

2 Foreign Minister receives credentials of new ambassadors



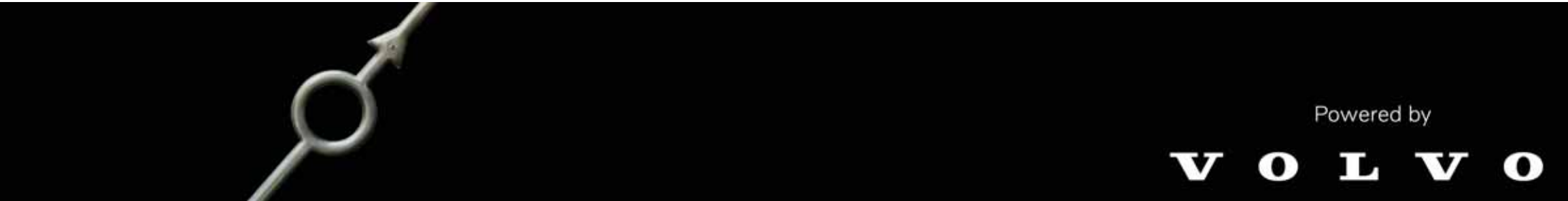
7 US VP Harris vows 'enduring engagement' in Asia



11 Angelina the fastest Instagram user to gain 1 million followers



14 Uncertainty, fear for Afghan cricketers as Taliban take over



# Amir approves transit of 5,000 Afghan evacuees

US envoy lauds Kuwait's cooperation for evacuating American citizens



KUWAIT: A handout picture released by the US embassy in Kuwait shows American Ambassador in Kuwait Alina Romanowski talking to military personnel as she checks on US evacuees from Afghanistan transiting through Kuwait. — AFP

KUWAIT: Kuwait approved the transit of 5,000 Afghan nationals, who have been evacuated from their country to the US under the directions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the foreign ministry said on Sunday.

This move comes in "recognition of the strategic relations between the State of Kuwait and the United States of America," according to the ministry statement. It also aims to "enhance the existing cooperation between them and in continuation of the humanitarian role of the State of Kuwait, which calls for the importance of securing safe passage for diplomats and foreign nationals and the facilitation of evacuations from Afghanistan."

Meanwhile, US Ambassador to Kuwait Alina Romanowski has lauded Kuwait for the cooperation for evacuating American citizens and at-risk locals from Afghanistan and has deeply appreciated its support at this level.

"Over the past several days, the United States has mobilized an unprecedented global effort to evacuate US citizens, personnel from partner nations, and at-risk individuals from Kabul," the US ambassador said in a press statement released yesterday. "The state department is working around the clock with our allies and partners in every region of the world to mobilize resources to

save and protect both Americans and our partners facing danger in Afghanistan. We deeply appreciate the support our allies have offered and are proud to partner with them in our shared support of the Afghan people. Kuwait, one of our closest friends in the Middle East, quickly rose to the occasion and lent a helping hand. The Kuwaiti Government generously chartered planes from Kuwait Airways to help facilitate this essential evacuation operation. Thank you to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his commitment to this humanitarian effort and our joint partnership, and his approval of the safe transit of 5,000 Afghans through Kuwait to onward destinations," she said.

"Since August 16, more than 850 Americans and personnel at embassy in Kabul transited safely from Afghanistan to the United States via Kuwait on five separate flights. Kuwaiti government chartered flights also transferred more than 400 Nepali Local Guards from the US embassy in Kabul to Nepal. This is not the first time Kuwait has stood by the United States. In 2005, for example, Kuwait pledged \$500 million in aid to US relief efforts after Hurricane Katrina, the single largest donation of its kind at the time," the statement said.

Continued on Page 2

## Taleban warn of 'consequences' if US extends airlift

KABUL: The Taleban warned yesterday there would be "consequences" if the United States and its allies extend their presence in Afghanistan beyond next week, as chaos continued to overwhelm Kabul airport. The hardline Islamists' takeover of the country last weekend shocked Western nations, coming just two weeks before an August 31 deadline for all troops to fully withdraw from the country.

To manage the chaotic airlifting of foreigners and Afghans—many of whom fear reprisals for working with Western nations—thousands of soldiers have poured back into Afghanistan, with pressure growing on Washington to extend the deadline. But the Taleban, who have so far sought to strike a more moderate tone, showed no willingness to compromise on the US pullout.

"If the US or UK were to seek additional time to continue evacuations—the answer is no. Or there would be consequences," Taleban spokesman Suhail Shaheen told Sky News yesterday. Staying beyond the agreed deadline would be "extending occupation", he added.

Around 16,000 people were evacuated over the past 24 hours from Afghanistan

through the Kabul airport, the Pentagon said yesterday as the US speeds toward completing its airlift by an August 31 deadline. General Hank Taylor told reporters that 61 military, commercial and charter flights involving a number of countries flew out from Hamid Karzai International Airport in the 24 hours to 3 am yesterday (0700 GMT) carrying people escaping the country after the Taleban seized power. Of the total evacuated that day, 11,000 were taken out by the US military airlift operations, Taylor said.

Meanwhile, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) said Sunday Afghanistan should never again be allowed to shelter "terrorist organizations", and called for inclusive dialogue to resolve the crisis

Continued on Page 2



KABUL: Taleban fighters in a vehicle patrol the streets of Kabul yesterday. — AFP

## 21 dead, 20 missing after US flooding

WASHINGTON: Devastating floods after record rainfall in the southern US state of Tennessee have left at least 21 people dead and at least 20 more missing, local officials said Sunday in what they warned was a preliminary toll. Tennessee was hit Saturday by what meteorologists called historic storms and flooding, dumping as much as 17 inches (38 centimeters) of rain. Rural roads, state highways, bridges and hundreds of homes were washed out and widespread power outages affected thousands of people.

However, tropical storm Henri was downgraded to a tropical depression late Sunday after slamming into Rhode Island on the US east coast, knocking out power to thousands of Americans, uprooting trees, and bringing record rainfall.

In Humpreys County, about 90 minutes from country music hub Nashville, the downpour on Saturday broke a 24-hour rainfall record for Tennessee, the National Weather Service said. Tennessee Governor Bill Lee described "picture of loss and heartache" in Waverly, a hard-hit town of around 4,500 where 20 of the victims



HELMETTA, US: Members of the New Market Volunteer Fire Company perform a secondary search during an evacuation effort following a flash flood as Tropical Storm Henri makes landfall in Helmetta, New Jersey, Sunday. — AFP

died. Henri is a rare tropical storm to strike America's northeastern seaboard and comes as the surface layer of oceans warms due to climate change. The warming is causing cyclones to become more powerful and carry more water, posing an increasing threat to the world's coastal communities, scientists say.

In Newark, New Jersey, flash flooding caused havoc with emergency services

rescuing 86 people, including 16 children, from submerged vehicles. In Helmetta, 30 miles south, volunteer firefighters waded through waist-deep water to help evacuate residents from waterlines rising dangerously close to their homes. Some 79,000 people lost power in Rhode Island and another 33,000 suffered blackouts in

Continued on Page 2



DOHA: Candidates leave after registering to run in the country's upcoming election to the Shura Council in Doha Sunday. — AFP

## Qatar opens registration for Oct 2 polls

DOHA: Qatar opened candidate registration for its first legislative elections Sunday, announcing the much-delayed polls would be held on October 2.

Elections to the 45-seat Shura Council, as proposed under a 2004 constitution, have been postponed repeatedly and its members have instead been directly named by the Amir Sheikh

Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. Only descendants of Qataris who were citizens in 1930 will be eligible to vote and stand, disqualifying members of families naturalized since that year.

Some members of the sizable Al-Murra tribe are among those who face being excluded from the electoral process. It will take a super-majority vote of the new, elected Shura Council to amend the eligibility law and extend the franchise to include more recently arrived Qatari families. "(A) decree stipulated that Saturday, October 2, 2021 would be set as the date for electing members

Continued on Page 2



# Kuwait's Foreign Minister receives credentials of new ambassadors



KUWAIT: Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Ambassador of Senegal to Kuwait.



Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Ambassador of Mauritania to Kuwait.



Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Ambassador of Qatar to Kuwait.

KUWAIT: Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah received yesterday at the Foreign Ministry Headquarter copies of credentials of the new ambassadors of Senegal, Mauritania and Qatar. The Minister wished the new diplomats success in their missions, and further prosperity to Kuwait's bilateral ties with their nations. — KUNA

## Defense Minister receives call from US counterpart

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah received a phone call from the US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin. During the call, both sides discussed issues of joint interest, a host of topics regarding the regional and international arenas, according to a statement released by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense yesterday. Minister Sheikh Hamad, during the call, invited his US counterpart to visit Kuwait, underscoring depth of the bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and their mutual keenness on boosting these bonds. He thanked secretary Austin for the



Kuwait's Defense Minister Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah

call that depicted the US keenness on cementing cooperation and joint action between the State of Kuwait and the United States of America. — KUNA

## Kuwait donates six fire engines to Tunisia

TUNIS: Tunisia yesterday expressed its appreciation for Kuwait's assistance in fighting devastating wildfires fanned by soaring temperatures, saying it was thankful for the "gracious gesture." The aid, comprising an assortment of fire-fighting equipment, could not have come at a more appropriate time, Tunisian Foreign Minister Othman Jerandi said, thanking His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for "yet another noble act." Similarly, Tunisia's Interior Minister Ridha Gharsallaoui thanked Kuwait for the aid it has given his country, which runs the gamut from COVID assistance to pushing rescue efforts amid the raging wild-



fires in the North African country.

Kuwait Fire Force had said earlier yesterday that upon His Highness the Amir's directives, Kuwait Army Air Force sent two aircraft to the Republic of Tunisia, carrying donation of six fully-equipped firefighting vehicles to confront forest fires and help in rescue

operations in the North African country. The donation comes within the brotherly bonds and support in facing crises and disasters, as it reflects Kuwait's pioneering role in providing humanitarian aid, KFF's Public Relations and Information said in a statement. — KUNA

## Amir approves transit of 5,000...

Continued from Page 1

"Today, Kuwait is a major non-NATO ally and a vital strategic partner to the United States not only on a bilateral basis, but also on working together for stability in the region, for progress, for peace, and bringing countries together.

"Since 2003, Kuwait has supported US and

## 21 dead, 20 missing after...

Continued from Page 1

Connecticut, according to the tracking website poweroutage.us.

More than 200 flights were canceled at Newark airport while New York's LaGuardia and JFK air-

coalition operations in Iraq and continues to play an integral role in the fight against ISIS. Moreover, Kuwait is a gracious host to American troops, which allows us to continue our mission of helping to defend our regional partners. The United States deeply values its friendship with Kuwait, and we look forward to marking 60 years of diplomatic ties this September.

As Secretary Blinken said last week following his phone call with Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah: "We deeply appreciate the Kuwaiti government's support, a prime example of our enduring partnership," the statement added. — KUNA

ports canceled almost 200 between them, they said. President Joe Biden ordered the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to coordinate disaster relief efforts in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York, where Governor Andrew Cuomo deployed 500 National Guard soldiers. "We're doing everything we can now to help those states prepare, respond and recover," he told reporters. Henri missed New York City by several miles but still caused tropical storm conditions overnight and throughout Sunday, where a flash flood warning was in effect until 5.45 pm. — AFP

active element in Qatar."

The registration process will run until Thursday, and campaigning is due to begin next month. "Holding elections in Qatar gives me an opportunity to contribute to the service of this country, which has spent on my education up to Master's degree," said Lahdan bin Issa Hassan Al-Muhannadi who is seeking to contest the northern Al-Khor and Al-Dhakhira constituency.

"This is one of the main landmarks in the history of Qatar." The election has sparked a torrent of fake news on social media with the Arabic hashtag #BoycottQatarElections trending on Twitter, despite initially being posted by only one account, indicating manipulation. Prime Minister Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz Al-Thani said that the polls, "the first in Qatar's history... must preserve national unity", according to the official Qatar News Agency. — AFP

## Taleban warn of 'consequences' if...

Continued from Page 1

following the Taleban's takeover. The Jeddah-based organization said it would dispatch envoys to Afghanistan to stress the importance of "peace, stability, and national reconciliation".

Two Taleban sources meanwhile told AFP the group would not announce the makeup of its government or cabinet until the last US soldier has left the country. The rush to leave Kabul has sparked harrowing scenes and killed at least eight people, some crushed to death while at least one person died after falling from a moving plane. One Afghan was killed and three others were injured in a dawn firefight yes-

terday that according to the German military erupted between Afghan guards and unknown assailants.

German and American troops "participated in further exchange of fire", the German army said in a statement. The Taleban, infamous for an ultra-strict interpretation of sharia law during their initial 1996-2001 rule, have repeatedly vowed a softer version this time.

President Biden has insisted he wants to end the US military presence and the airlifts by August 31. But with the European Union and Britain saying it would be impossible to get everyone out by then, Biden is under pressure to extend the deadline.

In the streets of the capital, the Taleban have enforced a calm of a kind, with their armed forces patrolling the streets and manning checkpoints. Visually, they have also been looking to stamp their authority, ensuring the tri-colored national flag is replaced with their white banner. At a roadside in Kabul at the weekend, young men sold Taleban flags, which bear in black text the Muslim proclamation of faith and the regime's formal name: "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan". — AFP

**RILASTIL**  
LABORATORI MILANO

**HYDROTENSEUR**

FALE LIFTANTI  
EFFETTO TENSORE  
INTENSIVO ED IMMEDIATO  
Con Lifting Complex, Tensil  
Smooth ed Acido ialuronico

FALE LIFTANTI  
EFFETTO TENSORE  
INTENSIVO ED IMMEDIATO  
Con Lifting Complex, Tensil  
Smooth ed Acido ialuronico

WELLNESS  
RECEIVED

Did you know that your face is the most sensitive part of your skin? And we have the best products to take care of it. Download the Pharma.C app now and order Rilastil's intensive face treatment, along with your favorite top skincare products.

pharma.c

Available on the App Store

Google Play



## Local

# Kuwait approves 'Ronapreve' antibody drug for COVID-19

## Three COVID-19 wards closed at Farwaniya Hospital

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's pharmaceutical regulator yesterday granted emergency use approval for an artificial antibody drug known as 'Ronapreve' to treat COVID-19, the health ministry said. The antibody drug, developed by the US biotech company Regeneron, has been approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency; UK's drug regulator, said the ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for drug control Dr Abdullah Al-Bader. The drug has been shown to be effective in reducing the likelihood of COVID-induced hospitalizations, added the official, hailing the medication as a useful tool to ease the strain on hospitals.

The UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency had announced last Friday that it has approved Ronapreve, the first monoclonal antibody treatment to prevent and fight COVID-19 in the UK. The decision came after a review of clinical trial data showed the drug that may be used to prevent and treat acute COVID-19 infection and reduce hospital admissions due to coronavirus. Phase 3 studies of the treatment found it reduced the risk of hospitalization or death in high-risk, non-hospitalized patients by 70 percent compared with placebo. Ronapreve also reduced the duration of coronavirus symptoms from 14 to ten days in those with the virus.

In July, Japan became the first country to fully approve its Ronapreve antibody treatment for patients with mild to moderate COVID-19. Before that, the antibody combination had been authorized for emergency or temporary pandemic use in a number of countries and regions, including the European Union, United States, India,

Switzerland and Canada.

Phase 3 trials of Ronapreve in Japan had also shown that high-risk non-hospitalized patients treated with the drug had a 70 percent reduction in subsequent hospitalization and death, Swiss pharmaceutical giant Roche had explained earlier. It also shortened the period of symptomatic illness by four days, Roche said, adding that the phase 1 trials had showed the safety and tolerability of the drug among the Japanese population.

### Wards closed

Meanwhile, Farwaniya Hospital Director Dr Mohammad Al-Rashidi announced yesterday that three out of the hospital's six COVID-19 wards have been closed, in the newest sign of recovery Kuwait is witnessing in its fight against the virus. The hospital could also close the intensive care unit for COVID-19 patients soon due to the sharp drop in patient admissions, Dr Rashidi added. This comes after Dr Abdullah Al-Mutairi, a consultant at the ICU at Jaber Hospital, said recently that three COVID-19 ICU wards have closed as, while Dr Dana Al-Haqan, a pediatric consultant at the hospital, had announced last week that the last child was discharged from the hospital.

Kuwait's daily COVID-19 cases continued to drop as the country announced on Sunday registering 167 new cases in the previous 24 hours, in addition to one death - raising total cases and deaths to 408,245 and 2,404 respectively. The tests to infection ratio registered on Sunday was 1.69 percent as 9,878 swab tests were taken during the same period. The number of people hospitalized with the virus



**KUWAIT:** This July 27, 2021 file photo shows a nurse administering a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to a man at a vaccination center in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh in Kuwait. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

stood at 318 as of Sunday, including 153 in ICUs, he added, while 4,524 were receiving regular treatment. Total recoveries reached 401,317 after 571 fresh recoveries were announced on Sunday. Meanwhile, the recovery rate increased to 98.3 percent.

Health authorities have recently announced opening new vaccination center as the country nears vaccinating 70 percent of the population against COVID-19, with a daily capacity of 100,000 administered doses.

## Kuwait treats six Lebanese injured in Akkar explosion

**KUWAIT:** Six Lebanese people who were injured in a recent fuel tank explosion in northern Lebanon are being treated at Al-Babtain Center for Burns and Plastic Surgery, the health ministry announced yesterday. In a statement to the press, ministry spokesperson Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said the move came upon directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as they have been immediately transferred to the center as soon as they arrived in the country. Dr Qutaibah Al-Kanderi, head of the medical team supervising the cases, noted that the burns varied between 50 and 80 percent in severity.

A Kuwait Airways plane transported late Sunday the Lebanese patients who were injured in the explosion that took place in the city of Akkar recently. Speaking in a joint news conference with Kuwait's Ambassador to Lebanon Abdelaal Al-Qenaei, Lebanon's health minister Hamad Hassan expressed appreciation to Kuwait for this humanitarian move, saying Kuwait has been providing support to Lebanon. He pointed to the shortage of medical supplies and medicine at Lebanon's hospitals. Meanwhile, Qenaei said that the Lebanese health minister contacted them in the wake of the blast and asked to help provide treatment for some of the wounded in Kuwait as Lebanon's health system suffers severe shortages. Qenaei added that this desire was conveyed to His Highness the Amir who ordered transferring the wounded to Kuwait, and receive necessary medicine and healthcare. —KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Medical personnel admit the Lebanese patients at Al-Babtain Center for Burns shortly after their arrival from Lebanon. —KUNA photos



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Ministry of Defense launched a three-day blood donation drive yesterday in cooperation with the Ministry of Health. —KUNA

## Coral reefs around Kuwait's Qaruh island bleached: EPA

**KUWAIT:** Coral reefs skirting the Kuwaiti island of Qaruh have been bleached, largely due to the waters' upper layers overheating and altering environment related to climatic change, the Environment Public Authority said yesterday. "EPA's teams found out during surveys of locations around the island that the coral reefs there have been bleached," said Abdullah Al-Zaidan, the deputy director general for technical affairs. Measuring the water's temperature, they found out that it hit 34 degrees on Saturday, as compared to 37 degrees in July. The bleaching of the reefs may occur when temperature rises at least one degree for three

consecutive weeks, he said, indicating that they may be revived once they are liberated of the heat related stress.

Meanwhile, the EPA yesterday denied online reports claiming the coastal regions have witnessed death of large numbers of fish. There was a countable number of fish deaths at some coastal regions over the past few days, EPA said in a statement, adding that the death of fish could not be classified as serious unless the number of dead fish exceeds 100,000. The fish death is a global phenomenon that recurs annually, it said, affirming that fish die due to waters' high temperature and irresponsible acts by sea-goers. —KUNA



**KUWAIT:** This handout photo released by Kuwait's Environment Public Authority yesterday shows bleaching on coral reefs near the Qaruh Island. —KUNA



## Local

**Kuwait Times**  
Established 1961  
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

**THE LEADING INDEPENDENT  
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF  
ESTABLISHED 1961**

Founder and Publisher  
**YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN**

Editor-in-Chief  
**ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN**

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432  
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7  
FAX : 24835620/1  
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163  
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125  
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.  
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com  
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

### Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** This photo taken on August 15, 2021 shows a crowded road in Kuwait City, Kuwait. Heavy traffic returned to most main streets around Kuwait after state departments resumed work at full capacity earlier this month, while traffic authorities have said that they have launched coordination to plan for the return to school on October 3. —Photo by Ghazy Qaffaf (Xinhua)

#### News in brief

##### Prime Minister to visit New York

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah is set to travel to New York next month on an official visit. Al-Qabas Arabic newspaper reported yesterday quoting informed sources, noting that preparations are ongoing to finalize the visit's agenda.

##### Drill in Avenues Mall

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Ministry of Interior yesterday said that the country's Special Forces and US army would perform a security drill in the Avenues Mall at 2:00 am this morning. The ministry's security media and public relations department said in a press statement that this exercise comes as part of deep relations and cooperation between the two institutions in the field of training.

##### Officers probed for alleged forgery

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's anti-corruption authority is investigating officers from the interior ministry for the alleged forgery of official documents, the watchdog said yesterday. The measure is part of efforts to push a sweeping anti-corruption crusade across all state bodies, said a statement by the watchdog, adding that the charges are "criminalized" by laws aiming to protect public funds. There would be no letup in efforts to clamp down on such nefarious deeds, added the statement.

##### Two arrested with 125 kg hashish

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait police arrested two people with possession of 125 kilograms of hashish and 250 grams of shabu, the interior ministry announced. The two were caught while attempting to smuggle the drugs into Kuwait through the Arabian Gulf waters, the ministry explained in a statement, noting that they were referred to the proper authorities for further action.

## Kuwait looks to regulate local used car trade market

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's traffic authorities are studying the possibility of setting a limit for the maximum number of cars non-Kuwaiti residents in the country can own, in an effort to regulate the local used car market. According to a local

report, authorities became alerted of a situation where people in Kuwait have up to 50 vehicles registered in their names at the same time, as they trade in used cars without a proper license, taking advantage of the law that allows people to freely sell vehicles they own to others without paying substantial fees, as well as the lack of a ceiling for the number of vehicles one person can own.

After conducting a survey on the situation, authorities became convinced that the local used car trade market needs more regulations, such as obtaining a license from the Ministry of

Commerce and Industry for an annual fee, and putting a cap on the number of vehicles a person can own, according to sources with knowledge of the situation.

"It was also discovered that some residents buy a large number of vehicles, then lease them to others in exchange of a monthly payment," said the sources who are quoted anonymously in a report published by Al-Rai Arabic daily yesterday. The sources specifically mentioned that authorities are studying introducing restrictions on car ownerships on residents only, although a decision on that regard is not final yet.

## Domestic help offices cautiously optimistic on costs' cut calls

**KUWAIT:** Several owners of domestic help offices in Kuwait expressed optimism regarding a senior diplomat's recent calls to reconsider the costs that employers in Kuwait pay in order to recruit domestic helpers from India. Nevertheless, the owners explained in statements to a local Arabic daily that a majority of the money paid goes on fees and charges inside and outside Kuwait.

Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sibi George was recently quoted by Al-Qabas Arabic daily saying that the current recruitment fee of domestic helpers from his country, which stand at around KD 890 per worker, was too high, noting that the recruitment costs in India amount to around KD 100. In statements published by Al-Anbaa yesterday, the anonymous office owners explained that in addition

to the KD 100 fee, they have to pay fees and commissions to mandooobs (brokers) and agents in Kuwait, in addition to commissions Indian offices are charging.

This brings up the total cost to recruit a domestic helper from India to up to KD 850, meaning that in this case, an office in Kuwait creates a net profit of only KD 40 per worker they help recruit. One office owner said the ministerial fees and government procedures, such as fees for authenticating papers and medical tests, currently cost KD 210, apart from the agents' and middlemen's commission.

He further explained that an office pays a KD 60 fee for the Indian Embassy's contract, KD 150 for Kuwait Embassy and medical test procedures, in addition to KD 90 for authenticating documents.

## Djibouti commends Kuwait's assistance

**KUWAIT:** Djibouti's Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Ali Moumin commended yesterday the State of Kuwait's "indiscriminate" humanitarian assistance around the world, helping needy regardless of their race or faith. Kuwait's philanthropic action spreads around the globe during crises, Moumin said after meeting with Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, Board Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS).

He said he visited Dr Sayer to express gratitude for KRCS for extending humanitarian assistance to Djibouti. Moumin, who commended "historic and distinguished ties with Kuwait, called for boosting partnership between Kuwait and Djibouti Red



**KUWAIT:** Djibouti's Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Ali Moumin meets KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer. —KUNA

Crescents in terms of training and relief. Dr Sayer said humanitarian work was facing many challenges, and called for doubling efforts to cement effectiveness of philanthropy. —KUNA

## Kuwait opens two schools in Hadramaut

**ADEN:** The Undersecretary of Yemen's Hadramaut Governorate, Issam Al-Kathiri, inaugurated on Sunday the "Bakathir Secondary School" in the city of Sayun and Wadi Bin Ali in the Shibam district, after its restoration with funding from the Kuwait Relief Society. In his speech during the inauguration ceremony, Kathiri expressed his thanks and appreciation to Kuwait, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti government, and the Kuwait Relief Society for the continuous support to the Yemeni people, especially in the education sector. Meanwhile, Office Director of Response Foundation in Hadramaut, Engineer Salem Bawazeer, said that the inauguration of these two projects is part of projects implemented by Kuwait Relief Society in Hadramaut, most notably the restoration of the Industrial Institute in Sayun. He

lauded the generous support provided by Kuwait Relief Society and other Kuwaiti associations to Hadramaut Governorate.

Deputy Director of the Kuwait Relief Society in Yemen, Adel Baeshen, said that the inauguration of the two projects to restore and rehabilitate the two schools is part of a package of development projects implemented by the association in various Yemeni governorates. He added that the education sector is of great priority and importance to Kuwait Relief Society, which launched during the past two weeks, coinciding with the start of the new academic year, a number of important projects to serve the educational process.

He pointed out that the Kuwait Relief Society opened a school of eight classes in Abyan governorate after building and equipping it and opened Al-Farouq High School in Shabwa after its restoration and rehabilitation. He stressed the keenness of Kuwait Relief Society to support the Yemeni people and to continue relief and development efforts in a way that contributes to achieving development and serving the Yemeni community, within the framework of the 'Kuwait by your side' campaign for the seventh year in a row. —KUNA

**Kuwait Times**  
ESTABLISHED 1961  
THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

STAY CONNECTED



- Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**
- Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**
- Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait  
Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616/7 | Fax: 24835620 - 24835621  
E: info@kuwaittimes.net



US VP Harris vows ‘enduring engagement’ in Asia

Page 7Page 6



KABUL: A handout picture released by the British Ministry of Defense (MOD) shows members of the British (left) and US Armed Forces posing for a photograph while working at Kabul Airport Sunday. —AFP

# UK seeks extension of Kabul evacuations

## Biden hopeful for ending Afghan airlift on time

**LONDON/WASHINGTON:** Britain said yesterday it would urge the United States to extend an end-of-the-month deadline for evacuations from Afghanistan, while the Taliban warned any delay would lead to “consequences”. US President Joe Biden has set an August 31 deadline for the chaotic airlift organized by thousands of temporarily deployed US troops, but has left the door open to an extension if needed.

Defense Secretary Ben Wallace said that Prime Minister Boris Johnson would “try to raise the prospect of seeing if the United States will extend” the deadline at an online leaders meeting of the G7 group of wealthy nations today. But a spokesman for the Taliban, Suhail Shaheen, told Sky News that the hardline Islamist group would not agree to any extension of the deadline, calling this a “red line”, with any delay viewed as “extending occupation”.

“If the US or UK were to seek additional time to continue evacuations—the answer is no. Or there would be consequences,” Shaheen said. “If they are intent on continuing the occupation, it will create a reaction,” he added. The UK defense minister stressed that the evacuations from Afghanistan’s capital could only be maintained beyond August 31 if led by the US.

“It’s really important for people to understand the

United States have over 6,000 people in Kabul airport and when they withdraw that will take away the framework... and we will have to go as well,” Wallace told reporters in Scotland. “If their timetable extends even by a day or two, that will give us a day or two more to evacuate people,” he said.

“Because we are really down to hours now, not weeks, and we have to make sure we exploit every

told Sky News that the “hard reality” was that the Taliban had a crucial say, now that they control Afghanistan. “I think everybody has to be clear that this is not just a discussion that happens between G7 leaders tomorrow, it is a discussion which happens with the Taliban,” he said. “The Taliban will have a choice, they can either seek to engage with the international community and show that they want to be a part of the international system.

“Or they can turn around and say there is no opportunity for an extension.”

Britain, which has deployed 1,000 soldiers to aid its airlift efforts, is pushing for longer to get out everybody who qualifies, with the trans-Atlantic allies’ defense ministers speaking by phone Sunday. London has so far evacuated 5,725 people from Kabul since August 13, including more than 3,100 Afghan individuals and their families, according to the defense ministry.

Heappey said early yesterday the UK expects a further nine flights to depart over the next 24 hours. He told Times radio that were Afghans who are eligible for asylum in the West were also fleeing the country overland and showing up at embassies in neighboring countries such as Pakistan.

President Joe Biden on Sunday said he still hopes to complete the “heartbreaking” evacuation from

Afghanistan by the end of the month but warned of potential terrorist attacks against the crowded Kabul airport. As the numbers of evacuees steadily rose, despite a volatile situation on the ground and enormous logistical difficulties, Biden said he was aiming to complete the task by August 31, the date agreed with the Taliban. Speaking in the White House, he said his “hope is we will not have to extend.” “We’ll see what we can do,” he added, when asked by reporters what his reply was to foreign leaders asking for more time. The White House said late Sunday that since last weekend, when the Taliban completed their victorious sweep across Afghanistan by capturing Kabul from the fleeing national government, the US “has evacuated and facilitated the evacuation of approximately 30,300 people on military and coalition flights.” Biden acknowledged the searing scenes of Afghans crowding the airport in desperation to escape the militants but said this had to be accepted, given the situation.

“There is no way to evacuate this many people without pain and loss and heartbreaking images you see,” he said. Underlining why US officials are keen to complete the mission as soon as possible, Biden warned that Islamic State extremists known as ISIS-K pose a constant threat. — AFP

## French FM in UAE to oversee Afghan exodus

**ABU DHABI:** French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian was due in the UAE yesterday to see for himself the massive airlift underway from Afghanistan using the Gulf nation as a staging post. France is seeking to evacuate more than 1,000 Afghans who are fleeing the country following the Taliban’s lightning takeover a week ago, one of a number of nations scrambling to evacuate vulnerable individuals.

Le Drian and colleagues were due to visit the Al-Dhafra base—some 30 kilometers (18 miles) from Abu Dhabi—where the French airforce has been conducting round the clock operations in support of the evacuations. Since August 15, “nearly 100 French residents, 40 residents of partner nations, and more than 1,000 (at-risk) Afghans” have been transported to France via the Emirates, Le Drian’s delegation said in a statement.

A flight with 250 French and Afghans aboard left



Jean-Yves Le Drian

for Paris on Sunday followed by another in the early hours of yesterday with 150 passengers. The first emergency flight carried 41 people, mostly French, on August 17. Le Drian and Defense Minister Florence Parly will meet diplomats, military personnel, police officers, and “all the staff working under extremely difficult conditions to enable evacuation

operations from Kabul”, the statement said.

They were also due to meet Abu Dhabi’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan to “thank the Emirati authorities for their support”, the communique added. France has a permanent military presence in the Emirates from where it conducted parts of its aerial campaign against the Islamic State group. France is one of several NATO and EU member states that are scrambling to rescue vulnerable foreign staff and Afghan allies from Afghanistan since the Taliban overran the capital just over a week ago. Britain said yesterday it would urge the United States at a virtual G7 summit to extend an end-of-the-month deadline to complete evacuations of Western citizens and Afghan colleagues from Kabul.

US President Joe Biden has set an August 31 deadline for the chaotic airlift organized by thousands of temporarily deployed US troops—but has left the door open to an extension if needed.

“We need time to accomplish this task, measured in days and weeks not months,” Le Drian told the French Journal du Dimanche weekly. Since August 14, roughly 25,100 people have been evacuated from Afghanistan aboard aircraft flown by the US and its allies, according to a White House estimate. —AFP

## The scramble to evacuate from Kabul airport

**KABUL:** Here are the latest developments in the chaotic evacuation of Western citizens and local allies from Kabul airport after the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan on August 15.

**Airport gunfight**

German and US forces engaged in a gun battle against “unknown assailants” at Kabul airport yesterday morning that killed an Afghan guard and injured three others, according to the German military. The deaths were the latest in a scramble to leave the country that has claimed the lives of at least eight people, some crushed to death, with at least one person falling from a moving plane. Around 30,000 people have been evacuated to safety since the Taliban marched into Kabul.

**Taliban warns against extension**

President Joe Biden said Sunday he hoped not to extend the August 31 deadline for ending US military presence and airlifts out of Afghanistan, but he added that talks were underway to explore that possibility. The European Union and Britain have called for the deadline to be extended, with the UK saying it would raise the issue at an online G7 meeting today. However yesterday the Taliban warned that any delay would lead to “consequences”. Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen told Sky News that the US staying beyond the agreed deadline would be “extending occupation”.

**Evacuees land in Belgium**

Two flights carrying 226 people — mainly Afghan employees of international missions and their families — arrived at a Belgian air base outside Brussels yesterday. Families, many with small children and carrying only hand luggage, were led to buses to be taken to a military base under police escort for health checks and immigration processing. Foreign Minister Sophie Wilmes said Operation Red Kite has already brought 400 people from Kabul’s airport. —AFP

## Extinction Rebellion targets central London in protests

**LONDON:** Thousands of climate change demonstrators thronged central London yesterday, as environmental activist group Extinction Rebellion held its latest round of protests, promising two weeks of disruption. Protesters were greeted with a visibly heavy police presence as they converged on Trafalgar Square in the heart of the British capital, where they rallied with a marching band and speeches.

The latest action—branded the “Impossible Rebellion”—saw participants block roads leading to the square, deploying a large pink structure with the slogan “come to the table” written on it. “What are you waiting for? Your local area to flood, or your street to get blocked with rubble and cars?” Extinction Rebellion’s UK branch said on Twitter.

“The #ClimateEmergency is hap-

pening now, and the rebellion for life is happening now.” The group, formed in Britain in 2018, is a network of climate activists who use civil disobedience to spotlight inaction on global warming. Since holding its first protests in London that year, activists have repeatedly brought parts of the capital and other cities to a standstill with carnival-like demonstrations.

They have also targeted individual businesses and premises in London for direct action, including newspapers’ offices and energy companies’ headquarters. The rallies have spread to many countries around the world. Police at previous UK protests have arrested hundreds of participants, but have also faced criticism for being too lenient. Maddy Hayley Thomas, 33, was among those rallying at the first day of the demonstrations in the British capital.



LONDON: Climate activists from the Extinction Rebellion group lock on under a van they parked blocking a road in central London yesterday as the group launched its ‘Impossible Rebellion’ series of actions. —AFP

“What is extreme is the fact that the government, huge corporations, all of our system is allowing the devastation to our planet, to the global south,” she said. Extinction Rebellion’s latest action comes as the UK government

gears up to host the crucial COP26 United Nations climate summit in the Scottish city of Glasgow, in November. It is set to draw thousands of delegates—and demonstrators—from around the world. —AFP



## International

# Security crisis drives up Nigeria's food worries

## Agricultural heartland in the grip of violence between nomadic herders, farmers

**MAKURDI, Nigeria:** Rice farmer Donald Amokaha spends his days weeding a temporary plot outside the city of Makurdi, on the fringes of the Benue river in Nigeria's agricultural heartland. Two hours' drive away into the countryside, Amokaha has a swathe of prime farmland, but it lies abandoned. Fear of attacks forced him to leave earlier this year.

"I usually cultivate rice, millet and sesame seeds on 100 hectares (250 acres) of land in Guma... but this year, I ran," Amokaha told AFP. "I ploughed 40 hectares but was unable to plant." Amokaha is only one of a growing number of farmers who are fleeing violence in Nigeria's crop-growing Middle Belt.

The agricultural heartland, like Nigeria's north-western states, is in the grip of years-long tit-for-tat violence between nomadic herders and farmers—a feud that has sharpened as climate change intensifies competition for water and land. While insecurity is rooted in that herder-farmer conflict, the crisis in north-west Nigeria has spiraled into broader criminality with mass abductions for ransom, cattle theft and banditry. The rural exodus is a key factor in driving up the cost of food in Africa's most populous country, hitting its tens of millions of poor.

The government's statistics bureau says inflation in June was around 17 percent compared with a year earlier. The rise has been fuelled by the fallout from the global pandemic, which has triggered a slump in petroleum demand, badly hitting revenues in oil-producing Nigeria. But within the index lies even worse news: food inflation of 22 percent.



### Farmers fleeing farmlands

#### Worries

In Nasawara state, on the outskirts of Nigeria's capital Abuja, vegetable seller Badamasi Bello is anxious. He said he loses customers daily because of the spiraling price of commodities. The high cost of transportation is also contributing to rising prices. "I used to sell tomatoes and peppers, but things are now costly. I sold 10 bags of these items daily, but customers are no longer coming like before. I now sell only two bags in a day."

Last month, the local State Emergency Management Agency chief warned about food scarcity, saying that many farmers living in camps for the internally displaced would struggle to return to the land. The UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported in May that Benue had more than 200,000 displaced people, although local government estimates put that figure much higher.

Benue State Governor Samuel Ortom, a fierce government critic from the opposition PDP party, said he fears the repercussions of rural flight on food output and the overall economy. "This crisis portends a great danger to the growth and development of Nigeria," Ortom told AFP.

#### Import calls

"Without adequate security, there can't be farming to produce food for our people." In May, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned at least 9.2 million Nigerians face a crisis or worse levels of food insecurity this year because of the country's conflicts.



While insecurity is rooted in that herder-farmer conflict, the crisis in northwest Nigeria has spiraled into broader criminality with mass abductions for ransom, cattle theft and banditry.

Benue produces food staples such as yam, rice, beans, and maize. It supplies 70 percent of Nigeria's soybean, according to the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission. Nigeria's central bank said it recently released 791 billion naira (\$1.92 billion / 1.7 million euros) to farmers and reduced interest rates on loans in a bid to stimulate food production.

Chijioke Ekechukwu, chief executive at Dignity Finance & Investment, said farmers were producing far less than was needed to meet Nigeria's food demand. "The current situation is affecting prices. Government needs to open borders for import of food shortfalls. When this is done, there will be enough for the local market and prices will

be forced to go down," Chijioke told AFP.

"In the long run, government should tackle insecurity." Nigeria closed parts of its borders in August 2019 in an attempt to battle smuggling of rice and other goods as the government tried to improve food self-sufficiency. The frontiers were also closed in March last year to help fight the coronavirus pandemic, although four borders were reopened in December. Amokaha, a former agriculture commissioner and now farmer, said food prices would rise inexorably until growers were able to return to their land. "Rather than importing food, the government should fight insecurity in order to encourage farmers go into more production," he said. —AFP

#### News in brief

##### Ukraine blocks Russian news sites

**KIEV:** Ukraine yesterday blocked the websites of several prominent Russian media outlets in its latest round of sanctions against neighboring Russia which it has accused of spreading propaganda. Ties between the ex-Soviet countries have deteriorated sharply since Russia annexed the Crimean peninsula in 2014 and threw its weight behind armed separatists in eastern Ukraine. Ukraine and its Western allies have accused the Kremlin of sending troops and weapons to reinforce the separatists and also say Russia is leveraging media as a propaganda tool to stoke the conflict. —AFP

##### UN action on Belarus sought

**WARSAW:** Four eastern EU members yesterday urged the United Nations to take action against Belarus for encouraging migrants to cross illegally into the European Union, calling it a "hybrid attack" on the bloc. The prime ministers of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in a joint statement said the influx of migrants had been "planned and systematically organized by the regime of Alexander Lukashenko". Thousands of migrants—mostly from the Middle East—have crossed the border in recent months in what the EU believes is a form of retaliation against increasingly tough EU sanctions. —AFP

##### Indonesian ex-minister jailed

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia's ex-social affairs minister was jailed for 12 years yesterday after being convicted of taking \$1.2 million in bribes linked to food aid for poor families hit by the coronavirus pandemic. A Jakarta court handed out the stiff sentence to Julianti Batubara following his December arrest and a sting operation that turned up suitcases, backpacks and envelopes stuffed with cash. "The court sentences the defendant to 12 years in prison and orders him to pay 500 million rupiah (\$35,000) in fines or serve six more months in prison," presiding judge Muhammad Damis told the hearing, which was held virtually for virus safety reasons. —AFP

##### New wildfire hits Greek island

**ATHENS:** Scores of firefighters backed by water-dropping aircraft battled a forest fire that broke out early yesterday on the southern part of Greece's Evia island, less than two weeks after an inferno decimated its northern part. The fire was burning near the village of Fygia where two neighborhoods have been evacuated and was moving toward the coastal tourist village of Marmari, where authorities were preparing boats to evacuate people if needed, according to Athens News Agency. Forty-six firefighters were battling flames fanned by high winds—assisted by 20 fire engines, three water-dropping airplanes and two helicopters, the Greek fire brigade said. —AFP

## Borrell: Afghan 'tragedy' shows EU needs geopolitical muscle

**BRUSSELS:** The fall of Kabul to the Taliban and the chaotic international evacuation effort shows that Europe needs to develop its own military capacity independent of the United States, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell argues. In an interview with AFP, Borrell said European powers would struggle to evacuate their citizens and Afghan allies before the United States ends its operation at Kabul airport—perhaps as early as August 31.

Several US allies have asked Washington to delay this departure, as NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg confirmed on Friday, as without the protection of the 6,000 US troops deployed at the airport, European operations may have to cease. The shocking collapse of the Western-backed Afghan government, the chaotic scenes at the airport and fears that a new generation of Afghan refugees may attempt to head to Europe have revived talk of Europe developing the means to act on its own.

The EU diplomatic mission in Kabul counts 400

## Afghan baby girl born on US military plane in Germany

**BERLIN:** An Afghan woman gave birth to a baby girl on a US military plane shortly after arriving on an evacuation flight to Germany, the US Air Force tweeted on Sunday. During the flight from a staging base in the Middle East, the woman went into labor and began to experience complications, it said.

"The aircraft commander decided to descend in altitude to increase air pressure in the aircraft, which helped stabilize and save the mother's life," the US Air Mobility Command said later on Twitter. Immediately on landing at the Ramstein base, US military medics

Afghan staff and family members that would be eligible to emigrate to Europe—but only 150 have been able to leave so far and some of the planes dispatched by EU militaries are flying out half-empty. A third of the passengers on a flight that arrived in Spain on Saturday were Americans, Borrell told AFP.

"The problem is access to the airport—the US checks and security measures are very strong" and were preventing the passage of Afghan staff, Borrell said, adding that Brussels had asked Washington to show "more flexibility".

European policy makers fear that Kabul will not be a one-off and that future crises in Iraq or in the Sahel region of West Africa could require similar military missions to secure European citizens and interests—perhaps without US support.

#### Strategic autonomy

"I regret greatly the way in which things have gone, but no-one asked for the opinion of the Europeans," he said. "Some countries are going to have to ask themselves questions about an American ally which, as Joe Biden said, doesn't want to fight other people's wars for them."

"The Europeans don't have a choice. We must organize ourselves to deal with the world as it is and not the world that we dream of." The European Union is already developing what it

helped the woman deliver her baby in the cargo hold of the plane.

Mother and child were then transferred to a nearby medical facility "and are in good condition", it said. Footage released by the US military showed the mother lying on a stretcher being carried off the plane by US soldiers at the base in southwest Germany. A week after the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan, evacuation operations from foreign countries continue under extreme conditions marked by scenes of panic and desperation at Kabul airport. Since 14 August, about 17,000 people have been evacuated by the US, including 2,500 Americans, the US government said earlier.

The US got the green light from Berlin for some of the evacuees to be directed to Germany, where it has a number of bases. About 1,150 people landed at the Ramstein base on Saturday, from where they are expected to depart for the United States within days, a base spokesman said. —AFP

tims have been complicated not just by road and bridge damage but by attacks on aid convoys by so far unidentified gangs.

"We have a security problem that is becoming more and more serious," said Jerry Chandler, director of Haiti's civil protection agency. Since early June, a two-kilometer (1.2 mile) stretch of highway running to the southwest peninsula from Port-au-Prince has been unsafe to travel, amid persistent gang violence in a desperately poor neighborhood of the capital.

"We're literally facing a problem of banditry, and we're working flat out with the police, who are sending reinforcements to the south," Chandler said.

Some of the worst destruction was in hard-to-reach rural areas, so the Haitian authorities have been using a United Nations helicopter and eight US aircraft to deliver aid. Aid delivery in hard-hit Les Cayes, Haiti's third-largest city, was being organized largely by inexperienced private groups or individuals, and fights have broken out amid those waiting for help. "We don't want to discourage the good Samaritans," Chandler said, but he urged people to communicate with his office so it



NEW DELHI: Afghans residing in India take part in a demonstration outside the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) office in New Delhi yesterday to protest against the Taliban's military takeover of Afghanistan. —AFP

calls its new "strategic compass", a framework to provide the 27 member states, acting together, to wield more diplomatic and military muscle and develop more of what France's President Emmanuel Macron calls "strategic autonomy". As events unfolded in Kabul, the president of the European Council, Charles Michel, who hosts EU leaders' summits, tweeted: "The situation in Afghanistan is not a success story for the international community. —AFP



RAMSTEIN, Germany: In this image courtesy of the US Air Force, Airmen assigned to the 86th Medical Group provide post labor care to an Afghan mother who gave birth aboard a US Air Force C-17 Globemaster III. —AFP



LES CAYES, Haiti: In this file photo police officers monitor the crowd as earthquake victims receive supplies during the distribution of food and water at the "4 Chemins" crossroads in Les Cayes, Haiti. —AFP

could help organize the most efficient delivery of aid to those in greatest need.

Brazil meantime joined in the aid efforts, dispatching a military KC-390 cargo plane carrying a team of 23 firemen and 10 tons of medical and emergency equipment to Haiti. —AFP



## International

# US VP Harris vows ‘enduring engagement’ in Asia region

## Harris dodges questions about US credibility after Afghan debacle

**SINGAPORE:** Vice President Kamala Harris vowed “enduring engagement” in Asia yesterday, offering reassurances of Washington’s commitment to the region even as the United States completes its chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban takeover.

The hardline Islamists’ swift return to power a week ago, and desperate scenes of thousands trying to flee, have cast a shadow over the United States’ status as a global superpower. But on a visit to Singapore, her first

worked with us and vulnerable Afghans, including women and children”.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong welcomed the vice president’s reassurances and said Singapore was offering a military aircraft to help in the chaotic evacuation from Kabul airport overseen by the US army. But he also expressed hopes that “Afghanistan does not become an epicenter for terrorism again”. US President Joe Biden’s administration is seeking to reset relation-

to evacuate tens of thousands of people. The crisis has prompted comparisons with the trauma of 1975 in Saigon, when US helicopters ferried final evacuees from the embassy roof, as Viet Cong troops advanced.

But US officials insist the trip was planned long before the Afghan crisis and is focused on Washington’s broader strategic goals in Asia. Southeast Asia is seen as critically important at a time China is challenging US political sway and naval dominance in the region.



**SINGAPORE:** US Vice President Kamala Harris speaks to troops as she visits the USS Tulsa in Singapore yesterday. — AFP

stop on a trip that will also include Vietnam, Harris repeatedly insisted that Washington could be depended on. “Our administration is committed to enduring engagement in Singapore, into Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific,” Harris told a press conference alongside Singapore’s leader.

“The reason I am here is because the United States is a global leader, and we take that role seriously.” But she dodged questions about whether US credibility had been damaged by the Afghan debacle, saying her government’s focus was on “evacuating American citizens, Afghans who

ships in Asia after the turbulent Trump era, and project Washington as a stabilizing force in the face of growing Chinese aggression.

But analysts say the seizure of power by the Taliban, notorious for their brutal 1996-2001 rule, and rapid collapse of US-trained Afghan forces have caused fresh concerns about US dependency.

### ‘Rules-based international order’

Harris is also facing criticism for being tone-deaf in going ahead with a visit to Vietnam as US forces struggle

castigated or even punished for waving the old national banner, but so far there is no official word from the group on the flag issue. At a Kabul roadside on Sunday, vendors were making a quick sale in Taliban flags—a white banner bearing the Muslim proclamation of faith and the regime’s formal name: “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan”. “Our goal is to spread the flag of the Islamic Emirate throughout Afghanistan, instead of the tricolor flag,” said vendor Ahmad Shakib, who studies economics at university.

It was not clear if he was affiliated with the Taliban. The sight of Taliban fighters in vehicles bearing the standard has terrorized people across Afghanistan in recent weeks as the militants first captured vast swathes of the rural hinterland and then all the major cities. The group was quick to replace the Afghan national flag wherever it could. But in the middle of the despair and fear sparked by the Taliban takeover, the old flag has become something of a symbol of defiance for many, featuring prominently in the small protests held in recent days.

### ‘My heart is here’

Social media has been awash with images and emojis of the old flag—a black, red and green vertical tricolor with the national emblem overlaid in white—posted by public figures including sports stars and many ordinary Afghans. On Afghanistan’s independence day last week, groups of people waved the national flag in Kabul and a handful of suburbs to celebrate—sometimes in plain sight of patrolling Taliban. At one rally, people on a convoy of honking cars waved national flags in Kabul. At another spot, men and women stood by the roadside holding the tricolor banner. A day earlier, Taliban fighters fired guns to disperse dozens in the eastern city of Jalalabad who were protesting over the removal of the national flag, according to local media. “My heart is here for this flag... I will never leave this flag,” said one Jalalabad resident. “Kill us, fire at us... We will never leave this flag.” — AFP

said. Indonesian prison officials declined to comment on Mack’s release date.

In 2014, von Wiese Mack’s badly beaten body was discovered in the taxi, outside the ritzy hotel where she had been staying with her daughter and Schaefer. The couple had fled to another part of Bali, where police arrested them. Schaefer confessed to the killing during his trial but claimed he was defending himself during an argument with von Wiese Mack, who was unhappy that her daughter was pregnant.

Prosecutors alleged that Schaefer “blindly hit” von Wiese Mack with the fruit bowl in a fit of rage after she hurled a racial slur at him. Schaefer is black. While her mother was being murdered, Mack hid in the bathroom and the couple then stuffed the body into the suitcase together, the trial heard. — AFP



**DENPASAR, Indonesia:** In this file photo taken on April 15, 2015, Heather Mack of the US waits for her court trial at a holding cell in Denpasar, Indonesia’s Bali island. — AFP

## Bali ‘suitcase killer’ set for early release

**DENPASAR:** An American woman convicted with her boyfriend of killing her mother and stuffing the body in a suitcase at a luxury Bali hotel is to be freed from prison early, her lawyer said yesterday.

In 2015, teenager Heather Mack was handed a 10-year jail term while her boyfriend Tommy Schaefer got 18 years for the murder of Chicago holiday Sheila von Wiese Mack on the Indonesian paradise island. Schaefer beat the 62-year-old victim to death with a fruit bowl during a heated argument at the five-star St Regis resort, before the couple abandoned the suitcase containing the battered body in a taxi, and fled.

Mack, who was pregnant at the time of the crime, was found guilty on a lesser charge of assisting in the murder. The woman, now 25, was set to be released from Bali’s Kerobokan prison in October, about three years early, her lawyer said, citing sentence reductions due to good behavior.

“Her sentence will be completed in October... and then she’ll be completely free,” Yulius Benyamin Seran told AFP, without giving a specific release date. Mack, who was 19 at the time of her conviction, would face deportation back to the United States following her release, he added.

But she wanted to stay in Indonesia to care for her six-year-old daughter, who was being raised in a Bali foster home. “She doesn’t want her daughter deported back to the US... and hounded by the media,” Seran



### VP to visit Vietnam today

Washington has repeatedly criticized Beijing’s expansive claims to almost the entire flashpoint South China Sea, which overlaps with the claims of several Southeast Asian states and Taiwan. At Monday’s press conference, Harris reiterated US commitment to “uphold the rules-based international order and freedom of navigation, including in the South China Sea”.

After arriving at the weekend, Harris began her official engagements Monday by holding talks with Lee as the United States and Singapore signed agreements on combating cyber threats, climate change, and the coronavirus pandemic. She was formally welcomed at the president’s official residence, inspected a guard of honor and was presented with an orchid named after her, a typical honor for a visiting dignitary. Harris also visited a naval base and addressed US sailors aboard the visiting USS Tulsa warship. Singapore and the US have strong and long-standing security ties.

The city-state also has good relations with Beijing, and its leaders have warned the US against taking too tough a line towards China. Today, Harris will give a speech laying out Washington’s vision for the region and meet with business leaders to discuss supply chain issues, particularly a microchip shortage that has hit the auto industry. She departs for Hanoi today evening. — AFP



**NEW DELHI:** A worker climbs up a ladder at the 25-metre (82-foot) high smog tower, built to purify the air during pollution season, in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

## Indian capital opens first ‘smog tower’

**NEW DELHI:** India’s capital New Delhi opened its first “smog tower” yesterday aimed at reducing the air pollution blamed for thousands of premature deaths every year, but experts were skeptical. Concentrations of tiny deadly particles in Delhi’s air regularly exceed safe limits by up to 20 times, particularly in winter when its 20 million people are enveloped in a noxious grey blanket of smog.

Forty giant fans on the 25-metre (82-foot) tower will pump 1,000 cubic meters of air per second through filters that halve the amount of harmful particulates in a radius of one square kilometer (0.4 square miles), according to engineers. “Today is a big day for Delhi in its fight for clean air against pollution,” Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said after the inauguration near the busy shopping area of Connaught Place.

The installation “is being looked at in an experimental way. We will analyze the data and if it’s effective, more towers will be built across Delhi,” Kejriwal added. The tower cost \$2 million and critics say erecting a sufficient number to clean the air substantially across the city would cost huge amounts of public money, and that efforts would be better directed at the sources of the smog.

These include vehicle exhaust, heavy and small-scale industry, construction activity, the combustion of waste and fuel, and in winter the burning of crops in neighboring regions. “Let’s just be clear that this is futile, an absolute waste,” Karthik Ganesan from the Council on Energy, Environment and Water told AFP.

“Now that taxpayers’ money has been spent, let Delhi be the test case for all other Indian cities... to ensure no other city spends on such ideas which we can’t afford,” he added. India has 14 of the world’s 15 most polluted cities, according to the World Health Organization.

A 2020 study in the Lancet found there were 1.67 million deaths in the country attributable to air pollution in 2019 including almost 17,500 in Delhi.

In 2018 China built a much larger 60-metre smog tower in the polluted city of Xian, but the experiment has not spread to other cities so far. — AFP



**DOHA:** In this file photo taken on February 29, 2020, US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad (left) and Taliban co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar shake hands after signing a peace agreement during a ceremony in the Qatari capital Doha. — AFP

## Art of the deal: US envoy behind Taliban’s return

**DOHA:** If one individual could bring peace to Afghanistan, US envoy Zalmay Khalilzad touted himself as the man for the job. In the end, however, the seasoned diplomat has overseen the demise of the republic he so painstakingly assembled. The 70-year-old Afghan-American envoy spent years as Washington’s point man for talks with the Taliban that paved the way for the deal to see the US end its longest war and exit Afghanistan.

That milestone came after more than a year of intense shuttle diplomacy during which Khalilzad visited foreign capitals, attended summits at glitzy hotels, and gave speeches at prestigious think tanks.

The Taliban were ready to discuss a compromise, he assured his audiences. Once a prolific social media voice, Khalilzad has gone silent since the Taliban returned to power following the collapse of the US-backed government in the face of an overwhelming blitzkrieg. The State Department said last week the envoy remained in Qatar, working the phones in hopes of encouraging a diplomatic settlement. But the deal he had hoped could end the war had actually unleashed disaster. Husain Haqqani, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, said Khalilzad told successive US presidents eager to withdraw their troops that he had a peace deal, but it was in fact a surrender.

“He negotiated poorly, emboldened the Taliban, and pretended that talks would yield a power-sharing agreement even though the Taliban had no intention to share power,” Haqqani told AFP.

### Storied career

Khalilzad took control of the US-Afghan portfolio in 2018 after the Trump administration named him a special envoy overseeing negotiations with the Taliban. The new assignment followed a storied career. Khalilzad had shaped embryonic governments in Afghanistan and Iraq following successive US invasions, gaining a reputation for bringing disparate groups to the table. Washington’s decision to pursue talks followed years of rising violence in Kabul where the Taliban unleashed chaos by sending waves of suicide bombers into the Afghan capital. Khalilzad secured the release of the Taliban’s co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar from Pakistan’s custody to kickstart the initiative, with the two sides cobbling together an agreement charting the US withdrawal after nearly two decades of conflict.

During months of negotiations in Qatar, Khalilzad was said to have developed a close rapport with the Taliban delegation. Pictures published online showed the gregarious envoy sharing laughs and smiles with insurgent negotiators, stirring resentment in Afghanistan where the war raged.

But when the US withdrawal deal was finally signed in February 2020 at a lavish ceremony in Doha, Khalilzad had secured mostly nebulous assurances from the Taliban about any future peace. “Khalilzad prised... just one strong commitment—that they would not attack the US and ‘its allies’,” wrote Kate Clark of the Afghanistan Analysts Network in a new report. More vague were promises from the Taliban to abandon Al-Qaeda and other international jihadist groups, and to begin talking to the Afghan government.

### Little time or space

In hindsight, the agreement appears to have been little more than a string of American concessions. The US was leaving Afghanistan without a ceasefire and had not even established a framework for a future peace process that would be vital for locking down a settlement to end the war. Rather than securing compromises from the Taliban in the months following the deal, Khalilzad piled more pressure on the Afghan government—strong-arming the palace into releasing thousands of insurgent prisoners who immediately bolstered the militant ranks.

To add to Kabul’s woes, the agreement effectively set off a countdown, with the US promising to pull all of its remaining troops from Afghanistan by May 2021 — a deadline later extended until September.

The Afghan government was left with little time or space to maneuver. US President Joe Biden’s decision in April to follow through with the withdrawal lit the final fuse, sparking an all-out offensive by the Taliban that overthrew the Afghan government by force on August 15. Two days earlier, US lawmaker Michael Waltz—an Afghan veteran—sent a letter to Biden pillorying Khalilzad’s performance. Khalilzad “has provided you with poor counsel and his diplomatic strategy has failed spectacularly”, he wrote.—AFP



# Business

TUESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2021

## New strike hit German passenger rail

### Escalating wage dispute to impact passenger services

**FRANKFURT:** Germany's passenger train network faces a second round of strikes yesterday and disruption to freight services this weekend, adding more pain to the tourist season and already strained supply chains. The latest move in an escalating wage dispute will impact passenger services from 2:00 am (0000 GMT) yesterday and last 48 hours, the head of the GDL train drivers union Claus Weselsky told reporters Friday.

The industrial action affecting cargo trains will begin August 21 and end at the same time four days later, the union head said. "Deutsche Bahn has up to this point not given notice that it will make any concessions in the pay dispute it started," Weselsky said, referring to the German rail operator.

"The GDL sees itself forced to call for new strikes at Deutsche Bahn," he said. Deutsche Bahn criticised the announcement of the new strike, saying in a statement that it was "a wholly unnecessary burden for our passengers and freight clients".



#### More pain to tourist season

Earlier this month, the union led a walkout after its members voted 95 percent in favour, following the collapse of pay talks with Deutsche Bahn. On Germany's long-distance rail network, carriages were packed as only 25 percent of the scheduled service ran, during the two-day strike which began in the morning of August 11.

Deutsche Bahn's freight service DB Cargo was also severely impacted, adding to delivery delays for German businesses already hit by shortages in raw materials and components from timber and steel to computer chips.

#### 'Wrong signal'

The announcement of more strikes sends the "wrong signal at the wrong time", according to Siegfried Russwurm, head of the influential Federation of German Industry (BDI). "This strike



**BERLIN:** Commuters crowd on a platform at Berlin's main railway station during a wage strike by German train drivers in Berlin yesterday. A strike on German passenger rail began early yesterday, creating headaches for thousands of travellers and commuters, after the train drivers' union rejected a new offer to keep services going. —AFP

will put an almost incalculably heavy burden not just on industry, but on the whole of society," he said in a statement.

Deutsche Bahn was already contending with huge losses as demand for travel drastically shrank during the pandemic which erupted in March 2020. It has also been struggling to rebuild long stretches of track destroyed by deadly floods that struck western Germany in mid-July.

At the core of the dispute, the union is demanding a 1.4-percent pay hike and a bonus of 600 euros (\$700) for 2021, and a further wage rise of 1.8 percent in 2022. Deutsche Bahn had offered to phase in a 3.2-percent wage increase in two steps in 2022 and 2023.

The slower increases proposed by Deutsche Bahn are necessary to "tackle the negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic" on the company's

finances, it said in a statement. The last major conflict between unions and Deutsche Bahn took place between 2014-2015, when over nine months GDL organised nine rounds of strikes to demand regulatory reforms. The stoppage in May 2015 of six consecutive days has held the record as the longest in the company's history. A shorter strike hit rail traffic in December 2018, when a stoppage was called for four hours. —AFP

## Bitcoin jumps above \$50,000 for first time since May

**LONDON:** Bitcoin rose back above \$50,000 yesterday for the first time in three months after supportive news from payments giant PayPal and cryptocurrency platform Coinbase. The world's most popular virtual unit jumped to \$50,440 during Asian trade, before easing to \$50,350 in early morning London deals.

"Bitcoin continues its recent recovery, moving above the \$50,000 mark it last attained in May though still some way short of its \$65,000 record as PayPal announces plans to launch its cryptocurrency trading platform in the UK," said AJ Bell analyst Danni Hewson. PayPal has announced that it will this week begin to allow users in Britain to buy, hold and sell cryptocurrency through the online payment platform for the first time.

The expansion into the hot digital money trend follows similar moves by the payments giant in the United States earlier this year. The US firm said its new service would allow UK-based customers to choose from four types of cryptocurrency: Bitcoin, ethereum, litecoin and bitcoin cash.

They will be available both via the PayPal app and its website, with the expansion set to start this week and be available to all eligible customers within the next few weeks. In April, PayPal-owned mobile payments service Venmo began letting users in the US buy, hold or sell cryptocurrency using its app.



**ISTANBUL:** File photo shows a physical imitation of a Bitcoin at a cryptocurrency "Bitcoin Change" shop in Istanbul. Bitcoin broke back above \$50,000 yesterday for the first time in three months. — AFP

PayPal itself followed in March allowing people there to use cryptocurrency to make purchases from millions of merchants that use the financial platform for online transactions. Bitcoin won another shot in the arm yesterday from last week's news that Coinbase was ploughing cash into the unit.

"The news last week that Coinbase will buy \$500 million (427 million euros) in cryptos to put on its balance sheet and put 10 percent of quarterly profits into a crypto portfolio has lent support to sentiment," noted Markets.com analyst Neil Wilson.

#### Blistering run

Bitcoin enjoyed a blistering run earlier this year

but in mid-May it began tumbling on a range of issues, including China's crackdown on cryptocurrencies and Tesla boss Elon Musk's decision to stop accepting it on concerns about the environmental impact of mining. The electric carmaker has since indicated its support for bitcoin, while several other high-profile investors including Twitter founder Jack Dorsey have flagged their interest.

It has now risen more than 70 percent from the six-month lows below \$29,000 touched in June, while speculation is swirling that it could begin its push towards \$100,000. However, Bitcoin is still a long way off its record just below \$65,000 that it achieved in April. — AFP

## UK business activity slows on supply crunch

**LONDON:** Britain's private sector business activity slowed sharply in August due to ongoing staff and supply shortages, a survey showed yesterday. The composite purchasing managers' index (PMI) hit a six-month low of 55.3 points, compilers IHS Markit and the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply said in a statement.

That compared with a reading of 59.2 in July, but it held above the key 50 level to indicate expansion. "An abnormally large slowdown in overall activity in August offers a stark warning to the UK economy that the accelerated levels of growth we've seen earlier this summer are not sustainable," said CIPS group director Duncan Brock said in a statement.

"It was the slowest output expansion for six months, and the worst shortages of staff and materials on record are mostly to blame." IHS Markit noted that the economy, which fully reopened last month, continued to grow above its pre-pandemic average.

However it also highlighted "clear signs" of a loss of momentum in the third quarter, or three months to September. "Despite COVID-19 containment measures easing to the lowest since the pandemic began, rising virus case numbers are deterring many forms of spending, notably by consumers, and have hit growth via worsening staff and supply shortages," said IHS Markit economist Chris Williamson.

"Supplier delays have risen to a degree exceeded only once before—in the initial months of the pandemic—and the number of companies reporting that output had fallen due to staff or materials shortages has risen far above anything ever seen previously in more than 20 years of survey history."

Recent official data showed that Britain's economy rebounded 4.8 percent in the second quarter as the government began relaxing lockdown restrictions amid its fast-paced vaccination programme. However, the rebound faces challenges as global supply chain bottlenecks persist and a jobs protection programme is set to end in September. — AFP

## UK raises concerns on mega takeover of chip designer

**LONDON:** Britain said a planned takeover of chip designer Arm by US firm Nvidia raises "serious competition concerns", while the deal may still be probed on security grounds. Japan's SoftBank Group revealed almost a year ago that it was selling Britain-based Arm for up to \$40 billion (34 billion euros) in a deal it hoped to complete in early 2022 following competition reviews in several jurisdictions.

Following its own investigation, Britain's Competition and Markets Authority highlighted concerns that included possible prices rises to semiconductors, already facing a global shortage because of the pandemic and impacting in partic-

ular the auto sector.

"We're concerned that Nvidia controlling Arm could create real problems for Nvidia's rivals by limiting their access to key technologies, and ultimately stifling innovation across a number of important and growing markets," CMA Chief Executive Andrea Coscelli said in a statement.

He noted that the chip technology industry was "vital" to everyday products. "This includes the critical data processing and data centre technology that supports digital businesses across the economy, and the future development of artificial intelligence technologies that will be important to growth industries like robotics and self-driving cars," Coscelli said.

The CMA said it had reported its takeover concerns to the UK government department charged with digital industry matters and arguing that "an in-depth investigation into the deal... is warranted on competition grounds". The watchdog meanwhile confirmed that the takeover could still face an in-depth UK probe on national

security grounds.

It comes as Britain this week ordered an investigation into the takeover of UK defence technology firm Ultra Electronics by US-owned Cobham in order to assess risks to security.

#### 'Beneficial deal'

In a statement, Nvidia said it looked forward to the opportunity to address "the CMA's initial views and resolve any concerns the government may have", adding it remained confident the deal "will be beneficial to Arm, its licensees, competition, and the UK".

Founded in 1990, Arm specialises in micro-processors and dominates the global smartphone market. But its chips are also found in sensors, smart devices and cloud services. Nvidia, known for graphics cards favoured in the video game industry, has seen sales skyrocket during the coronavirus crisis, with gaming a popular pastime in lockdown. SoftBank bought Arm in 2016 for \$32 billion. — AFP



## Business

# Despite economic crisis, Lebanon to reopen classrooms next month

## Power cuts, internet outages have made online instruction a luxury

**BEIRUT:** Students in Lebanon will return to the classroom starting next month, the education minister said yesterday, amid fears an accelerating economic crisis and the coronavirus pandemic would prevent schools from reopening.

Rights groups have decried an “education catastrophe”, with more than a million children in Lebanon out of school since the country’s COVID-19 outbreak began in February last year. Other students are at risk of never returning, the groups have warned, due to a financial downturn that has seen poverty rates soar to reach 78 percent of the population.

Classrooms will gradually reopen starting September 27, outgoing education minister Tarek Majzoub told a press conference yesterday. The decision covers both private and public schools as well as technical learning centres. All are to reopen by October 4 at the latest, he added.

Lebanon had moved to distanced learning in March last year due to the pandemic, with intermittent returns to the classroom for some students.

But power cuts, internet outages and the economic crisis have made online instruction a luxury, as families struggle to afford food, yet alone laptops and mobile phone devices.

Schools have threatened to shut because of extortionate operating costs amid rampant inflation. In an attempt to ease their burden, Majzoub said public schools would open to in-person attendance four days a week, with students taking classes online for the fifth day.

Private schools are free to determine their own operating schedule, he added.

The ministry “is coordinating with relevant authorities and donor countries to settle outstanding financial and economic issues,” Majzoub said, decrying “a series of crises” plaguing the education sector.

Lebanon’s economic crisis, branded by the World Bank as likely one of the planet’s worst in modern times, has seen the local currency lose 90 percent of its value on the black market.

The crisis has led to shortages of almost everything, from fuel to electricity and even bread, with power cuts lasting up to 22 hours a day and fuel for private generators increasingly scarce.

Majzoub said that with international assistance, the ministry has provided donations of textbooks and stationery for public school students, as well as solar panels for 122 learning facilities. —AFP



**BEIRUT:** File photo shows a Coral petrol station in the Lebanese capital Beirut. The key oil company said it would stop supplying its gas stations with fuel amid severe shortages that have brought the crisis-hit country to a halt. —AFP

## Female directors paid 73% less than men: Study

**LONDON:** Women directors at Britain’s top companies earn almost three quarters less than their male counterparts, a study showed yesterday. A female director at one of the companies listed on London’s FTSE 100 index earns an average £237,000 (\$322,700, 275,700 euros) per year, according to research from New Street Consulting Group (NSCG).

That is almost 73 percent less than the average £875,900 earned by male directors at FTSE 100 businesses. The pay chasm is also far greater than the rest of the UK job market. Men in Britain earn an average 15.5 percent more than women, according to recent official data published by the Office for National Statistics.

However, boardroom pay is skewed towards men because women hold far fewer director roles. Men are statistically far more likely to hold top positions like chief executive and chief financial officer. “Whilst great progress has been made in bringing more women onto boards, this research shows there is much more to do,” said study author and NSCG director Claire Carter.

“Focusing solely on the percentages of directors that are women is not enough when trying to approach equality.” —AFP

## EasyJet names ex-RBS boss as chairman

**LONDON:** British budget airline EasyJet, which has been slammed by COVID travel turmoil, yesterday named former Royal Bank of Scotland chief executive Stephen Hester as chairman. “EasyJet plc is pleased to announce that it has appointed Stephen Hester as a director and chair designate,” EasyJet said in a statement.

Hester will succeed John Barton as chairman at the start of December. EasyJet slashed costs and flights as the deadly pandemic ravaged demand for international air travel and slammed the global aviation industry.

However, the carrier last month revealed narrowing quarterly losses thanks to easing COVID travel curbs in Europe, speedy vaccinations and improving demand. Hester was formerly chief executive of RBS, now known as NatWest, for five years until 2014 and oversaw a massive restructuring after the lender’s state bailout during the global financial crisis. He then took up the helm at RSA Insurance but left after the completion of the group’s £7.2-billion takeover by Canadian and Danish peers Intact and Tryg. —AFP



Stephen Hester

## Eurozone business activity strong

**BRUSSELS:** Business activity in the eurozone is hovering near a 15-year high despite slightly cooling in August due to supply pressures, a closely-watched survey by IHS Markit showed yesterday. The PMI Composite reading measuring corporate confidence slipped to 59.5 in August, just under the strong 60.2 figure given in July. A figure above 50 indicates growth.

## OPEC chief makes first trip to oil-rich Congo

**BRAZZAVILLE:** OPEC chief Mohammad Barkindo arrived in Congo late Sunday in the first-ever visit by a head of the powerful cartel to the oil-rich African country where crude constitutes the primary source of income, the Congolese hydrocarbons ministry said.

“Congo has an essential role to play in the glob-

The dip was explained in part by some business concern over the effects of the Delta variant of the coronavirus, but especially by demand outstripping supply as activity bounced back vigorously in the 19-nation eurozone.

“Supply chain delays continue to wreak havoc,” IHS Markit’s chief business economist, Chris Williamson, said. The duo of surging demand and supply problems was pushing costs higher, he said, leading to “another near-record increase in average selling prices for goods and services”.

While that could fuel worries about inflation, Williamson said “inflationary pressures may have

al energy industry and OPEC plans to encourage it,” Barkindo was quoted as saying in a statement published by the ministry. During the trip, which will last until Wednesday, the secretary general of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries will meet various government officials, including Prime Minister Anatole Collinet Makosso and President Denis Sassou Nguesso.

Barkindo will also visit an oil platform off the coast near Pointe-Noire, Congo’s economic capital. Arriving at Brazzaville airport on a flight from Nigeria, Barkindo was welcomed by hydrocarbons minister, Bruno Jean-Richard Itoua.

The fourth-biggest oil producer south of the Sahara, behind Nigeria, Angola and Equatorial

Guinea, Congo joined OPEC in 2018. Congo is estimated to have proven reserves of some 2.9 billion barrels of oil and its daily output amounts to 336,000 barrels.

French group TotalEnergies accounts for just over two-thirds of overall output and it saw its contract for operating the Djeno terminal renewed last year for a further 20 years. Italian group ENI and US rival Chevron are also present in the country.

Brazzaville set up the publicly-owned group National Society of Petroleum of Congo (SNPC) in 1998.

The city is also home to the African Petroleum Producers’ Organization (APPO). —AFP

## Burgan Bank begins Summer Internship Program

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank has launched the 2021 Summer Internship Program for young bankers designed to provide the students, who have a passion for the banking world, with the opportunity to access a hands-on professional experience in the banking sector. Through the four-week training program, the participants had the chance to implement their acquired theoretical knowledge in a business environment and to learn new skills.

First launched in 2002, the yearly Summer Internship Program enables 17 talented students to acquire the experience as well as the key skills and competencies that facilitate their access to upcoming career opportunities in the banking industry.

The participants were selected from a large pool of candidates who have applied through the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program. Burgan’s employees were also invited to partake in the initiative, which reflects the bank’s commitment to stimulate Burgan’s loyalty and engagement.

The Summer Internship Program organized by the Learning and Talents Development Department in collaboration with the Recruitment and the Retail Management teams, engages students in rotations across the Bank’s branches and contact center to allow them to experience the retail banking dynamics. The internship program also helps participants to develop their teamwork, creativity,



communication and customer service skills. It covers a wide range of topics including leadership mastery, cooperation, creative thinking, public speaking and modern banking. The participants also take part in various cross-collaboration projects and initiatives under the supervision of the branches’ managers and employees.

Commenting on this pre-eminent program for developing the future leaders of the banking sector, Bashar Al-Qattan, Manager at the Learning and Talent Development, said “The Learning & Talent Development team has launched

this internship program as part of Burgan’s corporate social responsibility strategy that reflects the Bank’s commitment to provide continuous and impartial support to students in Kuwait through dedicated special educational and training initiatives. Designed to offer a learning platform enriched with unparalleled insights into the banking industry, the program aims to boost the interns’ power skills by providing them with the key banking foundations that will prepare them for great future career opportunities.”

Burgan Bank is committed to its

strategic investment in developing its human capital. In line with this key priority, Burgan extends the implementation of this principle to sharing banking knowledge and experience with the community by preparing and nurturing new generations of skilled employees. The Bank’s support to this initiative also falls under its dynamic full-fledged community program ENGAGE. Together to be the change, through which Burgan highlights the key aspects affecting various society segments and promotes social welfare through educational, cultural and health driven initiatives.

## UN biodiversity summit postponed to April 2022

**WASHINGTON:** The face-to-face portion of a critical UN biodiversity summit originally slated for last year will be delayed until April 2022, UN officials said, citing the COVID pandemic.

An “official” virtual opening of the COP15 meeting hosted by China will take place in mid-October this year, followed by face-to-face nego-

tiations in southern China’s Kunming from April 25 to May 8, 2022.

Campaigners have for years called for an effective global agreement on halting biodiversity loss, similar to what the Paris Agreement lays out for climate change.

With more than one million species facing extinction and the world failing to meet existing nature preservation targets, the need for an accord among the nearly 200 nations taking part in the talks is pressing.

Earlier this month, the UN unveiled a draft

agreement for the summit calling for the preservation of at least 30 percent of land and oceans, along with other biodiversity targets.

The fruit of months of online discussions, the draft mapped out the route for humanity to be “living in harmony with nature” by 2050.

The draft outlined 21 targets and 10 “milestones” to be hit by 2030 to preserve biodiversity.

These include restoring at least 20 percent of degraded ecosystems and ensuring that existing intact wild areas are retained.

At least 30 percent of land and marine species

should also be protected through conservation areas, the draft proposed.

The framework also called for more sustainable farming and fishing practices, including a two-thirds reduction in pesticide use, as well as “eliminating the discharge of plastic waste”.

“Addressing the challenge of halting ongoing losses of species and genetic diversity and the damage to our ecosystems will determine the well-being of humanity for generations to come,” UN biodiversity chief Elizabeth Maruma Mrema said after Wednesday’s announcement. —AFP



## Business

# As Jackson Hole looms, Wall Street opens higher

## Asian markets and oil bounce after last week's tumble

**NEW YORK:** US stocks opened higher yesterday, continuing Friday's bounce back from a soft patch, as traders looked ahead to the annual Federal Reserve conference later this week.

The Fed's easy money policies have led to a surge in equities over the past year-and-a-half even as COVID has caused widespread economic suffering, but stocks have been buffeted recently amid fears the fast-spreading Delta variant will harm the recovery.

Central bankers will gather virtually late this week for the symposium usually held in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and traders are looking forward to the marquee speech by Fed Chair Jerome Powell on Friday, where he could provide details on plans to pull back on the massive stimulus efforts.

Major Wall Street indices continued Friday's gains following a losing week, with the benchmark Dow Jones Industrial Average advancing 0.6 percent to 35,349.28 about 30 minutes into trading.

The broad-based S&P 500 climbed 0.8 percent to 4,475.25, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index rose 1.0 percent to 14,865.29.

News reports that Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen supports giving Powell as second term as Fed chief also was positive for markets, analysts said.

Her recommendation on the fate of the position she once held is likely to carry weight with President Joe Biden. Powell's four-year term Fed chair is up in February.

Just after markets opened, US regulators granted the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine

full approval, sending both companies shares higher. Pfizer rose 2.4 percent, and BioNTech surged 9.3 percent.

Beyond Jackson Hole, traders this week are looking forward to personal consumption and expenditures data due out Friday, which will provide another read on the magnitude of price increases in the United States as its economy bounces back from pandemic-induced closures in 2020.

Fears about the COVID mutation have rattled world markets as it forces some governments to reimpose containment measures, while sentiment was jolted further last week by minutes from the Fed's July meeting indicating it could start withdrawing its vast financial support by year's end.

The colossal bond-buying programme and record low interest rates have been a key pillar of the global recovery for more than a year, and the prospect of the cash being withdrawn has seen that advance stall. The thing that I am going to be watching

very carefully over the next month, before the next (Fed) meeting, is (whether) it is having a more material impact on slowing demand and slowing GDP growth, he said. I'm going to keep an open mind on that, and if it is having a more negative effect that might cause me to adjust my views somewhat from ones that I've stated.

Observers said the general consensus is that even when the Fed finishes winding back support, it is unlikely to immediately start hiking interest rates. Markets react to interest-rate hikes much more than tapering and we expect a pause between tapering and the first hike, suggesting

## Low interest rates



TOKYO: A pedestrian walks past a stock indicator displaying the Nikkei 225 of the Tokyo Stock Exchange and other world stock markets in Tokyo on August 16, 2021. (Photo by Kazuhiro NOGI —AFP)

liftoff in 2023 and not before, said Esty Dwek of Natixis Investment Managers.

Focus is now on Fed chief Jerome Powell's speech to the Jackson Hole annual conference of central bankers and finance chiefs, with hopes for a clue about a taper timetable. All three main indexes on Wall Street rallied Friday, and Asia picked up the baton at the start of the week.

Hong Kong, which sank nearly six percent last week, climbed more than two percent, as did Taipei, while Tokyo, Shanghai, Seoul and Wellington put on more than one percent. There were also gains in Sydney, Singapore,

Manila and Jakarta.

The positive start was mirrored in oil markets, with both main contracts enjoying big gains, having suffered heavy losses recently owing to concerns that the Delta spread will impact demand as countries restrict people's movements.

Crude was also helped by a dip in the dollar caused by the Kaplan remarks. Still, while the week has got off to a healthy start, investors remain cautious about Delta's effect on the recovery outlook, while China's ongoing regulatory clampdown is also keeping optimism on check. —AFP

## Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons introduces Toyota genuine motor oil

**KUWAIT:** Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Group Parts Division has announced the arrival of Toyota genuine motor oil in a brand-new pack, features enhanced looks to match cutting edge performance.

Toyota genuine motor oil is a fully customized superior quality lubricant trusted by millions of happy Toyota owners around the world. The reputation and reliability of our genuine spare parts as viewed and valued by our customers is based on its high-quality standards, durability, and performance. It is designed to perfectly meet the Toyota vehicles specifications, needs and requirements. Each part is designed to meet the highest and most stringent quality standards.

According to Desmond Lew Business Director Parts and Group Logistics "We thank all our loyal customers for their trust on Toyota genuine parts. Over the years we have been working closely with Idemitsu our business partner in Middle East along with local government authorities to bring nothing but the best for our customers in Kuwait".

Toyota genuine motor oil is the latest fully synthetic motor oil approved by Toyota Motor Corporation Japan with additional customer benefits as below:

- Latest oil to meet API SN standard
- Improved acceleration performance
- Superior protection against sludge and piston deposit
- High fluidity at low temperature and excellent cold start
- Environment friendly

### Distinct features of the new pack include:

1. RED CAP with Al Sayer logo on all genuine oil packaging exclusively made for Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Kuwait.
2. Better cap grip for ease of opening.
3. Level indicator strip for ease of partial usage.
4. Stylish Can with two handles for the ease of pouring
5. Labels with distinct identity - Toyota Genuine Motor Oil logo, Part Number, Bar code.

ALSAYER continues to provide better customer service by offering high quality genuine spare parts through its wide network of exclusive spare parts outlets. Today Toyota genuine motor oil is available at ALSAYER's 17 retail parts outlets and Toyota Service Centers. On the high streets, oil distributors, co-operatives, oil change centers, garages, auto repair shops, puncture shops stock and many more outlets stock and sell Toyota genuine motor oil to ensure easy access and convenience for Toyota owners.

## Ooredoo Kuwait sponsors INNOVA students in Harvard Model United Nations 2022

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Telecom, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, has always been a pioneer in taking serious leading role in various initiatives that contribute to educating and inspiring youth, all fall under the umbrella of the company's corporate social responsibility strategy.

Recently, Ooredoo Kuwait provided sponsorship to INNOVA which selected students from various schools in Kuwait to participate in the Harvard Model United Nations 2022 which will take place at Harvard University in Boston to contribute to the development of their leadership skills and capabilities, believing in the importance of investing in Kuwaiti youth for a better future.

Commenting on this sponsorship, Senior Director, Corporate Communications, Ooredoo Kuwait, Mijbil Al-Ayoub, said: "Ooredoo is the first telecom company in the State of Kuwait to collaborate with Harvard Model United Nations 2022 and the INNOVA International English School to provide an exceptional learning experience. The four-day international relations simulations program will provide an insight into the

workings of the United Nations and the dynamics of international relations by assuming the roles of international leaders and decision makers. The program provides school students the necessary skills to become future leaders".

The Harvard Model United Nations 2022 strives to build a constructive forum for open discussion on a range of long-term issues such as international peace and security and economic and social progress in various countries of the world.

## Schneider Electric and AVEVA unify Vale mining

**DUBAI:** Schneider Electric, the leader in the digital transformation of energy management and automation, and AVEVA, a global leader in industrial software, driving digital transformation and sustainability, are powering the unification of operations for Vale, a global natural resources and mining company.

The combination of AVEVA and Schneider Electric software, technology and mining domain expertise is providing Vale with the ability to integrate, centralize, and remotely monitor operations across its Mariana and Itabira complexes in Brazil.

Vale ranks among the top five largest mining companies in the world. Headquartered in Rio de Janeiro, the world's leading producer of iron ore, pellets and nickel employs a global workforce of over 170,000 people in 38 countries. The Mariana Complex and Itabira Complex are two of Vale's major iron ore production sites, located in Minas Gerais, Brazil. Together, the complexes are responsible for more than 75% of the production data from Vale's Minas Gerais mining operations.

While primarily implemented to improve safety through remote operations, digitalization is critically important to driving efficiency and sustainability in mining. Through the partnership Vale can unify operations across multiple sites and upgrade its old system to one capable of remotely controlling all the diverse technologies operating across each mining facility. Crucially, the remote management solution enables Vale to have fewer professionals onsite, increasing safety and reducing operational

expenditures while also vastly improving energy efficiency, and therefore, sustainability.

Vale chose Schneider Electric and AVEVA for the technological performance and visibility offered by their solutions. These provide an extremely high level of flexibility due to their vendor-agnostic nature, making it easy to integrate disparate technologies across multiple sites.

"We are constantly looking to improve safety, efficiency and sustainability, not just now but also for the future," said Paulo Henrique Fontes Coura, Senior Automation Leader, Vale. "Schneider Electric and AVEVA have become an integral part of that journey. Rather than simply offering the software, they provided a complete, bespoke end-to-end service helping us optimize at every turn. This included training, support, and advice throughout."

"The collaboration between our companies has created something much greater than the sum of its parts," said Gilberto da Cunha Vieira, Electrical and Automation Engineer Leader, Vale. "We are enormously grateful to Schneider Electric and AVEVA for bringing our facilities together."

Schneider Electric deployed EcoStruxure Control Expert - Asset Link, combining AVEVA System Platform and Schneider Modicon M580, to provide visibility and unify operations for Vale. The technology enables data to be integrated directly into the system, so Vale's managers have granular insights without having to manually transfer any intelligence. By bringing this data together, Vale can now create a master operations center and remotely manage everything. This greatly improves operational efficiency and means less people are onsite, providing a significant boost to safety.

### Other results include:

- Cost savings with faster data to make decisions:
- Full visibility and compatibility for all plants,

seen as keeping buyers out of the market, a dynamic that NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun pointed to in the July data.

"Much of the home sales growth is still occurring in the upper-end markets, while the mid- to lower-tier areas aren't seeing as much growth because there are still too few starter homes available," he said in a statement. However, he noted an increase in supply that was helping to ease the frenzied buying.

Total inventory was 1.32 million units as of the end of last month, up 7.3 percent from June but nonetheless

less 12 percent lower than the same month last year, the report said. Unsold inventory sat at a 2.6-month supply, only slightly more than in June and well below the 3.1-month supply seen in July 2020.

The median existing home price declined slightly from June to \$359,000, but that was still nearly 18 percent higher than its level last year. "Going forward, the market for existing homes will be supported by strong demand and mortgage rates that remain relatively low," said Nancy Vanden Houten of Oxford Economics. —AFP



Mijbil Al-Ayoub



Marc Ramsay

## High prices didn't deter Americans from home buying

**WASHINGTON:** US homes for sale were in short supply and expensive in July, but Americans continued buying, according to industry data yesterday



## Lifestyle | Features



Angelina Jolie

## ANGELINA JOLIE BREAKS RECORD AS FASTEST INSTAGRAM USER TO GAIN 1 MILLION FOLLOWERS

Angelina Jolie has become the fastest Instagram user to gain one million followers. The 46-year-old actress joined the photo-sharing platform over the weekend, and she's quickly amassed more than seven million followers on Instagram. Angelina surpassed the likes of Rupert Grint, and Sir David Attenborough to claim the record, as she amassed 2.1 million new followers in under three hours. The Hollywood star joined the platform to share a photograph of a heart-breaking letter from a teenage girl in Afghanistan, where the Taliban recently gained control of the country. Angelina's post read: "This is a letter I was sent from a teenage girl in Afghanistan."

Right now, the people of Afghanistan are losing their ability to communicate on social media and to express themselves freely. So I've come on Instagram to share their stories and the voices of those across the globe who are fighting for their basic human rights. "I was on the border of Afghanistan two weeks before 9/11, where I met Afghan refugees who had fled the Taliban. This was twenty years ago. "It is sickening to watch Afghans being displaced yet again out of the fear and uncertainty that has gripped their country.

"To spend so much time and money, to have blood shed and lives lost only to come to this, is a failure almost impossible to understand." Angelina pledged to continue

to support the Afghan people. Her post continued: "Watching for decades how Afghan refugees - some of the most capable people in the world - are treated like a burden is also sickening. Knowing that if they had the tools and respect, how much they would do for themselves. And meeting so many women and girls who not only wanted an education, but fought for it. "Like others who are committed, I will not turn away. I will continue to look for ways to help. And I hope you'll join me."

—Bang Showbiz

## Music world pays tribute to Phil Everly

US country rock pioneer Don Everly, who was the surviving half of the Everly Brothers, has died aged 84 after a career delighting fans with a string of hits such as "Bye Bye Love" and "Wake Up Little Susie." His death in the music hub of Nashville, Tennessee was announced by the Country Music Hall of Fame, which called him "one of the most talented and impactful artists in popular music history." No cause of death was provided.

Tributes from the music world were led by Carole King, Roy Orbison Jr and Julian Lennon, who tweeted: "R.I.P. Don Of 'The Everly Brothers' who along with his brother Phil, wrote some of the most memorable & classic songs of all time... Thank You for the Music." The duo, credited with influencing rock and country singers for decades, were among the inaugural honorees in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1986, alongside Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Buddy Holly and Jerry Lee Lewis. In 2001 they were inducted into its country counterpart. Don's brother Phil Everly died in 2014, aged 75. The duo's high-pitched, fluid harmonies brought them a series of hit ballads and rock tunes. "Wake Up Little Susie" and "All I Have to Do Is Dream" both topped the US charts in the 1950s. Their output dropped off in the 1960s but

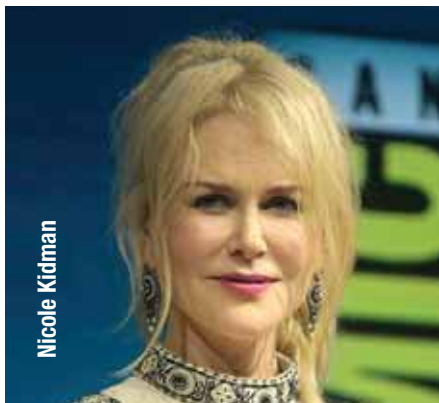
they still chalked up favorites such as "Cathy's Clown" and "Crying in the Rain."

## 'Beautiful sounding'

The group had a profound impact on the musical world, with their close harmonies emulated by groups including Simon & Garfunkel and the Beatles, as well as the Beach Boys, the Byrds, the Bee Gees and the Eagles. Paul Simon later said the Everlys "were the most beautiful sounding duo I have ever heard." Rolling Stone magazine placed the group No. 1 on its list of the "20 Greatest Duos of All Time."

The Everlys grew up in Iowa in a musical family-father Ike, originally a coal miner, was a talented guitarist-and by high school they had already drawn the help of a powerful mentor and promoter in famed guitarist Chet Atkins, a family friend. "Bye Bye Love," hit No. 1 in 1957. The pair signed with Warner Bros. Records in 1960, but joined the US Marine Reserves the following year, leading to a slowdown in their production. Their popularity also faded as tastes changed and fans turned toward the groups of the so-called British Invasion. Their last top-10 hit, "That's Old Fashioned," came in 1962, though they continued to record and tour.

The group broke up in 1973 — following a very public guitar-smashing dispute on a California stage-but had an emotional reunion performance 10 years later in London's Royal Albert Hall and continued to perform occasionally until Phil's death in 2014. Country music singer-songwriter Gretchen Peters recalled the "mysterious alchemy" of the brothers' harmonies. "I heard it as a kid in Simon & Garfunkel, (then) later Gram & Emmylou, then made my way upriver to the Everlys. Pure magic. RIP Don Everly." — AFP



Nicole Kidman

## Kidman on the 'frustration' of being an older woman in Hollywood

Nicole Kidman says having her two youngest children helped her cope with the "frustration" of being an older woman in Hollywood. The 54-year-old actress claims Hollywood bosses tried to oust her from movie roles as soon as she turned 40, and says she noticed people were no longer "interested" in her as an actress or a "person" when she hit the milestone age. But the 'Big Little Lies' star also says having her daughters Sunday, 13, and Faith, 10, with her husband Keith Urban helped take her life in a brand-new direction. Of her career, she said: "I was frustrated - as so many women are in different careers - at the idea of being told, 'Well, that's it: you've passed through that period where it's all going to be fine, and now you're in your 40s we're not interested as much in your storytelling or your ideas or in who you are as a woman or a person.' And speaking about having children with Keith, she added: "Our chance of having a baby was one percent. But my husband said, 'Well, at least we've got a chance.' I thought, 'One percent isn't a chance!' But he was right."

"Their coming into my life was the flip-side of losing someone - seeing that pregnancy test and wondering, 'What is this new person going to be like?' It's an amazing thing." Nicole also spoke about her time being single in between her marriages to Tom Cruise - whom she was married to from 1990 until 2001, and with whom she has adopted children Isabella, 28, and Connor, 26 - and Keith, whom she married in 2006. She explained: "I like sharing my life. I've always been like that. At 14 I had a boyfriend because I didn't want to be alone. "I went through a period where I was forced into being alone. But that was almost like a portal to go through, where you don't just jump from one thing to another, you're actually there, living it. And I came out of it much more available [mentally, to meet someone]." And in her only family, Nicole joked she isn't the "top" child as far as her mother is concerned - even though she's a Hollywood superstar. The 'Eyes Wide Shut' actress told The Mail on Sunday's You magazine: "There are so many different family members here and my mother always has a favorite. The other day I said, 'Where am I on the list?' and she goes, 'Oh no, you're up there right now, but you're definitely not the top.' "But I may be top next week! I had Mume over and made her some curry and drove her home. So I might have risen a couple of notches." — Bang Showbiz

## 'Free Guy' tops North American box office again

Twentieth Century's sci-fi comedy "Free Guy" slipped but did not trip on Sunday as it clung to the top spot in North American movie theaters with an estimated take of \$18.8 million, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported. The film, its release delayed a year by the COVID-19 pandemic, is a lighthearted yarn



In this file photo Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds attend the 'Free Guy' New York Premiere at AMC Lincoln Square Theater in New York City. — AFP

starring Ryan Reynolds as an Everyman bank teller who finds out unlike Jim Carrey's character in "The Truman Show" that he is a character in a huge video game and must save his friends from being deleted.

Family-friendly "Free Guy" was slightly off from its \$28 million opening weekend, but analysts said its result was impressive with COVID-19 still hanging over the industry and Tropical Storm Henri dewatering moviegoers in the US Northeast. It has a healthy global take so far of \$112 million. In second position, earning \$13 million for the Friday-through-Sunday period, was new Paramount release "Paw Patrol: The Movie." That was a respectable total, said Variety.com, for a film aimed at young kids-who remain ineligible for COVID vaccines. "Paw Patrol" tells the story of a boy named Ryder and the brave pups who help him save Adventure City from a colossal evil mayor.

Third spot went to Disney's family adventure film "Jungle Cruise," at \$6.2 million. Its plot-well, suffice it to say it is based on a theme-park ride. Horror feature "Don't Breathe 2," from Sony, followed with a \$5.1 million take in its second weekend. Starring Stephen Lang-who has what website Rotten Tomatoes calls a "thrillingly imposing presence"-it revolves around a game of mass murder perpetrated by a blind veteran. And in fifth place was United Artists' biopic "Respect," at \$3.8 million. Grammy, Golden Globe and Oscar winner Jennifer Hudson stars as queen of soul Aretha Franklin-who reportedly picked Hudson for the role. The Washington Post calls her portrayal a "kind of creative-even spiritual-mind-meld that sends a chill down the spine and a catch to the throat."

Rounding out the top five were: "The Suicide Squad" (\$3.4 million) "The Protege" (\$2.9 million) "The Night House" (\$2.9 million) "Reminiscence" (\$2 million) "Black Widow" (\$1.2 million)—AFP

## Vittoria Ceretti is the star of Chanel's fall 2021 make-up

Vittoria Ceretti has returned as the face of Chanel's fall 2021 make-up collection. The 23-year-old Italian model - who, according to Vogue Italia, was the most searched model of 2018 - smolders in the striking new promo shots with a sultry smokey eye. The campaign showcases the Khaki Harmony, Silver-Grey Harmony, Red-Brown Harmony, and Champagne Harmony palletes, with a focus on "matte or shiny, warm" contrasting looks. Chanel said: "Contour and light. Chanel is reinventing the rules of make-up with an ultra-sensorial two-step technique for contrasting eye looks. Four deep and rich color harmonies, emphasized by

effects that are matte or shiny, warm or electrifying. An interplay of layering and discord that gives an enigmatic result." Meanwhile, in other Chanel-related news, Pharrell Williams launched a new mentorship program with the French fashion house this summer. The music star's Black Ambition - which offers a series of prizes to "fund bold ideas and companies led by Black and Latinx entrepreneurs" - and Chanel joined forces on the two-part initiative featuring mentorships, workshops, and celebrity guests.

The 'Happy' hitmaker said in June: "I am incredibly honored by Chanel's support of Black Ambition. Mentorship is a cornerstone of Black Ambition's mission and is vital to the success of the next generation of Black and Latinx entrepreneurs." The Women Who Lead panel includes actress Tracee Ellis Ross and Good American CEO and co-founder Emma Grede - who runs the lucrative denim brand alongside reality star Khloe Kardashian. Harper's Bazaar's editor-in-chief, Samira Nasr, was put in charge of moderating the panel. — Bang Showbiz



Vittoria Ceretti



In this file photo flowers are placed on the Everly Brothers star to honor the memory of Phil Everly at Hollywood Walk Of Fame in Hollywood, California. — AFP

## Gwen Stefani posts glowing birthday tribute to teenage son

Gwen Stefani has sent birthday wishes to her 13-year-old son Zuma via social media. The 51-year-old singer took to Instagram to mark her son's birthday, posting a baby photo and an up-to-date snap of Zuma on the platform. Alongside the snaps, Gwen - who also has Kingston, 15, and Apollo, seven, with ex-husband Gavin Rossdale - wrote: "happy 13th b day to my Zuma baby [baby emoji] we love u so much!! gx (sic)" The blonde beauty also posted a snap of all three of her kids together in a family photo.



Gwen Stefani

Below the group shot, she wrote: "Happy Birthday!" Gwen posted another throwback photo of Zuma as a toddler at one of his early birthdays. In the photo, he's seen swinging a bat at a Spider-Man pinata. She captioned the picture: "Babies grow up." Meanwhile, Gwen married her long-term partner Blake Shelton in July, and he recently revealed that she had a "hard time" trying to get through her wedding vows without crying. The pair chose to write their own vows for the nuptials, and Blake admitted that Gwen's words were so moving they both had difficulty getting through the emotional moment without bursting into tears.

He said: "Gwen, right up until the night before, like when it started getting, like, two weeks away, she was like, 'Oh my god, let's just not do that. Let's just, like, have the repeat after me stuff.' ... And Carson [Daly, who officiate the ceremony] was adamant about, 'No, you can, look, you're a songwriter, you can do this.' And so, right up until the night before, she was working on hers and it was incredible. "I still haven't even seen a video of our wedding yet so I can't remember all the things she said, but it was, she had them written down and she had a hard time getting through them. — Bang Showbiz

## John Travolta's son changed his viewpoint on mortality

John Travolta's views on mortality changed after a profound conversation with his 10-year-old son Benjamin. The 'Saturday Night Fever' legend's youngest son told his father that he was afraid that the 67-year-old actor is going to die after his mom, the late Kelly Preston, died at the age of 57 from breast cancer last year. And John, whose son Jett tragically died when he was just 16, explained that everyone has to leave the world one day and that he should look at death as a part of life. Retelling their heart to heart to Kevin Hart on his Peacock talk show 'Hart to Heart', he began: "[Ben] said to me once, 'Because mom passed away, I'm afraid you're going to.'

"I said, 'Well, it's a very different thing.' And I went through the differences about my longevity and her limited life. "I said, 'But you know, Ben ... you always love the truth and I'm going to tell you the truth about life. Nobody knows when they're gonna go or when they're going to stay. Your brother [Jett] left at 16. Too young. Your mother left at 57. That was too young. But who's to say? I could die tomorrow. You could. Anybody can. So let's look at it like it's part of life. You don't know exactly. You just do your best at trying to live the longest you can.'"

Ben then asked his dad if he sees himself still being alive in three decades' time and admitted that by the end of their conversation his whole "viewpoint" on getting older changed. The 'Grease' star - who also has Ella, 21, with Kelly - continued: "I said, 'Yeah.' He said, 'Does 30 years ago seem like a long time?' I said, 'Yeah.' He said, 'Don't you think you have 30 more years in your life to live?' I said, 'Yeah, I do. I have at least 30 more years.' He said, 'What's wrong with that?' This is a 10-year-old telling me that! It changed my viewpoint." — Bang Showbiz



John Travolta





## Jesse Metcalfe wants to 'up the bar' in his career

**T**he 42-year-old actor - who recently walked away from the TV drama series 'Chesapeake Shores' - hopes to secure a role on an acclaimed show and take his career to the next level. Jesse - who previously played John Rowland on 'Desperate Housewives' - shared: "I really want to get on a critically acclaimed cable TV show again. I really want to up the bar in my career. "Not to look down on any

of the previous work that I've done, but I want to continue to pursue a film career and I think the best way to do that is to get on a respected, critically acclaimed television show. We're still in the golden age of television. "There are a lot of great projects out there. I've gotten a lot of premium opportunities recently and I'm focused on that." Jesse is determined to challenge himself in his professional life, and he's willing to

take hard decisions in order to achieve his ambitions. And while fans may have been shocked by his decision to quit 'Chesapeake Shores', the actor is determined to "grow" and to seek out new opportunities in the coming months. Speaking about his exit from the series, the actor - who first joined the Hallmark Channel's show in 2016 - explained to 'Entertainment Tonight': "Life's all about growth. I tend to put

myself in challenging situations because I feel like that's the fastest way to grow. "No one saw this decision coming for me to leave 'Chesapeake', but sometimes the hardest decisions are the best ones to make and the ones that you grow the most from. I think this is one of those decisions."

## Reynolds campaigns for Burton to host Jeopardy!

**R**yan Reynolds wants LeVar Burton to become the permanent host of 'Jeopardy!'. The 44-year-old actor has taken to Twitter to recommend LeVar as the new host of the long-running game show, likening the situation to his own experience with Deadpool. Ryan - who has achieved huge success with the Deadpool franchise - wrote on the micro-blogging platform: "Pretty consistently from 2013 to 2015 Deadpool would explode on Twitter with fans wanting me to play him. It was awkward because I agreed with them but the studio didn't see it. Ultimately the fans won and the rest is glorious history. I'm forever grateful. "Hi @levarburton (sic)" LeVar, 64, served as a guest host on 'Jeopardy!' last month, and fans have called on him to become the full-time replacement for Mike Richards, who recently resigned after offensive comments he made in the past became public. LeVar responded to Ryan's tweet with prayer hands and a purple heart emoji. Mike stepped down from the role as the show's host after inappropriate comments he made in his former role as a podcast



host came to light. He said in an email to people working on the show: "I will be stepping down as host effective immediately." Sony Pictures Television accepted Mike's resignation and admitted to being surprised by his offensive remarks. A spokesperson for the TV company told NPR: "We support Mike's decision to step down as host. "We were surprised this week to learn of Mike's 2013/2014 podcast and the offensive language he used in the past. We have spoken with him about our concerns and our expectations moving forward." Despite this, Mike is set to continue in his role as an executive producer. The spokesperson said: "It is our hope that as EP he will continue to do so with professionalism and respect."

## Golding 'felt great' after shedding weight for Snake Eyes

**H**enry Golding "felt great" after getting himself in shape for 'Snake Eyes'. The 34-year-old actor went through an intense fitness regime in order to star in the new film, and Henry relished the experience. He shared: "It sheds off you just because you're doing four or five hours [a day] of really high, intense cardio, working out these movements. "So it would just go and shed and I was like, wow, there's not going to be anything left of me! But it felt great, it did." Henry stars in some eye-catching combat scenes in the new movie, and he needed to push himself "to the limit" during the shoot. He told the 'Backstage Podcast': "Combat - especially for screen and [using] choreography - it's all about fluidity, and when you start on day one, you feel like a stick in mud. "You're kind of awkward, you don't know what that rhythm is like, but after doing it day in, day out, you start having the sixth sense of moving, sliding, having your feet at the correct stance and being able to adjust on the fly as you're competing against these combatants. "So the contrast is particularly steep, but it was



absolutely wonderful to be able to push myself to that limit." Henry previously revealed he spent four hours a day learning swordplay for his role in 'Snake Eyes'. The Hollywood star admitted that the sword-fighting scenes were the most challenging part of his role. Asked how much work he put into his sword skills, Henry said: "Yeah, we were four hours a day, with the stunt team, all in the build-up to getting us on set, ready and prepared. "Things change, as you know, when we get on set. Environments really dictate how much we're able to do from what we've learned in the studio in comparison to being on the edge of a car carrier, or standing on top of the building, in a rain sequence. "So you have to be at a stage and capability of being able to change up on-the-go as quickly as possible and learn new choreography within five minutes. And thankfully, all of that two months of pre-training got us to that stage."

## Cardi B wants her kids to continue their education

**C**ardi B will only pay her kids' rent if they continue their education or explore "business ventures". The chart-topping rap star - who has Kulture, three, with husband Offset and another child on the way - has revealed that the financial support she'll give her kids will be conditional on a few factors. Cardi, 28, wrote on her Twitter account: "When my kids get older and they want to move out imma get them a big condo and imma be paying their rent ONLY IF they are in school or workin on business ventures!! If not you living in my house, under my rules or you gotta pay your own rent. (sic)" Meanwhile, Cardi recently collaborated



with Lizzo on their hit single 'Rumors', and the singer subsequently hailed the rap star as a game-changer for female artists. Lizzo relished the experience of teaming up with Cardi - who worked as a stripper before finding fame - on the new single. Asked what she loves about the rapper, Lizzo explained: "Cardi B is the ultimate. She, to me, has always done it right. "Everything that she said, every way that she's reacted because you know why? It's because she was true to herself the whole time. She's a ground breaker. You can't deny her ability. She's a superstar. "She has changed the game forever for a lot of us, a lot of women. I don't even think she realizes she's doing it because it's just like, I'm trying to just be successful. I'm trying to get this money. I want to live a happy life. "She just follows her heart. That's what I love about her." Lizzo was determined to work with Cardi as soon as the possibility arose. She said: "There was no one else for it. There was literally no one else. From the day the ink dried on her Atlantic contract, I said, 'Please get me on a song with Cardi B.' She's just funny. I like funny people and she can rap. You know what I'm saying?"



## Rosie Huntington-Whiteley doesn't wear foundation

**R**osie Huntington-Whiteley doesn't use foundation anymore. The Rose Inc. founder's beauty brand has a "does-it-all concealer" which means the 34-year-old model can achieve the light, glowy coverage she wants without it. On the upcoming Modern Essentials make-up collection, she added: "We have a cream blush, a lip product, a brow gel, and a does-it-all concealer. "Since we locked the formula down, I have not been using any foundation. It has a chubby doe foot, so I dot mine all over my face where I want coverage. Then I use our brush to just blend. It has this lovely blurring effect, but it leaves the skin looking like your own skin, but with this velvet luminosity." When it comes to keeping acne at bay, the blonde beauty has developed two skincare products that work wonders for her complexion, an AHA toner and "hydrating serum-meets-primer". She told Refinery29: "I've had acne-prone skin my entire adult life, so I've been on a quest since the age of about 16 to figure out how to manage that. "Over the years, I've built out my own research, but these are the two skin-care products that give me the most instant results: an AHA toner and then a beautiful hydrating serum-meets-primer." Rosie said it was important for her team to just focus on a handful of products to nail the formulas. She explained: "Instead of launching 50 products, I wanted a tight edit. "I feel like that's the modern way of launching a brand in 2021 - we're actually calling the first drop our 'Modern Essentials' collection. Plus, it allows us to get each product right." And one of the main reasons she decided to launch the line was because it's what her fans wanted. She said: "Whenever I share anything beauty-related across my platforms, it got so much engagement. "I wanted an opportunity to connect with that audience and community. So, I set out to see if I could bring them a product line." Rose Inc.'s beauty products will be available from August 27 from Roseinc.com

## Beyonce and Jay-Z star in Tiffany & Co's latest 'About Love' campaign

**T**he power couple's romance is the center of the upcoming ad for the luxury jewelry brand, which launches on September 2. In a statement, the 'Crazy in Love' pair said: "Love is the diamond that the jewelry and art decorate." The Destiny's Child star and the hip-hop legend - who have Blue Ivy, nine, and four-year-old twins Rumi and Sir together - have also created a dazzling film for the brand filmed by Jay-Z on a Super 8 camera, which arrives on September 15. Soundtracked to Beyonce's version of 'Moon River', originally performed by the late Hollywood icon Audrey Hepburn in the 1961 movie 'Breakfast at Tiffany's', in which her character, Holly Golightly, is obsessed with their jewelry, the short was shot at the

breathtaking Orum House in Los Angeles. In the clip, Beyonce is wearing the stunning Tiffany Yellow Diamond - one of the largest yellow diamonds ever discovered - which has only been worn a handful of times. Hepburn wowed in the rare diamond in promo snaps for 'Breakfast At Tiffany's', while Lady Gaga borrowed it for the Oscars in 2019, and Gal Gadot's character, Linnet Ridgeway-Doyle, wears a replica in the upcoming mystery thriller movie, 'Death on the Nile'. Jean-Michel Basquiat's painting Equals Pi also features as it's a "common thread throughout the Carter's love story". Alexandre Arnault,



Real Housewives of New York City' star Bethenny Frankel simply commented: "YES" In August 2017, it was first reported Eric and nurse Lindsay were dating after spending time together at the Big Slick Celebrity Weekend charity event in Kansas City in June. An insider said at the time: "Lindsay was there fundraising, and Eric was one of the celebrity guests." Eric was previously romantically involved with Broadway star Katherine Tokarz for nearly three years until 2012. The star - who is best known for playing Cameron Tucker in ABC TV series 'Modern Family' - was romantically linked to Charlize Theron in 2012 following his split from Katherine, but he laughed off the speculation, joking that he was in fact dating Halle Berry. He said: "I wish people would stop spreading rumors that Charlize Theron and I are dating. It's starting to make Halle Berry jealous. "She was so cold to me this morning when she saw the rumors. "It was just quiet - fork and knife on the plate. Halle and I weren't speaking at all. And I'm like, 'Halle, listen! It's just a rumour. It's not real.' " In 2015, there was speculation Eric and Bethenny were dating, but she insisted they were not a couple. She wrote on Twitter: "Wow #so many boyfriendssolittle time How did I manage to be at a @Dodgers game & be in the Hamptons at the same time?!!! @ericstonestreet (sic)" — Bang Showbiz



## Teigen hasn't fully processed the loss of her son

**C**hrissy Teigen still hasn't processed the tragic loss of her late son, Jack. The 35-year-old model dedicated her new book 'Cravings: All Together: Recipes To Love' to her boy, whom she lost 20 weeks into her pregnancy last year, and the author admitted she has felt "slightly down lately" after reflecting on her decision to announce the arrival of her new collection of recipes as her "third baby". Chrissy - who has Luna, five, and Miles, three, with 'All of Me' hitmaker John Legend - explained how she "threw" herself into making her book and has not allowed herself to fully grieve. Taking to Instagram to share a picture from her date night with her husband and to reflect on their life in New York, the 'Lip Sync Battle' star shared: "Anyhowwww just reminiscing about New York a lot lately, when things were simple, thinking about all the stuff I've done and been through not just this year but in my life. I'm slightly down lately. "It kind of started when I was thinking of my book caption and typed out 'my third baby is here!!', as in cookbook, then

realized my third baby will never be here. then I realized i threw myself into the book to not think of the real, actual third baby. (sic)" The television personality, who revealed in December that she had quit alcohol, also admitted booze had helped to "numb" the pain until she stopped drinking. She added: "I don't really feel like I fully processed jack and now that I don't have the alcohol to numb it away, things are just...there, waiting to be acknowledged. I guess what I'm saying here is life is so complicated. (sic)" Chrissy and John shared the devastating news of their loss in October last year. Part of their lengthy statement at the time read: "We are shocked and in the kind of deep pain you only hear about, the kind of pain we've never felt before. We were never able to stop the bleeding and give our baby the fluids he needed, despite bags and bags of blood transfusions.





Lifestyle | Gossip

# Spears reunited with dogs after alleged home dispute



**B**ritney Spears has been reunited with her dogs after allegedly getting into a dispute with an employee over their care. The 39-year-old is being investigated by the Ventura County Sheriff's Department for an alleged misdemeanor battery incident after it was claimed she "struck" one of her housekeepers during a dispute. It was later claimed the argument occurred when the housekeeper took Britney's dogs to the vet after becoming concerned with the animals' wellbeing, which left the 'Toxic' singer fuming as the pooches were removed from her home. But it has now been reported the dogs are back home once again, and Britney is "thrilled" to have them around. A

source told People magazine: "Her dogs are a sensitive breed that often has health issues. She has gotten clear instructions about how to care for the dogs now." Insiders also claim the "housekeeper no longer works for" Britney, but insisted the singer has "more help" for her dogs now. Earlier this week, Captain Eric Buschow confirmed Britney was the subject of an investigation after the incident at her home. He said: "Ultimately that investigation will be forwarded to the attorney's office for review. It's a minor misdemeanor battery [investigation]." However, a source close to Britney insisted the report is not true. The insider claimed: "The housekeeper was holding her phone and Britney tried

to knock it out of her hands. She didn't hit anyone." Buschow declined to "discuss the particulars" of the incident but explained that misdemeanor battery occurs when there is "physical contact" with another person. But the captain also said there were no injuries reported. The alleged altercation comes one week after Britney's father, Jamie Spears, announced he will finally be stepping down as her co-conservator after months of campaigning to have him removed. Jamie - who currently oversees Britney's finances - insisted he won't step back until an "orderly transition" is put in place for a new conservator to take over.

## Hadid gushes over Lipa on her birthday: 'The girl of my dreams'

**A**nwar Hadid has praised Dua Lipa as "the girl of [his] dreams". The 22-year-old model - who is the brother of fellow models Gigi and Bella Hadid - took to his Instagram story on Sunday to gush over the 'Levitating' hitmaker in honor of her 26th birthday. Alongside a picture of Dua smiling, Anwar wrote: "Happy birthday girl of my dreams [heart emoji] love u forever and always (sic)" Dua also marked her own birthday with a snap of herself holding some pink heart-shaped balloons. She captioned the shots: "I'm a leo - can't u tell (sic)" And Anwar's sister Gigi, also 26, took to her own Instagram Story to share a selfie with Dua which was captioned: "Happy happy birthday sweet @dualipa! Supernova! We love you. Wishing u the best day & year!!!! (sic)" To which Dua responded: "Thank you sister I love you!!!! (sic)" Bella, 24, did not post to mark Dua's birthday on Sunday

but earlier this week she shared some pictures of their holiday getaway which included the 'Don't Start Now' singer. She wrote: "swipe for our dance party of 10! Adore every single last one of em (sic)" The London-born singer and Anwar have been dating since 2019. But Dua previously admitted she's made a conscious decision to keep their romance "quite private". She explained: "We have all these incredible memories and experiences, and if there's something that we want to share together, then OK that's fun. "But at the same time, we're quite private - we'll only show you as much as we want you to

see." The 'Break My Heart' hitmaker revealed she's still trying to "find the right balance" between sharing things with her fans and keeping her romance private. Dua is determined to not let other people's opinions undermine her own happiness. She said: "It's a little bit of give and take, trying to find the right balance of being so excited and being in love, and wanting to share that with the people around me, but at the same time not wanting to put too much out there. "I want to be able to just be happy in this relationship without having other people's opinions."



## Stephanie Beatriz has given birth

**T**he 'Brooklyn Nine-Nine' star took to Instagram to reveal she has welcomed a daughter, Rosaline, into the world. She posted: "B?B? HAS ARRIVED in style (and more importantly SAFETY) in @nuna\_usa's Pipa car seat. Her name is Rosaline: pronounced Roz-uh-line. (sic)" The 40-year-old actress - who plays Detective Rosa Diaz in the NBC comedy - admitted she has been feeling "so overwhelmingly full of gratitude" since giving birth to her first child. She said: "I'm very very in awe of the entire experience of having a kiddo. it is INCREDIBLE and HARD AF and BEAUTIFUL and EMOTIONAL, and I can't remember ever being this amazed and feeling so overwhelmingly full of gratitude. Roz, you are so cool. #nunafamily #nunapipa #mynuna (sic)" The 'BoJack Horseman' star's husband Brad Hoss - who appeared opposite Zelda Williams in 'See You on the Other Side' - wrote on Instagram: "We brought Rosaline (Roz-uh-line) home last week, and it's been a wild & crazy & amazing adventure every step of the way. (sic)" The couple



revealed in June they were expecting their first child together. Stephanie said at the time: "We're really excited we're going to be growing our family and I am pumped." The actress also admitted she didn't expect to get married and have kids until she met Brad, who she wed in 2018. She said: "I didn't think that a committed partnership was really for me. "I couldn't really see kids. It wasn't that I was closed off to it. "It was more that I couldn't quite see how a baby fit into the life that I was building."

## Daley planning career as children's author after taking gold at Tokyo 2020

**T**om Daley is planning a career as a children's author after winning gold at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. The 27-year-old diver bagged the top medal in the men's synchronized 10-metre platform event, as well as a bronze in the individual event at the same games, bringing his total number of Olympic medals to four. Following his success, Tom is set to release a memoir titled 'Coming Up For Air' in October this year, but is now also reportedly planning a further career in book writing - specifically children's books. A source said: "Tom has proved he is a compassionate, driven and talented man who thousands of young people look up to. "So when the idea of a possible kids' book came up there was a lot of interest. "Tom has his debut memoir, 'Coming Up For Air', out in October and those around him think it's going to be a bestseller. "Off the back of that a lot of big-name publishing companies have shown an interest in



producing a children's book. "There are meetings being lined up next month with Tom's literary agent to discuss the possibilities." Tom is dad to three-year-old Robbie - whom he has with his husband Dustin Lance Black - and is hoping he will be able to tap into his life as a father to work out what kids want in a book. And the sports star wants to "inspire more children" with his potential career change. Speaking to The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column, the source added: "Tom has a huge appeal and because of his incredible sporting career he is a household name. "His success at the Tokyo Games only made him stand out more and those around him think a children's book would be a brilliant step. "As a father himself, he knows what works for children and what they like. "And being able to continue to inspire more children through a book is a real pull. Tom is incredibly busy but this is something his team wants him to consider. "They think it would be a roaring success."

## Johnson pays emotional tribute to his late father

**D**wayne 'The Rock' Johnson has paid tribute to his father to mark what would have been his 77th birthday. Former professional wrestler Rocky Johnson passed away in January 2020 at the age of 75, and on Saturday, his son Dwayne posted a sweet tribute to him ahead of his birthday, which would have been later this week. Dwayne - who was also a professional wrestler before turning to acting - shared a video on Twitter in which he discussed his lifelong dream of being a professional American football player, and said that when his dream crumbled it opened a new path to him which led him to follow in his father's footsteps. He said in the clip: "Life is so wildly unpredictable that

when you look back, sometimes the dreams that we have, the things that we want most to happen in life, sometimes are the best things that never happen." And in an accompanying tweet, he wrote: "That irony of life sometimes when the thing we want most - can become the best thing that never happened. "My old man would've been 77 yrs old this coming week. "RIP Soulman and cheers to dreams that don't come true " #gratitudeandgrace #hawaii @ProjectRock (sic)" The 'Jungle Cruise' star previously admitted "nothing" could have prepared him for his father's death. Rocky died suddenly from a heart attack and Dwayne subsequently took to social media to reveal he had written the eulo-



gy. Taking to Instagram, the Hollywood actor wrote: "This was fun ... Written a lot of things over the years, but nothing prepared me for this one ... #eulogy

#mydad #soulman (sic)" Dwayne later posted a video of the eulogy to social media alongside a lengthy caption in dedication to his dad. Part of the caption read: "Dad, you lived a full and meaningful life "You trail blazed and even harder, you changed people's harsh behaviors toward a man of color. "Paving the way for me, my family and generations to come. "You loved us with the capacity of which you could - given all the givens. "Raised me with an iron hand and a tough complicated love. "A love that now, as a father and man, I've learned to refine as I raise my own children. (sic)"

## Shields felt 'so proud' as teenage daughter heads to college

**B**rooke Shields felt "so proud" as she sent her 18-year-old daughter off to college. The 56-year-old star took to Instagram over the weekend to document Rowan's move into college, praising her daughter for "spreading her wings". Brooke - who has Rowan and Grier, 15, with husband Chris Henchy - wrote alongside a series of photos and videos from their trip to campus: "My unique and extraordi-

nary baby girl spreading her wings. I love you so. We are so proud of you. This was the saddest drive away from anywhere I've ever had to make. But my baby is BEGINNING one of the most important adventures of her life to date...NOW! (sic)" Brooke's Instagram post featured a video clip of the family driving away from the campus, before Brooke turned the camera towards herself and revealed that she had tears in her eyes. Elsewhere, one of the photographs shows a visibly-emotional Brooke embracing her daughter before she prepares to leave the campus and head home. Earlier this year, Brooke discussed the challenge of raising teenage daughters, admitting she craves their approval. The model explained: "I am surprised by how much their approval in everything matters to me. "I don't remember my mom needing my approval as much as I needed my mom's approval - she was just a god to me. "So I watch my girls, and I have to really be careful that I am not so needy of them, because they're going to say 'I hate you,' and they don't really mean it, but they do at that moment." Brooke also admitted she worries about pushing them away by being too "needy and clingy". She said: "I have to remind myself I'm their mother, it's OK, and tell myself 'They love you, don't get needy and clingy, because you're going to push them away.'"



## Lopez and B Affleck 'are in it for the long run'

**J**ennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck are "in it for the long run". The 52-year-old star and Ben, 49, rekindled their romance earlier this year, and they recently brought their families together for a trip to The Magic Castle in Los Angeles, as their relationship moves to the next stage. A source explained: "Since Jennifer and Ben are in it for the long run, it's just a natural step that they all spend time together with the kids." Jennifer - who has 13-year-old twins Emme and Maximilian with her ex-husband Marc Anthony - is determined not to rush anything. But at the same time, she recognizes the need to introduce them to Ben, who has Samuel, nine, Seraphina, 12, and Violet, 15, with his ex-wife Jennifer Garner. The insider

explained to People: "They are not trying to rush anything, but they want all the kids to get to know each other. "They are making the last few days of summer as fun as they can. Soon it's back to school and work." Meanwhile, Ben recently spent time bonding with Jennifer's mother. The Hollywood star and Guadalupe developed a good relationship when the celebrity duo first dated in the early 2000s, and she is "thrilled that they are back together now". A source said: "In the past, Jennifer's mom and Ben were very close. Guadalupe loved Ben. She was sad when they couldn't work things out years ago. "She is thrilled that they are back together now." Ben and Guadalupe spent time together in Las Vegas, and Jennifer is delighted that they're getting along so well. The insider added: "Jennifer is very close with her mom. It's very important to her that the person she is with, gets along with her mom. "Jennifer loves that Ben and Guadalupe hung out in Las Vegas. They both love gambling and had fun together at the Wynn hotel."





## Sports

# Uncertainty, distress for Afghan cricketers after Taliban takeover

## For players, country's fall is about a lot more than cricket

**KABUL:** The crack of bat on ball echoes around Kabul's international stadium as Afghanistan's top cricketers prepare for their next tour — just days after the country fell to the Taliban. The calm of the empty stadium is a surreal contrast to scenes just a few kilometers north, where tens of thousands of Afghans at Kabul airport are desperately trying to flee on evacuation flights.

Following the stunning victory of the hardline Islamists, many of the players in cricket-mad Afghanistan's beloved national team are finding it difficult to focus on sport. "The fear is there in their eyes, in their voices, even in their messages," pace bowler Naveen-ul-Haq said of his teammates in Kabul during a BBC radio interview broadcast at the weekend.

"The Taliban have said (they) won't be troubling any sportsman, but nobody knows," added Haq, speaking from the West Indies where he plays in the Caribbean Premier League. The return of the Taliban has sparked widespread fear in Afghanistan and in the international community, reviving memories of their brutal first stint in power from 1996 to 2001 when they imposed a harsh version of Islamic law.

They banned most forms of entertainment — including many sports — and stadiums doubled as public execution venues. Sports the Taliban did allow were strictly controlled, and were only for men to play and watch.

They did not mind cricket, however, and the game born centuries ago on the playing fields of England is popular among Taliban fighters too. That has done little to ease the fears of many players, for whom the fall of the country is about a lot more than the sport.

"I appeal to the leaders of the world; please don't let Afghanistan go into chaos," former national captain Mohammad Nabi tweeted days before the fall of Kabul, as the Taliban were rapidly capturing territory. We need your support. We want peace."

### 'More than a game'

Cricket was barely known in the nation until the early 2000s, and its explosive rise in popularity was linked with conflict — the sport was picked up in Pakistan by Afghan refugees who then seeded it in their home country.

But the national team has enjoyed a meteoric rise on the international scene since then, gaining coveted Test status in 2017 and now ranked among the top-10 sides in the world in the one-day and Twenty20 formats. In the last 20 years, it has also emerged as a powerful symbol of national unity in a country riven by civil war and ethnic conflict.

"If you find positive news, if you see people happy together, it's only cricket... that brings it to

“

The fear is in their eyes

”

the country. It's that important to Afghanistan," Haq told the BBC. "It's more than a game for Afghanistan's people."

That connection with national identity was visible on Afghanistan's independence day — August 19, less than a week after the fall of Kabul. Afghan cricketers marked it by tweeting pictures and emojis of the tri-color national flag, which the Taliban have replaced with their white banner in areas under their control.

All-rounder Samiullah Shinwari had earlier tweeted a photo with the date of the Taliban takeover of Kabul — August 15 — and the words:



**KABUL:** Afghanistan's national cricket team players attend a training session at the Kabul International Cricket Ground in Kabul on Saturday, ahead of their one-day series against Pakistan, scheduled to take place in Sri Lanka in two weeks. —AFP

"The day Afghans lost their country and the whole world just watched."

### Difficult to focus

For the Afghan players currently outside the country, there are fears for their loved ones back home. The family of Rashid Khan — Afghanistan's biggest cricket star — can't leave the country, according to former England star Kevin Pietersen, who spoke to him last week during a tournament in Britain.

"We had a long chat here on the boundary talking about it and (Khan) is worried: He can't get his family out of Afghanistan," Pietersen told Sky Sports. There are positive signs. On Sunday, the Afghanistan Cricket Board tweeted pictures of its

newly reappointed chairman to indicate it would be business as usual.

Despite the uncertainty, Afghanistan's cricket authorities have said their upcoming series against Pakistan, to be played in Sri Lanka, will go ahead. With no commercial flights operating from Afghanistan, an official said the team would drive to Pakistan and fly out from there.

But even for those who are able to play away from Afghanistan, such as Naveen-ul-Haq in the West Indies, the images from home are difficult to ignore. "You forget about it for a minute or two to focus on cricket but it jumps into your mind again," he told the BBC. "I can't say that I will be fully focused on playing only cricket because you can't when you see your country like that." — AFP



**TOKYO:** In this picture taken on August 18, 2021, former Japanese Winter Olympian and gold medalist Miki Matheson speaks during an interview in Tokyo. — AFP

## Japan Paralympic team going for more than gold

**TOKYO:** Japan is sending a record number of athletes to the Paralympics aiming not only for gold medals but also to build a more inclusive society, according to top team official Miki Matheson. A gold medalist herself at the 1998 Winter Paralympics in Nagano, Matheson serves as one of three deputy chiefs of the Japan team and has high hopes for the Tokyo Games. "The success of the Paralympics is not just whether athletes hit the mark or win a lot of medals," the sportswoman told AFP in an interview.

"The Paralympics won't succeed if we can't feel that (people with disabilities) can go out more comfortably and that people around them can change their way of thinking because of the Paralympics," she added.

The top sporting event for athletes with disabilities opens today after a year-long pandemic delay. But with virus cases hitting fresh records in Japan, the health situation is weighing on organizers and participants alike.

During the Tokyo Olympics, Japan won a record 27 golds, which the nation's Olympic Committee says helped build public support for the Games despite the pandemic. But Matheson said the Paralympics has a mission that goes beyond sport, and that Japan still has some way to go on making society inclusive.

Matheson, who won three gold medals and one silver in ice sledge speed racing in Nagano, was left paraplegic after a car accident when she was a university student. She had practiced judo before the accident, but turned her attention to para sports after her injury.

The 48-year-old is now based in Canada with her family, but is living in her hometown Tokyo temporarily while working with the team. Despite efforts by Japan since winning the Paralympic host bid to improve disabled access and inclusion, Matheson said there were stark differences with life in Canada. —AFP

## Zverev adds Cincy Masters to Olympic gold, Barty wins

**CINCINNATI:** Alexander Zverev backed up his Olympic triumph with a fifth ATP Masters 1000 title as he crushed Andrey Rublev 6-2, 6-3 in Cincinnati on Sunday. The German needed less than an hour against his longtime childhood friend and rival to lift the trophy and put himself into a solid position with the US Open starting in six days. "The US Open starts in a week's time, so obviously I want to keep it up and I want to maybe play even better there," Zverev said.

Women's world number one Ashleigh Barty was similarly impressive in winning her fifth title of the season at the combined ATP and WTA event, cruising past Swiss wild card Jil Teichmann 6-3, 6-1. The Australian, who will keep a firm grip on the number one ranking as the final Grand Slam of the year approaches, took control mid-way through the opening set and was never truly threatened.

"It's been an awesome week, with each match it was getting progressively better," Barty said. "Today I was able to trust myself and play with confidence, which was important in a big final. I'm excited to get matches in tough conditions here in Cincy

going into New York."

Zverev showed no effects from the stomach discomfort which forced him to take a medical timeout during his draining semi-final victory over Stefanos Tsitsipas on Saturday. Zverev won his 11th match in a row and his fifth against Rublev, a player he's been playing since their junior days.

The German came into the week with six defeats in prior Cincinnati appearances, but turned that negative on its head. "My first win here was on Wednesday and now I'm holding the title four days later," he said. "It's been an incredible week, I had a lot of great matches. It's a great feeling going into the Open."

Zverev kept his unforced error count to just six, though he was outpaced by Rublev 11 to six. The third seed produced 16 winners and broke Rublev five times. Zverev's only minor hiccup came as he was broken while serving for victory leading 5-2 in the second set. But he closed out the convincing win a game later with a timely break back as Rublev found the net with a return. "Until the end I was playing pretty good tennis," Zverev said.

"I didn't do a big celebration at the net since Andrey and I have been best friends since we were 11 or 12. With my Olympic gold and this fifth Masters I'm really looking forward to New York."

### Barty dominates

Although she doesn't leave Cincinnati with a trophy, women's runner-up Teichmann departs after a



**MASON:** Alexander Zverev of Germany poses with the winner's trophy after defeating Andrey Rublev of Russia during the final of the Western and Southern Open at Lindner Family Tennis Center on Sunday in Mason, Ohio. — AFP

stellar week. The world No 76 beat three top 12 players, including four-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka, fourth seed Karolina Pliskova and Olympic gold medalist Belinda Bencic of Switzerland.

But she had no answers as Wimbledon champion Barty stretched her WTA Tour-leading match win tally this season to 40. "I'm very happy with my week, today I wanted to win, but Ash was just too good," she said. "I felt like I was there in the first set, but suddenly the first set was gone. She stepped up her level in the second - she was too good."

Barty played a near-impeccable

match against a first-time Masters-level finalist, losing serve only once as she served for victory. The top seed quickly corrected course, breaking Teichmann back in the final game to clinch the title in 71 minutes.

Barty, who didn't drop a set all week, said she hadn't expected her run to the title to be so seamless after she had played only the Olympics since Wimbledon. The double Grand Slam champion started yesterday her 83rd consecutive week in the number one spot. The win in her 19th career singles final gave Barty a 13th trophy, including seven from her last eight finals appearances. — AFP

## First woman on Para refugee team urges others to try sport

**TOKYO:** The first female member of the Paralympic refugee team said yesterday it was an "honor" to be at the Tokyo Games, urging other women with disabilities to get involved in sport. Alia Issa will be one of two flagbearers for the six-person refugee team at today's opening ceremony for the Paralympics, which were delayed a year by the pandemic.

The 20-year-old, who was born in Greece and whose family are from Syria, will compete in the club throw event in Tokyo — and she hopes others will follow her lead. "I want to say to other women who have disabilities not to stay at home, try everyday with sports, to be outside in the world. I hope I'm the first example to follow," she said at a press conference. "I never believed I would be in the Paralympic Games once in my life, and that I would be the first woman refugee in Paralympic Games here in Tokyo. It's a big honor for me."

When she was four, Issa caught smallpox, which damaged her nervous

system. She now uses a wheelchair and has some difficulty speaking. She started para sports three years ago, and has been training in club throw for the past two years. She will carry the flag for the refugee team today with swimmer Abbas Karimi, who grew up in Afghanistan.

It is just the second time a refugee team has competed in the Paralympics, after Rio in 2016. Today, the team's chef de mission Ileana Rodriguez said the six Paralympians represent "82 million people who are displaced around the world" and want to send a message of hope.

"We're very grateful for the countries that home refugees and we encourage countries that can support refugees to do it," Rodriguez said. "We hope that that's a strong message that we can leave to the people of Japan as well."

Japan, the world's third largest economy, granted refugee status to 47 people in 2020, a little over one percent of asylum requests received



**TOKYO:** Members of the Paralympic Refugee team, Syrian-born Ibrahim al-Hussain (left), Iranian-born Shahradd Nasajpour (top-center), Syrian-origin Greece-born Alia Issa (right) and the team's chef de Mission Ileana Rodriguez (center) pose after a press conference in Tokyo yesterday, on the eve of the Tokyo Paralympic Games. —AFP

that year, according to official data. Rodriguez added that "our hearts go to all the people in Afghanistan". Afghans trying to flee the Taliban

have overwhelmed the US-led military operation at Kabul airport, leading to tragic scenes in which at least seven people have died. —AFP



Sports

# Arteta under pressure to lead Arsenal out of the wilderness

## Worst start to a league season in team's history

**LONDON:** Arsenal and Mikel Arteta appeared to be the perfect fit but now the Spanish manager is being assailed by fans across the world, including the President of Rwanda, after the Gunners' worst start to a league season in their 118-year history. The 39-year-old is being targeted by increasingly disenchanted fans who have turned their ire from unpopular American owner Stan Kroenke on to him.

The boos which emanated from the home stands following Chelsea's 2-0 win on Sunday — Arteta appeared to be the only person not to hear them, declaring afterwards "I see a lot of positives with the crowd and the team today" — could reach fever pitch by the end of this week.

Arsenal face a tough League Cup clash at in-form Championship side West Brom tomorrow and then face Premier League champions Manchester City away on Saturday. Kroenke at least untied the purse strings in the close season despite the Gunners facing a Europe-free campaign after finishing eighth.

Arteta has so far spent £130 million (\$177 million) but an early return of no points and no goals in either of their league games has already got the fans concerned that another season of mid-table mediocrity awaits. Their disappointment with Arteta is all the greater because of his Gunners' pedigree, something that his predecessor fellow Spaniard Unai Emery lacked.

The former midfielder's experience at having played under Arsenal's legendary manager Arsene Wenger from 2011-16 and serving his managerial apprenticeship under Pep Guardiola at Manchester

City marked him down as the ideal candidate.

Arsenal were keen to lure him away from City in 2018 when Wenger left but had to wait till December 2019 to secure him after Emery failed to fire up the side. Arteta made a good start, winning the FA Cup in 2020 with victory over Chelsea at Wembley but there has been little to cheer since.

The Spaniard can point to extenuating factors for the disappointing start to this season like losing key players such as Alexandre Lacazette and £50 million signing Ben White due to coronavirus. He



### Gunners visit Man City Saturday

bridled at the scathing assessment last week of the President of Rwanda which is an official sponsor of Arsenal — "We just must NOT excuse or Accept mediocrity," Paul Kagame tweeted — but former players believe that is what his team are serving up.

#### 'A cushy life'

Former striker Ian Wright shook his head in bemusement at the latest display against Chelsea —



**LONDON:** Chelsea's English defender Reece James (right) shoots to score his team's second goal past Arsenal's German goalkeeper Bernd Leno (left) during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Chelsea at the Emirates Stadium in London on Sunday. — AFP

Arsenal's 20th Premier League defeat in the 60 matches Arteta has taken charge of. "When you looked at the way that Chelsea played us and the way (Romelu) Lukaku played, either they (the Arsenal players) are not prepared, they are not listening, or they can't perform what he (Arteta) wants them to do," he said on BBC's Match of the Day. "I don't know what the tactics were. For me it was

quite frightening."

Sol Campbell, who won two Premier League titles and two FA Cups under Wenger, says Arteta is probably safe for the moment because the club spent so much time and energy on getting him. However, Campbell is worried by the lack of steeliness in either the defense or midfield, which was painfully exposed by Chelsea. — AFP

## Bale scores but Real need Vinicius to earn draw

**MADRID:** Gareth Bale scored his first Liga goal since 2019 but took two late goals from his replacement, Vinicius, to earn Real Madrid a 3-3 draw at Levante on Sunday. That result allowed champions Atletico Madrid, who beat Elche 1-0 earlier in the evening, to take top spot in La Liga.

In the late game in Valencia, Bale gave Real Madrid the lead after five minutes. Karim Benzema ran in on goal but when the ball was held up by water on the pitch cut it back to Bale who side-footed the ball home.

It was the Welshman's first goal in La Liga since his second goal, an 86th minute equalizer, in a 2-2 draw against Villarreal at the start of September in 2019, a match which he ended by collecting a red card. Real dominated the first half but could not find a second. Instead, Levante leveled 28 seconds into

the second half. The ball broke to unmarked Roger who beat Thibaut Courtois with a hard low shot

Levante took the lead in the 57th minute when Jose Campana met a deep cross with a sweet volley into the top corner. Real manager Carlo Ancelotti promptly yanked off Bale, Isco and Eden Hazard in a triple substitution. One of the subs, Vinicius repaid his coach in the 73rd minute, accelerating onto a pass from Casimiro, shrugging off a defender and rolling a shot into the corner of the net.

Seven minutes later, David Alaba nodded a Levante free kick down into his own six yard box and Rober Pier gleefully thumped the ball home from close range. With five minutes left, Vinicius again equalized. Receiving the ball wide of the post and near the goal-line, he still somehow found the net, lofting the ball round goalkeeper Aitor Fernandez and in off the far post. Two minutes later, Fernandez was sent off for handling outside his area to stop a Real counter-attack. Because Levante had used all their substitutes, defender Ruben Vezo went in goal but Real could not find a winner.

"He has qualities, he's very fast, he's young, he's a great striker," said Ancelotti of the Brazilian, but he refused to say if Vinicius would start the next game,

which could cost Bale his place. "I don't give so much importance to who starts the game or not. It's not that important. Today, Vinicius changed the match with his freshness."

"What we lacked was in the defense, not in attack," said Ancelotti saying his team needed to work on their "defensive commitment."

Earlier in Madrid, Angel Correa continued his torrid form for Atletico. A week after striking twice in a 2-1 victory in the opening round at Celta Vigo, the diminutive Argentinian striker struck again in the 39th minute. Atletico, who won the title in a season played behind closed doors, finally got to share their trophy with their fans. For the first time in 18 months there was a crowd at the Wanda Metropolitano on Sunday, where 24,926 were allowed in. The home club also presented summer signing Rodrigo de Paul.

The Argentinian international midfielder was willing to help out in defense and assisted on his compatriot's goal, with a pass very like the one with which he set up Angel di Maria for Argentina's winner in the Copa America final against Brazil in July. De Paul lofted the ball over the visiting defense and into the path of the sprinting Correa. — AFP



**VALENCIA:** Real Madrid's Brazilian forward Vinicius Junior celebrates scoring his team's second goal during the Spanish League football match against Levante at the Ciutat de Valencia stadium in Valencia on Sunday. — AFP

## Gnabry scores twice as 'wild' Bayern squeeze past Cologne

**BERLIN:** Serge Gnabry struck twice as Bayern Munich picked up their first Bundesliga win this season with a 3-2 victory over Cologne Sunday, but Julian Nagelsmann criticized a "wild" display from the defending champions. Rapid-fire goals by Robert Lewandowski and Gnabry put Bayern 2-0 up just after the break, but Cologne roared back with two goals in as many minutes by Anthony Modeste and Mark Uth.

Gnabry gave Nagelsmann his first Bundesliga win as Bayern head coach by smashing the winner into the roof 19 minutes before the whistle. "It was unnecessary to let them score at 2-1 and then 2-2 -

we have to be careful that we don't keep giving away goals so easily and make life hard for ourselves," Gnabry said.

Nagelsmann also saw room for improvement. "The result is good, but the game was too wild for my taste," said Nagelsmann. "It was all a bit wild. Cologne gave us a lot of room which we didn't always use, there is a lot still to do."

Bayern seized control at the Allianz Arena when second-half replacement Jamal Musiala, 18, ghosted through the Cologne defense and squared for Lewandowski on 50 minutes. The Poland star, who scored a record 41 goals in the Bundesliga last season, has already scored twice in as many league games in 2020/21.

He has now scored in 12 consecutive Bundesliga games dating back to last season. Only Bayern legend Gerd Mueller, who died last Sunday aged 75, bettered the tally by netting in 16 straight league games. Gnabry doubled the lead when he stabbed in a Thomas Mueller cross on 59 minutes.

Cologne scored just a minute later and deserve credit for fighting back at 2-0 down. When Bayern defender Niklas Suele misjudged a cross, Modeste powered home his header. The French veteran then swung in a cross on Cologne's next attack which Uth stabbed home to level. Gnabry restored Bayern's lead when he picked his spot from the edge of the area as his shot flew past Cologne 'keeper Timo Horn.

#### Awoniyi strikes again

Earlier, former Liverpool striker Taiwo Awoniyi scored his fourth goal in three games to seal a Bundesliga point for Union Berlin in their 2-2 draw at Hoffenheim. The 24-year-old, who moved permanently from Merseyside this summer after spending last season on loan in the German capital, equalised with a superb strike early in the second half.

With Union 2-1 down, he rescued a point two minutes into the second-half by volleying home at the second attempt after his initial shot was parried.

It capped a golden week for the Nigerian who scored twice and set up a third goal in Thursday's 4-0 away drubbing of Finnish club Kuopion Palloseura in a first-leg qualifier for the Europa Conference League.

Awoniyi also scored the opening goal in last Saturday's 1-1 league draw at home to Bayer Leverkusen. Union took the lead after 10 minutes in Hoffenheim when defender Niko Giesselmann tapped home the rebound after his header was blocked. The hosts roared back as defender Kevin Akpoguma headed in the equalizer four minutes later.

Hoffenheim took the lead on half an hour when a superb Andrej Kramaric long ball was met by Danish forward Jacob Bruun Larsen, who scored his second goal in as many games before Awoniyi equalized. Union finished with 10 men as defender Marvin Friedrich was dismissed in added time for a second booking. He will now miss next Sunday's home game against Borussia Moenchengladbach. —AFP

# Classifieds

## Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144

Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

### REQUIRED FOR A CATERING COMPANY IN KUWAIT

- AC & EQUIPMENT TECHNICIAN
- KITCHEN MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN
- WAITER
- CLEANER

(Above candidates should be locally available in Kuwait with transferable residence)  
(Local manpower supplier can also contact us for the above requirement for monthly contract basis)

**CONTACT NUMBERS: 94714718 / 99261378**

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, Phangan Singh S/O Amar Singh R/O Vill. Mirze Ke (Ferozepur) have changed my name to Fangan Singh. (C 0633) 23-8-2021

**For labor-related inquiries and complaints:**

**Call MSALHOTLINE 128**



## Probe opened into violence that led to abandonment of Nice-Marseille game



NICE: Fans invade the pitch during the French L1 football match between OGC Nice and Olympique de Marseille (OM) at the Allianz Riviera stadium in Nice, southern France on Sunday. — AFP

**PARIS:** Local authorities in Nice have opened an investigation into the ugly incidents which led to the abandonment of Sunday's Ligue 1 match between the home side and Marseille, while politicians in France called for punishments to be meted out to those responsible.

The public prosecutor in the southern city confirmed it had begun a probe but said no arrests had been made after Nice supporters invaded the pitch and angrily confronted Marseille's Dimitri Payet, who had thrown a bottle lobbed at him back into the crowd, before a brawl broke out involving players and spectators. The French league (LFP) released a short statement saying it had summoned the two clubs to a hearing tomorrow "following the serious incidents".

The hosts were leading the Mediterranean derby 1-0 through a Kasper Dolberg goal when the game was interrupted in the 75th minute at the Allianz Riviera as Payet fell to the ground after being struck by a bottle thrown from the crowd as he went across to take a corner.

The former France international threw a bottle back into the crowd as team-mates came across to remonstrate with Nice fans packed in behind the goal. Some supporters then streamed onto the pitch and a melee ensued involving players and staff from both teams, fans and stewards. Marseille coach Jorge Sampaoli had to be restrained by members of his own staff. The match was halted for more than an hour and was finally abandoned just before midnight local time



### Marseille refuse restart over safety issues

after Marseille refused to return to the field of play, with club president Pablo Longoria complaining that the safety of his players "could not be guaranteed".

"The league wanted the match to restart. We decided for the safety of our players, who were attacked during the pitch invasion, not to resume because the safety of our players was not guaranteed," Longoria said, adding the referee "was with us" and decided to stop the game.

It now remains to be seen what action will be taken by the league, which must decide whether to

replay the game or award Nice a victory on the basis that Marseille forfeited the match by refusing to return to the pitch. "What really sparked things off unfortunately was the reaction of two Marseille players who threw bottles back at the supporters," claimed Nice president Jean-Pierre Rivere.

There had already been a loud-speaker announcement earlier in the game asking supporters to stop throwing bottles and there were also reports of incidents in the VIP box involving the presidents of the two clubs. One witness told AFP they had "grabbed each other by the neck and needed to be separated by their bodyguards".

### Blow for French football

The incidents are a huge blow for the image of Ligue 1, less than two weeks after Lionel Messi moved to France to sign for Paris Saint-Germain. It is also a major blow for Nice, a club with big ambi-



Marseille's French midfielder Dimitri Payet (right) speaks as Marseille's Argentine head coach Jorge Sampaoli (center) is steered by a colleague during the match. — AFP

tions under the ownership of Ineos, the group chaired by British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe.

The match was attended by over 32,000 fans with spectators allowed back inside stadiums in France after almost all of last season was played out behind closed doors due to coronavirus restrictions. Now, however, Nice run the risk of having to play several games in an empty stadium again as a punishment, and politicians lined up to call for action to be taken.

"It is of course regrettable given how long we have gone watching matches without spectators in stadiums," said Roxana Maracineanu, France's

Minister Delegate in charge of sport. She said those guilty of throwing objects and invading the pitch should be punished "if we can find them...I think there needs to be punishments for the club in question." Christian Estrosi, the center-right mayor of Nice who was at the game, got involved too, tweeting: "Violence is always intolerable. There must be punishments after (the league) has determined who was responsible." "The behavior of some of the supporters was unspeakable but so was that of the Marseille president in the stands and the coach on the field," he added. — AFP

## Ronaldo denied late winner, Mourinho off to winning start

**MILAN:** Cristiano Ronaldo was denied a last-gasp winner to save Juventus after his stoppage-time header was ruled out for offside in a dramatic 2-2 draw at Udinese, while Jose Mourinho got off to a winning start at Roma with a 3-1 victory over Fiorentina.

Ronaldo started on the bench at the Dacia Arena in Udine amid rumors he is looking for a way out of the Italian giants, but he almost snatched the three points deep into stoppage time after Juve insisted he was going nowhere this term. After the match returning coach Massimiliano Allegri played down the controversy, saying that he was always planning to bring on Ronaldo.

"Cristiano is OK... It's the start of the season and seeing the condition everyone is in and thinking about the game, especially at the beginning, I put him on the bench knowing that there would be a need for him to come on," he told broadcaster DAZN. "He made himself available, like everyone. He played well, even scored a goal but unfortunately it didn't stand."

Allegri's Juve looked to be cruising to victory when Paulo Dybala, wearing the captain's armband, and Juan Cuadrado put them two ahead midway through the first half. But two second-half blunders from Juve keeper Wojciech Szczesny allowed Udinese to take a

point through Roberto Pereyra's penalty and a Gerard Deulofeu strike.

Ronaldo entered the field to loud applause from the Juve fans on the hour mark with Juve leading 2-1 and he was unlucky not to restore their two-goal advantage when his header from a Dybala cross flashed wide. And with just seconds left he wheeled away after meeting Federico Chiesa's pinpoint cross with a trademark header, celebrating with his jubilant teammates who thought he had saved their skins. However he could only watch on in desperation as his winner was chalked off by VAR.

### Abraham repays Mourinho

It was the most dramatic moment in an eventful night in the Italian top flight, with six red cards in four matches and three big-name managers returning to the touchline. The one with the biggest reputation — Mourinho — was made happy by two assists from new signing Tammy Abraham who shone on his Roma debut at the Stadio Olimpico.

With Fiorentina already down to 10 men, in the 26th minute Abraham slipped through Henrikh Mkhitaryan whose neat finish was given as a goal after a long VAR check. Nicolò Zaniolo's second yellow card gave a brave Fiorentina side hope and Nikola Milenkovic levelled the scores on the hour mark. However great work again from Abraham — who also hit the bar — led to Roma retaking the lead through Jordan Veretout four minutes later, the 23-year-old just about staying outside before rolling a perfect low cross which allowed the French midfielder to slot home.

Veretout made sure Mourinho got three points from



UDINE: Juventus' Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo heads the ball during the Italian Serie A football match between Udinese and Juventus at the Dacia Arena Stadium in Udine, on Sunday. — AFP

his first match in Serie A since winning the league with Inter Milan in 2010 when he rolled home the third in the 79th minute after collecting a brilliant Eldor Shomurodov pass.

"We were good 11 against 11, good 10 against 10, but with 11 against 10 we weren't that good," Mourinho told DAZN. "I liked the spirit, the sacrifice the work we put in after the super difficult match on Thursday. But we had difficult moments that I wasn't expecting."

Luciano Spalletti also triumphed on his return to

football with Napoli, his team running out 2-0 winners over promoted Venezia despite playing three-quarters of the match a man down after striker Victor Osimhen was sent off for punching Daan Heymans.

Lorenzo Insigne opened the scoring with a 62nd-minute penalty after having blazed over a spot-kick just minutes before, and Eljif Elmas drilled home the second 11 minutes later to secure the win. There was no lack of drama in Sunday's other match, with Bologna beating new boys Salernitana 3-2 in a match in which three players were sent off. — AFP