best debate,"

Sen Chris Coons, D-Del, who spoke with Biden on Tuesday, said in an interview with the Associated Press. "He wanted advice. He was asking earnestly for input and comment on what he should do to restore confidence and support, and what's the best path forward."

Coons, the president's closest ally on Capitol Hill, said Biden clearly understood the urgency, the difficulty and the importance of the election, as the senator advised that the president do more unscripted, open-ended events to restore confidence in his candidacy. The two also spoke about Biden's schedule and its impact on his political efforts, particularly as he balances that task with critical governing tasks such as the NATO summit in Washington next week.

## Support

Biden's efforts to pull multiple levers to salvage his faltering reelection include his impromptu appearance with campaign aides, private conversations with senior lawmakers, a week-end blitz of travel and a network television interview. But he was confronting serious indications that support for him was rapidly eroding on Capitol Hill and among other allies.

Rep. Raúl Grijalva, D-Ariz, told The New York Times that though he backs Biden as long as he is a candidate, this "is an opportunity to look elsewhere" and what Biden "needs to do is shoulder the responsibility for keeping that seat - and part of that responsibility is to get out of this race."

Senior advisers say they believe the 81-year-old Biden may have mere

days to mount a convincing display of his fitness for office before his party's panic over his debate performance and anger about his response boils over, according to two people with knowledge who insisted on anonymity to more freely discuss strategy.

## Also:

**NEW YORK: Donald Trump** likes to be the one in the spotlight.

But in the days since President **Joe Biden**'s disastrous debate performance, the presumptive Republican nominee has kept a low profile, leaving the focus on his political efforts, particularly as he balances that task with critical governing tasks such as the NATO summit in Washington next week.

Trump's run began last week during the first debate, when Biden delivered a performance so dismal that he has spent the days since fending off calls from alarmed Democrats to step aside to save the party from losses up and down the ballot.

On Monday, the US Supreme Court ruled that former presidents have broad immunity from prosecution, limiting the indictment against Trump for his efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss to Biden. It's all but certain he won't face trial before Election Day.

And on Tuesday, the judge in Trump's New York criminal hush money trial postponed his sentencing to weigh the impact of the Supreme Court decision.

**Police to be crucial - Haiti PM:** Haitian Prime Minister Garry Conille told the UN Security Council on Wednesday that recently deployed Kenyan police will be crucial to helping control the country's gangs and moving toward democratic elections

- and he called feedback from their initial days in the capital "extremely, extremely positive."

He said his government will focus on addressing gang violence and food insecurity, ensuring free elections through constitu-

tional and political reform, and rebuilding public trust in the police.

On June 25, the initial contingent of 200 Kenyan police arrived in Port-au-Prince. Kenya has pledged 1,000 police to the international police force and Conille said the next contingent will be arriving "very soon." They will later be joined by police from the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Chad and Jamaica in the force that will total 2,500 personnel.

Haiti asked for an international force to combat gangs in 2022, and UN Secretary-General **António Guterres** appealed for months for a country to lead the force before the Kenyans came forward.

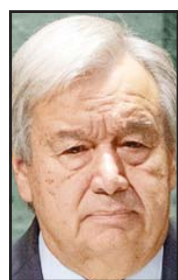
The gangs have grown in power since the July 7, 2021, assassination of President **Jovenel Moïse** and are now estimated to control up to 80% of the capital. The surge in killings, rapes and kidnappings has led to a violent uprising by civilian vigilante groups.

Meanwhile, US officials have asked Haiti's prime minister to prioritize the establishment of an electoral council as the country strives to rebuild its government amid rampant gang violence.

"This critical step toward will give the Haitian people an opportunity to select their leaders democratically for the first time in years," said Brian Nichols, US Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, who spoke after a meeting between US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Haitian Prime Minister Garry Conille the day before. (AP)



US President Joe Biden speaks during a Medal of Honor ceremony at the White House in Washington on July 3, posthumously honoring two US Army privates who were part of a daring Union Army contingent that stole a Confederate train during the Civil War. US Army Pvt's Philip G. Shadrach and George D. Wilson were captured by Confederates and executed by hanging. (AP)



Guterres



Moïse

## Lat/Am

**Beryl roars toward Mexico:** Hurricane Beryl ripped off roofs in Jamaica, jumbled fishing boats in Barbados and damaged or destroyed 95% of homes on a pair of islands in St. Vincent and the Grenadines before rumbling toward the Cayman Islands and taking aim at Mexico's Caribbean coast after leaving at least seven dead in its wake.

What had been the earliest storm to develop into a Category 5 hurricane in the Atlantic, weakened slightly but remained a major hurricane. Its eye was forecast to pass just south of the Cayman Islands overnight.

Mexico's popular Caribbean coast prepared shelters, evacuated some small outlying coastal communities and even moved sea turtle eggs off beaches threatened by storm surge, but in nightlife hotspots like Playa del Carmen and Tulum tourists still took one more night on the town. (AP)

**Brazil floods death toll hits 180:** At least 180 people have died from weeks of record flooding in southern Brazil's Rio Grande do Sul state and 32 people remain missing, the civil defense agency said Wednesday.

Torrential rains began on April 29 and continued for days, inundating cities across the state. Rescue and recovery work started after the flooding began to subside in mid-June.

Severe weather has impacted some 2,398,255 inhabitants in 478 towns, including the state capital, Porto Alegre, said the agency in a report, adding that during the height of the storms, more than 450,000 people were evacuated. (Xinhua)



Britain's LibDem party leader Ed Davey and his wife Emily Davey leave the polling station after casting their votes in Kingston, London on July 4. Britain goes to the polls Thursday after Prime Minister Rishi Sunak called a general election. (AP)



ABK Kuwait  
greetings on Hijri  
New Year.



### ABK branch closure for Hijri New Year

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) extends its greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah as well as the government, people, and residents of Kuwait on the occasion of the Hijri New Year 1446, hoping it bestows an abundance of blessings.

ABK discloses that its branches will be closed Sunday, 7 July 2024 to resume operations on Monday, 8 July 2024. During this holiday, ABK's digital branch in Al Khiran Mall will be open to serve customers from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. The Bank has also confirmed its full operational readiness to serve customers 24/7 via its various digital platforms throughout the holiday. This includes Online Banking via eahli.com, Mobile Banking through the ABK app, as well as the Bank's call center Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 and its ATM network.

### KOC allocates KD 30m for project

MEED magazine has reported that Kuwait Oil Company has allocated approximately KD 30 million (\$98 million) for a planned project aimed at developing a gas pipeline and associated mechanical works. This initiative forms part of Kuwait's strategy to harness gas from its Jurassic gas fields, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Scheduled for a pre-tender meeting on July 30, contractors are gearing up for the project, with bids expected to be submitted by Sept 29. The project scope includes offshore developments to facilitate gas collection from the Jurassic gas fields, along with the installation of a 16-inch diameter main feeder line originating from the Umm Naqa area.

## Market Movements 04-07-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	-	TASI	+63.46	11,658.66	
JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	+332.89	40,913.65	
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi	+57.46	6,507.49	
EGYPT	-	EGX 30	+203.62	28,364.79	
DUBAI	-	DFMGI	-13.39	4,065.82	
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	-8.56	80,323.94	

# Business



KOC signs contracts for heavy oil drilling rigs.

## KOC signs contracts with local firms for heavy oil production

Drilling rig contracts aim to boost local economy

**KUWAIT CITY, July 4: Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) has signed nine contracts with five local companies to provide drilling rigs for heavy oil production operations in the northern Kuwait fields, with the aim of supporting the local economy.**

The contract signing ceremony was held in the company's main building in the presence of KOC's Chief Executive Officer Ahmed Al-Eidan and a number of his deputies, group managers and heads of the concerned teams, in addition to officials of the five local companies with which the contracts were signed.

The nine contracts stipulate the provision of surface drilling rigs with a capacity of 550 HP for a period of up to five years, at competitive prices and within the allocated budgets. These contracts are considered unique, as this is the first time that drilling rig contracts are signed with local companies with the support of international companies experienced in drilling and well repair operations. This move aims to develop local capabilities and localize the petroleum industry.

KOC is committed to enhance the competitive environment, encourage local private companies and provide diverse oil sector job opportunities for young Kuwaitis.

The company will closely monitor these compa-

nies to improve their capabilities and qualify them to participate in future tenders for medium and deep drilling rigs and well repair in a bid to generate job opportunities and localize petroleum industries.

The five contracting companies are: Operation Energy, Kuwait Well Drilling, Imkan, Zenith Group Company Drilling and Maintenance of Oil Wells, and Engineering Refineries.

### Facilitating operations for entrepreneurs

## Kuwait ministry enhances business environment with activity mergers

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, July 4:** The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has issued a decision to merge complementary commercial activities with main activities to enhance the business environment and streamline commercial procedures.

This initiative is expected to boost the national economy and support local companies by reducing costs and facilitating operations for entrepreneurs.

The decision implements Article 14 of the Companies Law, which governs the is-

suance of commercial licenses in the country.

It was approved based on meetings of the Commercial Activities Classification Committee and permits the integration of activities at the same location, provided that the complementary activity does not interfere with the primary activity of the commercial license.

Included in the list of complementary activities are confectionery with retail sales of flowers, roses, and plants; health institutes for men, women, or children with snack food activities; and restaurants with retail sales of gifts and luxury items.

### KFH joins FTSE4Good Index

## Kuwait Finance House 'partakes' in Eco Talks

**KUWAIT CITY, July 4:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the 3rd edition of EcoTalks 2024 at the Scientific Center. This environmental awareness and conservation event aligns with KFH's strategic partnership with the Center and reinforces its commitment to sustainability leadership.

KFH's participation in this forum aligns with the Environment Month initiative, (We Are Generation Restoration). This activity focuses on raising awareness about land restoration, combating desertification, and improving drought resilience. It also emphasizes the importance of innovative solutions in tackling environmental challenges.

The forum addressed the key advancements in the sustainability sector with presentations from experts in the field. KFH showcased its role in preserving the environment and its commitment to promoting a sustainable future through responsible banking practices and green finance initiatives.

The partnership with the Scientific Center includes many initiatives and events focusing on the protection of the environment.

KFH places a strong emphasis on its sustainability strategy, ensuring that its regulations and standards align with international norms and the sustainable development goals. This commitment to sustainability has allowed KFH to excel in this field and be included in the prestigious FTSE4Good Index. Created by the global index and data provider FTSE Russell, the FTSE4Good Index Series is designed to measure the performance of companies demonstrating strong Environmental, Social and Governance

(ESG) practices. KFH is committed to promoting sustainability through strategic partnerships, social initiatives, and environmentally friendly business practices, demonstrating a dedication to protecting the environment.

KFH has made significant strides in the areas of environmental responsibility and sustainability. This includes publishing the first-ever carbon footprint report, issuing the sustainability reports, and implementing a comprehensive sustainability strategy that incorporates ESG considerations. Additionally, KFH has collaborated with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) on various initiatives aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

KFH Executive Manager Corporate Relations and CSR, Faisal Alsurayye stated that KFH is pleased to take part in the Eco Talks event organized by the Scientific Center, KFH's key partner in numerous environmental initiatives.

He mentioned that this event provides an excellent chance to raise awareness about the environment by engaging in conversations and dialogues about land reform, desertification, drought resistance, and other sustainability topics that relate to environmental preservation.

Alsurayye commented that the collaboration between KFH and the Scientific Center has been fruitful, achieving numerous objectives and emphasizing that it will persist due to KFH's dedication to advancing overall sustainability and adhering to environmental, social, and governance standards.



Faisal Alsurayye receiving the honor from AlSanousi.

### IEA predicts peak oil demand by 2029, OPEC disagrees

## Oil prices gain in June despite prospect of higher OPEC+ supply

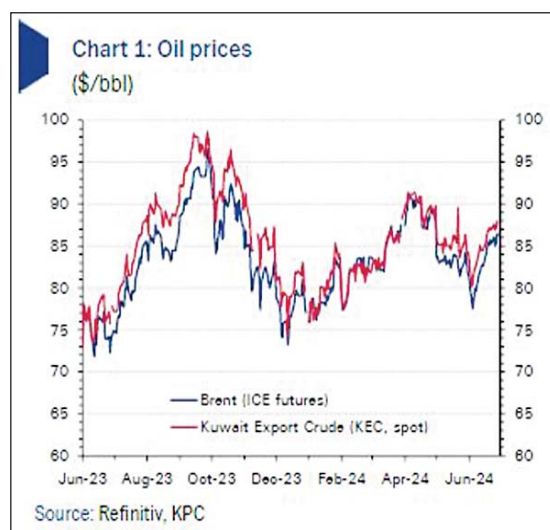
By National Bank of Kuwait

Oil prices finished higher in June, lifted by resur-facing geopolitical tensions and the prospect of rate cuts by key central banks in H2. Brent erased its post OPEC+ meeting losses, when the oil producers' group announced an unwinding of 2024's voluntary supply cuts from Q4. However, global oil demand growth estimates in 2024 were downgraded by the IEA to a below-trend 1 mb/d on muted economic activity and increasing renewable energy technology penetration.

• Brent futures closed higher in June, posting gains of 5.9% m/m to reach \$86.4/bbl (+12.1% ytd), their highest level in two months. (Chart 1.) Prices recovered from their sharp post-OPEC+ meeting falls of early June when markets grew concerned that the group's decision to unwind 2024's voluntary production cuts from October 2024 onwards and into 2025 would push the market into surplus territory. But by June's close, geopolitical risk was back in the frame with tensions flaring up between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon while Yemen's Houthis continued their attacks on Red Sea shipping. Local marker Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) ended June up 4.8% m/m at \$87.9/bbl (+10.5% ytd).

• In the futures markets, the negative reaction by speculators and money managers to the OPEC+ supply cut unwinding decision was striking. By the 4th of June, Brent crude money manager net length (the difference in the number of 'long' contracts and the number of 'short' contracts) had plummeted to 45.7K, the lowest level in almost ten years and beyond even the severity of the bearish drop associated with the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020. (Chart 2.) This was driven primarily by a surge in short selling positions, as speculators rushed to trade on the belief that higher OPEC output would tip the market into a supply surplus and pressure prices downwards. As June wore on, however, this pattern reversed, with net length once more increasing.

• Short-term oil demand growth forecasts from ma-



• In June the IEA also published its medium-term oil market forecast ('Oil 2024') report, in which



• In May, OPEC+ production (quota members only)

fell by 125 kb/d m/m to 34.1 mb/d, according to OPEC secondary source data. The decline was led mainly by Russia (-119 kb/d) and Kazakhstan (-62 kb/d), and only partially offset by increases in Nigerian production (+74 kb/d) as the country looks to increase supply to its recently-completed Dangote refinery. Kuwait, for its part, continued to pump at its quota level of 2.41 mb/d, according to official sources. In line with the OPEC+ schedule, Kuwait will be able to gradually unwind its 2024 supply cuts from Q4, at the rate of 11 kb/d every month to September 2025.

• In the US, crude production rose to 13.2 mb/d in June, largely matching the Energy Information Administration's (EIA) 2024 annual average production estimate. For 2025, the EIA expects output to rise by 500kb/d to 13.7 mb/d, one of the slowest rates of increase in several years—and in line with the trend of falling oil rig counts, an indicator of future production. (Chart 6.) The oil rig count fell to 479 by the close of June, its lowest level since late 2021.

• We maintain our forecast for Brent to average \$85/bbl in 2024, helped by what should this quarter be solid oil demand and tighter market balances. From Q4 onwards, market balances are expected to loosen with the scheduled unwinding of OPEC+ supply cuts, but these will only take place, OPEC+ says, if market conditions warrant them and at a pace slow enough to make the effect on balances and prices limited and manageable. Downside risks to the price outlook are worth highlighting, however. The most important is global economic growth and the potential for activity to underwhelm in H2 2024, which would likely require non-OECD and especially Chinese economic growth to slow. Partially offsetting this, though, would be the fairly good prospect of an uptick in economic activity in OECD countries, helped by looser monetary policy. Higher non-OPEC supply, led by output gains in the US, Canada and Brazil, cannot be discounted, either, for its potential to upset the OPEC+ equilibrium and pressure prices downwards. We see these gains as being limited in 2024, however.



## BUSINESS

## China is No.1 in generative AI patent applications

China has requested far more patents than any other country when it comes to generative AI, the U.N. intellectual property agency said Wednesday, with the United States a distant second.

The technology, which offers the potential to boost efficiency and speed up scientific discoveries but also raises concerns about jobs and workers, was linked to about 54,000 inventions

in the decade through 2023, the World Intellectual Property Organization reported.

More than a quarter of those inventions emerged last year - a testament to the explosive growth and interest in the technology since generative AI vaulted into broad public consciousness in late 2022, WIPO said.

The new report on patents, the first of its kind, aims to track patent applications as a possible

indication of trends in artificial intelligence. It focuses only on generative AI and excludes artificial intelligence more broadly, which includes technologies like facial recognition or autonomous driving.

"WIPO hopes to give everyone a better understanding of where this fast-evolving technology is being developed, and where it is headed," WIPO Director-General Daren Tang told reporters. (AP)

## European Commission OKs Lufthansa-ITA Airways merger

The European Commission on Wednesday gave its approval to the proposed merger between Italian flagship carrier ITA Airways and Germany's Lufthansa.

The deal between the two airlines has been in the works since ITA Airways was formed in 2020. The German carrier had also been in talks with Alitalia, the predecessor to ITA Airways, before Alitalia went bankrupt and was dissolved and then restruct-

ured as ITA Airways.

Giancarlo Giorgetti, Italy's minister of finance, praised the deal, saying it would help make Rome "a hub for air travel to the United States and Africa" through the Lufthansa network.

The European Commission's approval is conditional on the implementation of certain conditions aimed at preserving competition on some routes where Lufthansa already has

significant operations and where competition could be hindered by adding ITA Airways' flight routes. Lufthansa has already made some concessions on routes, and it is expected to make further concessions in the coming weeks.

But by combining the two networks, ITA will gain access to Lufthansa's network that covers most of Europe, North America, and Asia. (Xinhua)

## Taxes set to take effect soon

## Tariffs on China's EVs harm EU's interest, VDA warns

BERLIN, July 4, (Xinhua): The planned tariffs against China-made electric vehicles (EVs) would be counterproductive for Europe's climate goals and harmful to its industry and consumers, the German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA) said on Wednesday.

The association warned in a statement that Western car manufacturers in China would also be affected by the tariffs initiated by the European Union (EU), in some cases even worse than Chinese companies.

The cooperation and production of European carmakers in China were "an important building block for the transformation and competitiveness in Europe," the VDA

stated, emphasizing that the EU has historically benefited from its openness in international trade.

Germany, in particular, maintains a significant surplus in the automotive trade with China. Last year, Europe's largest economy exported passenger cars and parts valued at 26.3 billion euros (28.4 billion U.S. dollars) to China, meanwhile, imports from China amounted to 6.8 billion euros, according to the VDA.

The tariffs, set to take effect soon if no other political agreement is reached, would also "make it more difficult to successfully ramp up electric drive and thus decarbonize and achieve the climate targets," the VDA empha-

sized.

The association urged the European Commission to refrain from imposing the announced tariffs and instead find a negotiated solution with China. It welcomed the fact that talks have now started between the two parties.

"Competitiveness is fostered through competition," the association said. It proposed promoting this through free trade agreements, targeted and efficient funding for research and innovation, and a coherent policy framework that embraces technological advancements.

The German government rejects punitive tariffs on Chinese EVs. Chancellor Olaf Scholz has made a com-

promise offer in the customs dispute, proposing equally high tariffs on car imports from both sides, according to local media reports last week.

Due to the risk of trade conflicts, a third of over 160 German economic experts have opposed tariffs, while some others also expressed their hope to reduce the duties, according to a survey published Wednesday by the Munich-based ifo Institute for Economic Research.

The institute stressed that the tariffs would not weaken the position of China's electric cars, whereas "European manufacturers would not become more efficient as a result of tariffs."



A hiring sign is displayed at a restaurant in Chicago, Monday, July 1, 2024. On Wednesday, July 3, 2024, the Labor Department reports on the number of people who applied for unemployment benefits last week. (AP)

## 4,000 claimants added

## US filings for jobless claims rise modestly

WASHINGTON, July 4, (AP): The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits inched up last week and remain historically low, however the total number of people collecting jobless benefits continues to grow.

The Labor Department reported Wednesday that jobless claims for the week ending June 29 rose by 4,000 to 238,000 from 234,000 the previous week. The data was issued one day earlier than its regular Thursday release due to the July Fourth holiday.

The total number of Americans collecting unemployment benefits rose for the ninth straight week, to 1.86 million, for the week of June 22. That's the most since November of 2021.

Economists say that while the number of new people applying for jobless aid each week remains relatively modest, some who are receiving benefits are finding it harder to land new jobs. That suggests that demand for workers is waning, even as the economy remains strong. That, combined with recent data showing that inflation continues to ease, could point to the so-called "soft-landing" the Federal Reserve was aiming for when it began its rate-hiking campaign.

The Federal Reserve raised its benchmark borrowing rate 11 times beginning in March of 2022 in an attempt to extinguish the four-decade high inflation that shook the economy after it rebounded from the COVID-19 recession of 2020. The Fed's intention was to cool off a red-hot labor market and slow wage growth, which can fuel inflation.

Many economists had expected the rapid rate hikes would trigger a recession, but so far that hasn't happened, thanks in large part to strong consumer demand and a

sturdier-than-expected labor market.

"The data bear watching for signals about a more material weakening in the labor market going forward, which will have implications for Fed policy," said Rubeeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics.

The Fed's next policy meeting comes at the end of this month, but few experts are expecting a rate cut then. However, investors are betting that there is nearly a 70% chance for a reduction at the Fed's September meeting.

The Fed will release the minutes from its most recent interest rate policy meeting Wednesday afternoon and there may be more hints as to how Fed officials feel about the state of the U.S. economy, and what they may be thinking about current interest rates.

While the labor market remains sturdy, recent government data suggest some softness taking hold.

The four-week average of claims, which evens out some of the week-to-week volatility, also continued to climb, rising by 2,250 to 238,500.

Applications for jobless benefits are trending higher in June after mostly staying below 220,000 this year. The unemployment rate ticked up to 4% in May, despite the fact that America's employers added a strong 272,000 jobs last month. Job postings in May rose slightly to 8.1 million, however, April's figure was revised lower to 7.9 million, the first reading below 8 million since February 2021.

The government issues its June jobs report on Friday. Analysts are forecasting that U.S. employers added 190,000 jobs last month, a healthy figure but down from May.

Weekly unemployment claims are widely considered as representative of layoffs.

## Japan's Nikkei 225 index hits a record high close of 40,913.65

TOKYO, July 4, (AP): Japan's Nikkei 225 benchmark closed Thursday at a fresh record high of 40,913.65, pushing past its most recent record close set in March.

The index gained 0.8%, buoyed by heavy buying of technology and export-oriented shares. The index's all-time high during intraday trading is 41,087.75, set on March 22. Its previous record close was 40,888.43, also set on March 22.

The gains tracked an overnight rally on Wall Street, where the S&P 500 and tech-heavy Nasdaq also hit fresh records.

Investors have piled into the Japanese market partly due to the cheapness of the Japanese yen, which is trading at 34-year lows against the dollar. A weak yen tends to push the profits of exporters higher when they are repatriated to Japan.

The Nikkei 225 index has gained 22.4% so far this year. The index surged in the late 1980s during Japan's bubble economy, when asset prices soared. But it collapsed when that financial bubble imploded in early 1990 after hitting its earlier record of 38,915.87.

## US services sector sees 2nd contraction in three months

## Economy seen slowing

WASHINGTON, July 4, (Xinhua): Economic activity in the U.S. services sector contracted in June for the second time in the last three months, indicating a slowdown in the economy, the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) reported Wednesday.

The Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) registered 48.8 percent, 5 percentage points lower than the May reading, according to the latest Services ISM Report on Business.

The services sector grew for 15 straight months following a contraction in December 2022, before experiencing a 49.4-percent contraction in April this year. The reading in June was a reversal compared to May and the second in contraction territory in the last three months.

"The decrease in the composite index in June is a result of notably lower business activity, a contraction in new orders for the second time since May 2020 and continued contraction in employment," Steve Miller, chair of the ISM Services Business Survey Committee, noted.

The New Orders Index of 47.3 percent is 6.8 percentage points lower than the May reading. The Employment Index contracted for the sixth time in seven months and at a faster rate in June; the reading of 46.1 percent represents a 1-percentage point decrease compared to May.

"Survey respondents report that in general, business is flat or lower, and although inflation is easing, some commodities have significantly higher costs," Miller said.



People visit Licensing Expo 2024 in Las Vegas, the United States, on May 21, 2024. Licensing Expo 2024, the world's premier licensing trade show, kicked off in Las Vegas, U.S. state of Nevada. (Xinhua)



A sign for Microsoft offices is seen, May 6, 2021, in New York. Microsoft Corp. has agreed to pay \$14.4 million to settle allegations that the global software giant retaliated and discriminated against employees who took protected leave, including parental and disability, the California Civil Rights Department announced Wednesday, July 3, 2024. (AP)

## Microsoft will pay \$14m to settle allegations it discriminated against workers who took leave

## Dev to propel economic momentum

## Summer travel boom in China

BEIJING, July 4, (Xinhua): China is gearing up for a substantial surge in travel and tourism as the bustling summer vacation season kicks off, with analysts expecting the rapidly warming domestic market to further boost economic recovery.

The travel industry has made extensive preparations for the summer rush as travelers take to both air and rail routes.

China is expecting 860 million railway passenger trips in July and August, averaging 13.87 million daily. This strong travel demand is mainly driven by summer vacationers, tourists and family visitors, according to the China State Railway Group Co., Ltd.

Railway operators plan to increase transportation capacity by deploying 276 additional temporary trains daily, an increase of 128 from the same period last year.

date of court approval for the settlement, and who took at least one leave protected under state or federal law.

Each eligible employee will receive a base payment of \$1,500 with more available based on factors such as salary and length of employment.

Microsoft has about 221,000 employees worldwide, including nearly 7,000 in California, according to the state civil rights agency. The agency did not have an estimate for how many workers could receive payment.

SAN FRANCISCO, July 4, (AP): Microsoft Corp. has agreed to pay \$14.4 million to settle allegations that the global software giant retaliated and discriminated against employees who took protected leave, including parental and disability, the California Civil Rights Department announced Wednesday.

The proposed settlement stems from a multi-year investigation by the California agency and the consent decree is subject to approval in state court in Santa Clara County, where the Redmond, Washington-based company has an office.

The state agency, which launched its investigation in 2020, alleged that employees who took leave from work due to pregnancy or disability, or to bond with a new baby or care for a sick family member, received lower bonuses and unfavorable performance reviews.

Those factors, in turn, harmed employee eligibility for merit pay increases and promotions and the practice disproportionately impacted women and people with disabilities, the department said.

In a statement, civil rights department director Kevin Kish applauded the company "for coming to the table and agreeing to make the changes necessary to protect workers in California."

Microsoft responded in a statement that the agency's allegations are inaccurate, but it "will continue to listen, learn, and support our employees."

As part of the proposed settlement, Microsoft will take steps to prevent future discrimination, including updated manager training. An outside consultant will monitor and report on the company's compliance.

Most of the settlement money - \$14.2 million - will go toward harmed workers. Covered employees worked at Microsoft from May 13, 2017, to a yet-to-be-determined

## Average rate on a 30-yr mortgage climbs for 1st time since late May

LOS ANGELES, July 4, (AP): The average rate on a 30-year mortgage rose this week, pushing up borrowing costs on a home loan for the first time since late May.

The rate rose to 6.95% from 6.86% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Wednesday. A year ago, the rate averaged 6.81%.

The uptick follows a four-week pullback in the average rate, which has mostly hovered around 7% this year.

When rates rise they can add hundreds of dollars a month in costs for borrowers. The elevated mortgage rates have been a major drag on home sales, which remain in a three-year slump.

Borrowing costs on 15-year fixed-rate mortgages, popular with homeowners refinancing their home loans, also rose this week, pushing the average rate to 6.25% from 6.16% last week. A year ago, it averaged 6.24%, Freddie Mac said.

Mortgage rates are influenced by several factors, including how the bond market reacts to the Federal Reserve's interest rate policy and the moves in the 10-year Treasury yield, which lenders use as a guide to pricing home loans.

The yield, which topped 4.7% in late April, has been generally declining since then on hopes that inflation is slowing enough to get the Fed to

lower its main interest rate from the highest level in more than two decades.

Fed officials have said that inflation has moved closer to the Fed's target level of 2% in recent months and signaled that they expect to cut the central bank's benchmark rate once this year.

Until the Fed begins lowering its short-term rate, long-term mortgage rates are unlikely to budge from where they are now.

Economists are forecasting that mortgage rates will ease modestly by the end of this year, though most projections call for the average rate on a 30-year home loan to remain above 6%. That's still double what

the average rate was just three years ago.

"We are still expecting rates to moderately decrease in the second half of the year and given additional inventory, price growth should temper, boding well for interested homebuyers," said Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's chief economist.

The elevated mortgage rates and record-high home prices discouraged many would-be homebuyers this spring, traditionally the busiest period of the year for the housing market.

Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes fell in May for the third month in a row, and indications are that June saw a pullback as well.



## Ambassador Lamsal highlights investment summit success

# Nepal-Kuwait investment program promotes bilateral trade

By Paul Francis X. Fernandes  
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: The Embassy of Nepal in Kuwait hosted an interactive program under the title 'Export Promotion and Investment Opportunities in Nepal' on Wednesday at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

This was to strengthen bilateral trade relations between Nepal and Kuwait, engaging key stakeholders to explore investment prospects and gain insights into export promotion trends.

Addressing the gathering, His Excellency Ghana Shyam Lamsal, Ambassador of Nepal to Kuwait, extended gratitude to HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for their steadfast support, which has bolstered the Nepal-Kuwait relationship.

Highlighting the significance of the Third Nepal Investment Summit held in Kathmandu last April, Ambassador Lamsal noted its global impact, attracting over 2,500 participants, including 800 delegates from 50 countries.

The summit showcased 152 projects, with 19 seeking expressions of interest and 9 undergoing market sounding across various sectors, demonstrating Nepal's commitment to attracting diverse investments.



Photo during the event.

Photos by Mohammad Morsi

Ambassador Lamsal emphasized the potential for expanding bilateral trade between Nepal and Kuwait, noting Nepal's exports of woolen carpets, silk shawls, and cotton textiles, and its imports of mineral turpentine oil, petroleum products, and household appliances from Kuwait. Efforts to enhance trade relations are ongoing, promising mutual economic benefits.

Beyond economic opportunities, Ambassador Lamsal highlighted Nepal's geographical diversity, from the lush plains of the Terai to the majestic Himalayas, including Mount Everest (Sagarmatha).

He underscored Nepal's rich cultural tapestry, comprising over 100 ethnic groups with unique traditions, languages, and arts, and its exemplary religious tolerance.

In conclusion, Ambassador Lamsal portrayed Nepal as not merely a destination but an invitation to experience its natural beauty, cultural diversity, and spiritual tranquility.

He invited investors to explore sectors like renewable energy, tourism infrastructure, and technology, promising supportive government policies and economic growth opportunities in Nepal's strategic position between India and China.

He concluded by affirming Nepal's role as a gateway for regional trade, facilitated by ongoing infrastructure developments and trade agreements, offering favorable conditions for business expansion in manufacturing, agriculture, and services.

## First session focuses on integrity in workplace

# 'NBK Aspire' summer internship program kicks off

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has kick started 'NBK Aspire' Summer Internship Program for 2024, targeting students between the age of 14 and 18 years attending high school, college, or university, as part of delivering its social responsibility towards the youth and students.

The bank hosted the first training session, which started on June 30 and will continue until July 11, focusing on topics related to integrity in the workplace, in cooperation with Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority 'Nazaha', whose representatives lectured the students about its work nature.

The program's curriculum for this year is divided into 4 two-week sessions, which include training courses and workshops delivered in cooperation with Creative Confidence. The first session scheduled from June 30 to July 11, 2024 focuses on integrity in the workplace, whereas the second session scheduled from July 14 to 25 includes trips to NBK's different divisions. The third session is from July 28 to August 8 addresses cybercrime and the "Let's Be Aware" banking awareness campaign by familiarizing students to cybercrime and how to protect themselves from financial fraud, and finally the last session from August 11 to 22, 2024 focuses on training, development and sustainability.

The program also includes a set of training and study materials that include working group mechanisms, creative thinking, optimal self-expression, customer-dealing skills, as well as service quality concept. This aims to qualify and empower students, and to provide them with the opportunity to benefit from the advanced, up-to-date training and academic materials provided in the program. These courses



Photo during the event.

also include tours for participants to give them a closer look at the work mechanism in the bank's divisions and branches.

On this occasion, Asmaa Bin Hussain, Senior Officer - Public Relations at National Bank of Kuwait said: "The goal of 'NBK Aspire' is to encourage students during their summer vacation to receive training and engage in the banking business experience. It also reflects the bank's steadfast commitment to deliver its social responsibility by empowering and upskilling the young generation to play an active role in the future."

"In light of the program's resounding success over the past years, NBK always seeks to enhance its content with the aim of developing participants' personal skills, such as training on presentation skills, and devising

solutions for problem solving," she remarked.

On his part, Ahmed Al-Othman, Senior Media Specialist at 'Nazaha', mentioned that the Authority was established as part of the international commitment under the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), highlighting a number of Nazaha's goals and competencies according to its Establishment Law No. (2) of 2016.

Meanwhile, Dr. Hussein Al-Sabbagha, Chief Specialist at 'Nazaha', reviewed the concept of integrity and the principles to achieve it. He touched on the ways to practice integrity in education with a direct message to the student group, highlighting the dangers of educational corruption and its impact on the educational process and its outcomes.

It is worth mentioning that NBK

shows steadfast dedication to supporting the youth and students and developing their skills and experience through the most advanced training programs, which translates in upskilling and qualifying them to actively contribute to the success of public and private sector institutions in the future, thus promoting sustainability among national human resources.

Since founding, NBK has fostered corporate social responsibility culture as a cardinal principle for serving the community at large. To this end, it contributed large investments in social support, and introduced many meaningful programs in areas including education, healthcare, training and recruitment of national talent, social support and welfare programs as well as environmental and sports initiatives.

## Up to 10% cashback on intl transactions

# Warba Bank launches summer cashback campaign in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: Warba Bank is pleased to announce the launch of its anticipated summer cashback campaign, which runs from June 13 to August 31, 2024. This exclusive offer presents distinguished customers rewards of up to 10% cashback on eligible credit and prepaid card transactions made abroad, making it the most generous cash back program in Kuwait.

In this regard, Muhannad Borhama, Director Product Development and Customer Segments Department, explained that the campaign aims to enhance the added value of the holders of these cards, by providing valuable rewards on daily international operations, whether dining in restaurants and cafes, enjoying visiting tourist attractions and amusement parks, purchasing medical supplies, or by using private and public transportation services, as clients can earn cashback on a wide range of eligible transactions this summer. Noting that Warba Bank continues its distinguished cashback program, which rewards its eligible clients with cashback rates of 3% and 6% and a maximum of KD 500 per month, according to the special terms and conditions. During this summer, and through this campaign in particular, clients can obtain additional percentages, bringing the total return percentage to 10% and a maximum of KD 600 per month! The campaign also includes Visa Signature and Visa prepaid cards for the first time, World MasterCard, and World Elite MasterCard.

The commercial categories selected in this campaign are food and beverages, theme parks, pharmacies, and private and public transportation, noting that all (eligible) international personal transactions are counted within the cashback, regardless of their value.

Borhama further said: "We are excited to launch this exceptional opportunity for our clients to increase their rewards while spending their summer vacations outside Kuwait, which enhances their experience with unprecedented cashback on most daily transactions, and that Warba Bank always provides innovative financial solutions



Muhannad Borhama

that add real value to clients' lives." After the end of the month, the refund amounts are deposited in the form of points in the clients' digital "wallet" within the Warba Bank application, where they can exchange the points into cash amounts or exchange them for other exclusive offers. Warba Bank encourages all clients to take full advantage of this limited offer and enjoy a rewarding summer with eligible credit and prepaid cards from Warba Bank.

He stated that the eligible clients are classified based on their salaries and deposits in the Bank, starting with the W segment who have a monthly monthly earn between KD 500 and less than KD 1,500, and the Priority Banking segment, whose monthly income ranges from KD 1,500 to less than KD 2,500 KD, and Royal Banking segment who have a monthly income of KD 2,500 or more, as well as private banking clients. Clients are also classified based on total deposits in the Bank.

Warba Bank is one of the banks that has achieved great successes in a short period, as it occupied a leadership position in the field of Islamic digital banking services for individuals, and it is one of the largest local banks in the number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent components that make the Bank close to all members of society.

## Focus on joint research projects

# AUK ORG & USM sign MoU to boost research collaboration

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: The Office of Research and Grants (ORG) at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) have taken a significant step towards strengthening international collaboration in the field of research and education with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The MoU aims to enhance cooperation in scientific studies and research development. This collaboration seeks to broaden the scope of knowledge and establish a framework for joint research initiatives between the two institutions.

Under the MoU, both parties have agreed to explore opportunities for collaboration in various areas, including joint research projects and the organization of research workshops. These initiatives are geared towards fostering innovation, sharing expertise, and addressing global challenges through collaborative research efforts.

Commenting on the significance of the MoU and its caliber, Dr. Iyad Abu Doush, ORG director, stated, "We are excited to embark on this collaborative journey with USM. This partnership opens doors to new opportunities for knowledge exchange and interdisciplinary



Dr. Iyad Abu Doush

nary collaboration, ultimately driving innovation and societal impact."

The signing of the MoU marks the beginning of an exciting chapter in the collaboration between USM and AUK. By leveraging their respective strengths and expertise, both institutions aim to foster innovation, promote academic excellence, and contribute to the advancement of knowledge on a global scale.

# AmCham Kuwait's Women in Business Focus Group hosts its second 2024 Diversity & Inclusion Diwaniya

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: The American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) Kuwait's Women in Business Focus Group hosted their second Diversity & Inclusion Diwaniya of 2024. The event featured a dynamic discussion on capacity building and mentorship best practices, with notable attendees including several leading professionals, NGOs and industry experts.

Dr. Areezou Harraf opened the event by emphasizing the importance of developing impactful initiatives through the series of Diwanias. The discussion explored how to synergize mentor-mentee relationships and identify skill gaps to ensure effective mentorship. Dr. Harraf highlighted the need for mentors who complement the mentee's skill set and strategic positioning within organizations.

### Key Discussions and Insights:

■ **Effective Mentorship Matching:** Key speakers highlighted the importance of scientifically and objectively matching mentors and mentees based on career stages, goals, and skill needs. They discussed the use of assessments and psychometrics to ensure compatibility and success.

■ **Structured Programs and Training:** Participants emphasized the need for structured mentorship programs with defined timelines, regular meetings, and clear agendas. Training for both mentors and mentees was identified as crucial to clarify expectations and enhance the relationship.

■ **Awareness and Accessibility:** Increasing awareness of mentorship resources within organizations and forming partnerships with NGOs, embassies, and professional networks to expand access, especially for under-



Photo during the event.

represented groups, was strongly advocated.

■ **Evaluation and Sustainability:** The necessity of establishing metrics to measure the success of mentorship programs, continuous review, and iteration based on feedback was discussed to ensure long-term effectiveness.

■ **Distinction Between Mentorship and Coaching:** Clarifying the differences between mentorship and coaching, and providing guidance on when each is appropriate, was considered essential for effective career development.

Participants from the UNDP discussed the organization's mentorship programs with the private sector and the importance of value-added relationships. The U.S. Embassy's representatives also shared the State Department's approach to mentorship amidst

the unique challenges of a hybrid work structure. Finally, private sector entities highlighted their flash mentorship program aimed at providing access to higher-level executives.

The discussion concluded with action items to enhance mentorship programs. Clear criteria for mentor-mentee matching based on career stage, goals, and skill needs should be established, with the potential implementation of assessments to ensure compatibility. Training sessions for both mentors and mentees are essential to clarify expectations and best practices. Structured programs with defined timelines and agendas will maintain focus and progress, supported by digital platforms for analytics and data collection. Increasing awareness of mentorship resources

within organizations and through partnerships with NGOs, embassies, or professional networks will expand access, especially for underrepresented groups. Regular evaluation and iteration of mentorship programs based on feedback will ensure sustainability and effectiveness. Distinguishing between mentorship and coaching, and adapting programs to fit cultural and organizational contexts, are also crucial for success.

Dr. Harraf concluded the Diwaniya by reiterating the need for measurable initiatives and continuous improvement to ensure mentorship programs lead to tangible outcomes. The event underscored the importance of mentorship in career development and organizational growth, setting the stage for future impactful discussions.



### 'A timeless tale of heroism and sacrifice'

# 'Seven Samurai' at 70: Kurosawa's epic still captivates

NEW YORK, July 4, (AP) — Akira Kurosawa's "Seven Samurai" is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. But despite its age, the vitality and fleet-footed movement of Kurosawa's epic is still breathtaking.

To watch it again is to be swept along, all over again, by its flowing action and breadth of vision. Just as swiftly as Kambei Shimada (Takashi Shimura), the noble samurai leader of the seven, sprints this way and that in the climactic battle, "Seven Samurai" moves — man, does it move. It flies through rice fields and down wooded pathways. Kurosawa's camera doesn't anticipate where the action is running so much as chase headlong after it.

For many of its admirers, "Seven Samurai" has likewise been a kind of pursuit. It's not that Kurosawa's movie is so elusive — it's a fairly straightforward tale that states its meaning plainly. Its mystery is more the kind reserved for a grand monument whose existence seems as unfathomable as it is undeniable.

"Seven Samurai," a 207-minute epic about a 16th-century farm community that turns to a band of samurai to defend itself from marauding bandits, has seemed to always be here. It's about as lodged in movie canon as possible. Any beginner list for world cinema probably includes it. In the every-decade Sight and Sound poll of critics and filmmakers, it's slid slightly but not much. In 2022, it ranked No. 20, fittingly right alongside "Apocalypse Now," whose director, Francis Ford Coppola, is one of Kurosawa's most devoted acolytes.

Coppola and his contemporaries like Martin Scorsese and George Lucas worshipped Kurosawa. Scorsese once described "the shock of that level of mastery" when he encountered Kurosawa's movies in the 1950s. Later generations of filmmakers have had similar reactions. Alexander Payne called "Seven Samurai" a thunderbolt that changed his life. After seeing it as a young man, he said to himself: "I will never climb a mountain that high but I want to be on that mountain."

"No one has come near it," the critic Pauline Kael wrote years ago — a judgment that still holds.

This summer, timed to the 1954 film's 70th anniversary, a new restoration of "Seven Samurai" is playing in theaters beginning Wednesday in New York and expanding around the country July 12. It's a chance to revisit a stone-cold classic in all its big-screen glory.

**Masterworks**

Affection, of course, isn't universal for "Seven Samurai." Some quarters of critics will always prefer Ozu or Mizoguchi. Kurosawa's appeal in the West has always been in part because he, himself, was steeped in Hollywood genre films. Kurosawa, who made "Seven Samurai" after the masterworks of "Rashomon" (1950) and "Ikiru" (1952), was influenced by John Ford's films. Westerns, in turn, took after Kurosawa's masterpiece, beginning with the 1960 John Sturges remake, "The Magnificent Seven," a film that took the American title

from the initial U.S. release of "Seven Samurai," for which Toho Studios cut 50 minutes.

The long influence of "Seven Samurai" can be seen everywhere from the sideways wipe transitions of "Star Wars" to Pixar's "A Bug's Life." And, given how many movies since have taken more superficial approaches to its band-of-warriors-assemble narrative, a pessimistic view of "Seven Samurai" could lament it as a forerunner to today's spectacle-first big-budget movies. Shot in 148 days spread out over an entire year, "Seven Samurai" was at its time the most expensive Japanese film ever made, and one of its most popular at its box office.

But "Seven Samurai" shouldn't have to pay for its paler imitations. Watching Kurosawa's masterpiece again, what's startling is just how much it remains in a class by itself. You could point to particular elements — The choreography! The rain! Toshiro Mifune! — but it goes deeper than the vast sum of its many parts.

When Kurosawa decided to make what would be his first samurai film, Japan was just emerging from postwar American occupation. The samurai film had gone somewhat dormant during that period, and "Seven Samurai" would help reestablish it.

But Kurosawa's film, which was written by him with Shinobu Hashimoto and Hideo Oguni after a lengthy period of research, juggles themes of individualism and sacrifice for the common good that resonated in postwar Japan.

### Variety



This image released by Illumination Entertainment and Universal Studios shows The Minions in a scene from 'Despicable Me 4.' (AP)

### Film

#### Minions dominate in another wild adventure

## Minion mayhem in 'Despicable Me 4'

By Jake Coyle

Should a review of a "Despicable Me" movie be a thoughtful analysis or just a list of the funny stuff the Minions do in it? As much as I might believe in the value of film criticism, I kind of suspect that even the finest points of assessment would be dismantled about as fast as a Minion can say "Bello!"

Since they first emerged in the original "Despicable Me" in 2010, the Minions have marauded through movie theaters with impunity, soaking up some \$4.6 billion in ticket sales and spawning a franchise that with its latest entry, "Despicable Me 4," and counting the multiplying "Minions" spinoffs, numbers six movies and counting.

Along the way, they've accumulated bits of vocabulary from around the globe to add to their gibberish squeals. In "Despicable Me 4," I heard "antipasti," "bazooka" and something that sounded a little like the old "Goonies" line: "Hey you guys!"

So the Minions continue to evolve even if the movies don't. Six films in and with more on the way, too much of a good thing is becoming more of a pressing question in "Despicable Me 4," a silly and breezy installment from Illumination Entertainment that passes by with about as much to remember it as a Saturday morning cartoon.

That's not all bad. Much of what makes the "Despicable Me" movies fun is that they avoid any sense of seriousness like the plague. They stand proudly in the Looney Tunes realm of animation, with little aim beyond loosely stitching slapstick sequences together. There's a good chance you might cry during a Pixar movie, but if you wept during a "Despicable Me" movie, someone might call for help.

For "Despicable Me 4," which opens in theaters July 3, the filmmakers have, as if unsure about where to go next, smashed four or five sequel plotlines together. The film starts with a school reunion — the Lycée Pas Bon School of Villainy Class of '85 — where Gru encounters an old rival, Maxime le Mal (Will Fer-

rell), a French-accented, cockroach-obsessed villain.

Gru is attending, though, as an agent for the Anti-Villain League. (One hopes there is somewhere an Antihero League led by Travis Bickle and Walter White.) Gru traps Maxime and arrests him, but in short order, Maxime breaks out of prison and vows revenge on Gru, sending their family — wife Lucy (Kristen Wiig), and their three adopted children, Margo (Miranda Cosgrove), Edith (Dana Gaier), and Agnes (Madison Polan) — into witness protection.

**Impress**

This gives the movie a few jokes about Gru, who may be a family man now but who still has the bearing of a supervillain, trying to blend in. He tries to impress their next-door neighbor, a snobbish country club member named Perry Prescott (Stephen Colbert). But there's also a new character at home: baby Gru Jr.

That allows for some decent gags — the Minions, dressed like a race car pit team, help change dirty diapers with a T-shirt gun — but overly familiar ones. Gru Jr. is crawling in the footsteps of another child born into an atypical family with a big-torso'ed, spindly-legged father: Jack-Jack of "The Incredibles 2."

That may be why "Despicable Me 4" also quickly moves on from this narrative, shifting for a time into a heist movie. Gru is blackmailed by the Prescott daughter Poppy (Joey King) into stealing a honey badger from his old school. Meanwhile, the Minions, back at AVL headquarters, are used as guinea pigs for a new serum. Five of them are turned into the Mega Minions, a Fantastic Four-like assemblage of Minion-ized superheroes that have powers (flight, elasticity, a ray-gun eyeball) that they're predictably useless at controlling. One boulder-shaped Minion is keen enough to swallow a bomb before it detonates but not to prevent his belch from causing just as much damage.

So, yes, it will take a lot more than a so-so sixth

film to slow down the Minions. Though there's little that distinguishes this latest, overstuffed "Despicable Me," series veteran director Chris Renaud (with co-director Patrick Delage and writers Mike White and Ken Daurio) is in something between cruise control and autopilot on this careening, care-free sequel.

The "Despicable Me" movies have always benefited from the somewhat judiciously meting out their Minions. Even if they very handily upstage the franchise's main characters, they're second-banana henchmen who patiently wait for their many cameos. In "Despicable Me 4," one gets trapped in a vending machine and nonchalantly spends the rest of the movie there. If that's not a show of force, what is?

"Despicable Me 4," a Universal Pictures release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association for action and rude humor. Running time: 95 minutes. Two stars out of four.

**Also:**

**BEIJING:** New crime thriller "A Place Called Silence" topped the Chinese mainland box office chart with a revenue of 32.79 million yuan (about 4.6 million U.S. dollars) on its premiere Wednesday, according to the China Movie Data Information Network.

Directed by **Sam Quah**, who also made the 2019 hit film "Sheep Without a Shepherd," the movie delves into the topic of campus bullying and is expected to be a highlight among this summer's box office lineup.

It was followed by the domestic drama "Moments We Shared," which pocketed 13.84 million yuan.

Disney and Pixar's animated film "Inside Out 2" came in third with a daily earning of 9.07 million yuan on the day.

The total box office revenue on the Chinese mainland on Wednesday stood at about 74.99 million yuan. (Agencies)

**LOS ANGELES:** Jin, the oldest member of K-pop supergroup BTS, will be an Olympic torchbearer at the Paris games after recently completing his mandatory military service.

The 31-year-old singer is expected to represent South Korea in the torch relay in hopes of spreading the message of "harmony" and "peace," according to a statement. He finished his 18-month military service last month.

Jin along with the other torchbearers are scheduled to go across various historic sites of the host country. The specific schedule has not been disclosed.

The torch relay began in April. Jin began his military service at a front-line South Korean military boot camp in late 2022. His other group members — comprised of **Jung Kook**, **V**, **Jimin**, **Suga**, **RM**, and **J-Hope** — are currently serving their military duties.

A day after being released from military duty, Jin hosted the annual BOSTA in Seoul with activities including trying out foods, performances and dance challenges. (AP)

□ □ □

**CHANGSHA:** Arriving in China for a music competition in May, American singer **Chante Moore** was blown away by her soaring popularity in the Asian country within weeks.

Whether it was in the gym, in a restaurant or on the street, she has been recognized by her new fans in the central Chinese city of Changsha. "That doesn't happen in America as often," said the 57-year-old vocalist, who rose to fame in the United States with her whistle tones and R&B songs.

Moroccan-Canadian singer **Faouzia**, a 23-year-old rising star in the Western musical circle, had a similar experience during her first trip to China.

"When I first got here, it was very chill. But now, whenever I go to the mall, people always recognize me, even when I have sunglasses or a hood on," she said.

Moore and Faouzia are currently in Changsha, participating in "Singer 2024," a hit show by Hunan TV and Mango TV. Every Friday, they compete with other established Chinese singers such as **Na Ying** and **Wang Sulong** in live-broadcast performances.

Since its debut on May 10, the show has been dubbed "Changsha's Grammy" for its strong international squad, which also included American pop star **Adam Lambert** as a guest artist in Week 3 and **Kazakhstan** vocalist **Rukhaya** as a challenger in Week 8.

As the season's starting lineup, Moore and Faouzia are new to



Jin



Moore

most Chinese viewers and the country's showbiz. Yet this has not stopped them from pocketing five weekly champions in the past eight weeks, voted by a panel of audience and online viewers.

In interviews with Xinhua, both singers said they were touched by the Chinese audience's cordial response.

"They're just open, loving and ready for you to sing," said Moore. "They don't discriminate a bit against one or the other. It seems that they want everyone to do well, and they connect with every song, and they're rooting for us."

"I've never felt like I was really touching so many people at once, and being in another country,"

she said. "To me, it feels like I'm beginning a whole another part of my career."

Faouzia, as the show's youngest singer, used translation tools to read the comments left by Chinese viewers. "They're very funny, loving and very kind. Everyone made me feel very welcomed here," she said. (Xinhua)



## People &amp; Places

## Television

## Madix's dream job

## 'Hosting 'Love Island' is more fun than work'

LOS ANGELES, July 4, (AP): There was a scene in Season 10 of Bravo's "Vanderpump Rules" - before the real-life cheating fiasco dubbed Scandoval was revealed - where Ariana Madix and her then-boyfriend Tom Sandoval acknowledged they weren't spending enough quality time together. Sandoval wanted to party like a rock star while Madix wanted him to stay in with her, watching her favorite TV show, "Love Island USA," with friends.

"I don't have time to watch 50 (expletive) episodes of 'Love Island.' No, I don't," he said. "That's literally all we talk about so..." Madix responded, in a get-on-board or you're-out-of-luck kind of way.



Madix

Cut to about a year and a half later and Madix and Sandoval are no longer together. The Scandoval of it all is that Sandoval had been cheating on Madix for more than six months with a "Vanderpump" co-star. Madix is now the host of "Love Island USA" on Peacock, taking over for previous host Sarah Hyland.

It's a fitting development for Madix, whose nearly 10-year relationship fell apart publicly. Since then, she's competed on "Dancing with the Stars" and performed on Broadway as Roxie Hart in "Chicago." Her initial stint was extended due to ticket demand, and she'll return to the role next month. A former bartender, Madix released a bestselling cocktail recipe book and opened a sandwich shop called "Something About Her" in Los Angeles with "Vanderpump" co-star Katie Maloney.

For the last month, Madix has been in Fiji filming "Love Island USA." She says the job is a dream come true for a superfan like herself.

"I love watching how this show is made," said Madix in a recent Zoom interview. "There's a crew of maybe 400 people or so that work on the show to make this happen and to turn these episodes around almost in real-time. It is so impressive."

On "Love Island USA," a group of single men and women move into a remote villa with the goal of finding love. The contestants couple up based on first impressions. Those relationships are tested. Do they have lasting chemistry? They also have the option to explore connections with other people, including a stream of new singles who arrive throughout. At different times, viewers are invited to vote for their favorite couples. Contestants are also eliminated at different points, and in the end, the public votes for the winning couple who gets a cash prize.

In a Q&A, Madix speaks about "Love Island USA" and future opportunities. Answers are edited for clarity and brevity.

**AP:** As a fan of "Love Island USA," you're seeing how the sausage is made by working on the show. What's that like?

**Madix:** I love it. I think that there's some things that are so interesting about this show in comparison to other reality shows where there are cameras everywhere. These are fly on the wall cameras and there's no person walking around with a camera on their shoulder, which is what you would be used to with, say, like a "Real Housewives" or "Vanderpump" or something like that. I enjoy how unpredictable it is. It does not feel like work at all.

**AP:** What about it appeals to you?

**Madix:** It feels to me like a study in sociology or something. Aside from the big dramatic moments that you see, I'm also fascinated by just the mundane day-to-day conversations and the little moments that they have as well and conversations. I feel like it's a culture study. A group of people are in a fishbowl, and I'm just watching them interact and fall in love and fall out of love.

**AP:** Before you were on the show did you vote? Were you that invested?

**Madix:** I couldn't with the UK version which was available in the U.S. after the initial airing in the UK, but I have voted in the past for "Love Island, USA." I started with Season 4, which was the season that they shot in California.

**AP:** When you're not on set or working, are you still keeping up as a viewer?

**Madix:** I am constantly texting people who are working in the villa on days that I'm not there to get the tea on what is going on.

**AP:** Do you get to interact with the contestants outside of what we see on the show?

**Madix:** I get to say hi to them when I come in, but it also depends on what I'm coming in to do. Recently there was an audience vote resulting in one girl and one guy going home. That was a night that I wish that I could have talked to them more. And when I come in, you know, sometimes they're excited to see me. Sometimes they can tell, I think, by the look on my face that I'm coming in to deliver bad news. I always wish that I could talk to them more and hang out with them more because I love all of them in different ways. I feel bad when someone's, like, initially excited to see me and then I have a poker face so you know it's going to be bad.

**AP:** You recently turned 39. If you think about it, your 38th year was really exciting with many opportunities. Do you anticipate this year to be as busy?

**Madix:** I have some things that I'm working on. I hope this year is just as great, of course. I'm hoping to really blow it out and make it something super fun and just a last hurrah to my 30s.

**AP:** There was obviously a lot of interest in you in the immediate aftermath of Scandoval, but you kept getting presented with opportunities - "Chicago" may not have come about without "Dancing with the Stars." Have you gotten to take that in?

**Madix:** It's not often that I stop and think about things, but if I do, I'm proud of myself. I'm proud of my team because they absolutely kill it in every possible way. We've all kind of come up together in a sense, working so hard together for many years. Self-doubt and things like that are things that creep in. I really try to push any of that stuff out and focus on just how hard we've worked and how we've earned these things. And hopefully, we'll continue.



This image released by Discovery shows a scene from 'Belly of the Beast: Bigger and Bloodier,' part of 21 hours of programming celebrating 'Shark Week.' (AP)

## Television

## Massive makos, Queen Bosses shine in thrilling show

## Women take the lead in 'Shark Week'

NEW YORK, July 4, (AP): Imagine stepping into a life-sized whale carcass decoy and steering it into deep water. You're looking - yes, looking - for a group of hungry sharks to spark a feeding frenzy. To attract them, you shoot out hundreds of gallons of synthetic blood and chum. Then watch them lose it.

That's what marine biologist Liv Dixon did for Discovery Channel's "Shark Week," one of several eye-popping moments during the 21 hours of new programming this year where scientists risk everything to understand the apex predators better.

"Sharks jump at every opportunity," Dixon says. "And I'm kind of the same. I'm going to jump at every opportunity I get. You feel the adrenaline running through your veins like your whole body is shaking."

The week kicks off Sunday with Dixon's hour-long "Belly of the Beast: Bigger & Bloodier," in which she and veteran "Shark Week" biologist Dr. Austin Gallagher try to lure a so-called Queen Boss off the New Zealand coast.

"We're seeing these kind of subgroups or clans of white sharks, and we think they might be dominated by a larger female that we've termed the Queen Boss, which I love - big female energy coming in here," says Dixon. "We really just want to tap into the social dynamics of these sharks."

The seven nights of new shows are hosted by John Cena and include scientists traveling to Australia to see why there's been an uptick in attacks near Sydney Harbor, and to Mexico to figure out why there have been three fatal Great White shark incursions near a fishing village.

The show "Big Shark Energy" has researchers comparing some New Zealand sharks' speed, hunting ability and fearlessness to determine who has the swagger to swim away with a female shark, while other scientists hope to locate the fattest Great White - is 6,000 pounds possible? - and look at their poop to figure out

what they're eating.

"Shark Week" has become a key part of the summer holiday TV schedule, a place where humans safe on land can see ancient apex predators effortlessly and unnerveingly slip into view from the dark and snap open their jaws.

"They just seem still oddly like a monster species from the past," says Howard Lee, the president of Discovery Networks and TLC. "There's always something new to learn that has not yet been discovered. There's even breeds of sharks that we have not always captured."

"Shark Week" highlights also include a look at whether angel sharks remain in Japan's waters - including remarkable footage of the birth of velvet dogfish shark pups - and why a South Pacific resort has become a shark attack hotspot with bull, tiger and Great White sharks moving closer and closer to the beaches.

## Dramatic

As always, there is a deep respect for the creatures and strong science beneath the amusing titles, dramatic music and racy titles like "The Real Sharkano" and "Monster Hammerheads: Species X."

The big female energy that Dixon mentioned is apparent out of the water, too. She and researchers like Zandi Ndhlovu, Christine de Silva and Kendyl Berna are front and center, challenging the male-dominated shark waters.

"I hope more than anything it can inspire other young women and females to get involved," says Dixon. "I'm so proud to represent women in this space. I really think that's important for other women, and especially the next generation of young entrepreneurs and scientists."

Ndhlovu, a South African-based freediving instructor and founder of The Black Mermaid Foundation, first appeared on "Shark Week" in 2022 and returns for two episodes this season, blazing a way forward in representation.

"It's amazing to be working with sharks and showing up in the world as a Black woman in a way that allows little kids to see that the ocean belongs to them, too - increasing that representation around who the explorers and what science means."

The week also sees an investigation into a massive mako dubbed "Makozilla," accused of chomping on sea lions off the California coast. Scientists use a sea lion decoy and then drop huge slabs of tuna to try to get bite marks to match with sea lion scar attacks.

"I personally also do whale research and I'm like, 'I wish there was a 'Whale Week,' but no one would be like, 'Oh, wow, these humpbacks are really peaceful and beautiful,'" says Berna, an environmental scientist and wildlife filmmaker, who spent time in a shark cage luring makos.

"My hope is that it gets little kids to love sharks as well," she adds. "And hopefully, by the time my kids are watching things like this, we're going further in the direction of beginning to create more protections for sharks, not just in the U.S., but really globally."

Discovery's "Shark Week" has a rival - its programming coincides with National Geographic's "SharkFest," which also has hours of sharky content, including Anthony Mackie exploration of the shark ecosystem in his hometown of New Orleans. There's also an unconnected shark thriller in movie theaters called "The Last Breath."

"Shark Week" - with an accompanying podcast this year - was born as a counterpoint for those who developed a fear of sharks after seeing "Jaws." It has emerged as a destination for scientists eager to protect an animal older than trees.

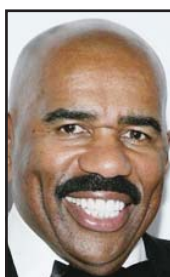
"Isn't that one of the things that makes the ocean so incredible? And isn't that what makes life so amazing?" asks Ndhlovu. "We know so much on land. We don't know so much about the ocean, and there's so much to still be discovered."



TV personality Ariana Madix, from the Bravo TV series 'Vanderpump Rules,' poses for a portrait in Los Angeles on Tuesday, May 28, 2024. (AP)



Taub



Harvey

## Variety

**NEW YORK:** A performance of the Broadway musical "Suffs," a Tony Award-winning musical about the suffragist movement, was briefly disrupted Tuesday when protesters unfurled a banner with the slogan "Suffs Is a White Wash" and chants of "Cancel 'Suffs!'"

The protest lasted no more than 20 seconds before several demonstrators were ushered out of the box seats by theater staff and the banner was taken down.

"At no point was the safety of any company members or patrons at the Music Box Theatre compromised," said a representative for the show, which was written by Shaina Taub and counts Hillary Clinton among its producers. The show won two Tonys at last month's award show.

The banner included a website run by self-described "radical, anti-racist, queer feminists" who called the musical "a betrayal of the next generation of feminists" and "rehashed white feminism." (AP)

**LOS ANGELES:** Once a year, law professor Moraima "Mo" Ivory usually brings celebrities like Steve Harvey, Ludacris and Rick Ross into her Georgia State University classroom for some entertainment legal talk. But this time, she's taking her next lesson across the Atlantic Ocean, from Atlanta to the Paris Olympics.

Ivory and her law students will head to the Summer Games in late July for a weeklong, all-expenses-paid trip funded primarily by a Delta Airlines donation. The students in her Legal Life course will study the business and legal issues related to the Olympics.

"We normally have celebrities, but I wanted to move into the sports world," said Ivory, the director of the school's entertainment, sports and media law program, which she started in 2019. "I thought it would be interesting to study the Olympics as the focal point of the class and go through all the ramifications of the Games."

During the semester, Ivory brought in guest speakers like the general counsel of the U.S. Olympic Committee, Olympian Edwin Moses and civil rights icon Andrew Young - Atlanta's mayor during the 1996 Summer Olympics. Her students have learned about adhering to the laws of the host city, NBC's exclusive US broadcast contract, corporate govern-

ance, intellectual property ownership, security protocols and how the International Olympic Committee functions.

After touching down in Paris, Ivory

and more than 30 students expect to explore the Olympic Village, visit Team USA House, attend the opening ceremony, check out Olympic sponsor-

ship sites and spend time at a local law school. (AP)

**TIRANA, Albania:** Thousands of people paid their last respects to Ismail Kadare in a state funeral held in Tirana Wednesday, with a minute's silence held nationwide in memory of the renowned Albanian novelist and poet who died earlier this week.

Kadare's coffin, surrounded by National Guard officers, lay in state in the entrance hall of the Opera and Ballet Theater in the capital's central Skanderbeg Square as his poems were recited in the background.

"He came, wrote and left," Prime Minister Edi Rama said during the ceremony, adding that Kadare had put Albanian literature "into the pantheon of world letters."

As his coffin left the hall, the crowd outside in Skanderbeg Square clapped and threw flowers.

Two days of mourning have been declared in Albania, where flags flew at half-staff across the country. Neighboring Kosovo, with a predominantly ethnic Albanian population, also declared Wednesday a day of mourning. Officials from Kosovo and neighboring North Macedonia, which has a sizable ethnic Albanian minority, attended the funeral ceremony. (AP)



Veteran hard rock artist Alice Cooper, (left), performs with the concert organized by US songwriter and producer Desmond Child, (right), at an ancient open air theater under the Acropolis in Athens on Monday, June 27, 2022. Cooper, an avid golfer, will be part of a monthly radio show with PGA Tour golfer Rocco Mediate. (AP)



## From diagnosing brain disorders to cognitive enhancement

## How 100 years of EEG have transformed neuroscience

By Erika Nyhus  
Bowdoin College

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

Electroencephalography, or EEG, was invented 100 years ago. In the years since the invention of this device to monitor brain electricity, it has had an incredible impact on how scientists study the human brain.

Since its first use, the EEG has shaped researchers' understanding of cognition, from perception to memory. It has also been important for diagnosing and guiding treatment of multiple brain disorders, including epilepsy.

I am a cognitive neuroscientist who uses EEG to study how people remember events from their past. The EEG's 100-year anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on this discovery's significance in neuroscience and medicine.

On July 6, 1924, psychiatrist Hans Berger performed the first EEG recording on a human, a 17-year-old boy undergoing neurosurgery. At the time, Berger and other researchers were performing electrical recordings on the brains of animals.

What set Berger apart was his obsession with finding the physical basis of what he called psychic energy, or mental effort, in people. Through a series of experiments spanning his early career, Berger measured brain volume and temperature to study changes in mental processes such as intellectual work, attention and desire.

He then turned to recording electrical activity. Though he recorded the first traces of EEG in the human brain in 1924, he did not publish the results until 1929. Those five intervening years were a tortuous phase of self-doubt about the source of the EEG signal in the brain and refining the experimental setup. Berger recorded hundreds of EEGs on multiple subjects, including his own children, with both experimental successes and setbacks.

## Research

Finally convinced of his results, he published a series of papers in the journal Archiv für Psychiatrie and had hopes of winning a Nobel Prize. Unfortunately, the research community doubted his results, and years passed before anyone else started using EEG in their own research.

Berger was eventually nominated for a Nobel Prize in 1940. But Nobels were not awarded that year in any category due to World War II and Germany's occupation of Norway.

When many neurons are active at the same time, they produce an electrical signal strong enough to spread instantaneously through the conductive tissue of the brain, skull and scalp. EEG electrodes placed on the head can record these electrical signals.

Since the discovery of EEG, researchers have shown that neural activity oscillates at specific frequencies. In his initial EEG recordings in 1924, Berger noted the predominance of oscillatory activity that cycled eight to 12 times per second, or 8 to 12 hertz, named alpha oscillations. Since the discovery of alpha rhythms, there have been many attempts to understand how and why neurons oscillate.

Neural oscillations are thought to be important for effective communication between specialized brain

regions. For example, theta oscillations that cycle at 4 to 8 hertz are important for communication between brain regions involved in memory encoding and retrieval in animals and humans.

Researchers then examined whether they could alter neural oscillations and therefore affect how neurons talk to each other.

Studies have shown that many behavioral and noninvasive methods can alter neural oscillations and lead to changes in cognitive performance.

Engaging in specific mental activities can induce neural oscillations in the frequencies those mental activities use. For example, my team's research found that mindfulness meditation can increase theta frequency oscillations and improve memory retrieval.

Noninvasive brain stimulation methods can target frequencies of interest. For example, my team's ongoing research found that brain stimulation at theta frequency can lead to improved memory retrieval.

EEG has also led to major discoveries about how the brain processes information in many other cognitive domains, including how people perceive the world around them, how they focus their attention, how they communicate through language and how they process emotions.

## Treatments

EEG is commonly used today to diagnose sleep disorders and epilepsy and to guide brain disorder treatments.

Scientists are using EEG to see whether memory can be improved with noninvasive brain stimulation. Although the research is still in its infancy, there have been some promising results. For example, one study found that noninvasive brain stimulation at gamma frequency - 25 hertz - improved memory and neurotransmitter transmission in Alzheimer's disease.

A new type of noninvasive brain stimulation called temporal interference uses two high frequencies to cause neural activity equal to the difference between the stimulation frequencies.

The high frequencies can better penetrate the brain and reach the targeted area. Researchers recently tested this method in people using 2,000 hertz and 2,005 hertz to send 5 hertz theta frequency at a key brain region for memory, the hippocampus. This led to improvements in remembering the name associated with a face.

Although these results are promising, more research is needed to understand the exact role neural oscillations play in cognition and whether altering them can lead to long-lasting cognitive enhancement.

The 100-year anniversary of the EEG provides an opportunity to consider what it has taught us about brain function and what this technique can do in the future.

In a survey commissioned by the journal Nature Human Behaviour, over 500 researchers who use EEG in their work were asked to make predictions on the future of the technique. What will be possible in the next 100 years of EEG?

Some researchers, including myself, predict that we'll use EEG to diagnose and create targeted treatments for brain disorders. Others anticipate that an affordable, wearable EEG will be widely used to enhance cognitive function at home or will be seamlessly integrated into virtual reality applications. The possibilities are vast. (AP)

## '30-minute exercise boosts cancer-fighting cells'

## Groundbreaking AI model enhances patient response to cancer therapy

CANBERRA, July 4, (Xinhua): Australian researchers have developed an artificial intelligence (AI) model that can help select the most suitable treatment for cancer patients.

In a new study, a team from the Australian National University (ANU), reported that the AI model -- called DeepPT -- was found to successfully predict responses to therapies for patients with multiple types of cancer.

By using DeepPT in combination with a second tool called ENLIGHT to select the most suitable therapy, the patient response rate to cancer therapy increased from 33.3 percent to 46.5 percent.

"We know that selecting a suitable treatment for cancer patients can be integral to patient outcomes," Danh-Tai Hoang, lead author of the study from ANU's Biological Data Science Institute, said in a media release.

DeepPT builds on previous work by the same researchers to develop an AI tool to help classify brain tumors. Both tools use microscopic pictures of patient tissue called histopathology images.

Compared to current methods of processing complex molecular data to identify suitable therapies -- a process that can take weeks -- Hoang said using histopathology images is more cost-effective and timely.

"Any kind of delay obviously poses a real challenge when dealing with patients with high-grade tumors who might require immediate treatment," he said.

The AI model, which was developed in collaboration with scientists from the U.S. National Cancer Institute and pharmaceutical company Pangea Biomed, was trained on over 5,500 patients with 16 common types of cancer, including breast, lung, head and neck, cervical and pancreatic cancers.

A new Finnish study shows that even a 30-minute exercise can increase the proportion of tumor-killing white blood cells in breast cancer patients' bloodstream.

According to a press release published by the University of Turku on Wednesday, twenty breast cancer patients who had just been diagnosed but had not yet started their cancer treatments participated in the study.

During the study, the patients pedaled a bicycle ergometer for 30 minutes at a resistance of their own choosing. Blood samples were taken from the patients at rest before, during, and after pedaling.

The results of the study revealed that during exercise, the amount of several different types of white blood cells increased in the bloodstream. The numbers of cancer-killing cytotoxic T cells and natural killer cells increased the most.

"We found that during the exercise, the number and proportion of cancer-destroying cells increased in the bloodstream, while the proportion of cancer-promoting cells either stayed the same or decreased," said Tiia Koivula, a doctoral researcher at the University of Turku, in the press release.

Koivula added that in preclinical

## US probes death, illnesses tied to 'candies'

## Fourth human case of bird flu in US

NEW YORK, July 4, (Agencies): A fourth farm worker has been infected with bird flu in the growing outbreak linked to dairy cows, health officials reported Wednesday.

The worker had direct contact with infected dairy cows on a northeast Colorado farm, state and federal health officials said. The man developed pink eye, or conjunctivitis, received antiviral treatment and has recovered.

Three previous cases of human infection linked to cows have been reported in dairy workers in Texas and Michigan since March. Two of those workers also developed pink eye, while one had mild respiratory symptoms. In 2022, the first US case of bird flu was detected in a Colorado farm worker exposed to infected poultry.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the new infection "does not change" the agency's assessment that the risk to the general public remains low. Surveillance systems tracking flu in the US have shown no unusual activity, officials said. However, people with prolonged contact with infected birds or other animals, including livestock, or to their environments, are at higher risk of infection.

The Colorado man was being monitored when he developed symptoms because of his work with dairy cows, according to the CDC. Tests at the state level were inconclusive, but samples sent to CDC tested positive. Full results of genetic analysis of the sample are pending.

As of Wednesday, more than 135 dairy herds in a dozen states had reported infections with the H5N1 virus that originated in poultry, according to the Agriculture Department.

Salmonella: Untreated water used

studies, cancer-destroying cells have been observed to migrate into the tumor area.

The study also found that the larger the tumor, the less the number of natural killer cells increased.

White blood cells, the cells of the human immune system, fight against cancer, bacteria, and viruses. However, not all white blood cells destroy cancer cells; some can even promote cancer growth. The most important cell types that destroy cancer cells are cytotoxic T cells and natural killer cells. Those that support cancer growth include regulatory T cells and myeloid-derived suppressor cells, explained the university in the press release.

Also: BEIJING: China plans to enhance the use of information technology (IT) in public hospitals by establishing integrated operation and management information platforms in all tertiary

public hospitals nationwide by the end of 2025, 50 percent of these hospitals will strive to adopt these platforms, according to a circular issued by the National Health Commission and the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Chinese health authorities have emphasized the importance of refining, standardizing and digitizing internal process management in public medical institutions to achieve efficient management and high-quality development in the sector.

To achieve these goals, measures will be taken to enhance the application of modern information technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data and cloud computing.

The focus will be on improving interoperability and data sharing among different internal information systems, harnessing the supporting role

of IT in integrating business and economic management.

Meanwhile, the health authorities will continue their crackdown on illegal access to medical insurance funds by medical institutions through a three-year special operation, according to the circular.

The move aims to curb fraud and regulate practices related to diagnosis, treatment, and pricing.

The circular also stressed the need to strengthen audit and supervision through information technologies and to establish a robust long-term supervision mechanism.

China has some 12,000 public hospitals, of which 2,800 are tertiary public hospitals.

Tertiary hospitals play a crucial role in providing specialized medical and health services. These hospitals are known for their technical expertise, management capabilities, and research capacities.

Candies: Federal health officials are investigating a possible death and dozens of illnesses tied to recalled "microdosing" candies laced with a chemical found in mushrooms and sold online and in vape shops nationwide.

At least 48 people in 24 states said they got sick after eating Diamond Shruumz-brand products, including chocolate bars, cones and gummies, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said Tuesday.

One death is "potentially associated" with the outbreak and 27 people have been hospitalized, the agency said. People who fell ill reported severe symptoms like seizures, agitation, abnormal heart rates and loss of consciousness. The latest illness was reported Monday, FDA officials said.

Prophet Premium Blends LLC, of Santa Ana, California, recalled all of its Diamond Shruumz products late last month because they contain muscimol, a psychoactive chemical found in potentially toxic Amanita mushrooms that may be tied to the illnesses.

The products are marketed for microdosing, which means taking very small doses of a psychedelic drug to achieve supposed benefits while minimizing negative side effects.

Diamond Shruumz products were sold nationwide in retail stores and online; at smoke or vape shops; and by retailers that sell hemp-derived products like cannabidiol, or CBD, or delta-8 THC.

The FDA, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and America's Poison Centers are investigating the outbreak. People who have these products should stop using them. Anyone who falls ill after using them should contact a health care provider or a poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

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## SPORTS

# Orlando City hand Toronto 5th consecutive loss



Seattle Sounders midfielder João Paulo, right, and Chicago Fire midfielder Fabian Herbers go up for the ball during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Seattle. (AP)

## Wembanyama returns to Paris as NBA Rookie of the Year

# Superstars, stars-in-waiting newcomers among 10,500 athletes at Paris Olympics

PARIS, July 4, (AP) — The 10,500 athletes who will compete at the Paris Games include first-time Olympians who already have global recognition and others whose stardom is just waiting to be discovered by a wider audience.

Here's a look at a few of the expected newcomers when the action starts July 24:

### Victor Wembanyama

The 7-foot-4 (2.24 meters) prodigal son of French basketball returns as the NBA Rookie of the Year.

Wembanyama left the Olympics host city last June as the 19-year-old phenom picked No. 1 in the draft by the San Antonio Spurs.

His sky-high potential was on display during a standout season for the 22-60 Spurs, averaging 21.4 points, 10.6 rebounds and a league-leading 3.6 blocks per game.

Wembanyama's last competitive game in France was a loss for his club, Metropolitans 92, that completed a sweep in the national playoffs.

The next should be on July 27 when France opens its three-game Olympic pool phase in the northeast city of Lille, about 140 miles (230 kilometers) outside of Paris. Wembanyama and company will take on an opponent that will be decided at an upcoming qualifying tournament. France also faces Japan and world champion Germany.

Paris expects nothing less than Wemby's return to the capital on Aug. 6 for the quarterfinals.

### Sunny Choi

At age 35, Choi and her 50-year-old sport of breakdancing both will make Olympic debuts this summer.

It was an unusual path to Paris for this first-time Olympian, who will face competitors less than half her age in the Place de la Concorde on Aug. 9, the last Friday of the Games.

### OLYMPICS

The Ivy League graduate left an executive position in New York at global cosmetics firm Estée Lauder to focus full-time on her dancing as the Paris Games approached.

As B-Girl Sunny - Grace is her given name, and Sun is her middle name - the Tennessee-born and Kentucky-raised Choi qualified by winning at the Pan-American Games last year.

The 16-dancer women's lineup in Paris will include Dominika Banevi of Lithuania, who was 16 when she became world champion last year.

It could be Choi's only shot at the Olympics. Organizers of the 2028 Los Angeles Games let the sport slip off the program.

### Sha'carri Richardson

Richardson's "I'm Not Back, I'm Better" tour is making a stop in Paris, and the reigning 100-meter world champion has big plans for her first trip to the Olympics.

It looked as if Richardson was going to be one of the big stars of the

CANBERRA, July 4, (Xinhua) — Three years after winning a record haul of gold medals in the pool, Australia's swimmers are again expected to deliver a majority of the nation's Olympic glory in Paris.

Australian athletes won 46 medals at the Tokyo Olympics, including 17 golds - more than the 16 in London and Rio combined. Of Australia's Tokyo medals, the nation's swimmers won nine golds.

To move up the medal tally from sixth in Tokyo, Australia will again need its swimmers to excel.

Based on times set so far in 2024, Australia has the No. 1 ranked swimmer globally in six individual events - Kaylee McKeown in the women's 200m individual medley, 200m and 100m backstroke, Ariarne Titmus in the 400m and 200m women's freestyle and Cameron McEvoy in the men's 50m freestyle.

McKeown and Titmus head to Paris as the defending Olympic champions and world record holders in those freestyle and backstroke events, while McEvoy, the first Australian male swimmer to qualify for four Olympics, is aiming to win his first-ever Olympic gold in the men's 50m freestyle.

Tokyo Games, but her victory in the 100 at the 2021 U.S. track trials was erased because she tested positive for a chemical found in marijuana. She went on TV and said she smoked marijuana as a way of coping with her mother's recent death.

The 24-year-old Richardson won the 100 meters at the trials again this year, clocking 10.71 seconds despite a less-than-stellar start. She joins what is sure to be a loaded field for one of the biggest events in Paris.



In this file photo, San Antonio Spurs center Victor Wembanyama (1) shoots ahead of Memphis Grizzlies forward GG Jackson (45) in the first half of an NBA basketball game in Memphis, Tenn. (AP)

"The world record is a bonus," Titmus said after winning the 200m freestyle at the Australian trials in June.

"That wasn't really on my radar coming into this. I just wanted to put together a great swim, and I have the chance to do it again in Paris." Additionally, Australians have set the second-fastest time in four events in 2024 - Mollie O'Callaghan in the 100 and 200m freestyle and Elijah Winnington in the 400 and 800m freestyle - and are the defending Olympic champions in the women's 4x100m freestyle relay and 4x100m medley relay.

### OLYMPICS

Emma McKeon, the most decorated Australian Olympian in history, will again swim in both relays and defend her titles in the 50 and 100m freestyle to add to her 11 medals, seven of which were won in Tokyo.

Outside the pool, canoeist Jessica Fox will be defending her Olympic title in the C1 canoe slalom and chasing a first gold in the K1 kayak slalom after winning both at the

World Cup for the ninth time in her career in Poland in June.

With freestyle BMX rider Logan Martin, park skateboarder Keegan Palmer, and sailor Matthew Wear heading to Paris, every Australian who won an individual gold medal in Tokyo is set to defend their title.

In the team events, Australia's men's basketball team returns with a squad similar to that which won bronze in Tokyo, and the men's field hockey team will be expected to win a medal, having done so at seven of the last eight Olympics.

The national women's football team, the Matildas, is also hopeful of winning a medal following fourth-placed finishes at the Tokyo Olympics and 2023 FIFA World Cup but will have to do so without captain and all-time top scorer Sam Kerr, who has been ruled out of the tournament due to a knee injury.

Australians will also be hoping for the country's first gold medal in athletics at the Olympics since 2012, with women's world champions Nina Kennedy in the pole vault and Eleanor Patterson and Nicola Olyslagers in the high jump, all in contention for gold.

9.91 while retaining his junior title.

At the 2023 worlds, Tebogo set his sights on individual sprint double champion Noah Lyles, running 9.88 for silver in the 100 and taking bronze in the 200.

Just as impressive, weeks earlier in London, Tebogo ran a 19.50 in the 200 at age 20 plus a few weeks. Lyles was almost 22 when he first ran 19.50 in 2019.

A Lyles-Tebogo rivalry could be a Paris highlight that shined beyond the Stade de France track.

### Donya Abu Taleb

Donya Abu Taleb is representing Saudi Arabia at the Paris Olympics. Abu Taleb earned her place in the taekwondo competition in Paris by winning her semifinals bout at an Asian qualifying event in March.

Saudi Arabia had never sent female athletes to the Olympics before Wojdan Ali Seraj Abdulrahim Shahrkhani and Sarah Attar went to the 2012 London Games. Shahrkhani competed in judo, and Attar ran the 800 meters for track and field.

The 27-year-old Abu Taleb, who took bronze at the 2022 world championship, is a genuine medal prospect in the 49-kilogram class. She was ranked No. 12 in June.

A native of the coastal city of Jeddah, she grew up training with boys and competes in a head scarf.

Her event, with 16 athletes in the lineup, is on Aug. 7 at the elegant glass-roofed Grand Palais.

## Inter Miami hold off Charlotte

TORONTO, July 4, (AP) — Martin Ojeda scored a goal and Orlando City beat Toronto FC 2-1 Wednesday night to extend Toronto losing streak to five games.

Facundo Torres played a cross that Toronto's Nicksoen Gomis redirected into the net in the for an own goal that gave Orlando (6-9-6) a 2-1 lead in the 45th minute.

Toronto (7-12-3) is winless in eight consecutive games since a 5-1 win over CF Montreal on May 18 and has been outscored 13-4 during its five-game skid.

### SOCCER

Raoul Petretta played a header, off an arcing cross from Federico Bernardeschi on the right side, from the back post to the center of the area, where Derrick Etienne Jr. slammed it home from point-blank range to give Toronto a 1-0 lead in the fifth minute.

Ojeda headed home an entry, played Iván Angulo, from the top of the 6-yard box to make it 1-1 in the 27th.

Teenager Benjamin Cremaschi scored late in the second half to rally Inter Miami to a 2-1 victory over Charlotte FC, extending a club-record unbeaten run on the road to eight.

Inter Miami (14-3-5) maintained a two-point lead in the Supporters' Shield race over FC Cincinnati with its fourth straight 2-1 victory despite playing all four without Lionel Messi and Luis Suárez. The pair, playing for Argentina and Uruguay, respectively, in the Copa America, have accounted for 12 goals apiece and 18 assists - 13 by Messi.

Inter Miami took a 1-0 lead in the 30th minute on a goal by Robert Taylor with an assist from defender Jordi Alba. Taylor's fourth score of the season was just the second allowed by Charlotte in the first 30 minutes this season.

Charlotte (9-8-5) pulled even in the 41st minute when Patrick Agyemang used second-year defender Jere Uronen's fifth assist of the season and career to score his sixth goal. Agyemang had one goal in one start and 12 appearances last season, his first.

Rookie Alonso Martínez scored a goal in each half and Matt Freese had three saves to lead New York City FC, to a 2-0 victory over CF Montreal.

Martínez took a pass from fellow rookie Hannes Wolf in the 9th minute and connected with a right-footed shot from the center of the box for the only goal Freese would need on the way to his fourth clean sheet of the season for New York City (11-8-2).

Hosei Kijima scored his first goal in MLS, Eduard Löwen also scored a goal and St. Louis City beat the San Jose Earthquakes 2-0 to snap a nine-game winless skid.

Löwen, on the left side, slipped a shot between a pair of defenders, past the outstretched hand of goalkeeper Will Yarbrough and into the net to give St. Louis (4-7-10) a 1-0 lead in the 28th minute.

Kijima scored on a volley off a set piece to make it 2-0 in the 41st. Indiana Vassilev lofted a perfectly-placed free kick over a line of defenders to a charging Kijima for the tap-in finish.

San Jose (3-16-2) has lost seven games in a row and is winless - with just one tie - in 10 straight.

Yarbrough finished with six saves for the Earthquakes.

Roman Bürki, who stopped one shot, had his sixth shutout of the season for St. Louis.

St. Louis had 57% possession and outshot San Jose 23-7, 8-1 on target.

Ryan Gauld had assists on goals by Brian White, Mathias Laborda and Sebastian Berhalter to propel the Vancouver Whitecaps to a 3-1 victory over Minnesota United.

Vancouver (9-7-4) jumped out to



New York City FC goalkeeper Tomás Romero catches the ball during an MLS soccer match against CF Montréal in New York. (AP)

a 2-0 lead just 17 minutes into the match before handing Minnesota United (8-8-5) its fifth loss in a row.

White used an assist from Ryan Gauld to score in the 4th minute. It was the ninth goal this season for White, who scored three times in a come-from-behind 4-3 victory over St. Louis City last time out.

The Whitecaps took a two-goal lead when Gauld and Sebastian Berhalter notched assists on defender Mathias Laborda's second goal of the season. Berhalter's assist was his second this season. Laborda had one goal last season as a rookie.

Hugo Cuypers scored two goals in the closing minutes - including one in stoppage time - and Gastón Giménez also scored a goal late to help the Chicago Fire rally and beat the Philadelphia Union 4-3.

Maren Haile-Selassie chipped a one-touch pass, off an arcing cross played by Brian Gutiérrez from the right side, to the center of the area where Cuypers tapped home volley from point-blank range to give Chicago (5-10-6) a 4-3 lead in the second minute of stoppage time.

Christian Ramírez and Diego Rossi each scored a goal to help the Columbus Crew beat Nashville SC 2-0.

Juan "Cucho" Hernández lofted a perfectly-placed entry to Ramírez, who headed home the finish from point-blank range to give Columbus a 1-0 lead in the 30th minute.

Rossi slipped behind the defense and ran onto a through ball played by Yaw Yeboah before rolling a shot into the net to make it 2-0 in the 65th.

Columbus (10-3-6) has won three consecutive games by a combined score of 11-1.

Nashville (6-7-8), which had its three-game unbeaten streak snapped with a 2-1 loss to Inter Miami last time out, has lost back-to-back games.



St. Louis City's Chris Durkin, (top), and Vancouver Whitecaps' Pedro Vite (45) vie for the ball during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)

## Team obtained 9 berths

# China announces shotgun roster for Olympic Games

BEIJING, July 4, (Xinhua) — Olympic bronze medalist Wei Meng will spearhead Team China in the shotgun competitions at the upcoming Paris 2024 Olympic Games, according to the roster announced by the Chinese Shooting Association on Wednesday.

China obtained nine shotgun berths for Paris 2024, the most in history.

Wei, 35, will compete in her third Olympics in women's skeet in Paris, alongside 19-year-old Jiang Yiting, who is the youngest Chinese shooter in shotgun.

Yu Haicheng is the other athlete with previous Olympic experience in the roster, who finished fifth in men's trap and ninth in mixed team three years ago.

Asian champion Qi Ying will also compete in men's trap. In women's trap, China will be represented by Zhang Xinqiu and 36-year-old Wu Cuicui, the oldest in the roster.

Lyu Jianlin is the only Chinese shooter in men's skeet, and he will

### OLYMPICS

partner with Jiang in the skeet mixed team as the event makes its Olympic debut in Paris.

Following is the full shotgun roster for Paris 2024: Men's skeet: Lyu Jianlin Women's skeet: Jiang Yiting, Wei Meng Skeet mixed team: Lyu Jianlin, Jiang Yiting Men's trap: Qi Ying, Yu Haicheng Women's trap: Wu Cuicui, Zhang Xinqiu.









In this images shared on X by the official page of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Modi holds the Twenty20 World Cup trophy as he poses with the Indian cricket team at his residence in New Delhi, India. (AP)

# Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

## Kuwait Olympic delegation heads to Paris Olympics with high hopes

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: The Kuwaiti Olympic Committee delegation is set to depart for France on July 21 to participate in the 33rd Olympic Games, "Paris 2024," scheduled from July 26 to August 11. The delegation includes 10 athletes, with the first batch leaving on July 18th.

Kuwait will be represented by nine athletes in Paris 2024: Khaled Al-Mudhaf, Muhammad Al-Daihani (fencing), Yousef Al-Shamlan (fencing), Amina Shah (sailing), Suad Al-Faqaan (rowing), Yaqoub Al-Yawha, Amal Al-Rumi (athletics), Lara Dashti, and Muhammad Sabet (swimming).

During a press conference at the Hilton Garden Inn Hotel, the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee announced the sponsors for the athletes, which include Burgan Bank, Kuwaiti Danish Dairy Company (KDD), Spark Sports Center, Sherry Al-Ghanim Automotive Companies, Ali Kakoli, and Mahara Company.

Ali Al-Marri, Assistant Secretary of the Kuwait Olympic Committee and Director of the Kuwaiti delegation, expressed optimism for a strong showing from Kuwaiti athletes at Paris 2024. He highlighted the hopes

for achievements in this post-pandemic tournament, the first major sporting event since the COVID-19 outbreak disrupted schedules worldwide.

Al-Marri extended gratitude to the Kuwait General Sports Authority and the sponsors for their unwavering support, emphasizing the preparation efforts undertaken through training camps within and outside Kuwait.

### OLYMPICS

Fatima Hayat, member of the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee and head of women's sports, underscored Kuwait's participation in rowing, swimming, fencing, and shooting events. She wished the athletes success and expressed pride in their representation at the world's largest sporting event, where gender parity in participation has been achieved for the first time.

Hayat noted that nearly half of Kuwait's delegation comprises women, marking a significant milestone and reflecting strong support from the private sector. She expressed optimism for continued collaboration to foster more success and accomplishments in future endeavor.



Officials pose for a group photo after the press conference.

## Djokovic grinds out victory over wild card Fearnley at Wimbledon

China's Wang stuns 5th seed Pegula

LONDON, July 4, (AP): Novak Djokovic says he wouldn't have been surprised if his second-round match against young Jacob Fearnley at Wimbledon went to a fifth set, but he's "very glad it didn't."

The seven-time champion at the All England Club beat his 22-year-old Scottish opponent 6-3, 6-4, 5-7, 7-5 on Centre Court on Thursday in another test of his fitness following recent knee surgery.

"Can I be playing better and moving better? Yes, absolutely," Djokovic said in an on-court interview. "So I'm hoping that as the tournament progresses each day or each match I'll be feeling a bit better."

### TENNIS

Fearnley, a wild-card entry who recently finished playing college tennis at TCU, had a strong cheering section that erupted when he took the third set.

"He served very well, it was very difficult to break his serve. He made me work, definitely," Djokovic said.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion said he should have closed it out in straight sets, but that he "was not really comfortable in my own skin, particularly in the third and fourth."

"Sometimes you have rough days where maybe you are not feeling your best," he added, "and of course it also depends on the opponent across the net. He made me earn this victory."

No. 5 Jessica Pegula become the highest-seeded women's player to lose. The American was defeated by Wang Xinyu 6-4, 6-7 (7), 6-1. For Wang, it was her first victory over a top-10 player.

Two-time Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka was the No. 3 seed at Wimbledon before she pulled out before the first round because of a shoulder injury.

Britain's big day got off to a rough start when wild-card entry Yuriko Lily Miyazaki won only 19 points en route to a 6-0, 6-0 loss to Daria Kasatkina.

The 28-year-old Miyazaki committed 31 unforced errors and five double-faults in falling to the No. 14-seeded Kasatkina, a Russian who won the Eastbourne title ahead of the grass-court Grand Slam.

Kasatkina will next face Paula Badosa, who advanced Thursday by beating Brenda Fruhvirtova 6-4, 6-2.

No. 12 Madison Keys marked U.S. Independence Day with a 6-2,



Serbia's Novak Djokovic plays a forehand return to Britain's Jacob Fearnley during their second round match at the Wimbledon tennis championships in London. (AP)

## Palestinian Football Association lauds Kuwait support for home matches in WCup qualifiers

KUWAIT CITY, July 4: The Palestinian Football Association has commended Kuwait's supportive stance towards hosting the Palestinian national team's home matches during the crucial phase of the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup.

Both Kuwait and Palestine are part of the second group in the qualifiers, alongside South Korea, Iraq, Jordan, and Oman.

In an official statement, the Palestinian Association expressed profound gratitude to the Kuwait Football Association for its positive decision regarding hosting the qualifying matches in Palestine. This historic opportunity marks the first instance of hosting such significant matches on Palestinian soil.

"We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our brothers at the Kuwaiti Federation for their solidarity and support," the statement read. "We emphasize the importance of playing our home matches in Palestine, particularly in Jerusalem, which holds immense national significance for all Palestinians, whether residing in the homeland or in the Diaspora. It is the site of our primary sta-

dium, symbolizing our collective identity and heritage."

For Palestinians, sports transcend mere competition, embodying national identity and values while serving as a platform for justice and equality. The statement called upon other countries in their qualifying group to emulate Kuwait's example and permit matches to be hosted on Palestinian territories, asserting their right to engage in sports in Palestine

### SOCCER

in accordance with FIFA regulations.

"The Palestinian Federation pledges to provide a secure and hospitable environment for all participating teams and officials during these qualifiers," the statement assured. "We eagerly anticipate showcasing Palestinian hospitality and the fervor of our fans. Once again, we extend sincere thanks to the Kuwait Football Association and urge all nations to join us in this historic endeavor, supporting our right to host and compete in the 2026 World Cup qualifiers on Palestinian soil."

6-2 victory over Wang Yafan to reach the third round.

"I've always really loved playing during the Fourth of July. I think

I've spent more Fourth of Julys in London than anywhere else in the world," the 29-year-old American said. "It's always fun, and it's defi-

nately an experience. Like today walking by I saw a bunch of Americans, and they all said, 'Happy Fourth.'"

### Pogacar keeps yellow jersey

## Groenewegen wins stage 6

DIJON, France, July 4, (AP): Dutch champion Dylan Groenewegen won the sixth stage of the Tour de France after a mass sprint that was decided in a photo finish on Thursday.

Tadej Pogacar kept the yellow jersey.

Groenewegen earned a sixth career stage victory at cycling's biggest race ahead of Jasper Philipsen and Biniam Girmay.

There was no major change in the general classification, with Pogacar keeping a 45-second lead over Remco Evenepoel. Two-time defending champion Jonas Ving-



Netherlands' Dylan Groenewegen, (right), sprints to the finish line to win ahead of Belgium's Arnaud de Lie, (left), during the sixth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 163.5 kilometers (101.6 miles) with start in Macon and finish in Dijon, France. (AP)

### CYCLING

egaard was in third place, 50 seconds off the pace.

After Matthieu Van der Poel opened the sprint in the city of Dijon with an excellent lead-out for his teammate Philipsen, Groenewegen timed his effort perfectly and used his great power to prevail by just a few inches.

The fight between the main contenders for the yellow jersey is expected to resume on Friday during the race's first time trial. The 25-kilometer (16-mile) race against the clock features a climb with an average gradient of 6.1% that will put riders to the test in the final section.

Thursday's relatively short stage of 163.5 kilometers (102 miles) started from Macon, taking the peloton through the Burgundy vineyards. Early into the stage, riders rode past a giant drawing of France striker Antoine Griezmann, who was born in Macon.

Jonas Abrahamson ignited the first move of the day to claim points in the classification for the polka-dot jersey of best climber, at the

top of a short climb and went on a breakaway with Axel Zingle. The duo was caught soon after.

On long sections of roads exposed to wind, the peloton rode at a steady pace, with riders careful not to get caught in a split. About 85 kilometers (53 miles) from the finish, Vingegaard's teammates Wout van Aert and Christophe Laporte moved to the front to speed up the pace and harden the race.

The peloton lined out and split in two but all the main contenders managed to stay in the first group, although Pogacar found himself isolated. It was just a scare for the UAE Team Emirates leader as the second group with his teammates managed to bridge the gap in the end.

The sprinters' teams took control with four kilometers left as the fastest men of the peloton got ready for their final, brutal effort. Groenewegen was not immediately sure he won and waited to be 100% sure before he let his joy explode.

## Jubilant Indian cricketers return home

NEW DELHI, July 4, (AP): Jubilant India cricketers have received a rousing welcome home from fans after winning the Twenty20 World Cup final in Barbados.

India skipper Rohit Sharma held up the World Cup trophy after arriving at New Delhi International Airport early Thursday morning.

Hundreds of supporters were gathered at the airport, many waving the national flag and chanting "India, India."

There were thousands more waiting to continue the celebrations, which started Saturday and were about to ramp up. Some of the players danced to drum beats when they reached their hotel.

India pulled off a sensational seven-run win against South Africa in a gripping final last weekend, ending a drought in global International Cricket Council limited-overs competitions.

The team's return from the Caribbean was delayed because of a shutdown forced by Hurricane Beryl in Barbados.

"It's a lifetime experience,"

cricket official Arun Dhimal said.

The T20 triumph was India's first World Cup title since it won the 50-over version in 2011.

Over the last 12 months, India lost the World Test Championship final to Australia in England and the 50-over World Cup final at home, also to the Australians.

### CRICKET

After meeting India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi, the cricketers were due to fly to Mumbai and participate in an open bus roadshow, followed by a celebration ceremony later Thursday at the Wankhede Stadium.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India has announced a cash bonus of 1.25 billion rupees (\$15 million) for the winning squad.

Soon after winning the title, Rohit Sharma, star batter Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja announced their retirement from international T20 matches.