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Meet UAE working parents who get more time with kids



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CELINE DION SINGS PRAISES OF DUBAI TEEN'S OLYMPIC SONG COVER



Bloomberg

■ Firefighters attempt to control a wildfire in Dionysos, Greece, yesterday. A huge wildfire blazed through the suburbs on the outskirts of Athens, forcing thousands of people to evacuate as houses were engulfed by the fire and local hospitals put at risk.

Greece calls on EU for help as Athens suburbs on fire

Thousands of residents flee as wildfire guts homes

PENTELI, GREECE

A massive wildfire blazed its way into Athens' northeastern suburbs yesterday as hundreds of firefighters battled to contain it, forcing thousands of residents to flee their homes and sparking a Greek government appeal for international help.

In scenes never before seen in the Greek capital, residents wearing masks against the choking smoke were desperately dousing their homes with water hoses in the leafy suburbs of Nea Penteli and Vrilissia in an effort to render them less vulnerable to fire.

Television footage showed several cars in both areas gutted by fire and the roofs

of stately homes burning as water-bombing helicopters roared overhead.

"The situation is dramatic," Penteli mayor Natassa Kosmopoulou said. "A school and homes are on fire, and I can see the fire coming towards the town hall," she said.

Greece yesterday formally called for EU assistance, a spokesman said. "The EU civil protection mechanism was activated upon request of the Greek authorities," EU spokesman Balazs Ujvari said in a statement, adding that Italy, France, the Czech Republic and Romania were sending units to help.

The wildfire started on



Scan the QR code for more pictures of wildfires raging near Greek capital

Sunday afternoon in the town of Varnavas, some 35 kilometres northeast of Athens.

Strong winds

Aided by strong winds, it grew to a 30-kilometre long frontline of fires, more than 25 metres high in places, according to state TV ERT.

Nearly 700 firefighters with 190 fire engines and over 30 aircraft sought to contain it, but it scaled Mount Pentelicon, which looms over the Greek capital.

Authorities opened the Olympic stadium in northern Athens and other stadiums to house thousands of people evacuated from the path of the blaze.

Several smaller communities and towns, including Marathon, which gave the Olympic long distance race its name, started to evacuate on Sunday. — AFP

US ups military might ahead of Gaza truce talks

CEASEFIRE DEAL COULD PERSUADE IRAN, PROXIES TO HOLD OFF ON ATTACKS

DUBAI

BY STEPHEN N. R.
Senior Associate Editor

The US is ramping up its naval and air forces in the Middle East to bolster Israel against potential Iranian attacks amid simmering tensions in the region just as Gaza ceasefire talks are set to resume on August 15.

Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin has expedited the arrival of the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier group, which includes F-35C fighters, to the region and has also deployed the guided-missile submarine USS Georgia, reports said.

The decision follows a call with Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and aims to strengthen Israeli defences and potentially deter Iran.

Threat of retaliation

Iran, along with its Hezbollah proxy, has threatened retaliation for the recent assassinations of key militants in Beirut and Tehran. Iran's acting foreign minister Ali Bagheri Kani has reiterated the country's intent to retaliate against Israel for the death of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh.

The US is keen to prevent a major escalation, particularly with a presidential election approaching in three months.

The development comes as

Lufthansa said it was extending the suspension of flights to Tel Aviv, Tehran, Beirut, Amman and Erbil through to August 21.

Air France and its subsidiary Transavia France also extended the suspension of their flights to Beirut, through Wednesday.

Spiral of violence

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz yesterday expressed "great concern" about the "spiral of violence" in the Middle East in a phone call with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, his spokesman Wolfgang Buechner said. He "appealed to President Pezeshkian to do everything possible to prevent a further military escalation".

The US, Qatar and Egypt last week called for a new round of Gaza ceasefire talks on August 15, an effort to resolve long-deadlocked negotiations between Israel and Hamas more than 10 months into their war.

Israel has agreed to attend the talks. One Israeli official said they would take place in Doha with focus on whether Hamas might relent on truce terms, according to Bloomberg.

A deal that offers Hamas a reprieve could be enough to persuade Iran and its proxy groups to hold off on their promised attacks. But Israeli media has speculated a retaliation for the assassinations could come before the truce talks are scheduled to start.

SEE ALSO P9

Up to Dh1m fine for UAE labour law violators

DUBAI

The UAE Government has issued a Federal Decree-Law amending specific provisions of the UAE Labour Law. The decree aims to ensure the efficiency and competitiveness of the labour market, regulate employment relationships, define the rights and obligations of all parties involved, and ensure their protection by law.

According to the decree, fines of no less than Dh100,000 and no more than Dh1 million will be imposed on any employer who employs workers without a proper permit, hires workers or brings them to the country and fails to provide them with a job, misuses work permits, or shuts down a business or suspends its activities without settling workers' rights. The same penalties apply to the illegal employment of minors or allowing minors to work in violation of the law by their guardians.

Additionally, the new decree introduces criminal penalties for fictitious recruitment, including fictitious Emiratisation. Therefore, employers found guilty of bypassing the provisions of the laws or executive regulations or decisions regulating the labour market, by faking their recruitment of one or more employees, will face fines ranging from Dh100,000 to Dh1 million.

— WAM

SEE ALSO P2

How Paris Olympics became the hub for wedding proposals

City of Love witnessed 7 marriage proposals during the Games

DUBAI

BY A.K.S. SATISH
Sports Editor

Olympic Games are known to break records. The athletes have been preparing for a lifetime to showcase their skills at the pinnacle of sporting glory and motivate themselves to give their best. Through the years, many legends were born during the Olympic Games who push hard to etch their names in the history books.

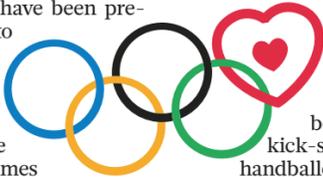
Paris also witnessed a few records being broken but it was a record broken outside

the playing field that caught everyone's attention.

The City of Love saw seven marriage proposals as the athletes went down on one knee to propose to their partners during the July 26 to August 11 showpiece, including a double proposal in Marseille following the sailing events.

The marriage proposals began even before the games kick-started, with Argentines handballer Pablo Simonet and Maria Campoy, a member of the women's hockey team, got engaged before the opening ceremony on July 26.

SEE ALSO P11



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How working parents get more family time

REDUCED HOURS, REMOTE WORK AND FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES OFFERED BY COMPANIES ENSURE BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE

DUBAI
 BY SHARMILA DHAL
 UAE Editor

British expat Elizabeth Williamson, 44, who works as recruiting director at Bain Middle East, has two children aged eight and seven, both born and raised in Dubai.

"The challenge we face as an expat family is in maintaining connections with friends and relatives back home. The dynamic pace of the region sometimes means longer working hours which can also impact family life," she confesses.

But thankfully, her company reduced her work hours by 20 per cent ever since she had kids. It allowed her to spend an additional day every week with them and connect with other new parents.

"More recently, our remote work policy over the summer means we are encouraged to maximise time spent with our families abroad – which is a game changer. Baines can choose to work remotely for up to 20 working days across the year which offers us so much flexibility," she notes.

As a result, Elizabeth and her kids Freya and Harry get to spend time with the grandparents back in the UK.

This also means while she is working from home (some weeks full time, others half days), the kids are out exploring the countryside and having sleepovers with cousins. They have already planned a train trip to London, picnics and a seaside visit," she adds.

Flexible work policies

In what is marked shift from the past, an increasing number of working parents in the UAE find themselves as blessed as Elizabeth because their employers have adopted flexible work policies.

In fact, there is also a growing official recognition of the challenge for parents to achieve work-life balance, as a result of which employers are being encouraged to come up with parent-friendly initiatives.

As Sana Suhail, Director-General of the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority, says: "We have always emphasised the importance of parents spending



■ British expat Elizabeth Williamson, who works as a recruiting director in Dubai, says her kids Freya and Harry get to spend time with the grandparents back in the UK thanks to her company giving employees the option to work remotely for up to 20 working days across the year.



■ Elie Alkeserouany, a consultant in Dubai, with her husband and two kids. Parental leave of two months and the hybrid working model have helped her balance work and family.



The Parent-Friendly Label programme enhances the employee's well-being and enables them to thrive in their professional and personal lives."

Sana Suhail | Director-General of the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority

quality time with their children for its positive impact on the child's development. However, we also acknowledge the challenges working parents face in achieving work-life balance, which can become a source of stress for many."

She says it was in recognition of these challenges that the Parent-Friendly Label (PFL) programme was devised to encourage and enable organisations to implement parent-friendly policies and create a supportive work culture.



■ Ahmad ElShawarby, an Egyptian senior business unit manager, with his wife and three kids. He gets 16 weeks of parental leave which he can use at his convenience.

"Ultimately, it enhances the employee's well-being and enables them to thrive in their professional and personal lives," she adds.

'I was allowed to work from home two days a week'

Terri Louise Brown, 33, a Scottish customer development manager for Nestle UAE, vouches for the benefits of working in a parent-friendly environment.

"I have two children, Jude, 3, and Julia, 10 months old. It was tough for Jude when I had to go back to work after being home for five months on maternity leave and had to leave my baby at home while maintaining a breastfeeding schedule. Thank-

fully, I was allowed to work from home two days a week, and for the first year after the baby was born, I could reduce my working hours by two hours to ensure I could maintain a feeding schedule and bond with my infant," she says.

Even when the little kids are unwell, she is allowed to stay home with them. Reduced working hours for the first 18 months, work-from-home policy, breastfeeding room with a fridge, and a sterilised local office are among the many blessings she counts as a working mum.

Quality time with kids

Brown's colleague Ammar Al Jaber, a 35-year-old Syrian, who works for the commercial

OFFICIAL INITIATIVES

- Starting yesterday, Dubai began piloting a project where select government entities will be trying out a four-day week for their employees.
- Sharjah implemented the four-day week across public departments in 2022.
- In Abu Dhabi, the Parent-Friendly Label programme, a pioneering initiative, has had many takers.

ily during that time. I am very grateful. On top of that, we get 16 weeks of parental leave which I can use at my convenience."

The father of three says he will be going to Egypt and staying in his summer house on the north coast where the family can enjoy the good weather and the beautiful beach.

'Great opportunity to work while staying connected with family and friends'

At Bain, Elie Alkeserouany, a 33-year-old consultant, is also working remotely this summer. "According to the company policy, we are allowed to spend 20 working days outside the UAE, which provides a great opportunity to work while staying connected with family and friends."

"I have two children, aged 3.5 and 1.5 years old. Balancing work and family life is challenging because my children are still very young. When they wake up at night it becomes harder to perform at work the next day.

"My job, including travel, means time spent with my children is precious and when they get sick, this is also a logistical challenge," Elie explains.

Parental leave of two months and the hybrid working model, which minimises travel and allows more time with the children, have been a great boon, Elie adds.

development team, says he can spend more quality time with his nine-month-old daughter Zeya because of the company's work-from-home policy and flexibility. "While balancing work and family can be challenging, especially after a long day at work, the support from my company allows me to have more energy and time to dedicate to her."

16 weeks of parental leave

Elsewhere, Ahmad ElShawarby, 34, an Egyptian senior business unit manager (Gulf) at Novartis, talks of how he would feel guilty about not being able to spend enough time with his children. "But my company gave me the flexibility to work from the US for one full month during the summer when my wife gave birth and I had the chance to support my fam-

Dh1m fine for violating worker rights, faking Emiratisation

MoHRE empowered to settle labour disputes on certain conditions, including employer paying 50% of fine

ABU DHABI
 Gulf News Report

The UAE Government has amended specific provisions of the federal decree-law regarding the Regulation of the Employment Relationship, known as the UAE labour law.

This decree is part of the UAE's efforts to further develop its legislative and legal framework. It aims to ensure the efficiency and competitiveness of the labour market, regulate employment relationships, and define the rights and obligations of all parties involved, and ensure their protection by law.

Violations and fines

The decree imposes fines of no less than Dh100,000 and no more than Dh1 million on any employer who employs workers without a proper permit, hires workers or brings them to the country and fails to pro-



■ If the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation's decision on a dispute is contested, the case shall now be brought before the Court of First Instance rather than the Court of Appeal.

vide them with a job, misuses work permits, or shuts down a business or suspends its activities without settling workers' rights, in violation of the new decree and its Executive Regu-

lations. The same penalties apply to the illegal employment of minors, or guardians allowing minors to work.

Additionally, the new decree introduces criminal penalties for

fictitious recruitment, including fictitious Emiratisation. Employers found guilty of bypassing the provisions of the laws or executive regulations or decisions regulating the labour market,

The decree imposes fines of between Dh100,000 and Dh1 million on any employer who employs workers without a proper permit, hires workers and fails to provide them with a job, misuses work permits, shuts down a business or suspends its activities without settling workers' rights.

by faking their recruitment of one or more employees, will face fines ranging from Dh100,000 to Dh1 million per worker.

Labour disputes

The amendments state that in the case of labour disputes, and if there is a disagreement with a decision the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation issued to solve the dispute, the case shall then be brought before the Court of First Instance rather than the Court of Appeal. The court shall revoke proceedings with any claims filed after two years from the termination of the employment relationship, by the provisions of the present law.

Furthermore, the new Decree stipulates that criminal proceedings for fictitious employment, including fraudulent Emiratisation, can only be

initiated at the request of the Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation or his/her authorised representative.

The decree also provides the ministry with the power to settle such cases upon the employer's request before a court sentence is issued, provided that the employer pays at least 50 per cent of the minimum specified fine and pays the government all the financial incentives received by his/her fictitious employees.

Additionally, Courts of Appeal shall refer all requests, disputes and grievances regarding the regulation of employment relations, in their current state, to the competent Court of First Instance.

This begins from the date of implementation of this decree-law, except from the disputes that have been adjudicated or reserved for a judgment.

How you can blow the whistle on economic crimes in Dubai

REPORT VIOLATIONS ANONYMOUSLY WITH PROOF ON AUTHORITY'S WEBSITE

DUBAI
BY ZAINAB HUSAIN
Features Writer

If you are aware of economic crimes like money laundering, bribery, forgery, or embezzlement that could harm Dubai's economy, you can report them through the website of the Economic Security Centre of Dubai (ESCD), the government entity responsible for safeguarding the economic security of the emirate.

What can you report?

- Various types of economic crimes, including money laundering and the financing of terrorism or illegal organisations.
- Crimes related to public service, such as bribery, abuse of power, and impersonation of public officers.
- Crimes affecting Dubai's security and interests, such as forgery, embezzlement, abuse of public funds, misappropriation, illicit gain, profiteering, cheating in obligations with Dubai government entities, and counterfeiting of currency.
- Practices that harm economic security, including activities that negatively impact the emirate's economy and resources.

To report an economic crime, you will need to provide documentation or evidence of the violation. It is crucial to note that you should not conduct your own investigation, as only authorised entities are responsible for gathering the necessary evidence.



The Economic Security Centre of Dubai ensures that the emirate remains a global financial hub by protecting its economy and boosting investor confidence. Picture used for illustrative purposes.



Living in UAE: All your queries related to living and working in the UAE answered

HOW TO REPORT AN ECONOMIC CRIME

- Log on to the ESCD website (www.esc.gov.ae) and click on 'Report Incident' on the home page. After reviewing the application overview, agree to the terms and conditions, then click 'Continue.'
- You will then be asked to enter your full name, email address, mobile number, and the captcha code.
- Click 'Send OTP' to receive a one-time password (OTP) on your registered mobile number.
- Once you enter the OTP and your identity is verified, you can proceed to file your report. Provide details such as the incident type, date, and the name of the entity or individual involved.
- You will also need to attach evidence to support your report.

Your report will remain confidential, and your personal details will not be shared with third parties.

Based on the nature of the incident and the evidence provided, the ESCD will decide whether to investigate the complaint further and follow up with you.

Pension authority to help you manage money

Launches programme to teach people how to make smart financial decisions

DUBAI
Gulf News Report

The UAE has launched a new programme to help people improve their financial situation and achieve their financial goals.

The General Pension and Social Security Authority (GPSAA)'s Wafra programme is available on Jahiz platform and is designed to teach people how to make smart financial decisions, save money, and invest wisely.

Developed in collaboration with the Federal Authority for

Government Human Resource, the programme covers topics like budgeting, debt management, and retirement planning.

Two levels, nine units

The programme is structured into nine units, divided into foundation and advanced levels. The foundation level consists of six units, while the advanced level, comprising three additional units, will be rolled out in subsequent stages. Participants who complete each level will receive certificates, and all Jahiz platform users can access these courses through the "Knowledge" page.

The first course "Personal Lifecycle, Wishes, Needs and Values" provides a vision on the relation between the personal consumption rates and the income, differentiation between

needs and wants and understanding how the personal values affect spending.

The course highlights the strategies of comparing prices like "value for money" and other strategies that help making right purchasing decisions. Participants in the course will gain the basic financial knowledge to develop personal budget planning skills, enhancement of savings and adoption of sound habits of spending and borrowing.

Why join the programme?

GPSAA said financial decisions hinge on identifying needs versus wants against expected income, emphasising sound practices like "needs vs wishes" and responsible spending. These decisions are crucial for fostering finan-

cial sustainability and healthy spending habits, it added.

"As individuals progress through different life stages, their needs, income, and spending levels change. Clear financial objectives are vital for maintaining stability. Expenditure is divided into basic needs, personal wishes, and ambitions, with saving playing a key role in balancing these elements against limited resources," the Authority said.

GPSSA noted that internal and external factors, such as lifestyle, family size, and societal pressures, influence needs and desires. Unexpected circumstances can also impact financial decisions, making it essential for individuals to evaluate their life conditions and align their spending with income, it added.

Save money and time: Hire Dubai school taxi

Safe, reliable and quick: Taxi services for school pickups and drop-offs

DUBAI
BY ZAINAB HUSAIN
Features Writer

Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) offers several options for parents looking for a dedicated taxi service for school pickups and drop-offs.

In 2023, the RTA launched the 'school rides' option through the Careem app. One of the benefits of choosing this option is that you would be paying for a single package that covers multiple children. The service offers lower fares compared to regular Careem rides and allows you to use the same package for multiple children at the same school. The Careem app also provides real-time tracking.

Age requirements

Children under eight years are not allowed to use the service without an adult companion. Those between eight and 11 years can use it with written consent from a parent or guardian, while children above 12 can travel alone.

How to book

Open the Careem app and go to 'All Services' on the home page. Look for the 'School Rides' option, then tap on 'Search Schools' and enter the school's name to confirm its location. After that, enter your home location and pay for the package. The cost depends on the distance between home and school, with packages starting at Dh260 for 20 rides.

Once payment is complete, you can begin booking rides to and from the school. Simply select the drop-off location, confirm the pickup

location, review your ride to ensure the School Rides package is active, and click on 'Yalla' to book a ride.

DTC's In Safe Hands

The Dubai Taxi Corporation (DTC) offers another option for parents called 'In Safe Hands.' This service allows you to pre-book daily, weekly, or monthly taxi rides to school.

A child under the age of 13 must be accompanied by a guardian. A refundable deposit of Dh200 must be paid before the service starts. The tariff starts at Dh25 and is calculated at Dh3.67 per km.

Booking the DTC service

Open the 'DTC' app and tap on the 'In Safe Hands' service on the home page, then tap 'Book New.' You will be asked to provide the passenger information, including the guardian's full name, mobile number, and Emirates ID number.

After entering the necessary details, select the number of passengers, excluding the guardian. Next, enter the pickup and drop-off locations, using the app's search bar. You can also select whether the trip is one-way or two-way and if it's a regular or single trip. For repeated trips, you can choose the service duration and whether you want the taxi in the morning, evening, or both.

After selecting the days and pickup or drop-off times, you will receive a summary of the trip details and cost. If you are satisfied, proceed to add your credit or debit card details and pay for the trip. Once the payment is complete, you will receive confirmation on the app, and the taxi will arrive to pick up or drop off your children as scheduled.

If you need to make any changes to your booking, contact the DTC call centre at 800 88088.



Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority offers a dedicated taxi service for school pickups and drop-offs, ensuring your child reaches quickly, without additional charges.

New plan for safer roads in Abu Dhabi

Goal is to make roads safe for everyone, including pedestrians and delivery riders

ABU DHABI
BY ABDULLA RASHEED
Abu Dhabi Editor

The Abu Dhabi Traffic Safety Technical Committee has launched an 'Accelerators Plan' to enhance traffic safety in the emirate.

The plan will analyse how to make roads better for everyone by finding and fixing problems causing accidents.

The plan emphasises six key areas — analysing traffic accidents, improving pedestrian and micro-mobility safety, ensuring delivery drivers' safety,



Afra Mubarak Al Nofeli/Gulf News

delivery — to implement and measure the success of these initiatives.

Abdul Rahman Al Shezawi, chairman of the Technical Committee for Traffic Safety, said the plan goes beyond routine procedures to reduce traffic accidents and injuries.

The goal is to reduce traffic accidents and their social and economic impacts, ultimately improving the quality of life in the emirate.

Summer campaign

Simultaneously, the Ministry of Interior, represented by the Federal Traffic Council, launched the 'Accident-Free Summer' campaign, running until September 1. This campaign targets all road users, emphasising the importance of safe driving practices.

Abu Dhabi's Accelerators Plan seeks to find and fix problems causing traffic accidents in the emirate.

enhancing freight transport safety, addressing driver behaviour, and reviewing speed limits.

It will go through three stages — design, acceleration and

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The closing date for receipt of completed Tender online is 11.00 Hrs of Thursday, September 26th, 2024.
For any further queries, the office of the Vice President-Contracts may be contacted.

Participants in the Tender should submit the names of their Local Partners/Sponsors, having a valid Dubai Trade License along with a photocopy of their current license.

This advertisement is a complementary part of the Tender Documents

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'Youth are the fuel that powers progress'

PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENT HAIL ROLE IN NATION-BUILDING

ABU DHABI
BY KHITAM AL AMIR
Chief News Editor

President His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan yesterday stressed that the UAE is committed to investing in youth and empowering them to contribute to nation-building.

His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, also emphasised that the UAE bets on its youth to shape its future and compete on the global stage.

Tweeting on International Youth Day, Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed said: "Through their ambition and determination, youth are essential in accelerating progress towards a more sustainable and prosperous future for all, and the UAE is committed to investing in youth and empowering them to transform our nation's growth."

Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid also took to X and said, "Youth are the assets on whom our nation bet, the foundation on which a nation builds its future. They are the fuel that powers progress and the driving force behind genuine development. With their determination and vitality, nations rise, and the quality of human life improves. We take pride in them and compete on the global stage. To them, we entrust the nation's banner."

Through their ambition and determination, youth are essential in accelerating progress towards a more sustainable and prosperous future. The UAE is committed to investing in youth."

Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan

CELEBRATING YOUTH

The UAE yesterday joined the world in celebrating International Youth Day under the theme 'From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development'. The day is celebrated annually on August 12 to bring youth issues to the attention of the international community.

The UAE's youth empowerment strategy is based on Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed's vision who said: "Empowering and investing in youth and preparing them with future skills and sciences is a fundamental pillar within the UAE's comprehensive development vision. "Youth are the strength, energy, ambition, and true wealth. They are also the pillar of development and the leaders of to-

Youth are the assets on whom our nation bet, the foundation on which a nation builds its future. They are the fuel that powers progress and the driving force behind genuine development."

Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

tomorrow in their communities. They must acquire everything that enables them to contribute effectively to the progress of their country and create a prosperous future for it."

National Youth Agenda 2031

In May, the UAE Cabinet approved the National Youth Agenda 2031, which aims to empower young Emiratis to be role models regionally and globally.

The agenda focuses on five main pillars: Aiming for the Emirati youth to be a major contributor to the national economic growth, to contribute effectively to the community while adhering to Emirati values and principles, to globally drive positive change and be a global role model, to keep up with the latest breakthroughs in advanced technologies and be highly proficient in mastering the skills of the future, and to enjoy the highest levels of health and quality of life.

Recognising heatstroke signs early key to proper treatment

Difference between exertion, classic types, treatment and prevention explained

ABU DHABI
BY ALI AL HAMMADI
Reporter

As summer peaks, a UAE-based doctor has advised residents to stay protected against heatstrokes.

Some groups like the elderly and obese are more vulnerable because too much heat hinders the body's ability to regulate its temperature, said Dr. Imad Al Majzoub, Consultant Emergency Medicine at Sheikh Shakhbout Medical City (SSMC).

"Heatstroke is defined as dysfunction in the Central Nervous System (CNS) which is accompanied by a systemic inflammatory response at a temperature of 40°C or greater. It is a medical emergency."

Signs of CNS dysfunction include irritability and confusion, but may progress to seizures, altered mental status and coma, he warned.

Circulatory collapse or shock can also be present in heatstroke patients, with bleeding in multiple areas, he added.

Two types of heatstrokes

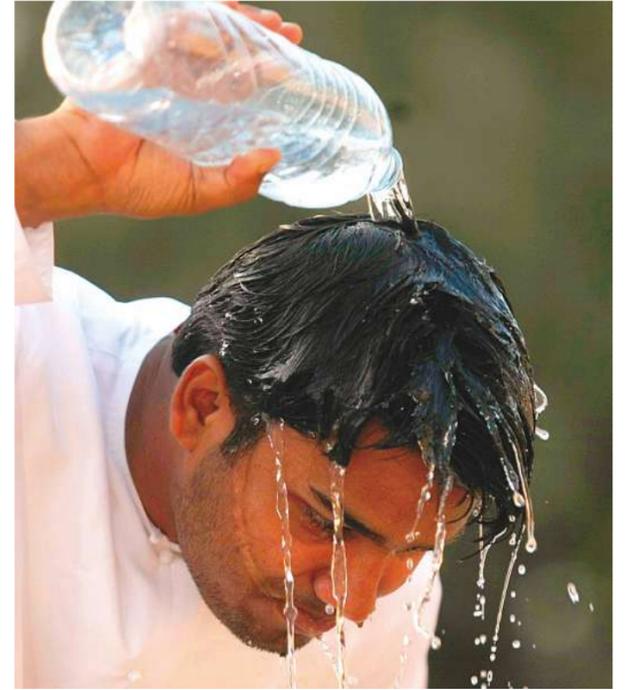
According to Dr Majzoub, heatstroke can be exertional or classic. "Exertional heatstroke occurs in patients participating in athletics or in an activity that leads to heat exposure and stress. The environment, use of gear, poor physical conditioning, previous history of illness and lack of heat acclimatisation can contribute to the exertion. It can occur even in temperate climates," he pointed out.

"Classic heatstroke, on the other hand, involves patients who have poor physiologic mechanisms for heat regulation. They include groups with comorbidities, the elderly, children, those on medications that impair physiologic responses to heat, or those with psychiatric or socioeconomic barriers," he said.

"Early recognition is key to treatment of heatstroke. Dr. Al Majzoub said, "The person must first move away from the hot environment and stop all activity. Rapid cooling is the most common therapy for both heat strokes and should be initiated quickly, even in the pre-hospital setting, after removing the patient's clothing."

He said cold water immersion was the most effective way for rapid cooling in patients, especially in cases of exertional heatstroke. It involves placing the patient in a bath of cold or ice water.

"Evaporative cooling involves spraying the patient's skin with tepid water and then fanning the patient. This



Gulf News Archives

■ Heatstroke is defined as dysfunction in the central nervous system, which is accompanied by a systemic inflammatory response at a temperature of 40 degrees Celsius or more.



Early recognition is key to treatment of heatstroke. The person must first move away from the hot environment and stop all physical activity. Rapid cooling is the most common therapy used to treat classic and exertional heat stroke."

Dr Imad Al Majzoub
| Consultant Emergency Medicine at Shaikh Shakhbout Medical City

method has been studied more in classic heatstroke and is thought to be more effective in elderly patients in particular."

He said conductive cooling can be achieved using cooling blankets. Ice packs are most effective when applied to the whole body. There is limited benefit of ice packs placed only on the axillae, neck and groin though, he cautioned.

Whole-body cooling can best be achieved by actively shifting the ice packs and ice-water soaked towels across the entire body.

Cold, intravenous fluids may also supplement other meth-

ods of cooling, but are not considered sufficient on their own.

Prevention is key

Dr. Al Majzoub said, "Avoiding exertion or being outdoors at peaking daily temperature and maintaining hydration are mainstays in prevention. The wet-bulb globe temperature index (measure of heat stress in direct sunlight) should be used to assess environmental heat risk. If not available, the heat index can be used."

He said athletes and those working outdoors are vulnerable, regardless of how high the temperature soars. Trainers, supervisors and medical staff should be educated on early recognition of heatstrokes.

Acclimatisation to hot and humid environments can be achieved by doing one-two hours of exercise outdoors over 10-14 days.

Overweight or obese individuals may be at increased risk and must take care.

A former case of heatstroke can put an individual at risk for subsequent heat-related illness for months after the event.

Stay hydrated

The most reliably modifiable risk factor is the hydration status, he noted.

"Dehydration has been linked to increased physiological strain, decreased sweat rates, increased perceived exertion and increased core temperatures. Hyperhydration has not been shown to affect heat tolerance. Guidelines suggest that hydration before activity and a 'drink to thirst' mentality during exertion are preventative for heat-related illness," he added.

Health insurance for Sharjah citizens

Those aged 45 and above can get treated at University Hospital Sharjah

SHARJAH
Gulf News Report

Dr Abdulaziz Al Muhairi, chairman of the Sharjah Health Authority, announced that His Highness Dr Shaikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, has granted approval for a health insurance programme

Dh 80m
budget allocated for the Sharjah health insurance programme

for Sharjah citizens aged 45 and above. This initiative, which started yesterday, provides coverage for treatment at the University Hospital Sharjah, with an allocated budget of Dh80 million.

Dr Al Muhairi provided details of the newly approved

health insurance coverage for Sharjah citizens during a recent call to the *Direct Line* programme broadcast on Sharjah Broadcasting Authority.

Electronic link

He explained that the Sharjah Health Authority will send an electronic link to eligible beneficiaries, allowing them to activate their health insurance. This insurance will be connected to their Emirates ID.

Beneficiaries can reach out to the authority for assistance by calling 06-5091666 or sending a message via WhatsApp at 050-7856717.

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DUBAI
 BY MANOJ NAIR
 Business Editor

Parkin drives up public parking revenue, eyes new private spaces

DUBAI FIRM TO ISSUE A DIVIDEND FOR H1, PAYABLE TOWARDS END OF OCTOBER

Dubai's Parkin pulled in a sharp revenue gain to Dh419.77 million for the first six months of 2024, up from Dh382.86 million. That brought about profit before tax of Dh218.4 million, against Dh188 million a year ago.

If the tax element is included, the profit tally would be Dh198 million.

"Our second quarter results highlight continued momentum in our core business of public parking and clear execution on key initiatives as part of our growth strategy," said Ahmed Bahrozian, Chairman. "The company operates an extensive, digitally enabled, parking portfolio at strategic locations as part of the city's critical infrastructure, with a systemic role in enabling mobility."

Parkin plans to issue a dividend for the first-half of the year, payable towards end October.

Q2 'record' despite April rains

"The company delivered revenue growth of 12 per cent in Q2, with total average parking revenue per day reaching a record level, notwithstanding the impact of the extreme rainfall that Dubai experienced in April and the slightly lower number of chargeable days in the period," said Mohammad Al Ali, CEO. "I am also pleased to report that EBITDA increased by 42 per cent with a margin of 65 per cent."

Average public parking utilisation rate during the April to June period was 26 per cent, up 1.8 per cent. Parkin – which is working on its own app – had its IPO and listing on DFM earlier this year.

More chances at higher growth

Soon, Parkin's numbers will feel the boost from an additional 7,500 new private developer spaces it signed up, as well as from the EV partnership with Dewa, "which aims to develop Dubai's EV charging infrastructure to create a more sustainable future for our city's transport network".

On the EV alliance with Dewa, the Parkin CEO said that initial coordination efforts will focus on the technical evaluation criteria required for each location to park the EV charging infrastructure. And that the UAE's recent announcement of



Ahmad Alotbi/Gulf News

Parkin will work with private developers to expand our special development zones, bring in more digital services into our operations, and back them with solar powered parking meters."

Mohammad Al Ali | Parkin CEO



a uniform tariff structure represents a good place to start.

"This project with Dewa was actually supposed to start two years down the line," said Al Ali. "But given where Parkin is on its sustainability and Net Zero 2050 journey, we have brought forward those plans. The intent is to create a business structure that will benefit both parties as well as future users of our charging networks."

Developer ties

"The developer parking segment currently accounts for less than 10 per cent of total

revenues, paid parking in private developer areas represents a significant growth opportunity for the company," said Parkin in a statement. (This is where the company takes on the management of parking areas associated with residential and commercial developments from private developers.)

In all, Parkin's developer spaces increased 17 per cent from 17,200 in Q2-2023 to 20,200 in Q2-2024. It signed an agreement to add the 7,500 additional spaces across six key locations in Dubai.

As of end June, the company

Dh 107.1m
 What Parkin got through fines in H1-24, which is 13% higher from a year before

in line with guidance provided to the market during the listing process in Q1 2024," said a statement.

Multi-storey car parking

Parkin is keeping options open on generating more revenue from operating multi-storey car parking in Dubai. Currently, it fetches less than 2 per cent of revenues, and the lowest among multiple business lines.

"Multi-storey car parking will remain a main pillar of operations," said Khattab Abu Qauod, Chief Financial Officer at Parkin.

The company has first right of refusal to take on any future facilities as part of an arrangement with the RTA. Based on this, 20 per cent of the revenue generated from these facilities will be paid as concession fees to RTA.

"We will continue to maintain a capex-lite structure, as was promised at the time of the IPO," said Abu Qauod.

What Parkin expects in H2-24

"Notwithstanding the effect of seasonality on operations and revenue in later quarters, the management team consider that the business will perform

UAE insurer sanctioned over lack of data safety

DUBAI
 Gulf News Report

The UAE Central Bank has imposed an administration sanction on an insurance firm for not having proper safeguards in place for client data.

An investigation revealed the insurer had 'deficiencies in its regulatory policies and procedures' and which were in violation of the 'Guidance on the Personal Data' collected for insurance policies dated April 18, 2022.

"Accordingly, the CBUAE imposed a warning on the insurance company in relation to the activity and a direction that the insurance company refrain from such activity," said a statement.

Abide by UAE laws

"The CBUAE, through its supervisory and regulatory mandates, works to ensure that all insurance companies, their owners and staff abide by the UAE laws, regulations and standards to safeguard the transparency and integrity of the insurance sector and the UAE financial system," the statement added.

Last week, the regulator placed financial sanctions on a bank for deficiencies in its anti money laundering policies and procedures. The fine totalled Dh5.8 million.



Last week, UAE Central Bank placed financial sanctions on a bank for deficiencies in its anti money laundering policies and procedures.

Adnoc Gas revenues shoot past \$9 billion for first-half of 2024

Shareholders to get 8.164 fils a share payout in September

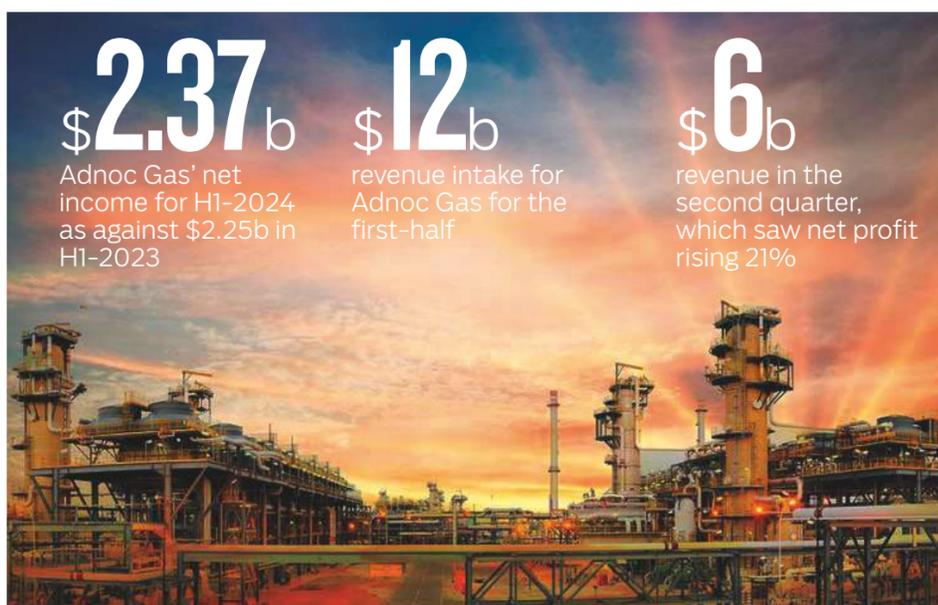
DUBAI
 Gulf News Report

Adnoc Gas has recorded revenues of more than \$9 billion for H1-2024 as UAE's population growth and demand from its industrial sector fuelled its financials. The corresponding top-line number for 2023 was \$8.16 billion. The company provides more than 60 per cent of the domestic demand for gas.

Net income for H1-2024 was \$2.37 billion against \$2.25 billion a year ago, exceeding expectations.

The Adnoc entity, which has confirmed a 5 per cent annual dividend hike, will be releasing \$1.7 billion in September. The approved interim dividend equals 8.164 fils a share. A planned final dividend – also of \$1.7 billion – will be distributed in April 2025.

The revenue intake for Adnoc Gas for the first-half has actually topped \$12 billion



once the contributions from its stake in Adnoc LNG and others are integrated. Based on these, Adnoc Gas' Q2-2024 revenues would be over \$6 billion, something that it achieved in Q4-23 and Q1-24 as well.

"Our robust Q2 results

clearly reflect our focus on growth, significantly strengthening revenues and profitability while continuing to maintain a healthy margin," said Dr Ahmed Alebri, CEO. "The 21 per cent improvement in Q2 net profit underlines our

commitment to enhancing our performance, implementing efficiencies, and optimising costs."

Medium-term prospects

Adnoc Gas forecasts global gas demand to go through a

STAKE TRANSFER

In July, Adnoc Gas said it will transfer ownership of the \$2.4 billion gas pipeline extension project (ESTIDAMA) to Adnoc, thus "significantly optimising Adnoc Gas' capital efficiency". Adnoc Gas will continue to manage and operate the ESTIDAMA project, allowing it to reach "new customers in the Northern Emirates".

— Gulf News Report

Adnoc Gas forecasts global gas demand to go through a 14 per cent increase by 2040.

14 per cent increase by 2040. Specific to the UAE, demand will likely "exceed global growth significantly". Apart from higher GDP and population driving demand, there is also the government "initiatives to attract new industries

to the UAE including AI data centres". These facilities require high energy consumption.

Ruwais LNG update

The ongoing development of the Ruwais LNG project will start bearing results from 2028, when deliveries are expected to start. This will create two LNG liquefaction trains with a total export capacity of 9.6mmtpa.

As of now, 70 per cent of Ruwais LNG production capacity are already secured through sales commitments. On the development side, a sizeable \$5.5 billion worth of EPC contracts have been awarded for the two LNG trains.

In June, Adnoc had announced a Final Investment Decision (FID) on the Ruwais LNG project and in July, it signed up Mitsui & Co, Shell, bp, and TotalEnergies as equity partners, each taking 10 per cent.

"Adnoc Gas is managing the design and construction and has reaffirmed its intention to become an equity partner, and operator, of Ruwais LNG by acquiring Adnoc's stake," said a statement.

Menzies eyes UAE, Saudi Arabia expansions under Kuwaiti owner

IN UAE, AVIATION SERVICES FIRM WILL COMPETE WITH EMIRATES-OWNED DNATA

DUBAI
BY DHANUSHA GOKULAN
Chief Reporter

Aviation services company Menzies is preparing for a foray into the UAE and Saudi Arabia, two of the busiest and most competitive markets for the industry.

This is not lost on UK-headquartered Menzies Aviation's chairman, Hassan El-Houry. After three years of rapid double-digit growth, Menzies — part of Kuwait's Agility group — is on track to surpass previous records this year as it expands its services to new markets, said El-Houry. With 50,000 employees, Menzies Aviation handles more than 4.5 million flights and over 2 million tonnes of cargo annually.

The company, he added, has "aggressive" growth plans for the GCC region, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE, in the next five years.

"I believe that the discussion about the GCC will be entirely different in five years," said El-Houry. "Saudi Arabia aims to triple its number of passengers to 250 million by 2030. They plan to invest \$100 billion in aviation infrastructure to achieve this. We want to be a part of that — and will be."

In the UAE, Menzies Aviation will have to compete against Emirates Group-owned dnata, which had a net profit of \$387 million in 2023-24 and current-



“We don't only compete on price; we also compete on safety, security, and quality. Airlines that value safety, security, and quality choose us.”

Hassan El-Houry
| Menzies Aviation's chairman

■ With 50,000 employees, UK-headquartered Menzies Aviation handles more than 4.5 million flights and over 2 million tonnes of cargo annually. Menzies is part of Kuwait's Agility group.

ly provides aviation services to airports in 52 countries.

El-Houry said: "There are about five major competitors, along with some regional leaders, and then around 100 to 200 smaller companies that are country- or airport-specific."

"We like to think of ourselves competing with the Top 5 major players and some regional players. This is because we don't only compete on price; we also

compete on safety, security, and quality. If an airline is looking for the cheapest option, we may not always be the most cost-effective choice, and that's fine. Airlines that value safety, security, and quality choose us."

New markets

Recently, Menzies Aviation launched operations in Spain, Portugal, Hong Kong, Jamaica, Peru, and Panama. The compa-

ny outbid competitors and won operational rights for seven airports in Spain.

"We are region- or country-agnostic," said El-Houry, who was formerly CEO at National Aviation Services.

"We look at each opportunity individually. And, you know, assess whether it adds value to our company; if it adds value to our company, we pursue it. If not, we walk away," he said.

Air Arabia reports H1 net profit of Dh693m

Airline added 3 new aircraft to its fleet, for a total of 77

DUBAI
Gulf News Report

Air Arabia (PJSC), the Middle East and North Africa's first and largest low-cost carrier (LCC) operator, yesterday announced strong financial and operational results for the second quarter and first half of 2024, as the airline continued to expand its network, further solidifying its leadership position in the market.

Air Arabia reported a net profit of Dh427 million during the second quarter ending June 30, 2024; 7 per cent lower than the Dh459 million recorded in the same period in 2023. The airline achieved a turnover of Dh1.65 billion, marking a 19 per cent increase compared to the second quarter of last year. Between April and June 2024, over 4.5 million passengers travelled with Air Arabia Group across its operating hubs, reflecting a 19 per cent increase from the 3.8 million

passengers carried in the same quarter of the previous year.

'Robust passenger demand'

In the first half of 2024, Air Arabia reported a net profit of Dh693 million, reflecting a 13 per cent decrease from the Dh801 million recorded in the same period in 2023. In the same period, the airline achieved a turnover of Dh3.19 billion, marking a 13 per cent increase compared to the Dh2.82 billion registered in the first half of last year.

Commenting on the results, Shaikh Abdullah Bin Mohammad Al Thani, Chairman of Air Arabia, said: "The solid net profit recorded in the second quarter was driven by robust passenger demand and revenue growth, underscoring the strong fundamentals of our business and the enduring appeal of our value-driven offerings to customers."

During the first half of the year, Air Arabia added 3 new aircraft to its modern fleet bringing it to a total of 77 owned and leased Airbus A320 and A321 aircraft.



■ Air Arabia achieved a turnover of Dh3.19b in H1-24, marking a 13% increase compared to the Dh2.82b registered in H1-23.

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■ An electronic ticker displays stock figures in Shanghai, China, last Wednesday, following the global market meltdown on Monday.

For now, global markets will stay vulnerable to meltdowns

BLOW-UP OF 'CARRY-TRADE' HAS HAUNTED MARKETS HIT BY THE RAPID UNWIND

NEW YORK

By now, last Monday's global market meltdown looks more like a brief tremor, a fleeting panic unleashed by a small policy shift from the Bank of Japan and resurgent fears of a US recession.

But the way it unfolded so rapidly — and just as quickly faded out — is exposing how vulnerable markets are to a strategy that hedge funds exploited to bankroll hundreds of billions of dollars of bets in virtually every corner of the world. The yen 'carry trade', as it's known, was a sure-fire recipe for easy profits: Just borrow in Japan, the world's last haven of rock-bottom interest rates, then plow it into Mexican bonds yielding over 10 per cent, Nvidia's soaring shares or even Bitcoin. When the yen kept falling, the loans became even cheaper to repay, and the payoffs turned that much bigger.

Then, seemingly all at once, investors bailed out of the trade, in turn helping to fuel a furious rebound in the yen and a swift exodus from equities and other currencies as traders dumped assets to meet margin calls. It roiled Japan's stock market, too, setting off the fiercest one-day sell-off since 1987 on concern the surge in the currency would hammer exporters. "The yen carry trade remains the epicentre of everything in markets right now," said David Lutz, head of ETFs at JonesTrading.

Pressure building for weeks

The pressure had been building up for weeks as markets in carry-trade hot spots sputtered, the Nasdaq 100 Index slid off record highs and worries mounted that the Federal Reserve had kept monetary policy too tight for too long. Then came the spark: an interest rate hike in Japan. The BOJ's benchmark is now still a mere 0.25 per cent, the lowest in the industrial world, but the increase at the end of last month was large enough to force investors to rethink their long-held belief that Japanese borrowing costs would always remain pinned near zero.

Even though markets have steadied, the episode is raising alarms about how much leverage had built up around Japan as its central bank kept pumping out cash despite the post-pandemic inflation surge. That's left anxious traders trying to gauge whether the bulk of the unwinding is over — or whether it will continue rippling through markets in the



WHY OIL IS LOOKING PAST MARKET UNCERTAINTY

Oil prices rose for a fifth consecutive session yesterday, extending gains from the previous week's near 4 per cent rise, as US recession fears eased while geopolitical tensions in the Middle East supported prices. Brent crude futures were up 73 cents, or 0.9 per cent, to \$80.39 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate crude futures rose 88 cents, or 1.2 per cent, to \$77.72.

"Support is coming from last week's better-than-expected US data which eased fears of a US recession," IG markets analyst Tony Sycamore said. Brent traded below \$80 a barrel after its first weekly gain since early July, while West Texas Intermediate was around \$77.

Crude has tracked a rebound in equity markets since sinking to a seven-month low at the start of last week, with a dour outlook in China, the biggest importer, also weighing on sentiment.

Traders will be looking to market reports for more clarity on supply and demand balances — with monthly outlooks due from Opec and the International Energy Agency — as well as US inflation data tomorrow. "The immediate market concern will be attacks on Iran's oil supply and infrastructure" as the country accounts for about 4 per cent of global oil production, said Vivek Dhar, an analyst with Commonwealth Bank of Australia. Meanwhile, money managers have cut their net bullish positions on global benchmark Brent to the lowest in data going back to 2011, while they've flipped to a net-bearish position on diesel. The physical market is also flashing warning signs with US refineries running slow as profit margins shrink. —Agencies

weeks ahead. Coming up with an answer is tricky because there are no official estimates for how much money is tied up in carry trades. According to GlobalData TS Lombard, there was some \$1.1 trillion piled into the strategy, assuming all overseas borrowing in Japan since the end of 2022 was used to finance it and domestic investors used leverage for their foreign purchases. After last week's dramatic unwinding, strategists at JPMorgan Chase & Co. reckoned that three-quarters of global currency carry trades have now been closed out, while those at Citigroup Inc. said the current level of positioning has taken markets out of the "danger zone."

Further room to run

But others like BNY believe the unwind has further room to run, potentially driving the dollar-yen currency pair down toward 100 — a decline of more than 30 per cent from where it ended last week, signifying a much stronger yen.

a wave of speculative cash that flowed out of Japan, putting downward pressure on the yen as traders sold the currency to buy those of the countries where they were investing the proceeds.

The impact was particularly stark in Latin America, which offered rates well above those in the US and Europe. In 2022 and 2023, currencies like the Brazilian real and the Mexican peso rose sharply, becoming some of the world's best performers.

Returns of 40%

By one measure, borrowing in the yen and investing in Mexico, for example, produced returns of 40 per cent last year. The strategy continued to rack up gains, with yen-funded trades in a basket of eight emerging-market currencies returning just over 17 per cent this year to early July. "To go long the peso was such a no-brainer just a few months ago — but those days are definitely behind us," said Alejandro Cuadrado, head of global FX and Latin America strategy at Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria SA in New York.

When the yen started rebounding from its weakest levels in decades, that created a feedback loop as traders unwound carry trades to lock in their gains — pushing the yen up further as investors purchased it to close out their loans. It accelerated after the BOJ hiked rates on July 31 for a second time this year and surprisingly weak US job figures fanned fears that the Fed had waited too long to reverse course.

After the unwind hit Japan's stock market on Aug 5, driving the Nikkei down 12 per cent, BOJ Deputy Governor Shinichi Uchida stepped in to assure investors the central bank won't be raising rates as long as market instability persists. The markets steadied, with signs that hedge funds pulled back some bets that the yen would continue to gain.

The recent turn has likely tamped down the carry trade, at least temporarily, with traders anticipating more volatility in foreign-exchange markets this year. The carry-to-risk ratio for yen-funded trades targeting eight emerging market currencies fell to the lowest in about a year last week, suggesting the reward for the strategy has worsened, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. "No trade lasts forever — and, the facts have changed," said Jack McIntyre, a manager at Brandywine Global Investment Management. "The BOJ tightened and something broke: in this case the carry trade." —Bloomberg

Starbucks gets activist on board as sales dip

Global coffeehouse chain struggles with pullback in demand

SEATTLE

Starboard Value, an investment firm with a history of taking activist positions in companies, has a stake in Starbucks Corp., according to a report.

The number of shares owned by Starboard or its intentions couldn't be learned, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, which cited people familiar with the matter, while adding the activist investor wants the coffee giant to take steps to improve its stock price.

A spokesperson for Starbucks declined to comment. Starboard couldn't immediately be reached for comment. Starbucks shares rose 2.9 per cent in after hours trading in New York.

Starbucks is already contending with activist Elliott Investment Management, with which the company has had "constructive" conversations, Chief Executive Officer Laxman Narasimhan told investors in late July.

The chain is struggling with a pullback in demand that has resulted in two consecutive quarters of sales declines at stores open for at least a year. The company has also faced criticism from Howard Schultz, its former CEO and biggest individual investor, as he publicly chided senior leadership for the company's performance.

Fewer people are going to Starbucks and buying \$6 iced coffees and lemonades at Starbucks. Starbucks sales dropped

3 per cent globally at stores open for at least a year, including a 2 per cent drop in its home North America market.

And that masked how steep the decline was for Starbucks last quarter: Total transactions at North American stores open at least a year fell 6 per cent in the quarter. That was offset, in part, by higher prices.

Consumer fatigue

Starbucks' struggles reflect consumer fatigue with high prices at food chains, restaurants and stores after years of price hikes. They also reveal cracks in Starbucks' business model, which has changed in response to customer demand from a predominately sit-down coffee shop to a mostly drive-thru and mobile takeout chain.

Consumers are showing their limits at Starbucks and other chains like McDonald's. McDonald's this week reported that sales at stores open at least a year fell 1 per cent last quarter, its first sales decline since 2020.

Starbucks also faces increased pressure from rival drive-thru coffee chains — and from people opting to make their morning cup of coffee at home. Prices surged over the past few years, but this year, grocery store costs have moderated, while the cost of eating away from home continued to rise.

"Your more cost-conscious consumer, they're finding other places or just doing things at home. There's also more competition from some of the drive-thru coffee chains, like a Dutch Bros," said RJ Hottovy, an analyst at Placer.ai.

—Agencies



■ Starbucks sales dropped 3% globally at stores open for at least a year, including a 2% drop in North America market.

Cisco to cut thousands of jobs in 2nd round of layoffs

Slowdown in corporate tech spending forced cuts

CALIFORNIA

Cisco Systems Inc. plans to eliminate thousands more jobs in a second round of layoffs this year, Reuters reported, as the networking equipment maker shifts its focus to faster-growing businesses such as cybersecurity and artificial intelligence.

The news follows Cisco's move to cut approximately 4,000 jobs in February after a slowdown in corporate tech spending wiped out its sales growth. The company had nearly 85,000 workers at the end of fiscal 2023, which ran through July of that year.

Cisco joins other tech companies in paring jobs as they cope with uneven demand. Though AI spending has helped fuel growth in some

areas, traditional information technology giants haven't benefited as much. Intel Corp. announced plans last week to slash 15,000 jobs as it contends with sluggish sales. Dell Technologies Inc. is also cutting positions as part of a re-organisation of its sales teams.

Shares fall

Cisco shares fell as much as 1.3 per cent to \$45.24 in New York. They were down 9.3 per cent this year heading into Friday's session.

The latest job cuts could be announced as early as tomorrow when the company reports fourth-quarter results, according to Reuters. Three months ago, an upbeat Cisco forecast sparked hope that IT customers had picked up spending again. But the broader tech industry has been dogged by more recent concerns about the economy — and the idea that AI spending might not have a near-term payoff. —Agencies



EUROPE'S MOMENT OF TRUTH IS HERE

European Union's values and leadership, while evolving, are essential for future unity and vision

BY ANA PALACIO | Special to Gulf News

Whenever Europeans return from their summer holidays, calls for a structural overhaul of the European Union are practically inevitable. This year will be no different, though the impetus for change may be more powerful than ever.

The EU is facing numerous daunting — even existential — challenges. War rages on its doorstep, economic competitiveness lags, and deep social polarisation persists.

Political uncertainty in France and indecision in Germany compound the EU's fragility, precisely when an unpredictable leadership transition in the United States, which threatens to usher in a prolonged period of American isolationism, leaves Europe with little choice but to take its fate into its own hands.

The EU has managed to overcome severe disruptions in recent years, from sovereign-debt crises to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom. But, in today's geopolitical environment, it is weak, vulnerable, and ill-prepared to handle the challenges it faces. The enduring influence of populist forces — which weaponise concerns over illegal migration and openly defy European unity — is a major reason why.

EU's moral authority

For example, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who has led Hungary's government since 2010 (after previously holding office from 1998-2002), has carried out surprise visits to Kyiv, Moscow, and Beijing, to discuss a potential Ukraine peace deal.

EU leaders scrambled to clarify that Orbán had no such mandate. Unfazed, Orbán proceeded to announce a new fast-track visa system that would enable citizens of eight countries, including Russia and Belarus, to enter Hungary without security checks.

This has reinforced the growing recognition that in a world increasingly dominated by geopolitical power plays and realpolitik, the EU's moral authority and steadfast commitment to values-based governance are not outdated or ineffective but are, in fact, enduring principles that set the EU apart.

Rather than relics of the past, these values are crucial for guiding the future, offering a beacon of hope and stability in an increasingly complex global landscape. The EU's unwavering dedication to these principles positions it as a unique force for good in the world, inspiring others to uphold similar standards of governance and integrity.

Not only has the once-powerful Franco-German engine of European integration run out of steam; European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's new mandate — which she secured by crafting an ambigu-



ous platform that sought to appeal to a broad spectrum of interests — seems unlikely to bring profound change.

Against this backdrop, forging a coherent vision on critical issues like competitiveness, innovation, and defence will prove difficult, at best. Those who stand to gain the most from this situation are spoilers, such as Orbán, who have learnt how to exploit disunity and ambiguity.

Urgency for EU to reassert itself

During past crises — from the Brexit negotiations to the EU's previous dealings with Hungary over Orbán's assaults on democracy and the rule of law — the EU has relied largely on a legalistic and technocratic approach, which has often left it worse off.

Calls for the EU to start speaking the "language of power" have remained unheeded. And while proposals for strengthening the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy's mandate have been advanced, they represent little more than cosmetic changes.

To regain its footing, the EU must act with urgency and resolve, even if that entails uncomfortable confrontations with member states. And to thrive in the world of today and tomorrow, it must, once again, establish itself as an indispensable partner for the US.

This means strengthening its economy, not least through innovation. It also means heeding former US Defence Secretary Robert Gates's advice to engage more effectively with younger generations of Americans. Bolstering the image of the EU, which often is viewed more negatively than individual member states, is essential.

With US President Joe Biden now a lame duck, Ukraine and Europe have entered a period of elevated vulnerability. If the upcoming US presidential election brings Donald Trump back to the White House, pressure for a "negotiated peace" in Ukraine could intensify, further disrupting an already fragile geopolitical landscape.

The EU faces a stark choice: it can either continue to allow internal and external forces to weaken it, or it can act boldly to reclaim its integrity and strengthen its influence.

From encouraging innovation and bolstering the rule of law to establishing and implementing a shared foreign-policy vision, the EU must demonstrate that it can be both principled and powerful, or risk being left behind.

— Project Syndicate

■ Ana Palacio, a former minister of foreign affairs of Spain and former senior vice president and general counsel of the World Bank Group, is a visiting lecturer at Georgetown University.

THE TRUE VICTORY OF PARIS 2024

From Simone Biles to Arshad Nadeem, athletes showcased resilience, grit and unity

BY AHMAD NAZIR | Special to Gulf News

The curtains have fallen on the 2024 Paris Olympics, an event that, in its grandeur and spectacle, reaffirmed the timeless allure of the Games. It was a stage where athletic brilliance met ideals of unity and diversity, a celebration that surpassed the mere pursuit of gold and resonated with the deeper essence of what it means to be human.

In the heart of these Games, on the storied clay of Roland Garros, Zheng Qinwen etched her name into history, delivering the most significant victory for Chinese tennis since Li Na's iconic triumph 13 years ago. Her gold medal symbolises the rise of a new generation of Chinese athletes, standing tall on the world stage.

Simone Biles returned to the Olympic arena, not as the invincible force of Rio 2016, but as a figure of inspiration. Her presence in Paris was a masterclass in resilience and grace. Brazil's Rebeca Andrade dazzled in the floor exercises, capturing the gold and receiving a heartfelt tribute from Biles herself.

Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem delivered a javelin throw that not only shattered previous records but also elevated him to a new level of global recognition. In a discipline that demands both power and precision, Nadeem's performance was the epitome of athletic excellence, earning him a place among the legends of the sport.

Beyond these individual victories, the Paris Olympics were a living mosaic of unity and diversity, where the world converged in a celebration of the human spirit. In the stands, one could see an American and a Chinese fan, an Indian and Briton, a Ghanaian and a German, all sitting side by side, waving their flags and sharing in the electric atmosphere.

These Games brought disparate voices together, not in a cacophony but in a harmonious chorus that spoke of our shared humanity. This, perhaps more than any medal, is perhaps the true essence of the Olympics — a reminder that in our diversity lies our greatest strength, and in our unity, our most profound hope.

Paris 2024, with its unforgettable moments, some controversy and powerful narratives, stands as a testament to the enduring power of the Olympic Games. It showed us that the pursuit of excellence is not just an individual endeavour but a collective journey. It is a journey that brings nations together, celebrates differences, and, for a fleeting moment, makes the world feel just a little bit smaller.

As we look back on these Games, let us take with us the lessons of Paris: that the true victory of the Olympics lies not in the medals won, but in the spirit of togetherness, the breaking of barriers, and the shared belief that, every four years, the world can unite in the name of sport, peace, and humanity.

Paris Olympics 2024 have reminded us that the Games are not just about athletic achievement — they are about celebrating what makes us human, what brings us together, and what, in the end, truly makes us winners.

■ Ahmad Nazir is a UAE based freelance writer, with a degree in education from the Université de Montpellier in Southern France.

WHY HYBRID WORK IS THE FUTURE

Benefits of personal well-being and health far outweigh challenges of mixing remote work and office

BY JYOTSNA MOHAN | Special to Gulf News

If there is one long-lasting impact of the pandemic it is how work-life balance is at a point of no return and more than mere memo jargon. While WFH (work from home) is a new reality that is increasingly being normalised, it is a hybrid work model that offers a realistic path going forward.

A new McKinsey report on the hybrid model says that most employees prefer to work from home three days a week.

Yet, in a bid to push economic reform, Greece has started a six-day week for some industries. This allows employees to work up to 48 hours a week against the previous 40, a norm in most

countries. Perhaps it needs to look at Iceland where a trial four-day week between 2015 and 2019 was an "overwhelming success" and a majority of the country's workforce have moved to shorter hours while maintaining the same pay.

In the UAE, a four-and-a-half-day week for the last two years has not just increased productivity in offices but also decreased the burden for students. This shortened week applies even to schools where the weekend begins by Friday noon. In case of adverse weather or unanticipated disasters, both teachers and students shift seamlessly to remote teaching, a by-product of the pandemic.

Well-being though is not a new word, but it is only in the present that it is getting its due. Among the top three reasons people left their jobs as per a Pew Research Centre survey of workers who quit in 2021 was not feeling respected. In countries like India, the workforce has been conditioned to labour above and beyond both its pay and hours.

The other side of the coin

The increasing emphasis on stress management is not without operational risks. For generations like the Millennials and Gen Z, mental health is also a term flung casually which makes it tough to sift the genu-

ine from the misunderstood. Not just that, frequent harking and misuse of words like depression take away the importance the issue deserves in global workplaces.

The imagined fragility of this section of people is seen in their snubbing of jobs that tick all the boxes, even as beginners. Others exploit the work-life balance debate and make it tougher for those who have genuine grievances. Quiet quitting is a combination of both factors.

Among those who can greatly benefit from the flexibility and a hybrid model are women who have over the years dropped out from the workforce for reasons beyond their control. It is a win-

win for all. They can effectively be in two places at one time and companies can retain some of their best talent. The onus is now on the corporate world and how willing it is to be flexible.

Several studies are being done to understand both shortened weeks and a culture that encourages a healthy mix of remote working and in-person attendance and they are a good indicator that the issue has finally got the prominence it deserves. People are prioritising themselves and their health. That can never be wrong.

■ Jyotsna Mohan is the author of the investigative book *Stoned, Shamed, Depressed*.

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Gaza war reveals limits of military power



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Bloomberg

■ Displaced Palestinians flee following evacuation orders from the Israeli army to leave the Hamad district of Khan Younis, southern Gaza, on Sunday. Israeli struck a school in Gaza City, claiming it was a Hamas "command and control centre".

Calls for Gaza truce grow as Hamas pushes for Biden plan

BRITAIN, UK, GERMANY CALL FOR FIGHTING TO END, AND RELEASE OF HOSTAGES

GAZA STRIP

International pressure mounted yesterday for a ceasefire in Gaza, with Britain, France and Germany issuing a joint plea for an end to fighting between Israel and Hamas with "no further delay".

The call came a day after Palestinian group Hamas — whose October 7 attack on Israel triggered the war — urged mediators to implement a truce plan presented by US President Joe Biden instead of holding more talks.

No further delay

"The fighting must end now, and all hostages still detained by Hamas must be released," French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said in a statement. "The people of Gaza need urgent and unfettered delivery and distribution of aid," it said. "There can be no further delay."

Mediators have invited Israel and Hamas to resume talks towards a long-sought truce and hostage-release deal, after fighting in Gaza and the killings of Iran-aligned leaders sparked fears of a wider conflict.

75 BODIES IDENTIFIED IN SCHOOL STRIKE

Gaza officials told AFP yesterday that they had identified 75 bodies of Palestinians killed in a weekend strike by Israel on the Al Tabieen religious school compound in Gaza City, where rescuers reported at least 93 dead.

AFP was unable to independently verify the toll.

"There are 93 dead in the Al Tabieen school strike, 75 of them have been identified," Gaza civil defence agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said. "The others have not yet been identified because some bodies are torn and charred by the bombardment."

He said the dead included 11 children and six women.

Amjad Aliwa, an emergency doctor at Al Ahli hospital in Gaza City, confirmed that 75 people killed in the strike had been identified. "There are still bodies (whose identities are unknown) that are completely destroyed," he told AFP.

"There are also some families who have been displaced to the south (of Gaza Strip) and cannot come to identify their loved ones."

Meanwhile, Israeli news website Walla, citing the military, reported that 38 militants were killed in the strike.

Asked by AFP about the report, the Israeli military said that it would respond later. The military said it struck the school compound after receiving intelligence that Hamas militants were using it as a command and control centre to plan attacks against Israel and its security forces.

— AFP

Israel has accepted the invitation from the United States, Qatar and Egypt for a round of talks planned for Thursday.

Hamas said Sunday it wanted the implementation of a truce plan laid out by Biden on May 31 and later endorsed by the UN

Security Council, "rather than going through more negotiation rounds or new proposals".

Unveiling the plan, Biden had called it a three-phase "road map to an enduring ceasefire and the release of all hostages", describing it was an Israeli pro-

posal. Mediation efforts since then have failed to produce an agreement.

Hamas has named its Gaza chief, Yahya Sinwar, to succeed slain political leader and truce negotiator Ismail Haniyeh, killed July 31 in Tehran in an attack blamed on Israel, which has not claimed responsibility.

Haniyeh's killing, hours after Israel assassinated the military chief of Lebanese group Hezbollah in a strike on Beirut, spurred intense diplomacy to avert a wider war in the Middle East.

'Have to go somewhere'

In Khan Younis, southern Gaza's main city ravaged by months of bombardment and battles, AFP journalists said hundreds of Palestinians had fled northern neighbourhoods after Israel's evacuation orders.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said that "just in the past few days, more than 75,000 people have been displaced in southwest Gaza", where Khan Younis is located.

"We have to go somewhere, and we don't know if it will be good or bad," said Majd Ayyad, who was originally displaced from Gaza City.

— AFP

TOWARDS PEACE

Where parties stand on Biden's Gaza truce plan

GAZA STRIP

US President Joe Biden announced in late May a three-phase plan to end the war in Gaza, a proposal that Hamas wants to see implemented rather than enter new talks starting Thursday as Israel has agreed.

The plan, which Biden described as an Israeli proposal, has already seen intense deliberations over the past several weeks.

Last week, Israel — which has been slow to publicly embrace the deal — said it was ready for new talks on the proposal.

But just days later, it carried out a deadly strike on a Gaza school, housing displaced people, killing at least 93, according to rescuers in the Palestinian territory.

Below are the details of the plan and the statements of parties and brokers since Haniyeh's killing.

Phase One

Biden said the first phase includes a "full and complete ceasefire" lasting six weeks, with Israeli forces withdrawing from "all populated areas of Gaza".

Hamas would release "a number" of hostages, including US citizens, captured in the October 7 attacks on Israel, including women, the elderly and the wounded. The remains of some hostages who had been killed would also be returned. Hundreds of Palestinian prisoners would be released in exchange.

Humanitarian aid would "surge" to 600 trucks a day entering Gaza, while the international community would deliver hundreds of thousands of temporary shelters and housing units.

During the initial six-week period, Israel and Hamas would "negotiate the necessary arrangements to get to phase two, which is a permanent end to hostilities".

Phase Two

Israeli forces would completely withdraw from Gaza under the second phase of the plan, lasting another six weeks.

Hamas would release "all remaining living hostages" including male Israeli soldiers. This has been a key sticking point for Hamas. If both sides keep to the deal, it will lead to the "cessation of hostilities permanently", Biden said.

Phase Three

A major reconstruction plan for Gaza would begin. Biden said he would also work with regional partners to ensure it happens in a way that "does not allow Hamas to re-arm".

What if it goes wrong?

Biden said that if Hamas "fails to fulfil its commitments under the deal, Israel can resume military operations".

Who says what?

Late on Sunday, Hamas said further talks would give it Israel more time to perpetuate the war of genocide against Gazans.

Israel has yet to respond, while Qatar criticised Israel, following Haniyeh's killing. "How can mediation succeed when one party assassinates the negotiator on other side," Qatar Prime Minister Shaikh Mohammad Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said.

— AFP



Bloomberg

■ Palestinians flee with their meagre belongings from Hamad district in Khan Younis after evacuation orders.

Sudan's humanitarian crisis reaches 'cataclysmic breaking point'

Preventable death looms over 'tens of thousands' of people

GENEVA

Sudan is at a catastrophic "breaking point", with tens of thousands of preventable deaths looming due to multiple crises, the United Nations' migration agency warned yesterday.

The International Organization for Migration said famine and floods were adding to a catalogue of challenges facing millions of people in the war-torn country, amid the world's largest displacement crisis.

"Make no mistake: these conditions will persist and worsen if the conflict and restrictions on humanitarian ac-

cess continue," Othman Belbeisi, IOM Middle East and North Africa director, said in a statement.

"Without an immediate, massive, and coordinated global response, we risk witnessing tens of thousands of preventable deaths in the coming months. We are at breaking point — a catastrophic, cataclysmic breaking point."

Warring generals

War has raged since April 2023 between the Sudanese army under Abdul Fattah Al Burhan and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, led by his former deputy Mohammad Hamdan Daglo.

The conflict has left tens of thousands dead, according to the UN.

The IOM said new figures



AFP

■ A woman cooks at a campsite which people displaced by the war were evacuated to, following floods in Kassala on Sunday.

showed more than 10.7 million people are internally displaced within Sudan, with many uprooted several times over.

Meanwhile 2.3 million have

fled across the borders into neighbouring countries.

Flooding has displaced more than 20,000 people since June across 11 of Sudan's 18 states,

The IOM said new figures showed more than 10.7 million people are internally displaced within Sudan, with many uprooted several times over.

2.3m

people have fled across the borders; 45,000 displaced over the last two weeks

the IOM said, adding that critical infrastructure had been washed away, disrupting the delivery of vital supplies.

Overall, more than 45,000

people have been displaced over the last two weeks, with more than 38,000 of them fleeing across the borders.

'Among the worst'

The conflict has pushed the Zamzam camp near the besieged Darfur city of Al Fasher into famine, according to the UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) review. The IOM said humanitarian and protection conditions in Sudan were "among the worst in the world".

"Restrictions on humanitarian access, including impediments imposed by parties to the conflict, have severely curtailed the ability of aid organisations to scale up and save lives, especially during the current rainy season," the Geneva-based agency said.

— AFP

NEW DELHI

Indian doctors in government hospitals across several states halted elective services "indefinitely" yesterday to protest the rape and murder of a young medic.

The 31-year-old woman's brutalised body was found bearing multiple injuries on Friday in a state-run hospital in West Bengal's Kolkata, where she was a resident doctor.

An autopsy confirmed sexual assault and homicide.

Police have detained a man who worked at the victim's hospital, helping people navigate busy queues, according to local media reports.

Better workplace security

Demonstrations by doctors demanding justice and better workplace security that initially began in Kolkata have spread to other parts of the country.

Sexual violence against women is a widespread problem in India — an average of nearly 90 rapes a day were reported in 2022 in the country of 1.4 billion people.

But doctors say they face additional threats of workplace violence from angry family members of patients, especially after delivering bad news.

"There should be stringent security measures in hospitals and CCTV cameras should be installed," said Dr. Sarvesh Pandey, General Secretary, Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA).

Dr. Pandey added that the protesting doctors' demands included a specialised law protecting health care workers from violence on the job.

"There are incidents every day where doctors are assaulted," said Dr. Pandey.

300,000 join strike

Pandey said around 300,000 doctors across the county have joined the protest and demanded that others join as well.

"We will continue our strike until we get a written assurance that our demands will be fulfilled," Dr Pandey said.

The doctors are demanding a CBI inquiry of the case, a fast-track court and the formation of a committee for the implementation of the Central Protection Act in all hospitals.

FORDA India president Dr Aviral Mathur said, "Everyone should condemn this incident ... We will call off the strike when our demands are addressed as we don't want the patients to suffer. The emergency services are going on for the convenience of patients ... Our organisation is constantly in touch with the ministry. We have full faith that our demands will be fulfilled."

Earlier, the Principal of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, Dr. Sandip Ghosh

Indian medics on strike after rape and murder of colleague

31-YEAR-OLD WOMAN'S BODY FOUND BEARING MULTIPLE INJURIES IN KOLKATA



■ Federation of Resident Doctors' Association members protest at Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, New Delhi, yesterday. ANI

offered to resign from his post. The protesting doctors had called for his sacking.

"I am getting defamed on social media ... The deceased doctor was like my daughter. As a parent, I resign ... I don't like that this should happen to anyone in future," Dr. Ghosh told reporters as he left the hospital.

A survey by the Indian Medical Association found 75 per cent of doctors in India had faced some form of violence.

CM hints at CBI probe

Meanwhile, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said that if the Kolkata police are unable to solve the case by Sunday, she would hand over the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

"The day I got to know about the incident from the Kolkata Police Commissioner, I told him that it is a sad incident and immediate action should be taken and a fast-track court should also be set up ... If the police are unable to solve this case by Sunday, then we will not keep this case in our hands, we will hand it over to CBI," the West Bengal CM said.

— AFP

WHO IS SANJAY ROY, HELD IN KOLKATA DOCTOR'S RAPE-MURDER CASE?

Sanjay Roy, who was arrested for the rape and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, was identified by police as an alcoholic and a porn addict. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) believes he was under the influence of alcohol while committing the crime on Friday morning.

When the police began questioning him, he appeared calm and relaxed and admitted to committing the crime. The investigation also revealed that his mobile phone contained many pornographic clips. According to a report in *The Telegraph*, Roy is said to have told the officers questioning him that he had gone to red-light areas twice on Thursday night, hours before he allegedly brutalised the young doctor.

Roy, a 33-year-old civic volunteer with the police welfare board, had unrestricted access to various departments at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. After the attack in the seminar hall, Roy returned to his quarters to sleep. He later attempted to destroy evidence by washing his clothes, according to the investigation team. CCTV footage captured Roy entering the emergency building at 4am and leaving 40 minutes later.

4 failed marriages

A Bluetooth headset, which was seen hanging around Roy's neck on the footage, was missing when he exited; a piece of it was later found near the victim's body and matched to Roy's phone. Roy,

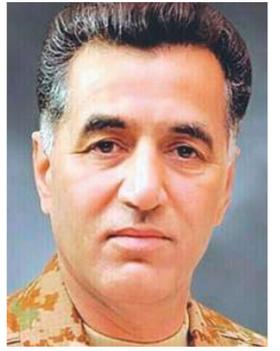


■ Police produce Sanjay Roy at Sealdah Court in Kolkata on Saturday. ANI

who had a history of four failed marriages — three of which ended due to his erratic behaviour and one due to his wife's death from cancer — was arrested just before midnight on Friday.

He confessed to the crime during interrogation, showing no remorse and reportedly stating, "Hang me if you want," according to reports from the *Times of India* and NDTV. In addition to his involvement in the crime, Roy was allegedly part of a racket at the hospital, charging patients' relatives for admissions and beds. Roy often posed as a police officer, wearing clothing and tags marked with "KP" (Kolkata Police) and using his connections to stay in police barracks.

— Stephen N.R., Senior Associate Editor



■ Lt Gen Faiz Hameed (Retd)

Ex-ISI chief held, court martial initiated

DUBAI

Gulf News Report

Pakistan Army yesterday announced that it has arrested former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief Lt Gen Faiz Hameed (Retd) and initiated court martial proceedings against him in connection with a housing scheme scandal.

The inquiry, conducted by the Pakistan Army in compliance with Supreme Court orders, found sufficient grounds to initiate disciplinary action against Hameed under the Pakistan Army Act.

"Complying with the orders of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, a detailed court of inquiry was undertaken by Pakistan Army, to ascertain correctness of complaints in Top City Case made against Lt Gen Faiz Hameed (Retd)," the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the army, said.

"Consequently, appropriate disciplinary action has been initiated against Lt Gen Faiz Hameed (Retd), under provisions of the Pakistan Army Act," it said.

"In addition, multiple instances of violation of the Pakistan Army Act post-retirement have also been established. The process of Field General Court Martial has been initiated and Lt Gen Faiz Hameed (Retd) has been taken into military custody," the ISPR added. Lt Gen Hameed (Retd) headed the spy agency from 2019 to 2021 after then ISI chief and current Army chief Lt Gen Asim Munir was prematurely removed from the post.

The housing scheme's management had accused Hameed of orchestrating a raid on the owner's offices and residence.

UK welcomes 'de-escalation' of far-right violence after atrocity

Agitators accused of using a tragedy to fuel their anti-Muslim agenda

LONDON

The UK government welcomed yesterday the "de-escalation" of far-right inspired disorder and rioting following a knife attack that killed three children, but insisted officials remain on "high alert".

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's spokeswoman was speaking a day after hundreds of people gathered for the funeral of nine-year-old victim Alice da Silva Aguiar.

Mourners wore white, a tradition for some in Portugal, where Alice's parents hail from.

"She was taken from us in an unimaginable act of violence that has left our hearts broken beyond repair," they said in a statement released through police, adding she was "full of joy, light, and love".

Two other girls — Bebe King, six, and Elsie Dot Stancombe, seven — also died in the attack. Ten others were injured including eight children.

Driven by hate

The violence in English towns and cities, blamed on the far-right, came after misinformation spread about the alleged perpetrator of the mass stabbing on July 29 at a Taylor Swift-themed dance class in Southport, northwestern England. "We welcome that there has been a de-escalation this weekend. But we're certainly not complacent and remain on



■ The coffin of Alice da Silva Aguiar is brought to St Patrick's Catholic Church in Southport, on Sunday, for her funeral. AFP

high alert," the prime minister's spokeswoman said.

The stabbings sparked a riot in Southport the following evening, on July 30, and

violence in more than a dozen English towns and cities as well as in Northern Ireland over the ensuing week.

Starmer's spokeswoman

added that authorities had acted decisively to quell the unrest but that there was no room for complacency.

"We also recognise that the job is not done until people feel safe in their communities, but thanks to the work of our police officers, prosecutor and judiciary, we have seen a swift response from the justice system," she said. "Within a matter of days, we've seen criminals involved arrested, charged, sentenced and behind bars."

Far-right agitators

Officials pointed the finger at far-right agitators and opportunist "thugs" accused of using the Southport tragedy to further their anti-immigration, anti-Muslim agenda.

Misinformation spread online in the immediate aftermath of the stabbing spree, claiming

that the perpetrator was a Muslim immigrant.

One of those rioting was a 12-year-old boy who on Monday admitted throwing a missile at a police van in Manchester, also in the northwest.

District Judge Joanne Hirst said the boy — who cannot be named due to his age — had been more involved in the violence than any other accused person she had seen "coming through these courts, adult or child".

British-born Axel Rudakubana has been charged with murder and attempted murder over the mass stabbing.

His parents originally come from Rwanda, which is overwhelmingly Christian.

A motive for the atrocity has not been disclosed, but police have said it is not being treated as terrorism-related. — AFP

PARIS
BY THOMAS WRAGG
Golf Editor

The Olympic Games is simply magical. Ever since I was a young boy, I've been fascinated by the sheer size of the multi-sport event and how it can unify countries from every corner of the globe for two weeks every four years.

My fondness in the Games came as no surprise given that I come from a family that is big on athletics. My grandad, Melvyn Batty, was one of the best British long-distance runners of his time in the 1960s, with the pinnacle of his career coming in 1964 when he set the 10-mile World Record in 47 minutes and 26.8 seconds.

Unfortunately, I never quite got his endurance genes, but I was a keen sprinter when I was a child and won a few medals in our county's district sports championships. I simply loved competition and would try and mimic the stars I had seen on TV at the Olympic Games or Athletics World Championships.

The first of those I remember vividly was Kelly Holmes winning double gold at the 2004 Games in Athens when I was just 10 years old. Holmes blew away the field in both the 800m and 1500m to become the first Brit since Albert Hill in 1920 to win two athletics gold medals in the same Olympic Games. Seeing her claim the titles made me feel euphoric and proud to be a Brit. Our little island was a world-beater.

In the years that followed, other stars of track and field, swimming and a multitude of other weird and wonderful sports made me fall deeper in love with the Olympic Games. Swimming legend Michael Phelps showed that the word impossible is just for us mere mortals, Usain Bolt made people fall in love with athletics that had never showed any interest before and seeing Brits win on home soil in 2012 made me feel things that I had never felt before. Sport is a wonderful thing.

The Olympic Games, aside from football, is also the only time you'll catch me shouting at my TV screen urging people over the finish line, over the high jump bar or a safe passage through a danger at every turn mountain bike track.

Incredible athletes

While I loved being glued to the TV for every Olympic Games since 2004, it wasn't quite enough. I had to witness these incredible athletes first-hand. London 2012 was the natural choice given that I lived just an hour away from the capital, but there was no luck for my family and I in the ballot. Rio 2016 wasn't feasible for me, while fans weren't allowed into Tokyo 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Twenty years after being inspired watching Holmes secure glory in Athens, I finally got my opportunity to attend the greatest sporting spectacle in the world when securing tickets to the final weekend of Paris 2024.

I felt like a kid at Christmas when waking up at 5am to get the train from London to Paris on Saturday just gone. A two hour and 16-minute journey followed before we arrived in the City of Love. A quick taxi to our hotel ensured we had time to freshen up ahead of our evening in the Stade de France for the final day of track and field.

As you may have already seen from the photo at the top of this article, I had to go big with my choice of outfit for the next two days. This was my first time at the Olympics after all.

Much to the delight of my partner (!), I opted for a full Union Jack suit to leave absolutely no one guessing who I would be cheering on at these Games. It's fair to say it went down well with the fans outside the stadium.

As soon as we arrived, I had



Watching athletes compete in Olympics is priceless

I FINALLY FULFILLED MY DREAM

Team France football team celebrate on stage at the Champions Park at Trocadero. AFP

OLYMPICS IN NUMBERS

9.5m tickets sold for the Olympic Games, with spectators from 222 different countries

450,000 spectators attended the Beach Volleyball at the foot of the Eiffel Tower

1m people took to the streets of Paris for the men's and women's road cycling events

743,000 spectators on July 30 alone

66,000 spectators for a women's rugby 7s match, a new attendance world record

11,804 athletes at peak occupancy on August 3

2.4 billion views on Paris 2024 social platforms

On gulfnews.com
How Paris Olympics became the hub for wedding proposals

400,000 hot dogs sold at competition venues, including 100,000 vegetarian dogs

4,000 pastries, 600 baguettes and 3,000 muffins served every day

150 hairdresser and manicure appointments every day



Thomas Wragg in front of the Velodrome National de Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines.



people from France, Mauritius and Great Britain all asking for photos with me. They either loved the suit or wondered why there was a stupid man wearing something like that when there was an excessive heat warning in place!

Magical

But it was all part of the fun of the Games. People dress up, celebrate their team's colours and cheer their athletes on wildly. This is exactly why I wanted to be a part of it.

An evening of world-class sport followed, with Great Britain managing to secure medals in the men's and women's 4x400m relay and Georgia Bell winning a superb bronze in the 1500m. It was magical to be a part of and nearly bought a tear to my eye when the Great British

athletes did their laps of honours merely ten metres away from our seats.

It was also amazing to see how much love the French athletes got at a home Games. The amount of noise inside the Stade de France was nothing short of tremendous — it's giving me goosebumps just thinking about it once again.

At a time when France, like many places in Europe, is suffering from much division, these Games have allowed a short period of reflection and shown how powerful a unified country can be. Long may that continue.

Our flying visit to Paris continued the next day with a trip to the Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines Velodrome for the final day of cycling.

The Union Jack suit, despite being a tad smelly, made a second appearance and was once again a star attraction with fans, volunteers and BBC Sport, who were keen to take a photo of the wally dressed inappropriately for the heatwave that Paris was enduring.

The Olympic Games, aside from football, is also the only time you'll catch me shouting at my TV screen urging people over the finish line, over the high jump bar or a safe passage through a danger at every turn mountain bike track.

Uncomfortable experience

The BBC Sport reporter told me I would melt inside the Velodrome, which had seen temperatures soar and records tumble during the Games. She wasn't wrong, it was an uncomfortable experience, but it certainly didn't take away the fun from showing my support of Team GB. It was another electric ses-

sion of sporting action, but entirely different to what I had seen the night before in the Stade de France. There I witnessed the true glories that sport can offer, while the Velodrome showed the sheer brutality and heartbreak of competition.

Three Team GB athletes were all involved in heavy crashes on the track to knock them out of medal contention, bringing a disappointing end to four years of intense training. But like any great athlete, they rose back to their feet, took the applause of the crowd and will no doubt be looking to put those wrongs right in LA in 2028.

As Rocky Balboa famously said: "It ain't about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward."

And that's what makes live sport so enthralling. You are seconds, inches or moments away from despair of glory.

Paris 2024, you've been a blast. My first Olympic Games was everything I could have asked for and more. Thanks for the memories.

Al Wasl's Saleh Best Emirati Player

ABU DHABI
Gulf News Report

Ali Saleh of Al Wasl won the Golden Ball for the 2023-24 UAE Pro League season during a glittering ceremony at the Emirates Palace Mandarin Oriental in Abu Dhabi. The 22-year-old who played a key role in Al Wasl's triumph in UAE Pro League and President's Cup win last season emerged the winner ahead of his teammate Fabio De Lima and Yahya Al Ghassani from Shabab Al Ahli.

The event was attended by Abdulla Naser Al Jneibi, Chairman of UAE Pro League, along with board members, representatives from sponsoring institutions, clubs, and an elite line-up of sports and media personalities.

Al Jneibi, said that this annual celebration has become a highly anticipated event in every professional football season, serving as a driving force for creativity in UAE football.

Al Jneibi said: "Today, we gather at the UAE Pro League Awards Ceremony for the 2023-2024 season, a season filled with remarkable successes and cherished memories in the journey of UAE football. This brilliance in the realm of creativity would not have been possible without the boundless contributions and generous support from our wise leadership, which has been our weapon in facing challenges and driving us toward achieving our strategic goals."



Graham Thorpe 'Thorpe took his own life'

LONDON

Graham Thorpe's wife Amanda has revealed the former England cricketer took his own life after battling depression and anxiety for several years.

Aged just 55, Thorpe's death in August plunged the cricket world into mourning for the popular star. He enjoyed an impressive England career as an elegant batsman between 1993 and 2005, before spending 12 years in various coaching roles.

Amanda Thorpe has now revealed in an interview with *The Times* that the former Surrey player attempted suicide two years ago before taking his own life earlier this month. "Despite having a wife and two daughters whom he loved and who loved him, he did not get better. He was so unwell in recent times and he really did believe that we would be better off without him and we are devastated that he acted on that and took his own life," Amanda Thorpe said. — AFP



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Any person objecting to this change of name should make such objection in writing, no more than fourteen (14) days from the date of publication of this notice to the following:
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Email: info@dda.gov.ae

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M/s. (SPARKMINK MEDIA FZ-LLC), (License No: 94401) located at SD2-64 BLDG 8 DUBAI MEDIA CITY P. O. Box 478852, Dubai, UAE, licensed with the Dubai Development Authority wishes to announce its decision taken via board resolution passed at its Board meeting held on July 1 2024 regarding closing down and dissolution of "M/s. Sparkmink Media FZ-LLC"

Accordingly, any interested party who has a claim against the Company is hereby requested to submit its outstanding claims within 45 days of notice by registered post or contact:

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Company Name (SPARKMINK MEDIA FZ LLC),
P. O. Box 478852, Dubai, U.A.E
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Email: info@sparkmink.com

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Borderlands (UAE cinemas)

Get ready for a bumpy ride with *Borderlands*, a film adaptation of the beloved video game series. Starring Cate Blanchett as the cunning treasure hunter, Lilith, and Kevin Hart as the motley crew member, Roland, this action-packed adventure — which opened to mixed reviews — takes you to a chaotic future where they seek a legendary vault. With high-octane action sequences, sharp humour, and imaginative world-building, *Borderlands* could spell escapist fun.

TOP 10 FILMS, SHOWS TO WATCH THIS WEEK

Whether you're in the mood for heart-pounding action or powerful drama, this week's selection has something for everyone

By **Manjusha Radhakrishnan**, Entertainment Editor



Deadpool & Wolverine (UAE cinemas)

For a blend of irreverent humour and high-octane action, don't miss *Deadpool & Wolverine*. Ryan Reynolds reprises his role as Wade Wilson/Deadpool, and Hugh Jackman returns as Logan/Wolverine in this exciting crossover event. The film combines Deadpool's sharp wit and meta humour with Wolverine's intense action and complex character development, offering fans a thrilling and hilarious superhero experience like no other.



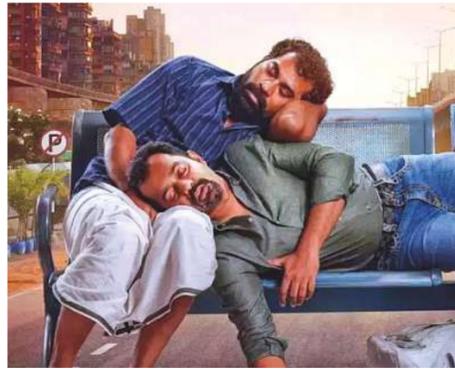
Minmini (UAE cinemas)

This Tamil-language film, starring Parveen Kishore, Gaurav Kaalai, and Esther Anil, is a coming-of-age drama about those grappling with survivors' guilt. Directed by Halitha Shameem, this movie is ambitious. Powered by compelling performances, the film was shot over eight years to capture the real-time growth of the actors as it chronicles their journey from high school to adulthood.



The Instigators (Apple TV+)

Matt Damon and Casey Affleck play two ageing thieves, Rory and Cobby, who attempt an ambitious robbery. When things go wrong, they find themselves on the run with Rory's therapist (Hong Chau) as their hostage. This heist comedy, directed by Doug Liman of *Edge of Tomorrow* fame, also boasts a great supporting cast. If you're in the mood for a wacky heist thriller with a great-looking cast and smart one-liners, this is the one.



Photos: IMDb, Netflix, Apple TV+, Prime Video

Adigos Amigos (UAE cinemas)

Starring Asif Ali and Soubin Shahir, two of Malayalam cinema's versatile actors, *Adigos Amigo* is an engaging dramedy. The film unfolds at a bustling bus stand, where the lives of two men from opposite social backgrounds collide. Their friendship begins when the wealthy man offers food, drinks, and cash to the financially pressed individual, leading to humorous encounters and unexpected adventures.



Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba (Netflix)

Starring Taapsee Pannu, Vikrant Massey, and Sunny Kaushal, this romantic thriller is about an unconventional couple wanted by the police for murder. It's a sequel to the 2021 thriller which was all shades grey. If the original dealt with Massey and Pannu as a married pair who would go to great lengths to be together, the second instalment sees them on the run from the law enforcement agencies. Pannu and Massey are delectable in this wicked comedy.



It Ends With Us (UAE cinemas)

Experience the emotional depth and powerful storytelling of *It Ends With Us*, based on Colleen Hoover's best-selling novel. Starring Blake Lively as Lily Bloom, the film explores the complexities of love, resilience, and personal growth as Lily navigates a turbulent relationship and life-changing decisions. With heartfelt performances and a compelling narrative, this film will resonate deeply and leave a lasting impression.



A Good Girl's Guide to Murder (Netflix)

Based on the best-selling novel by Holly Jackson, this six-episode series follows high school student and amateur detective Andie, played by Emma Mackey, who reopens a high-profile missing person case from her small town. What starts as a school project spirals into a dangerous investigation. It's like a modern version of the *Nancy Drew* series with its blend of suspense, twists, and intriguing characters. The series handles grim subjects like rape and drug culture without making them exploitative.



Twisters (UAE cinemas)

This thrilling stand-alone sequel to the iconic disaster film, *Twister*, features Glenn Powell and Daisy Edgar-Jones as storm chasers who once again confront the most dangerous tornadoes ever recorded and investigate an outbreak in Oklahoma. With stormy scenes and a story that mixes intense drama with human perseverance, *Twisters* is a must-watch for adrenaline junkies and fans of natural disaster flicks. Critics' reviews have mostly been positive for this one.



Chandu Champion (Prime Video)

With the Olympics still on our minds, there's no better time to watch a movie made on the life and times of a paralympics gold medalist from India. Starring Kartik Aaryan, this Kabir Khan directorial is a quintessential underdog tale about India's obscure, but heroic real-life champion, Murlikant Petkar. Good performances and compelling storytelling makes this film a good one-time watch. Be warned, it's a predictable biopic, but it's a well-made film.



Miley Cyrus becomes youngest artist to receive Disney Legend award

At the D23 Expo held in Anaheim on Sunday night, Miley Cyrus was celebrated as the youngest-ever Disney Legend, a prestigious accolade reserved for individuals who have made a profound impact on the Disney legacy.

This recognition marks a significant milestone in Cyrus's illustrious career, which began with her role as Hannah Montana.

The ceremony featured a memorable introduction by Lainey Wilson, who performed a vibrant rendition of the *Hannah Montana* hit, *The Best of Both Worlds*.

Following the performance, Wilson lauded the 31-year-old Cyrus for her bravery and authenticity, stating, "Miley, I want to thank you for never being afraid to step outside the box, always staying true to yourself," *Variety* reported.

Miley shares a secret

During her acceptance speech, Cyrus spoke candidly about the fears and challenges that come with success.

"I'm gonna let everybody get on a little Disney Legend secret. I'm the one that tells you what you're not

supposed to know. And what I want to say, is that legends get scared, too. I'm scared right now, but the difference is we do it anyway, and all of you can do that every single day. It's legendary to be afraid and do it anyway. There is no such thing as failure when you try," she said.

Reflecting on her Disney journey, Cyrus humorously recalled the company's decision to hire her back in 2005 as part of its efforts to rejuvenate the brand. "In 2005, Disney was on a mission to rebuild the company. That's why they hired Bob Iger, and me," she joked.

She expressed her pride in her role as Hannah Montana, dedicating the award to the character and her devoted fans. "This award is dedicated to Hannah and all of her amazing, loyal fans, and to everyone who has made my dream a reality. To quote the legend herself, 'This is the life,'" she added, referencing the iconic song from the series.

The event honoured others, including costume designer Colleen Atwood, actress Angela Bassett, *Disney Parks* cast member Martha Blanding, and filmmaker James Cameron, among others. —ANI



Celine Dion shares Dubai teen's Olympic song cover on Insta

The global superstar, who made a dazzling stage comeback at the Olympics, is impressed

By **Manjusha Radhakrishnan**
Entertainment Editor

Dubai-based singer Celine Dion has captured the attention of Canadian superstar Celine Dion with her stirring acoustic rendition of Edith Piaf's classic *Hymne à L'Amour*, the very song Dion recently performed at the Olympics opening ceremony.

The queen of power ballads, who returned to the stage for the first time since revealing her battle with Stiff Person Syndrome, reposted a video of the 16-year-old singing Piaf's ballad on her Instagram story to her 8.3 million followers last week.

"Sixteen years after my parents met Celine Dion in Dubai and named their daughter Celine after that encounter, it is now the ultimate honour to have my acoustic cover of the Olympics opening song posted on the global

star's Instagram yesterday," said Matahari in an exclusive interview with *Gulf News*. She described it as one of the most significant milestones in her budding career.

"This is the perfect conclusion of a musical connection that began in 2008 when my mother met Celine Dion in Dubai," she added.

STRING OF ACHIEVEMENTS

This isn't the first time that Matahari's voice and enterprising nature has caught the eye of global superstars.

Earlier this year, Oscar-winner A.R. Rahman was impressed with the young French-Indonesian singer, and she's now recording a song at his Firdaus Studio in Dubai as a part of their programme to encourage young artists to

"This is the perfect conclusion of a musical connection that began in 2008 when my mother met Dion in Dubai."

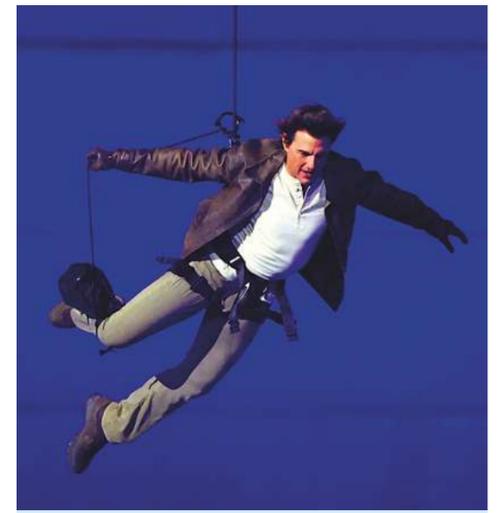
record in a professional environment. She has also performed with singer Shania Twain and opened for Jason Derulo at a concert in Dubai.

Described as the "Indonesian Taylor Swift" — perhaps due to her commanding vocals, waiflike figure, and long hair with blue highlights — her voice was also a dominant one at the Indonesian pavilion at Expo 2020. She has performed privately on the QE2 and has an uncanny ability to sing in Hindi, Arabic, and English.

Matahari is being homeschooled while her parents support her singing ambitions.

"I was around five or six when I first performed on stage ... I feel I was born to sing. This is my true calling," said Matahari in an earlier interview at the *Gulf News* office.

Photos: Devadasan K P/Gulf News, AFP



Tom Cruise drops in and roars out of the Olympics closing

Hollywood star Tom Cruise — in his Ethan Hunt persona — wowed at the Olympics closing ceremony by descending from the top of the Stade de France.

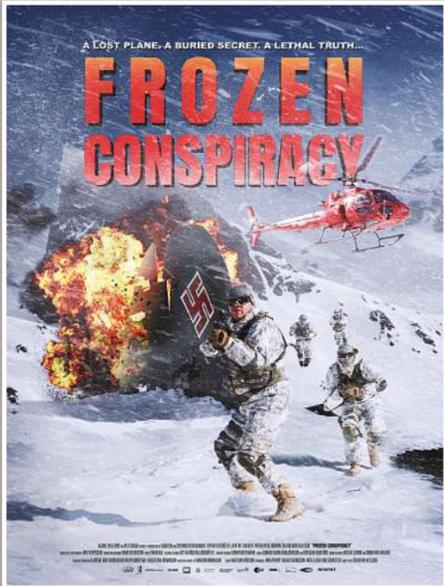
Grammy-winning R&B artist H.E.R. teased the *Mission: Impossible* soundtrack as Cruise dropped 50 metres to the floor, drawing gasps. He shook hands with enthralled athletes, took the Olympic flag from star gymnast Simon Biles, fixed it to the back of a motorcycle, and roared out of the arena.

Cruise drove his bike past the Eiffel Tower in a pre-recorded segment, onto a plane and then skydived over Hollywood Hills. Three circles added to the O's of the iconic Hollywood sign, creating the five Olympic rings.

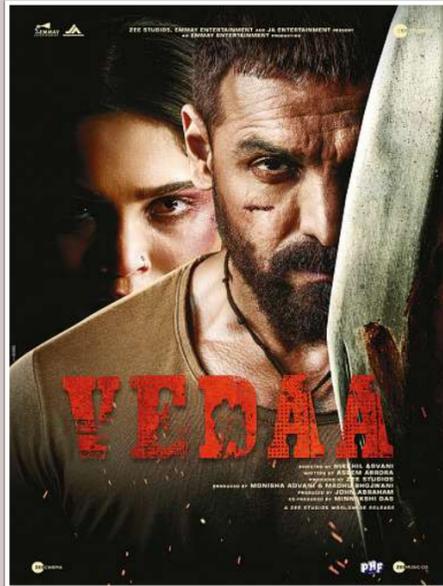
The flag was then passed from US Olympians past and present as it traversed the city before reaching a beach party, where LA music icons, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Billie Eilish, Snoop Dogg and Dr. Dre, performed.

Cruise took to his X handle on Sunday and wrote in the caption, "Thank you, Paris! Now off to LA." He also reposted the video of him carrying the Olympic flag by LA28, the official X handle of Los Angeles Olympics, the next edition due for 2028. — Agencies

Hollywood & Bollywood at cinemas in UAE & GCC



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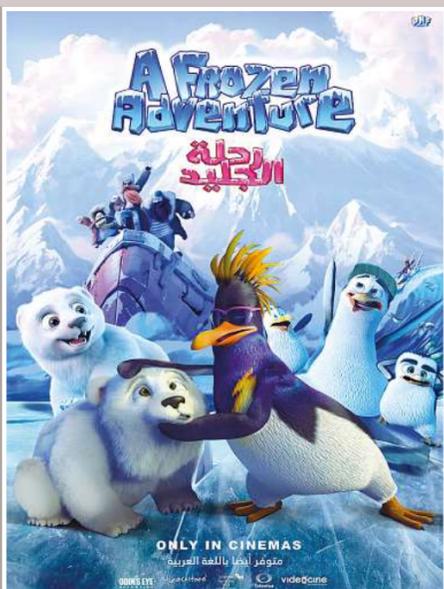
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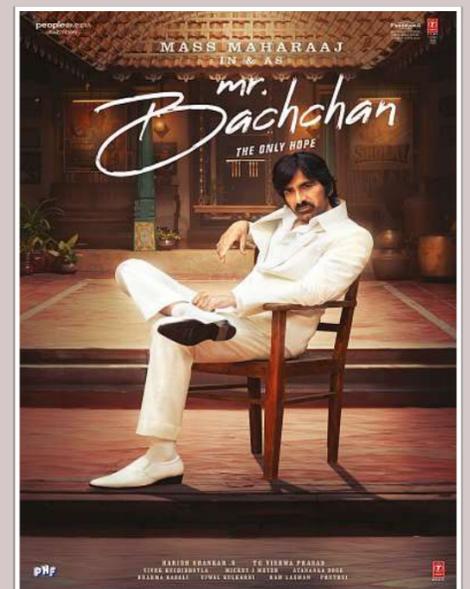
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The image shows two newspaper covers. The top cover is Gulf News, dated Monday, July 22, 2024. The main headline is 'Biden withdraws, endorses Harris as Democratic nominee'. Other headlines include 'Bangladeshi rioters in UAE to face trial' and 'UAE residents urged to uphold principles of co-existence'. The bottom cover is India Today, dated July 15, 2024. The main headline is 'THE HITMEN' with a sub-headline 'THE INSPIRING STORY OF HOW INDIA CAPTAIN ROHIT SHARMA AND HIS TALENTED TEAM BECAME THE T20 WORLD CHAMPIONS'. Other headlines include 'BJP-RSS RELATIONS WHY THEY ARE STRAINED' and 'RAIL SAFETY WHAT'S DELAYING KAVACH'.

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