

Djokovic, Nadal set for Olympics second-round showdown

Legends drawn for potential second-round meeting in Paris, as both seek elusive singles gold | P12



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US economy beats Q2 growth expectations

Paris holds breath for today's Olympics opening ceremony

AFP | Paris

Paris was yesterday counting down the hours to the most ambitious Olympics opening ceremony in history on the river Seine.

The show tonight will see up to 7,500 competitors sail down a six-kilometre stretch of the Seine on 85 boats, accompanied by a performance blending French culture and Olympic values that organisers promise will be spectacular.

The Paris Olympics, officially known as the Games of the XXXIII Olympiad, are scheduled to take place from July 26 to August 11, 2024.

HH Shaikh Khalid names Bahrain delegation head

TDT | Manama

His Highness 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 (BOC), has assigned HH Shaikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa, Vice President of BOC, to lead Bahrain's delegation at the 33rd Summer Olympics in Paris from 26 July to 11 August 2024.

HH Shaikh Isa bin Ali expressed his appreciation to HH Shaikh Khalid, noting that the assignment reflects his confidence in national capabilities to represent Bahrain.

Reckless truck driver arrested

TDT | Manama

The General Traffic Department has arrested a truck driver from a local company following the circulation of a video clip on social media showing him driving the truck in the wrong direction in the Ramli area.

The department reported that the driver's actions posed a significant risk to road users' safety.

In response, the General Traffic Department has initiated legal proceedings and impounded the vehicle involved.

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Tense truce talks

Netanyahu, Biden discuss approach to ending nine-month Gaza fighting

AFP | Washington

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday he was ready to work with Joe Biden for the rest of his presidency, as the two leaders met for the first time at the White House for talks on a Gaza ceasefire.

"I want to thank you for the 50 years of public service and 50 years of support for the state of Israel," Netanyahu said after they shook hands in the historic setting of the Oval Office.

"And I look forward to discussing with you today and working with you in the months ahead."

Biden stunned the world Sunday when he announced that he was bowing out of the US presidential election, with Vice President Kamala Harris now set to be the Democratic Party's candidate.

Netanyahu will also meet Harris separately at the White House, in a reflection of the new political reality that will see Biden as a lame duck president for his remaining six months in office.

The Harris meeting comes amid speculation that if she wins in November it could herald a tougher approach on Israel's war in Gaza.

Support

Relations between Biden and Netanyahu are tense over Israel's conduct in the war sparked by Hamas's October 7 attacks, but the US president has contin-



Palestinian children receive treatment at the Nasser hospital following the Israeli military targeting of the southeastern district of Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip. (AFP)

ued strong military and political support.

They have met just three times during his presidency, once in September last year in New York, and then when Biden traveled to Israel after the attacks and hugged Netanyahu on the airport tarmac at Tel Aviv.

The meetings come after Netanyahu vowed "total victory" against Hamas in a fiery speech Wednesday to the US Congress.

Biden and Netanyahu will later meet the families of US hostages held in Gaza.

Police presence

The White House was surrounded by metal barriers and a heavy police presence, after protests broke out near the Capitol following Netanyahu's speech.

Harris yesterday condemned the "despicable" and "unpatriotic" burning of an American flag

by protesters, after attempts by Donald Trump's Republicans to paint Democrats as pro-Hamas.

In a primetime speech explaining his decision on Sunday to bow out of the US presidential election, Biden made clear that resolving the conflict would remain a top priority.

"I'm going to keep working to end the war on Gaza, bring home all the hostages to bring peace and security to the Middle



The White House said yesterday US President Joe Biden will tell Israeli premier Benjamin Netanyahu a ceasefire in Gaza is needed "soon".

East and end this war," the US president said.

Negotiations

A senior US administration official said Wednesday that negotiations on a Gaza deal were in the "closing stages" and that Biden would try to close some "final gaps" with Netanyahu.

Harris has previously been more outspoken about Israel's conduct of the war, prompting speculation she will shift her policy as presidential nominee.

The US official said there was "no daylight between the president and vice president", who will meet Netanyahu at 4:30 pm (2030 GMT).

Netanyahu will meet Republican contender Donald Trump today at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida.

Global finance meeting

US rejects plan for G20 deal to tax super-rich

AFP | Rio De Janeiro

The United States sees no need to negotiate an international agreement on taxing the super-wealthy, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said yesterday, highlighting divisions on a plan that is top of the agenda at a G20 finance ministers' meeting in Rio de Janeiro.

Taxing the ultra-rich is a key priority of Brazil's leftist president, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who this year heads the G20 grouping of the world's major economies, the European Union and African Union.

"Tax policy is very difficult to coordinate globally," Yellen told a press conference in Rio de Janeiro, ahead of an evening meeting between finance ministers to discuss the topic.

"We don't see a need or really think it's desirable to try to negotiate a global agreement



Image used for illustrative purposes only



The richest one percent of the world have earned more than \$40 trillion in a decade, but their taxation is at "historically" low rates, according to a study by the NGO Oxfam published yesterday.

on that. We think that all countries should make sure that their taxation systems are fair and progressive."

Yellen said Washington was "strongly supportive of progressive taxation, and making sure that very wealthy, high-income individuals pay their fair share."

She highlighted policies proposed by US President Joe Biden, such as a billionaires' tax, which she described as "a very worthwhile initiative."

Progressive taxation

"It makes sense for most countries to take this approach of progressive taxation."

Brazil's search for a global agreement on taxing the richest of the rich is backed by France, Spain, South Africa, Colombia and the African Union.

"Some individuals control more resources than entire countries," Lula said Wednesday at the launch of an initiative to fight world hunger, another project topping his G20 agenda.

A roadmap to relief

Major road upgrades afoot across all governorates

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Urgent road infrastructure projects are in progress, as announced on the official website of the Ministry of Works.

These efforts aim to alleviate traffic congestion across all governorates, with the ministry currently advancing the third and fourth phases of these initiatives.

The third phase involves two key undertakings.

The first is the addition of a third lane in each direction on Mahzoora Avenue, spanning from Umm Al Naasan Avenue to its junction with Avenue 37.

The second focuses on the enhancement of the Shaikh Jaber A. Al Subah Highway intersection with Avenue 1, extending to Umm Al Saad Avenue.

The fourth phase comprises four undertakings.

The first pertains to the enhancement of Avenue 77, from Avenue 47 to Road 4566 in Sanad.

The second addresses improvements to Bahrain Youth



The projects offer solutions to traffic issues

Avenue in the Educational Area.

The third involves the development of Mahzoora Avenue in Riffa, between Road 3933 and Estiqlal Highway.

Intersection

The fourth centres on the intersection of Avenue 20 with

Road 2651 in Busaiteen.

The Ministry clarified that these projects aim to ease traffic congestion on various streets and intersections, catering to the needs of citizens on all major roads.

This effort forms part of a broader strategic plan for the

road network, which includes the construction of tunnels, bridges, and the expansion of main roads.

Typically requiring two to five years for completion, these projects are designed to accommodate urban growth and the increasing number of

vehicles.

They offer solutions to traffic issues, improve the efficiency of road networks, elevate performance levels, and ensure traffic safety.

These initiatives also align with housing and investment projects in the Kingdom.

Easing Southern Governorate traffic woes



The road connecting Hunainyah Avenue to Al Muaskar Highway

TDT | Manama

Work has kicked off on the road linking Hunainyah Avenue and Al Muaskar Highway in the Southern Governorate, according to Engineer Ahmed AlTajir, Assistant Undersecretary for Roads at the Ministry of Works.

This initiative is part of a broader effort to improve Bahrain's road network, ensuring smoother traffic flow in alignment with the Government Programme (2023-2026), aimed at benefiting the nation and its citizens.

AlTajir explained that the project involves constructing a dual carriageway, spanning 3.4 km, connecting Hunainyah Avenue from the north to Al Muaskar Highway in the south.

The plan includes developing intersections, providing side pavements, establishing a rainwater drainage network, enhancing lighting, and implementing traffic safety measures. Additionally, a treated water line for landscaping and irrigation will be installed.

He added that the project aims to provide additional access points for those heading to Hunainyah, East Riffa, and surrounding areas, thereby easing off congestion in the region

Gulf Air launches direct flights to Paris for 2024 Olympics



Streamlined travel for athletes, officials and spectators

TDT | Manama

Gulf Air has introduced direct flights from Bahrain International Airport to Paris, enhancing travel for the upcoming Paris Olympics 2024.

This service aims to provide seamless connectivity for athletes, officials, and spectators, ensuring they arrive comfortably and on time for the prestigious event.

Direct Flight Details

Gulf Air offers several daily flights to both Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG) and Orly Airport (ORY).

For instance, one key flight departs Bahrain at 01:35 AM, landing in Paris at 07:55 AM after a 7-hour, 20-minute journey.

These flights are designed to cater to the high demand expected during the Olympics, providing convenient options for travelers.

Enhancing the Travel Experience

Passengers flying with Gulf Air can expect exceptional service and luxurious amenities. The airline's modern fleet

includes award-winning in-flight services, such as gourmet dining, spacious seating, and advanced entertainment systems.

These features ensure a comfortable and enjoyable journey for all passengers.

Convenient Connections

Bahrain International Airport (BIA) serves as a strategic hub, connecting travelers from various cities across Asia, Africa, and the Gulf to Paris.

The airport's state-of-the-art facilities and efficient processing systems further enhance the travel experience, making it a preferred choice for those heading to the Olympics.

Gulf Air's direct flights to Paris are part of a broader effort to support the global movement of Olympic delegations, media personnel, and fans, ensuring that everyone arrives ready to participate in or enjoy the games.

This initiative underscores Gulf Air's commitment to providing top-tier travel services and contributing to the success of the Paris Olympics 2024.

Community security and human rights a priority

TDT | Manama

The Interior Minister, His Excellency General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, emphasised the significance of enhancing community security programs and initiatives, which align with the values and principles of the comprehensive development process led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

In his remarks, the Minister noted that this development process has bolstered the status of human rights and oversight institutions, strengthening their role in advancing the human rights system in Bahrain.



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Man held for stealing BD1,500 from restaurant in Manama

● Robbery case filed

TDT | Manama

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science has arrested a 34-year-old man in connection with the theft of approximately BD1,500 from a restaurant in the Manama area.

According to the administration, authorities launched an immediate investigation after receiving a report of the robbery.

The subsequent search led to the identification and arrest of the accused individual.

The General Department of Criminal Investigations and Evidence has confirmed that all necessary legal procedures have been completed, and the case has been referred to the Public Prosecution for further action.

Dream home, bigger payout

Parliament to discuss increasing housing finance from BD80,000 to BD120,000

TDT | Manama

The Public Utilities Committee of the Council of Representatives is preparing to discuss a new draft law that proposes increasing the amount of housing finance provided by the Ministry of Housing to a maximum of BD120,000, instead of the current BD80,000.

The explanatory memorandum of the law states that it aims to ensure that the financing amounts are commensurate with the real estate market prices in the Kingdom of Bahrain and to encourage citizens to apply for the alternative housing programs offered by the Ministry.

Amount

The text of the proposed law, submitted by MP Jalal Kazim along with a number of other MPs, states: "A new article numbered (5) bis shall be added to the Housing Law, stating: "The amount of financing for the purchase or construction of a hous-



The proposal aims to ensure that the financing amounts are commensurate with the real estate market prices in the Kingdom, and to encourage citizens to apply for the alternative housing programs offered by the Ministry.

ing unit from the Housing Bank shall be determined according to the monthly income of the applicant and according to the financing schedule prepared by the Ministry, provided that the financing amount shall not be



Image used for illustrative purposes only

less than eighty thousand Bahraini dinars and not more than one hundred and twenty thousand Bahraini dinars."

The explanatory memorandum of the proposal states that it aims to raise the ceiling of the

financial financing amount for the purchase or construction of a housing unit, so that the financing amount shall not be less than eighty thousand dinars and not more than one hundred and twenty thousand Bahraini

dinars, according to the monthly income of the applicant.

This is to ensure that it is commensurate with the beneficiary of the financial service from the Housing Bank and with the prices of the real estate market, and in comparison with the current living situation in light of the rising prices of real estate and building materials, which negatively affects the owner of the housing service in the accumulation of debts on him, in addition to other fees that he incurs after the purchase, which may force him to borrow personally from other financing banks in order to be able to purchase or complete the construction of the dwelling, and thus the citizen will be in a circle of financial obligations that burden him as the head of a family.

Therefore, this proposal will contribute to increasing the desire for the housing finance services provided by the government, which will guarantee them stability and a decent life, the explanatory memorandum stated.

Two years in jail for fraudulent online transactions

● Defendant uses stolen credit cards

TDT | Manama

A man has been sentenced to two years in prison by the Lower Criminal Court for fraudulent online transactions using stolen credit cards.

The Public Prosecution had charged the man after an investigation revealed he used stolen credit cards to conduct online transactions through a fake website.

The National Financial Intel-

ligence Center (NFIC) initially alerted the prosecution to the suspect's activities after discovering suspicious transactions using stolen foreign credit cards.

Upon further investigation, the Public Prosecution discovered that the suspect had created a fake website and used his social media account to sell luxury watches, as per a statement issued by the Public Prosecution.

"The investigation also revealed hundreds of fraudulent transactions using nearly 50 stolen foreign credit cards, amounting to a total of 132,000 Bahraini



Image used for illustrative purposes only

dinars. The Public Prosecution questioned the suspect and confronted him with the evidence, including objections raised by the payment company regarding suspicious transactions on his website," the Public Prosecution stated. The suspect was subsequently detained pending further investigation.

Location

As per the statement, the defendant's arrest came after the NFIC investigation traced the location of the fraudulent transactions, confirming that the suspect used his email and

phone number to complete the transactions.

Based on this evidence, the Public Prosecution referred the case to the Lower Criminal Court for trial.

The Head of the Cybercrime Prosecution affirmed the Public Prosecution's commitment to investigating suspicious online transactions and holding perpetrators accountable.

She emphasised the importance of maintaining trust and security in online payment systems, which are crucial for facilitating and promoting business in the digital age.

Man on trial for causing car accident victim's disability

TDT | Manama

A seemingly minor car accident escalated into a criminal case after a 50-year-old man sustained a permanent injury, resulting in a 10% disability.

The incident occurred when the victim, while leaving his home, collided with a car parked behind his residence.

The victim recounted that upon exiting his vehicle, he discovered a young woman inside the other car.

She contacted her father, who arrived with his son, the defendant.

Heated exchange

During a heated exchange, the defendant, the woman's brother, allegedly punched the victim in the left jaw.

The altercation was eventually broken up by the defendant's father.

The defendant confessed to the assault during investiga-

tions conducted by the Public Prosecution.

The defendant's sister corroborated the account, stating that her brother had indeed punched the victim.

Punch

A medical report confirmed that the victim's injury was consistent with a punch and resulted in a fractured lower jaw.

The injury required more than 20 days of treatment and involved surgical intervention to fix the fracture.

The victim also had to undergo the extraction of two teeth due to damage caused by the injury.

As a result, he now experiences reduced sensation in the lower left side of his face due to nerve damage, leading to a permanent disability estimated at 10%.

The High Criminal Court has



The defendant, the woman's brother, allegedly punched the victim in the left jaw during a heated exchange.

initiated proceedings against the defendant, a 24-year-old crane operator, for causing permanent disability without intent

The defendant has acknowledged the charges.

The court has scheduled August 4th for the defense attorney to review the case and respond, with the provision of copies of the case files.

Summer activity inaugurated for people with special needs



Sports is for everyone, including those with special needs

TDT | Manama

The Deputy Capital Governor Hassan Al Madani inaugurated the annual summer activity of the Bahrain Association for Parents and Friends of the Disabled in its 14th edition, which is organised by the association at its entertainment

centre in Salmaniya Park.

The Deputy Capital Governor was briefed on the association's various summer programme activities and events, and stressed that the Capital Governorate's eagerness to continue supporting and sponsoring programmes and activities, to accomplish its comprehensive development goals and to activate the princi-

ple of community partnership.

He said that the governorate has placed special emphasis on integrating people with special needs into society, activating their role, and raising their level of determination.

The Chairperson of the Association's Board of Directors thanked the Capital Governorate for their

Paycheck pledge

Candidate pledges 80% of salary to social fund for needy residents

TDT | Manama

Mohammed Al Sahli, a potential candidate for the upcoming by-election in the first constituency of Muharraq Governorate, has announced he will donate 80% of his salary to a social fund for needy residents if elected.

In a post on his Instagram account, Al Sahli stated, "The Bahraini people have been disappointed by MPs, and they believe that every candidate runs for the salary alone. But we will break this rule. I will establish a social fund to help the needy residents of the area, and I will allocate 80% of my salary to it if I win, and 20% for my office. I hope that other candidates will follow the same initiative

"I will establish a social fund to help the needy residents of the area, and I will allocate 80% of my salary to it if I win, and 20% for my office."

- MOHAMMED AL SAHLI, POTENTIAL CANDIDATE



if they are serious about serving the people."

Public sentiment

Al Sahli's pledge comes as a response to public sentiment that many politicians are motivated by personal gain rather

than serving the community.

His initiative aims to address this perception and demonstrate a commitment to social responsibility.

The by-election, which will take place in September, was triggered by the Court of Cas-

sation's decision to revoke the membership of former MP Mohammed Al Hussaini due to his holding of dual citizenship, a violation of Bahraini electoral laws.

Intention

The Court of Cassation's ruling has sparked a wave of activity, with several candidates already expressing their intention to run.

Businessman Ebrahim Al Shaikh announced on Friday his decision to take part in the elections, while Waleed Al Alawi, who came second in the previous elections, has also declared his candidacy.

Several other candidates have also announced their intention to participate in the by-election.

Bahraini woman to run for Muharraq by-election

Inspired by royal reform

TDT | Manama

Dr. Nada Ali Bin Shams has announced her candidacy for the upcoming by-election in the first constituency of Muharraq Governorate.

In a press statement, Dr. Bin Shams stated, "After placing my trust in God and seeking counsel, I declare my candidacy for the Council of Representatives from the first constituency of Muharraq Governorate. I am honoured and proud to serve my country and its citizens.

"This decision aligns with the reform project initiated by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, which we all strive to support, and the encouragement of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khali-



"This decision aligns with women's participation in all fields that showcase the capabilities and potential of Bahraini women."

- DR. NADA ALI BIN SHAMS

fa, HM the King's consort, for women's participation in all fields that showcase the capabilities and potential of Bahraini women."

Filipino workers take part in free skill-building training at Embassy

TDT | Manama

A total of 53 Filipinos are taking part in a free meat and food processing training sessions at the Philippine Embassy.

In recent weeks, Filipinos

have been actively engaging in numerous training sessions undeterred by the summer heat, to acquire valuable skills.

During the training, Dr. Amelito S. Adel, Overseas Workers Welfare

Administration (OWWA) Welfare Officer, urged the participants to inquire about any unclear aspects of food processing procedures to enhance their comprehension especially time and measurements.

He prompted attendees to seek clarification to the trainers, Jeffrey Kerr Fredeluces and Nicodemus Cordero on any uncertainties regarding the process for improved understanding.

Meanwhile, Dinah E. Sta. Ana has encourage Overseas Filipino Workers to engage in OWWA skills training to enhance their capabilities through skill development programs.

The OWWA Reintegration Program aims to support Filipino expats in transitioning back to the Philippines and achieving self-sufficiency after their employment abroad.

CONDENSED INTERIM FINANCIAL INFORMATION, for the six months ended 30 June 2024

(All figures in Bahraini Dinars)

NATIONAL HOTELS COMPANY (B.S.C)



CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as at 30 June 2024			
	30 June 2024 (reviewed)	31 December 2023 (audited)	
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	33,803,242	33,591,757	
Investment property	29,793,669	29,913,554	
Investment in an associate	6,017,265	6,525,967	
Investment securities	5,115,873	4,839,767	
Total non-current assets	74,730,049	74,871,045	
Current assets			
Inventories	80,374	74,604	
Investment securities	1,098,364	1,119,806	
Trade receivables and other assets	881,062	599,753	
Bank deposits	2,150,000	2,300,000	
Cash and cash equivalents	4,031,106	3,862,115	
Total current assets	8,240,906	7,955,278	
Total assets	82,970,955	82,826,323	
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY			
Non-current liabilities			
Employees' end of service benefits	283,633	278,775	
Total non-current liabilities	283,633	278,775	
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	1,582,865	1,514,654	
Total current liabilities	1,582,865	1,514,654	
Total liabilities	1,866,498	1,793,429	
EQUITY			
Share capital	12,127,500	12,127,500	
Statutory reserve	6,063,750	6,063,750	
General reserve	1,087,579	1,087,579	
Property revaluation reserve	14,418,702	14,418,702	
Investments fair value reserve	1,476,634	1,583,771	
Share of reserves of associate	151,804	166,152	
Retained earnings	45,778,488	45,585,440	
Total equity	81,104,457	81,032,894	
Total liabilities and equity	82,970,955	82,826,323	

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS for the for the six months ended 30 June 2024				
	Six months ended 30 June		Three months ended 30 June	
	2024 (reviewed)	2023 (reviewed)	2024 (reviewed)	2023 (reviewed)
Revenue from contracts with customers	4,228,650	3,750,832	2,176,815	1,752,045
Operating costs	(2,473,581)	(2,226,058)	(1,275,442)	(1,103,943)
GROSS PROFIT	1,755,069	1,524,774	901,373	648,102
Share of profit of an associate	905,646	906,390	568,823	441,249
Dividend income	156,116	140,741	24,000	24,000
Interest income	234,406	189,334	111,205	82,829
Change in fair value of investments at fair value through profit or loss	(20,442)	39,603	(39,133)	41,123
Other income	6,266	3,648	2,471	1,618
Depreciation	(1,047,247)	(1,087,664)	(523,368)	(550,186)
General and administration expenses	(341,658)	(269,404)	(212,686)	(139,839)
Profit for the period	1,648,156	1,447,422	832,685	548,896
Basic and diluted earnings per share (filis)	14	12	7	5

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME for the six months ended 30 June 2024				
	Six months ended 30 June		Three months ended 30 June	
	2024 (reviewed)	2023 (reviewed)	2024 (reviewed)	2023 (reviewed)
Profit for the period	1,648,156	1,447,422	832,685	548,896
Other comprehensive income				
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:				
-Net movement in fair value of Investments at fair value through other comprehensive income during the period	(107,137)	(185,780)	(78,231)	(197,594)
-Share in associates' other comprehensive income	(6,087)	(16,836)	(18,197)	(20,096)
Total other comprehensive income for the period	(113,224)	(202,616)	(96,428)	(217,690)
Total comprehensive income for the period	1,534,932	1,244,806	736,257	331,206

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS for the six months ended 30 June 2024			
	30 June 2024 (reviewed)	30 June 2023 (reviewed)	
OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Profit for the period	1,648,156	1,447,422	
Adjustments for:			
Depreciation	1,047,247	1,087,664	
Share of profit of an associate	(905,646)	(906,390)	
Change in fair value on investments at FVTPL	20,442	(39,603)	
Dividend income	(156,116)	(140,741)	
Interest income	(234,406)	(189,334)	
Impairment on financial assets	10,616	(6,173)	
Provision for employees' benefits	22,503	27,398	
Operating profit before working capital changes	1,452,796	1,280,243	
Change in inventories	(5,770)	(4,884)	
Change in trade receivables and other assets	(235,100)	(31,372)	
Change in trade and other payables	292,810	2,583	
Cash flows from operations	1,504,736	1,246,570	
Employees' end of service benefits paid	(17,645)	(8,895)	
Directors' remuneration paid	(210,000)	(210,000)	
Charitable contributions paid	(14,600)	(40,000)	
Net cash from operating activities	1,262,491	987,675	
INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(848,134)	(1,010,405)	
Purchase of investment property	(290,713)	(2,149,723)	
Purchase of investments at FVOCI	(388,823)	-	
Bank deposits	150,000	4,200,000	
Dividends received from an associate	1,400,000	1,400,000	
Dividend received	132,116	140,741	
Interest received	217,182	183,800	
Net cash from investing activities	361,608	2,764,413	
FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Dividend paid	(1,455,108)	(1,450,411)	
Sale of treasury shares	-	67,068	
Net cash used in financing activities	(1,455,108)	(1,383,343)	
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	168,991	2,368,745	
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	3,862,115	1,948,604	
Cash and cash equivalents at 30 June	4,031,106	4,317,349	

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY for the six months ended 30 June 2024

2024 (reviewed)	Share capital	Treasury shares	Statutory reserve	General reserve	Property revaluation reserve	Investments fair value reserve	Share of reserves of associate	Retained earnings	Total	2023 (reviewed)	Share capital	Treasury shares	Statutory reserve	General reserve	Property revaluation reserve	Investments fair value reserve	Share of reserves of associate	Retained earnings	Total
At 1 January 2024	12,127,500	-	6,063,750	1,087,579	14,418,702	1,583,771	166,152	45,585,440	81,032,894	12,127,500	(46,451)	6,011,069	1,087,579	14,418,702	2,000,347	223,037	44,912,675	80,734,458	
- Profit for the period	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,648,156	1,648,156	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,447,422	1,447,422
- Other comprehensive income for the period	-	-	-	-	-	(107,137)	(6,087)	-	(113,224)	-	-	-	-	-	(185,780)	(16,836)	-	(202,616)	(202,616)
Total comprehensive income for the period	-	-	-	-	-	(107,137)	(6,087)	1,648,156	1,534,932	-	-	-	-	-	(185,780)	(16,836)	-	1,447,422	1,244,806
Adjustment to associate's reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	(8,261)	-	(8,261)	-	33,637	-	-	-	-	-	-	33,431	67,068
Dividends declared for 2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,455,108)	(1,455,108)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,450,411)	(1,450,411)
Balance at 30 June 2024	12,127,500	-	6,063,750	1,087,579	14,418,702	1,476,634	151,804	45,778,488	81,104,457	Balance at 30 June 2023	12,127,500	(12,814)	6,011,069	1,087,579	14,418,702	1,814,567	206,201	44,943,117	80,595,921

Faisal Ahmed Al Zayani (Chairman)

Adel Nahabah Hamadeh (Vice Chairman & Managing Director)

Industry ministry launches Digital Business Champions Overseas Programme

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce has embarked on an ambitious initiative with the launch of the Digital Business Champions Overseas Programme. The programme's inaugural mentoring session, held at the Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance (BIBF), brought together representatives from 142 licensed companies in Bahrain. This initiative is a significant step towards equipping Bahraini



Maram AlMahmeed

businesses with cutting-edge digital expertise, aiming to boost their global competitiveness in

the export market.

Mrs Maram AlMahmeed, Director of Information Systems, announced that representatives from various nationalities attended the first mentoring session to gain insights from mentors' pioneering experiences in the field of exports through digital business. The session aimed to equip these companies with the necessary expertise to enter and succeed in this sector.

The programme includes specialised mentoring sessions de-

signed to facilitate the exchange of valuable expertise in digital business and exports. During these sessions, mentors share their extensive experience, offering insights into innovative solutions used to enhance product and service quality. The discussions also cover various challenges encountered in the field and proactive strategies for overcoming them.

AlMahmeed noted that companies and establishments that successfully complete the pro-

gramme will be awarded the title of Digital Business Champions Overseas. This title will be based on the digital transformation plans they submit at the end of the programme, outlining their strategies for transitioning to digital business and exporting overseas.

Alnafnoofi Online For Trading Via Internet was named the "eCommerce Champion" of the first version of the eCommerce Champions Overseas programme, in recognition of

its commitment to the work programme and for meeting all criteria.

This year's notable participants include Lalabella Events, The Gentlemen's Club Bahrain Clothing, and Alnafnoofi Online For Trading Via Internet. Additionally, several digital business service provider companies, such as National Bank Of Bahrain, Aramex Bahrain and Lion Impact Bahrain Online Operations, also took part in the programme.

Cash-strapped Hungary borrows 1 bn euros from China

AFP | Budapest, Hungary

Hungary borrowed one billion euros (\$1.1 billion) from Chinese banks earlier this year, its debt management agency said yesterday, as the EU member state faces a difficult financial situation.

The Hungarian government did not announce the deal, which was first reported by the local financial news site Portfolio based on publicly available data.

Budapest took out a three-year, floating-rate loan from Chinese banks on April 19, data on the Hungarian Government Debt Management Agency's website showed.

"The one-billion-euro loan agreement with the China Development Bank, the Export-Import Bank of China and the Hungarian branch of the Bank of China Limited will finance infrastructure and energy development, among other projects," the agency told AFP in a statement.

US economy beats Q2 growth expectations

AFP | Washington, United States

US economic growth blew past expectations in the second quarter, boosted by consumer spending and inventory building despite high interest rates, government data showed yesterday, after a slow start to the year.

The world's biggest economy grew 2.8% in the April to June period, up from 1.4% in the first three months this year, said the Commerce Department.

The figure was markedly above the 1.9% rate economists anticipated -- a reassuring sign that consumption remains resilient.

The acceleration "primarily reflected an upturn in private inventory investment and an acceleration in consumer spending," said the Commerce Department.

This was "partly offset by a downturn in residential fixed investment," it added.

While sectors like manufac-



Shoppers walk through the Fashion Centre at Pentagon City, a shopping mall in Arlington, Virginia

turing and housing have been struggling after the Federal Reserve rapidly hiked interest rates in 2022 to combat surging inflation, consumption has been stronger than analysts expected.

This gave the economy a boost despite rates hovering at their highest levels in more

than two decades -- making borrowing more expensive for individuals and companies.

A key factor underpinning consumption has been the robust labor market, which saw continued wage growth and businesses reluctant to let go of workers after difficulties in hiring during the pandemic.

Climate activists halt traffic at Germany's Frankfurt airport



Passengers queuing under the schedule board at the departures hall at Frankfurt's International Airport, western Germany

AFP | Frankfurt, Germany

Frankfurt police yesterday arrested climate activists who brought Germany's busiest airport to a standstill by gluing themselves to the tarmac. Traffic was halted for two hours during the busy summer holiday season before the first of the airport's landing runways was able to operate again at 0502 GMT, said an airport spokesman.

Seven activists had managed to reach the runway where they glued themselves onto the tarmac, a police spokesman said. An eighth was still trying to get through the perimeter fence when he was detained.

Police were able to remove the activists from the airport's

restricted grounds by 0815 GMT. All eight were placed under provisional arrest.

Climate activist group "Letzte Generation" (Last Generation) claimed responsibility for the civil disobedience action.

Its members used pincers to cut openings in the wire fence before making their way "by foot, with bicycles and skateboards to different points around the runways", the group said.

A photo circulated by the group depicted a protester sitting on the tarmac with an orange banner that read: "Oil kills". The group is pushing for a binding international accord that would lead to an end in oil, gas and coal use by 2030.

Batelco introduces Basma – An AI powered digital assistant

TDT | Manama

Batelco, part of the Beyon Group, has introduced Basma the new digital assistant powered by advanced generative artificial intelligence (AI) technology at a launch event. Basma is designed to enhance customer experience and provide digital assistance on Batelco's App and website. Basma is available anywhere and at any time enabling customers to receive assistance 24/7.

Users can now interact with Basma in English and Arabic through seamless voice and chat conversations directly within the Batelco mobile app and web-



Basma Launch - Management and team members

site. Basma can understand the user's needs and provide efficient solutions in real-time, her capabilities include responding to FAQs, bill inquiry, usage inquiry, package and device

installment, fiber order tracking, line reconnection, add on activation, and more. Basma's AI-powered system is designed to continuously learn and improve its capabilities, ensuring

that it can provide increasingly accurate and relevant assistance over time.

Yesterday, Basma was introduced by Batelco General Manager Consumer, Aseel Mattar

during a press conference that took place at Beyon headquarters in the presence of Batelco's Chief Executive Officer Maitham Abdulla. The event was well-attended by members

of the media, who were eager to learn more about this latest innovation. During the press conference, Batelco Head of Digital Channels, Khaled Alayoobi showcased Basma's capabilities through a live demonstration.

Batelco GM Consumer Aseel Mattar said, "Batelco has designed Basma to be more than just a functional digital assistant – she is a trusted companion, ready to assist customers with all their telecommunications needs. With Basma, Batelco customers can now enjoy a high level of support and convenience around the clock."

Update the Batelco App to start chatting with Basma.



Sameer Nass, Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, met with an Indian business delegation at the Chamber's headquarters yesterday. The meeting was also attended by India's ambassador to Bahrain, Vinod K. Jacob. During the discussions, Nass emphasized the potential to enhance trade and investment between Bahrain and India, particularly in the food sector. He noted that Bahrain has a strong demand for diverse food products, while India has significant expertise in these areas. It was highlighted that India was Bahrain's sixth-largest export partner and seventh-largest import partner in 2023, with trade exceeding 1 billion US dollars that year. Khalid Najibi, the First Vice Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber, pointed out that the trade gap between the two countries is minimal. He noted that India represents a substantial market for Bahraini exports and is a major supplier of rice. Najibi emphasized the importance of building on current achievements and further developing Bahrain as a market for Indian products, both through imports and re-exports. Vinod K. Jacob, the Indian Ambassador to Bahrain, praised the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry for its efforts to enhance trade relations between the two countries. He also acknowledged the significance of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in strengthening these ties.



News in brief

◆ **The foreign ministers** of Russia and China met yesterday on the sidelines of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) foreign ministers talks in Laos, Moscow and AFP journalists said. The three-day meeting of the 10-member ASEAN bloc started in the capital Vientiane on Thursday, with the South China Sea and the conflict in Myanmar high on the agenda. Sergei Lavrov held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the meeting, Russia's foreign ministry said. A schedule for Thursday's meeting seen by AFP showed that Lavrov was due to join Wang for a 40-minute "ministerial meeting". Lavrov left the venue at 7.15 pm local time (1215 GMT), without commenting on what the meeting had covered.



Russia, China FMs meet as ASEAN talks get underway in Laos

◆ **Russian President Vladimir Putin** vowed yesterday to crush anybody who tries to divide Russian society as he hailed the effectiveness and unwavering loyalty of his country's powerful law enforcement agencies. Putin has escalated a decades-long crackdown on civil society, independent media and opposition amid his military offensive in Ukraine, with dissent and criticism of the Kremlin outlawed and punishable by years-long prison sentences. "Those who try to intimidate people, to split our society, to play on religious or national feelings will never succeed," Putin said in a video message posted by the Kremlin. "Inevitable and just retribution awaits them," he added.

Putin vows 'retribution' against those trying to 'divide' Russia



◆ **The death toll** from a devastating landslide in southern Ethiopia has risen to 257, the United Nations said yesterday, warning it could increase to up to 500.

Ethiopia landslide death toll rises to 257, could reach up to 500: UN

The disaster occurred on Monday following heavy rains in a tiny community in a mountainous area of South Ethiopia regional state. The last toll, given by the local authority on Tuesday, was 229. "The death toll has risen to 257," as of July 24, the UN's humanitarian agency OCHA said in statement on Thursday, citing local authorities. "The death toll is expected to rise to up to 500 people," it said. At the scene in Kencho Shacha Gozdi, hundreds of people combed through the sodden red mud as they searched for survivors of the deadliest landslide recorded in Africa's second most populous country. "More than 15,000 affected people need to be evacuated," OCHA said, including at least 1,320 children, as well as 5,293 pregnant women and new mothers.



SPOTLIGHT

US defends UNRWA after Israel moves to deem it terror group



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks to a joint meeting of Congress at the US Capitol

AFP | Washington, United States

The United States on Wednesday criticized an Israeli bill that would declare the UN agency for Palestinian refugees a terrorist organization, saying that such efforts are "incredibly unhelpful."

"UNRWA is not a terrorist organization, and we urge the Israeli government and the Knesset to halt the movement of this legislation," said State Department spokesman Matthew Miller.

He added that "the attacks that the Israeli government has leveled on UNRWA are incredibly unhelpful. They do nothing to advance the cause of getting humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza."

Israel's parliament, the Knesset, on Monday gave preliminary approval to a bill that designates UNRWA a terrorist organization and proposes

severing all ties with the humanitarian agency.

After passing its first reading, the legislation will go to a parliamentary committee for further deliberation.

UNRWA, which has more than 30,000 employees serving some 5.9 million Palestinian refugees in the region, has been accused by Israel of employing "more than 400 terrorists" in the Gaza Strip.

The United States suspended its financial contributions to the agency after separate unproven Israeli allegations were made that some UNRWA staff were involved in Hamas's October 7 attacks.

Since then, US lawmakers have prohibited Washington from releasing funds to the agency. Several other countries that also withdrew funding for UNRWA have since reinstated their contributions, including Britain, France and the European Union.

UN experts urge halt to violence against Ahmadis in Pakistan

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

United Nations experts yesterday voiced grave concern at reports of surging discrimination and violence against Pakistan's Ahmadi minority community, including extrajudicial killings and attacks on places of worship.

The Ahmadiyya sect, considered heretics by fundamentalist groups, has been persecuted for decades in Pakistan but threats and intimidation have risen in recent years.

"We are alarmed by ongoing reports of violence and discrimination against the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan," said the nine independent experts, including the special rapporteurs on extrajudicial executions, on freedom of expression and on freedom of religion.

"Urgent measures are necessary to respond to these violent attacks and the broader atmosphere of hatred and discrimination which feeds it," they said in a statement.

Russian, Chinese bombers stage joint patrol near Alaska



Representative picture

AFP | Moscow, Russia

Russian and Chinese jets staged a joint patrol over far eastern Russia and the Bering Sea near Alaska but Moscow and Beijing stressed it was not aimed at any "third party".

Wednesday's flights, with nuclear-capable bombers, came days after Moscow said the United States sent its own strategic bombers close to Russian airspace.

Russia said its "Tu-95MS strategic missile carriers and the Chinese air force's Xian H-6 strategic bombers carried out an aerial patrol over the Chukchi and Bering Seas and the north Pacific Ocean".

The joint US-Canadian North American Aerospace Defense Command earlier said American and Canadian warplanes had intercepted two Russian and two Chinese bombers in international airspace near Alaska on Wednesday.

It said the bombers "remained in international airspace" and were "not seen as a threat".

Moscow said the patrol observed international law and did not breach foreign airspace, adding that "at certain stages of the route, the aviation group was accompanied by fighter jets of foreign countries".

Palestinian Olympic fake of possible Russian

AFP | Paris, France

A video that has been widely shared on social media showing a purported Palestinian threatening attacks on France during the Olympic Games in Paris is a fake and could be of Russian origin, security sources and experts said yesterday.

The video has emerged with France preparing to stage an unprecedented opening ceremony along with River Seine on Friday and some sporting action already under way since Wednesday.

The video, posted on social networks including X and Telegram, shows a man with his face covered by a keffiyeh scarf and only his eyes exposed threatening "rivers of blood" during the Olympics.

With a Palestinian flag pinned to his front, the man says such attacks will be retribution for what he describes as French support of



Displaced Palestinians play football in the courtyard of a UN-run school in Jabalia, in the northern Gaza Strip

Israel in its war against Palestinian militant group Hamas in the Gaza Strip and the presence of Israeli athletes at the Olympics.

He finishes by brandishing a bloodied head which appears to be that of Marianne, the symbol of the French Republic.

But while the video was widely

shared, many were also quick to cast doubt on its authenticity, noting it was not the style of groups like Hamas to make such videos and also questioning the quality of the speaker's Arabic.

"The French secret services and their partners have not been able to authenticate the veracity

Philippines races to contain spill after oil tanker capsizes off Manila

AFP | Limay, Philippines

A Philippine-flagged tanker carrying 1.4 million litres of industrial fuel oil sank off Manila yesterday, authorities said, as they raced to contain a spill.

One crew member of the MT Terra Nova was killed when the tanker capsized in Manila Bay, nearly seven kilometres (4.3 miles) off Limay municipality in Bataan province, as it sailed to the central city of Iloilo.

The vessel went down in rough seas as heavy rains fuelled by Typhoon Gaemi and the seasonal monsoon lashed



Part of MT Terra Nova oil tanker after it sank off Manila Bay

Manila and surrounding regions in recent days.

An oil slick stretching several kilometres has been detected and the Philippine Coast Guard was preparing to apply dispersants and deploy floating barriers to contain the spill.

Coast guard spokesman Rear Admiral Armando Balilo told a briefing earlier on Thursday authorities were "racing against time" to contain the spill and stop more fuel leaking.

It appeared so far that diesel fuel used to power the tanker was leaking into the sea but not the industrial fuel oil cargo, Balilo said.

He warned that if all the industrial fuel oil in the tanker were to leak, it would be the biggest spill in Philippine history.

"There is a big danger that Manila will be affected, even the shoreline of Manila, if the fuel will leak, because it is within Manila Bay," Balilo said.

Sunita Williams to return soon, hints Nasa



TDT | agencies

Nasa Flight Director Ed Van Cise announced that a subset of the NASA team is working closely with Boeing's CST-100 Starliner spacecraft and its crew members astronauts Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams.

This collaboration aims to fine-tune the spacecraft's systems and prepare for its upcoming departure.

The two astronauts have been aboard the Space Station for over a month as work continued on fixing several issues a glitches with the Starliner spacecraft.

Trump attack gunman searched online about

AFP | Washington, United States

The gunman who attempted to assassinate Donald Trump at a campaign rally searched online for details about the November 1963 shooting of US president John F. Kennedy in the days before the attack, the FBI director said Wednesday.

FBI chief Christopher Wray, testifying before a congressional committee, said the gunman flew a drone over the venue where the former president was scheduled to speak about two hours before he took the stage in Butler, Pennsylvania, on July 13.

Wray told members of the House Judiciary Committee that



Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump is evacuated from a rally by Secret Service agents

investigators have not established a motive for the shooting but "we are digging hard because this is one of the central questions for us." Trump survived the assassi-

nation bid, suffering a wound to his right ear, and a Secret Service sniper shot dead the suspected gunman -- named as 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks -- less

Battle of Siffin during the first Muslim civil war between Ali ibn Abi Talib and Muawiyah I beside Euphrates River



Francisco Pizarro orders the death of the last Sapa Inca Emperor, Atahualpa

The Surrey Iron Railway, arguably the world's first public railway, opens in south London

Fidel Castro leads a failed attack on the Moncada Barracks, intended to spark a revolution in Cuba

Threat video Russian origin

of this video," French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said late Wednesday.

'False flag'

A security source, who asked not to be named, told AFP "the first analyses point to a Russian operation under a 'false flag'". The source said "several clues" pointed to this interpretation.

A "false flag" operation sees attackers operate under false identities or without distinctive signs to deceive opponents, observers and potentially trigger an escalation of a conflict.

One of the first accounts to

France has mounted a vast security operation to ensure the Olympics are safe. Around 18,000 French troops have been deployed to secure the Games in addition to regular police.

post the video on X, "@endzionism24", now suspended, was created in February but then remained silent for several months.

It was activated a few days before the video was posted to share content hostile to Israel, a typical pattern of inauthentic accounts used for propaganda and disinformation purposes.

The security source said that "the video was then reposted on X by accounts known to be part of Russian networks and was relayed by African sites known to be relay points for Russians."

These included "@aussie-cossack", a pro-Russian account which has over 60,000 followers.

The man makes numerous mistakes in Arabic grammar and syntax while his pronunciation of "Allahu Akbar" (God is Greatest) at the end of the video was also widely mocked.

US sanctions China-based network over N. Korea support

AFP | Washington, United States

The United States unveiled sanctions Wednesday against a network of half a dozen people and five firms in China it accuses of supporting North Korea's ballistic missile and space programs.

The network is alleged to have helped North Korea with procuring items for its ballistic missile programs, which the US Treasury Department said were being operated in "flagrant violation" of UN Security Council resolutions.

North Korea's continued development of its ballistic missile technologies "is both irresponsible and destabilizing for both the region and the international community," Treasury under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence Brian Nelson said in a statement.

"The United States remains committed to using our tools to enforce these international sanctions, including disrupting the illicit procurement networks that provide key inputs for these technologies," he added.

Beijing's foreign ministry hit

back Thursday, saying it "opposes illegal unilateral sanctions."

"China always conscientiously implements UN Security Council resolutions and fulfils its own international obligations, and is committed to upholding peace and stability on the (Korean) peninsula," ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said at a news conference.

"Indiscriminately imposing sanctions cannot resolve peninsular issues," she said.



Representative picture

at JFK shooting: FBI chief



FBI Director Christopher Wray

than 30 seconds after he had fired eight shots.

"With respect to former president Trump, there's some question about whether or not it's a

bullet or shrapnel that, you know, that hit his ear," FBI chief Wray said. Two rally attendees were seriously injured and a 50-year-old Pennsylvania firefighter was shot dead. Wray said Crooks "appears to have done a lot of searches of public figures, in general" but that there was no clear pattern to the research. "A lot of the usual repositories of information have not yielded anything notable in terms of motive or ideology," he said.

"Starting somewhere around July 6 or so, he became very focused on former president Trump and this rally," the FBI chief said, and he registered that same day to attend the campaign event in Butler, Pennsylvania.

Rushdie attacker indicted on terrorism charges



New York, United States

The man accused of trying to kill the author Salman Rushdie has been charged with terrorism for allegedly acting on behalf of Hezbollah, according to documents unsealed Wednesday.

Hadi Matar, a 26-year-old American of Lebanese descent who was already charged by the state of New York for the 2022 stabbing attack, has now been indicted by a grand jury on three counts that include attempting to provide material to support a foreign terrorist organization, said the indictment dated July 17 but not unsealed until now.

That organization is Lebanon's Iran-backed movement Hezbollah, the US Justice Department said.

In August 2022 Rushdie lost sight in his right eye after the attack by a knife-wielding assailant at an arts gathering in New York state.

Biden says time to pass torch to 'younger voices'



Biden

AFP | Washington, US

US President Joe Biden told Americans Wednesday he quit the 2024 election to unite the country, saying in a historic Oval Office speech that it was time to pass the torch to "younger voices."

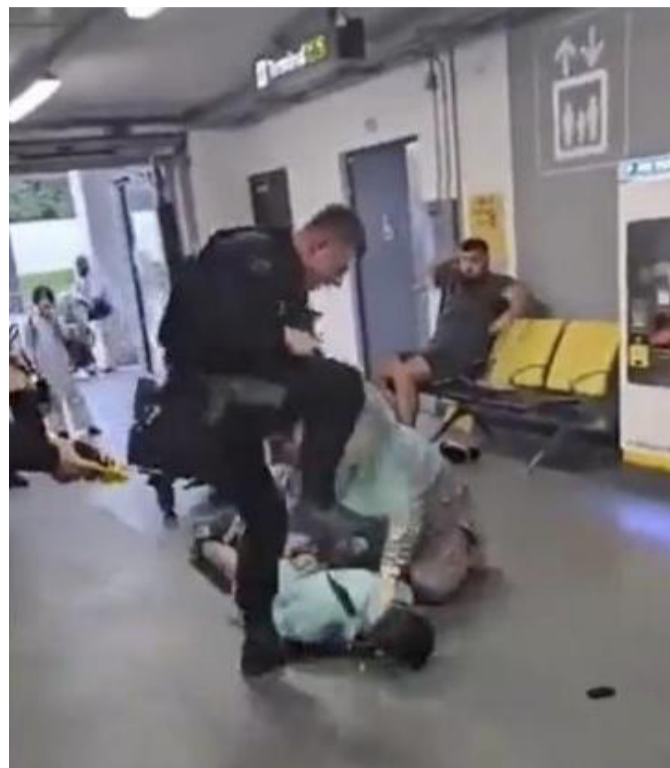
"I revere this office. But I love my country more," the 81-year-old said in an elegiac prime-time address to the nation urging his divided country to embrace democracy and shun hatred.

"The defense of democracy, which is at stake, is more important than any title," Biden said. "I have decided the best way forward is to pass the torch to a new generation. That is the best way to unite our nation."

In his first televised address since his stunning decision, Biden also hailed his Vice President Kamala Harris, 59, who is set to be the new Democratic presidential nominee.

"She's experienced. She's tough. She's capable," Biden said in just the fourth address of his presidency from behind the Resolute Desk -- and likely his last.

UK police officer suspended after video of violent arrest



screen grab from a video circulating online

AFP | London, United Kingdom

A UK police officer was suspended yesterday after a video circulating online appeared to show an officer kicking and stamping a man's head while making an arrest.

Greater Manchester Police in northwest England said an officer was "suspended from all duties" after a review of the incident at Manchester Airport on Tuesday.

The video, which has circulated online, has caused public outrage.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) watchdog said it was independently investigating the "level of force" used by the police officer involved who was suspended.

"We appreciate the footage which was shared on social media has attracted wide-

spread shock and concern," the IOPC said in its statement.

In a previous statement, Greater Manchester Police said three officers were assaulted, with one female officer "suffering a broken nose" and requiring hospital treatment, while apprehending a suspect at the airport following reports of an assault.

Footage of the police officer using force against the man being arrested was taken following the officers being assaulted, according to the force.

It appeared to show a police officer kicking and stamping on the head of a man lying on the ground, next to a woman.

Details of what happened immediately before and after the video remain unclear, with police saying that the "use of such force in an arrest is an unusual occurrence and one that we understand creates alarm".

Authorities seize hundreds of illegal dog meat skewers

AFP | Jakarta, Indonesia

Public order officers in Bali have seized hundreds of dog skewers and dozens of kilograms of raw dog meat on the Indonesian resort island where the trade is illegal, officials said yesterday.

The tourist hotspot banned the dog meat trade last year, with offenders facing up to three months in prison or up to 50 million rupiah (\$3,064) fine. The trade still exists in other parts of the country.

During inspections this week authorities found three dog meat sellers who were still carrying out their activities in violation of the local regulation, Bali public order agency head Dewa Nyoman Rai Dharma told AFP.

They seized 500 dog meat

skewers from a seller in the Jembrana district and 56 kilograms of raw dog meat from another seller in the same district.

The dog satay seller only received a warning because he had not been caught trading before, while the other two sellers were deemed repeat offenders and had minor criminal offences filed against them at a local court.

Authorities were only pursuing minor criminal cases for repeat offenders because they wanted to give dog meat sellers a chance to overhaul their businesses, Dewa said.

"But we will process re-current (sellers) for deterrent effect. We're not playing around."

The two sellers will stand trial next month.



Indonesia is one of a handful of countries that still permit the sale of dog and cat meat, but a campaign against the practice has been gaining ground, with some cities including Semarang in Java imposing local bans on the trade in recent years.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Hunger has no place in the 21st century. A #ZeroHunger world is not only necessary — with action on finance, it is achievable. Together, let's consign hunger to the history books.

@antoniogetterres

02



At the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, Abebe Bikila, an #Ethiopian, made history by becoming the first black African to win gold in the men's marathon. Not only that, he ran barefoot and broke the world record. Abebe Bikila inspired generations of runners, from Africa and around the world. That's the power of sport: the power to inspire, and the power to change.

@DrTedros

03



Tomorrow, 26th July, is a very special day for every Indian. We will mark the 25th Kargil Vijay Diwas. It is a day to pay homage to all those who protect our nation. I will visit the Kargil War Memorial and pay tributes to our brave heroes. Work will also commence for the Shinkun La Tunnel Project. This project is important to improve connectivity to Leh, especially during bad weather.

@narendramodi

04



Should Tesla invest \$5B into @xAI, assuming the valuation is set by several credible outside investors?

@elonmusk

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

celebs



Ryan Reynolds reveals why he had to 'let go' of the idea of earning big money for Deadpool

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Ryan Reynolds had to "let go" of the idea of being paid a huge amount for 'Deadpool'.

The 47-year-old actor had always wanted to bring the Marvel Comics character to the screen and had been trying to do so for a decade by the time he finally managed to play Wade Wilson in 2016 but did not

believe that it would ever become a success.

He told The New York Times: "When I finally got to make it, it had been almost 10 years at that point. No part of me was thinking when 'Deadpool' was finally greenlit that this would be a success.

"I even let go of getting paid to do the movie just to put it back

on the screen: They wouldn't allow my co-writers Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick on set, so I took the little salary I had left and paid them to be on set with me so we could form a de facto writers room."

But the Hollywood star learned while on set of the film - which eventually grossed \$782.6 million at the box office and spawned two

sequels - that sometimes money can be the "enemy" of creativity, so by doing away with a focus on the financial side of things, he was able to hone in on the character.

He said: "It was a lesson in a couple of senses. I think one of the great enemies of creativity is too much time and money, and that movie had neither time nor money.

It really fostered focusing on character over spectacle, which is a little harder to execute in a comic-book movie. I was just so invested in every micro-detail of it and I hadn't felt like that in a long, long time. I remembered wanting to feel that more - not just on "Deadpool," but on anything.

Ryan Reynolds

Keanu Reeves 'didn't write' new novel

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Keanu Reeves "didn't write any" of his new novel.

The 'John Wick' actor has teamed up with one of his favourite authors, China Miéville, on 'The Book of Elsewhere', which is inspired by his own 'BRZRKR' comic books and features the series' protagonist, immortal warrior Unute aka B, but he left penning the story to his collaborator.

He admitted to The Guardian newspaper: "I didn't want to write the book. I wanted another creator to take that journey. So, ultimately, China has written the novel. It's not, like, we could look at page eight and say, 'Oh, I wrote



this section.' I didn't write any of the novel."

The pair first met face-to-face in Berlin in 2021, and went through China's first draft in a series of Zoom meetings, with the 51-year-old author admitting it took him some time to grasp Keanu's ideas, but ultimately he realised the 59-year-old star's suggestions were "absolutely right".

He said: "What I felt he was particularly per-spacious Keanu Reeves

"I didn't want to write the book. I wanted another creator to take that journey. So, ultimately, China has written the novel. It's not, like, we could look at page eight and say, 'Oh, I wrote this section.' I didn't write any of the novel."

KEANU REEVES

about was questions of character - which shouldn't be a surprise because of the acting.

"But the way we talk about things structurally, and in terms of character, isn't necessarily the same. We don't come with the same vernacular.

"So there was a process where I had to learn to understand what was being put to me. I remember a couple of times when you were saying things about B, and I was like, I know I'm not getting what he's saying.

"Then after a couple of goes around - oh, OK, I get it. And every time that happened - I can think of three times very particularly - I was, like, oh: he's absolutely right."

The 'Speed' actor couldn't be happier with the end result of their collaboration.

He said: "I'm reading a 'BRZRKR' China Miéville novel! Yeah! What, what, what? And then like, why am I crying? Why am I feeling so much? And then what is that? And then? Wait, I need to like ... what's that f*****word? Oh, yeah. Great."

Keanu released the first volume of 'BRZRKR' - which he created with writer Matt Kindt and artist Ron Garney - in November 2021. The second volume in the series was released in 2022 and the third volume was released in October 2023.

In 2021, it was announced that Netflix would develop a live-action film based on the comic book, which Keanu is attached to star in.

'The Book of Elsewhere' will be released on 23 July.

Armie Hammer thinks being cancelled saved his life

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Armie Hammer thinks he would have died if he hadn't been cancelled.

The 37-year-old actor faced accusations of sexual misconduct including rape in 2021 - while no charges were filed following a two-year investigation by the Los Angeles Police Department - as well as claims of cannibalistic fantasies.

Hammer denied all allegations and insisted facing "a career death" saved his life, as he acknowledged his "s***** behaviour" including cheating on his wife and using "people to make me feel better".

He told Bill Maher on the 'Club Random' podcast: "My life would have kept going exactly as it was. And I know that that would ultimately only lead in one place, and that's death."

He added: "I experienced an ego death, a career death, a financial death, all of these things, right?"

"You got to die. And once you die, you can then be reborn."

The 'Call Me By Your Name' actor

"I experienced an ego death, a career death, a financial death, all of these things, right? You got to die, you can then be reborn"

ARMIE HAMMER

insisted being cancelled has been "incredible liberating" because he was no longer "preoccupied with how [he] was perceived".

He added: "Once everyone just decides that they hate you, you go, 'Oh, well, then I don't need anything from you people anyway. I guess I should just learn to be content with myself'."

"And then you go do that, and it feels f***** amazing."

Hammer admitted he was "callous and inconsiderate" towards other people - including being unfaithful to his now ex-wife Elizabeth Chambers, who he split from in 2020 after over eight years of marriage - but he has repeatedly denied the allegations against him.

He said: "I used people to make me feel better. I was callous and inconsiderate with people and their emotions and their well-being."

"And I wanted what I wanted, and I was going to take it at any cost, even if it was at an emotional cost of someone else. And that is s***** behaviour."



Halle Berry 'leaves Kim Kardashian's legal drama'

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

Halle Berry has reportedly left Kim Kardashian's upcoming legal drama.

Just a week ago, the 57-year-old star was reported to be part of the cast for 'All's Fair' - which has been created by 'American Horror Story' boss Ryan Murphy - alongside Glenn Close and reality star turned actress Kim.

Now, Variety has reported that she has "bowed out of the show due to a scheduling conflict".

She had also been attached to executive produce, but will no longer be attached to the show in any capacity.

The series is set to focus on an all-female law firm in Los Angeles, while specific details regarding Halle's planned character had been kept under wraps.

Ryan will write, direct and executive produce the project, which is the first of his series announced under his new Disney deal after his Netflix agreement came to an end.

Kim and Glenn are both executive producers, along with Kris Jenner, Alexis Martin Woodall, Scott Robertson and Eric Kovtun.

Kim made her acting debut as publicist Siobhan Corbyn in 'American Horror Story: Delicate', and the spooky anthol-

ogy show's creator was delighted with the praise for her performance.

In a recent episode of 'The Kardashians', Ryan told her: "You were really, really good to the point where they called me and were like, 'Do you think Kim would want to do her own show?'"

In a confessional after the chat, Kim joked she wasn't should what she "got herself into", and wondered if she could "really pull this off".

Ryan - who also created the likes of 'Glee', 'Nip/



Tuck', 'Ratched' and more - then revealed his pitch for Kim's potential series.

He suggested: "Kim is the world's best, most expensive divorce lawyer, and she has her own firm, and the thing about her firm is it's an all-female firm."

Kim - who filed from divorce from ex Kanye West early in 2021 before finalising the split the following year - joked she "has some experience" in the field.

Halle Berry

SUDOKU

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7	9	2	3	4				
4	6							

Yesterday's solution

6	2	9	5	4	1	7	8	3
5	3	7	9	2	8	4	6	1
8	1	4	3	7	6	5	9	2
1	9	8	2	6	7	3	5	4
3	7	5	1	9	4	6	2	8
2	4	6	8	3	5	9	1	7
9	5	2	7	1	3	8	4	6
7	6	1	4	8	9	2	3	5
4	8	3	6	5	2	1	7	9

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- Moist; 6- Long walks; 11- Stipulations; 14- Alamogordo's county; 15- Beaming; 16- Sellout sign; 17- Conger catcher; 18- Lover of Juliet; 19- Small batteries; 20- Encounter; 22- Alpaca's cousin; 24- Bitter derision; 28- Comfort in misfortune; 30- Quantity; 31- Strikes out; 32- Stylish; 33- Sweetheart; 37- Is afflicted with; 38- Monte; 39- At the present time; 40- Hollow-horned ruminants; 43- Part of Hispaniola; 45- Two-legged support; 46- Gibberish; 47- Thief; 49- Vocalization of young birds; 50- Pithy; 51- Word that can precede war, biotic and climax; 52- Greek vowel; 53- Cheek cosmetic; 56- Expressed disapproval; 61- Mus. slow up; 62- Tree-lined walk; 63- Overture; 64- Born, in France; 65- "See ya!"; 66- Wise ones.

Down
1- Garden tool; 2- Salt Lake City player; 3- Brooks, filmmaker responsible for "Blazing Saddles"; 4- High dudgeon; 5- Inactive; 6- Seraglio; 7- Rhythm; 8- Dutch carrier; 9- Fair-hiring abbr.; 10- Tumid; 11- Stern with a bow; 12- Picture border; 13- Cubs slugger Sammy; 21- Ball-park fig; 23- Final, ultimate; 24- Figure skater Cohen; 25- Jordan's capital; 26- Way to cook; 27- Junkyard dog; 28- Vends; 29- Ersatz butter; 31- Called one's bluff; 33- Visible exhalation; 34- Architect Jones; 35- your life; 36- "Dallas" family name; 38- Deal (with); 41- Subsides; 42- Generous; 43- Constitution of a person; 44- longa, vita brevis; 46- Stick (out); 47- Knot again; 48- Use a soapbox; 49- Scoff; 50- Small gull; 51- Author James; 54- Pay stub; 55- Nth. Abbr.; 57- Health haven; 58- Frat party staple; 59- Chemical ending; 60- Driller's deg;

Yesterday's solution

A	L	E	C	A	J	A	R		M	A	M	A					
R	I	A	L	S	E	T	A	P	A	B	E	D					
A	E	R	O	S	T	E	E	R		N	E	R					
B	U	L	B	E	T	E		I	B	I	S	E					
			B	O	R	A		M	N	O	P						
			G	E	V	E	R	T		M	E	T	A	L	L	I	C
			G	E	O	R	G		S	A	L	E		E	A	R	P
			O	R	D		S	K	I	E	R		M	O	A		
			L	I	K	E		P	A	N	E		S	W	A	N	S
			D	E	A	F		M	U	T	E		L	E	A	R	Y
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			R	E	B	O	R	N		N	E	T		T	O	I	L
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Verstappen seeks redemption at Spa

Red Bull urges Verstappen to abandon late-night simulation racing as he seeks to end winless streak at Spa

● **Red Bull star aims to bounce back from Hungary frustrations at his favorite Belgian Grand Prix circuit**

● **Verstappen warned to take “nothing for granted” after recent struggles**

● **Winless streak of four races would be his longest since 2020**

AFP | Spa

A week after ranting on the team radio in Budapest, Max Verstappen heads to the Belgian Grand Prix warned to take “nothing for granted” and advised by Red Bull to give up late-night simulation racing during race weekends.

The series leader and three-time world champion departed Hungary in a petulant mood after finishing a frustrated fifth, swearing on team radio and in post-race interviews, having gone to bed at three am before the race.

It was his and Red Bull's third consecutive race without a win and he will need to deliver a more composed and professional performance on his preferred circuit on Sunday to avoid ex-

tending his winless run to four for the first time since 2020.

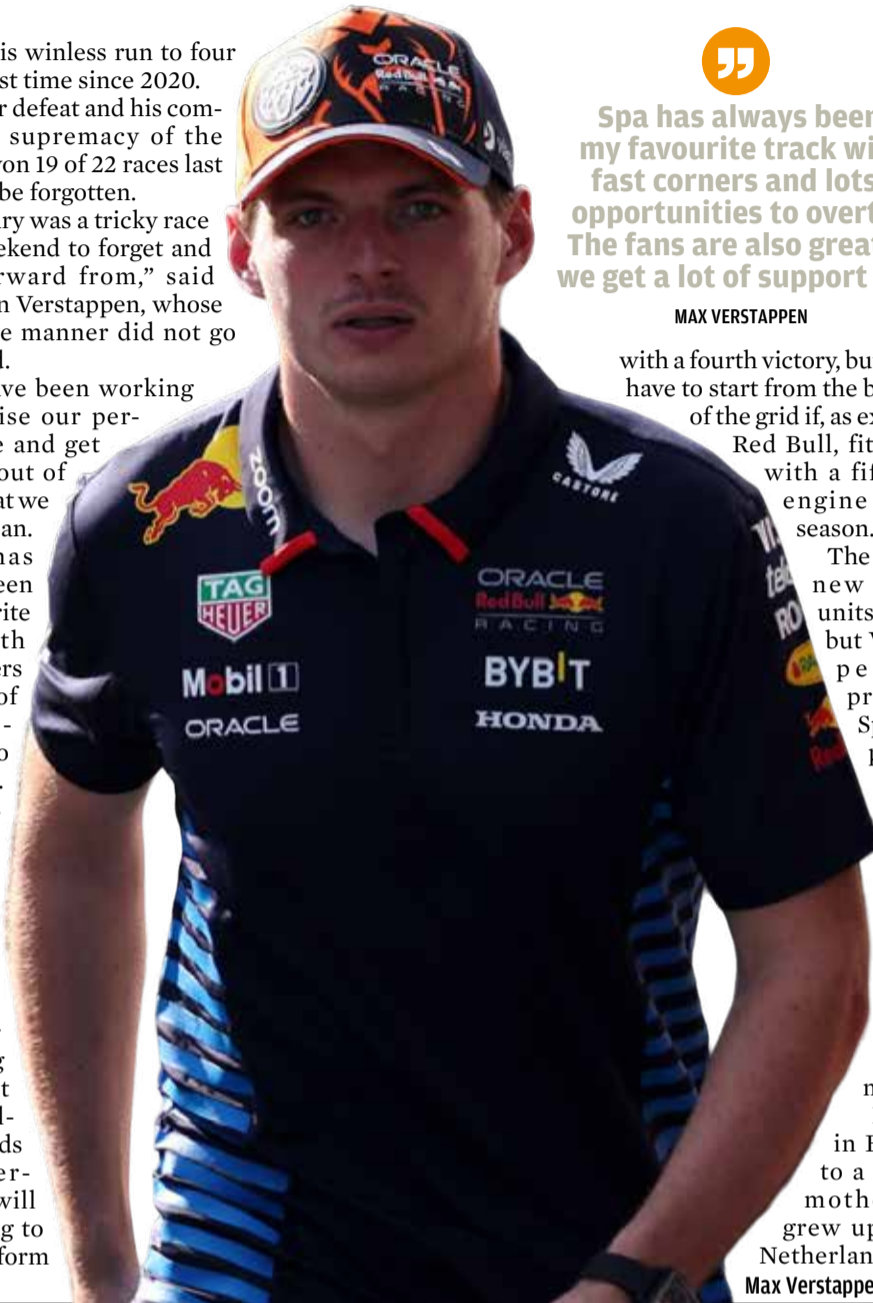
Another defeat and his commanding supremacy of the past, he won 19 of 22 races last year, will be forgotten.

“Hungary was a tricky race and a weekend to forget and move forward from,” said Dutchman Verstappen, whose combative manner did not go unnoticed.

“We have been working to optimise our performance and get the best out of the car that we possibly can.

“Spa has always been my favourite track with fast corners and lots of opportunities to overtake. The fans are also great and we get a lot of support there,” he added.

After winning the last three Belgian Grands Prix, Verstappen will be seeking to return to form



MAX VERSTAPPEN

“Spa has always been my favourite track with fast corners and lots of opportunities to overtake. The fans are also great and we get a lot of support there

with a fourth victory, but he may have to start from the back half of the grid if, as expected, Red Bull, fit his car with a fifth new engine of the season.

The limit for new power units is four, but Verstappen has proved at Spa in the past that he can overcome grid penalties when he seizes the momentum.

Born in Belgium to a Belgian mother, but grew up in the Netherlands, Ver-

Max Verstappen

stappen always enjoys passionate backing from the local crowd and he may need it as he bids to extend his lead, trimmed to 76 points last Sunday, ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris.

Coincidentally, Norris, who was also involved in some colourful ‘team orders’ radio exchanges last Sunday, also has a Belgian mother and he will be seeking to reduce the gap further by winning on Sunday, after handing victory last weekend to his team-mate Oscar Piastri following instructions to do so.

Piastri’s ‘all-rounder’ car

Red Bull team boss Christian Horner has warned the threat from McLaren, the in-form team with the fastest car, and both Mercedes and Ferrari, could wreck their season if they cannot respond and gather points more emphatically than they have.

“We’re just going to develop the fastest car we can, and that’s what we’ll continue to do,” said Horner.

“In the drivers’ championship, obviously Max has a good lead – but that can diminish very quickly, so, nothing can be taken for granted.”

The team’s influential director Helmut Marko, a close adviser and confidante to the world champion, told speedweek.com: “We agreed that he would no longer run simulations so late in the future.”

Most attention may be focussed on the leading title con-



Despite being born in Belgium to a Belgian mother, Max Verstappen grew up in the Netherlands and often receives overwhelming support from the local crowd at Spa, which is considered his favorite track on the circuit

tenders, but that will suit Piastri who showed commendable assurance as he claimed his maiden victory last Sunday.

“Spa’s not been the happiest of hunting grounds for us recently, but I’m confident we’ll be strong,” said the 22-year-old Australian.

“We’ve got a car that’s become a real all-rounder so I’m super confident and I think the team should be as well.”

After winning his home British race and then finishing third for Mercedes last weekend, seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton will also be a challenger on a track where he has won four times as will Ferrari’s Charles Leclerc, who took pole last year and won in 2019.

New Barcelona coach Flick hails ‘unbelievable’ Yamal

AFP | Barcelona

New Barcelona coach Hansi Flick on Thursday hailed the performance of the Spanish club’s teenage winger Lamine Yamal at Euro 2024, calling it “unbelievable”.

Yamal made history in his country’s opening game against Croatia by becoming the youngest player ever to appear in a European Championship game at the age of 16 years and 338 days.

He then claimed another piece of history by becoming the youngest player ever to score a goal at the Euros in Spain’s 2-1 semi-final win against France, at the age of 16 years and 362 days.

Spain went on to beat England 2-1 in the final to win their

fourth Euros on July 14, just a day after Yamal turned 17.

“He has done a really great job in the last year, he has improved a lot. What he did in the Euro is unbelievable,” Flick told a news conference as he was officially unveiled as Barcelona’s new coach.

“But great players maintain their performance and now it is necessary for him to keep his feet on the ground,” he added.

“I think he is a great guy.



Lamine Yamal

I spoke with him before, when I arrived, and he is now in this team and of course, he gives us great moments but he can improve and make things better.

He is on a really fantastic path.”

Barca appointed the former Germany and Bayern Munich manager as head coach on a two-year contract in May after sacking Xavi Hernandez, tasking him with turning around the club’s fortunes following their trophy-less run

last season.

“What I want to see is that we are playing really good football, attacking football, and that everyone can see that this team really gives a lot for this club. I think this is crucial,” Flick said.

“I think he is a great guy. I spoke with him before, when I arrived, and he is now in this team and of course, he gives us great moments but he can improve and make things better. He is on a really fantastic path

HANSI FLICK

Canada football staff sent home over Olympic drone scandal



Canada’s players pose for photos on the pitch at Geoffroy-Guichard Stadium in Saint-Etienne, France

AFP | Paris

An assistant coach and an analyst with the Canadian women’s football team were sent home from the Olympics for their part in a spying scandal.

The analyst, 43-year-old Joey Lombardi, was also given a suspended eight-month prison sentence for flying a drone over a New Zealand training session this week in Saint-Etienne.

Lombardi pleaded guilty when he appeared in court in Saint-Etienne on Wednesday, the court said.

The assistant coach was Jasmine Mander, to whom Lombardi reported.

Head coach Bev Priestman also announced she will take no part in the opening game of Canada’s gold medal defence, against New Zealand.

“The COC is in contact with the IOC and in contact with FIFA. Canada Soccer has been

transparent and cooperative throughout the process,” the COC said.

“The COC will continue to review this matter and may take further action if necessary.”

The decisions come after a staff member was detained by French authorities for flying the drone in a bid to spy on New Zealand’s tactics.

The Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) said it had since learned of a second incident involving New Zealand, who formally lodged a complaint with the IOC integrity unit and demanded answers from Canada.

Priestman said she did not think it would be appropriate to be on the bench for the clash against New Zealand.

“On behalf of our entire team, I first and foremost want to apologise to the players and staff at New Zealand Football and to the players on Team Canada,” she said.

French driver Ocon signs for ‘ambitious’ F1 team Haas

AFP | London

French driver Esteban Ocon has signed a multi-year deal to drive for Haas, the American Formula One team announced yesterday ahead of the Belgian Grand Prix.

The 27-year-old makes the move from Alpine as a replacement for Kevin Magnussen, whose departure was confirmed earlier this month.

“I am thrilled to embark on this new chapter in my Formula 1 career,” said Ocon.

“I’ll be joining a very ambitious racing team, whose spirit, work ethic, and undeniable upward trajectory has really im-



Esteban Ocon

pressed me.”

Ocon, who has raced in 146 grands prix, will be joining his fourth F1 team after Manor, Force India and Renault, now known as Alpine.

He claimed both his and Al-

“I’ll be joining a very ambitious racing team, whose spirit, work ethic, and undeniable upward trajectory has really impressed me

ESTEBAN OCON

pine’s sole win so far at the rain-hit Hungarian Grand Prix in 2021.

“It was important to me that we have a driver with a known pedigree in Formula 1, and as a grand prix winner, Esteban undoubtedly fits that brief,” said

team owner Gene Haas.

“Esteban’s proved himself in the teams he’s raced for as someone who’s continually in the mix and scoring points. It’s that continuity we’re keen to capitalise on as we look for increased performance gains on-track.”

Ocon, who made his F1 debut in 2016, announced he was splitting with Alpine in June, a week after he collided with his team-mate Pierre Gasly in Monaco.

Next season he will team up with 19-year-old British driver Oliver Bearman, who finished seventh in Jeddah after stepping in at late notice for Carlos Sainz in his only F1 start.

Djokovic, Nadal set for Olympics second-round showdown

Legends drawn for potential second-round meeting in Paris, as both seek elusive singles gold

● **Djokovic faces Matthew Ebden; Nadal plays Marton Fucsovics**

● **Alcaraz plays Hady Habib**

AFP | Paris

Grand Slam record-breakers Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal were placed on an Olympics second-round collision course in the draw for the Paris Games yesterday.

Nadal, a singles gold medallist at the 2008 Olympics, is playing

Rafael Nadal

in his final Games having also won doubles gold in Rio in 2016, while Djokovic was a bronze medallist in singles in 2008.

Serbia's Djokovic, a 24-time Grand Slam champion and top seed in Paris following the withdrawal of world number one Jannik Sinner, begins his campaign against Australia's Matthew Ebden.

"I am excited for this duel in the second round, and I will give it my all," said Djokovic, who has faced Nadal 59 times over the past 18 years.

"I am aware of the importance of the Olympic Games. I represent my country, which is more responsibility and even more pressure."

Spain's Nadal, who has won 14 of his 22 Grand Slams on the clay

Nadal, Djokovic and Nishikori are playing at the Olympics for the fifth time in their careers

of Roland Garros, faces Hungary's Marton Fucsovics in his opener.

French Open and Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz, the second seed, tackles 275th-ranked Hady Habib of Lebanon in opening round of the tournament, which starts on Saturday.

"Roland Garros is the most special place in the world of tennis for me," said 38-year-old Nadal, who was defeated in the first round of the French Open by Alexander Zverev last month during an injury-hit season.

"This year I was not able to spend a lot of time at Roland Garros so I am excited to be back here. It's another opportunity and a chance to enjoy every single moment."

Defending Olympic champion Zverev, seeded third, takes on Jaume Munar of Spain.

Russian fourth seed Daniil Medvedev, playing in Paris as a neutral following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, will meet Rinky Hijikata of Australia.

Two-time singles gold medallist Andy Murray, who will end his career at the Olympics after almost two decades on tour, will only play doubles.

Novak Djokovic

Murray withdraws from Paris Olympics singles but will play doubles

AFP | London

Andy Murray withdrew from the tennis singles at the Paris Olympics yesterday but the two-time gold medallist will play doubles in what will be the final event of his glittering career.

The British former world number one, who will retire at the end of his fifth Games, has still not fully recovered from back surgery last month.

He believes the men's doubles, where he is playing with Dan Evans, offers his best chance of another medal.

"I've taken the decision to withdraw from the singles to concentrate on the doubles with Dan," said the 37-year-old.

"Our practice has been great and we're playing well together. Really looking forward to getting started and representing GB one more time."

Murray won gold in singles

“Our practice has been great and we're playing well together. Really looking forward to getting started and representing GB one more time

ANDY MURRAY

at London 2012 and in Rio four years later, as well as silver in mixed doubles with Laura Robson in 2012.

His withdrawal means his final singles match was his brief second-round appearance at Queen's Club against Jordan Thompson last month before he was forced to pull out because of a spinal cyst.

The Scot confirmed earlier this week that he would retire after the Paris Olympics.

"The Olympics are incred-

Andy Murray

ibly special for me, had some amazing memories on the court in London in 2012," he said at Roland Garros yesterday.

"Playing at home and winning medals was unbelievable. I am happy to do it one more time to compete for my country."

"I trained the last few weeks to get myself ready to play singles and doubles but I am getting older and it's harder to recover

from all the

injuries. I just ran out of time. But I am happy to be in the doubles with Dan -- we can have a good run."

Murray has been ravaged by injuries in recent years, slumping to 121st in the world.

He has played with a metal hip since 2019 and suffered ankle damage earlier this year.

Murray was only fit enough to play doubles with his brother, Jamie, at Wimbledon this month.



World Cup holders Spain win women's Olympic football opener

AFP | Paris

Reigning Ballon d'Or Aitana Bonmati scored one goal and helped create another as World Cup holders Spain came from behind to beat Japan 2-1 in their first game of the women's Olympic football tournament yesterday.

Spain are making their Olympic women's football debut at the Paris Games but are leading contenders to win the gold medal after their World Cup triumph in Australia and New Zealand last year.

They fell behind against Japan in the western French city of Nantes to Aoba Fujino's early free-kick, but Bonmati soon equalised before Mariona Caldentey netted the winner in the 74th minute.

It is the perfect start for Spain



Spain players celebrate after scoring in Group C, in which rivals Nigeria and Brazil meet later.

With 12 teams split into three groups of four, there is margin for error as the two best third-placed teams will advance to the quarter-finals.

That will provide some comfort for Japan, who won the silver medal at London 2012.

Spain's starting XI featured seven players who were in the line-up for last year's World Cup final win over England in Syd-

ney, plus Alexia Putellas, the two-time former Ballon d'Or winner.

Japan's side included Hinata Miyazawa, the top scorer at the World Cup, but it was Fujino who opened the scoring in the 13th minute with a fine strike from a dead ball which proved too powerful for goalkeeper Cata Coll.

However, Spain bossed possession and drew level midway through the first half when Bonmati was played in by Athenea del Castillo and rounded the goalkeeper to score.

They then grabbed what proved to be the winner when Caldentey came in from the left and played a quick exchange of passes with Bonmati before firing in.

Olympic Esports games to debut in Saudi Arabia in 2025



IOC and Saudi Arabian officials at the 142nd IOC Session

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has officially announced the debut of the Olympic Esports Games, scheduled for 2025 in Saudi Arabia. This landmark decision was confirmed during the 142nd IOC Session in Paris on July 23, 2024.

IOC President Thomas Bach highlighted the significance of this development, stating, "With the confirmation of the Olympic Esports Games, we are keeping up with the pace of the digital revolution." This initiative reflects the IOC's commitment to embracing new trends and engaging with younger audiences.

Saudi Arabia's National Olympic Committee (NOC) will host the inaugural event. HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal, Minister of Sport and President of the Saudi Arabian Olympic and Paralympic Committee, emphasized the country's dedication to esports, viewing it as a natural progression in their sports evolution. "Our commitment to esports is a reflection of the world our young people live

in," he said. HRH Princess Reema Bandar Al-Saud, an IOC member and board member of the Saudi Arabian Olympic and Paralympic Committee, added, "With over 23.5 million gamers, many of whom are women, hosting the Olympic Esports Games in 2025 is a natural progression in our journey."

The IOC has already begun planning for the event, focusing on selecting a city and venue, game titles, and participant qualification processes. The IOC will establish a dedicated structure for the Games to cater to the unique nature of esports.

Milestone for Esports

Thomas Bach reiterated the significance of this milestone, stating, "We are entering new ground on a very firm base." This decision follows the success of the Olympic Esports Week held in Singapore in 2023 and discussions at previous IOC sessions.

The Olympic Esports Games marks a significant step forward for the IOC and the global esports community, promising an exciting and inclusive future for digital sports