



3 Over 2,000 sites inspected over outdoor labor ban compliance



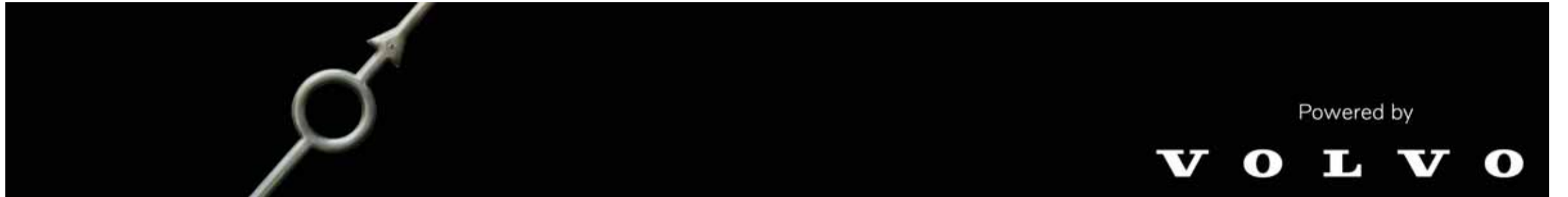
5 Hurricane Ida grows to Category 4 storm



13 Japanese giant wants soy sauce to be 'ketchup of India'



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Kuwait's tire dump troubles remain despite new location

Arhia cleared of millions of tires • Salmi tire graveyard grows



KUWAIT: Environment Public Authority General Director Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah explains as to how Kuwait has completed the huge task of removing old tires from a dump (inset) in Arhia, near Mutlaa. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Page 3)

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait marked a milestone in its tire dump saga yesterday with the removal of tons of old tires from a dump in Arhia, near Mutlaa now complete. Speaking at an event celebrating the end of the removal, Mohammad Al-Fares, Minister of Oil, Minister of Higher Education and Minister of Environment Public Authority, said that the removal program took three years and relieved the residential district of South Saad Al-Abdullah of serious health and environmental hazards.

In 2019, the director general of the Kuwait Environmental Public Authority said there were around 20 million to 40 million tires. Most of these have now been moved to Al-Salmi tire dump. It is one of the largest tire graveyards in the world and is visible from space. But the move has done little to alleviate the longer term environmental problem for Kuwait.

There have been several massive fires at the tire graveyard. In October 2020, an estimated 1 million tires caught fire in a blaze that took days to control. In 2012, an estimated five million tires burned for days in a massive blaze that released plumes of black

smoke adding carbon monoxide and sulfur oxide to foul Kuwait's already variable air quality. An average car tire produces two gallons of oil when burned, according to EPA estimates. This means that the 2012 fire, when the tires were located in Sulaibiya, likely released as much as 10 million gallons of toxic chemicals into the lands around the tire dump, not to mention the air pollutants.

Kuwait ranked last in environmental security in the 'Safe Cities Index 2021' report, released recently by The Economist Intelligence Unit. Kuwait managed a score of only 22 out of 100 in environmental security, and is the only city in the list with a 'Low' score in this category, designated for cities with scores between zero and 25. The report is based on the fourth iteration of the index, which ranks 60 cities across 76 indicators covering digital, health, infrastructure, personal and environmental security. The report focus on matters of environmental concern for Kuwait City but speaks to the much larger issue of Kuwait's environmental policy and future.

Al-Fares said the tires are being handled according to international standards.

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US destroys explosive-laden car in Kabul

KABUL: The United States said it destroyed an explosive-laden vehicle with an air strike in Kabul yesterday, hours after President Joe Biden warned of another terror attack in the capital as a massive airlift of tens of thousands of Afghans entered its last days. A Taliban spokesman confirmed the incident, saying a car bomb destined for the airport had been destroyed—and that a possible second strike had hit a nearby house.

The US said it had only struck the vehicle, but added that secondary blasts indicated "a substantial amount of explosive material". Local media reported there may have been civilian casualties, which the US said it was assessing.

The strike comes after a suicide bomber from the Islamic State group on Thursday targeted US troops stopping huge crowds of people from entering Kabul's airport, from where about 114,000 people have been evacuated since August 15 when the Taliban swept back into power. More than 100 people died in the attack, including 13 US service personnel, slowing down the airlift ahead of Biden's deadline for evacuations to end by Tuesday. The operation is winding down despite Western powers saying thousands may be left behind.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said some 300 Americans still in Afghanistan were seeking to leave the country. "They are not going to be stuck," he told ABC, adding the US had "a mechanism to get them out".

The Pentagon said Saturday that retaliation drone strikes had killed two "high-level" IS jihadists in eastern Afghanistan, but Biden warned of more attacks from the group.

"The situation on the ground continues to be extremely dangerous, and the threat of terrorist attacks on the airport remains high," Biden said.

Continued on Page 2

MP calls for emergency Assembly session

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Opposition MP Hamad Al-Matar said yesterday that he has started collecting signatures to force the National Assembly to convene an emer-

gency session to discuss "regional developments" following the latest events.

Matar was referring to the reports that pro-Iran militias in Iraq fired three Katyusha missiles into the Iraqi-Kuwaiti borders and said they were targeting US military bases in Kuwait. The Kuwaiti army initially denied the reports early Saturday but later added that the army and the interior ministry found pieces of one of the Katyusha missiles "which fell near the area" of the joint borders. The statement did not provide a precise location of where the missile had fallen, but said there were no damages or losses.

"I will start today collecting signatures (of other

MPs) to hold an emergency session of the Assembly to discuss the regional developments following the latest events" after the Kuwaiti army found parts of a Katyusha rocket near the joint borders, MP Matar said on Twitter.

The Assembly is currently in summer recess which ends in late October and for it to convene urgently, at least 33 MPs must sign the petition. The session could end in one or more days.

Earlier, Matar had said that Defense Minister Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah told him that nothing had penetrated or crossed the Kuwaiti

Continued on Page 2

Macron calls for Kabul 'safe zone'

MOSUL, Iraq: France and Britain will today urge the United Nations to work for the creation of a "safe zone" in the Afghan capital Kabul to protect humanitarian operations, French President Emmanuel Macron said. "This is very important. This would provide a framework for the United Nations to act in an emergency," Macron said in comments published in the weekly Journal du Dimanche.

Above all such a safe zone would

allow the international community "to maintain pressure on the Taliban," who are now in power in Afghanistan, the French leader added. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council—France, Britain, the US, Russia and China—will meet today to discuss the Afghanistan situation.

Macron yesterday visited the Islamic State jihadist group's former Iraqi stronghold Mosul, a day after vowing to keep troops in the country. In a speech at the devastated city's Church of Our Lady of the Hour, which the UN's cultural agency UNESCO is working to restore, Macron urged Iraq's religious communities to "work together" to rebuild the country.

Continued on Page 2



MOSUL: French President Emmanuel Macron (center) is welcomed upon his arrival at the Al-Nuri Mosque in Iraq's second city of Mosul yesterday.— AFP

30 loyalists die in strikes on Yemen airbase

DUBAI: Strikes on Yemen's largest airbase yesterday killed at least 30 pro-government troops and wounded scores more, said medical and loyalist sources who blamed Houthi rebels for the attack. The strikes were carried out on Al-Anad airbase,

some 60 kilometers (40 miles) north of Yemen's second city Aden in the south of the conflict-riven country. The airbase served as the headquarters for US troops overseeing a long-running drone war against Al-Qaeda until they pulled out in March 2015, shortly before the Houthis overran the area.

"More than 30 have been killed and at least 56 were injured" in the strikes on the airbase in the government-held southern province of Lahij, armed forces spokesman Mohammed Al-Naqib told AFP. Video footage from the scene showed dozens of people gathered in front of Lahij hospital, where one ambulance after another was pulling

up to drop off casualties.

An official from the hospital said it was all hands on deck. "We have called on the entire staff, surgeons and nurses, to come in," Mohsen Murshid told AFP. "We also know that there are still bodies under the rubble". Naqib had in an earlier statement accused Yemen's Houthi rebels of carrying out missile and drone strikes on the facility. There was no immediate comment from the rebel side. A military medic confirmed the death toll after it jumped from seven fatalities earlier in the day.

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Local

Kuwait's Amir congratulates Iraqi leaders on success of conference

Sheikh Nawaf hopes conference goals help region overcome challenges



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Acting Speaker of the National Assembly Ahmad Al-Shohoumy.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Nazaha Enhancement Abdullah Yousef Al-Roumi.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Ministers of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Interior Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and Foreign Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah congratulated Saturday Iraqi President Barham Salih and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi on the success of the Baghdad Cooperation and Partnership Conference. In two separate cables, His Highness wished the conference's noble goals would be materialized to help the region overcome challenges as well as to unite regional and international efforts to ensure the region's security and stability and to promote multilateral political, economic and security partnerships and constructive dialogue.

His Highness the Amir acclaimed Iraq's concerted efforts to prepare for the conference and the suc-

cessful organization of it. He also wished Iraq everlasting security and stability as well as further progress and welfare. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the Iraqi president and premier.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister at Seif Palace yesterday. His Highness the Amir also hosted the Acting Speaker of the National Assembly Ahmad Al-Shohoumy. Furthermore, he received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-

Sabah, as well as Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Nazaha (Integrity) Enhancement Abdullah Yousef Al-Roumi.

In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness the Prime Minister at Seif Palace yesterday. He also received Acting Speaker Shohoumy, Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali, Roumi, as well as Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and Interior Minister Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences yesterday to President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev over the victims of the

explosion that ripped through a military warehouse in southern Kazakhstan. In the cable, His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon the dead and for a speedy recovery for the injured. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables. Moreover, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to the President of Bangladesh Mohammad Abdul Hamid over the victims of boat accident in Titas River. In the cable, His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon the dead and for a speedy recovery for the injured. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables. — KUNA

30 loyalists die in strikes on...

Continued from Page 1

Yemen's internationally recognized government-backed by a Saudi-led military coalition and the Houthis have been locked in war since 2014, when the insurgents seized the capital Sanaa. In 2019, the Houthis said they launched a drone strike on Al-Anad during a military parade, with medics and government sources saying that at least six loyalists were killed including a high-ranking intelligence official. Eleven people were wounded in that attack, including Yemen's deputy chief of staff Major General Saleh Al-Zandani who later died of his injuries.

Al-Anad was recaptured by government forces in August 2015 as they recovered territory from

the rebels across the south with support from the Saudi-led coalition. Yesterday's incident is one of the deadliest since December 2020, when blasts targeting cabinet members rocked Aden airport.

At the time, at least 26 people, including three members of the International Committee of the Red Cross and a journalist, were killed and scores wounded in the explosions as ministers disembarked from an aircraft in the southern city. Yemen's grinding conflict has claimed tens of thousands of lives and displaced millions, resulting in what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Some 80 percent of Yemen's 30-million population are dependent on some form of aid for survival. While the UN is pushing for an end to the war, the Houthis have demanded the re-opening of Sanaa airport, closed under a Saudi blockade since 2016, before any ceasefire or negotiations. The incoming UN special envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, will officially assume his duties on September 5. — AFP



LAHIJ, Yemen: People gather as ambulances transport casualties of strikes on Al-Anad air base to the Ibn Khaldun hospital in the government-held southern province of Lahij, yesterday. — AFP

Macron calls for Kabul...

Continued from Page 1

"We will bring back a (French) consulate and schools," he pledged, while criticizing the pace of reconstruction in Mosul, where IS fought its last urban battle, as "too slow".

The mainly Sunni Muslim city was recaptured from IS in 2017 after three years. Only 30-40 percent of its health facilities have so far been restored, according to a local official. Macron made the commitment for France to stay put in Iraq during a regional summit in Baghdad largely devoted to the fight against terrorism and the impact of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan as the US withdraws.

"No matter what choices the Americans make, we will maintain our presence in Iraq to fight against terrorism," he told a news conference on Saturday. His visit to Mosul, a melting pot of Iraq's diverse ethnic and religious communities, symbolized France's support for Christians in the Middle East.

Before the 2003 US-led invasion that ousted dictator Saddam Hussein, Iraq had a sizeable minority of 1.5 million Christians, but it has whittled down to 400,000 out of a total population of some

40 million after waves of emigration in the face of conflict and persecution. France, which finances French-speaking Christian schools in the region, aims to highlight the plight of Christians in the Middle East, as well as other minorities.

"This message is civilizational but also geopolitical. There will be no balance in Iraq if there is no respect for these communities," the French president said ahead of his visit.

Macron also made a stop at the site of Mosul's Al-Nuri mosque, where IS leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi had declared the establishment of a "caliphate" in 2014. IS blew up the famed 12th century mosque in June 2017 as Iraqi forces closed in on the jihadists in Mosul's Old City.

UNESCO is now organizing a vast project to rebuild it almost identically, with its famed leaning minaret. The mosque and church are part of three reconstruction projects led by UNESCO and funded by the United Arab Emirates to the tune of \$50 million. The initiative, called "Reviving the Spirit of Mosul", the largest in the organization's history, includes plans to rebuild Ottoman-style heritage houses as part of a European-funded project.

The French president on Friday visited the Shiite Muslim shrine of Imam Musa Al-Kadhimi in the north Baghdad district of Kadhimiya, accompanied by Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi. It was the first such visit for a French president. — AFP

allocated for the establishment of tire recycling plants in Salmi," Hassan Kamal, a Kuwaiti Municipal Council member, told Anadolu Agency. "The designated site will include about 52 plants to recycle tires, paper, and plastic."

However, Hammoud Al-Anzi, head of the Jahra Committee in the Municipal Council, told Anadolu Agency that the efforts made so far do not match "the challenge of the huge number of tires." He called on the government to involve community volunteers to dispose of the tires, and invite major transport companies and heavy equipment companies to contribute within the framework of social responsibility to accelerate the pace of tires' disposal and reduce the tons of dumped tires piled neatly in Kuwait's desert.

Kuwait's tire dump troubles...

Continued from Page 1

There are also plans to recycle or shred some of these for local consumption and export. Last March, the General Administration of Customs approved a request for a company to export five million used tires at the Arhia site within nine months. It also initiated the establishment of five factories to cut, recycle and export these tires.

"An area of two million square meters has been

MP calls for emergency...

Continued from Page 1

borders with Iraq. MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari called for investigating the contradictions in the Kuwait Army statements about the missiles.

In the meantime, MP Abdullah Al-Turajji said yes-

terday he has sent a series of questions to the ministers of defense, interior and foreign affairs over Kuwaiti preparations when the United States withdraws from Iraq later this year and the possibility that events in Afghanistan are repeated in Iraq.

The lawmaker said in his questions that all have been following the chaotic events in Afghanistan after the US withdrawal, and the firing of missiles near the Iraq-Kuwait borders. He said that such events create concerns among Kuwaiti citizens and therefore authorities should reassure citizens that they are well-prepared for any developments.

US destroys explosive-laden...

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"Our commanders informed me that an attack is highly likely in the next 24-36 hours." The US embassy in Kabul later released a warning of credible threats at specific areas of the airport, including access gates. In recent years, the Islamic State's Afghanistan-Pakistan chapter has been responsible for some of the deadliest attacks in those countries. They have massacred civilians at mosques, public squares, schools, and even hospitals.

While both IS and the Taliban are hardline Sunni Islamists, they are bitter foes-with each claiming to be the true flag-bearers of jihad.

The IS attack has forced the US military and the Taliban into a form of cooperation to ensure security at the airport that was unthinkable two weeks ago. On Saturday, Taliban fighters escorted a steady stream of Afghans from buses to the main passenger terminal, handing them over to US forces for evacuation. The troops were seen throughout the civilian side of the airport grounds and annex buildings, while US Marines peered at them from the passenger terminal roof. After a 20-year war, the foes were within open sight of each other, separated by just 30 meters. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said US troops had started withdrawing-

without saying how many were left.

Biden yesterday headed to an air force base in Delaware, where the remains of the servicemen killed in Kabul have been transferred, to attend a ceremony and meet with the victims' families.

Western allies that helped with the airlift have mostly already ended their flights, with some voicing despair at not being able to fly out everyone at risk. The head of Britain's armed forces, General Sir Nick Carter, told the BBC it was "heartbreaking" that "we haven't been able to bring everybody out".

A White House official said 2,900 people were evacuated in a 24-hour period between Saturday and yesterday, a drastic reduction from earlier in the week. Two Afghan athletes were able to leave last weekend and spent a week in France before a "major global operation" took them to Japan for the Tokyo Paralympics. There was an emotional welcome for Zakia Khudadadi and Hossain Rasouli at the athletes' village on Saturday night.

"There were lots of tears from everyone in the room," said International Paralympic Committee spokesman Craig Spence. French President Emmanuel Macron said talks had begun with the Taliban to "protect and repatriate" at-risk Afghan nationals beyond Tuesday. The UN said it was bracing for a "worst-case scenario" of up to half a million more refugees from Afghanistan by the end of 2021. At the airport, gone are the crowds of thousands mobbing the perimeter, hoping to be let through and allowed onto a plane. The Taliban have now sealed off roads leading to the facility and are only letting sanctioned buses pass. — AFP

Local

Over 2,000 sites inspected for compliance with outdoor labor ban

Several companies still do not adhere to govt regulations



KUWAIT: A combination of photos taken during the Public Authority for Manpower's inspection team's tour at construction sites in Mutlaa yesterday. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Three days before the end of a summer ban on outdoor work, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has conducted surprise inspections at construction sites in Mutlaa yesterday, fining several companies for violations.

The government of Kuwait forbids work outdoors during the heat of summer; every day from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm during the period between June 1 and August 31. Every year however, violations happen where workers and contractors ignore the ban to continue working during those hours. In response, PAM leads inspection campaigns to fine violations.

Yesterday's inspection was led by Mansour Al-Mutairi, head of the 2021 inspection campaign, which is aimed at protecting workers from extreme heat and excessive work during noon time. The surprise inspection yesterday was the last in a series of inspections that were conducted by PAM throughout the summer. The authority had announced it would conduct surprise inspection tours on different locations to monitor any violations and take legal action against violators if necessary.

Speaking to Kuwait Times at the site, Hamad Al-Mekhyel, Head for the Occupational Safety Department at the Public Authority for Manpower, Jahra Governorate, admitted there are still many pri-



1,760 workers found in violation

vate contractors and companies who do not adhere to the government's strict regulations on outdoor ban.

"We are here to check compliance and whether contractors are following our strict guidelines with regards to work ban from 11am to 4pm," he said. "It's sad to say that here on this site, we still found many workers in violation of the work ban. Contractors will be fined KD100 for each worker caught on the

site, and the fine will be multiplied by the number of violations committed."

"We have been conducting these inspections since June 1st," he said. "We want to see the regulations followed strictly because we want everyone's safety and cooperation, especially with regards to workers' exposure to excessive heat."

Mekhyel reiterated that his teams were conducting raids 'since day one'. "We have been conducting inspections every week," he indicated. "This surprise visit to Mutlaa is the last one in the series of several raids conducted from day one. Since June, we have been conducting raids to ensure that companies and employers are not forcing anyone to work outdoor," he added.

According to Al-Mekhyel, PAM has inspected 2,381 sites all over Kuwait from June 1 to August 19, 2021, and found a total number of 1,760 workers in violation of the ban. On the other hand, they also found 1,045 companies who violated the work ban for the first time, and they were given tickets for violation not following government ban. Meanwhile, the number of companies that followed the rules after re-inspection stood at 844 while there were two



sites which reportedly repeated violations when inspectors revisited the sites again. PAM has received 110 complaints from the public reporting violations to the 11am-4pm outdoor working ban.



Kuwait aims to transform 'tire graveyard' into new city

KUWAIT: Kuwait yesterday announced plans to transform what was once a mammoth "tire graveyard" to a new residential city. The 2-square-kilometer (0.7-square-mile) dump in the north of the oil-rich Gulf country was where tires went to die - a total of more than 40 million at the end.

Seventeen years of tire dumping and three massive fires between 2012 and 2020 sparked environmental concerns, prompting the authorities to shut it down for good. "We have moved from a difficult stage that was characterized by great environmental risk," Oil Minister Mohammad Al-Fares said at the now empty landfill some five kilometers (three miles) from Al-Jahra province. "Today the area is clean and all tires have been removed to begin the launch of the project of Saad Al-Abdullah city."

In past months, trucks loaded with tires had made more than 44,000 trips from the landfill to Al-Salmi region, near Kuwait's industrial area,



KUWAIT: Director General of Kuwait's Environment Public Authority (EPA) Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah speaks during a ceremony yesterday, announcing the total transfer of hundreds of tons of discarded tires from Arhia to the Salmi border area, ahead of recycling. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

where Fares said they will be temporarily stored. He said the tires will be cut or repurposed for local use or for export, adding that storage would meet "international standards... in case of fire".

According to Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah, Director General of the Environment Public

Authority, Kuwait plans to recycle all the tires and avoid the need for another landfill. "There is already a factory today that repurposes them, and we hope to find other manufacturer to contribute to help end the tires issue," he told AFP.

Alaa Hassan, head of EPSCO Global General

Contracting, told AFP her firm extracts raw materials from tires, including elements used to pave roads and sidewalks. She said EPSCO has the capacity to cut or repurpose approximately two millions tires a year, in cooperation with other factories. — AFP



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ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
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News in brief

Foreign Minister meets Iranian counterpart

BAGHDAD: Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah met Saturday Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian on the sidelines of the Baghdad Cooperation and Partnership Conference. During the meeting, the foreign ministers reviewed means to bolster bilateral relations in a variety of domains and the latest international and regional developments of common concern. — KUNA

Indian embassy closed today

KUWAIT: The Indian embassy announced yesterday that the embassy and all three out-sourced centers (CKGS Abbasiya, CKGS Fahheel, CKGS Sharq), will be closed today on account of Janmashtami. However, emergency consular services will be rendered by the mission at its premises, it added.

Citizenship withdrawn from eight people

KUWAIT: An Amiri Decree was issued to withdraw Kuwaiti citizenship from eight people, obtained originally through forgery. The decision, published in the official gazette Kuwait Al-Youm yesterday, stipulates withdrawing the citizenship from six people who obtained it directly through fraud, in addition to two others by extension.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Heavy traffic on the Fourth Ring Road, one of Kuwait's busiest highways, on Saturday. As Kuwait steps back into normalcy following months of COVID-19 restrictions, traffic jams have made their grand return to most main roads in the country. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Afghan woman delivers baby in Kuwait airspace

ANKARA: An Afghan woman successfully gave birth to a healthy baby girl in the middle of an evacuation flight operated by Turkish Airlines. After leaving her stopover in Dubai, Soman Noori, 26, gave birth at an altitude of 10,000 meters (32,808 feet) in the Kuwaiti airspace at 4:00 am, said a statement by Turkey's national flag carrier on Saturday.

The baby girl was named "Havva" by the cabin crew, which assisted in the birth on the flight that evacuated Afghan citizens working in Afghanistan to the UK. After the pregnant passenger told the cabin crew about her labor pains, the crew asked whether there was a doctor on board.

As no doctor was available, "cabin crew facilitated the birth in line with their training," the statement said. After landing in Kuwait as a precaution, the aircraft continued its journey towards their destination Birmingham, United Kingdom, with the baby and her family.



ANKARA: A handout photo released by the Anadolu Agency yesterday shows the cabin crew posing with the baby.

Tobacco smuggling attempt foiled

KUWAIT: Kuwait Customs foiled an attempt to smuggle three tons of chewing tobacco into Kuwait yesterday. The banned substances were found in 29 cardboard boxes hidden in a shipment that arrived from the United Arab Emirates through air, the General Administration of Customs announced, noting that proper action was taken.

One year for forgery

The misdemeanors court sentenced a man to one year in jail after he was convicted of collecting KD 300,000 through swindling and identity theft. The suspect, Kuwaiti, was arrested following complaints submitted by a number of women, the last of whom said he took KD 52,000 from her before disappearing. The plaintiff explained that she met the suspect online, and the two became close after he claimed to be a VIP and promised her with marriage. The man claimed that he owns a real estate company and convinced her to invest through buying an apartment instead of keeping her money deposited in the bank. She said that as soon as he received the money, he drove off and disappeared, Al-Anbaa daily reported.

Unlicensed weapon

Police arrested a man with possession of an unlicensed firearm following a car chase. The suspect reportedly drove off when patrol officers ordered him to pull over as he was driving on the shoulder of the road in high speed. The man's vehicle eventually turned upside down when he swerved while still driving in high speed, but was not hurt in the accident as police placed him under arrest after finding the firearm in his car, Al-Anbaa daily reported yesterday.

Attempted suicide

A domestic helper was hospitalized after drinking bleach in an apparent suicide, according to police. The woman was brought to hospital in a bad condition by her sponsor who told police that he found her with an empty bottle of bleach nearby after he became alerted by the disinfectant's strong smell. Police are waiting for the maid to be discharged from the hospital to be questioned on suicide attempt charges, reported Al-Anbaa.

Sulaibiya mugging

Sulaibiya detectives are looking for two suspects who mugged a man in the area. The victim, bedoon (stateless), told police that while sitting in front of his house at dawn, he was surprised when two persons attacked him and then took KD 350 in cash from him. He also submitted a medical report stating that he was beaten, Al-Anbaa reported. Investigations are ongoing.



KUWAIT: A handout photo released by Kuwait's General Administration of Customs yesterday shows boxes containing chewing tobacco confiscated before they were smuggled into Kuwait.

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UK gov't slammed over Afghan exit as hundreds left behind

Tigray rebels accuse AU of bias amid talks



NEW ORLEANS, US: People stand in line to get through the TSA security checkpoint at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport Saturday as they were evacuating the area as Hurricane Ida worked its way toward the Louisiana coastline in New Orleans, Louisiana. —AFP

Hurricane Ida grows to Category 4 storm

Thousands evacuate as Ida stays on course to hit New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS: Hurricane Ida was upgraded to a Category 4 storm as it stayed on course to hit New Orleans with maximum sustained winds reaching 140 miles (225 kilometers) per hour, the US National Hurricane Center said yesterday. Ida was due to make landfall later yesterday, 16 years to the day Hurricane Katrina devastated the southern US city, flooding 80 percent of New Orleans, and leaving behind 1,800 casualties and billions of dollars in damage.

"Dangerous Category 4 Hurricane Ida strengthens some more," the NHC said in its latest advisory.

"Life-threatening storm surge, potentially catastrophic wind damage, and flooding rainfall will impact portions of the northern Gulf Coast beginning later this morning." Shops were boarded up and evacuations were underway Saturday in New Orleans, with officials warning residents to leave immediately or hunker down to ride out the storm.

Images on social media and US news channels showed scores of people gathered at the airport waiting to board flights and cars driving bumper-to-bumper on clogged roads leading out of the city. "Everybody is scared because it's the anniversary of Katrina and people didn't take it seriously at the time," said Austin Suriano, who was helping board up the

windows of his father's watch repair shop. Category 4 is the second-highest on the Saffir-Simpson scale, with winds of up to 156 miles per hour. President Joe Biden warned Saturday that "Ida is turning into a very, very dangerous storm" when it had strengthened to a Category 2 hurricane.

"Time is not on our side"

Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards said Ida would be one of the most powerful storms to hit the state since the 1850s. In New Orleans, Mayor LaToya Cantrell warned residents to take Ida with utmost seriousness. "Time is not on our side," she said. "It's rapidly growing, it's intensifying."

Southern Louisiana was bracing for massive damage and flooding as the fast-intensifying storm roared northward after pummeling western Cuba. "Extended power loss is almost certain," New Orleans homeland security director Collin Arnold told reporters Saturday. "I'm imploring you to take this storm seri-

ously." Biden said hundreds of emergency personnel had been sent to the region, along with food, water and electric generators.

Shelters were being prepared around the region but Louisiana is one of the states hit hardest by COVID-

19, and the president urged anyone heading to such facilities to wear a mask and take precautions. The National Weather Service forecast a "life-threatening storm surge"—as high as 12 feet near New Orleans and 16 feet around the mouth of the Mississippi River when the hurricane makes landfall.

It warned of "catastrophic wind damage" and said Ida could spawn tornadoes. Louisiana has declared a state of emergency in preparation for the storm. The declaration, approved by Biden, will expedite federal storm assistance to the southern state. The hurricane made landfall late Friday in western Cuba as a Category 1 storm, packing winds near 80 miles per

hour but causing mostly minor damage.

Scientists have warned of a rise in cyclone activity as the ocean surface warms due to climate change, posing an increasing threat to the world's coastal communities.

'Very painful'

The dire warnings about Ida inevitably sparked memories of Katrina. Governor Edwards said in a briefing. "It's very painful to think about another powerful storm like Hurricane Ida, making landfall on that anniversary," he said. One big difference, he said, was the huge investment since then in an extensive storm protection system of levees, gates and pumps.

Still, Eric Suriano from the watch repair shop said he remembers Katrina vividly: "It was the nightmare of my life." Meanwhile, a Category 1 hurricane named Nora made landfall on Mexico's Pacific coast, the NHC said.

Nora's center "remains near the coast of Mexico after making landfall in the northwest Jalisco" province, it added. Last week, a rare tropical storm struck the US northeastern seaboard, knocking out power, uprooting trees and bringing record rainfall. —AFP

Zionists strike Gaza after fire balloons and border clashes

GAZA CITY: The Zionist air force attacked two sites in Gaza yesterday, the army said, after Gazans clashed with forces on the border and launched incendiary balloons into southern Zionist region.

The latest escalation came as Zionist entity and Egypt continued to relax restrictions on commerce and travel imposed on the Gaza Strip, largely cut off by both countries since the Islamist movement Hamas seized the Palestinian enclave in 2007. Zionist "fighter jets struck a Hamas military compound used for manufacturing weapons and training as well as an entrance to a tunnel adjacent to Jabalia," the Zionist army said.

"The strikes were in response to Hamas launching incendiary balloons into Jewish territory and the violent riots that took place yesterday," it said in a statement. The army said both incidents were "examples of how Hamas continues to employ terror tactics and target civilians."

There were no reports from the Gaza Strip of any casualties caused by the Zionist strikes. Speaking in Washington, where he had met with US President Joe Biden, Zionist Prime Minister Naftali Bennett

said he held Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas responsible for any unrest from the Palestinian enclave. "As I have already said, our actions in Gaza will serve our interests," he told reporters before boarding a plane back to the Zionist region.

"As far as I'm concerned, the address (of those responsible) has been and remains Hamas."

On Saturday evening, two wildfires broke out in the Eshkol region near the Palestinian enclave, Zionist firefighters said. Protests erupted later in the day, with the Zionist army firing tear gas and stun grenades as Palestinians burned tires on the border between Gaza and Zionist state, an AFP reporter said. The health ministry in Gaza said 11 Palestinians had been hurt in the clashes, three of them by live fire. Hours earlier, Gazans laid to rest Omar Hassan Abu Al-Nile, 12, who died of his wounds a week after being shot by Zionist forces during border clashes.

In 2018, Gazans began a protest movement demanding an end to Zionist's blockade and the right for Palestinians to return to lands they fled or were expelled from when the Jewish state was founded in 1948. The often-violent weekly demonstrations backed by Hamas sputtered as Zionists killed some 350 Palestinians in the territory over more than a year. Hamas and Zionists then fought a devastating 11-day conflict in May, the worst between the two sides in years, which ended with an informal truce.

Incendiary balloons from Gaza have continued in the following months, with Zionists blaming

to the Brennan Center for Justice, a nonprofit public policy institute.

Those laws range from a requirement to have a fixed address in order to register to vote to a ban on the drive-through voting that was popular in some states last year amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Carrying signs that read "Voting rights for all" and "Your vote matters," the protesters marched in Washington's humid heat from the White House to the Capitol, the seat of the US Congress. About 20,000 people were in attendance, according to organizers.

"I just feel like we just kind of went backwards," said Rikkea Harris, 25, an African American university student who had traveled from Colorado. Her father, Rickey Harris, 65, said that protesting was key to "trying to knock down all these voting suppression laws that they're putting in across the country."

In 1965 the US Congress adopted the Voting Rights Act, meant to ban discriminatory election measures. But some states, mainly in the south, have passed often technical changes that make it harder for African Americans—who tend to be Democrat voters—to cast a ballot. That process accelerated sharply as Donald Trump pushed false claims that massive fraud had cost him victory in the November 2020 presidential election.

Residents warned to leave immediately



BEIT HANUN, Palestinian Territories: A Palestinian woman inspects the damage at her house following Zionist bombing in Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday. —CAFP

Hamas. Zionists have at the same time been easing restrictions on civilian life and commerce for the territory it has blockaded since 2007, when Hamas took power. On Sunday, Egypt reopened the Rafah crossing with the Gaza Strip to allow Palestinians to exit, after having partially reopened on Thursday for travel into Gaza. Rafah, Gaza's only gateway to the outside world not controlled by Zionists, was shuttered on Monday by Egypt. Egypt gave no reason for the move, but Palestinian sources in Gaza said it was over the rise in border violence with Zionist forces. —AFP



WASHINGTON: Philonise Floyd, the brother of George Floyd, delivers remarks during the "March On for Washington and Voting Rights" on the National Mall Saturday. —AFP

The organizers of Saturday's protests denounced the legislation as "racist, anti-democratic voter suppression laws," and demanded that the US Congress pass legislation to block such voting restrictions. The Democratic-controlled House of Representatives has passed two draft laws to limit the restrictions, but they are unlikely to pass the closely divided Senate. —AFP

Erdogan cool to Taliban securing Kabul airport

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan poured cold water yesterday over a plan in which Turkey operates Kabul airport and the Taliban provides security, adding Ankara would be in a tough position if another attack occurs. Turkey had long planned to help secure and run the Afghan capital's airport, but appeared to drop the idea when it started Wednesday to withdraw its approximately 500 non-combat troops from Afghanistan.

Erdogan on Friday said Turkey had held its first talks with the Taliban in Kabul, adding that Ankara was still assessing the Islamist group's offer for Turkey to run the airport's logistics.

"What does the Taliban say with regard to the airport issue? They say 'give us the security but you operate it,'" Erdogan said in comments published by the official Anadolu news agency and other media outlets. "How come we hand you over the security?" Erdogan added.

"Let's say you took over the security but how would we explain to the world if another bloodbath takes place there? It's not an easy job."

More than 100 people died in the suicide attack on Thursday outside Kabul airport, including 13 US service personnel, slowing down the airlift ahead of US President Joe Biden's deadline for evacuations to end by Tuesday. Fresh terror attack warnings have rattled evacuation efforts overseen by US forces and Biden has warned another attack on the frantic airlift was "highly likely."

Turkey has completed its evacuation operation while moving its embassy from the airport back to its original compound, Erdogan said. "We are planning right now to maintain our diplomatic presence," he said but added plans were constantly being updated depending on the security situation. "We keep ready all our necessary alternative plans. Our priority is the safety of our personnel." —AFP

Thousands protest curbs on minority voting rights in US

WASHINGTON: Tens of thousands of people took to the streets in Washington, Houston, Atlanta and other US cities to protest against laws in several Republican-led states that critics say will make it harder for minorities to vote. The date selected for the rallies was not picked at random: It was on August 28, 1963 that a quarter-million people descended on Washington for a massive civil rights rally highlighted by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I have a dream" speech.

Addressing a much smaller crowd on Saturday, his son Martin Luther King III spoke of the need to safeguard American democracy and to guarantee voting rights for everyone. "You are the dream, and this is our moment to make it true," he said. Since January, at least 18 states have adopted a total of 30 restrictive election laws, with dozens of others under consideration, according

International

UK govt slammed over Afghan exit as hundreds left behind

Johnson hails mission as 'unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes'

LONDON: The UK government yesterday faced a torrent of criticism after its hurried withdrawal from Afghanistan ended, leaving hundreds eligible for relocation behind. Prime Minister Boris Johnson hailed a mission "unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes" after the UK airlifted over 15,000 people in the last two weeks.

But current and former officials slammed government failings, suggesting many more Afghans could have been rescued. The Observer leftwing broadsheet cited a whistleblower as saying thousands of emails from MPs and charities to the foreign ministry highlighting specific Afghans at risk from the Taliban takeover went unopened. Foreign Minister Dominic Raab has already been strongly criticized for not immediately ending a beach holiday when the Taliban took control. The Observer said it saw evidence that an official email account set up by the Foreign Office to receive such pleas regularly had 5,000 unopened emails last week.

It said these included messages from ministers' offices and the leader of the opposition Labour party, Keir Starmer. "They cannot possibly know (how many people have been left behind) because they haven't even read the emails," the whistleblower was quoted as saying.

The Foreign Office responded that its crisis team worked 24/7 "to triage incoming emails and calls". Officials have given varying estimates of how

many eligible Afghans did not board evacuation flights, the last of which left Saturday, with the head of the UK armed forces General Sir Nick Carter putting this "in the high hundreds". The Sunday Times right-wing broadsheet quoted an unnamed minister as saying: "I suspect we could have taken out 800 to 1,000 more people".

The same minister slammed Raab, claiming he "did nothing" to build ties with third countries from which Afghans might enter the UK. The Foreign



Britain has
airlifted
over 15,000

Office acknowledged that Raab had delegated calls to his Afghan counterpart while saying he recently called his Pakistani counterpart.

Richard Dannatt, a former head of the British army, told Times Radio on Sunday that he was calling for an inquiry into why the evacuation "happened in such a haphazard and chaotic fashion".



BRIZE NORTON, UK: Members of the British armed forces 16 Air Assault Brigade walk to the air terminal after disembarking a Royal Air Force Voyager at RAF Brize Norton, west of London yesterday. —AFP

Raab himself wrote in The Sunday Telegraph that the Afghan situation was a "bitter pill to swallow".

To deal with the Taliban regime, the UK must

build a wider international coalition of regional powers and other United Nations Security Council members, including countries "with whom we have a difficult relationship", he wrote. —AFP

News in brief

Trudeau rival gaining ahead of vote

TORONTO: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party appears to be ceding popularity to its Conservative rivals, according to polls published Saturday, with early elections only weeks away. The Conservatives of Erin O'Toole, the main opposition party, took a slim lead as support for the Liberals has eroded in recent days, according to a tracking survey by Nanos Research conducted for the CTV network and the daily Globe and Mail. The poll shows Conservatives favored by 33.3 percent of eligible voters, to 30.8 percent for Trudeau's Liberals, a difference just within the poll's margin of error but reflecting a steady swing away from the Liberals in recent days. In mid-August, when Trudeau announced plans to hold an early election on September 20 — less than two years after the last federal ballot-his Liberals held a small lead. —AFP

160,000 join protests in France

PARIS: A total of 160,000 people protested across France on Saturday, the interior ministry said, angered at the country's COVID health pass system which they say unfairly restricts the unvaccinated. By early evening the authorities had logged 222 separate protest actions, including 14,500 people who turned out in Paris. Sixteen people were arrested and three police officers slightly injured in what was the seventh consecutive weekend of COVID protests. "The vaccine isn't the solution," said retiree Helene Vierondeels, who attended a right-wing protest in Paris. —AFP

Senegal navy searches for migrants

DAKAR: The Senegalese navy was carrying out a search and rescue mission on Saturday after a boat carrying about 60 migrants capsized earlier in the week, according to a military statement and a local official. The boat flipped over about 15 kilometers (nine miles) off the northern city of Saint-Louis, said the official, who asked not to be identified. The accident happened on Wednesday night, the navy statement said. Those on board were trying to reach Spain, naval spokesman Ameth Sow told local TV. —AFP

Hurricane Nora lashes Mexico

GUADALAJARA, Mexico: Hurricane Nora made landfall Saturday near Mexico's Pacific coastline but no casualties have been reported so far, the US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said. The Category 1 storm made landfall near Tomatlan in Mexico's Jalisco state and will continue north towards the states of Nayarit and Sinaloa, the National Meteorological Service (SMN) reported. As it passed through Jalisco on Saturday night, the hurricane brought heavy rain that "will likely result in life-threatening flash flooding and mudslides" across Mexico's west coast over the weekend, the NHC said. —AFP

4 Indians charged with rape, murder

NEW DELHI: A priest and three other men have been charged with the gang rape and murder of a low-caste nine-year-old girl, Indian police said, in a case that sparked days of protests in New Delhi. The girl was allegedly assaulted by the priest, 53, and three workers on August 1 after she had gone to a crematorium to fetch water. The four men, who have been in custody since they were detained in early August, face the death penalty. —AFP

Tigray rebels accuse AU of bias amid talks

ADDIS ABABA: Rebel forces from Ethiopia's war-torn region of Tigray yesterday accused the African Union (AU) of bias, days after the bloc appointed former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo as a mediator in the months-long conflict.

The spokesman for the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Getachew Reda, accused the AU of "partiality" towards the Ethiopian government and said it would be "naïve to expect this mission to work". Northern Ethiopia has been wracked by violence since November, when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sent troops into Tigray to topple the TPLF, the regional ruling party, saying the move came in response to attacks on army camps.

The 2019 Nobel Peace Prize winner promised a swift victory, but the war has instead dragged on for months, triggering a humanitarian crisis in Tigray, while the rebels have pushed

into the neighboring Afar and Amhara regions. Abiy rejected early appeals from high-level envoys from the AU for talks with Tigrayan leaders, sticking to his line that the conflict is a limited "law and order" operation.

On Thursday, the bloc announced Obasanjo's appointment as a high representative for the Horn of Africa, saying it was part of a "drive to promote peace, security, stability & political dialogue".

But yesterday, TPLF spokesman Getachew dismissed the initiative, saying: "We are hard pressed to know... how people would reasonably expect a constructive role from an institution that has given partiality a very bad name". "Solving a crisis at the very least requires acknowledging the existence, let alone the magnitude of the problem," he wrote on Twitter.

Famine-like conditions

The war has proved to be a sensitive subject for the AU, which is headquartered in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. Although Washington has been openly critical of Abiy's handling of the war, African members of the UN Security Council have backed Ethiopia in opposing formal discussion

Candidates seeking Merkel's crown in first major TV debate

BERLIN: The three candidates seeking Chancellor Angela Merkel's job face their first major prime-time TV debate yesterday, with her party's choice to succeed her desperately seeking to reverse a losing trend less than a month before elections. The candidate of Merkel's CDU-CSU alliance, Armin Laschet, had gone into the election race with a comfortable lead over his rivals from the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Greens.

But several missteps in the last weeks have left his popularity in the doldrums and support for his party slipping just as Merkel is due to bow out of politics after 16 years as German leader.

Instead, Finance Minister Olaf Scholz, who was largely written off by many in the beginning given lackluster support for his SPD, has now sprung forward in the race. He has even overtaken the leader of the Greens, Annalena Baerbock, as she stumbled too from a series of scandals including plagiarism claims. A poll published by Bild am Sonntag newspaper just hours before the TV battle showed support for Scholz's SPD climbing to 24 percent.

The CDU-CSU alliance meanwhile sank to its all-time worst score at 21 percent. The Greens were at 17 percent.

The survey appears to confirm recent trends that support for the SPD was surging and that for the conservatives waning, in the crucial last lap of the election race. Merkel's conservatives were now "in total panic," said Bild. The picture was worse when it came to Germans want as chancellor, with polls over the last weeks showing Scholz with a big lead over Laschet and Baerbock.

The apparent splintered political landscape heralds complicated talks ahead to form a government, as mathematically, three parties would be needed for a stable coalition. For the first time in over a decade, stable Germany was staring at a potentially turbulent political future.

Hopes pinned on debate

Laschet, currently state premier of North Rhine-Westphalia, saw the tide turn against him during the deadly floods that struck western Germany in mid-July. Caught on camera chuckling

South Sudan leaders agree deal to pave way for united army

JUBA: South Sudan's President Salva Kiir has struck a deal with former foe Riek Machar that will pave the way for their rival armed forces to merge, a cabinet minister said on Saturday, in a potential breakthrough for the lumbering peace process. The world's newest nation has struggled with chronic instability since independence in 2011, with Kiir and Vice President Machar locked in an uneasy coalition following the end of a five-year civil war.

Saturday's announcement holds out hope that the country's fragile peace process can shake off years of drift and bickering and result in the cre-

ation of a unified armed forces command, a key component of the 2018 truce agreement. However, in a sign of lingering distrust between the two sides and the potential for any deal to break down, a spokesman for Machar denied to AFP that an agreement had been reached. Martin Elia Lomuro, the minister of cabinet affairs, had earlier told a press conference that the pair had agreed on a power-sharing deal to split control of the leadership of the country's national security command.

"We have now come to the correct approach and it is agreed that we will now... share 60:40 percent," said Lomuro, with Kiir's party holding the majority share and the remainder to be divided between Machar and a handful of opposition parties. The deal will help "to create one unified security sector that will be dedicated to the people of South Sudan rather than to a political party or political group", he said.

But Puok Both Baluang, Machar's spokesman, told AFP the news was "not true", adding that the

two parties had earlier discussed a 50:50 breakup. The leadership of the national security command refers to the commander-in-chief of the country's national forces as well as the heads of army and police units. If confirmed, the long-overdue agreement will open the door for Kiir and Machar's rival troops to merge into one army—a critical safeguard against future conflict that can also help bring stability to lawless areas of the country.

The 2018 ceasefire and power-sharing deal ended a conflict that has cost almost 400,000 lives, but doubts persisted, with many of Machar's top cadres complaining they had lost out under the arrangement with the ruling party. Earlier, this month foes in Machar's party said they had ousted him as leader—a move his allies dismissed as a "failed coup", but which raised fears for the already fragile peace process. Machar said the squabbles were aimed at derailing the formation of a unified armed forces command. —AFP



BONGA, Ethiopia: People walk in front of a photo depicting Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed at the entrance of Bonga University, in the town of Bonga, 100 km southwest of the city of Jimma, Ethiopia. —AFP

of the situation in Tigray at the world body. According to the members, whose stance is backed by Russia and China, the conflict is Ethiopia's internal affair and any international efforts should go through African leaders or via the AU.

As the conflict has deepened, the humanitarian toll has spiked, with aid workers struggling to reach cut-off populations and 400,000 people facing famine-like conditions in Tigray,

according to the UN.

Obasanjo previously headed the AU's election observer mission during Ethiopia's polls last June, where Abiy won a landslide victory. But a fifth of the country's constituencies, including in Tigray, were unable to vote due to ethnic violence and logistical problems. There was no immediate response from the AU to the TPLF's allegations, and calls to the bloc's representatives were not answered. —AFP



BERLIN: Election campaign billboards for (from left) the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Left Party (Die Linke) and the Greens Party (Die Gruenen) featuring co-leader of Germany's The Greens party and Chancellor candidate for the 2021 federal election Annalena Baerbock, line a boulevard in Berlin. —AFP

behind in the background with local officials while Germany's president gave a speech mourning victims of deadly floods, Laschet has since been unable to halt a falling trend in popularity.

Underlining the seriousness of the situation for Merkel's conservatives, which have led four consecutive coalitions, Sueddeutsche said the CDU-CSU "will have to fight at the moment to be even in a position to be in negotiations for the next government". "At

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Business

MONDAY, AUGUST 30, 2021

Key developments in the balance of payments of Kuwait for the year 2020

Services account recorded a decline in the deficit

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) published yesterday the preliminary data of the State of Kuwait's Balance of Payments (BoP) for 2020, and the revised data of 2019. The external transactions of the Kuwaiti economy showed its ability to overcome the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the preliminary data of the Balance of Payments revealed a surplus during 2020 of KD 6,857.8 million in the current account (that sums up receipts and payments on transactions between the domestic economy and other economies in terms of goods, services and income) against a surplus of KD 10,125.0 million during the previous year, i.e. a drop by KD 3,267.2 million or 32.3%. This downturn is mainly attributable to the decline in the total value of receipts on the credit side of the current account by KD 8,047.6 million or 23.6% compared with the previous year, and the decrease in the total value of payments on the debit side of the current account by KD 4,780.4 million or 19.9% compared with

the previous year. Furthermore, preliminary data indicated a drop in the surplus of the Balance on Goods by KD 5,981.3 million or 55.8% to reach KD 4,736.0 million during 2020, against KD 10,717.2 million during the previous year. This fall is driven



BoP records a surplus

mainly by the decline in the crude oil exports as a result of lower demand amid slow global growth, and the pandemic-induced plunge in oil prices.

The Services Account (net value of services transactions between residents and non-residents that include trans-

portation, travel, communications, construction, other services as well as government Services and Goods) recorded a decline in the deficit by KD 2,261.5 million or 41.9% to reach KD 3,139.5 million during 2020, compared with a deficit of KD 5,401.1 million during the previous year. This decline was mainly attributed to the drop in Travel Item due to the pandemic.

Preliminary data of the Financial Account (recording transfers of financial assets and liabilities between residents and non-residents) indicate net capital outflows (growth in residents' net investments abroad) of KD 6,472.1 million during 2020, against net capital outflows of KD 9,435.5 million during the previous year.

As a result, the overall position of Kuwait's BoP recorded a surplus of KD 2,552.6 million during 2020 against a surplus of KD 815.4 million during the previous year.

From a broader perspective, and taking into consideration the change in the

Summary of the Balance of Payments of the State of Kuwait (KD Million)

Item	2019*	2020**
Current Account, of which:	10,125.0	6,857.8
- Balance on Goods	(10,717.2)	(4,736.0)
Capital Account	93.0	909.6
Financial Account	-9,435.5	-6,472.1
Overall Balance	815.4	2,552.6

Source: Central Bank of Kuwait.

* Revised data.

** Provisional data.

Negative numbers of Capital Account data indicate net capital outflows, while positive numbers indicate the opposite.

Negative numbers of Financial Account data indicate capital outflows i.e. an increase in external assets or a decrease in foreign liabilities. Positive numbers indicate the opposite.

net value of external assets of some institutions listed under "General Government" and changes in CBK's reserve assets, the BoP's overall position,

in a broad definition, indicates a surplus of KD 3,325.5 million during 2020 against a surplus of KD 3,791.6 million during the previous year.

Libyans yearn for end to daily blackouts

TRIPOLI: Walk down any commercial street in the Libyan capital Tripoli and the pavements will be lined with generators ready to spring into action whenever the mains electricity supply cuts out. In the decade since the NATO-backed overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi, repeated outbreaks of fighting have caused heavy damage to the power distribution network, while there has been virtually no new investment in generating capacity.

On most days, Tripoli residents can expect multiple cuts to the mains supply totaling 12 hours a day. The hum of generators and the acrid fumes and smoke of diesel fuel have become one of the most hated aspects of daily life in the once-affluent city.

"We've put up with this mess for the past 10 years... It has a big impact on our daily lives," said 23-year-old pharmacist Sufian Zerkani. "It's a basic right the state should guarantee."

Keeping the generators fuelled up has become a daily chore for many. At service stations, pedestrians equipped with funnels and jerrycans for the generators queue alongside motorists. The destruction and decay has come as a shock in a country that boasts Africa's largest reserves of oil and gas, and a population of just seven million.

'Nothing's changed'

The most recent round of fighting ended with a UN-backed ceasefire last year. That paved the way for peace talks and the formation of a transitional government this March, ahead of elections set for December. The new peace process has raised hopes that there might be light at the end of the tunnel after a decade of rival governments fighting with the support of shifting alliances of local militias.

But for many, the promise of a return to peace and normality is not coming quickly enough. "Nothing's changed—the promises made by one government after another have never been kept," said 25-year-old student Nader al-Naas.



TRIPOLI: Children study by the light of candlesticks at night in a flat in Libya's capital Tripoli. —AFP

In the hottest months, temperatures in Tripoli regularly touch 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit). "It's a disastrous situation, especially in the summer," Naas said.

It is worse for those without the means to buy a generator, who sleep outside on rooftops to escape the stifling heat at night. Basic generators sell for around \$470, but more reliable models cost thousands. Last year's ceasefire came after forces in Tripoli saw off a year-long offensive by a rival administration based in the east.

For a time, the east and its main city Benghazi enjoyed more reliable mains supply than Tripoli and the west. But as the conflict intensified, it too was forced to adapt to the daily grind of power cuts.

"When there's no power, we stop work," said Benghazi mechanic Ali Wami.

"It's been a week since I was able to carry out any repairs to that vehicle," he said, pointing to a heavily damaged car. Nearby, grocery shop manager Osama Al-Dalah said the blackouts were bad for profits and bad for staff. "All these power cuts wear us down, dampen our spirits and lose us money," he said. "We need a radical solution." But while the country basks in a plentiful supply of sunshine, few Libyans are yet to set up solar panels as an alternative source of energy.

what is being said". He added that not all industries or regions were suffering equally, and that even within some COVID-hit sectors, there were businesses that were thriving.

"We are ready to help the sectors that really need it," Dussopt told Radio J ahead of a meeting with leaders from industries still suffering from the pandemic, including tourism, small businesses and culture. He said that any aid "will be a necessarily transitional, very sector-focused approach". As an example, Dussopt cited the restaurant trade: "In some regions, the number of visitors is the same as before, it is even higher than in July and August 2020, which were months that were not affected."

Companies must also take responsibility

Decade of decay

In a recent report, the Libyan Audit Bureau took the state-run General Electricity Company of Libya (GECOL) to task for unfinished projects and investments that "brought nothing to the network". A GECOL official told AFP the problem was the infrastructure, which has been "decaying for 10 years and requires extensive maintenance." During the abortive 2019-20 assault on Tripoli by Haftar's forces, hundreds of high-tension lines serving the capital and its suburbs were destroyed.

Foreign firms pulled out fearful for the safety of their employees, delaying the construction of new generating capacity. Thieves pulled out the distribution cables to scavenge copper wire.

Generating capacity from oil and gas power stations of between 5,000 and 5,500 megawatts falls well short of the demand of 7,000 MW in winter and 8,000 MW in summer, the GECOL official said.

Two new power stations are under construction by a German-Turkish consortium in Tripoli and in Libya's third city Misrata. They are expected to add 1,300 MW of capacity to the grid in the first quarter of next year. A third new power station, in Tobruk in the far east of Libya, is scheduled to follow. —AFP

for their own operations and for finding solutions to their problems, he said. Instead of simply complaining about the difficulty they face hiring, he said, employers "have an interest in making the careers they offer more attractive" — by increasing salaries, for example.

The state had made great efforts, he said. Moreover, economic growth is forecast at six percent this year, with the government hoping for four percent in 2022. The minister said the government's deficit peaked at 9.2 percent in 2020 and would come in "below nine percent" for 2021.

That was "despite the cost of the crisis, despite the cost of the recovery plan", he said, adding "we can aim for a target of around five percent" in 2022, depending on actual growth. —AFP

Mosul struggles to rebuild without funds

MOSUL: Iraqi shopkeeper Ahmad Riad is busy again serving customers at a Mosul market four years after the city was destroyed in battles against jihadists, but he still awaits war reparations. "Life has gradually resumed," said Riad, who runs a shop selling rice, pasta and tins of tomato paste in the Corniche market, along the banks of the Tigris river.

"But we have not received any compensation from the government."

Mosul, the country's second city in Nineveh province, was the last major Iraqi bastion of the Islamic State group's failed "caliphate" between 2014 and 2017.

The city was retaken by the Iraqi army and a US-led coalition after intense bombardment and fighting that left it in ruins. The market was "devastated" in the battles, Riad said, with shopkeepers using their limited savings to rebuild.

"We are the ones who paid," he said. Of the 400 stalls that once crammed the market, just a tenth have returned to business, he added.



MOSUL, Iraq: A shopkeeper sits at wholesale foodstuffs store at the Cornish shopping street in Iraq's second city of Mosul, in the northern Nineveh province. —AFP

According to official sources, the cost of reconstruction for Nineveh would top \$100 billion, a staggering sum for a country mired in an economic crisis.

It outstrips the total annual budget of oil-rich Iraq, which stands at nearly \$90 billion in 2021. Many buildings are still in ruins, their facades dotted with bullet holes and piles of rubble lie strewn all around.

100,000 claims, 2,600 paid

When Pope Francis visited Mosul last March, he held a mass with the partially collapsed walls of the centuries-old church behind him. On Sunday, French President Emmanuel Macron is expected to visit Mosul, a day after attending a regional summit in the Iraqi capital Baghdad, some 355 kilometres (220 miles) to the south.

Mosul, capital of Nineveh province, is a melting pot of diverse ethnic communities and was once one of the key cities on the Middle East trade route,

lying close to both Turkey and Syria. Ammar Hussein runs a restaurant.

"The government should compensate the merchants who suffered damage so that they can rebuild their stores and the market can return to its former glory," he said. The list of claims is long.

Some 100,000 claims have been filed by those who suffered damage during "liberation operations", according to Mahmud al-Akka, director of Nineveh's compensation department.

Not even three percent have been paid: While more than 65,000 files have been examined, just 2,600 claimants have received cash, he said.

On top of that, the centralised nature of the Iraqi state — and the graft-riddled bureaucracy that governs it — means that disbursements are paid out extremely slowly. Mosul district chairman Zuhair al-Araji blames officials in Baghdad.

Promises as elections approach

Progress is patchy. While 80 percent of basic infrastructure such as sewers and roads have been restored, only around a third of health facilities have been rebuilt, according to Araji.

Mosul resident Saad Ghanem filed a claim for his destroyed home. "As far as I know, the compensation department in Nineveh finalised the transac-

tion and then submitted it to the government in Baghdad," he said. "They still have not compensated us."

Mosul, a Sunni Muslim city, did not take part in October 2019 popular protests decrying corruption and government misuse of power in Baghdad, as well as much of the country's Shiite south.

Residents said they feared the benefit of reconstruction could be wiped out by the unrest. With parliamentary elections in two months, the slow pace of reconstruction prompted Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi to visit earlier this month.

Kadhemi said he was "sorry" to see the problems, ordering a committee to draw up an "action plan". At his wooden furniture store, carpenter Ali Mahmoud said he is exhausted.

"I hope to rebuild my workshop, which was my livelihood, and return here," he said. "But I don't have enough money." —AFP

France fine-tunes business aid as COVID blank cheque ends

PARIS: France will turn off the fire-hose of aid to help businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic, instead directing funds where most needed, the government's accounts chief said yesterday. "It's the end of whatever it takes", Minister for Public Accounts Olivier Dussopt warned.

The government wants to "look at what is really being lost, rather than just

Business

Mitsubishi Power and its presence across Kuwait over the past 50 years

Q: Please take us back to when you started operating in Kuwait in 1970. You have a long-standing partnership with the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW), can you tell us more about this?

Ahmed Monir: Mitsubishi Power's expansion to Kuwait was synonymous with the establishment of the state in 1970. Since then, Mitsubishi Power has formed a long-standing alliance and partnership with the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) and Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) in the country.

We are grateful to MEW's distinguished leadership who have made it possible for us to have a successful and fruitful relationship with Kuwait for over 50 years. Our presence in the country is a testament to our profound commitment towards Kuwait and supporting our valued partners, as we work together to usher the country into the next phase of sustainable power generation.

At Mitsubishi Power, we are honored to participate in the development of the country's future energy needs and thankful to all those who have helped us achieve the success that we have today: our customers, partners, clients, and our people - whose dedication and commitment to excellence are key drivers of our competitiveness not only in Kuwait, but across the wider MENA region.

Q: Your company is also connected to the operation of Doha West Power Station and Sabiya Power Station. Can you tell us about this?

Ahmed Monir: To meet the fast-changing demands of today's power generation industry, Mitsubishi Power has provided cutting-edge technologies and services to upgrade major plant

rehabilitation and overhaul power plants in Kuwait.

Mitsubishi Power's technologies are installed in many major power plants, including the 2.4GW Doha West, 2.4GW Sabiya, the 2.5GW Az-Zour South 0.5GW Shuaiba South B, and others, bringing Mitsubishi Power's total installed capacity to 8 GW. The company engaged in commissioning the Doha West Power Station in 1980 and is continuing through to maintain the plant's life extension to this day. Mitsubishi Power constantly optimizes the performance of power-generating facilities such as the Az-Zour South Power Plant, which was first commissioned in 1986, and the Sabiya Power Plant which has paved the way to provide an impeccable and seamless operation in the country.



Ahmed Monir

In 2020, Mitsubishi Power was awarded a contract from Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) to rehabilitate and upgrade six boilers in unit 29 of Mina Al-Ahmadi refinery in Kuwait. The restoration includes improving the combustion system (implementing low-NOx burners), extending the lifetime (by upgrading pressure parts), enhancing auxiliary systems to enable a higher availability and operational flexibility of the unit.

Mitsubishi Power had been focusing on the rehabilitation and improvement of power units across the country. For Doha West Power Station, Mitsubishi Power rehabilitated eight steam turbines and generators throughout 2015 to 2019, and for

Sabiya Power Station, we have recently completed the required outage, major overhaul, and control system upgrades successfully - although COVID-19 restrictions and difficulties faced for dispatching our specialist from Japan we finally achieved our work as per schedule with MEW satisfaction.

Overall, Mitsubishi Power provides 43% of Kuwait's power supply totalling to 7,846.8 MW of installed capacity.

Q: What are your plans in the next 5 to 10 years in Kuwait and the MENA region in general?

Ahmed Monir: Mitsubishi Power today supplies a majority share in Kuwait's installed power capacity, as well as powering major installations in the O&G industry in Kuwait (Mina Al-Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah refineries), while also supplying major equipment for Kuwait's desalination stations. Mitsubishi Power aims to extend this success by furthering its collaboration with our local partners in the country and providing best-in-class technology enabling secure and optimum power for Kuwait's future power needs.

Looking to the future, Mitsubishi Power hopes to play a vital role in further shaping and diversifying Kuwait's energy landscape keeping pace with the regional and global energy transition. We will also seek to respond to the region's robust power demand by proposing highly advanced power systems, thereby contributing to further economic development while also easing environmental burdens.

We anticipate steady growth in the gas turbine market in the Middle East. Even with the expansion in renewable energy, we expect steady growth in demand for GTCC systems as a stable energy source. We will accommodate the needs of

customers, by providing gas turbines that allow for flexible operation in combination with renewable energy sources, such as handling peak loads, and help achieve network stability and energy-efficient power generation. Among them, so far, we have received orders of the F-series and JAC series gas turbines, the most advanced GTs in the world with the industry's highest efficiency approaching 65% and the reliability of 99.6%. With the expected rapid expansion in renewable energy, we are moving forward with proposals for large gas turbines with better ramp rate performance, as well as small and mid-sized gas turbines for distributed power supply.

Mitsubishi Power has also been developing and using hydrogen fuelled gas turbines for the power generation market since the 1970s. Collaborating with Japan's New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO), we developed hydrogen combustion technology for large-frame gas turbines, that will shape the future of power generation.

For large gas turbines like the J-series, Mitsubishi Power aims to achieve 100% hydrogen-firing capability by 2025, followed by commercialization thereafter. Our natural gas fired gas turbines can be upgraded to burn hydrogen fuel with minimal modification to convert existing power generation facilities. In addition, since hydrogen can be used in Mitsubishi Power' large-capacity gas turbines, application of these technologies can help stimulate large-scale hydrogen demand.

With its industry-leading power technology, Mitsubishi Power is well prepared to facilitate Kuwait's power infrastructure expansion, enabling significant advances in reducing CO2 emissions and transitioning towards a low carbon society.

solutions by stc launches cost-effective business continuity promotion

KUWAIT: solutions by stc, the specialized business arm of Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, launched its new promotion specially tailored to support small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) with dedicated data access (DDA) and dedicated internet access (DIA) at competitively low prices. The promotion, available till year end, comes as an additional step taken by solutions by stc to back and assist SMEs in streamlining their continuity plans during this critical time while reinforcing the Company's key role in the private sector.

The cost-effective solutions will enable SMEs to gain reliable dedicated connectivity through stc's state-of-the-art 5G service, unlocking more opportunities for growing business models, special those that deal with technology and online services. This will ultimately provide safer, more reliable, and dedicated connectivity options at competitive prices, allowing businesses to enhance their operations and meet their targets. SMEs taking advantage of this promotion can select from 4 types of internet speeds including 25, 50, 100, and 200 Mbps. Customers can also benefit from connecting locations with discounts on DIA with commitment plans up to 24 months.

solutions by stc simplified the installation process through a cost-efficient process that eliminates the hassle of installing fiber optic cables, yet still delivering reliable and steady speeds. The Company guarantees uninterrupted services for businesses imple-

menting their continuity plans, ensuring smooth DDA point to point transmission. Other services offered include setting up IP telephone systems, CCTV, ICT services and platform management solutions. To ensure seamless and effective use of these offerings, solutions by stc has dedicated a highly skilled support team that can assist in all aspects of installation and setup, while allowing enterprise customers to benefit the most out of the wide range of products.

Commenting on the promotion, solutions by stc stated that it initiated this promotion as part of its support strategy to assist SMEs in their path towards normalcy. This step comes in the form of equipping SMEs with the necessary tools to manage their digital and online services. In its pursuit to support the segment and the private sector, the bundled solutions under the Company will grant access to a wealth of tech-based features at the lowest and most competitive prices. solutions by stc will continue to leverage its strength and solid business model by blending innovation with connectivity to deliver an unrivaled interactive experience for its valued customers.

solutions by stc added that it strives to consistently explore and provide its loyal customers with alternative methods that can elevate their digital journey and enhance their business functions. Possessing a deep understanding of customer needs has aided the Company in offering solutions that enhance their operational efficiency, as well as the day-to-day activities for businesses of all sizes. As a business solutions provider, the Company offers a range of connectivity solutions, fixed or wireless services, 5G technology through stc, ICT, IoT and the IT products and services at competitive prices to meet the growing market demand within these areas.

London's City finance hub mulls post-COVID future

LONDON: London's once bustling City finance district is grinding back to life, but it bears the scars of the deadly pandemic, sparking fresh questions over the future of the so-called "Square Mile".

The COVID-19 health crisis erupted in April last year, sparking a nationwide lockdown that turned the global financial hub into a ghost town.

City workers were forced to work remotely and some have since adopted hybrid or flexible work that splits time between home and the office.

Britain fully exited lockdown last month, buoyed by speedy vaccination, but many workers appear in no hurry to return to the office amid fears over the Delta COVID variant.

'Reluctance to risk exposure'

"There remains an underlying reluctance of many to risk exposure to the virus, either in the workplace or on the journey to work," Remit Consulting's corporate real estate specialist Lorna Landells told AFP.

School holidays and the government's Covid policy have impacted the return to office life, but fully vaccinated Britons are no longer required to self-isolate after coming into contact with an infected person. Nevertheless, central London office occupancy is just 10.3 percent of its total capacity in the week ending August 20, according to data compiled by Remit. "When I'm looking out of my office window, the streets look fairly empty," said Nigel Wilson, the head of insurer Legal & General, in a recent interview with The Guardian newspaper.

"We are still very early days into (the reopening) and I do expect more people to be back in September."

'London will not go back'

In contrast, Howard Davies, chairman of NatWest bank and a former head of London's financial watchdog, believes that the City has changed forever. "The days when 2,500 people

walked in through our office door... at 8:30 am and walked out again at 6:00 pm, I think that is gone," he told Bloomberg.

"It will look quite a lot different during the day and central London will not go back to the footfall that we had before — people are concerned about the risks of travelling and they've discovered they can do things in a different way."

British finance minister Rishi Sunak, however, wants office workers to return, arguing it helps the careers of young people. Yet banking giants like Barclays and HSBC are betting on long-term hybrid work patterns, which has also cut their need for office space. Almost 80 percent of City workers plan to be back in the office from September, according to a recent survey by recruitment firm Michael Page.

Yet only 25 percent of workers expect to return to the full five-day working week.

'Important hub'

City authorities are putting a positive gloss on the outlook for the area, the financial clout of which already remains uncertain as a result of Brexit.

"Central office hubs still have a crucial role to play — whether it be for staff development, team morale, collaboration and creativity, networking opportunities, or much more," said Catherine McGuinness, policy chair of the City of London Corporation, in a statement to AFP.

"Many employees themselves are eager to return to the office for at least part of the week, and their return will deliver the footfall needed for the hospitality and retail sectors."

The Corporation runs the Square Mile, or historic financial district, which includes the Bank of England and St Paul's Cathedral.

King's College London economics professor Jonathan Portes said the City would retain its importance despite sliding commuter footfall.

"While working patterns will certainly change — and that may mean some changes to the feel of the City — I think London will remain an important hub of global finance," he told AFP. More than half a million people commuted to and worked in the City before the pandemic, breathing life into its coffee shops, pubs and restaurants. — AFP

Burgan Bank announces Yawmi account winners

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Sami Saad Alhuwaidi
2. Salem Daasan Aldaasan
3. Mohammad Abdulredha Alsaahhaf
4. Amnah Hameed Sulaiman
5. Ismaeil Salem Zayed

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD

125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers Daily and Quarterly Draws, wherein the Quarterly Draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

India's Airtel to raise \$2.86bn

NEW DELHI: India's telecom giant Bharti Airtel said yesterday it plans to raise 210 billion rupees (\$2.86 billion) by selling shares to existing shareholders ahead of the rollout of its 5G network.

"The board of directors... comprehensively reviewed the industry scenario, business environment, financial/business strategy of the company and approved the company's plan to raise further capital," the Telco said in a notice

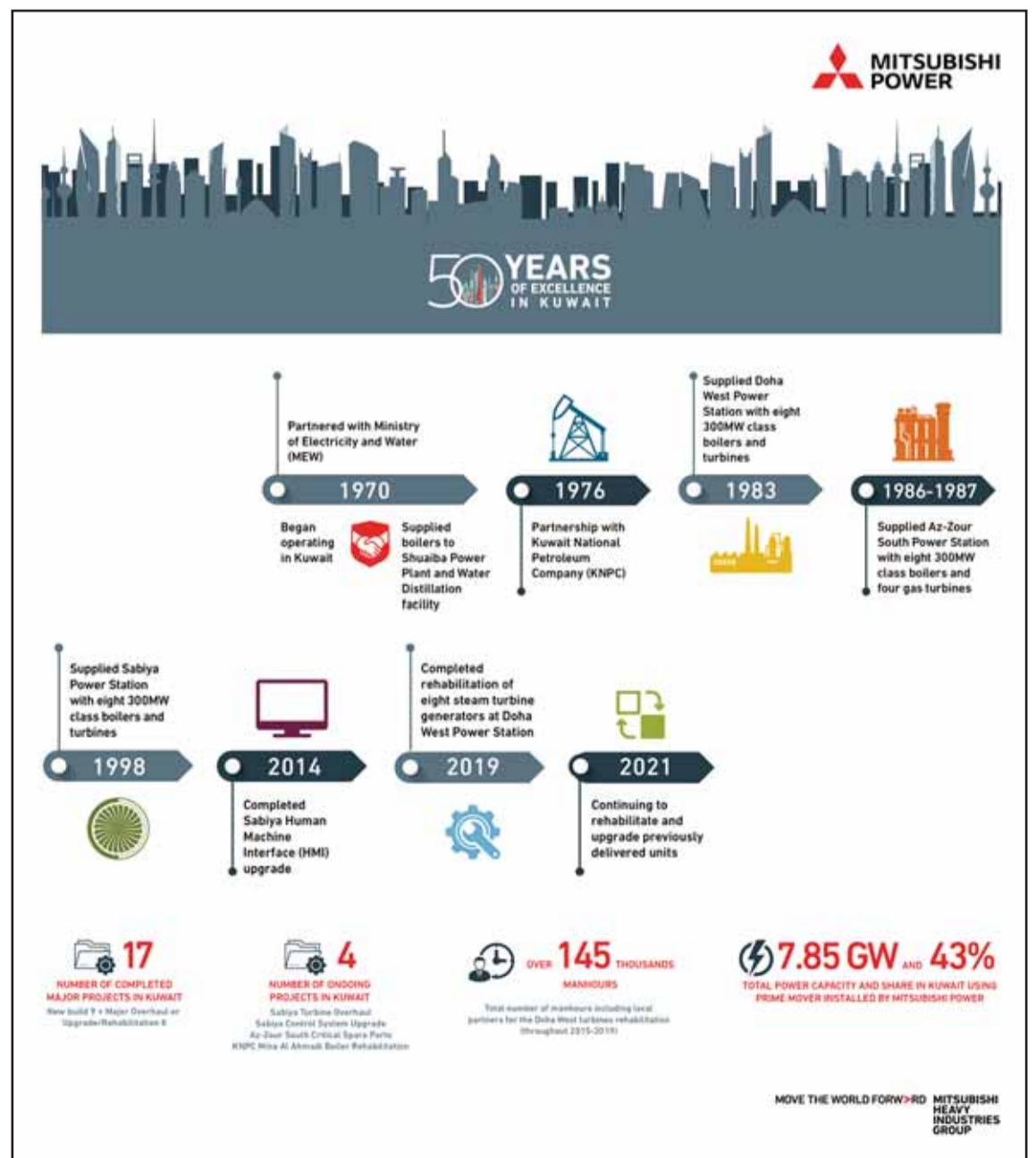
to the stock exchange.

The shares will be priced at 535 rupees each, Bharti Airtel said.

Sunil Mittal, the billionaire chairman of Bharti Airtel, and other founding members of the company would take part in the issue, the New Delhi-headquartered firm said.

"In addition, they will also subscribe to any unsubscribed shares in the issue," it added.

India's communications ministry in May authorised trials of the super-fast 5G wireless technology. The trials are being conducted by Airtel and other telecom service providers Reliance JioInfoComm, Vodafone Idea and MTNL. — AFP



Business

GCC profits soar over 200% led by energy, bank and material sectors

GCC corporate earnings report: Q2-2021

KUWAIT: The resumption of economic activity in the GCC to almost full scale was reflected in corporate profits booked during Q2-2021. Aggregate profits during the quarter breached pre-COVID levels to reach \$45.0bn during Q2-2021 vs \$14.2bn during Q2-2020. The sequential growth in net profit was also healthy at 17.6% as a majority of the sectors posted growth as compared to last year. Saudi Arabian companies reported the biggest absolute increase in earnings that rose by \$26.5bn or 356.6% y-o-y to reach \$33.9bn during Q2-2021. Quarterly net profit of Saudi Aramco was up 258.3% y-o-y to reach \$24.2bn mainly backed by higher oil and other commodity prices globally during the quarter. Companies in Kuwait also reported multi-fold increase in quarterly profits from a record low profit last year, whereas Abu Dhabi-listed companies posted a profit growth of 49%. Omani companies reported the smallest y-o-y increase in earnings during the quarter at 22.3% to reach \$0.52bn.

In terms of sector performance, the Energy sector once again led the y-o-y rise in earnings posting \$24.5bn or 267.4% y-o-y jump in earnings up from \$6.7bn in Q2-2020. Profits for the banking sector almost doubled y-o-y to \$8.2bn during Q2-2021. Companies in the Materials sector posted profits during Q2-2021 to the tune of \$4.3bn as compared to a net loss of \$0.78bn during Q2-2020.

On the other hand, sectors that were resilient during the pandemic witnessed a y-o-y decline in profits. Telecom was the one of the four sectors that posted a y-o-y decline with profits reaching \$1.64bn during Q2-2021, a decline of 11.6% y-o-y and 18.6% q-o-q. Insurance, Retailing and Food & Staples Retailing sectors also posted marginal y-o-y decline in profits during Q2-2021. Insurers in Saudi Arabia posted the biggest y-o-y decline in earnings during Q2-2021 with profits more than halved to \$118mn during the quarter as compared to \$253mn during Q2-2020.

Earnings reported by GCC-listed companies witnessed a faster-than-expected recovery during Q1-2021 backed by healthy growth seen in almost all sectors. The recovery was led by resumption in economic activity in the region despite controlled restrictions as COVID-19 cases remerged at the start of the year resulting in partial-lockdowns. Business sentiments have remained upbeat as a result of one of the fastest vaccine administration in the world achieved by the GCC countries. This was also reflected in the monthly PMI, which indicates trends in manufacturing activity, for Saudi Arabia and UAE. According to Markit, Saudi Arabia's PMI in January-2021 was at 57.1, the highest since November-19 and remained elevated above the 50 mark during February-2021 and March-2021. Similarly, the PMI for UAE also remained above 50

during the first three months of this year. A PMI of above 50 indicates growth in manufacturing activity.

Quarterly net profits reached \$40.0bn during Q1-2021, up 49.2% or \$13.2bn as compared to \$26.8bn reported in Q1-2020. Earnings during the quarter also surpassed Q1-2019 level by 4.4%. The q-o-q growth as compared to Q4-2020 was even stronger at 59.9%. Out of the 21 sectors on the exchange, 17 sectors reported y-o-y as well as q-o-q growth in profits during Q1-2021. Moreover, the top 5 sectors in the region reported a y-o-y profit growth of 42% with the bulk of the growth coming from the Materials sector.

On the other hand, the three sectors that reported y-o-y decline in profits included Consumer Services, Food & Staples Retailing and Software & Services. Companies in the Food & Staples Retailing and Software & Services sectors reported smaller profits due to a higher base in Q1-2020 that resulted in a decline in Q1-2021, whereas the decline in the Consumer Services sector was mainly led by losses reported by companies that continue to be affected by COVID-19 restrictions, including airlines and related industries.

In terms of sequential growth, excluding Bahraini companies, the growth in net profit was almost 80% or an absolute growth of \$10.9bn to reach \$25.1bn in Q3-2020. The biggest q-o-q growth was seen in the Energy sector with the profits up by \$4.9bn or 72.9% to reach \$11.5bn. The banking sector was next with a profit growth of 66.9% after banks reported higher topline coupled with a decline in provisions that supported earnings. The Materials sector reported profits of \$634.5mn during the quarter as compared to losses during Q2-2020. On the other hand, the Insurance and Real Estate sectors reported the biggest q-o-q decline in earnings at 36.8% and 22.4%, respectively.

Earnings performance when compared to last year was broadly negative with a decline of 34.5% in Q3-2020 with steep declines in some of the key large-cap sectors on the GCC exchanges. Saudi Arabian companies reported the biggest absolute decline in earnings that fell by \$10.2bn or 37.0% y-o-y to reach \$17.4bn during Q3-2020. Excluding the quarterly net profit of Saudi Aramco that declined by 44.5% y-o-y, aggregate profits for Saudi Arabia declined at a much smaller pace of 11.9% y-o-y. Companies in Dubai and Kuwait were next with declines of \$1.8bn and \$430.6mn, corresponding to y-o-y percentage declines of 59.2% and 30.4%, respectively. Companies listed in Abu Dhabi reported the smallest q-o-q decline in earnings at 2.9% to reach \$2.39bn.

The Energy sector reported the biggest absolute profits that reached \$24.5bn, up almost four fold y-o-y and 14.8% q-o-q. Profits for Saudi Aramco was

up 258.3% y-o-y during Q2-2021 at \$24.2bn, whereas the rest of the companies in the sector reported profits of \$292.5mn in Q2-2021 as compared to a loss of \$87.4mn in Q2-2020. Profits for Aramco was supported by higher crude oil prices led by recovery in oil demand globally. In terms of segments, results were supported by improved downstream margins and the consolidation of SABIC's results, partially offset by lower crude oil volumes sold and higher crude oil production royalties, according to the company.

The Banking sector also reported higher profits during Q2-2021 that reached \$8.2bn, almost double y-o-y and 1.9% q-o-q. The y-o-y growth in profits was seen across the region after record low profits reported last year. UAE-based banks reported the biggest increase in profits during the quarter, registering a growth of 22.3% after 9 out of 16 listed banks in the UAE reported an increase in net profits.

Profits for the Materials sector stood at \$4.26bn during Q2-2021 as compared to a loss of \$0.78bn in Q2-2020. The q-o-q growth was also impressive at 49.4%. The turnaround in SABIC's bottom-line from a loss of \$0.6bn in Q2-2020 to a profit of \$2.0bn was the biggest factor for the y-o-y growth in profits for the Materials sector. This was further supported by healthy profits reported by Maaden and Aluminium Bahrain during Q2-2021.

Net profits during IH-2021 more than doubled to \$83.2bn as compared to \$41.0bn during IH-2020. Profits were once again up across the board as compared to the peak of the pandemic period last year. Saudi Arabian companies posted a profit growth of 125% y-o-y during IH-2021 with Aramco posting a profit growth of 90.7%. Excluding Aramco, profit for Saudi-listed stocks increased more than four-fold to \$16.8bn during IH-2021. In terms of sector performance, profits for the Energy sector almost doubled while Banks posted an increase of 47.2% during IH-2021. Materials and Utilities companies also posted healthy profits during IH-2021 as compared to losses during IH-2020 for both the sectors.

The Telecom sector, which reported limited impact from the lockdowns reported a marginal y-o-y net profit decline of 0.8% with profits at \$2.2bn in Q1-2021, although q-o-q growth was strong at 34.4%. Out of 16 listed telcos in the GCC, 8 reported a y-o-y decline in profits that were partially offset by healthy growth in profits for Etisalat and Mobily.

In terms of 9M-2020 earnings performance, the aggregate for the GCC countries declined by 44.1% y-o-y to reach \$65.3bn as compared to \$116.8bn during 2019, a decline of \$51.5bn. Saudi Arabia once again reported the biggest absolute decline in earnings with a fall of \$39.9bn or 46.9% to reach

\$45.2bn. Dubai was next with a decline of \$4.5bn or 52.2% to reach \$4.1bn in aggregate 9M-2020 earnings. Kuwait and Abu Dhabi also witnessed steep absolute decline in earnings during the period, falling by \$3.2bn and \$1.9bn, respectively. The smallest percentage decline was reported by Oman at 16.2% or \$0.2bn to reach \$1.2bn in 9M-2020.

The y-o-y decline in quarterly earnings for the Energy sector came primarily on the back of subdued oil prices during the quarter that pushed down earnings across the board for the sector. Both crude oil and natural gas prices remained range bound during the quarter. Aramco's Q3-2020 earnings showed strong q-o-q recovery in Q3-2020 with a growth of \$5.0bn or 74.5% on the back of recovery in oil prices although average crude production in Q3-2020 was almost 0.5 mb/d lower in Saudi Arabia as compared to Q2-2020 production. However, in terms of y-o-y performance, Aramco's profits plunged by 44.5% or \$9.5bn, a trend seen in 15 out of the 21 energy companies that declared Q3-2020 earnings. In the Materials sector, SABIC reported profits for the first time in four quarters at \$290.2mn, a y-o-y growth of 30.5% led by higher sales volumes and improved margins.

Net profit for the GCC banking sector bottomed in Q2-2020 and witnessed a strong revival in Q3-2020 growing by 66.9% q-o-q to \$7.3bn, although it continues to remain well below pre-COVID levels with a decline of 26.9% vs. Q3-19. The q-o-q growth was mainly led by a fall in provisions during the quarter as well as savings on cost of fund. An increase in non-interest income also contributed to the growth in quarterly profits. Profits for Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti banks witnessed multifold q-o-q increase during Q3-2020, while the sector reported a decline in all the GCC countries in terms of y-o-y performance.

Aggregate net income for listed banks reached one of the lowest on record during Q2-2020 after declining by 32.9% y-o-y to reach \$6.1bn. The decline was broad-based with the banking sector in all of the six exchanges (excluding Bahrain) reported double-digit drop in net profits during Q2-2020 led by provisions charges related to COVID-19.

Telecom sector earnings declined by 8.2% y-o-y and 4.6% q-o-q during Q2-2020 to reach \$1.81bn. The decline came after 12 out of 15 listed telcos reported a y-o-y fall in earnings. The biggest absolute y-o-y decline in earnings was reported by UAE's Du with its net profits declining by \$67.7mn or 53.6% to reach \$58.6mn due to a lockdown-led decline in the telco's topline. Zain and STC were next with declines of \$46.4mn (-28%) and \$33.0mn (-4.3%). Etisalat and Ooredoo were the only regional operators that reported a y-o-y earnings growth of 7% and 2.6%, respectively, during Q2-2020.

Al-Tijari announces winners of Al Najma, Salary Account campaign

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait conducted the weekly draws on Al Najma Account and Salary Transfer Campaign yesterday. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Ahmed Al-Basman.

The results of the draws were as follows:

- 1- Al Najma weekly account - the prize of 5,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars went to the winner Mohamadhasib Mohamadshaq Shaikh.
- 2- Salary account campaign - the prize of up to 1,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars - went to the winner Ms Amani Bader Al-Harees.

The Bank stated that the salary campaign is aimed at customers who transfer their salaries of KD 500 or more to the Bank, especially Kuwaiti employees and residents working in the government, oil sectors and companies listed with the Bank as well as retirees, and take advantage of the benefits of this campaign and get an instant cash gift from KD 250 to KD 500 Kuwaiti Dinars or an interest-free loan for a period of up to 5 years and up to 25,000 Kuwaiti Dinars, Kuwaiti pensioner, along with expatriate customers who transfer their debt to the Bank will receive an instant cash gift of 1% from their transferred debt.

The Bank stated that Al Najma Account prizes are distinguished by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that the account offers weekly prize of KD 5,000, monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000.

Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 200, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

The Bank revealed that Al Najma account is available to everyone, and anyone can open Al Najma account through CBK mobile application in simple steps from anywhere and at any time.

Joyalukkas Exchange opens 14th branch in Fahaheel

KUWAIT: Joyalukkas Exchange, people's favourite exchange, opened a new branch earlier this week in Fahaheel, furthering the ease of money transfer and exchange in the country. It was inaugurated by His Excellency Sibi George, Ambassador of India to Kuwait in the presence of Fahad Ahmed Khan Suri, first Secretary, Embassy of India to Kuwait along with other embassy officials.

His Excellency Sibi George said, "I'm very happy to inaugurate this new branch of Joyalukkas Exchange. The fact that we can have more Indian business enterprises in the country shows that we are in the gradual process of recovery from the pandemic. Particularly the financial sector which is contributing towards building our relationship with this important country. It is truly a morale boost for the community. I wish Joyalukkas Exchange all the best."

Present on the scene were Joyalukkas Exchange Kuwait, General Manager, Ashraf Ali Jalaluddeen,

NBK - Bahrain reports net profit of BHD 60.24m

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait - Bahrain ("NBK - Bahrain") reported a net profit of BHD 60.24 million (KD 48.18 million) for IH 2021, compared to BHD 60.89 million (KD 49-79 million) for the same period in 2020. As of end of June 2021, NBK-Bahrain's total assets stabilized at BHD 7.13 billion, whereas total shareholders' equity rose by 32% to BHD 910.55 million, and customers' deposits recorded BHD 1.83 billion for the same period.

Commenting on the Bank's IH 2020 results, NBK Group CEO, Isam Al-Sager said: "NBK - Bahrain managed to post good profits for the 1st half of 2021, despite the continuing uncertainty witnessed since the beginning of the year, following the emergence of the corona virus variants, as well as the challenges and disruptions facing the operating environment due to the pandemic." "Year after year, NBK-Bahrain continues to strengthen its position in the Bahraini market, which is one of the key growth markets for NBK Group, considering its promising growth potentials and positive prospects," he added.

Al-Sager noted: "NBK Group has a unique edge represented in the broad geographical footprint and the ability to conduct business in both conventional banking and Islamic banking. This diversification



Assistant General Manager, Abdul Azeem Mattuvayil, and the Regional Manager of Joyalukkas Jewellery, Vinod Kumar. Moreover, all branch managers, the marketing team, and head office staff attended.

In the spirit of furthering entrepreneurship, business owners and professionals attended as well. Antony Jos, Managing Director of Joyalukkas Exchange, commented, "It's always an honour to

open a new Joyalukkas Exchange store. We hope to help more people with remittance, exchange, and many other financial services, especially those with loved ones back home. The situation is improving every day and opening this new branch is a testament to that. We also support Indian entrepreneurship in Kuwait and provide many solutions for business owners."

gives a significant degree of resilience to the Group's earnings and provides it with a strong competitive advantage." Al-Sager mentioned that the Group's strategic investments over the recent past years in the key growth driving areas, along with the performance of international operations was instrumental in supporting the Group's profitability and mitigating risk.

On his part, General Manager of NBK - Bahrain, Ali Fardan said: "NBK - Bahrain's results for the 1st half of 2021, despite the challenges facing the banking sector, is a proof of our resilient and well-diversified business model and our ability to quickly adapt to the challenges brought about by the pandemic."

Al-Fardan pointed out that during the first six months of the year, the operating environment in Bahrain showed further signs of recovery thanks to the relentless efforts of vaccine rollout campaigns, which would boost confidence in the business environment and give more momentum to the performance of economic activity.

Fardan affirmed that the bank will continue to support its customers to weather the headwinds of the pandemic, as part of its commitment to its national duties. We are making steady steps to strengthen our position in Bahrain by offering high-quality banking and financial services to our retail and corporate customers, and leveraging on our huge growth potentials in the Bahraini market, he added.

Fardan commended the efforts of the Central Bank of Bahrain, in particular, and government authorities, in general, which supported the performance of the bank and the banking sector in Bahrain at large. He



also stressed that the support provided by NBK Group to the bank in Bahrain, through its widespread regional and international branch network, has clearly contributed to promote the bank's activities in the Bahraini market, capitalizing on its high credit ratings, extensive relationship network, and leading reputation as the best bank in the Middle East and one of the Safest Banks all over the world.

NBK is the largest financial institution in Kuwait with effective market dominance in the commercial banking market and has been consistently awarded the highest credit rating of all banks in the region from Moody's, Standard & Poor's, and Fitch Ratings. NBK also stands out in terms of its local and international network, which includes branches, subsidiaries and representative offices in China, Geneva, London, Paris, New York, and Singapore alongside its regional presence in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Turkey, and the UAE.

Business

Twitch video gamers rise up against 'hate raids'

Hashtag has become a magnet for complaints over the past month

SAN FRANCISCO: Night after night, video game streamer RektRaven watches as their feed is inundated with abusive messages. Hate raided, yet again. In recent months the phenomenon of "hate raids" — barrages of racist, sexist and homophobic abuse — has been making life increasingly unpleasant for minority users of Twitch, the world's biggest video game streaming site.

Raven, a Black 31-year-old who identifies as gender non-binary, fought back tears while describing the mental toll of logging into a site designed for entertainment. "It just gets hard," said the parent-of-two, who declined to reveal their real name over fears for their security. "I'm being hated on for my skin color, or my sexual preferences, when I don't have control over that."

Twitch is more than a source of fun for Raven: It's their job. The Virginia-based horror games player holds affiliate status, under which prolific and widely followed streamers get paid. Sick of racial slurs and messages referring to the Ku Klux Klan, Raven started a Twitter hashtag, #TwitchDoBetter.

The hashtag has become a magnet for complaints over the past month, largely from female, non-white and LGBTQ players, that Twitch is failing

to stop internet trolls running amok — all while taking 50 percent of streamers' earnings.

Attack of the bots

Launched in 2011 and bought by Amazon three years later, Twitch counts more than 30 million visitors per day, most of whom tune in to watch other people play video games with entertaining commentary. But that doesn't mean it can't be used for serious purposes.

Swedish lecturer Gabriel Eriksson Sahlin logs in under the username BabblingGoat to play "The Sims" and "Dragon Age". The 24-year-old trans man gently answers questions in the live chat about gender identity — including from anxious parents whose children have recently come out — "while falling down ledges in games and trying not to die", he said, laughing.

He is frustrated that his efforts to create something positive are being disrupted, with alarming regularity, by transphobic abuse. The hate raids vary in scale: They can involve a handful of people posting hateful messages, or hundreds.

People also program bots to post endless offensive spam, sometimes in the form of "gore raids" —

volleys of ultra-violent images.

Inventive trolls

Under increasing pressure, Twitch this month announced that new measures to prevent hate raids, including "account verification improvements", would be introduced later this year. In the meantime, players say there has been no let-up in the abuse.

"The hate raids have not slowed down whatsoever. They only seem to be getting worse," said Chonki, a Jewish-Chinese New Yorker whose stream was inundated with anti-Semitic messages and images of swastikas. Players have various tools at their disposal to try to filter abuse and block bullies. But hate raid victims say the trolls use "leet" hacker slang — deliberately misspelling words — to carry on using banned terms, or they embed abusive words in images to avoid detection.

Amusement, boredom, revenge

Mark Griffiths, director of the International Gaming Unit at Britain's Nottingham Trent University, said determined trolls would "always find ways around" the tools designed to stop them.



NEW YORK: This picture courtesy of @chonkikage shows a self-portrait of video game streamer Chonki in New York on August 26, 2021. Chonki has been one of the victims of the phenomenon of "hate raids" — barrages of racist, sexist and homophobic abuse. —AFP

His research over the past 25 years has found people usually troll for three main reasons: amusement, boredom or revenge. — AFP

NBK Money Market Report

Fed: Tapering possible in 2021

KUWAIT: Currency markets treaded carefully this week as all eyes fixated on the central banker's Jackson Hole Symposium over the week's end. Traditionally a non-event, the conference was used to get global policymakers together in an informal environment. Over the past three years however, it was used to deliver major policy changes that had global implications. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell in 2018 questioned the usefulness of the natural rate of unemployment. In 2019, he foreshadowed a cut in interest rates. And in 2020, he rolled out a radical revision of the Fed's monetary policy framework.

The big issue markets were concen-

trating on is of course, Fed tapering. The Fed had historically given a few months' notice via strong signals that a form of monetary policy tightening was coming. With the COVID-19 rebound and increased talks of tapering among central bankers, markets believed this meeting would shed light on the Fed's forward guidance.

In typical Fed fashion however, Jerome Powell spoke carefully highlighting the pros and cons of acting too fast during "transitory" periods. It was a clear signal that they are in no rush towards rate hikes. He did mention however, that during the Fed's July policy meeting, he was of the view that if the economy "evolved broadly as anticipated, it could be appropriate to start reducing the pace of asset purchases this year." Still, Powell signaled the US central bank will remain patient as it tries to support the economy back to full employment, repeating that he wants to avoid chasing "transitory" inflation and potentially discouraging job growth in the process. In conclusion, he expects strong

job creation to continue and that "for now, policy is well positioned." The US dollar dropped around 0.40% after the meeting.

USD GDP

US GDP increased at a 6.6% annualized rate for the April-June period, the government said. Economists polled by Reuters had expected that second-quarter GDP growth would be raised to a 6.7% pace. The level of GDP is now 0.8% higher than it was at its peak in the fourth quarter of 2019. The upward revisions to last quarter's GDP growth reflected a slightly more robust pace of consumer spending and business investment than initially estimated. Demand however, was driven by one-time stimulus checks from the government to some middle- and low-income households.

Europe & UK

Q2 German GDP revealed a marginally stronger growth rate of 1.6% than the preliminary estimate of 1.5% with the outlook ahead also looking positive following

solid PMI data readings for August. The modestly stronger than expected figure reflected strong household consumption, which jumped 3.2% and government spending which gained 1.8%.

The impressive data came just after the Bundesbank warned that the recovery may not be as strong as expected going forward. The Delta variant and supply chain issues could weigh on economic activity in the current quarter and in Q4. The Bundesbank currently assumes GDP growth of 3.7% this year. But the PMI data still offers hope that the services rebound could surprise on the upside. While the Manufacturing PMI for the euro-zone fell 1.3pts, the Services PMI dropped just 0.1pt, remaining elevated just below the 60-level. The resilience of the services sector going forward will certainly be helped by the considerably higher vaccination rates across key euro-zone countries that will reduce the need for added restrictions. The opening up to some degree of travel is also helping tourism in certain countries as well.

UK Retail Sales

British retailers reported the biggest surge in spending in almost seven years this month and orders hit a new high but inventories fell to the lowest levels on record, putting pressure on prices, industry data showed. The Confederation of British Industry's measure of the volume of sales compared with a year earlier soared to 60, from 23 in July. A Reuters poll of economists had pointed to a fall to 20. The CBI said retailers reported that selling prices in the three months to August increased at the fastest pace since November 2017 and the picture for the next quarter looked similar. Separately, Britain's tax office said 73,740 homes were sold in July on a seasonally adjusted basis after the scaling-back of a tax break designed to encourage home purchases during the coronavirus crisis.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30090.



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON
26 AUGUST 2021

Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	30,116	7,447.17	2.1%	7.4%	23.1%	662,173,721	218,496,735	25,833	29.4	2.3	76.0%
Main Market	9,530	5,486.26	0.9%	2.5%	20.5%	1,043,069,419	104,105,310	30,846	20.9	3.6	24.0%
All Share	39,646	6,791.35	1.8%	6.2%	22.5%	1,705,243,140	322,602,045	56,679	27.4	2.6	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
BANKS	23,112	1,565.53	2.3%	8.3%	24.0%	424,645,577	146,728,704	12,366	33.4	2.3	57.62%
BASIC MATERIALS	980	1,098.16	2.0%	1.1%	22.2%	2,839,636	1,752,162	752	23.2	1.6	2.44%
CONSUMER DISCRETIONARY	544	1,059.48	2.6%	6.0%	42.0%	32,571,615	6,244,711	2,100	9.6	41.2	1.36%
CONSUMER STAPLES	226	741.02	-0.5%	-3.0%	-9.5%	3,485,377	2,015,804	329	15.1	1.5	0.56%
ENERGY	284	1,360.02	-1.5%	-4.7%	6.5%	49,202,029	1,613,770	1,248	14.1	1.3	0.71%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	3,520	1,260.50	1.3%	5.0%	35.6%	613,601,233	75,869,650	18,155	8.8	1.6	8.78%
HEALTH CARE	400	807.12	0.0%	0.0%	-2.4%	0	0	0	27.4	5.3	1.00%
INDUSTRIALS	4,140	1,166.37	1.0%	3.3%	30.9%	50,243,256	23,030,709	6,508	27.0	1.8	10.32%
INSURANCE	600	1,441.77	2.4%	4.8%	24.7%	1,386,513	242,058	190	10.4	1.2	1.50%
REAL ESTATE	2,652	1,234.35	1.4%	4.2%	29.6%	411,218,581	41,475,187	10,808	26.6	1.2	6.61%
TECHNOLOGY	10	734.78	-3.8%	-5.6%	46.2%	244,425	25,239	27	-	0.9	0.02%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	3,388	1,104.72	1.1%	3.0%	0.2%	91,322,569	17,802,258	2,754	15.9	2.1	8.45%
UTILITIES	255	610.53	3.6%	3.6%	-16.2%	24,482,329	5,801,792	1,442	20.1	4.9	0.64%

Top Gainers

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
WARBACAP	80	26.8	6,774,747	538,560	516
PAPCO	60	20.0	7,863	488	10
FTI	49.0	17.8	58,907	2,675	22
RKWC	74	15.2	2,581,387	190,094	160
PAPER	221.0	14.5	101,115	21,797	28

Top Losers

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
ARGAN	105	-7.1	96,292	9,613	10
MAZAYA	80	-7.0	134,821,958	10,983,302	2,788
NAPESCO	746.0	-6.8	156,855	117,075	117
AQAR	64	-4.9	29,660	1,929	3
KINS	429.0	-4.7	170,076	73,008	23

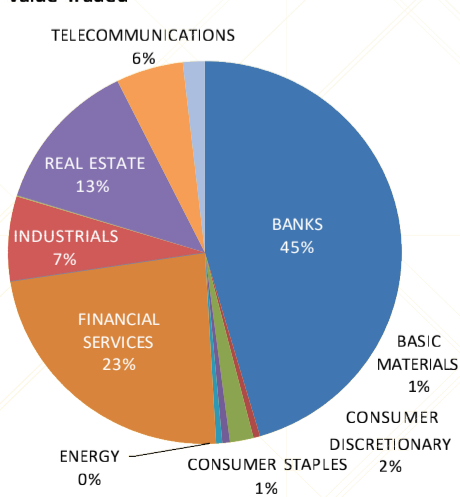
Top Volume

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
MAZAYA	80	-7.0	134,821,958	10,983,302	2,788
AUB	274	0.0	109,987,960	29,734,602	1,767
KIB	230	2.2	87,328,540	19,877,615	1,278
INVESTORS	16	13.3	80,355,074	1,274,282	814
AAYAN	156	2.0	75,169,475	11,849,558	1,206

Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	819	1.7	39,480,679	31,910,368	3,187
AUB	274	0.0	109,987,960	29,734,602	1,767
NBK	939	4.8	25,913,456	23,700,700	1,932
KIB	230	2.2	87,328,540	19,877,615	1,278
GBK	242	0.4	71,888,885	17,401,460	900

Value Traded



Market Summary:

- In contrast to the Main Market, the Premier market witnessed a huge increase in volume reaching 47% and the value increased 31%, while the Main market's volume dropped 8% and the value dropped 14%.
- All Share, Premier, and Main indexes all registered new all-time new high levels overcoming the resistance level. Staying above these resistance levels will lead to a much higher and steep rise.
- Technically, the All-Share index registered a new all-time high-level closing at 6791 creating a support level at 6703 and 6668. Staying above 6750 will lead to 6905. Premier index closed at a new all-time high level at 7447 creating a support level at 7428, 7317, and 7274. Staying above 7430 will lead to 7590. The main index registered a new all-time high-level closing at 5486 creating a support level at 5467 and 5393. Staying above 5500 will lead to 5510 and 5580.

Lifestyle | Features

THE MANY TAKES ON PRINCESS DI

Testament to the bottomless public appetite for the British royals and their most tragic figure, no less than three new portrayals of Princess Diana are on the way in the coming months. "The Crown" returns to Netflix next year to cover her final terrible years, while a Broadway musical about the princess opens in November. Before all that, Kristen Stewart will take on the role that has made and broken careers in "Spencer", which premieres at the Venice film festival this week. Here is a selection of the great and not-so-great attempts that have gone before her.

'Diana' (2013)

To date, the biggest budget take on the Queen of Hearts was this Naomi Watts vehicle, widely acknowledged to be an absolute stinker. Watts later admitted it was "a sinking ship". The Guardian could not help themselves: "I hesitate to use the term 'car crash cinema', but the awful truth is that, 16 years after that terrible day in 1997, (Diana) has died another awful death."

'Diana: Her True Story' (1993)

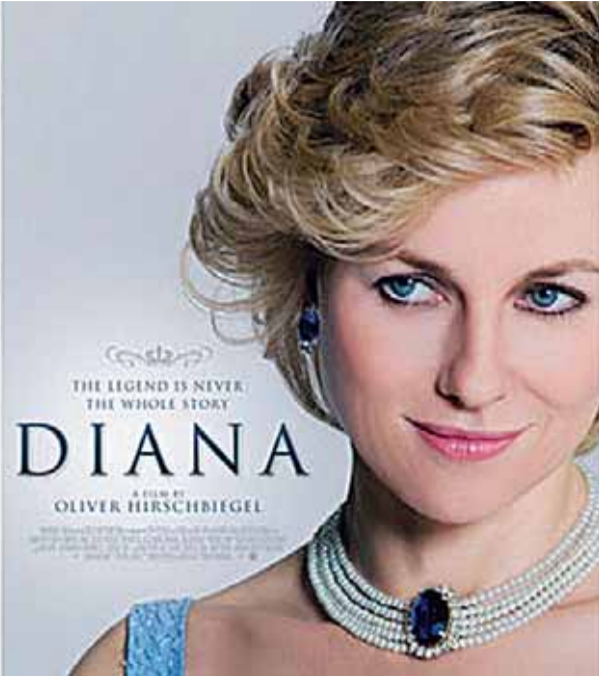
One of the least excruciating of the many TV movies dished up mostly for American audiences, The Sun newspaper still found this adaptation of a popular biography "as shallow as a toddler's play-pool". The biggest challenge was trying to recreate that famous hairdo, with the filmmakers reportedly auditioning seven wigs before they got the look right on Serena Scott Thomas (sister of Kristin).

'Diana & Me' (1997)

The "lost" Diana movie stars Toni Collette as an Australian named Diana Spencer who travels to Britain



to catch a glimpse of her famous namesake. Unfortunately, it was due for release in September 1997 and was yanked from the schedules following Diana's death on August 31. Though the filmmakers reshot some scenes in a bid to win back the distributors, the plot, which includes Collette teaming up with



a paparazzi photographer to chase down the princess, inevitably made for awkward viewing. The film is now available only via a German DVD release.

'The Crown' (2020)

The comparison that matters for "Spencer" is

whether Stewart can match the revelatory turn by Emma Corrin, who won endless praise and a Golden Globe this year for her performance in season four of the Netflix smash. Many have quibbled over the details, including Diana's brother Charles Spencer, who worried on Britain's ITV: "I find Americans tell me they have watched 'The Crown' as if they have taken a history lesson. Well, they haven't." But few could resist the drama, with the Daily Mail saying Corrin "captures the fact that there was something tragic about Diana before she even became tragic". There won't be much of a wait before another dollop of Diana, as "The Crown" returns next year, this time with Elizabeth Debicki ("Tenet", "The Night Manager") in the role.

'William & Kate' (2011)

But if you have tired of Diana refashions, her children now provide plenty of fodder for TV movies, too. "William & Kate", shot in Los Angeles for US channel Lifetime, was released to coincide with the royal wedding. Newsday said it had "the dramatic vitality of a tree stump". Trying to find something positive to say, London's Evening Standard came up with: "It is recognizably a film, in that it takes place on a screen. Events run in a forward direction." Clearly, the film was not made with snooty journalists in mind, and the film has a resounding five stars from royal fans on Amazon. The good news for them is that Lifetime has followed it with no less than three Harry and Meghan movies: "A Royal Romance", "Becoming Royal" and the forthcoming "Escape from the Palace". Escape for Meghan, that is, but not the rest of us. —AFP



WILL THE CURSE OF 'DUNE' BE LIFTED IN VENICE?

With a \$165-million budget and a cast to rival the star system of Arrakis, hopes are high for "Dune" as it prepares to land in Venice next Friday for its world premiere. The cast list is exciting enough, including Timothee Chalamet, Zendaya, Jason Momoa, Oscar Isaac and Javier Bardem. But what has sci-fi fans really feverish is the man behind the camera: Canadian Denis Villeneuve.

Through hits like "Sicario" and "Arrival", Villeneuve has put himself alongside Christopher Nolan as one of the rare directors who can deliver deadly serious cinema that also packs theatres. Crucially, he has also proved a safe pair of hands when handling totems of 20th-century geekdom, after his critically adored "Blade Runner 2049", a sequel to the sci-fi classic.

A prototype

Set many millennia in the future, "Dune" follows the tribal battles for control of "spice", a drug that extends life and delivers prophetic powers, on the inhospitable planet of Arrakis, which also happens to be infested with giant worms. The brainchild of author Frank Herbert, "Dune" was first published in 1965 and became a six-volume space opera of massive influence, not least on "Star Wars". "It is the biggest-selling and most-read science fiction novel ever, but also the most commented upon and the most studied," said Renaud Guillemain, an eminent member of France's community of "Duniens".

"It was the prototype for the sort of world-building universe in science fiction books, with their own coherence, references and foundations," said Guillemain, comparing it to what "Lord of the Rings" did for fantasy. Some of the images and ideas have also become sci-fi staples, including its giant sandworms (hello "Tremors"), suits that recycle sweat, or the Bene Gesserit, an order of female martial arts experts with thought-control powers. Fans also praise its visionary edge, anticipating debates over global warming and the impact of technology.

'Cursed'

Despite its ready-made audience and clear cinematic potential, previous transfers to film have been famously difficult. "It is cursed by its excellence," said Lloyd Chery, author of a French reference book about Dune. Cult Franco-Chilean filmmaker Alejandro Jodorowsky was the first to try his hand, spending no less than four years in the 1970s on the project, with Salvador Dali, Alain Delon and Orson Welles lined up, along with Pink Floyd for the music.

In the end, the money could not match the ambition and it became part of tragic movie lore, recounted in the 2013 documentary "Jodorowsky's Dune". In the 1980s, in the wake of "Star Wars", studios grew more interested. Fresh from "Alien", Ridley Scott was tapped to direct, before it was passed to David Lynch. Seven versions of the script and six punishing months filming in Mexico led to many monumental sets being built and thousands of costumes. But Lynch's mad vision was fatally undermined by the Hollywood machine, and the movie bombed on release in 1984.

A trilogy?

There have been popular TV adaptations since, including "Children of Dune" starring James McAvoy, but never on the grand scale that the novels seemed to demand. Cue Villeneuve, and his all-star cast. Far from the "nightmare" experienced by Lynch, he appears over the moon with his film, and is already thinking about two possible sequels, according to an interview he gave CBC Radio Canada. But that will depend on the commercial success of the first installment. Villeneuve has already clashed with Warner Bros over its decision to release the film on streaming platforms alongside the theatre release. "There is absolutely no love for cinema, nor for the audience here. It is all about the survival of a telecom mammoth," Villeneuve said in a statement about the decision last December. While that clash plays out in Hollywood boardrooms, all eyes will turn to the battles on Arrakis when "Dune" premieres on September 3. —AFP

Twain praises husband for 'incredible support' during tough times

Shania Twain's second marriage has been an "incredible re-strengthening of her confidence". The 55-year-old singer has been married to Frederic Thiebaud since 2011, and she feels "very grateful" to have found love again after her split from first husband Robert John Lange. Speaking about her divorce, she said: "The silver lining during all of that was falling into love with somebody [Frederic]. He has been an incredible support through those difficult times. "My second marriage has been an incredible re-strengthening of my confidence, of my will to even want to sing again. "It is just amazing, the power of love, and I am very grateful to have found that again. "I had been going along and enduring so much of what I had lost for a very long time. "Finding the courage to regain my voice and getting back on stage again, taking all those risks. "How about even taking the risk to fall in love again [laughs]. Shania suffered a "life shattering" experience when her parents



died in a car crash when she was 21. But the "From This Moment On" hitmaker admitted her 19-year-old son Eja - who she shares with Robert - has brought plenty of emotional "consistency and stability" to her since he was born. When asked on podcast "Allison Interviews" what experiences have been most formative for her, Shania added: "My youth, growing up in a small northern mining town in Canada was very formative. "That upbringing has stayed with me in many ways, I would say permanently. "My parents dying was a personal earthquake in my life, and life shattering. "My first marriage was formative. Everything changed in my life as a result of my first marriage, both personally and creatively. "That partnership [with Robert] created a change in my life forever. "And having a child was an incredibly life changing experience, and a very beautiful one. "My son has brought a lot of consistency and stability to me, emotionally." —Bang Showbiz

Mission impossible: To rescue Tom Cruise's stolen luggage

The mission for British police on Friday, should they choose to accept it, was to recover the luggage of Hollywood superstar Tom Cruise after his bodyguard's car was stolen. Cruise's bags were in the BMW X7 that was taken on Monday from outside the hotel in Birmingham, central England, where he is currently staying. The Sun tabloid reported. The car was recovered "a short time later" but the contents were reportedly still missing. "Everything inside it had gone," a source told the paper. The 59-year-old US actor is in Britain filming the seventh installment of the "Mission Impossible" series. "We received a report of a BMW X7 stolen from Church Street, Birmingham," a West Midlands Police spokesman confirmed, but did not reveal the identity of the owner. "The car was recovered a short time later. Inquiries are ongoing." According to the British tabloid, the thieves intercepted the signal used by the luxury car's ignition key in a ruse reminiscent of one of Cruise's films. The star has caused a stir in the Midlands since his arrival, dining out in a curry house and landing his helicopter in a family's garden. —AFP



Daniel Radcliffe was 'starstruck' by Gary Oldman

Daniel Radcliffe was first left feeling starstruck over Gary Oldman. The "Harry Potter" star has acted alongside some of the biggest movie stars including the likes of Dame Maggie Smith and Alan Rickman but he admits he first got completely starstruck over his co-star Gary Oldman. Speaking about Maggie and Alan, he told The Late Show with Stephen Colbert: "At the time I wasn't starstruck by any of those people. The first person I remember being starstruck by was Gary Oldman. Because that was the age when I was aware of who he was and his work and also getting more serious about acting myself. So, yeah, before that when you meet someone as a nine-year-old it's sort of hard to like, gain starstruckness of them later on." Daniel previously revealed people are always surprised he hasn't been "messed up" by childhood fame. The 32-year-old actor explained: "I was very aware early on people



have very low expectations of what I'll be like. Which is great because hopefully you always exceed them. Once I was having dinner with the Director of Photography on a film and I told some weird story about a thing that happened to me in a kind of light, amused way. "When I got to the end, the DP looked at me and went, 'How are you not more messed up?' It's a reaction that does happen and I don't really have a satisfying answer for people." Daniel credits his parents with keeping him grounded, as they made sure he was comfortable with his acting roles. He added: "I have parents supportive of me but who also asked me between every film: 'Are you still having fun? You do know you don't have to do this?' And I was like, 'I really want to do this, I hate school so much.' I was conscious of the stereotype of child actors, and they didn't want to be pushy parents." —Bang Showbiz

21 films chasing top prize at Venice Film Festival

The Golden Lion, the top prize at the Venice Film Festival set to begin September 1, will be awarded to one film among 21 contenders from across the globe. Here are the films in the running:

'Madres paralelas' (Parallel Mothers): Spain

Two single women prepare to give birth in a maternity ward in Pedro Almodovar's latest film with regulars Penelope Cruz and Rossy De Palma.

'Mona Lisa and the Blood Moon': US

Ana Lily Amirpour's fantasy film starring Kate Hudson, Craig Robinson and Jeon Jong-seo follows a girl with super powers who escapes a mental asylum and rejoins the world in New Orleans.

'Un Autre Monde' (Another World): France

The last of Stephane Brize's trilogy about the world of work, it stars Vincent Lindon as a boss forced to make tough decisions.

'The Power of the Dog': New Zealand/Australia

Two brothers feud on a Montana ranch after one comes home with a new wife, in Jane Campion's film starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Kirsten Dunst.

'America Latina': Italy/France

Italian twins Fabio and Damiano D'Innocenzo wrote and directed this love story thriller starring Elio Germano.

'Levenement' (Happening): France

A young woman risks prison as she seeks an abortion in 1960s France in Audrey Diwan's drama.

'Competencia Oficial' (Official Competition): Spain/Argentina

Penelope Cruz stars as a filmmaker dealing with two difficult leading men, including Antonio Banderas, in the comedy directed by Gaston Duprat and Mariano Cohn.

'Il Buco' (The Hole): Italy/France/Germany

Michelangelo Frammartino's film is based on the true story of a group of spelologists who in 1961 discovered a deep cave in a remote area of Italy's south.

'Sundown': Mexico/France/Sweden

Tim Roth stars as a wealthy man seeking to walk away from his life while on vacation in Mexican director Michel Franco's latest.

'Illusions perdues' (Lost Illusions): France

Xavier Giannoli's film adaptation of the Balzac novel stars Benjamin Voisin, Xavier Dolan and Gerard Depardieu.

'The Lost Daughter': Greece/US/UK/Zionist

US actress Maggie Gyllenhaal's directorial debut

is based on an Elena Ferrante novel and stars Olivia Colman as a woman obsessed with another mother and daughter.

'Spencer': Germany/UK

Chilean director Pablo Larraín follows the last years of marriage between Princess Diana and Prince Charles and stars Kristen Stewart and Jack Farthing.

'Freaks Out': Italy/Belgium

A circus troupe in Rome becomes increasingly desperate with the onset of WWII in Gabriele Mainetti's film.

'Qui rido io' (The King of Laughter): Italy/Spain

Toni Servillo stars as Naples' famous turn-of-the-century comedian Eduardo Scarpetta in Mario Martone's biopic.

'On the Job: The Missing 8': Philippines

Erik Matti's action film with prisoners-turned-hitmen that explores corruption in the media is a sequel to 2013's "On the Job".

'Zebny nie Bylo Sladow' (Leave No Traces): Poland/France/Czechoslovakia

The true story of a witness to the fatal beating of a young activist in Warsaw by the militia under the Communist regime by Polish director Jan P. Matuszynski.

'Kapitan Volkonogov Bezhai' (Captain Volkonogov Escaped): Russia/Estonia/France

Natasha Merkulova and Aleksey Chupov's thriller follows a state interrogator in the former Soviet Union who flees, hoping to repent.

'The Card Counter' US/UK/China

A gambler is haunted by his past as a serviceman in Paul Schrader's revenge thriller starring Oscar Isaac, Tiffany Haddish and Willem Dafoe.

'E' stata la mano di Dio' (The Hand of God): Italy

Paolo Sorrentino's drama is set in Naples during the heady years when football legend Diego Maradona delivered big dreams to the gritty Southern city.

'Vidblysk' (Reflection): Ukraine

A Ukrainian surgeon seeks to rebuild his life after witnessing horrifying violence as a Russian prisoner in Valentyn Vasyanovych's drama.

'La Caja' (The Box): Mexico/US

A Mexico City teen heads north to collect his father's remains but is drawn into the grim world of apparel assembly plants in Venezuelan director Lorenzo Vigas' film. —AFP

Lifestyle | Features

JAPANESE GIANT WANTS SOY SAUCE TO BE THE 'KETCHUP OF INDIA'



In this picture Harry Hakuei Kosato, Director Kikkoman India Private Limited, poses with a bottle of Kikkoman Soy Sauce in Mumbai. —AFP photos



Chefs check freshly arrived bottles of Kikkoman Soy Sauce at the Ishaara restaurant in Mumbai.



A chef arranges samosas with mincemeat filling prepared with Kikkoman Soy Sauce at the Ishaara restaurant in Mumbai.

Every dish tastes better with a dash of soy sauce, even dessert: that's the ambitious pitch of Japanese food giant Kikkoman, hoping to persuade Indians to use it in curries, sweets and everything in between. Convincing 1.3 billion people to add a staple of East Asian cuisine to their butter chicken and samosas is no cakewalk but it will likely be easier than the brand's 1960s push into the United States. "When we entered the US, people thought we were selling bug juice because of its dark color," Harry Hakuei Kosato, Kikkoman's India representative, told AFP.

Today the brand's funnel-shaped dispenser is a ubiquitous presence in US households, accounting for half of the firm's \$4.4 billion revenues, and Kikkoman now hopes to replicate that success in India. Sales were boosted by the West's growing craze for Japanese cuisine since the 1980s, but the company is taking a different approach to India, which is home to a significant vegetarian population. "It is not about getting everyone to eat sushi. We want our soy sauce to become the ketchup of India," said Kosato.

He hopes that the move to market the sauce as an endlessly adaptable condiment will strike a chord in a country where culinary innovation is part of street food culture. For instance, Mumbai's grilled Bombay Sandwich—a hawker staple—is a buttered British-style toastie, but with a filling that includes boiled potato, onion, tomato, beetroot, and coriander chutney, topped with a sprinkling of "sev", a crunchy deep-fried Indian snack. So it is perhaps unsurprising that some Indian chefs began using soy sauce in their dishes long before Kikkoman launched in the country earlier this year.

'Chef's secret'

Restaurateur Prashant Issar first deployed it in a biryani six years ago, while running Mirchi and Mime, a Mumbai restaurant showcasing modern Indian cuisine. Since then he has added a dash of soy sauce to a range of local dishes, from samosas to lamb keema. "When I tried it with keema pao, it was just like 'oh my god'. It was an explosion of flavors," Issar told AFP. "It has this indefinable umami flavor; this tart, sharp quality you can't find anywhere else," he explained, describing it as "a bit of a chef's secret".

Kikkoman is now trying to get the word out to ordinary Indians and counting on social media influencers like Shalini Kapoor to drum up an appetite for its product. For Kapoor, a home chef who never liked the "synthetic" taste of locally-available soy sauces and couldn't imagine using the condiment in Indian food, the results have been revelatory. She has even used it to make jalebis—a deep-fried pretzel soaked in sugar syrup. "I think it's amazing in Indian desserts," she told AFP. But it might take the rest of India more time to catch up to the idea, she acknowledged. "They just need to get a taste of it." —AFP



A chef prepares a samosa filling with mincemeat with Kikkoman Soy Sauce at the Ishaara restaurant in Mumbai.



A chef fills a samosa with mincemeat filling prepared with Kikkoman Soy Sauce at the Ishaara restaurant.



A staff watches as freshly arrived Kikkoman Soy Sauce boxes are loaded onto racks at a cold storage at Padeghar in Raigad district of Maharashtra.



A chef garnishes an egg over Keema - mince lamb meat with Kikkoman Soy Sauce at the Ishaara restaurant.

SERBIAN FILM WINS TOP PRIZE AT CZECH FESTIVAL

'As Far As I Can Walk', a film by Serbian director Stefan Arsenjevic, won the Crystal Globe award at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival in the Czech Republic ending late Saturday, organizers said. The film co-produced by Serbia, France, Luxembourg, Bulgaria and Lithuania tells the story of two African migrants in Serbia. English actor Michael Caine received the Crystal Globe for his outstanding contribution to world cinema at the beginning of the festival, the most influential in Central and Eastern Europe.

American actor Ethan Hawke and Czech director Jan Sverak, known for his Oscar-winning film 'Kolya' from 1996, also received a prize for their contribution to cinema. American actor Johnny Depp was another special guest at the festival held on August 20-28. Postponed from July because of COVID-19 restrictions, the festival registered 111,203 tickets sold, down from almost 140,000 in 2019. The festival was cancelled last year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. —AFP



British film actor Michael Caine is handed the Crystal Globe Award for the Outstanding Artistic Contribution to the World of Cinema by the president of the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival Jiri Bartoska, during the opening of the 55th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (KVIFF) in Karlovy Vary. —AFP photos



US actor and producer Johnny Depp greets his fans at the red carpet prior to the screening of the film "Crock of Gold; A few rounds with Shane MacGowan" during the 55th edition of the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.

Sports

Tuchel praises 10-man Chelsea's response as 'world turned upside down' at Liverpool

Klopp 'not too despondent' with the draw

LIVERPOOL: Thomas Tuchel believes Chelsea showed the resilience that can make them Premier League champions in frustrating Liverpool for 45 minutes with a man down in a 1-1 draw at Anfield on Saturday. Kai Havertz's looping header put the visitors in front before Reece James was sent-off in first-half stoppage time for handball on his own goal line and Mohamed Salah converted the resulting penalty. But Jurgen Klopp's men failed to make their man advantage count in the second-half as the European champions showed resilience to dig out a precious point that strengthened their title credentials.

"We showed great resilience and deserved the point," said Tuchel. "I cannot praise the team enough I do not know if there is a harder stadium than at (Manchester) City or Anfield to go one man down. Suddenly the world was upside down, I can't praise the team's resilience enough. It felt like it would never end. I was hoping we would survive and take a well-deserved point."

The two sides and Manchester United, with Cristiano Ronaldo back at Old Trafford, are expected to pose Manchester City a much tougher challenge to retain the Premier League this season. And the first heavyweight clash of the campaign did not disappoint with a raucous Anfield atmosphere the accompaniment to 90 minutes of high drama that left both sides level at the top of the table with seven points from three games.

'Good start'

Liverpool's title defense was knocked off course by a series of long-term injuries to key players last

season. However, with Virgil van Dijk and Joel Matip restored in central defense, allowing Jordan Henderson and Fabinho to play their more familiar midfield roles, the Reds' blend of intense pressing and counter-attacking was back to its best early on.

And Klopp insisted he was not too despondent with the draw. "Everybody thinks playing against 10 men it is easy, it is an advantage in possession but their defensive structure only changes in that they defend a little deeper," said Klopp. "It's really early in the season. We drew against obviously the best team in Europe last year. That's ok, it's a good start. Three games, seven points, let's go."

Klopp made the bold call to give 18-year-old Harvey Elliott just his second Premier League start with Thiago Alcantara left on the bench. Elliott fired the first shot inches wide before Henderson then missed a glorious chance to open the scoring when he volleyed wide on his weaker left foot from Trent Alexander-Arnold's inch-perfect cross.

Chelsea had barely threatened until they hit the hosts with a sucker punch on 22 minutes when Havertz's header brilliantly guided James's corner into the far corner. The Blues then could have put the game beyond Liverpool before the game-changing incident at the end of the first-half.

Romelu Lukaku announced his return to English football by scoring on his second Chelsea debut in a routine 2-0 win at Arsenal last weekend. The Belgian struggled when up against Van Dijk, but got the better of Matip to send Mason Mount through on goal and the England midfielder's shot flashed across goal.

“We showed great resilience”

Lewandowski hits hat-trick to pass 300 goals for Bayern

BERLIN: Robert Lewandowski scored a hat-trick as Bayern Munich thumped Hertha Berlin 5-0 on Saturday, with the Poland striker passing the milestone of 300 goals for the defending Bundesliga champions. Bayern took an early lead through Thomas Mueller before Lewandowski struck either side of a Jamal Musiala goal.

Having scored a record 41 Bundesliga goals last season, Lewandowski has already netted five times in three league matches this term. Lewandowski could have finished with four, having stepped over the ball to allow Mueller to score the early opener.

"Sometimes the first goal is the most important, it was right to leave the ball for Thomas - I knew he was there," said Lewandowski, who has scored three goals or more in 15 Bundesliga games in his career. "We had the game under control and everything planned came off. I'm always hungry, I feel really good and I am always looking to reach the next level, always ready to improve."

Mueller said Lewandowski is playing at "another level". Lewandowski doubled the lead after Mueller's opener by heading into the net at the second attempt having first hit the cross bar as Bayern outclassed Hertha. He has scored in 16 consecutive games for Bayern in all competitions, one more than club legend Gerd Mueller, who scored in 15 consecutive games in 1969/70.

Hertha's fortunes did not improve when their goalkeeper Alexander Schwolow landed on Berlin captain Dedryck Boyata after clearing a corner and the pair banged heads. Bayern's third came just after the break when Mueller won possession and Musiala, 18, beat two defenders to fire inside the far post.

Musiala made way for Leroy Sane who answered recent whistles from Bayern fans by serving up Lewandowski's second. Sane exchanged passes with Mueller, then sliced through the defence on the left and gave Lewandowski a simple tap in for his 300th goal in all competitions for Bayern. He completed his hat-trick when Joshua Kimmich's corner was flicked on to the back post by Tanguy Nianzou for Lewandowski to head home. —AFP

Carvajal strike sees Real Madrid edge Betis to go top

MADRID: Dani Carvajal's second-half goal gave Real Madrid a 1-0 win at Real Betis on Saturday as Carlo Ancelotti's men moved top of the early La Liga table. Madrid now have seven points from their opening three games after a bright start to the season, while the reported potential signing of Kylian Mbappe could give them another boost before the end of the transfer window on Tuesday.

"It's a matter for the club, they're working on this," Ancelotti said of Paris Saint-Germain star Mbappe, for whom Madrid have already had a 160-million-euro bid rejected. Italian Ancelotti, who returned to the club after the resignation of Zinedine Zidane, has seen some of his tougher decisions pay off so far, with Gareth Bale and Isco impressing after being brought back into the fold.

Los Blancos will not play their first home match of the season until September 11 due to the ongoing renovation of the Santiago

Bernabeu. But they still lead the way in La Liga ahead of Sevilla and Valencia on goals scored. "There are many things that we have to improve, but the balance is positive," said Ancelotti. "We have had an odd pre-season, many players arrived late. I am quite satisfied but yes, we have to improve."

Betis remain winless after opening the season with two draws following a feisty encounter at the Benito Villamarin which saw the hosts have five players and veteran coach Manuel Pellegrini booked. Both teams looked dangerous early on, with Betis goalkeeper Rui Silva making a good save from Madrid defender Eder Militao in the seventh minute.

Shortly afterwards, away 'keeper Thibaut Courtois had to get down smartly to keep out Nabil Fekir's well-struck effort from long range. Karim Benzema thought he had put the capital giants ahead in the 53rd minute but saw his effort ruled out for offside.

But the visitors did break the deadlock just after the hour mark through the unlikely source of Carvajal. Vinicius Junior did well to keep the ball in play before right-back Carvajal volleyed home Benzema's cross.

Madrid center-back David Alaba almost gifted Betis an immediate equalizer as he

attempted to cut out a cross, but sent the ball spinning just past his own post. Eden Hazard, dropped to the bench, came on as a late substitute as the away side closed out an ultimately comfortable win.

Sevilla unbeaten

Earlier, Youssef En-Nesyri's header secured Sevilla a 1-1 draw at Elche which kept Julien Lopetegui's men unbeaten after three games. The Moroccan forward's second goal of the campaign shortly before half-time moved Sevilla alongside Valencia, Real Mallorca and Madrid on seven points.

Defender Enzo Roco had given Elche an 11th-minute lead but they had to settle for a second point of the campaign. Sevilla are hoping to launch another title challenge this term after falling away late last season to finish fourth.

But Barcelona and Real Madrid have both endured difficult summers, although champions Atletico Madrid kicked off their title defense with back-to-back wins. Elsewhere, 19-year-old Ander Barrenetxea gave Real Sociedad a 1-0 victory over Levante, while Athletic Bilbao won by the same scoreline at Celta Vigo. —AFP



LIVERPOOL: Chelsea's head coach Thomas Tuchel (left) speaks with Chelsea's goalkeeper Edouard Mendy after the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Chelsea at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England on Saturday. —AFP

Liverpool were struggling to pick holes in the Chelsea back five until a corner deep into first-half stoppage time. Matip's header came back off the crossbar and in the goalmouth scramble James stopped Sadio Mane's effort crossing the line with his hand.

There seemed little intent from the England international, but once referee Anthony Taylor awarded the penalty following a VAR review, he had little option but to send James off for denying a clear goalscoring opportunity.

At half-time, Tuchel sent on Thiago Silva for his first appearance of the season in place of Havertz to shore up his defense ahead of the expected Liverpool siege. But the home side were largely restricted to efforts from long range as Van Dijk, Fabinho and Andy Robertson tested Edouard Mendy, while Henderson curled a shot inches wide. Chelsea could even have stolen all three points late on when Alisson Becker made a meal of stopping Mateo Kovacic's strike on the break. —AFP

Dismal Juve slump to shock Empoli defeat after Ronaldo exit

MILAN: Juventus were stunned by promoted Empoli in their first match of the post-Cristiano Ronaldo era, a 1-0 home defeat in Serie A leaving the 'Old Lady' looking toothless while Ciro Immobile hit a hat-trick for Lazio in a 6-1 thrashing of Spezia.

The Turin giants would have been confident of their chances against their Tuscan opponents but Leonardo Mancuso's first ever goal in Italy's top flight mid-way through the first half condemned Juve to an embarrassing defeat which enraged supporters at the Allianz Stadium. Those fans will be worrying about their team's chances of taking the league title back from fierce rivals Inter Milan on the basis of Saturday's display and last week's 2-2 draw at Udinese.

Coach Massimiliano Allegri practically shrugged his shoulders and said "life goes on" when he revealed on Friday that superstar forward Ronaldo, now back at Manchester United, had told him he wanted to leave. And after the defeat he attempted to downplay the departure of the five-time Ballon d'Or winner, who would have saved Juve's skin at Udinese had it not been for a razor thin offside decision.

"Cristiano was at Juventus three years, I only had him for one. He scored goals, he did what he was very good at, he is a great player but from this point onwards we can't think about Cristiano Ronaldo any more," Allegri said to DAZN.

'Mancuso's dream'

But Juve missed a cutting edge in front of goal in what was the worst possible start to life without the 36-year-old, who last term topped the Serie A goals charts and scored over 100 times for the in three seasons in Italy.

They were whistled off the field by indignant home fans, whose team sit 13th in Serie A with one point from their opening two matches. Juve's best play came before Mancuso's goal turned the match on its head in the 21st minute, with Federico Chiesa twice being denied by excellent Guglielmo Vicario saves.



TURIN: Juventus' head coach Massimiliano Allegri (center) gives instructions to forward Federico Chiesa (right) during the Italian Serie A football match against Empoli at Allianz Stadium in Turin on Saturday. —AFP

After that Aurelio Andreazzoli's Empoli, who were beaten 3-1 by Lazio last weekend, played courageously and matched their more illustrious hosts for long periods in what will be a famous victory for the small town club. "You dream of something like this since you were a child and now it's happened you still need time to believe it," Mancuso told DAZN, who is playing in Serie A for the first time aged 29.

Immobile stars

In Rome, Lazio already looked like a trademark Maurizio Sarri team as Immobile lashed home his treble in a flamboyant performance. Euro 2020 star Immobile struck his first just seconds after Daniele Verde had given Spezia a shock fourth-minute lead, leveling the scores with a delicate dinked finish and then ramming home the second 10 minutes later with a first-time strike from just outside the penalty area.

The 31-year-old then missed a penalty in first half stoppage-time only to nod home completely

unmarked from the subsequent corner to complete his treble. "I was saying all sorts of things to myself, I missed four penalties last season and I didn't want to start that way this year," Immobile told DAZN. "I changed my mind on where to shoot at the last minute and that never pays off. It annoys me that I didn't score the penalty, to be honest."

Felipe Anderson, Elseid Hysaj and Luis Alberto — who also created three of the goals — added three more stylish strikes after the break as Lazio put on a show of passing football that puts their goal tally to nine in two games, with Immobile scoring four of them.

Atalanta looked bereft of ideas in their goalless draw with Bologna in Bergamo. Gian Piero Gasperini's side struggled to create many opportunities and had to settle for a point following an underwhelming performance. Fiorentina got off the mark for the season with a 2-1 home over Torino thanks to goals from Nicolas Gonzalez and Dusan Vlahovic. —AFP



SEVILLE: Real Madrid's defender Dani Carvajal (left) celebrates scoring the opening goal during the Spanish League football match against Real Betis at the Benito Villamarin stadium in Seville on Saturday. —AFP

Sports

Afghan Paralympians in tears while Brits light up Super Sunday

'Extremely emotional' meeting at athletes' village

TOKYO: Afghanistan's athletes were in tears when they finally arrived at the Tokyo Paralympics, officials said, as Britain's wheelchair rugby team won one of 63 golds up for grabs on Super Sunday. Afghanistan's Zakia Khudadadi and Hossain Rasouli were evacuated to France last weekend from the Taliban-controlled country in a "major global operation", the International Paralympic Committee said.

"The meeting at the athletes' village was extremely emotional. There were lots of tears from everyone in the room," said IPC spokesperson Craig Spence. Spence said the Afghanistan flag appearing at Tuesday's Opening Ceremony had been the "first step to keep the door open" to the athletes and their arrival was "a very strong message of hope to many others around the world".

Khudadadi will compete in the women's -49kg K44 taekwondo on Thursday. Sprinter Rasouli will take part in the men's T47 long jump tomorrow having arrived too late for his favored T47 100m. "As you can imagine after a very turbulent week, both athletes were exhausted following their flight last night," added Spence.

Day 5 of the Games brought a first-ever wheelchair rugby gold for Britain, who beat the United States 54-49 in the final. The Brits had never previously won a medal in the event, but a heroic effort edged out the Americans, who were looking to improve on the silver they claimed five years ago in Rio. "What an amazing shift that was — that was one to remember," said Britain's Jim Roberts, who led the scoring with 24 tries. "I play to win every game I go into, so that's what I wanted to come for."

Japan beat Australia 60-52 to take the bronze, leaving the Aussies — who went into the competition looking for a third straight gold — going home empty handed. "It's going to hurt watching every other team receive a medal and not us, but that's just what happens when you're not the best," said Australia captain Ryley Batt.

The day began with American Kendall Gretsche snatching triathlon gold right on the line in a dramatic finish after Australia's Lauren Parker had led almost the entire race at Odaiba Marine Park yesterday. Parker was hampered by backmarkers on the final lap, with the crucial seconds lost enabling Gretsche to reel her in to win by less than the length of her wheelchair. "I couldn't see her in front of me until halfway through that lap," said Gretsche. "As soon as I saw her, I was like, 'Hey! You just have to do it. You have to give everything you can.'"

British great Hannah Cockcroft smashed her own women's T34 100m world record as she won a sixth Paralympic gold medal and third in a row in this event, with fellow Brit Kare Adenegan following her home for silver. "I honestly didn't know that time was within me," said Cockcroft.

And there was a stunning conclusion to the F40 men's shot put final when Iraq's defending Paralympic champion Garrah Tnaiash broke the world record with 11.15m on his final attempt to leapfrog the RPC's Denis Gnezdilov into gold medal position.

There were 20 finals at the athletics stadium yesterday and the first gold there went to world record holder Oksana Zubkovska of Ukraine in the T12 long jump with a leap of 5.54 meters as records began to tumble.

British great Hannah Cockcroft smashed her own women's T34 100m world record as she won a sixth Paralympic gold medal and third in a row in this event, with fellow Brit Kare Adenegan following her home for silver. "I honestly didn't know that time was within me," said Cockcroft.

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Gretsche snatches triathlon gold



TOKYO: Australia's Lauren Parker (top) and Kendall Gretsche of the USA race to the finish line in the women's triathlon PTWC at Odaiba Marine Park during the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo yesterday. —AFP

But the Russian still had one attempt remaining and he astonishingly bettered Tnaiash's mark by just one centimeter at 11.16m to snatch back the gold. "It's gorgeous," said a jubilant Gnezdilov. "It's the best mood possible. These are the Paralympic Games. I won them and with a world record on top of everything. This is the best thing to happen in my life."

Wheelchair racing legend Tatyana McFadden claimed a silver in the women's T54 800m final — the 19th Paralympic medal of her career. In the

swimming pool, 14 more gold medals were decided, with Japan's Naohide Yamaguchi setting a new world record of 1min, 3.77sec in the men's 100m breaststroke SB14.

Two athletes have tested positive for COVID in the Paralympic village, the IPC announced, among 11 new Games-related cases. The others are seven contractors, one staff member and one member of the media. It brings the total coronavirus cases detected in the village to 15, including seven athletes. — AFP

No game for old men: The precision art of Paralympic boccia

TOKYO: Boccia sounds remarkably simple. Throw one or more of six colored balls closer to a white target ball, or jack, than your opponent. Simple? Think again. This sport is a combination of chess, snooker and bowls where strategy, precision, steely nerves — and a little luck — all come into play.

One of two Paralympic Sports at Tokyo 2020 that has no Olympic equivalent, it shares similarities with the French game of boules or the Italian equivalent, bocce. The game traces its roots back to Ancient Greece and Egypt and is thought to be one of the oldest sports played by humans.

But this is no game played by old men on dusty Italian or French town squares, this is gripping — and addictive to watch. Designed so athletes with cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy or any kind of neurological impairment that impacts motor function can take part, boccia has been part of the Paralympics since 1984.

Players in wheelchairs use throws from hands, feet or helped by assistive devices such as ramps and pointers, to deliver the leather balls which are filled with plastic granules so they do not bounce and are easy to grip.

'Incredibly impressive'
Whichever method is employed, angles, trajectory, speed and a calculating brain are crucial to prevail on an indoor playing field roughly the size of a badminton court. But leading Canadian player Julian Ciobanu, who has muscular dystrophy, compares it to another sport. "It's like archery," he told AFP on Sunday after winning his second consecutive pool match in the BC4 class at the Ariake Gymnasium in Tokyo. "But you are shooting with your hand or foot."

Some boccia players have severe physical impairments, and Ciobanu, who competes in the unassisted category and throws conventionally from his hand, is in awe of some of his fellow boccia athletes and the accuracy with which they can deliver each shot.

"It's incredibly impressive when you see these people with their physical limits," he said. "It's a precise sport. It's a sport that involves a lot of passion, a lot of concentration and a lot of strategy, like a game of chess. You need to play with a lot of confidence and always think two or three bowls ahead."

One of the flamboyant stars of the sport is Britain's David Smith, who is aiming for a second straight BC1



TOKYO: Brazil's Maciel Santos (center) competes with South Korea's Lee Yong-jin (not pictured) in the boccia individual BC2 class during the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games at Ariake Gymnasium in Tokyo on Saturday. —AFP

Paralympic gold. Unmistakable with his striking blue and red mohawk-like hairstyle, Smith identified one other attribute you need in boccia, and it's one you can't control.

"I had to dig in a bit and get a little bit of luck," said Smith after squeezing past Argentina's Mauricio Ibarbure 4-3 in a titanic pool tussle. "Sometimes it's all about the run of the ball on this floor," added Smith who won the silver at London 2012 and is chasing a third straight Paralympic Games medal.

"Games can be won and lost by little details, so yeah I'll take all the luck I can get, to be honest," said Smith who holds a "triple crown" of major tournament titles — 2016 Paralympics, 2018 World Championships and 2019 European Championships. Individual medals in the four classes of competition, which are all open for men and women, will be decided in finals on Wednesday, followed by pairs and team competitions which conclude on Saturday. — AFP

NBA says COVID vaccine required for referees

NEW YORK: The NBA said Saturday it will require COVID-19 vaccinations for all referees working games in the 2021-22 season. The league said in a statement that the requirement was agreed with the National Basketball Referees Association. It allows some exemptions for religious or medical reasons. "The referees have also agreed to take any recommended boosters," the league said. "Any referee who does not get vaccinated and is not exempt will be ineligible to work games."

The announcement comes a day after several US media outlets reported the NBA had informed teams that all personnel who work in physical proximity to players or referees during games must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. ESPN, citing a memo sent by the NBA to teams on Friday, said the directive specifically includes coaches, front-office members and trainers but stops short of requiring all players to be vaccinated. League-wide vaccination of players is subject to negotiations with the National Basketball Players Association. According to ESPN, the league set an October 1 deadline for team personnel to be fully vaccinated.

Broadcasters, photographers and security personnel who operate near the court are included in the directive, along with locker-room attendants, medical staff, equipment managers, and food and beverage handlers and providers. The regular season tips off on October 19, when the reigning champion Milwaukee Bucks host the Brooklyn Nets and the Golden State Warriors will take on the Los Angeles Lakers in a blockbuster opening-night double-header. — AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Khaldiya	24848075
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Kaifan	24849807
Maternity Hospital	24843100	Shamiya	24848913
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700	Shuwaikh	24814507
Chest Hospital	24849400	Abdullah Salem	22549134
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010	Nuzha	22526804
Adan Hospital	23940620	Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300	Qadsiya	22515088
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000	Dasmah	22532265
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9	Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
		Shaab	22518752
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NOTICE

August 17, 2021

Mr. Pratheesh Chandrasekharan Nair, son of Mr. Payyakkkeel Narayanan Nair Chandrasekharan Nair, resident of Manacheriyil, Mannakkanadu PO, Kottayam, Kerala-686633 and Ms. Sari Sasikumar Nair, daughter of Mr. Sasikumar Thundathil Thankappan Nair, resident of Sari Nivas, Vattukulam P O, Kadappoor, Kottayam, Kerala- 686596 both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in) / letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125)

K. Rethina
(K.S Rathore) First Secretary (CA) and Marriage Officer, Embassy of India, Kuwait

Son shines as Spurs go top of Premier League, Greenwood fires Man Utd



WOLVERHAMPTON: Manchester United's English striker Mason Greenwood celebrates scoring the opening goal during the English Premier League football match against Wolverhampton Wanderers at the Molineux stadium in Wolverhampton, central England yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: Son Heung-min sent Tottenham to the top of the Premier League as the South Korean's free-kick clinched a 1-0 win against Watford, while Mason Greenwood's late strike fired Manchester United to a record-breaking 1-0 victory at Wolves yesterday.

Nuno Espirito Santo's side have made a flawless start to the new domestic season and they sit two points clear of second placed West Ham after a third successive victory. Son settled a hard-fought clash at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium when his free-kick caught Watford keeper Daniel Bachmann out of position in the first half.

After their protracted search for a manager to succeed to Jose Mourinho dragged on throughout the close-season, Tottenham were in danger of becoming a laughing stock. Nuno was far from their first choice, but the former Wolves boss has hit the ground running north London.

Three consecutive 1-0 wins, including one against Premier League champions Manchester City, as well as progress in the Europa Conference League, suggest Tottenham could enjoy a better

season than expected. Nuno is the first Tottenham manager since Arthur Rowe in 1949 to win his first three league games in charge.

"We knew the threat of Watford, we managed it well, controlling the deep areas, but we should be better on second balls," Nuno said. "We had clear chances to kill the game and transform the result. So, with all that, I'm very happy because the players worked very hard."

Watford midfielder Moussa Sissoko was back at Tottenham, just two days after leaving for the Hornets and he nearly laid on an early goal. Sissoko picked out Juraj Kucka and his shot was headed off the line by Eric Dier.

Son strikes

Tottenham took the lead in the 42nd minute when Son swung in a free-kick from the left wing and Bachmann was caught out as it sailed past him into the far corner. It was Son's second goal of the season after the forward's winner against Manchester City on the opening weekend.

At Molineux, Manchester United set an English

top-flight record for unbeaten away league games in their first match since agreeing a blockbuster deal to sign Cristiano Ronaldo from Juventus. Portugal star Ronaldo, who will return to United 12 years after leaving to join Real Madrid, is not available to make his second club debut this weekend as he waits to officially complete the move.

While Ronaldo waits in the wings, unbeaten United had Greenwood to thank for their second win in three matches. As United fans waved Portugal flags and chanted "Viva Ronaldo", 19-year-old forward Greenwood scored for the third successive game.

United have now gone 28 successive away league games without defeat, passing the mark they shared with Arsenal. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's team were indebted to David De Gea for a superb double save that kept the score level before Greenwood's winner.

De Gea blocked Romain Saiss's close-range header from a corner, then somehow spread himself to thwart the defender's close-range follow-up. Greenwood made Wolves pay for that

miss in the 80th minute when he took Raphael Varane's pass and hit a low shot that flashed under keeper Jose Sa.

Wolves claimed Paul Pogba had fouled Ruben Neves in the build-up to the goal, but referee Mike Dean and VAR ignored their protests. Greenwood is only the second teenager in Premier League history to score in his side's first three games of a season after Liverpool's Robbie Fowler in 1994-95.

United climbed to third place, while Wolves remained pointless and goalless under new boss Bruno Lage. Patrick Bamford rescued a 1-1 draw for Leeds at Burnley. Sean Dyche's side took the lead in the 61st minute when Leeds failed to clear a corner and Matt Lowton's shot was flicked in by Chris Wood from six yards.

The New Zealand international's first goal of the season was the 30,000th scored in the Premier League era. But Leeds striker Bamford celebrated his first call-up to the England squad this week with the 86th minute equalizer. Jamie Shackleton's shot was deflected into Bamford's path and he tapped in for his first goal this season. — AFP

Former IOC president Jacques Rogge dead at 79

PARIS: Jacques Rogge, who spent 12 years as president of the International Olympic Committee, has died at the age of 79, the organisation announced yesterday. "It is with great sadness that the International Olympic Committee announces the passing of former IOC President Count Jacques Rogge. He was 79 years old," said an IOC statement. Rogge was the eighth president of the IOC, from 2001 to 2013, after which he was succeeded by Thomas Bach.

"First and foremost, Jacques loved sport

and being with athletes - and he transmitted this passion to everyone who knew him. His joy in sport was infectious," said Bach yesterday. "He was an accomplished President, helping to modernize and transform the IOC. He was also a fierce proponent of clean sport, and fought tirelessly against the evils of doping. Since we were elected as IOC members together we shared a wonderful bond of friendship, and this continued until his last days. The entire Olympic Movement will deeply mourn the loss of a great friend and a passionate fan of sport."

Rogge was an orthopedic surgeon with a degree in sports medicine. He also played rugby at international level, winning 16 caps for Belgium and became a world champion sailor. It was on the water that he took part in three Olympics in 1968, 1972 and 1976. After his career as an athlete he became president of



Jacques Rogge

the Belgian and European Olympic Committees, and was elected president of the IOC in 2001. After his IOC presidency, he served as a Special Envoy for Youth, Refugees and Sport to the United Nations. Rogge was married to Anne and he leaves behind a son, a daughter and two grandchildren. — AFP

itself in October. Among the Spain-based players called up by South American nations for the upcoming qualifiers are Real Madrid's Brazilians Eder Militao, Casemiro and Vinicius Junior, and nine Argentinians, including Rodrigo De Paul and Angel Correa of Atletico Madrid.

In a statement, FIFA welcomed the CAS ruling, saying "the compromise decision to add two additional days rather than three as requested by...CONMEBOL was taken by the competent FIFA body after consulting all relevant stakeholders and after taking into account all relevant circumstances".

Last week FIFA president Gianni Infantino called for a show of solidarity from leagues after the English Premier League announced its clubs would not release players for international matches played in red-list countries. That was due to frustration that players who travelled to red-list countries would have to follow UK coronavirus quarantine regulations ruling them out of several of their club's matches. — AFP

La Liga loses battle over release of South American internationals

MADRID: Barcelona's match against Sevilla next month is one of two games that have been postponed by La Liga in Spain after it lost an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) over the release of players for upcoming South American World Cup qualifiers.

Barcelona's visit to Seville and Villarreal's home game with Alaves were both due to be played on Saturday, September 11. However, they will now go ahead at a later date, while La Liga has also decided to shake up the remaining fixtures for that weekend after the failure of its appeal.

La Liga had contested FIFA's insistence that players be released for duty with their countries, with South American national teams each playing three World Cup qualifiers in eight days between September 2 and 9.

It had complained that FIFA had unilaterally extended the September international window by two days to allow CONMEBOL, the South American football confederation, to organize the matches. It means that Spain-based players may not return to their clubs until Friday, September 10, leaving them next to no time to prepare for matches that weekend.

"It is obvious that they would not be in a condition to compete properly for their clubs," La Liga said in a statement, adding that it went to the CAS to "defend the integrity of the competition and the rights of the clubs affected."

It pointed out that European governing body UEFA had not extended the international window despite national teams on the continent also playing three World Cup qualifiers in September, and warned that the situation is set to repeat

Verstappen declared winner of rain-ruined Belgian Grand Prix

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, Belgium: Red Bull's Max Verstappen emerged as the winner of the rain-ruined Belgian Grand Prix with only a handful of laps completed behind a safety car at a drenched and dangerous Spa-Francorchamps circuit.

Pole-sitter Verstappen was awarded half points, which moved him to within three points of Lewis Hamilton in the drivers' championship. Williams' George Russell took second with Hamilton's Mercedes in third in the shortest race in Formula One history - all 14 kilometers of it.

Organizers finally gave the go-ahead for a rolling start behind a safety car at 18:30 local time (16:30), three and a half hours after the scheduled 15:00 start. But after two laps with the spray flying the race was stopped with

conditions deemed too dicey at the track where Formula 2 driver Antoine Hubert lost his life in 2019.

The signs were ominous from the start of the afternoon when Verstappen's Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez aquaplaned on his way to the original start at Les Combes. In the end Saturday's qualifying proved pivotal as Verstappen acknowledged.

"Now, in hindsight, it was important to get the pole position - but it was a shame not to do proper laps," said the Belgian born Dutch driver. "The visibility was very low. If we had started at 15:00 (local time), we would have had a better chance. It's a win but not really in the right way. Credit to the fans to stay here all day. In the cold and rain. They are the bigger winners today." — AFP



SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, Belgium: Red Bull's Dutch driver Max Verstappen (right) drives behind the safety car during preliminary laps as the race is postponed over rainy weather during the Formula One Belgian Grand Prix at the Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Spa yesterday. — AFP