

Olympic open water training in polluted Seine scrapped: organisers
 Paris Olympics organisers cancel open water swimming training due to elevated bacterial levels | P16

WORLD 8 Nobel winner Yunus says ready to head Bangladesh 'interim government'

THE DAILY tribune



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HM King receives new Italy, Qatar ambassadors

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa received the credentials of two new ambassadors to the Kingdom of Bahrain in a ceremony held at Al Sakhir Palace yesterday.

His Majesty received the credentials of Andrea Catalano, Ambassador of the Italian Republic, and Sultan Ali Yousef Mohammed Al Khater, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Qatar.

HM the King commended the strong bilateral relations between Bahrain and the two countries. He wished the ambassadors success in performing their diplomatic missions.

The ambassadors conveyed greetings and appreciation from their countries' leaderships, along with wishes

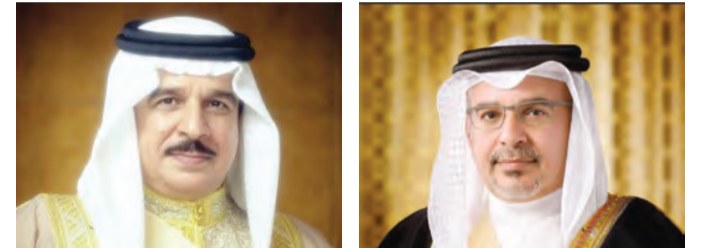


HM the King with H.E. Italian Ambassador Andrea Catalano and H.E. Qatari Ambassador Sultan Ali Yousef Mohammed Al Khater of further development and prosperity for Bahrain and its people.

His Highness Shaikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Personal Representative of His Majesty the King; His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Representative of His Majesty the King for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs; Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Minister of the Royal Court; Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs; and Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Fadhala, Chief of Royal Protocol, attended the ceremony.

The ambassadors arrived separately at Al Sakhir Palace, where they were received by the Chief of Royal Protocol, and the customary ceremonies were conducted.

His Majesty congratulated by HRH Prince Salman



HM the King

HRH Prince Salman

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His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, congratulated His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa on the occasion of Bahrain winning the gold medal in the women's 3,000m steeplechase race at the Paris 2024 Olympics.

His Royal Highness hailed the directives of HM the King.



Takaful International reports strong Q2 and H1 profits

P7



NBB posts 14% rise in H1 profit

P7

Royal praise

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His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday congratulated HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS), Chairman of the General Sports Authority (GSA), and President of the Bahrain Olympic Committee; and His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, His Majesty the King's Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, on Bahrain's historic achievement.

Bahrain wins Olympic gold!

Winfred Yavi reigns supreme in women's 3,000m steeplechase final

Double joy as track star sets new Games record in style

Paris

Bahrain's Winfred Yavi clinched the women's Olympic 3,000m steeplechase title in Paris yesterday, setting an Olympic record with a time of 8:52.76. This outstanding performance not only earned Yavi the gold medal but also marked a significant milestone for Bahrain athletics.

The women's 3,000m steeplechase final was a showcase of global athletic talent, with competitors achieving per-

sonal bests, national, and area records.

The event highlighted the depth of skill and dedication present in the international athletics community.

Yavi's victory not only brought pride to Bahrain but also solidified the nation's reputation as a growing powerhouse in the world of athletics.

Her record-breaking performance is a testament to her exceptional talent and determination, setting a new standard for future athletes.

Fierce

The competition was fierce, with Yavi narrowly defeating Uganda's defending champion,

Peruth Chemutai, who claimed silver with a national record of 8:53.34.

Kenya's Faith Cherotich completed the podium, securing bronze with a personal best time of 8:55.15.

France's Alice Finot achieved an Area Record with her time of 8:58.67, finishing in fourth place.

Ethiopia's Sembo Almayeu followed with a season-best performance of 9:00.83, taking fifth.

The race also saw impressive displays from Kenya's Beatrice Chepkoech and Great Britain's Elizabeth Bird, who recorded times of 9:04.24 and 9:04.35, respectively.



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Focus on energy sector development



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, presided over the 30th meeting of the Supreme Council for Energy and Natural Resources. The session focused on assessing the progress of the National Energy Strategy and key sector initiatives. The committee reviewed the current status of the Bapco Refinery Expansion Project, alongside updates on other critical projects within the oil and gas sectors. The discussions emphasised the importance of ongoing developments and their alignment with Bahrain's energy objectives. The committee continues to monitor these projects to ensure they meet the strategic goals set for the country's energy future.

Bahraini shines at nuclear science Olympiad



The Bahraini students, along with their trainers, celebrate their success

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Hassan Majid Aman, a student at Isa Town Secondary Boys School, won a bronze medal at the first International Nuclear Science Olympiad (INSO), held in Clark, Philippines, from 31 July to 6 August. This event was sponsored by

the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Minister of Education, His Excellency Dr Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma, extended his congratulations to the student, noting that this success showcases the talent and creative potential within Bahrain's schools. He also thanked the educators and specialists who prepared

and trained the Bahraini students for the Olympiad, contributing to this accomplishment. Bahrain's involvement in this Olympiad is part of the Ministry of Education's initiatives to advance students' scientific skills in various fields of science, aligning with the ministry's developmental goals and sustainable development objectives.

LMRA nets violators

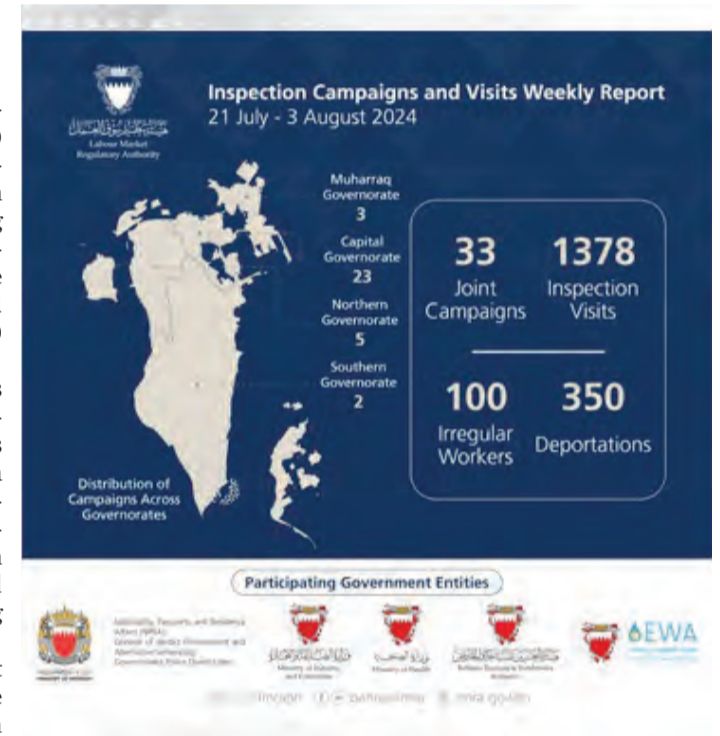
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The Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) announced the implementation of 1,411 inspection campaigns and visits, during the period of 21 July to 3 August 2024, which resulted in the detention of 100 violating and irregular workers, while 350 violators were deported.

The inspection campaigns and visits also resulted in monitoring a number of violations related to the provisions of a number of regulating laws, especially the LMRA and the Residency Laws in the Kingdom of Bahrain, noting that legal measures were taken regarding the observed violations.

The authority pointed out that 1,378 inspection visits were carried out on various shops in all governorates, in addition to 33 joint inspection campaigns, that included 23 campaigns in the Capital Governorate; three campaigns in the Muharraq Governorate; five campaigns in the Northern Governorate, and two campaigns in the Southern Governorate.

The government entities that participated in the campaigns are the Ministry of Interior, represented by the Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs (NPRA), and the Governorate's respective Police Directorate, the General of Verdict



Enforcement and Alternative Sentencing, Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA), Electricity and Water Authority, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

Inspection campaigns

The Authority affirmed the continuation of joint coordination with government agencies to intensify inspection campaigns in all governorates of the Kingdom, and to address any violations or practices that neg-

atively affect the stability and competitiveness of the labour market or harm economic and social security of the Kingdom.

The LMRA renewed its call on all members of the society to support the efforts of government agencies in addressing illegal labour practices, by reporting violations via the electronic form on the authority's website www.lmra.gov.bh or by calling the authority's call centre on 17506055 or via the government's Suggestions and Complaints System (Tawasul).

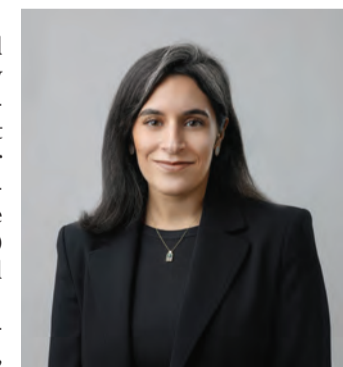
BTEA hails successful Summer Toy Festival

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The Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) announced the successful conclusion of the first edition of the Bahrain Summer Toy Festival 2024 at the Exhibitions World Bahrain, where it attracted more than 97,000 visitors from the Kingdom and abroad.

On this occasion, Her Excellency Ms. Dana Osama Al Saad, Deputy CEO for Resources and Projects at the BTEA, stated: "We are pleased to announce the conclusion of the first edition of the Bahrain Summer Toy Festival, which witnessed remarkable success due to the joint efforts between the concerned government authorities and private sector institutions, where these collaborative efforts had a positive impact on the festival's success in its inaugural edition."

Ms. Al Saad expressed ap-



H.E. Dana Osama Al Saad

preciation to Al Dana Amphitheatre, Spacetoon, Exhibition World Bahrain, and the National Bank of Bahrain for their joint and constructive efforts, which resulted in an exceptional summer entertainment festival.

She affirmed that this success contributed to the stimulation of tourism activity throughout the Kingdom and provided tangible support to hotels and the

hospitality sector.

She also expressed her aspiration to make the festival an annual event in cooperation with all partners, in alignment with the plans to develop the tourism sector and achieve the goals of the Tourism Strategy 2022-2026, with the aim of diversifying the tourism product and positioning the Kingdom as a preferred tourist destination at the regional level.

The Bahrain Summer Toy Festival contributed to boosting the tourism movement in the 2024 summer season, resulting in a significant increase in the occupancy rates of hotels and hospitality establishments.

It also increased various tourism and commercial activity in the Zallaq and Sakhir areas, enhancing the occupancy levels and commercial activity of resorts, hotels, restaurants, cafes and various shops located in the vicinity.

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The Ministry of Labour extends its gratitude and appreciation to companies that have employed Bahraini nationals during (January 1 - June 30, 2024) as part of the priorities and objectives of the Economic Recovery Plan.

The Ministry also extends its gratitude to the following companies that have obtained the highest Bahraini employment rate for the first half of 2024 (January 1 - June 30, 2024)



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A comprehensive list of the companies and organizations supporting national employment can be viewed by visiting the website www.mol.gov.bh

Takaful International Company B.S.C.

INTERIM CONDENSED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

AS AT 30th JUNE 2024



BAHRAIN TAKAFUL

(Bahraini Dinars)

INTERIM CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION		
As at 30 June 2024 (Reviewed)		
	30 June 2024 (Reviewed)	31 December 2023* (Audited)
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,699,459	3,427,531
Term deposits	5,899,769	5,899,742
Financial assets at amortised cost	-	804,508
Financial assets at fair value	25,674,952	22,085,886
Retakaful arrangement assets	1,176,495	2,947,026
Other receivables, accrued income and prepayments	6,095,920	4,913,328
Property and equipment	161,016	115,030
Intangible assets	544,682	569,952
Right of use asset	427,109	465,735
Investment in an associate	225,300	235,668
Statutory deposit	125,000	125,000
TOTAL ASSETS	42,029,702	41,589,406
LIABILITIES, PARTICIPANTS' FUNDS AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Takaful arrangement liabilities	24,482,394	24,434,419
Retakaful arrangement liabilities	762,579	262,316
Payables and accrued liabilities	3,592,680	3,502,325
Ijara liabilities	465,609	502,626
TOTAL LIABILITIES	29,303,262	28,701,686
Participants' funds		
Surplus in participants' funds	1,059,433	856,864
Investments fair value reserve	(205,622)	(55,517)
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS' FUNDS	853,811	801,347
Shareholders' equity		
Share capital	8,500,000	8,500,000
Treasury shares	(2,087)	(2,087)
Statutory reserve	1,057,598	1,057,598
General reserve	200,000	200,000
Retained earnings	2,249,905	2,332,705
Investments fair value reserve	(132,787)	(1,843)
TOTAL SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY	11,872,629	12,086,373
TOTAL LIABILITIES, PARTICIPANTS' FUNDS AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY	42,029,702	41,589,406

INTERIM CONDENSED STATEMENT OF INCOME						
For the six-month period ended 30 June 2024 (Reviewed)						
	Shareholders'		Participants'		Total	
	30 June 2024 (Reviewed)	2023* (Reviewed)	30 June 2024 (Reviewed)	2023* (Reviewed)	30 June 2024 (Reviewed)	2023* (Reviewed)
Recognised takaful contributions	-	-	12,314,125	12,282,398	12,314,125	12,282,398
Recognised takaful costs	-	-	(9,904,861)	(9,740,145)	(9,904,861)	(9,740,145)
Retakaful net results	-	-	(2,254,636)	(2,098,642)	(2,254,636)	(2,098,642)
Takaful participants' gross margin	-	-	154,628	443,611	154,628	443,611
Participants' profit income on investment	-	-	535,650	375,768	535,650	375,768
Participants' other investment income net	-	-	(6,386)	36,511	(6,386)	36,511
ECL gain / (loss) on financial assets	-	-	6,126	(5,212)	6,126	(5,212)
Mudarib share expense	-	-	(133,848)	(93,569)	(133,848)	(93,569)
Amortization of deferred cost (related to provision of takaful arrangements)	-	-	(390,898)	(559,293)	(390,898)	(559,293)
Amortization of deferred profit (related to provision of retakaful arrangements)	-	-	90,548	82,156	90,548	82,156
Other participants' expenses	-	-	(53,251)	(57,367)	(53,251)	(57,367)
Net participant's surplus	-	-	202,569	222,605	202,569	222,605
Wakala fee income	2,373,911	2,034,778	-	-	2,373,911	2,034,778
Shareholders profit income on investment	241,877	161,444	-	-	241,877	161,444
Shareholders other investment income net	(11,818)	151,414	-	-	(11,818)	151,414
ECL loss on financial assets	(8,015)	(4,270)	-	-	(8,015)	(4,270)
Mudarib share income	133,848	93,569	-	-	133,848	93,569
Share of result of an associate	16,291	20,400	-	-	16,291	20,400
Other income	4,064	13,375	-	-	4,064	13,375
Total shareholders' income	2,750,158	2,470,710	-	-	2,750,158	2,470,710
General and administrative expenses	(1,168,530)	(1,056,656)	-	-	(1,168,530)	(1,056,656)
Other fees, commission and related expenses	(836,662)	(802,027)	-	-	(836,662)	(802,027)
Other expenses	(190,388)	(183,597)	-	-	(190,388)	(183,597)
Total shareholders' expense	(2,195,580)	(2,042,280)	-	-	(2,195,580)	(2,042,280)
Net profit for the period	554,578	428,430	202,569	222,605	757,147	651,035
Earnings per share (filis)	6.52	5.04	-	-	-	-

INTERIM CONDENSED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY							
For the six-month period ended 30 June 2024 (Reviewed)							
	Share capital	Statutory reserve	General reserve	Retained earnings	Investments fair value reserve	Treasury shares	Total owners' equity
Balance at 1 January 2024	8,500,000	1,057,598	200,000	2,332,705	(1,843)	(2,087)	12,086,373
Profit for the period	-	-	-	554,578	-	-	554,578
Other comprehensive loss	-	-	-	(130,944)	-	-	(130,944)
Dividend for the year 2023	-	-	-	(637,378)	-	-	(637,378)
Balance as at 30 June 2024	8,500,000	1,057,598	200,000	2,249,905	(132,787)	(2,087)	11,872,629
Balance at 1 January 2023	8,500,000	963,869	200,000	1,884,720	974	(2,087)	11,547,476
Impact of initial application of FAS 30	-	-	-	29,345	(34,848)	-	(5,503)
Restated balance as at 1 January 2023	8,500,000	963,869	200,000	1,914,065	(33,874)	(2,087)	11,541,973
Profit for the period	-	-	-	428,430	-	-	428,430
Other comprehensive loss	-	-	-	(119,972)	-	-	(119,972)
Dividend for the year 2022	-	-	-	(424,919)	-	-	(424,919)
Balance as at 30 June 2023	8,500,000	963,869	200,000	1,917,576	(153,846)	(2,087)	11,425,512

INTERIM CONDENSED STATEMENT OF INCOME						
For the three-month period ended 30 June 2024 (Reviewed)						
	Shareholders'		Participants'		Total	
	30 June 2024 (Reviewed)	2023* (Reviewed)	30 June 2024 (Reviewed)	2023* (Reviewed)	30 June 2024 (Reviewed)	2023* (Reviewed)
Recognised takaful contributions	-	-	6,424,740	5,847,804	6,424,740	5,847,804
Recognised takaful costs	-	-	(5,195,211)	(4,416,432)	(5,195,211)	(4,416,432)
Retakaful net results	-	-	(1,215,525)	(1,250,248)	(1,215,525)	(1,250,248)
Takaful participants' gross margin	-	-	14,004	181,124	14,004	181,124
Participants' profit income on investment	-	-	272,957	190,825	272,957	190,825
Participants' other investment income net	-	-	(18,356)	54,185	(18,356)	54,185
ECL gain on financial assets	-	-	156	465	156	465
Mudarib share expense	-	-	(63,690)	(49,206)	(63,690)	(49,206)
Amortization of deferred cost (related to provision of takaful arrangements)	-	-	(180,538)	(244,012)	(180,538)	(244,012)
Amortization of deferred profit (related to provision of retakaful arrangements)	-	-	36,506	21,036	36,506	21,036
Other participants' expenses	-	-	(11,674)	(29,234)	(11,674)	(29,234)
Net participant's surplus	-	-	49,365	125,183	49,365	125,183
Wakala fee income	1,045,260	795,121	-	-	1,045,260	795,121
Shareholders profit income on investment	113,386	72,698	-	-	113,386	72,698
Shareholders other investment income net	42,045	212,114	-	-	42,045	212,114
ECL loss on financial assets	(7,443)	(2,804)	-	-	(7,443)	(2,804)
Mudarib share income	63,690	49,206	-	-	63,690	49,206
Share of result of an associate	9,460	11,619	-	-	9,460	11,619
Other income	4,064	8,031	-	-	4,064	8,031
Total shareholders' income	1,270,462	1,145,985	-	-	1,270,462	1,145,985
General and administrative expenses	(647,833)	(542,462)	-	-	(647,833)	(542,462)
Other fees, commission and related expenses	(373,163)	(512,914)	-	-	(373,163)	(512,914)
Other expenses	(87,875)	(47,726)	-	-	(87,875)	(47,726)
Total shareholders' expense	(1,108,871)	(1,103,102)	-	-	(1,108,871)	(1,103,102)
Net profit for the period	161,591	42,883	49,365	125,183	210,956	168,066
Earnings per share (filis)	1.90	0.50	-	-	-	-

INTERIM CONDENSED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN PARTICIPANTS' FUND						
For the six-month period ended 30 June 2024 (Reviewed)						
	Surplus in participants' fund		Investments fair value reserve		Total	
	General takaful	Family takaful	General takaful	Family takaful		
Balance as at 1 January 2024	676,063	180,801	(46,287)	(9,230)	801,347	
Other comprehensive loss	-	-	(137,261)	(12,844)	(150,105)	
Surplus for the period	164,466	38,103	-	-	202,569	
Balance as at 30 June 2024	840,529	218,904	(183,548)	(22,074)	853,811	
Balance at 1 January 2023	284,051	(15,548)	(84,210)	(2,523)	181,770	
Impact of initial application of FAS 30	12,118	859	(15,011)	(1,121)	(3,155)	
Restated balance as at 1 January 2023	296,169	(14,689)	(99,221)	(3,644)	178,615	
Unrealised fair value (loss) / gains on investments	-	-	(67,649)	4,408	(63,241)	
Surplus / (deficit) for the period	356,988	(134,383)	-	-	222,605	
Balance as at 30 June 2023	653,157	(149,072)	(166,870)	764	337,979	

INTERIM CONDENSED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS			
For the six-month period ended 30 June 2024 (Reviewed)			
	2024 (Reviewed)		2023* (Restated)
	2024	2023*	2023*
Net cash generated from operating activities	1,223,814	-	1,644,203
Net cash used in investing activities	(2,277,233)	-	(1,964,442)
Net cash used in financing activities	(674,395)	-	(410,249)
NET DECREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	(1,727,814)	-	(730,488)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	3,427,273	-	8,087,048
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF THE PERIOD	1,699,459	-	7,356,560
COMPRISING:			
CASH AND BALANCES WITH BANKS			
Cash and balance in current accounts	1,699,459	-	3,856,560
Term deposits with original maturity of three months or less	-	-	3,500,000
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	1,699,459	-	7,356,560
Cash and balances with banks as per interim statement of financial position	1,699,459	-	7,356,560

INTERIM CONDENSED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME						
For the six month period ended 30 June 2024 (Reviewed)						
	Six month ended 30 June 2024 (Reviewed)			Six month ended 30 June 2023 (Reviewed)		
	Shareholders	Participants'	Total	Shareholders	Participants'	Total
Net profit and surplus for the period	554,578	202,569	757,147	428,430	222,605	651,035
FAS 30 Transition impact	-	-	-	(5,503)	(3,155)	(8,658)
A. Items that will not be reclassified to interim condensed statement of income in subsequent periods						
Net changes in fair value of investments measured at FVOCI - equity instruments	(38,570)	-	(38,570)	(17,491)	-	(17,491)
B. Items that are or may be reclassified to interim condensed statement of income in subsequent periods						
Net changes in fair value of investments measured at FVOCI - debt instruments	(100,891)	(142,477)	(243,368)	(98,211)	(58,029)	(156,240)
Net changes in allowance for expected credit losses of investments measured at FVOCI - debt instruments	8,517	(7,628)	889	(4,270)	(5,212)	(9,482)
Total other comprehensive loss	(130,944)	(150,105)	(281,049)	(119,972)	(63,241)	(183,213)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD	423,634	52,464	476,098	302,955	156,209	459,164

INTERIM CONDENSED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME						
For the three month period ended 30 June 2024 (Reviewed)						
	Three month ended 30 June 2024 (Reviewed)			Three month ended 30 June 2023 (Reviewed)		
	Shareholders	Participants'	Total	Shareholders	Participants'	Total
Net profit and surplus for the period	161,591	49,365	210,956	42,883	125,183	168,066
FAS 30 Transition impact	-	-	-	-	-	-
A. Items that will not be reclassified to interim condensed statement of income in subsequent periods						
Net changes in fair value of investments measured at FVOCI - equity instruments	(32,546)	-	(32,546)	(33,596)	-	(33,596)
B. Items that are or may be reclassified to interim condensed statement of income in subsequent periods						
Net changes in fair value of investments measured at FVOCI - debt instruments	(58,716)	(94,109)	(152,825)	(83,511)	(14,417)	(97,928)
Net changes in allowance for expected credit losses of investments measured at FVOCI - debt instruments	8,844	(13,353)	(4,509)	(4,270)	(5,212)	(9,482)
Total other comprehensive loss	(82,418)	(107,462)	(189,880)	(121,377)	(19,629)	(141,006)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD	79,173	(58,097)	21,076	(78,494)	105,554	

HRH Prince Salman appoints new directors

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, has issued a series of decrees appointing new directors across several

key government ministries and agencies.

Saud Ahmed Abdulaziz Al Khayat was appointed as Director of Information and Real Estate Development, while Mohammed Ahmed Abdulrahman Bukhmas was named

as Director of Accounts and Customer Relations in the National Bureau for Revenue (NBR).

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister also appointed three new directors to the Ministry of Works:

Mariam Yaqoub Juma Saffar as Director of Building Projects Management, Hamad Ibrahim Mohammed Bado as Director of Roads Projects and Maintenance Management, and Ammar Abdullah Khalil Al Safar as Director of

Roads Planning and Design Management.

Abdullah Nabeel Mohammed Al Matawa'a was appointed as Director of the Visas and Residence Administration at the Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs (NPRA).



HRH Prince Salman

No proof, no closure

Bahraini woman's search for missing twin ends with court rejection

TDT | Manama

A Bahraini woman's legal battle to uncover the fate of her missing twin, born 20 years ago at Salmaniya Medical Complex, has ended in disappointment.

The Court of Appeals upheld a lower court's decision to dismiss her claim, citing lack of evidence and the passage of time.

The woman, who had only received her firstborn child after the delivery, alleged that she had given birth to twins but never received any documentation regarding the second child. She claimed that she had no knowledge of the child's fate, whether alive or deceased.

In her lawsuit, she demanded that the medical complex provide a report on the birth, and issue a birth certificate or a death certificate for the missing child.

The lower court dismissed the claim, stating that it lacked specific requests.

The woman appealed the decision, leading the Court of



The Court of Appeals stated that the lack of medical records, coupled with the woman's failure to provide evidence of a twin pregnancy, and her delay in pursuing the matter for over two decades, ultimately weakened her case.

Appeal to request information from Salmaniya Medical Complex.

The hospital confirmed that no medical or electronic records existed for the



Image used for illustrative purposes only

woman.

The Court of Appeals, in its ruling, stated that the lack of medical records, coupled with the woman's failure to provide evidence of a twin pregnancy, and her delay in pursuing the matter for over two decades, ultimately weakened her case.

Birth certificate

The court also emphasised

that the birth certificate of her existing child, while indicating Salmaniya Medical Complex as the place of birth, did not automatically prove the existence of a second child.

The court ultimately dismissed the appeal, leaving the woman with no answers about the fate of her missing twin.

Rain-affected residents receive compensation

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Works has begun distributing financial compensation to residents affected by the heavy rains that fell in April.

Several citizens confirmed that they received compensation payments deposited into their bank accounts earlier today.

MP Hanan Fardan lauded the efforts of both the Ministry of Works and the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture in processing the compensation payments.

"On behalf of the residents of Al Lawzi and all those affected by the rain, I extend our deepest gratitude to His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for his direc-



MP Hanan Fardan and Zainab Al Dirazi speak about the compensation

tives to the concerned ministries to ensure compensation for all those affected by the heavy rainfall," stated MP Fardan.

She emphasised that her office had been closely monitoring the situation and had been in constant communication with the Minister of Works, Eng. Ibrahim bin Hassan Al Hawaj, particularly given that a significant portion of the affected population are low-income individuals who urgently require compensation to repair their homes damaged by the rainfall.

Criteria

Fardan explained that the Ministry of Works' damage assessment committee employed several criteria for compensation, including ensuring that the damage was directly caused by the accumulated rainwater.

Al Maraqaeb Park facilities set for major development



H.E. Eng. Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak with MP Dr. Mariam Al-Dhaen

TDT | Manama

Plans are underway to develop Al Maraqaeb Park in Isa Town, featuring advanced facilities to cater to the community's needs.

The park will offer a variety of games and playgrounds suitable for all ages, along with the development of Al Qadi playgrounds.

Cooperation with the private sector is being considered to enhance these facilities for local residents.

This initiative was among the significant issues discussed in a joint coordination meeting between MP Dr. Mariam Al-Dhaen and His Excellency Eng. Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak, Minister of Municipalities and Agriculture Affairs.

The meeting focused on various municipal affairs in the Second District of the Southern Governorate, including the development of the popular market and addressing challenges such as the Al Maqasees Market and rainwater accumulation.

Dr. Al-Dhaen highlighted discussions on establishing a central market for meat and vegetables to serve both district and governorate residents.

Team effort

She emphasised the importance of a coordinated team effort, saying, "It is crucial to integrate the governorate's efforts to support these projects."

The Ministry of Municipalities aims to expand affores-

tation plans in line with Bahrain's carbon neutrality goals.

Dr. Al-Dhaen announced upcoming agricultural training workshops for citizens interested in home gardening, emphasising the importance of choosing suitable tree species for Bahrain's climate.

She stressed the need for enhancing green areas, which will positively impact public health, and highlighted efforts to make the region a "green model piece" on Bahrain's map. Dr. Al-Dhaen also emphasized the importance of integrating environmental awareness and green belt concepts into educational curricula and creating new career paths in the agricultural sector.

Initiative

"The Ministry will provide and distribute vegetable and fruit seedlings for free, assisting citizens and residents in planting and caring for them. This initiative aims to spread environmental awareness and encourage participation in afforestation efforts, contributing to sustainable development in Bahrain," she stated.

She praised Minister Al Mubarak for his commitment to high-level coordination with the legislative authority, which helps meet citizens' aspirations and supports national achievements.

Dr. Al-Dhaen also acknowledged the efforts of the Director General of the Southern Municipality, Eng. Issa Al Buainain, in enhancing and improving municipal services for the Southern Governorate's residents.

IGA achieves countless breakthroughs in first half of 2024

Mohammed Darwish

TDT | Manama

Remarkable strides in technology adoption and IT governance were achieved by the Information & eGovernment Authority (iGA) during the first half of 2024.

According to CEO Mr Mohamed Ali Al Qaed, these advancements align with the developmental objectives cham-

pioned by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

This progress reflects the ongoing directives from the government, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

Under the guidance of Lt-General HE Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior and Chairman of the Ministerial Committee for In-

formation and Communication Technology, Bahrain's digital transformation revealed promising trends.

The number of eServices has now surpassed 700, with 89% of government services digitised, leading to a 75% reduction in government costs and a 68% decrease in transaction processing times.

This progress is a clear indicator of the government's vision

of advancing digital initiatives to provide high-quality services and enhance user satisfaction.

Digital transactions via the national portal, mobile applications, and other channels reached 4 million, with electronic payments exceeding BD374 million. Mobile transactions grew by 20% compared to the same period in 2023, with monthly usage rates exceeding 788,000.

Notably, the "Al-Tajer" app saw a 192% rise in payment transactions, while the "eS-habab" app experienced a 99% increase in average monthly users. The iGA introduced 35 new eServices via the national portal, including printing ID card statements with QR codes, death certificate services, and enhanced functionalities within the "Al-Tajer" app.

Additionally, 12 national sys-

tems were developed, with updates to 124 services, including the second phase of the "Sijilat 3.0" system, offering new features and services.

The "Tawasul" system was updated, directing over 85,000 cases to various government entities with an impressive 98.5% compliance rate.

Furthermore, 81 national initiatives were re-engineered to enhance efficiency.

Condensed Consolidated Interim Financial Information

30 June 2024

NATIONAL BANK OF BAHRAIN GROUP
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Condensed Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2024

(Bahraini Dinar Millions)

	30 June 2024 (reviewed)	31 December 2023 (audited)
Assets		
Cash and balances at central banks	180.6	181.3
Treasury bills	193.4	186.1
Placements with banks and other financial institutions	906.9	1,038.9
Loans and advances	2,702.8	2,535.1
Investment securities	1,231.5	1,155.0
Investment in associates	30.2	26.3
Interest receivable and other assets	144.2	127.6
Property and equipment	70.4	70.3
Goodwill and other intangible assets	51.5	51.9
Total assets	5,511.5	5,372.5
Liabilities		
Due to banks and other financial institutions	603.8	671.0
Borrowings under repurchase agreements	509.5	460.7
Customer deposits	3,635.6	3,504.8
Interest payable and other liabilities	178.5	158.8
Total liabilities	4,927.4	4,795.3
Equity		
Share capital	226.6	226.6
Shares unallocated under share incentive scheme	(0.5)	(0.9)
Share premium	15.1	13.6
Statutory reserve	113.3	113.3
General reserve	32.4	32.4
Other reserves and retained earnings	184.5	180.0
Equity attributable to the shareholders of the Bank	571.4	565.0
Non-controlling interest	12.7	12.2
Total equity	584.1	577.2
Total liabilities and equity	5,511.5	5,372.5

Condensed Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss

For the six months ended 30 June 2024

(Bahraini Dinar Millions)

	Six months ended		Three months ended	
	30 June 2024 (reviewed)	30 June 2023 (reviewed)	30 June 2024 (reviewed)	30 June 2023 (reviewed)
Interest income	151.3	126.3	75.0	64.7
Interest expense	(77.9)	(57.1)	(38.3)	(28.8)
Net interest income	73.4	69.2	36.7	35.9
Other income	30.0	23.6	10.4	6.9
Total operating income	103.4	92.8	47.1	42.8
Staff expenses	26.7	24.3	12.7	12.2
Depreciation, amortisation and equipment expenses	11.4	9.4	5.5	4.9
Other operating expenses	13.6	12.4	6.7	6.7
Total operating expenses	51.7	46.1	24.9	23.8
Operating profit before results of associates, impairment, other provisions and tax	51.7	46.7	22.2	19.0
Share of profits from associates, net	1.0	0.7	0.4	0.3
Loans, placements and securities impairment, net	(5.7)	(4.4)	(3.1)	0.9
Other impairment and provisions, net	0.3	(0.9)	0.1	(1.1)
Profit before tax	47.3	42.1	19.6	19.1
Tax expense	(0.2)	-	(0.2)	-
Profit for the period	47.1	42.1	19.4	19.1
Attributable to:				
Shareholders of the Bank	46.6	40.8	19.1	18.4
Non-controlling interest	0.5	1.3	0.3	0.7
Profit for the period	47.1	42.1	19.4	19.1
Basic and diluted earnings per share	21 fils	18 fils	8 fils	8 fils

Condensed Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the six months ended 30 June 2024

(Bahraini Dinar Millions)

	Six months ended		Three months ended	
	30 June 2024 (reviewed)	30 June 2023 (reviewed)	30 June 2024 (reviewed)	30 June 2023 (reviewed)
Profit for the period	47.1	42.1	19.4	19.1
Other comprehensive income: Items that are or may be reclassified to profit or loss:				
Fair value through other comprehensive income (debt instruments and treasury bills)				
- Net change in fair value	9.2	7.1	1.2	7.5
- Net amount transferred to profit or loss	(9.4)	(6.7)	(1.9)	(1.6)
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss:				
Fair value through other comprehensive income (equity instruments)	5.0	1.6	1.0	3.1
Total other comprehensive income for the period	4.8	2.0	0.3	9.0
Total comprehensive income for the period	51.9	44.1	19.7	28.1
Attributable to:				
Shareholders of the Bank	51.4	42.8	19.4	27.4
Non-controlling interest	0.5	1.3	0.3	0.7
Total comprehensive income for the period	51.9	44.1	19.7	28.1

Condensed Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity

For the six months ended 30 June 2024

(Bahraini Dinar Millions)

2024 (reviewed)	Share capital	Un-allocated shares	Share premium	Statutory reserve	General reserve	Other reserves and retained earnings			Total owners' equity	Non-controlling interest	Total equity
						Fair value reserve	Donation charity reserve	Retained earnings			
Balance at 31 December 2023	226.6	(0.9)	13.6	113.3	32.4	28.5	13.4	138.1	565.0	12.2	577.2
2023 appropriations:											
Cash dividend at 20%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(45.2)	(45.2)	-	(45.2)
Transfer to donations and charity reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.0	(4.0)	-	-	-
Balance after 2023 appropriations	226.6	(0.9)	13.6	113.3	32.4	28.5	17.4	88.9	519.8	12.2	532.0
Employee shares assigned	-	0.4	1.5	-	-	-	-	-	1.9	-	1.9
Comprehensive income for the period:											
Profit for the period	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	46.6	46.6	0.5	47.1
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-	-	4.8	-	-	4.8	-	4.8
Total comprehensive income for the period	-	-	-	-	-	4.8	-	46.6	51.4	0.5	51.9
Utilisation of donation and charity reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1.3)	-	(1.3)	-	(1.3)
Disposal of equity securities	-	-	-	-	-	(0.1)	-	0.1	-	-	-
Other movements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0.4)	(0.4)	-	(0.4)
Balance at 30 June 2024	226.6	(0.5)	15.1	113.3	32.4	33.2	16.1	135.2	571.4	12.7	584.1

Condensed Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity

For the six months ended 30 June 2023

(Bahraini Dinar Millions)

2023 (reviewed)	Share capital	Un-allocated shares	Share premium	Statutory reserve	General reserve	Other reserves and retained earnings			Total owners' equity	Non-controlling interest	Total equity
						Fair value reserve	Donation charity reserve	Retained earnings			
Balance at 31 December 2022	206.0	(1.1)	12.3	103.0	32.4	28.2	13.0	172.1	565.9	10.0	575.9
2022 appropriations:											
Cash dividend at 25%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(51.5)	(51.5)	-	(51.5)
Bonus shares issued at 10%	20.6	(0.1)	-	-	-	-	-	(20.5)	-	-	-
Transfer to donations and charity reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.4	(3.4)	-	-	-
Transfer to statutory reserve	-	-	-	10.3	-	-	-	(10.3)	-	-	-
Balance after 2022 appropriations	226.6	(1.2)	12.3	113.3	32.4	28.2	16.4	86.4	514.4	10.0	524.4
Employee shares assigned	-	0.3	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	1.6	-	1.6
Comprehensive income for the period:											
Profit for the period	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40.8	40.8	1.3	42.1
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-	-	2.0	-	-	2.0	-	2.0
Total comprehensive income for the period	-	-	-	-	-	2.0	-	40.8	42.8	1.3	44.1
Utilisation of donation and charity reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1.6)	-	(1.6)	-	(1.6)
Other movements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.1)	(0.4)
Balance at 30 June 2023	226.6	(0.9)	13.6	113.3	32.4	30.2	14.8	126.9	556.9	11.2	568.1

Condensed Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows

For the six months ended 30 June 2024

(Bahraini Dinar Millions)

	Six months ended	
	30 June 2024 (reviewed)	30 June 2023 (reviewed)
Cash flow from operating activities		
Profit for the period	47.1	42.1
Adjustments for non-cash items:		
Depreciation and amortisation	5.4	4.7
Amortisation of right-of-use leased property	1.0	1.0
Fair value gain of investment properties	(0.9)	-
Loans, placements and securities impairment, net	5.7	4.4
Other impairment and provisions, net	(0.3)	0.9
Share of profits from associates, net	(1.0)	(0.7)
Profit for the period after adjustments	57.0	52.4
Change in operating assets and liabilities:		
Balances with central banks (mandatory cash reserve)	(4.2)	(1.3)
Treasury bills	27.2	21.0
Placements with banks and other financial institutions	(0.2)	0.8
Loans and advances	(176.4)	67.3
Investment securities	(65.4)	(50.6)
Interest receivable and other assets	(8.4)	(11.3)
Due to banks and other financial institutions	(67.2)	67.6
Borrowings under repurchase agreements	48.8	(71.2)
Customer deposits	130.8	33.7
Interest payable and other liabilities	8.5	3.0
Net cash (used in) / from operating activities	(49.5)	111.4
Cash flow from investing activities		
Dividend received from associates	0.1	0.1
Purchase of property and equipment, net	(5.1)	(4.2)
Net cash used in investing activities	(5.0)	(4.1)
Cash flow from financing activities		
Dividends paid	(45.3)	(51.6)
Donations and charities paid	(1.8)	(2.0)
Payment of lease liabilities	(0.9)	(1.0)
Net cash used in financing activities	(48.0)	(54.6)
Net (decrease) / increase in cash and cash equivalents during the period	(102.5)	52.7
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	1,092.9	512.9
Cash and cash equivalents at 30 June	990.4	565.6

The comparatives for the condensed consolidated statement of financial position have been extracted from the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023. The comparatives for the condensed consolidated statements of profit or loss, comprehensive income, changes in equity and cash flows have been extracted from the reviewed condensed consolidated interim financial information for the six months ended 30 June 2023.

Reviewed by KPMG - 6 August 2024

Mrs. Hala Ali Husain Yateem
Chairperson

Mr. Yusuf Abdulla Yusuf Alireza
Vice Chairperson

Mr. Usman Ahmed
Group Chief Executive Officer

NBB posts 14% rise in H1 profit

● The Board of Directors proposed an interim cash dividend of BHD 22.7 million, which represents a 10% per share dividend.

TDI | Manama

National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) has reported a 4% increase in net profit attributable to shareholders reaching BHD 19.1 million (USD 50.7 m) for the second quarter ended 30 June 2024, compared to BHD 18.4 m (USD 48.8 m) in the same period of 2023. The increase is mainly driven by balance sheet growth and, higher gains from investment securities and treasury activities.

Earnings per share at 8 fils (USD 2 cents) is in line with the same period in 2023.

Total comprehensive income attributable to NBB's shareholders decreased by 29% to BHD 19.4 m (USD 51.5 m) compared to BHD 27.4 m (USD 72.7 m) in 2023.



Hala Yateem, Chairperson of NBB



Usman Ahmed, Group CEO of NBB

The decrease is attributable to the negative mark-to-market movements of the equity and bond portfolios.

Year-to-date

NBB has reported a 14% increase in its net profit attributable to the shareholders for the six months ended 30 June 2024, recording BHD 46.6 m (USD 123.6 m) compared to BHD 40.8 m (USD 108.2 m) for the same period of 2023. The increase in

net profit is mainly due to higher net interest income driven by a stronger average balance sheet compared to the first half of 2023, and higher gains from investment securities and treasury activities.

Earnings per share increased to 21 fils (USD 6 cents) for the period compared with 18 fils (USD 5 cents) for the same period in 2023. Total comprehensive income attributable to NBB's shareholders for the period in-

creased by 20% to BHD 51.4 m (USD 136.3 m) compared with 42.8 million (USD 113.5 m) in 2023.

The increase is mainly attributable to the positive mark-to-market movements of the equity portfolio and to a higher consolidated net profit.

Interim dividends

Following the Group's strong performance, the Board of Directors proposed an interim cash dividend of BHD 22.7 million, which represents a 10% per share dividend. The payment is subject to the approval of the regulatory authorities.

On the Group's quarterly performance, Mrs. Hala Yateem, Chairperson of NBB, said: "The strong profitability is supported by a robust balance sheet, with total assets reaching BHD 5.5 billion, a 3% increase from the year-end level. This performance has resulted in an annualised average return on equity of 16.4%, surpassing the 14.7% and 14.2% recorded on 30 June and 31 December 2023 respec-

tively, highlighting NBB's efforts to continually enhance the value it delivers to shareholders. We received our third successive title for the 'Best Retail Bank in Bahrain' at the MEED MENA Banking Excellence Awards. The Bank has also continued its investments in various community, health, educational, and environmental initiatives, resulting in our third regional Euronext award for the 'Middle East's Best Bank for Corporate Responsibility' and consecutive country accolades for 'Best Bank in Bahrain for Corporate Responsibility' and 'Best Bank in Bahrain for ESG. Building on this foundation, NBB is poised for further growth in the remainder of 2024 as we continue to contribute to the progress of the Kingdom's financial sector and reinforce our position as the region's leading bank in corporate responsibility."

Usman Ahmed, Group Chief Executive Officer of NBB, commented: "NBB Group has achieved strong growth in its core business in the first half of 2024, with operating profits of

BHD 51.7 million representing an 11% increase over the same period in 2023. This growth was underpinned by organic expansion of our business across Bahrain, UAE and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and represents the Bank's strategic focus on its core geographies and customer segments, with loans and customer deposits increasing by 7% and 4% respectively from the year-end level."

Ahmed added: "In addition to our client business, our professional markets activities also continue to deliver exceptional returns. Continuing with our commitment to client-centric innovation, we launched NBB GO during the second quarter, a cutting-edge SoftPOS application that simplifies and redefines the mobile payment experience for small businesses."

"As we move forward, NBB remains focused on further expanding its scale and profitability through serving its clients and driving innovation, while also creating positive social impact," said the Group Chief Executive Officer of NBB.

Takaful International reports strong Q2 and H1 profits

TDI | Manama

Takaful International Company yesterday reported its second quarter and six months profits that increased from a year ago helped mainly by strong performance of its funds.

Q2 results

Second quarter net profit attributable to the shareholders was BD 162K, a significant increase of 277% from the net profit of BD 43K for the same period in the previous year. Comparatively, earnings per share increased to 1.9 Fils from 0.5 Fils for the same period in the previous year.

Total comprehensive income attributable to the shareholders of the Company surged to BD 79K compared to a total comprehensive loss of BD 80K for the same period in the previous year. Second quarter total net profit was BD 211K compared to BD 168K for the same period in the previous year, with an increase of 26%.

The shareholders' fund achieved a profit of BD 162K, compared to a profit of BD 43K for the same period of the previous year, a significant increase of 277%. This increase is attributed to the improved income generated from the investment portfolio during the quarter. The General and Family Takaful Funds achieved a surplus of BD 49K, compared to a surplus of BD 125k for the same period of the previous year, which decreased by 61%. This decline in the performance of the two Takaful funds is mainly due to an increase in claims reserve during the period compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.

Recognized takaful contributions were BD 6.425 million for the three months period ending on 30 June 2024, compared to BD 5.848 m for the same period of the previous year, an increase of 10%. Recognized Takaful



Ebrahim Al-Rayes, Chairman



Essam Al-Ansari, CEO

Costs were BD 5.195 m compared to BD 4.416 m in the same period of the previous year, with an increase of 18%.

H1 results

The shareholders' net profit was BD 555K for the six months ending on 30 June 2024, an increase of 30% from the net profit of BD 428K for the same period in the previous year. Comparatively, earnings per share increased to 6.52 Fils from 5.04 Fils for the same period in the previous year. The comprehensive income attributable to the shareholders of the Company was BD 424K, compared to a profit of BD 303K for the same period of the previous year, an increase of 40%.

The Company reported a total net profit of BD 757K compared to BD 651K for the same period of the previous year, with an increase of 16%. The shareholders' fund achieved a profit of BD 555K, compared to a profit of BD 428K for the same period of the previous year, an increase of 30%.

Recognized Takaful contributions were BD 12.314 m for the six months ending on 30 June 2024,

compared to BD 12.282 m for the same period of the previous year, a slight increase of 0.3%. Recognized Takaful Costs were BD 9.905 m during the six months period ending on 30 June 2024, compared to BD 9.740 m in the same period of the previous year, with an increase of 2%.

Ebrahim Al-Rayes, Chairman of the Board of Directors, stated, "As we look ahead, the Board maintains a cautiously optimistic outlook and remains committed to pursuing innovative growth opportunities that maximize shareholder value and strengthen our market position."

Essam Al-Ansari, CEO of the company, added: "Our solid results reflect the exceptional dedication and hard work of our team. We are particularly proud to have formed a dedicated ESG committee that will help strengthen our sustainability efforts and ensure we continue to be responsible corporate citizens. In addition, we have signed strategic alliances with our market partners, aiming to enhance our customer experience and improve our service and products."

NBB 

Recommendation of Declaration of Interim Dividends

The Board of Directors of National Bank of Bahrain B.S.C. resolved, at its meeting held on 6 August 2024, to recommend the distribution of interim dividends for the six months ending 30 June 2024 to the shareholders whose names are registered on the Bank's register on the Record Date. This is subject to the approval of the regulatory authorities. The proposed distribution is as follow:

- **Cash Dividend:** 10% of share nominal value, equivalent to 10 fils per share amounting to BD 22.7 million.

Below are the key dates to be taken note of:

Event	Date
Cum-Dividend Date (Last day of trading with entitlement to dividends)	14/08/2024
Ex-Dividend Date (First day of trading without entitlement to dividends)	15/08/2024
Record Date (The day on which all shareholders whose names are on the share register will be entitled to dividends)	18/08/2024
Payment Date (The day on which the dividends will be paid to the entitled shareholders)	29/08/2024

Mrs. Hala Ali Husain Yateem
Chairperson
6/8/2024

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QUOTE OF THE DAY
IT DOES NOT MATTER HOW SLOWLY YOU GO AS LONG AS YOU DO NOT STOP
CONFUCIUS

TODAY IN HISTORY

1461
Ming Dynasty Chinese military general Cao Qin stages a coup against the Tianshun Emperor



1714
The Battle of Gangut: the first important victory of the Russian Navy during the Great Northern War against Sweden

1933
The Iraqi Government slaughters over 3,000 Assyrians in the village of Sumail. The day becomes known as Assyrian Martyrs' Day.

1955
Tokyo Telecommunications Engineering, the precursor to Sony, begins selling its first transistor radios in Japan

News in brief

♦ **A Polish man accused of punching Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen** told a Copenhagen court on Tuesday he doesn't recall hitting her because he was under the influence of alcohol. The suspect, whom Danish authorities have ruled cannot be named in the media, risks prison time and deportation if convicted, with a verdict expected when the trial wraps up on Wednesday. The 39-year-old, who appeared in the Copenhagen district court wearing a T-shirt and jeans, was immediately apprehended after the alleged assault on June 7 in a Copenhagen square. He denied responsibility. Speaking in court, the accused said he remembered coming face-to-face with the prime minister, whom he recognised, but not putting his hand on her.

♦ **Russia yesterday said** it had expelled a Moldovan diplomat in a tit-for-tat move after Chisinau expelled a Russian diplomat in an espionage scandal. Tensions between Moscow and ex-Soviet pro-EU Moldova are tense, with Russia backing separatists in the breakaway region of Transnistria and regularly criticising Moldova's attempts to move closer to the West. Russia's foreign ministry said it summoned Moldova's top envoy "to lodge a strong protest against the ongoing unfriendly steps" being taken by Chisinau towards Russia. Moscow said it was declaring "a member of the Moldovan embassy in Russia" persona non grata. Moldova last week accused an official of an unspecified embassy in the country of "communicating" with two officials who it alleged were conspiring against Chisinau and passing on information to a foreign country. It later expelled the Russian diplomat.

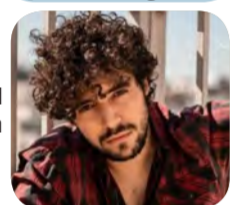
♦ **Russia expels Moldovan diplomat in tit-for-tat move**

Russia backing separatists in the breakaway region of Transnistria and regularly criticising Moldova's attempts to move closer to the West. Russia's foreign ministry said it summoned Moldova's top envoy "to lodge a strong protest against the ongoing unfriendly steps" being taken by Chisinau towards Russia. Moscow said it was declaring "a member of the Moldovan embassy in Russia" persona non grata. Moldova last week accused an official of an unspecified embassy in the country of "communicating" with two officials who it alleged were conspiring against Chisinau and passing on information to a foreign country. It later expelled the Russian diplomat.



♦ **An Iranian appeals court** has halved the prison sentence handed down against pop star Shervin Hajipour, whose song became the anthem of nationwide protests in 2022, the judiciary said yesterday. Hajipour, 27, is known for his song "Baraye" which became popular during mass demonstrations triggered by the September 2022 death in custody of Mahsa Amini. Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian Kurd, had been arrested for an alleged breach of the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women. In March, the pop star said he had been sentenced to three years in prison for "inciting and provoking people to riot to disturb national security". He was also sentenced to eight months for "propaganda against the regime", he said on his Instagram page. Under Iranian law, jail sentences run concurrently.

♦ **Iran reduces jail term of Grammy-winning protest singer**



SPOTLIGHT

Harris picks Minnesota governor Walz as running mate

Washington, United States



Tim Walz, Harris

Kamala Harris said yesterday she was "proud" to tap Tim Walz as her running mate, opting for the Minnesota governor with blue-collar credentials as the partner most likely to boost her historic -- and bruising -- bid for the White House.

Walz had been on a vice-presidential shortlist with a string of other Democratic figures seen as broadening Harris's appeal as she sprints into the contest against Donald Trump.

Aiming to make history as the first woman president, Harris -- already a trailblazer as the first female and first Black and South Asian vice president -- has little time before Election Day on November 5.

"I am proud to announce that I've asked @Tim_Walz to be my running mate," she posted on X.

"As a governor, a coach, a teacher, and a veteran, he's delivered for working families like his. It's great to have him on the team."

Expectations had always been that Harris would pick a white man to balance the ticket and help win over working-class, white, male voters, a demographic that propelled Trump to victory in 2016.

Walz fits that description as a 60-year-old Midwestern-

er with a folksy manner, decades of military experience and a rural perspective -- a vice-presidential shortlist with a string of other Democratic figures seen as broadening Harris's appeal as she sprints into the contest against Donald Trump.

The onetime teacher and school sports coach flipped a Republican district to win a seat in the US House of Representatives in a state seen as light years from the coastal elites of California, Harris's home turf, or the East Coast.

At the same time, Walz will appeal to the left for championing popular Democratic policies including cannabis legalization, increasing worker protections, safeguarding abortion rights, and supporting tighter firearm restrictions.

Trump's campaign immediately branded the Minnesota as a "dangerously liberal extremist" seeking to impose California values on the nation.

But "to characterize him as left is so unreal," Nancy Pelosi, the former House speaker who worked extensively with him in Congress, told MSNBC.

Walz is right down the middle. He's a heartland of America Democrat.

US orders non-emergency staff out of Bangladesh

Washington, United States

The United States government said yesterday that it had ordered non-emergency personnel to leave Bangladesh as a precaution after mass protests ousted longtime ruler Sheikh Hasina.

The State Department said that all non-emergency diplomats and other personnel as well as their family members had been ordered to leave as of Monday, although the US embassy in Dhaka remains open at limited capacity.

"I am honoured by the trust of the protesters who wish for me to lead the interim government," he said in a written statement to AFP. "If action is needed in Bangladesh, for my country and for the courage of my people, then I will take it," the 84-year-old Nobel-winning microfinance pioneer said, also calling for "free elections."

"The interim government is only the beginning," he said. "Lasting peace will only come with free elections. Without elections, there will be no change."

Yunus, known as the "banker to the poorest of the poor", was awarded the Peace Prize in 2006 for his work loaning small cash sums to rural women, allowing them to invest in farm tools or business equipment and boost their earnings.

Earlier Tuesday, student leaders in Bangladesh demanded that Yunus lead a caretaker government, a day after the military took control as demonstrations forced Hasina to flee the country.

Hasina, 76, had been in power since 2009 but was accused of rigging elections in January and then watched millions of people take to the streets over the past month demanding she quit.

Hundreds of people were killed as security forces sought to quell the unrest but the protests grew and Hasina finally fled aboard a

Nobel winner Yunus says ready to head Bangladesh 'interim government'

AFP | Paris, France



People gather to see burnt Jatrabari police station as anti-government protesters set fire in Dhaka



Bangladeshi Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus said Monday that he was ready to head an interim government in Bangladesh after mass demonstrations forced longtime ruler Sheikh Hasina to flee the country. "I am honoured by the trust of the protesters who wish for me to lead the interim government," he said in a written statement to AFP. "If action is needed in Bangladesh, for my country and for the courage of my people, then I will take it," the 84-year-old Nobel-winning microfinance pioneer said, also calling for "free elections."

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India 'deeply concerned' at Bangladesh crisis: foreign minister

AFP | New Delhi, India



Daljit Singh Chawdhary (L), the director general of Border Security Force (BSF) arrives at the India-Bangladesh border of Petrapole about 100km north east of Kolkata

India's foreign minister said yesterday he was "deeply concerned" till law and order is visibly restored "in neighbouring Bangladesh, a day after the ouster of prime minister Sheikh Hasina. Foreign minister S. Jaishankar also gave the first official confirmation Hasina was in India, where she fled on Monday as protesters stormed her palace.

"We... will naturally remain deeply concerned till law and order is visibly restored," Jaishankar told parliament.

"In the last 24 hours, we have also been in regular touch with the authorities in Dhaka," Jaishankar said.

Hasina fled by helicopter to India, arriving at a military airbase near New Delhi.

A top-level source said she wanted to go on to London but calls by the British government for a UN-led investigation into "unprecedented levels of violence" put that in doubt.

"Our understanding is that after a meeting with leaders of the security establishment, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina apparently made the decision to resign," Jaishankar said.

"At very short notice, she requested approval to come for the moment to India. We simultaneously received a request for flight clearance from the Bangladesh authorities. She arrived yesterday evening in Delhi."

India shares a border with Bangladesh of more than 4,000 kilometres (2,485 miles). "Our border guarding forces have also been instructed to be exceptionally alert in view of this complex situation," Jaishankar said.

Hasina's dramatic ouster also sparked concern in Sri Lanka, where it was seen as duplicating the turmoil that toppled Colombo's leader in 2022.

Sri Lanka said on Tuesday it hoped Bangladesh would restore democracy.

"We also faced a similar danger to our democracy, but we protected our parliament," government spokesman Bandula Gunawardana told reporters in Colombo.

Sri Lanka's foreign minister Ali Sabry wished Bangladeshis the "strength to overcome these challenges and emerge even stronger".

"We look forward to a future filled with peace and prosperity for both our nations," Sabry said on social media platform X.

Sri Lankan media also highlighted parallels with then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa fleeing Colombo in July 2022.

Social media users shared photos of protesters ransacking Rajapaksa's official residence alongside Bangladeshi protesters storming Hasina's palace on Monday.

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Musk, UK govt spar over far-right riots

AFP | London, United Kingdom



A police officer restrains a protester during a 'Enough is Enough' demonstration called by far-right activists in Weymouth, on the southwest coast of England where the Bibby Stockholm migrant accommodation barge is moored

As far-right riots grip England, provocative tech billionaire Elon Musk is posting sympathy for the anti-immigration demonstrators, angering the UK government, which blames social media companies for fuelling the unrest.

The week-long disturbances that have spread to numerous cities are linked to misinformation online that the suspect behind a mass stabbing that killed three girls was a Muslim asylum seeker.

A war of words between X owner Musk and Prime Minister Keir Starmer's recently elected Labour administration began on Sunday when Musk tweeted that a British "civil war is inevitable".

Starmer's spokesperson said Monday there was "no justification" for the comment, only for Musk to respond with a stream of posts Tuesday questioning the British leader's response to the riots.

Musk also referenced a dubious claim about policing that has been widely denied by lawmakers from across the political spectrum and police chiefs.

appeared in British courts yesterday as the UK government said 6,000 specialist police were ready to deal with England's worst disorder in over a decade.

Almost 400 people have been arrested and 100 charged over the week-long disturbances sparked by online misinformation about the murder of three children in a mass stabbing.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer was due to chair his second emergency meeting in as many days late Tuesday as police forces across the country brace for further possible violence.

He also added a hashtag "TwoTierKeir", referring to allegations by those on the right of "two-tier policing" in which far-right agitators are punished more harshly.

Hard-right Reform UK leader Nigel Farage said on Monday that "since the soft policing of the Black Lives Matter protests, the impression of two-tier policing has become widespread".

The BLM protests were largely peaceful, but pockets of disorder were heavily cracked down on by police. So were previous riots largely involving minority ethnic groups in 2011 when Starmer himself was chief state prosecutor.

His original "civil war" post came in reply to another X user blaming the riots on "the effects of mass migration and open borders".

The comment was "not surprising for Elon Musk, who's

Riot suspects in court as UK govt readies 6,000 police

London, United Kingdom

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US in 'around-the-clock' push against Mideast war

Washington, United States

US President Joe Biden held crisis talks on Monday on a potential Iranian counter-attack on Israel as his administration said it was working around the clock to avoid all-out war in the Middle East.

Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken engaged in frantic diplomacy to try to ease tensions sparked by a suspected Israeli attack that killed Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

The president called King Abdullah II of Jordan, which helped down Iranian drones and missiles in an earlier showdown in April, while Blinken called top officials in Qatar and Egypt, the key intermediaries seeking a ceasefire in the 10-month Israel-Hamas war.

"We are engaged in intense diplomacy, pretty much around the clock, with a very simple message -- all parties must refrain from escalation," Blinken said after joining other top officials in a White House meeting.

"It's also critical that we

break this cycle by reaching a ceasefire in Gaza," said Blinken, who has also spoken since Sunday with G7 counterparts and Iraq's prime minister.

On Monday, multiple US personnel were injured in a rocket attack on a base in Iraq, adding to the already heightened regional tensions.

Blinken, who has warned that Iran could strike soon, made a new pitch for Biden's ceasefire plan that would freeze fighting in Gaza and return hostages seized in the October 7 mega-attack on Israel by Hamas.

A ceasefire "will unlock possibilities for more enduring calm, not only in Gaza itself, but in other areas where the conflict could spread," Blinken said as he met Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong.

In a veiled allusion to US frustrations, Blinken said, "What it really comes down to, really, is all parties finding ways to come to an agreement, not look for reasons to delay or to say no."

"It is urgent that all parties make the right choices in the hours and days ahead," he said.

Israel army confirms death of last missing person from October 7 attack

Jerusalem, Undefined

The Israeli military confirmed yesterday that Bilha Yinon, the last person listed as missing from the October 7 Hamas attack, was killed that day.

"Today, IDF (Israel army) representatives officially informed the family of Bilha Yinon that she is no longer alive," the military said in a statement.

Seven US personnel injured in attack on Iraq base



A view of the Ain al-Assad air base hosting US forces in Iraq in the western Anbar province

AFP | Baghdad, Iraq

A rocket attack on a base in Iraq wounded seven Americans, a US official said yesterday, with the Pentagon blaming Iran-aligned forces for the violence that comes as the region awaits an expected counterattack by Tehran on Israel.

The rocket fire the previous day was the latest in a series of attacks targeting Ain al-Assad base, which hosts American troops as well as other personnel from the US-led coalition against the Islamic State jihadist group.

"Five US service members and two US contractors were injured in the attack," in which two rockets struck the base, the US defence official said on condition of anonymity.

Five of the wounded are being treated at the base while two have been evacuated for further treatment, the official said, adding that all are in stable condition.

US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris were briefed on the attack the previous day, the White House said. "They discussed the steps we are taking to defend our forces and respond to any attack against our personnel in a manner and place of our choosing," it said in a statement.

A Pentagon statement on a call between Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin and his Israeli counterpart Yoav Gallant described the rocket fire as an "Iran-aligned militia attack on US forces" and said the two agreed that it "marked a dangerous escalation".



Extreme heat. Floods. Droughts. Wildfires. Rising sea levels. To tackle all these symptoms of the climate crisis, we need to fight the disease that causes them. The disease is the addiction to fossil fuels. The disease is climate inaction. Leaders across the board must wake up and step up their #ClimateAction now.



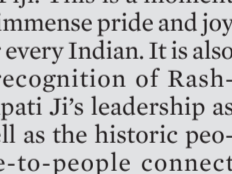
Today, Australian Foreign Minister @SenatorWong and I signed a memorandum of understanding to coordinate our efforts on countering foreign information manipulation. We discussed cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and our joint work on critical minerals, climate, and energy.



Congratulations to Rashtrapati Ji on being bestowed the highest civilian award of Fiji, Companion of the Order of Fiji. This is a moment of immense pride and joy for every Indian. It is also a recognition of Rashtrapati Ji's leadership as well as the historic people-to-people connect between India and Fiji.



It's critically important that medical students from all walks of life can pursue their education and graduate without crippling debt. Thank you, @MikeBloomberg, @WHO Global Ambassador, for yet another decision aimed at supporting young people and reducing inequities in access to health education and health care.



Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stance)

Alba names Ricardo Fontes Santana CFO



Ali Al Baqali, Alba's Chief Executive Officer

TDT | Manama

Aluminium Bahrain (Alba), the world's largest single-site smelter, announced the appointment of Ricardo Fontes Santana as its new Chief Financial Officer (CFO), effective 15 August 2024.

With over 25 years of global experience, Santana brings a wealth of knowledge in the metals and mining industry. His career includes leadership roles at industry giants such as



Ricardo Fontes Santana, new Chief Financial Officer

Sohar Aluminium, South32, ESILOR, BHP Billiton, and Shell, spanning diverse geographies including Brazil, Australia, Singapore, The Netherlands, Portugal, and Oman.

Khalid Al Rumaihi, Chairman of Alba's Board of Directors, said, "His deep-rooted expertise in the global industrial sector, coupled with a proven ability to navigate complex financial landscapes, makes him an invaluable addition to our team."



Khalid Al Rumaihi, Chairman

Ali Al Baqali, Alba's Chief Executive Officer, added, "His impressive history of delivering exceptional financial performance and executing strategic initiatives aligns perfectly with Alba's ambitious vision."

Expressing his enthusiasm for the new role effective 15 August 2024, Ricardo Fontes Santana, stated:

"I am honoured to join the Alba Executive team and contribute to the Company's ongoing success."

AUB unveils MyHassad's largest prize ever worth BHD 1 Million

● Wrapping the first six months with the handover of BD 500,000 to one lucky winner

TDT | Manama

Ahli United Bank (AUB) has announced the winner of its Grand Prize of BD 500,000 as Khayriyah Abdullah. The prize handover took place at the winner's residence in the presence of members of AUB's management.

AUB also unveiled the new and largest prize ever from its market leading MyHassad saving scheme that will run for the next six months. Under this scheme, monthly draws will be held on the last Wednesday of each month, with a qualification period of seven days. The



new monthly prize structure includes 10 prizes of BD 1,000 each, 3 prizes of BD 10,000 each, as well as a special draw prize of BD 100,000 for loyal customers with high deposits.

The new scheme will culminate in January of 2025 with a Grand Prize of BD 1 million the largest MyHassad prize ever by AUB, with a qualification period of 30 days.

Zain Bahrain partners with British Council to enhance employee skills and training



The deal signing

TDT | Manama

Zain Bahrain, a leading telecom provider in the Kingdom, announced a strategic partnership with the British Council, a renowned international organisation dedicated to creating learning and development opportunities. This partnership aims to enrich employees' skills and capabilities through innovative assessment and training solutions, aligning with Zain Bahrain's unwavering commitment to employee development.

The partnership will introduce advanced tools and solutions to assess English language proficiency and enhance language and soft skills, while measuring the effectiveness of training programs. These solutions will also monitor the progress of individuals undergoing skill development initia-

tives, ensuring that the training provided is impactful and beneficial. This is a significant step towards Zain Bahrain's goal of fostering a continuous learning and development culture within the organization.

Abdulla Al Majed, Learning & Development Manager at Zain Bahrain commented, "Empowering our workforce with essential skills is crucial in today's dynamic business environment. Zain Bahrain's partnership with the British Council reinforces our commitment to providing employees outstanding training and development opportunities."

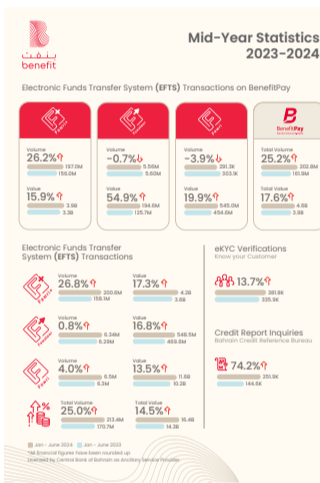
Adnan Khawaja, Regional Head of Sales at British Council stated, "This collaboration is yet another milestone towards our commitment to innovative, needs-based learning solutions that make a real difference in today's fast-paced business environment."

BENEFIT surpasses BHD16.4 Billion in Electronic Transactions for H1 2024

TDT | Manama

BENEFIT, the Kingdom's innovator and leading company in Fintech and electronic financial transactions services, has reached a total value of 16.4 Billion Bahraini dinars for all electronic fund transfer transactions (Fawri, Fawri+ and Fawateer) during the first half of 2024, a 14.5% increase in value compared to the first half of 2023.

The online payments under the Electronic Fund Transfer System (EFTS), consisting of Fawri+, Fawri and Fawateer, experienced substantial growth in the first half of 2024, as witnessed by 25.0% volume increase, from 170.7 Million transactions during the first half of 2023, to 213.4 M transactions in



the first half of 2024.

Fawri+ transactions over all channels in the first half of 2024 reached a total value of BHD 4.2 Billion compared to BHD 3.6 Bn in the previous year, a growth

of 17.3%. Furthermore, Fawri+ transactions through BenefitPay's application in the first half of 2024 reached a total value of BHD 3.9 Bn, a growth of 15.9%, compared to BHD 3.3 Bn in the first half of 2023.

Fawri transactions over all channels increased by 13.5% as its value in the first half of 2024 exceeded BHD 11.6 Billion, compared to BHD 10.2 Bn during the first half of 2023. Moreover, Fawri experienced a value increase of 19.9% through the BenefitPay application, increasing from BHD 454.6 M during the first half of 2023, to BHD 545.0 M in the first half of 2024.

Regarding Fawateer transactions across all channels, the first half of 2024 reported a value of BHD 548.5 M showcasing

a 16.8% increase from the first half of 2023, where the value was BHD 469.6 M. Fawateer transactions through BenefitPay's application increased in value by 54.9%, with a total value of BHD 194.6 M in the first half of 2024, up from BHD 125.7 M during the same period of the previous year.

The National electronic Know-Your-Customer (eKYC) platform totaled up to 381,791 verifications, 13.7% increase from the first half of 2023.

Furthermore, the Bahrain Credit Reference Bureau operated under BENEFIT, recorded a total of 251,889 credit report inquiries in the first half of 2024, up from 144,625 credit report inquiries in the first half of 2023, a 74.2% increase.

Bahrain Development Bank, Ahli United Bank join hands to sponsor Farmers Market

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Development Bank (BDB) has announced Ahli United Bank as a sponsor of the Farmers Market in Hoorat A'ali. As part of the agreement, Ahli United Bank will support initiatives dedicated to the sustainable growth of the Farmers Market.

The Farmers Market enables Bahraini farmers to sell fresh and locally grown organic products as well as exchange their collective expertise with



Ahmed Soud Alkharji, Group Chief Executive Officer of Ahli United Bank



Dalal Al Qais, Chief Executive Officer of BDB

one another. Commenting on the partnership, Ms. Dalal Al

Qais, Chief Executive Officer of BDB, said: "We are committed

to highlighting food security endeavours, which aim to make use of the country's resources and further contribute to its economic prosperity."

On his end, Mr. Ahmed Soud Alkharji, Group Chief Executive Officer of Ahli United Bank, said: "This strategic collaboration underscores our ESG pillars and reflects our responsibility to the community in which we operate, as we strive to contribute to the growth of our society and the development of its resources."

Huawei unveils industry-specific ICT solutions at Bahrain Commercial Roadshow

TDT | Manama

Huawei, a leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and smart devices, recently hosted the Bahrain leg of the Middle East and Central Asia (ME&CA) Commercial Roadshow, showcasing cutting-edge solutions designed to empower key sectors including education, healthcare, real estate, and finance.

The event brought together industry leaders, government officials, and technology experts to explore how innovative ICT solutions can revolutionize op-



erations across these vital sectors. The roadshow is part of Huawei's broader strategy to accelerate digital transformation in the ME&CA region, focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) segments within key industries.

Pengye, Managing Director, Enterprise Business, Huawei Bahrain, emphasized the critical nature of digital transformation for Bahrain's businesses. "Embracing digital transformation is not just a strategy but the key to long-term success for business

in Bahrain. Advanced technologies can unlock unimaginable growth opportunities and help overcome key challenges facing these industries."

The roadshow highlighted Huawei's commercial market solution strategy, demonstrating

how digital transformation can create immense opportunities across all focus areas.

A key announcement at the event was the introduction of Huawei eKit, a platform designed for distribution business that integrates marketing, transactions, services, and partner operations. Huawei also unveiled its Commercial Market Growth Incentive Program (GIP) 2024, offering exciting benefits, incentives, and profit opportunities for partners and customers.

Pengye, Managing Director, Enterprise Business, Huawei Bahrain, said, "By fostering open dialogue and providing compre-

hensive support, we're building a stronger, more dynamic ecosystem to better serve our customers and drive innovation across the region."

Hisham Badaoui, Senior Director, Business Solution & Product, stc Bahrain, said, "In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, businesses need robust, scalable, and intelligent solutions to stay competitive. Through our long-standing partnership with Huawei, we aim to accelerate the digital transformation of Bahraini enterprises while positioning stc as a leading technology enabler in the Kingdom of Bahrain."

CELEBS

celebs

Cardi B laughs off rumors of money troubles



Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Cardi B has laughed off speculation that she has financial troubles. The 31-year-old rap star has taken to social media to rubbish suggestions that she's under pressure to sell her home in Atlanta, because she's battling financial problems.

Cardi - who has Kulture, six, and Wave, two, with rapper Offset - wrote on X: "You bum b***** wish... me and offset bought that house in 2019 for 5 million now it's worth 7. Check the Atlanta market. And no, we not selling it... and if I ever sold it I would just sell my part to Offset since

“One negative thing is that, even though I'm happy, I feel like I was a little bit happier two or three years ago when I had less money

CARDI B

he loves Atlanta. Throwing salt on my home? Hating bad (sic)" Cardi has enjoyed a meteoric rise over recent years.

However, the rap star has repeatedly suggested that she was actually happier before she found fame and success.

Cardi - who is one of the best-selling artists in the world - told CR Fashion Book maga-

zine: "One positive thing is that, my family, whatever they want, they get. Everything that I want to buy, I can get. I don't have to worry so much about my future.

"One negative thing is that, even though I'm happy, I feel like I was a little bit happier two or three years ago when I had less money." What's more, Cardi feels as though she's lost some control over her own life.

The rapper - who worked as a stripper before finding success in the music business - said: "I had less people who had opinions about my life. I felt like my life was mine.

"Now I feel like I don't even own my life. I feel like the world owns me."

Selena Gomez 'so depressed' in her 'It Girl era'

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Selena Gomez was "so depressed" in her 'It Girl era'.

The singer, 32, is happily settled with her 36-year-old music producer boyfriend Benny Blanco - who she has been dating since June 2023 - and has now reflected on how unhappy she was in her youth, which included her getting photographed by paparazzi while dating her ex Justin Bieber.

She opened up about how she had the blues at the time in a reaction to throwback footage of herself posted on social media showing her getting snapped by photographers and posing with a fan.

The TikTok clip was set to her ex Justin's song 'Company', with a caption the video saying: "I know and so do you that at the time she would never have gotten engaged to Benny (Blanco) (when) she was in her IT GIRL era'.

Text over the video also said Selena's former self "would never date Benny Blanco".

Selena hit back: "Kinda makes me laugh because I was so depressed back then lol."

The singer dated Justin, 30, Selena Gomez

on and off for eight years and a few months after she and Justin split in 2018 he married Hailey Bieber, 27, with whom he is expecting his first child - something Selena has not publicly commented on.

Selena has told how she loves how Benny treats her, saying online in December: "He has treated me better than any human being on this planet."

She added to Time magazine the musician is not "fazed" when her critics say "the most hurtful things".

Benny celebrated her 32nd birthday by buying her a jewel-encrusted necklace in the shape of his first initial.

Selena showed off her diamond-covered 'B' necklace - a 14-karat gold, diamond-studded piece from Los Angeles-based brand Baby Gold,

which sells for \$600 - in a photo posted on Instagram.

Benny commented on the image: "I got the hottest chick in the game wearing my chain" - in reference to Jay-Z's lyric from his 'Public Service Announcement' track.



Ryan Gosling 'looks to buy a property in London'

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Ryan Gosling is looking to buy a house in London.

The 43-year-old actor and Eva Mendes, his long-term partner, have been exploring the possibility of buying a house in Barnes, south London, as the loved-up duo are keen to lay down roots in the UK capital.

A source told The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column: "Ryan and Eva would certainly add an A-list element to an already well-to-do area."

The Hollywood duo have turned to property experts in a bid to find the ideal home for them.

The insider explained: "The couple have sev-

eral property contacts they are utilising to help them find the perfect place, along with a budget of over £10 million (\$12.8 million)." Last year, meanwhile, fellow movie star Ryan Reynolds and his wife Blake Lively also chose to buy a property in London.

The 47-year-old actor is the co-chairman of Wrexham AFC, a Welsh soccer team - but Ryan opted to buy a home in London instead because it made "more sense".

A source told the Mail on Sunday newspaper at the time: "Ryan and Blake just love Britain, it has become a real second home for them. They have made some really good friends in the UK, so it made sense to have a proper base here."

Ryan and Blake, 36, have both become very fond of Wrexham over recent years.

However, they chose to buy in London

because it's more convenient for their work lives.

The source said: "While they love Wrexham, a lot of their work is taking place in London so it seemed to make more sense to be there rather than Wales.

"The UK is small compared to America, so nowhere is actually that far."



Ryan Gosling

Zac Efron 'fine' after 'minor swimming incident'

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Zac Efron is doing "fine" after being hospitalised following a "minor swimming incident".

The 'Family Affair' actor was vacationing in Ibiza

Zac Efron

when he experienced an issue in the pool of the villa he was staying at on Friday (02.08.24) and was taken to hospital as a precautionary measure, but released the next morning.

His representative said: "He is fine."

Sources told TMZ the 36-year-old star was pulled out of the water by two people working at the villa but his spokesperson didn't explain how it could have only been a "minor" incident if he required hospital treat-

ment. They stressed he was only there as a precautionary measure but declined to be drawn on the specifics of what happened.

Meanwhile, Zac recently admitted he felt "very nervous" when he first worked with Nicole Kidman on 'The Paperboy' back in 2012, and Zac has admitted to feeling anxious about working with his award-winning co-star.

Zac - who has reunited with Nicole to make 'A Family Affair' - told PEO-

PLE: "We had so much fun doing that, but it was crazy."

The Hollywood star has fond memories of working with the 57-year-old star and he jumped at the opportunity to reunite with her for the new rom-com.

He said: "I'm still so enamoured with Nicole.

"There's a part of me that pinches myself when I realise who I'm working with a lot. I think that was more pronounced during 'The Paperboy'

because I was a lot younger. I was very nervous back then."

Nicole feels they've both benefited from the experience of working together before.

She shared: "It's really helpful when you're doing this sort of work together that you've already got a history together, because it's easy. You're not working to create a history. So I'm not like, 'Can I touch you?' I feel incredibly trusting of Zac."

SUDOKU

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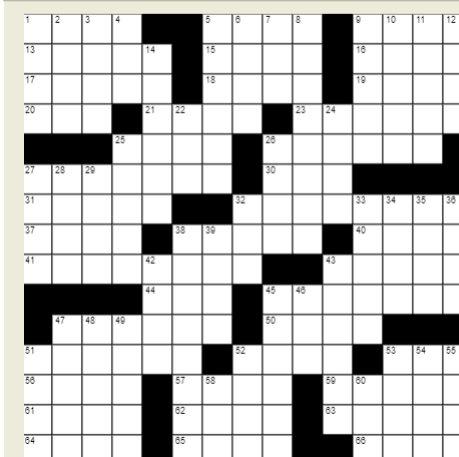
Yesterday's solution

6	8	5	4	2	3	1	9	7
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4	9	8	2	3	1	7	6	5
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2	7	3	5	8	6	9	1	4
3	2	1	7	6	5	4	8	9
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How to play

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

CROSSWORD



Across

1- Woody plant; 5- The Supremes, e.g.; 9- Chinese weight; 13- Hawaiian dances; 15- Tombstone lawman; 16- Name on a razor; 17- ... a customer; 18- Fit to ...; 19- Ale, e.g.; 20- AAA suggestion; 21- Deep unconscious state; 23- Souvenirs; 25- Land measure; 26- Natural ability; 27- Kelp; 30- Call ... day; 31- Communion table; 32- Mall-goer, often; 37- Become closer to; 38- King with a golden touch; 40- Ancient letter; 41- Lacking social engagement; 43- Bing Crosby's record label; 44- Fleming who created Bond; 45- Athletic shoe; 47- Baby; 50- Not as much; 51- "Casablanca" star; 52- Must've been something ...; 53- Face on a five; 56- Greet vowels; 57- This ... outrage!; 59- Ascended; 61- CalØ au ...; 62- High-ranking NCO; 63- Govt. security; 64- General ... chicken; 65- Baseballer Slaughter; 66- A long way off;

Down

1- God of thunder; 2- Litter's littlest; 3- Gen. Robert ...; 4- Devour; 5- Joined; 6- Pro ...; 7- Indignation; 8- Performs surgery; 9- Put off, as an agenda item; 10- Dined at home; 11- Build; 12- Metallica drummer Ulrich; 14- Football, most places; 22- Metal-bearing mineral; 24- Joie de vivre; 25- Cognizant; 26- ... yellow ribbon...; 27- Beach blanket; 28- Zeno of ...; 29- Rat ...; 32- NFL scores; 33- Zones; 34- Oozy dirt; 35- Suffix with exist; 36- Back; 38- In the ...; interim; 39- ... She Lovely?; 42- Perjurer; 43- Barren place; 45- Biases; 46- Can be used to catch fish or surf; 47- Smidgens; 48- Marsh of mystery; 49- Observes Ramadan; 51- Waist band; 52- "Othello" villain; 53- Starting; 54- Second letter of the Greek alphabet; 55- Cabinet dept.; 58- Taxpayer's ID; 60- One ... million;

Yesterday's solution

S	O	I	L	S	T	I	L	E	R	O	N	E				
S	A	R	A	H	A	S	I	S	A	S	I	D				
17	S	H	A	R	I	M	I	T	T	A	C	T				
20	S	N	A	N	S	O	L	A	R	P	E	T	E	S		
21	S	U	N	D	A	E	S	R	I	L	A	N	K	A		
22							T	S	P	E	M	O	T	E	S	
23	M	E	L	I	S	S	A	A	V	E						
24	A	D	I	E	U	P	A	S	T	E	S	T	U			
25	I	N	O	R	T	A	H	O	E	S	E	R	S			
26	N	A	N		S	O	L	A	R		P	E	T	E	S	
27					C	I	D			T	E	A	C	H	E	R
28					A	W	A	R	D	S		S	C	I		
29	B	R	A	C	E	L	E	T		O	N	T	I	M	E	
30	R	E	S	T		L	I	A		T	O	L	E	T		
31	A	T	T	U		R	A	N	T		E	R	A	T	O	
32	T	E	E	S		S	H	E	A		R	A	Y	O	N	

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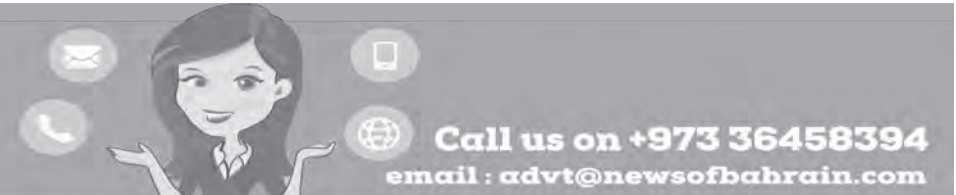
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Duplantis fulfils childhood dream with world record to win Olympic gold

- Duplantis clears 6.25 meters, setting new world record
- Ninth time breaking world record at only 24 years old
- Nearest competitor 30cm short of Duplantis' mark

AFP | Paris

Armand Duplantis says the defence of his Olympic pole vault crown in world-record style came as no surprise as he had visualised it a "million times" when practising as a child in his own backyard. Coached by his American father Greg, a former pole vaulter, Duplantis is a product of a track and field-crazy family which had their own vaulting apparatus in the garden.

They were all present in the stadium and it was to them that Duplantis hurtled after sailing over 6.25 metres with no "pre-announced nonsense". "That's just overflowed with emotions, freaking out," said Duplantis, the new record improving his previous best by 1cm in front of a delirious 69,000-capacity crowd at the Stade de France on Monday night.

"I've been fortunate enough to do it several times now, but every time the feeling is kind of the same. This was a more extreme version.

"When I'm going over the bar it's like AI (artificial intelligence).

gence), it doesn't feel real. That was more hysteria and freaking out."

Having started vaulting at the age of four in his backyard on a makeshift runway and landing pad, Duplantis revealed his *deja vu* moment.

"I've visualised this moment a million times in my life. I mean, this is every time I was in my backyard," he said of his world record vault.

"I would just imagine that the bar was at the world record mark. It was the Olympic final -- that's pretty much exactly what I visualised." Duplantis was happy to bask in the moment and not be drawn into looking too far into the future after his success. It was the ninth time the Swede had broken the world record, an astonishing achievement given he is still only 24 years old.

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It was the ninth time the Swede had broken the world record, an astonishing achievement given he is still only 24 years old.

The silver medallist on the night, American Sam Kendrick, managed 5.95m, a full 30cm short of Duplantis' mark. What next for two-time Olympic champion Duplantis, who



Duplantis started pole vaulting at age four in his backyard, using a makeshift runway and landing pad. This early start in a track-and-field-focused family laid the foundation for his Olympic success

thing else? When things align the way they did for me, you've got to enjoy those kinds of things.

"I try to enjoy as best as I can." Duplantis could have waited until back on the circuit for a tilt at the world record, for which prize money is given, but he chose to attempt it on track and field's biggest stage.

"The biggest dream since a kid was to break the world record at the Olympics," he said.

"I've been able to do that in front of the most ridiculous crowd I've ever competed in front of.

"If I don't beat this moment in my career, then I'm pretty pretty okay with that. You know, I don't think you really can get much better than what just happened. So it's dang amazing."

Of his final vault, Duplantis said he was "just trying to control the energy rather than let it control me".

"I didn't really have anything to lose either. I'd already won and broke the Olympic record, I was already Olympic champion for a second time."

Armand Duplantis in action



India's Ashok eyeing medal after last-minute dash to Paris



Aditi Ashok of India plays a shot (file photo)

AFP | Paris

Indian golfer Aditi Ashok is hoping to make up for a near-miss in Tokyo by winning an Olympic medal this week, after rushing to catch a flight following an event in the United States on Sunday.

Ashok only arrived in Paris late on Monday evening after playing an LPGA Tour event in Portland.

She said she took a flight from Portland to London but did not arrive at her hotel until 11:00 pm local time after her connecting flight from Heathrow was delayed.

Ashok has not been given any favours by the organisers as she will tee off in the third group in Wednesday's first round at 09:22 am.

"When I holed out, my dad -- well, my caddie, obviously my dad, went straight to the car to pack the golf bag," Ashok said yesterday.

"I submitted the card and I was like, 'Ok, just make sure I sign it' because I didn't want to forget.

"Then I just got to the car, packed my golf bag, had a shower and I think we were in the airport within 30 min-

utes of holing my last putt... Catching the flight was the hardest part."

The 26-year-old insisted she would not be under-cooked despite her frantic journey, as she had practised at Olympic venue Le Golf National ahead of last month's Evian Championship.

This will be the fifth consecutive week Ashok has played a tournament.

"I feel like some stuff would have changed, and I need to figure that stuff out today," added the world number 63 of the Albatros course.

"I don't think I'm as under-prepared as maybe people would think I am."

Ashok fell just short of the medal positions three years ago in Tokyo.

She finished fourth, one shot behind bronze medallist Lydia Ko and two strokes adrift of champion Nelly Korda.

India have won three medals so far in Paris, all in shooting, and will be hoping Ashok can go at least one better as they attempt to match their record-breaking tally of seven from Japan.

"These events I think are so much different than a regular event," said Ashok.

Brazilian amputee table tennis star savours Olympic dreamland

AFP | Paris

Twenty-two years after first picking up a bat, Brazilian amputee table tennis star Bruna Alexandre is finally making her dream come true, warming up for the Paralympics by competing at the Paris Olympic Games.

The 29-year-old, whose right arm was amputated at the age of three months due to thrombosis, is her country's first para-athlete to take part in the Olympics.

"I have been trying to qualify for the Olympics for years. I knew it would be difficult because the competition is very fierce in Brazil," Alexandre told AFP.

"But I succeeded. I got here and today I am making a huge dream come true for me."

Alexandre took up table tennis at the age of seven.

Initially she found it difficult to serve with one arm, but she mastered the tricky skill of throwing the ball up with her left hand then serving with vicious spin.

"I managed to adapt after about a year. Now my serve is one of my strong points," said the Brazilian, who is also a gifted skateboarder and cyclist.

Alexandre is already a decorated Paralympian, winning silver at the Tokyo Games, but on Monday she had her first taste of Olympic action, taking on the powerful South Koreans in the team event.

The third-seeded Koreans saw off the Brazilian challenge but Alexandre was philosophical after the defeat.

"It's about showing that

It's about showing that everything is possible, regardless of whether you have one arm or one leg

BRUNA ALEXANDRE

everything is possible, regardless of whether you have one arm or one leg," she said.

She thanked the French crowd for a rapturous reception, adding: "I am celebrating and I will celebrate for many more days this dream that I am realising today."

"Never give up"

Alexandre is not the only Paralympian to feature in the Olympic table tennis tournament. Australia's Melissa Tapper, whose right arm is paralysed, is competing at her third Olympics.

But it was Polish player Natalia Partyka who laid the ground, competing in both Olympics and Paralympics in Beijing 2008 and London 2012.

"She's a source of inspiration. She has inspired many people, not just me but also Melissa Tapper," Alexandre told AFP, adding that she watched YouTube videos of Partyka in action.

She sees herself as representing people with disabilities from her country and all around the world.

"I think it can open a lot of doors. Inclusion in the country can be improved. I think sport is a great way to make that happen," she said.

Alexandre credits hours spent in her beloved skateboard as critical to a sense of balance that has propelled her to the top in table tennis.

Sweden and Germany storm to Olympic beach volleyball semis



Sweden's Jonatan Hellvig and David Ahman celebrate their win

AFP | Paris

Sweden and Germany stormed into the Olympic men's beach volleyball semi-finals yesterday in front of a frenzied crowd as stadium temperatures rose in front of the Eiffel Tower.

The world number one, Swedish duo David Ahman and Jonatan Hellvig, booked a place in the semi-finals by thrashing opponents Evandro Goncalves Oliveira Junior and Arthur Diego Mariano Lanci of Brazil in straight sets.

The Brazilian pair whipped up an excited crowd but were slower to get going on the court, and the youthful top-seeded pair made some spectacular blocks against the Brazilian duo to earn their decisive victory.

The Swedish men, both aged 22, have become known for their use of an aggressive playing style known as the "Swedish jump-set", which adds an element of unpredictability to attacking play.

There were rowdy cheers through the game, with a psyched-up crowd dancing to the "Macarena" and singing along to a round of "Voulez-vous" by Swedish pop sensations Abba.



Bruna Alexandre

Batelco and BRAVE CF partner to deliver premium martial arts content on BRAVE TV

TDT | Manama

Batelco, part of the Beyon Group, and BRAVE Combat Federation have signed a partnership, to elevate the viewing experience for Martial arts fans, making premium content more accessible and affordable than ever before.

As part of the partnership, subscriptions to BRAVE TV, the official digital platform of BRAVE Combat Federation, will be integrated with Batelco services, enabling customers to subscribe to BRAVE CF's premium content at a reduced rate, providing access to top-tier martial arts action.

The popularity of martial arts has grown in recent years and since its inception BRAVE CF has hosted 83 events in a record-breaking 32 countries, helping to establish itself among the most global martial arts organisations in the world.

Batelco General Manager Consumer, Aseel Mattar said, "We are delighted to collaborate



Batelco General Manager Consumer, Aseel Mattar and Valeria Lang, Chief Operations Officer of BRAVE CF

with BRAVE CF and support in widening the reach of premium martial arts content through the addition of BRAVE TV subscription to our services. Customers can now access and enjoy an exclusive collection of premium martial arts content at greater value for their money."

Valeria Lang, Chief Operations Officer of BRAVE Combat

Federation, expressed her enthusiasm for the partnership: "This collaboration with Batelco is a big step in our mission to bring the best of mixed martial arts to fans in Bahrain and beyond. It aligns perfectly with Bahrain's digital transformation goals, ensuring that our audience can enjoy seamless access to our content."

“We are delighted to collaborate with BRAVE CF and support in widening the reach of premium martial arts content through the addition of BRAVE TV subscription to our services. Customers can now access and enjoy an exclusive collection of premium martial arts content at greater value for their money

BATELCO GENERAL MANAGER CONSUMER, ASEEL MATTAR

With the partnership, BRAVE CF and Batelco aim to set a new standard for sports entertainment in Bahrain, offering the thrill of mixed martial arts through the network of Bahrain's premier telecommunications service.

Chelsea boss Maresca says rules to blame for academy talent exodus



Chelsea's head coach Enzo Maresca directs his team during a pre-season club friendly football match

AFP | London

Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca said financial sustainability rules must be changed to discourage clubs from cashing in on academy graduates as Conor Gallagher looks set to join Atletico Madrid.

The England international would join Mason Mount, Lewis Hall, Ruben Loftus-Cheek, Ian Maatsen and Callum Hudson-Odoi as products of the Chelsea youth system to be sold over the past two years, while Armando Broja and Trevoh Chalobah are also expected to leave before the end of August.

Chelsea have needed to re-coup funds after splashing well over £1 billion (\$1.3 billion) in the past four transfer windows to revamp the squad under new ownership led by LA Dodgers co-owner Todd Boehly and private equity firm Clearlake Capital.

The sale of players who came through the academy is particularly helpful for clubs to comply with financial regulations as the full transfer fee is recorded as a profit in the books.

Profit and sustainabili-

“This is not Chelsea's problem, these are the rules. All the clubs at this moment are compelled to sell players from the academy because of the rules. It's all of the Premier League clubs' problems

ENZO MARESCA

ty rules that limit Premier League clubs to losses of £105 million (\$134 million) across a three-year assessment period have been blamed for a slow summer transfer window so far.

Last season Everton and Nottingham Forest were docked points for breaching the regulations, while newly-promoted Leicester could face one this season for breaches in the 2022/23 campaign.

"This is not Chelsea's problem, these are the rules. All the clubs at this moment are compelled to sell players from the academy because of the rules. It's all of the Premier League clubs' problems," said Maresca, who joined Chelsea from Leicester in June.

Saudi Ministry launches tender for privatizing six sports clubs

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

The Saudi Ministry of Sport, in partnership with the National Center for Privatization (NCP) & PPP, has officially announced the tendering phase for the privatization of six sports clubs.

This initiative is a key component of the broader sports investment and privatization project introduced by the Crown Prince, aligning with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030.

The six clubs entering this privatization phase are Alzulfi, Alnahda, Alokhdood, Alan-



Prince Abdul Aziz bin Turk Al-Faisal, Saudi Sports Minister

sar, Alorouba, and Alkholoud. This announcement follows a previous update about the second phase of the Sports Clubs

Investment and Privatization Project, which involves the privatization of 14 clubs in total, as approved by the Council of Ministers.

The privatization process will unfold in multiple stages, starting with the submission of expressions of interest (EOI) and requests for qualification (RFQ) by investors via the NCP's "Investors Portal." Applications will be accepted until 4:00 PM on September 19, 2024. This will be followed by the evaluation of submissions, the launch of financial and technical offers, and formal negotiations.

This move is designed to in-

volve the private sector in the development and growth of the sports industry, enhancing the capabilities of national teams, clubs, and sports practitioners. It reflects Saudi Arabia's commitment to advancing its sports sector as part of Vision 2030, fostering collaboration between public and private entities to strengthen the national economy and create lasting impact.

This announcement opens up exciting opportunities for investors looking to make a mark in the sports sector, supporting the Kingdom's ambitious goals and contributing to its evolving sports landscape.

Henry 'living a dream' as France reach Olympic men's football final

● **Thierry Henry leads hosts to gold medal match against Spain**

● **France aims for second gold after 40 years**

● **France overcomes Egypt 3-1 in semi-final**

TDT | Manama

Thierry Henry won almost everything possible in a glittering career as a player and is now "living a dream" as a coach after leading hosts France to the final of the Olympic men's football.

France are aiming to win gold for the second time, 40 years after their triumph in Los Angeles, and will face Spain in the final after narrowly avoiding a shock defeat against Egypt on Monday. Henry's team were trailing



France players celebrate after beating Egypt to reach the Olympic men's football final

1-0 in the semi-final in Lyon but came back to win 3-1, with Jean-Philippe Mateta equalising to force extra time and then scoring again in the 99th minute before Michael Olise sealed the victory.

"I am going to be honest, I am mainly happy for Team France because when you see everyone

picking up medals all over the place, you say to yourself that you can't let them down," Henry said.

"You don't want to be the team that doesn't win a medal, so at least that is done, and now we will see what colour we get.

"But honestly I am living a dream and I don't want to wake

up." Henry, who won the Champions League with Barcelona and both the World Cup and European Championship with France as a player, was appointed coach of France's Under-21 and Olympic teams just under a year ago.



Despite not having star players like Kylian Mbappe and Antoine Griezmann, France has reached the final with Alexandre Lacazette leading the team and Jean-Philippe Mateta emerging as the top scorer with four goals

“I am going to be honest, I am mainly happy for Team France because when you see everyone picking up medals all over the place, you say to yourself that you can't let them down

THIERRY HENRY

The 46-year-old will now lead them out on Friday in the final at the Parc des Princes, the same ground where France beat Spain in the final of the 1984 European Championship just weeks before their only Olympic victory to date.

"You know how difficult it is going to be against them. They are often in the finals of competitions, in both men's and women's football," Henry added of the Tokyo Olympic silver medalists who beat Morocco 2-1 in their semi-final.

France are guaranteed a medal

after making the final despite failing to enrol the services of full national team captain Kylian Mbappe and vice-captain Antoine Griezmann for the Olympic tournament.

Instead they have been led from the front by Lyon's former Arsenal striker Alexandre Lacazette, while their star man in the knockout rounds has been Mateta.

He scored 16 goals in the Premier League last season for Crystal Palace, including 14 in his last 16 games.

Now he is France's top scorer at the Games with four goals, among them the winner in a fiery quarter-final against Argentina and his double against Egypt.

"It is a dream to be in the final and I can't wait to be in Paris," said Mateta, who comes from the suburbs of the French capital.

"We have been talking about the Games for a year and a half now and finally we get to go to Paris."

Olympic open water training in polluted Seine scrapped: organisers

Paris Olympics organisers cancel open water swimming training due to elevated bacterial levels

- Training cancelled for 5th time since Games started
- Triathletes allowed to swim in Seine despite pollution concerns
- Marathon swimming events scheduled for August 8 and 9

AFP | Paris



Athletes jump into the water to compete in the swimming race in the Seine

Paris Olympics organisers cancelled training for open water swimming in the River Seine yesterday due to pollution, raising questions over why triathletes were allowed to swim in the waterway the day before. The decision -- the fifth time organisers have cancelled training in the river since the start of the Games on July 28 -- is also likely to further frustrate swimmers.

The Paris sewerage system is known to discharge untreated waste water into the channel during severe rainstorms despite a 1.4-billion euros (\$1.5 billion) upgrade over the last decade. Training for the triathlon mixed relay race was cancelled on Saturday and Sunday after storms last week. But organisers and governing

body World Triathlon gave the green light for the competition to go ahead on Monday, saying bacterial levels had fallen to safe levels. They did not give figures for the two bacteria they measure as an indicator of the presence of faecal matter -- E.Coli and enterococci. The race turned out to be a

YOU

KNOW WHAT

Monday's mixed triathlon relay was disrupted by illness with at least three teams reporting sick athletes who had swum in the River Seine the week before during the individual men and women's races

thriller, Germany's Laura Lindemann holding off a fierce challenge from the United States and Britain to take gold. Organisers issued a statement early yesterday saying the marathon swimming "familiarisation session" yesterday would not go ahead because of elevated ente-

rococci readings. "After the daily situation meeting this morning between Ville de Paris, Paris 2024 and World Aquatics, it has been decided that the familiarisation session to take place today, 6 August 2024 is cancelled," the statement said. Several triathletes have expressed frustration about the repeated training cancellations since the start of the Games which prevented them from preparing for the strong currents in the Seine, which is flowing at two-three times its usual summer rate. The Seine is set to be used for marathon swimming -- a 10-kilometre race -- on August 8 for women and August 9 for men. Monday's mixed triathlon relay was disrupted by illness with at least three teams reporting sick athletes who had swum in the River Seine the week before during the individual men and women's races. Teams from Belgium, Switzerland and Norway reported

Standings

#	NOC	G	S	B	Total
1	China	22	19	14	55
2	United States	21	30	28	79
3	France*	13	16	19	48
4	Australia	13	12	8	33
5	Great Britain	12	13	17	42
6	South Korea	11	8	7	26
7	Japan	10	5	11	26
8	Italy	9	10	6	25
9	Germany	8	5	4	17
10	Netherlands	7	5	6	18
11	Canada	5	4	8	17
12	New Zealand	3	5	1	9
13	Hungary	3	3	2	8
	Sweden	3	3	2	8
15	Romania	3	3	1	7

racers with stomach bugs, although no direct link was drawn to the Seine. Some athletes have defended using the river and say they have not been affected by the uncertainty about its cleanliness. "No-one was afraid to jump in. We were all happy to have a race," German Tim Hellwig, who won gold on Monday during the team event, told reporters. "If like 99 percent of the athletes don't have any problems, I think it's fine," he said. Organisers have said that marathon swimming can be moved to another location in Vaires-sur-Marne on the River Marne east of Paris if the Seine is too polluted to use. They said yesterday they were "very confident" that the men's and women's events would take place in the Seine.

Taiwan threatens legal action over Olympic boxing gender row

Taiwanese sports officials threatened the International Boxing Association with legal action on Tuesday after the organisation claimed a Taiwanese fighter in the Paris Olympics women's competition was "a man". Taiwan's Lin Yu-ting and Algeria's Imane Khelif, both of whom are guaranteed a medal after reaching the semi-finals, are at the centre of a major gender row. The IBA disqualified them



Taiwan's Lin Yu-ting (L) in action

from its world championships in 2023, but boxing in Paris is run by the International Olympic Committee, which cleared them to compete. The two organisations have been in open dispute and the IOC took over the sport at the Games because of financial, governance and ethical concerns at the IBA. The Russian-led IBA attempt-

ed to clarify the situation surrounding Lin and Khelif but a chaotic press conference on Monday only muddied the waters further, with IBA officials making a series of contradictory statements. Its president, Kremlin-linked oligarch Umar Kremlev, claimed that both fighters had "genetic testing that shows that these are men".

Chinese diving prodigy wins third Olympic gold at age 17

The 17-year-old diving prodigy Quan Hongchan yesterday won her second gold at the Paris Olympics and third of her career to maintain China's perfect record in the sport in the French capital. Quan sealed a China one-two in the women's 10m platform, her winning total of 425.60 points keeping team-mate Chen Yuxi at bay for silver with 420.70. North Korea's Kim Mi Rae took bronze on 372.10, and promptly burst into tears.



the 10m platform at the Tokyo Olympics, when she was just 14, and then took gold in the women's synchronised 10m platform in Paris with Chen. China are the unrivalled superpower in diving and have won all five golds in the sport so far in the French capital. Three more golds are up for grabs. China's divers won all but one of the eight titles in Tokyo, Britain took the other.

Germany beat Antetokounmpo's Greece to reach basketball semis

World Cup champions Germany reached the Olympic men's basketball semi-finals for the first time yesterday, coming from behind to beat Greece 76-63 and dumping two-time NBA MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo out of the Games. Trailing by as many as 12 in the first quarter, Germany had drawn level at 36-36 by halftime and after a tense third quarter roared away in the fourth to book a meeting with either host nation France or Canada for a place in the final.



Germany's Franz Wagner drives for a basket in a quarter-final victory over Greece

man team pulled together to slow Antetokounmpo. "It was more than half of the scouting report, so a big part of our preparation," he said of the need to contain the Greek superstar. "It takes all five on the court to try to stop him, but I thought we did a good job, especially in the second half, of at least trying to contain him." Greece started strongly and Antetokounmpo brought their fans to their feet with a dunk that gave them a 16-4 lead with five minutes remaining in the first quarter. Wagner said the whole Ger-

Serbia pip Australia in thriller to make last-four

Nikola Jokic led Serbia into the men's Olympic basketball semi-finals yesterday as they rallied from 24 points down to edge Australia 95-90 in overtime and set up a potential showdown with the United States. Patty Mills scored 26 points for Australia, including 14 in a row during a 20-0 run spanning the first and second quar-

ters, but Serbia hung tough and gradually erased the deficit to pull off an epic comeback. Three-time NBA MVP Jokic tallied 21 points, 14 rebounds and eight assists and received plenty of help from his supporting cast. Bogdan Bogdanovic had 17 points as one of five other players to hit double figures for Serbia. Australia made it through

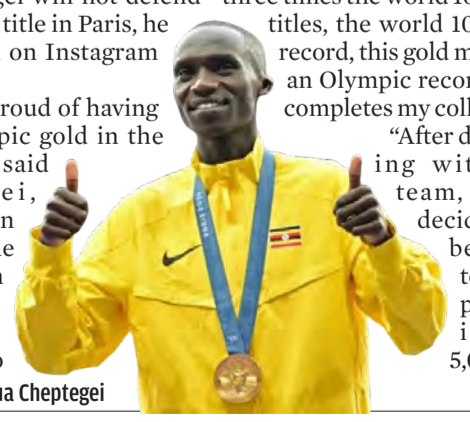
the group stage despite losing two of three games, whereas Serbia pipped South Sudan to second in their section behind Team USA. Serbia, beaten 110-84 by the US in their tournament opener, could meet the reigning four-time champions again in the semi-finals if the Americans get past Brazil later on yesterday.



Serbia's Nikola Jokic in action

No Olympic double tilt as Cheptegei pulls out of 5,000m

Newly-crowned Olympic 10,000m champion Joshua Cheptegei will not defend his 5,000m title in Paris, he announced on Instagram yesterday. "I'm so proud of having won Olympic gold in the 10,000m," said Cheptegei, who won silver in the event in the Tokyo Games. "So proud for Uganda. After the world junior 10,000m title, three times the world 10,000m titles, the world 10,000m record, this gold medal in an Olympic record time completes my collection. "After discussing with my team, we've decided it's best not to compete in the 5,000m."



Joshua Cheptegei