



2 Interior minister expresses pride in Kuwait armed forces



6 Bhutan vaccinates most of population after donations



8 IMF sees 6% world growth, warns developing nations falling behind



16 Osaka crashes out as Biles withdrawal stuns Olympics



Civil aviation issues new regulations for travelers

Circular explains rules regarding vaccines, quarantine, PCR tests

Arrival of Caracal choppers to boost state capabilities



KUWAIT: National Guard Deputy Chief Lt Gen Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Sabah attends the inauguration ceremony of the Caracal multirole helicopters. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait yesterday said Caracal multirole helicopters should reinforce capabilities across state bodies, as the first batch of the French-made aircraft landed in the country under a military deal worth \$1 billion. The multirole aircraft will facilitate integral operations such as search and rescue efforts, in addition to emergency evacuation plans, said Kuwait National Guard Deputy Chief Lt Gen Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Sabah.

He hailed the arrival of the aircraft as a "turning point" in Kuwait's military history, besides one of many long-term development plans envisaged by the National Guard, attributing this success to its chief HH Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah. On the National Guard's future ambitions, he said the "sky is the limit", in line with the military body's established role as a "bastion against all threats". — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation yesterday issued new regulations for travelers from August 1, when fully-vaccinated expats with legal residency will be allowed to return, insisting only approved vaccines will be accepted. The regulations state that residents with valid iqamas can return to the country provided they have been vaccinated fully with one of four vaccines recognized by Kuwait. Other vaccines are not accepted.

The circular said only Pfizer-BioNTech, Oxford-AstraZeneca, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are approved. Two doses must be received of the first three vaccines and one dose of the fourth. Airlines have also instructed passengers that at least 14 days must lapse from the second dose to be allowed to board the plane.

The DGCA said all those planning to travel to Kuwait must have a negative PCR test result, taken within 72 hours of the travel time. It said expats and Kuwaitis who have been vaccinated in Kuwait - and after the green color mark appears in their Immune/Kuwait Mobile ID applications - should complete registration on the Shlonik application and Kuwait Mosafer platform.

All vaccinated residents and Kuwaiti citizens must quarantine at home for seven days from the day of arrival. In case they want to end the quarantine early, they can pay the fees and undergo a PCR test on the third day. If the result is negative, the quarantine is considered ended, the regulations say.

Residents who have received approved vaccines outside Kuwait are required to authorize their vaccination certificate by uploading it to the health ministry website. A green mark will appear in a few days on the Immune/Kuwait Mobile ID apps. The vaccina-

tion must be verified electronically before boarding the plane and upon arrival in Kuwait through checking the QR code. No paper documents will be accepted.

These travelers must also complete registration on the Shlonik app and Kuwait Mosafer platform. They will also quarantine at home for seven days, with those desiring to end it early can undergo a PCR test on the third day. If the result is negative, the quarantine ends. The same conditions apply to Kuwaiti citizens.

Unvaccinated Kuwaitis who have the red or yellow color mark on their Immune/Kuwait Mobile ID apps must first complete registration with the Shlonik app and Kuwait Mosafer platform. They must pay the cost of two PCR tests and take the first upon arrival in Kuwait and the second on the sixth day of institutional quarantine. They must also pay the cost of the seven-day quarantine at a local hotel authorized and mentioned on the Kuwait Mosafer platform.

If the result of the second PCR test is negative, they will complete the seventh day of quarantine at the hotel and seven days at home. Kuwaitis who have received unrecognized vaccines outside Kuwait will be treated as unvaccinated.

Members of the foreign diplomatic corps in Kuwait, their first-degree relatives (spouses and children) and their domestic helpers are exempted from institutional quarantine, provided they produce their official IDs. Medical staff in the government and private sectors and their spouses and children, in addition to their domestic helpers, are also exempted from institutional quarantine provided they produce documents proving their profession. The circular also said only Kuwaiti citizens who have been fully vaccinated will be allowed to travel out of Kuwait from August 1.

News in brief

Saudis face 3-year exit ban

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia warned yesterday that citizens visiting destinations on its list of countries blacklisted due to COVID-19 will face "hefty penalties" and three-year travel bans following their return. "Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and the spread of new variants, the ministry warns against travelling to countries on its (restricted) list, whether directly or indirectly via other countries," the interior ministry said on Twitter. According to state airline Saudia, citizens are barred from travelling to 16 countries, including the neighboring UAE. — AFP

Iran arrests Zionist agents

TEHRAN: Iran's intelligence ministry said yesterday it has arrested a network of agents working for the Zionist archenemy and seized a weapons cache meant to be used in "riots", state television reported. The report follows protests over water shortages that erupted more than 10 days ago in the southwest of the country, where, according to Iranian media, at least four people were killed. A video released by Iranian state TV's website showed a number of weapons and grenades including AK-47s and pistols stacked in the back of a white SUV. — AFP

Record COVID cases in Iran

TEHRAN: Iran recorded nearly 35,000 new COVID cases yesterday, the health ministry announced, amounting to the Islamic republic's highest daily infections number for a second consecutive day. In the past 24 hours, Iran registered a record 34,951 positive cases, bringing the total number of infections since the start of the pandemic to 3,758,197. The hardest-hit country in the Middle East also recorded 357 additional coronavirus-related deaths, taking total fatalities to 89,479. — AFP

Biden declares end of combat mission in Iraq

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden declared US relations with Iraq would enter a new phase with American troops exiting combat operations in the country by year-end as he held talks Monday with Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi. Amid the threat of an Islamic State resurgence and Iran's powerful influence in Baghdad, Biden stressed that Washington remains "committed to our security

cooperation" while Kadhemi reaffirmed their "strategic partnership."

US troops in Iraq will "to continue to train, to assist, to help, to deal with ISIS (Islamic State) as it arises," Biden said. But, in a shift that comes as the United States pulls out of Afghanistan, the US leader confirmed that the 2,500 US troops still in Iraq won't be fighting. "We're not going to be, at the end of the year, in a combat mission," he said.

Eighteen years after the US invaded Iraq to remove strongman Saddam Hussein, and seven years after a US-led coalition battled Islamic State extremists who threatened the country, Washington turned its focus to other types of assistance.

Continued on Page 2



WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden shakes hands with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi in the Oval Office of the White House on Monday. — AFP

UN calls for schools to reopen ASAP

GENEVA: Schools closed due to the coronavirus pandemic must reopen as soon as possible, the United Nations insisted yesterday, estimating that the education of more than 600 million children was at stake. "This cannot go on," James Elder, spokesman for the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), told reporters in Geneva.

While acknowledging the difficult choices that governments have to make when facing the COVID-19 crisis and the possible spread of the disease, "schools should be the last to close and the first to reopen," he said, calling it a "terrible mistake" to reopen schools and pubs before schools. "Reopening schools cannot wait for all teachers and students to be vaccinated," he added, calling on governments to protect their education budgets despite the economic hardship caused by the pandemic.

While children in the northern hemisphere are on their summer holidays, in eastern and southern Africa, an estimated 40 percent of school-age children are currently out of school. Across that region,



HEBRON: A Palestinian teacher addresses high school students as they return to class for the new academic year in this Aug 10, 2020 file photo. — AFP

schools are being closed due to COVID-19 surges, with more than 32 million children estimated to be out of school due to pandemic-related closures or having failed to return after their classrooms reopened. That comes on top of the estimated 37 million children who were out of school before COVID-19 struck.

Continued on Page 2

WHO sounds the alarm on 'harmful' e-cigs

GENEVA: Electronic cigarettes and similar devices are dangerous to health and must be regulated to curb the tobacco industry's tactics to get young people hooked on nicotine, the World Health Organization warned yesterday. "Nicotine is highly addictive. Electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) are harmful, and must be better regulated," said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

The WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2021, which focused on new and emerging products, was published yesterday and said ENDS should be tightly regulated for maximum public health protection. "Where they are not banned, governments should adopt appropriate policies to protect their populations from the harms of ENDS, and to prevent their uptake by children, adolescents and other vulnerable groups," Tedros said.

Continued on Page 2

Local

Amir receives copy of Kuwait Central Bank annual report



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a copy of Kuwait Central Bank's annual report from Governor Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a copy of Kuwait Central Bank's annual report from Governor Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives a copy of Kuwait Central Bank's annual report from Governor Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received Kuwait Central Bank Governor Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel, who pre-

sented the 2020/21 financial annual report to His Highness the Amir. Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received Abdullah Yaqoub Bishara, who presented to His Highness a book about the Late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's pioneering diplomatic

career locally and globally.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad at Bayan Palace. Furthermore, His Highness Sheikh Mishal received the CBK's financial report from

Dr Hashel, as well as a book about the Late Amir from Bishara in separate meetings at Bayan Palace yesterday. In addition, Dr Hashel presented a copy of the annual report to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Interior minister expresses pride in armed forces



KUWAIT: Interior Minister and acting Defense Minister Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah meets top officers of the army. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Interior Minister and acting Defense Minister Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah expressed yesterday his pride on the efforts and sacrifices of the Kuwaiti armed forces towards their country. During the reception of the ministry's workers and staff on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, Sheikh Thamer praised the cooperation and coordination

between the ministry of interior and the ministry of defense in protecting Kuwaiti lands. Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Sheikh Khaled Al-Sabah expressed his gratitude and appreciation for this reception, which reflects the minister's devotion towards workers in the ministry. A number of senior officials attended the reception. — KUNA

UN calls for schools to reopen...

Continued from Page 1

In nearly half the countries in Asia and the Pacific, schools have been closed for more than 200 days during the pandemic. In South America and the Caribbean, there are 18 countries and territories where schools are either closed or partially closed, Elder said. Around the world, "education, safety,

friends and food have been replaced by anxiety, violence, and teenage pregnancy", he said.

Citing Uganda, he said that between March 2020 and June 2021, there was a more than 20 percent increase in pregnancy among 10 to 24-year-olds. Remote learning remains out of reach for a third of pupils around the world, UNICEF said. In southeast Asia and the Pacific, 80 million children had no access to remote learning while their school was closed. Schools in Uganda were closed for 306 days with only 0.3 percent of households having an Internet connection. According to a World Bank study, the pandemic will cost this generation of students \$10 trillion in lost income, Elder said. — AFP

WHO sounds the alarm on...

Continued from Page 1

The UN health agency's eighth annual report said ENDS manufacturers often target youths with thousands of tantalizing flavors - the document listed 16,000 - and reassuring statements. Former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg, the WHO's global ambassador for non-communicable diseases, said there were still more than a billion smokers around the world.

"As cigarette sales have fallen, tobacco companies have been aggressively marketing new products - like e-cigarettes and heated-tobacco products - and lobbied governments to limit their regulation," he said. "Their goal is simple: to hook another generation on nicotine. We can't let that happen."

The UN health agency is particularly concerned by people under 20 using e-cigarettes due to the harmful effects of nicotine on brain development. The WHO also believes that children who use these devices are more likely to smoke later in life. However, regulating such products is not necessarily straightforward because the product range is

very diverse and rapidly evolving, said Ruediger Krech, director of the WHO's health promotion department.

"Distinguishing the nicotine-containing products from the non-nicotine, or even from some tobacco-containing products, can be almost impossible. This is just one way the industry subverts and undermines tobacco control measures," he said. The WHO recommends that governments do whatever they can to prevent non-smokers from taking up e-cigarettes, for fear of "renormalizing smoking in society".

The report found that 32 countries have banned the sale of ENDS. A further 79 have adopted at least one partial measure to either prohibit the use of such products in public places, prohibit their advertising, promotion and sponsorship or require the display of health warnings on packaging. "This still leaves 84 countries where they are not regulated or restricted in any way," the WHO said.

The Geneva-based organization stressed that efforts to regulate e-cigarettes should not distract from the fight against smoking. Though the proportion of smokers has fallen in many countries, population growth means that the total number of smokers remains "stubbornly high", the WHO said. "Tobacco is responsible for the death of eight million people a year, including one million from second-hand smoke," it stressed. — AFP

Burgan Bank continues to support its pioneering 'Ro2ya' Talent Program

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank has launched in February 2020 its pioneering training program 'Ro2ya', managed by the Learning and Talent Development Unit, part of the Human Resources and Development Group. This initiative confirms Burgan's firm commitment to implementing its pivotal human capital development strategy. Under Ro2ya, the training programs are provided in the bank's modern training center and through the online learning and development portal to support the capabilities of talented employees and qualify them to acquire the latest work methods and skills that would enable them to keep pace with the market's changing requirements as well as the banking sector's rapid and growing development.

Sixty participants are taking part in the program. They are divided into three groups according to their job levels and current competency, namely, the "Eagles", the "Arrows" and the "Sprouts". Each group follows a learning path carefully designed to help participants develop their skills and knowledge in their various fields of specialization.

Commenting on the goals of Ro2ya Program, Ghada El-Kadi, Unit Head - Learning and Talent Development, said: "Ro2ya Program was launched by Burgan Bank in February 2020 for a period of two to three years to confirm the bank's firm and continuous commitment to nurture and develop future banking leaders and to respond to the Central Bank's strategic plan to prepare Kuwaiti talents to assume senior executive positions in Kuwaiti banks. This program aims to prepare future senior Kuwaiti employees at Burgan Bank by supporting promising talented employees and enabling them to acquire advanced banking and leadership skills that would enable them to deliver outstanding performance in the future. With the support of Burgan's top executive management and the Human Resources Department's senior management, Ro2ya program relies on the expertise of the Learning and Talent Development Unit of the Human Resources Department, in addition to the proficiency of the Organizational Development Unit, to provide educational solutions for various

career paths and plans."

Meanwhile, Manager of Learning and Talent Development, Bashar Al-Qattan, said, "The participants in Ro2ya Program from all the groups and different levels have shown an exceptional commitment to the program and a keenness to learn and grow, especially under the current unprecedented circumstances. The Learning and Talent Development Unit is determined to provide an outstanding educational journey for the talented Burgan employees through a blended approach focused on virtual workshops, practical and applied projects preparation and implementation, job rotations, individual coaching, certification trainings, as well as external executive skills development opportunities in collaboration with KFAS and leading local and international academic institutions. The program draws on the expertise of our distinguished colleagues who have gained internationally recognized skills in their fields of specialization. In addition, an e-learning platform has been designated for each group to provide self-assessment tools, reading materials, online learning paths and group discussions. We will continue to support participants to ensure that they reach their full potential."

It is worth mentioning that Ro2ya program falls within the framework of Burgan Bank's continuous efforts to implement its transformation strategy, and is part of the bank's sound plan to support the human element and help promising talents upgrade their capabilities to advance their careers by enhancing their knowledge and practical skills. For Burgan Bank, these efforts are essential to strengthen its capabilities and maintain its leading position at the local and regional levels. This program confirms Burgan's commitment to its core values of trust, commitment, excellence and progress, and its keenness to instill them in its promising young employees to prepare a new generation of banking leaders who are able to support the development of the bank and the banking sector as a whole and to contribute to the efforts of sustainability and development that everyone seeks to achieve.

Biden declares end of combat...

Continued from Page 1

It said it would help strengthen electric power supplies, fight COVID-19, confront the impacts of climate change, and support private sector development.

Some 500,000 coronavirus vaccine doses pledged to Baghdad "will be there in a couple weeks", Biden told Kadhemi in the White House. Biden also emphasized US support for elections in October in Iraq, saying Washington is working closely with Baghdad, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the United Nations to ensure the elections are fair. "We support strengthening Iraq's democracy and we're anxious to make sure the election goes forward," he said.

Kadhemi said he was in Washington "to discuss the future of our nation". "America, they help Iraq. Together we fight, fight and defeat ISIS," he said. "Today, our relation is stronger than ever - our partnership in the economy, the environment, health, education, culture and more."

The face-to-face meeting, analysts said, was to give support and cover to Kadhemi, in power for little over a year and under pressure from Iran-allied political factions to push US troops from his country. A senior US official who would not be identified praised Kadhemi for being pragmatic and "a problem solver rather than someone who tries to use problems for his own political interests".

The main concern from Washington is to lend enough support to Iraqi security forces to keep up the fight against the remnants of the Islamic State group - while also keeping a damper on Iran's influence in Iraq. Since last year the principal role of the remaining US troops in Iraq has been to train, advise and support their Iraqi counterparts to battle Islamic State.

But powerful pro-Iran political factions, which are crucial to Kadhemi retaining power, are overtly hostile to the US presence, and are accused of being behind rocket and drone attacks on bases in Iraq where US forces operate. The Iraqi Resistance Coordination Committee, a group of militia factions, threatened to continue the attacks unless the United States withdraws all its forces and ends the "occupation."

A drone attack was carried out Friday on a military base in Iraqi Kurdistan that hosts American troops, but did not cause any casualties. A US State Department statement on the lower-level bilateral meetings that accompanied the Biden-Kadhemi summit emphasized US respect for Iraq's sovereignty. "The bases hosting US and other Coalition personnel are Iraqi bases and are operating per existing Iraqi laws; they are not US or Coalition bases, and the presence of international personnel in Iraq is solely in support of the Government of Iraq's fight against ISIS," it said.

Ramzy Mardini, an Iraq specialist at the University of Chicago's Pearson Institute, said the meeting could be cosmetically "shaped" to help the Iraqi premier alleviate domestic pressures. "But the reality on the ground will reflect the status quo and an enduring US presence," said Mardini. — AFP

Local

Cabinet appreciates public cooperation that helped curb COVID-19 spread in Kuwait

Govt stresses need to abide by health requirements to avoid virus spread

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet on the latest developments on global pandemic situation relating to the spread of the coronavirus and variants. He also briefed the ministers on the health situation in Kuwait that witnessed a decline in deaths and infections over the past period. The Cabinet stressed the necessity of abiding by all health requirements and precautions to avoid the spread of the infection. It also advised people to take the anti-coronavirus vaccine, lauding cooperation of the public as a teamwork and compliance with all instructions of health authorities.

Kuwait's daily coronavirus cases jumped by 988 to 393,605 as deaths rose by nine, including eight unvaccinated patients, to 2,293, the health ministry said on Monday. Another 1,336 people were cured of the virus, raising the total of those to have overcome the disease to 377,434, ministry spokesperson Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said in a statement. The number of people hospitalized with the virus stood at 1,074 as of Monday, with 317 of them in intensive care units, he added, revealing that another 13,878 are receiving regular treatment. Some 14,116 swab tests were conducted over the same day taking the total to 3,340,473, Dr Sanad added.

The Cabinet had on Monday cancelled the decision on the closure of all commercial activities at 8:00 pm as of yesterday, head of governmental communication center and spokesman for the Cabinet Tareq Al-Mezrem said. This came in a news videoconference of Al-Mezrem after the weekly Cabinet meeting at Seif Palace headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The Cabinet

decided to open all activities, except for gatherings, conferences, wedding parties, social occasions, and all children actions as of September 1, he added. All vaccinated people are allowed to enter varied activities, and those who are unvaccinated can enter pharmacies, cooperative societies, parallel markets, and food and catering centers, as of August 1, he noted. In addition, the Cabinet decided to resume direct flights to Morocco and the Republic of Maldives as of August 1, he made clear.

Amir's return

Meanwhile, the Cabinet welcomed the return of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the homeland after successful medical checkups, wishing him everlasting well-being. The Cabinet expressed appreciation to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud for great efforts and preparations for pilgrims this year amid these exceptional health conditions.

In the meantime, Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Communication and Information Technology affairs Rana Al-Faris briefed the Cabinet on applying the unified government project of e-services through the 'Sahel' smartphone app. In addition, the Cabinet discussed the recommendations of the economic affairs committee on some bills regarding approving the 2020-2021 final accounts of the Capital Markets Authority, the independent budget, the bodies, and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and its subsidiaries. The Cabinet approved these bills and referred them to His Highness the Amir.

Moreover, the ministers extolled the bronze



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah (center) chairs the Cabinet's meeting. —KUNA

medal won by Abdullah Al-Turqi at Skeet contest at Tokyo Olympic Games, voicing pride for Kuwaiti athletes' achievements. The Cabinet discussed the political affairs in light of the latest developments on the political arena at Arab and international levels. It expressed Kuwait's strong condemnation and denunciation of the attacks launched by Houthi militias' drones on Saudi Arabia. The Cabinet stressed Kuwait's full solidarity with, and support to, Saudi Arabia in all measures taken to maintain its security and stability.

It commended efforts by the Iraqi security authorities for dismantling two terrorist cells that

carried out the Sadr city market blast, and killed and wounded dozens of people. It affirmed Kuwait's full support to Iraq in all measures taken to maintain its security and stability, expressing confidence in the country's ability to face terror and foil sabotage attempts. The Cabinet expressed sincere condolences to Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxemburg as well as the families of the victims over the devastating floods that engulfed these countries. Afterwards, it voiced Kuwait's sympathy with China and India over the devastating floods that left several killed, wounded and missing. —KUNA

Shooting Club awards Olympic medalist Rashidi KD 10,000

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Secretary General of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi said Kuwait Shooting Sport Club's board of directors decided to reward skeet shooter Abdullah Al-Rashidi KD 10,000 for winning a bronze medal at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, adding that any shooter who wins an Olympic medal will get the same reward as an encouragement.

Osaimi, on behalf of the board of directors, thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, 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 for their support and dedicated the win to them. Osaimi also lauded the support of the President of Asian Shooting Federation and Honorary President of Kuwait Shooting Sport Club Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Information Minister and State Minister for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and Public Authority for Sport Director General Humoud Fulaiteh.

Osaimi said continued support for Kuwait shooting from various parties made it possible to make these important achievements, most important of which is making it possible to hoist the Kuwait flag at the most important sports event. He said KSSC is proud for making Kuwait's people happy through the achievement of Rashidi, and wished the trap shooters all success in their events.



KUWAIT: Secretary General of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi (left) with skeet shooter Abdullah Al-Rashidi in an archive photo.

solutions by stc provides cloud-based imaging services to healthcare market

KUWAIT: solutions by stc, the specialized business arm of Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, announced that it has formed a long-term partnership with Agfa HealthCare to provide advanced cloud-hosted enterprise imaging services to healthcare providers in Kuwait. The partnership aims to leverage the strengths of both companies within their fields to offer customers a wealth of expertise and technological solutions catered to their specific domains.

In a statement, solutions by stc indicated that the newly formed partnership will enable the Company to serve the healthcare market by combining its cloud-based solutions with Agfa HealthCare enterprise imaging technology. To better serve local customers, solutions by stc will be offering a range of connectivity, cloud-based, and integrated network solutions, as well as managed services to enhance the process. Additionally, the two companies have agreed to offer the medical imaging applications through cloud-hosted services delivered through solutions by stc's data hosting facility in Kuwait. This will in return simplify the deployment phase and enable local healthcare facilities to utilize the image management solution at affordable rates.

The Enterprise Imaging Solution offered by Agfa HealthCare is a sophisticated and unified platform that provides an imaging management system, vendor neutral archiving (VNA), a powerful workflow engine, real-time interdisciplinary collaboration tools, XERO Universal Viewer, advanced clinical tools, and efficient reporting functionality. The integrated

solution thereby supports value-based care coordination, while equipping caregivers with a broad range of tools that can assist in achieving quality outcomes for patients. According to the partnership agreement, and building on Agfa HealthCare's latest Enterprise Imaging Solution, the services will be first offered to solutions by stc's existing healthcare customers.

solutions by stc commented that the partnership falls in line with its commitment to deliver modern and innovative technological solutions to its customers. The Company currently provides an extensive offering line to assist corporate customers in their digital transformation journey. When introducing new concepts, the Company applies a design thinking approach to widen its offering base, especially when collaborating with market leaders. As a business solutions provider, solutions by stc offers a range of connectivity solutions, fixed or wireless services, 5G technology, ICT, IoT and the IT products and services. The Company also launched the 5G LIVEBUS, a safe and smart bus solution supported by 5G connectivity to provide a safe and convenient method of transportation for passengers.

solutions by stc aims to continue exploring new alternative methods of applying digital and cloud-based concepts that can greatly enhance the efficiency and productivity of existing applications. As the digital era continues to expand through transformative milestones, the Company aims to keep pace with the rapidly evolving tech-world and become the gateway to its customers' appetite for digital innovation.

Kuwait inaugurates COVID-19 vaccination center in Jleeb



KUWAIT: People arrive at a vaccination center in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh to take their COVID-19 vaccine shots yesterday. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Ministry of Health announced the inauguration of a COVID-19 vaccination center in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, in an effort to speed up the vaccination process to contain the virus spread in one of the most populated areas. In a statement yesterday, the ministry affirmed that the

center's capacity is compatible with the area's population, with the availability of large waiting areas. The ministry stressed the continuation of the vaccination process as part of the efforts aimed at curbing the epidemic, especially in areas of overcrowded labor. —KUNA

EPA penalizes violators of marine environment

KUWAIT: Environment Public Authority (EPA) on Tuesday issued a number of penalties of various environmental violations namely dumping waste and breaking rocks to catch hidden marine creatures. It said in a press release the violations were issued during field surveys by the authority teams and the Environment Police on the shores of Al-Asimah and Hawalli Governorates. Such actions violate the Environmental Protection Law. The authority confirmed continuous monitoring of the beaches and marine coasts through periodic inspections by its teams; in cooperation with Kuwait Environment



Police. Law 100 on Environmental Protection prohibits hunting, killing, catching, collecting, harming, possessing or transporting wild and marine creatures, whether live or dead, or harming eggs, nests or habitat of the animals. —KUNA

Local

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

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

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

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

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Several pictures showing signs outside residential buildings in Kuwait saying that apartments are available for rent. 'For Rent' signs have noticeably increased in Kuwait as building owners race to fill vacant apartments, even offering reduced rents in some areas. —Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

News in brief

FM receives call from
Tunisian counterpart

KUWAIT: Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah on Monday received a telephone call from his Tunisian counterpart Othman Jerandi. During the call, Jerandi reviewed, with Sheikh Ahmad Nasser, all current developments in Tunisia, within the framework of the deep-rooted relations between the two countries and their peoples.

Nurses forged COVID-19
vaccine certificates

KUWAIT: Police arrested three health ministry nurses who forged vaccination certificates to unvaccinated people for KD 250-300 each, the interior ministry said. The suspects reportedly changed the status of four persons in the health ministry's system to show that they are vaccinated against COVID-19 despite not taking the vaccine, the interior ministry explained. Investigations are ongoing to reveal any other potential suspects who might have obtained the certificate through forgery, it added.

Kuwait oil drops 71
cents to \$73.02 pb

KUWAIT: Kuwait crude oil dropped 71 cents during Monday's trading sessions to close at \$73.02 per barrel compared with \$73.73 pb last Friday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. Benchmark Brent futures however edged 40 cents higher to \$74.50 pb while West Texas Intermediate (WTI) lost 16 cents to \$71.91 pb.

Australian Academy collaborates with
ACK to organize electronic camp

KUWAIT: The Australian Academy (AA), in collaboration with the School of Engineering at the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK), organized "Discover Engineering Virtually", an electronic camp for high school students, which covered four major disciplines of engineering as a part of its efforts to help the youth of Kuwait reach their full potential.

The virtual camp took place from June 27 to July 14, 2021, and introduced participants to four major disciplines of Engineering including: Petroleum, Civil, Mechanical and Electrical, in an easy and fun way. The main aim of the camp was to build excitement, motivation and

interest in studying engineering, and to increase confidence in the participants' ability to understand concepts of engineering through engaging in engineering projects and applications through rich online platforms.

During the Petroleum Engineering segment of the camp, students learned about various aspects of the field including Reservoir Engineering, Petroleum Refining, Petroleum Geology and Drilling Engineering concepts. Students were also made aware of the importance of safety in the Petroleum industry. Students were given a hands-on experience with software simulating and visualizing wellheads as well.

With regards to the Civil Engineering segment, participants were introduced to various sub-disciplines within Civil Engineering. The students explored the topics of Urban Planning, Transportation Engineering, Structural Engineering, Seismic Engineering, Water Resource Engineering, as well as general engineering principles.

As for the Mechanical Engineering segment, participants were able to examine and simulate a lot of engineering concepts and principles such as Newton's Laws of Motion, Airfoil Analysis, Design, CAD Drawings, Potential to Kinetic Energy Conversion, and Wind Turbine Measurements.

Lastly, for the Electrical Engineering segment, participants gained virtual hardware skills in building electronic circuits, and were taught about how microcontrollers function and how to

connect different components to it such as sensors, actuators, and display screens. At the end of every session, participants embedded what they learned in building electronic circuits and programming its microcontroller to implement real life solutions to different scenarios such as: a traffic light, a fire detector, an intruder alarm, a window wiping system, a CCTV camera system, a counter-up and counter-down (scenario of an elevator), a gas detector and designing a smart home and implementing an automatic lighting system.

By the end of the camp the students were familiarized with different disciplines in Engineering which opened their insights to different fields of study that they may potentially enroll in the future. The students also learned valuable skills that would help them with their ongoing studies in high school.

Education sectors
ready for school
year to begin Sept

KUWAIT: All sectors of the Ministry of Education confirmed their readiness to start the school year end September through a wide range of procedures on receiving students despite current conditions and the

ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The Ministry's statement following the Ministry's counseled meeting, which included Ali Al-Yaqoub the Ministry's Undersecretary, encompassed the 2021/2022 school year arrangements inured to gradually revamp safety and security of the students. The meeting also included the proposition of student's full-access to school under carefully laid out and specific guidelines paralleled with the Health Ministry. Discussion revolving around proposed solutions with a detailed depiction of the process of putting the school year back on track in accordance with the mandated health requirements to better ensure the staff and students safety, were also rooled. —KUNA

Indian School of Excellence, Kuwait
launches Enthusia - Talent Hunt 2021

KUWAIT: "A school with a difference" - Indian School of Excellence, Kuwait has been creating new trends in the field of education, making it a fun filled and enthralling experience. Enthusia - Talent Hunt 2021, a game-changing set of competitions, specially designed for the Indian students in Kuwait by ISEK, is going trendy amongst the young talents of Kuwait. The inaugural ceremony of this innovative event was conducted virtually on July 24, 2021, attended by eminent personalities. The dynamic and versatile Indian actor and stand-up comedian Ali Asgar inaugurated the event. The Board members, Principals and staff members of ICSK and ISEK along with participants and their parents graced the occasion with their presence.

The show was kick-started with the description of 'Enthusia - 21' by the high-spirited host Nisha Parakkoth, of ISEK, who captured all audience attention in no time. Sidra Sayed, from ISEK, narrowed the gap between the audience and the chief guest with a detailed introduction of Ali Asgar. Principal Sherly Dennis, who is also the master brain of Enthusia 2021 welcomed the gathering. She appreciated the parents for their encouragement and support to identify the interest of the children outside the academics. She congratulated each participant, as she believes that the first step towards winning is participation.

Ali Asgar in his interaction with the audience shared his own life experiences as a student and as a performer. He also emphasized to the students that stepping back from difficult situations is not an option. One should always participate in all the activities, irrespective of the rewards without leaving the studies behind.



The Chairman of ICSK and ISEK Board of Trustees, Shaik Abdul Rahiman, expressed his gratitude while presenting the virtual memento to Ali Asgar for his soulful participation in the event. He also appreciated and recognized the efforts taken by the team of ISEK under the guidance of the Principal Sherly Dennis. The event was made more colorful by the energetic performance of the young champs of ISEK.

Priya Mageshvaran of ISEK, delivered the vote of thanks to everyone present. As the Inaugural ceremony came to a close, the participants were all ready and geared up for their very first competition. The fun-filled competitions for four categories starting from LKG to Class 12th will continue through the week and the Award ceremony for all the 19 competitions will be held on August 7, 2021.

Kuwait Times
ESTABLISHED 1961
THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

STAY CONNECTED



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

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait

Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616/7 | Fax: 24835620 - 24835621

E: info@kuwaittimes.net



HK court convicts man in national security trial

Koreas restore severed cross-border communications in surprise thaw

Page 6

Page 6



LEVERKUSEN: Fire engines are seen as smoke rises from a landfill and waste incineration area at the Chempark industrial park run by operator Currenta following an explosion in Leverkusen's Buerrig district, western Germany, yesterday. — AFP

One dead in blast at German chemical site

City mayor: It was 'a dark day for the people of Leverkusen'

LEVERKUSEN: One person has died and four are missing after an explosion at a chemical park in western Germany, the site operator said yesterday, urging residents to stay indoors as a column of black smoke billowed from the area. Another 16 people were injured in the incident in the city of Leverkusen, Chempark operator Currenta said, two of them seriously. All those affected worked at the site.

The cause of the huge blast, which was heard several kilometres away, remains unknown. Germany's NINA warning app sent an "extreme danger" alert to residents, telling them to close their doors and windows and keep emergency numbers free as much as possible. The explosion happened at around 09:40 am (0740 GMT) at Chempark's waste incineration site in Leverkusen's Buerrig district. The area is separate from the main industrial park that houses numerous chemical companies including Bayer, Lanxess and Evonik Industries.

At an afternoon press conference in Leverkusen, Chempark head Lars Friedrich said the warning to

stay indoors remained in place while experts raced to identify the composition of the smoke cloud. Asked whether the cloud might contain toxic gases, Friedrich declined to speculate but said nothing could be ruled out.

City mayor Uwe Richrath said it was "a dark day for the people of Leverkusen". Playgrounds in the Buerrig and Opladen neighbourhoods would be closed, he said, urging residents to rinse fruit and vegetables from their gardens before eating them.

'Tragic accident'

The city of Leverkusen said on its Facebook page that measurements of pollution levels were all still "in the green" and that any measures taken were as a precaution. A hotline has been set up to answer questions from concerned residents. Locals were also asked to report any sightings of soot or residue that may fall from the sky so it can be examined.

"We are deeply saddened by this tragic accident and the death of an employee," said Chempark's

Friedrich, adding that "rescue efforts continue at full speed" to find the four missing employees. The blast had triggered a fire in tanks used as storage for liquid solvents awaiting incineration, he said.

The large blaze took several hours to put out, with firefighters from nearby Cologne called in to help. Three of the tanks "were completely or partially destroyed", Friedrich said, making it impossible to tell for now where the explosion started.

Large numbers of police, firefighters and rescue crews were deployed to the scene, as well as pollution detection experts. Police in Cologne tweeted that they had closed several motorways in the area because of "major damage" and urged drivers to avoid the area. Locals shared images on social media of the black cloud rising into the air, with some saying their windows were rattled by the force of the explosion.

Massive chemicals complex
Leverkusen, on the eastern bank of the Rhine

river, lies about 20 kilometres (12 miles) north of Cologne in the western state of North Rhine-Westphalia. It has a population of more than 160,000 people. According to Currenta, the Chempark chemicals complex is one of the largest in Europe.

More than 70 companies are based at its three locations in Leverkusen, Dormagen and Krefeld-Uerdingen. The chemical incident comes as Germany is reeling from historic floods earlier this month that left at least 180 people dead in North Rhine-Westphalia and neighbouring Rhineland-Palatinate state.

The high death toll raised questions over the country's warning systems, and whether enough had been done to notify residents ahead of time. Government officials have called for old-school sirens to be used more widely again, on top of smartphone warning apps and radio and TV broadcasts. Currenta said it had used both sirens and the NINA app to sound the alarm after the explosion. — AFP

US says China's sea claims have 'no basis' in international law

SINGAPORE: Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin said yesterday that Beijing's expansive claims in the South China Sea have "no basis in international law", taking aim at China's growing assertiveness in the hotly contested waters. Austin's broadside came at the start of his first trip to Southeast Asia as US defence secretary, as he seeks to rally allies in the region as a bulwark to China.

President Joe Biden's administration wants to reset relations with Asian countries and build alliances to face Beijing, after the turbulence and unpredictability of the Donald Trump era. Speaking in Singapore, Austin criticised China's actions in the disputed sea, where Beijing has overlapping territorial claims with several Southeast Asian states.

"Beijing's claim to the vast majority of the South China Sea has no basis in international law," he said in a speech hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies think tank. "That assertion treads on the sovereignty of the states in the region," he said, adding that the US would support countries in defending their rights.

China claims almost all of the resource-rich sea, through which trillions of dollars in shipping trade passes annually, with competing claims from

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. Beijing has been accused of deploying a range of military hardware including anti-ship missiles and surface-to-air missiles there, and ignored a 2016 international tribunal decision that declared its historical claim over most of the waters to be without basis.

Tensions have escalated in recent months between Beijing and rival claimants. Manila was angered after hundreds of Chinese boats were spotted inside the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone, while Malaysia scrambled fighter jets to intercept Chinese military aircraft that appeared off its coast.

'Will not flinch'

Austin said yesterday that the US "will not flinch when our interests are threatened"—but he insisted Washington does "not seek confrontation" with China. "I am committed to pursuing a constructive, stable relationship with China, including stronger crisis communications with the People's Liberation Army."

The US-China relationship has deteriorated over a range of issues from cybersecurity and tech supremacy to human rights in Hong Kong and Xinjiang. Biden has largely kept the hawkish stance on China of Donald Trump, describing the Asian power as the pre-eminent challenge to the United States, but has lowered the temperature and instead emphasised working with allies and working at home to compete better. After Singapore, Austin will visit Vietnam and the Philippines, and will seek to underline that the US is a "stabilising force" in



SINGAPORE: US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin (L) speaks with Singapore's Minister of Defence Ng Eng Heng during the 40th International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Fullerton lecture in Singapore yesterday. —AFP

Southeast Asia, said a senior defence official.

A booming region home to more than 650 million people, Southeast Asia has become a key battleground for influence between the US and China. And as the region faces its most serious coronavirus outbreak yet, Washington and Beijing have been competing to donate vaccines. Austin played up the US contribution, saying Washington was "rushing life-saving vaccine doses to the region", and listed several Southeast Asian countries that had received jabs. "They are free. No conditions, no small print—and no strings attached." — AFP

Death toll from Henan floods rises to 71

BEIJING: The death toll from floods in central China's Henan province rose to 71 yesterday as a tribute at a subway where 14 people died was sealed off in a sign of sensitivity to public criticism of the government's handling of the disaster.

Torrential downpours dumped a year's rain in just three days last week on the hardest-hit city of Zhengzhou, flooding subway cars and trapping more than 500 com-

muters during rush hour last Tuesday. Images of passengers inundated by shoulder-height water went viral on Chinese social media.

The city government announced yesterday the names of those who perished in the subway, a rare attempt at transparency after people started leaving flowers at the entrance to the station. "Extreme rains caused severe water logging in parts of subway line 5, and the retaining walls that protected the subway lines crumbled," the government statement said.

Subway guards eventually blocked access to the floral tribute, but a video published by state-run West China Metropolis Daily Tuesday showed a group of people

pushing aside the yellow barricades on Monday night chanting "let the spirits of those who died come back home!"

One of the victims, identified in the official list by his last name Sha, was days short of his 34th birthday. "Who would have thought that you were only one stop away from home, but you will never come back again," his wife wrote on China's twitter-like Weibo.

Sha's wife, who declined to give her name, told Jimu news that she was suing the metro operator for negligence. Foreign journalists covering the floods have been harassed online and on the ground, as sensitivity towards any negative portrayal of China mounts.

Reporters from AFP were forced to delete footage by hostile residents and surrounded by dozens of men while reporting on a submerged traffic tunnel in Zhengzhou. Heavy downpours that began July 17 have affected almost 13 million people, damaged nearly 9,000 homes and caused economic losses in Henan estimated at 13.9 billion yuan (\$2 billion). Forecasters said yesterday more heavy rain is expected as the remnants of Typhoon In Fa pass through the area.

Cities still reeling from the last week's floods, including Xinxiang, Hebi and Anyang, are likely to see the heaviest downpours from July 27 to 29, Henan's meteorological observatory said in a statement. — AFP

A Reputed Maintenance Company in Qatar is hiring for the below positions for Oil & Gas Project

Rotating Equipment Technician

Dip. in Mechanical Engg. with min. 8 years' experience maintenance, trouble shooting and repair of a wide range of rotating, stationary and mechanical machineries, and equipment.

Metering Instrument & Control Technician

Dip. in Electronic / Instrument Engg. with min. 5 years' experience in carryout basic troubleshooting and maintenance of all the PLC, HMI, Flow computers, printers' systems (Siemens; Allen Bradley, Omni etc.)

Instrument & Control Technician

Dip. in Electronic / Instrument Engg. with min. 5 years of Experience in installation, maintenance, troubleshooting and testing of a wide range of electronic installations, instrumentation, control, and automation systems (PLC DCS, analyzers, Safety systems).

Condition Monitoring Technician

Dip. in Mechanical Engg. with min 5 years of experience in condition monitoring and reliability and performance analysis as per reliability management program and plans, in addition to monitoring and analyzing equipment balancing, alignment, vibration, tribology and other mechanical conditions of a wide range of rotating and mechanical machineries and equipment.

Lab Analyst

Degree in Chemistry or Chemical Engineering with min. 6 years of experience in applied laboratory activities in O&G plant production and Industrial Water Management plants.

Field Operator

Dip. In Mechanical / Chemical Engineering with min. 8 years of experience in operate the onshore / offshore plant equipment's.

All Candidates Should Have Min. 3 Years in Oil & Gas Plant

Suitable candidates shall forward their CVs to hr.fmrec@gmail.com / WhatsApp: 00 974 5550 5943

International

Koreas restore severed cross-border communications in surprise thaw

Top leaders agree to make big stride in recovering mutual trust

SEOUL: North and South Korea signalled a surprise thaw in relations yesterday, announcing the restoration of cross-border communications that were severed more than a year ago and an agreement between their two leaders to improve ties.

The joint announcement, which coincided with the anniversary of the end of the Korean War, was the first positive development since a series of summits between the North's Kim Jong Un and the South's President Moon Jae-in in 2018 failed to achieve any significant breakthrough.

The two sides revealed that Kim and Moon had exchanged a series of letters since April in which they agreed that re-establishing hotlines would be a productive first step in re-booting relations between the two rivals who, despite the end of their 1950-53 conflict, remain technically at war.

"The top leaders of the north and the south agreed to make a big stride in recovering the mutual trust and promoting reconciliation by restoring the cut-off inter-Korean communication liaison lines," North Korea's official KCNA news agency reported.

Pyongyang unilaterally cut off all official military and political communication links in June last year over activists sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border but the two sides said all lines were restored yesterday. They exchanged their first phone call since the suspension yesterday morning, Seoul's unification ministry said, with the defence ministry adding that military hotlines were also back to normal operation.

Moon's office said that restoring the hotlines was the first step towards improving ties. "The two leaders also agreed to restore mutual trust between the two Koreas as soon as possible and move forward with the relationship again," it added in a statement. The dovish Moon is credited with brokering the first-ever summit between North Korea and a sitting US president in Singapore in June 2018.

But Pyongyang largely cut off contact with Seoul following the collapse of a second summit between Kim and then US president Donald Trump in Hanoi that left nuclear talks at a standstill. Just days after severing the hotlines last year, Pyongyang also blew up an inter-Korean liaison office on its side of the border

and threatened to bolster military presence along the Demilitarized Zone that separates them.

'Kim's first response'

Since US President Joe Biden took office, Pyongyang and Washington have adopted a wait-and-see attitude to relations following the diplomatic roller coaster ride under Trump that produced three summits but no agreement on dismantling the North's nuclear arsenal.

Kim said in June that Pyongyang needed to prepare for both "dialogue and confrontation" with Washington-but with a particular emphasis on the latter. The White House promised a "practical, calibrated approach"-including diplomatic efforts-in a recent review of its strategy to persuade the impoverished North to give up its nuclear weapons and missile programmes.

Sung Kim, the top US diplomat in charge of North Korea negotiations, said in June that Washington was ready to meet with Pyongyang "anywhere, anytime, without preconditions". But Kim Yo Jong-Kim Jong Un's sister and a key adviser-dismissed the offer.

Analysts said yesterday's restoration



Sung Kim, the top US diplomat in charge of North Korea negotiations.

of the inter-Korean hotlines signalled Kim's initial response to Washington's talks offer. "It looks like he has decided that restoring inter-Korean relations is beneficial to the North's both domestic and foreign policies and politics," Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of

North Korean Studies, told AFP.

Despite the standstill in talks, Moon has relentlessly stressed the importance of restoring inter-Korean ties, he added. "This should be read as Kim Jong Un's first response to Seoul and Washington," Yang said. — AFP

Bhutan vaccinates most of population after donations

THIMPU: Bhutan has inoculated most of its eligible population with second doses of COVID-19 vaccinations in a week, in a speedy rollout hailed by UNICEF on Monday as a "success story" for international donations. More than 454,000 shots were administered over the past week in the remote Himalayan kingdom-just over 85 percent of the eligible adult population of more than 530,000 people-after a recent flood of foreign donations.

UNICEF's Bhutan representative, Will Parks, hailed the ambitious vaccination drive as a "great success story for Bhutan". "We really need a world in which the countries which have surplus vaccines really do donate to those countries that haven't received (shots) so far," he told AFP in the capital Thimphu.

"And if there's anything that I hope the world that can learn, is that a country like Bhutan with very few doctors, very few nurses but a really committed king and leadership in the government mobilising society-it's not impossible to vaccinate the whole country."

The tiny nation had quickly used up most of the 550,000 AstraZeneca jabs donated by India in late March and early April for first jabs, before the neighbouring country halted exports over a massive local surge in infections. — AFP

HK court convicts man in national security trial

HONG KONG: A Hong Kong court convicted a former waiter of terrorism and inciting secession yesterday in the first trial conducted under a national security law that was imposed by China to stamp out dissent.

The watershed ruling lays down a new marker in the city's changing legal landscape and confirms certain slogans are now outlawed in the international finance hub.

Tong Ying-kit, 24, was charged with terrorism for driving a motorbike into three police officers and secession for flying a protest flag during a rally on July 1 last year, the day after the national security law was enacted. The flag read "Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times", a ubiquitous slogan during the huge and often violent pro-democracy protests that convulsed the city two years ago.

The 15-day trial was heard without a jury — a significant departure from Hong Kong's common law tradition — and was decided by three judges handpicked by the city's leader to try national security crimes.

In a written ruling, the judges said the flag's slogan was "capable of inciting others to commit secession".

The charge of terrorism was met because crashing his motorbike into police officers "seriously jeopardised

public safety or security".

Tong will be sentenced at a later date, and faces up to life in prison.

The ruling has profound implications for future national security cases. More than 60 people have been charged under the law, including some of the city's best-known democracy activists such as Jimmy Lai, owner of the now-shuttered Apple Daily newspaper. Most are now in jail awaiting trial.

Slogan now illegal?

Legal analysts said yesterday's ruling showed Hong Kong's judiciary is adopting a broad interpretation of the security law and that the courts would become more like those in authoritarian mainland China, especially for political cases.

"The whole system, from the administration to the law enforcement to the judiciary, has reached an alignment," Eric Lai, an expert on Hong Kong's legal system at Georgetown Law School, told AFP.

Surya Deva, an expert at City University of Hong Kong's law school, told AFP that "all institutions and legal processes will be geared to achieve certain pre-defined outcomes" in national security-related cases.

In mainland China, opaque courts answer to the Communist Party and conviction is all but guaranteed,



HONG KONG: Senior counsel Clive Grossman (R), who is representing Tong Ying-kit, leaves the High Court in Hong Kong yesterday, after Tong was convicted of terrorism and inciting secession in the first trial conducted under a national security law imposed by China. — AFP

especially in political or national security cases.

Hong Kong maintains an internationally respected common law system that is the bedrock of its business-hub status. Days of Tong's trial were spent on the flag, with university professors called by both sides to explain the slogan's meaning.

Defence experts argued the slogan meant many things to different people in what was a leaderless protest movement that included a broad spectrum of views, from people advocating genuine independence to those

wanting greater democracy and police accountability.

The prosecution argued that the slogan had clear separatist connotations and that Tong's decision to drive his bike into the police met the security law's definition of terrorism.

Tong's case was unusual in that he was one of the only people arrested under the security law who was accused of an explicitly violent act.

The vast majority of those awaiting prosecution were arrested for expressing political views that authorities say are now illegal. — AFP

Myanmar junta cancels results of 2020 polls won by Suu Kyi's party

YANGON: Myanmar's junta on Monday cancelled the results of 2020 polls won by Aung San Suu Kyi's party, announcing they were not "free and fair" almost six months after deposing the Nobel laureate in a coup. Investigations had uncovered more than 11 million cases of fraud in the elections in which Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy trounced the military-aligned opposition, the junta's election commission said.

"They (the NLD) attempted to take state power from non-NLD parties and candidates by misusing COVID-19 restrictions," said commission chairman Thein Soe. "[It] was not free and fair, that is why the result of 2020 election is cancelled." He did not say whether fresh polls in the country of 54 million would be held.

The junta has previously said it would hold new elections within two years, but has also threatened to dissolve the NLD. Suu Kyi has been detained since the coup, and faces an eclectic raft of charges, from flouting coronavirus restrictions to illegally importing walkie talkies, that could see her jailed for more than a decade.

Myanmar has been in chaos since the military's power grab, with more than 900 killed in a crackdown on dissent, according to a local monitoring group. A resurgent virus wave has caused deadly havoc across the country, striking with many hospitals empty of pro-democracy medical staff.

Myanmar's economy is expected to shrink by 18 percent in 2021, the World Bank said Monday, as a result of massive unrest following the coup and a third coronavirus wave. The NLD saw their support increase in the 2020 vote compared to the previous election in 2015. — AFP



OSLO: File photo shows NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg speaking with people outside Oslo's Cathedral following a memorial service on July 22, 2021, ten years after a right-wing extremist killed 77 people in twin attacks. — AFP

NATO chief urges 'settlement' in Afghanistan

BRUSSELS: NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg yesterday reiterated calls for a "negotiated settlement" with the Taliban in Afghanistan, admitting the country faced a "deeply challenging" security situation as foreign troops leave.

"The security situation in Afghanistan remains deeply challenging, and requires a negotiated settlement. NATO will continue to support Afghanistan, including with funding; civilian presence; and out-of-country training," Stoltenberg wrote on Twitter after speaking to Afghan President Ashraf Ghani.

Since early May, violence has surged as the Taliban launched a sweeping assault just days after

US-led NATO forces began a withdrawal which is now almost complete. The deadly advance has seen the insurgents capture scores of districts, border crossings and encircle several provincial capitals.

The fighting continues across the rugged countryside as peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban have so far failed to reach a deal to end the war. Most of NATO's 10,000-strong force have already pulled out of the country after a decision by President Joe Biden to bring Washington's troops home after two decades.

The United Nations warned Monday that Afghanistan could see the highest number of civilian deaths in more than a decade if the Taliban's offensives across the country are not halted. The US descended on Afghanistan and its Taliban government in 2001 in the wake of the 9/11 attacks by Al-Qaeda, which had sought sanctuary in the country.

There are serious fears that the Taliban's advance could see the collapse of the country and unravel the tenuous gains made in 20 years of costly involvement in the country. — AFP

Indonesia reports record 2,069 virus deaths in 24 hours

JAKARTA: Indonesia reported a record 2,069 coronavirus deaths in 24 hours yesterday as the Southeast Asian nation faces its deadliest COVID-19 surge since the pandemic began. Yesterday's grim tally was nearly 600 deaths higher than the previous day and topped last week's daily record 1,566 deaths, the health ministry said.

New infections also shot up to just over 45,000, from about 28,000 on Monday. The eye-watering data comes after Indonesia this week loosened virus curbs by allowing small shops, streetside restaurants and some shopping malls to reopen after a three-week partial lockdown. But health experts warned it could trigger a fresh wave of cases, as the highly infectious Delta variant tears across the vast archipelago, which has overtaken India and Brazil to become the global pandemic epicentre.

Shopping malls and mosques in less affected parts of the Muslim-majority nation also got the green light to open their doors from Monday, to limited crowds and with shorter hours. Offices were still under shutdown orders.

Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous nation where tens of millions live hand to mouth, has avoided strict lockdowns seen in some other countries. But the government has been widely criticised for its handling of the pandemic and policies that critics say prioritised Southeast Asia's largest economy over public health.

President Joko Widodo has pointed to falling daily infection and hospital occupancy rates, including in the hard-hit capital Jakarta, as justification for the easing. But the Delta variant has been detected in about a dozen regions outside Jakarta, densely populated Java and Bali, where infections have also soared in recent weeks. — AFP



mitsubishi



Rear View Camera



Smartphone Link
Display Audio



18" Alloy Wheel



Paddle Shift



Bluetooth



Keyless Operation System

**Family friendly
& mighty..**

**Defies any
circumstances**

Starting from

5,999 KD

Made in Japan



OUTLANDER



الخط الساخن 22055888
مبيعات الجملة 22055887



Business

WEDNESDAY, JULY 28, 2021

CBK's robust policies helped offset Kuwait's financial crisis: Al-Hashel

CBK publishes annual report for fiscal year 2020/21

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) published its 49th Annual Report for the 2020/2021 fiscal year, which includes audited financial statements for the period until March 31, 2021 and encompasses CBK's efforts for said year.

Central Bank of Kuwait Governor Dr Mohammad Y Al-Hashel stated that it has undoubtedly been an exceptional year, taking into consideration the Central Bank of Kuwait's success in facing a multitude of challenges that have risen due to the Coronavirus pandemic. This crisis has been unprecedented, reaching all corners of the globe since it was first discovered at the end of 2019, until the present day. Total and partial lockdowns in various countries around the world also affected supply and demand, which placed a hiatus on economic activity and ultimately led to massive employment loss and incurred huge damage to several economic sectors. Locally, the impact of the crisis was compounded by the drop in oil prices, which called for more spending in the face of income loss.

The governor said that this crisis was a true test to the robust monetary and regulatory policies that the Central Bank of Kuwait has worked diligently to implement over the past decade. It showcased the strength of these policies and boosted the nation's banking sector, specifically in its ability to provide financial services to the public, despite increasing pressure and unusual circumstances that were forced by the pandemic. The Central Bank of Kuwait continued its operations seamlessly without any interruption whatsoever, and it continued to perform its role with speed and efficiency.

During the last fiscal year, the Central Bank of Kuwait continued its efforts to maintain monetary stability and financial stability through a proactive approach and early interventions, while continuing to utilize all monetary policy tools, supervisory policies, and macro prudential instruments, in a professional manner that strengthens sustainable economic development. The Central Bank of Kuwait

was also successful in preserving the attractiveness of the local currency as a stable and reliable store for local investments, while ensuring that banks and authorities it oversees continue to provide their financial services to the local economy and public, in a seamless, swift and safe manner.

Al-Hashel reiterated that this crisis was unprecedented, and the Central Bank of Kuwait played its mandated role as a financial advisor to the government, which required leadership to stimulate the national economy in face of the challenges posed by the pandemic. It also upheld its role in developing the legislative framework, placing controls to implement policies related to banking and finance, in addition to presenting studies and predictions on the crisis, and ways to address its various ramifications.

He added that the COVID-19 pandemic also bore witness to the sagacity of the financial and regulatory policies at the Central Bank of Kuwait. It displayed its institutional culture that strives to facilitate the flow of knowledge and the exchange of expertise, while enhancing excellence and increasing productivity through a work environment that encourages its employees to develop their performance and skillset. Reliance on a national workforce was a long-term initiative at the Central Bank of Kuwait when it comes to training and development, and during this past year the institution has worked tirelessly to strengthen this aspect of its corporate culture, mainly through its efforts to continue the development of its employees and focus on their continued training.

The Central Bank of Kuwait has also focused on employee development as means of enhancing infrastructure that pertains to IT and the digital economy, in order to provide a strong base for Fintech development. This includes ongoing efforts to ensure the growth of auditing systems for these electronic services, as well as sound and strong management of both information security



Dr Mohammad Y Al-Hashel

and cybersecurity.

Additionally, corporate social responsibility and public outreach has also continued throughout the last year, primarily through awareness campaigns that alert the public to their rights while raising financial and banking knowledge; a campaign such as "Diraya", or "Be Aware" in English, was launched in partnership with the Kuwait Banking Association, in addition to other communication and CSR activities such as the "Kafa'a initiative" offered to develop and qualify national cadres specialized in finance and banking.

The Governor stressed that with all of the precautions and steps taken to face the pandemic over the course of the last year, it is still premature to say that the crisis is over. An overwhelming feeling of uncertainty still hovers over the future of the economy, which is why the Central Bank of Kuwait's future outlook is to focus on strengthening the banking sector in order to face any challenges that may arise. The risks involved in tapering the policies implemented to confront the crisis, and the impact of digitization on the role of financial mediation in the banking sector and the impact of a low-interest environment on banking sector's busi-

ness model, cannot be overlooked.

The Central Bank seeks to continue to strengthen its regulatory efforts and develop its activities by making use of Regtech and Supstech. These technologies can play an active role in combating money laundering and terror finance, as well as prudential risk management, which reflects on the strength and stability of the banking sector.

With the increasingly important role of Big Data, the Central Bank of Kuwait places great emphasis on data governance, taking into consideration the financial sector's use of data in service and product development to cater to the needs of its clients, while ensuring their privacy. The Central Bank of Kuwait has also seen cybersecurity and data security as a priority, in light of the increasing role of technology and cyber risks associated with it. Another pivotal focus is green finance, through environmental disclosure standards and environmental effects standards, and the requirements placed on banks and its inclusion in stress test forms.

Looking forward, one of the Central Bank of Kuwait's main goals is to encourage innovation and its support to develop the financial industry sustainably. This also includes the development of a state of the art financial infrastructure, which will serve to encourage innovative financial services that will safely and securely cater to the needs of clients.

With all that the future holds in regards to challenges and opportunities, people remain at the heart of this transformation. Therefore, the Central Bank of Kuwait will continue to develop its national workforce, increasing their knowledge and expertise, in order to continue its journey of distinction and success that this institution has led for several decades in service to the nation's economy.

In conclusion, Al-Hashel pointed out that the Annual Report for FY 2020/21 is now available through the official CBK website (www.cbk.gov.kw).

IMF sees 6% world growth, warns developing nations falling behind

KUWAIT: The global economy will expand by six percent this year, but disparities between nations are widening as advanced economies accelerate while developing countries fall behind, the IMF said yesterday.

While the forecast for global growth is unchanged from the previous estimate in April, the United States is projected to see faster seven percent growth thanks to massive government spending and widespread COVID-19 vaccinations, while the IMF slashed the forecast for India, which is facing a resurgence of infections. "Vaccine access has emerged as the principal fault line along which the global recovery splits into two blocs," the International Monetary Fund said in its updated World Economic Outlook, warning of the danger to the economy if new virus variants are allowed to take hold.

The recovery "is not assured even in countries where infections are currently very low so long as the virus circulates elsewhere," the report said. And while the recent inflation spike is the result of the unprecedented and uneven turnaround from the pandemic and should prove temporary, the IMF raised the possibility that price increases could become "persistent."

The Washington-based crisis lender once again stressed that "the immediate priority is to deploy vaccines equitably worldwide."

Advanced nations have vaccinated nearly 40 percent of the population, compared to barely 10 percent in emerging markets and even fewer in low-income countries, the report said. "The emergence of highly infectious virus variants could derail the recovery and wipe out \$4.5 trillion cumulatively from global GDP by 2025," IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath warned in a blog post.

More than half of that lost wealth would come from rich nations in the event new variants of the coronavirus spread unchecked. And this is not just a "tail risk" that is highly unlikely, "This is a realistic downside risk," said Petya Koeva-Brooks, deputy director of the IMF Research Department.

Although some emerging market nations like Brazil and Mexico are poised to show stronger growth this year, developing nations as a group are lagging and struggling to return to their pre-pandemic levels.

"I would say we're more worried than we were back in April," Koeva-Brooks told AFP. The IMF is pushing for a \$50 billion plan that offers a "feasible cost to end the pandemic" by distributing vaccines and addressing immediate needs in lower income countries.

Temporary or persistent?
Rising prices are another factor



Gita Gopinath

weighing on the global recovery, and pose a challenge to policymakers. "The unprecedented convulsion in the global economy last year continues to trigger aftershocks," the IMF said, pointing to a shortage of computer chips and a lack of shipping containers where they are needed, which has delayed deliveries of materials. Koeva-Brooks said some of the bottlenecks and price jumps were to be expected and should be temporary, but IMF economists acknowledge that higher inflation could become entrenched.

Because the situation is so unique and "we've never seen how to reopen economies after a crisis like this one," it is difficult to forecast, she said. However, the IMF said inflation should return to pre-pandemic ranges in 2022 and urged central banks to hold off on reacting to the temporary price pressures—but to be ready to take "preemptive action."



Divergent recoveries

Vaccinations allowed an economic reopening and led to upgrades for the United States for this year and next, when growth is expected to hit 4.9 percent. However, that assumes the US Congress will approve another round of spending later this year, such as President Joe Biden's infrastructure and job creation programs. The IMF also raised the 2021 estimates for Canada and Britain to 6.3 percent and seven percent, respectively, while the euro area GDP is expected to expand 4.6 percent, just slightly higher than the April WEO.

India's growth forecast was slashed three points to 9.5 percent, and even China was trimmed by three-tenths of a percentage point to 8.1 percent. In Latin America, Mexico is expected to post higher growth, helped by the positive spillovers from the US economy, while Brazil also got a boost amid rising commodity prices, the report said. —AFP

British department store Selfridges up for sale: Report

LONDON: British department store chain Selfridges Group has been put up for sale by Canada's Weston family for £4.0 billion (\$5.5 billion, 4.7 billion euros), media reports said Monday.

Credit Suisse has been appointed to start looking for a buyer, Britain's domestic Press Association newsire reported without citing its source. Several suitors have expressed an interest but no formal bid has yet been tabled, it added. Neither Selfridges nor the Weston family would comment when approached by AFP.

Selfridges, whose flagship store is on London's

Oxford Street, was founded in 1908 but has been controlled by the Westons since 2003. The group has 25 outlets worldwide under five brands, including De Bijenkorf in the Netherlands, Holt Renfrew in Canada and Selfridges in Britain.

Department stores, like the broader retail sector, have been hammered by the coronavirus pandemic which pushed consumers to shop online. Selfridges itself cut 450 jobs a year ago after sales slumped during England's nationwide lockdown, which was fully lifted a week ago. UK rival Debenhams meanwhile collapsed at the end of last year, with the loss of thousands of jobs.

John Lewis Partnership meanwhile announced plans to slash 1,000 management jobs this month, having already axed 16 stores during the pandemic with the loss of 2,800 positions. High street retailers were already struggling before the COVID outbreak due to intense competition from supermarkets and online giants like Amazon. — AFP



LONDON: Shoppers carry Selfridges bags as they walk past Selfridges flagship store on Oxford street in central London. —AFP

Stocks retreat as Fed kicks off policy meeting

NEW YORK: US and European stock markets fell yesterday after a mixed Asian session, as attention turned to the Federal Reserve and the start of the US central bank's policy meeting.

Bitcoin, which briefly topped \$40,000 on Monday, dropped under \$38,000 after Amazon denied a report that it planned to begin accepting the digital currency by the end of the year. Hong Kong led a sell-off across most Asian stock markets, extending the previous day's losses as traders were spooked by China's latest crackdown on a range of industries.

New regulations on China's tutoring sector — which has clobbered private education firms — along with more moves against tech firms and fresh rules for property and food delivery companies has traders wondering where Beijing will strike next, analysts said. In the background are rising concerns about the fast-spreading Delta coronavirus variant and the slow rollout of vaccines, with some governments having to impose new lockdowns or other containment measures.

Meanwhile, the highest-level China-US talks under President Joe Biden ended without making much headway, suggesting tensions between the two superpowers will continue to simmer. Hong Kong sank more than four percent to match Monday's drop with investors running for cover after Beijing's latest move to tighten control over the economy.

At the weekend, China said it would prevent after-school tutoring companies from making a profit, raising capital or going public, making it virtually impossible to invest in them. Officials also looked to wind in tech giant Tencent, while unveiling new rules to protect hard-pressed drivers in the delivery business.

"China's regulatory uncertainty is not going away," said Rodrigo Catril at National Australia Bank. "Indeed it looks to be broadening, with no clarity as to when and where it will end."

In Hong Kong, the value of shares in firms caught in the regulatory sweep fell further, though losses for education firms were not as stark as on Monday. Tencent was also hit after it was told to relinquish exclusive music label rights owing to apparent antitrust breaches.

Its shares fell by 10 percent, while Alibaba shed more than six percent. Food delivery firm Meituan lost more than 17 percent. —AFP

Business

Ooredoo Kuwait Group reports revenue of KD 295 million for first half of 2021

Group reported a record jump with over 300% net profit

KUWAIT: National Mobile Telecommunications Company K.S.C.P "Ooredoo" (Ticker: OOREDOO) announced yesterday its financial results for the half year ended 30 June 2021:

Commenting on these significant financial results, Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdullah Al-Thani, Chairman of the Board of Directors stated the fact that: "COVID-19 continued to impact economic activities in several of our markets during the first half of 2021, however, despite these challenges; we prioritize the health and wellbeing of our employees and customers. This is supported by the on-going provision of uninterrupted connectivity in the markets in which we operate, and the empowerment of the communities that continue to be affected by the pandemic. Consolidated revenue increased slightly to KD 294.7 million in H1 2021, compared to KD 294.1 million in H1 2020, and NMTC reported an improved EBITDA margin of 36 percent for the period despite the various ongoing restrictions and challenges associated with the pandemic.

In Kuwait, our continued focus on cost optimization, supported by our digital transformation agenda, led to an increase in EBITDA by 11 percent to KD 29.7 million in H1 2021. In Tunisia, first half revenues and EBITDA increased by 6 percent and 3 percent respectively. In Algeria, reported revenues declined to KD 92.6 million mainly due to the 9 percent devaluation of the Algerian dinar, in local currency terms revenue was up 8 percent. In Palestine, we reported a strong EBITDA increase of 22 percent, driven by our revenue growth of 10 percent as well as our continued cost optimization initiatives. In the Maldives, Q2 revenue in local currency terms improved by 3 percent year on year and Ooredoo Maldives won multiple Asia Pacific Stevie Awards 2021."

Al-Thani concluded saying: "We are broadening our products across all markets offering and focusing on expanding our customer acquisition channels".

"Hi strong performance for Ooredoo Kuwait wouldn't have been possible without the commitment and innovative work of every team member in our company," said Abdulaziz Yaqoub Al-Babtain, Ooredoo Kuwait's CEO. "Ooredoo's financial and operational performance witnessed a substantial growth over the past 6 months. We are gratified by the enthusiastic customer response to the unmatched line of cutting-edge products and offers that we delivered across all our channels," said Al-Babtain.

Al-Babtain pointed out to the fact that "We have stayed focused on our core business while maintaining agility to transform and lead in the digital space driven by our bold strategy and revolutionary vision. We have successfully invested in our network infrastructure, signed strategic B2B agreements, provided governmental entities and partners with connectivity services and security solutions, continued to invest in our Kuwaiti manpower and above all: Ooredoo Kuwait was proudly named "Kuwait Fastest Network in 2021".

Review of operations

The Group's operational performance can be summarized as follows:

Ooredoo Kuwait:

Ooredoo Kuwait revenues were KD 102.7 million in H1 2021, compared to KD 104.2 million in H1 2020. EBITDA increased by 11 percent to KD 29.7 million in H1 2021 compared to KD 26.7 million in H1 2020, driven by operational efficiencies across the business.

KD 68 million Investment

Ooredoo Kuwait's network infrastructure witnessed a significant upgrade over the past two years, with KD 68 million invested heavily in developing the network in addition to enhancing and enriching customers' experience and providing the best 5G experience. Faster speeds and very low response rates (latency) in data transmission have been remarkably observed.

Online eSIM

In continuation of its ongoing digital change efforts to efficiently attain digital transformation, demonstrate flexibility and efficiency, and after witnessing exquisite results triggered by its collaboration with the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), Ooredoo Telecom, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, is now the first telecom operator in the country and region to offer customers the ability to conduct a complete purchasing process of a new eSIM online and without any physical interaction or signature utilizing "Kuwait Mobile ID", a mobile application provided by the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) that provides users with a digital civil ID accredited for identification and digital signature for both government and private sector.

Ooredoo customers can now purchase and subscribe to a new eSIM prepaid or postpaid plan, or transfer from the traditional SIM to an eSIM utilizing the "Kuwait Mobile ID" and My Ooredoo applications.

Today, the availability of digital solutions and services has become a necessity in order for companies to improve the customer experience and increase productivity. Hence, since the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic: flexibility, mobility and digitization have been key factors for business continuity and customer satisfaction. Thus, Ooredoo Kuwait has overcome itself once again in taking major steps in deploying the most efficient features and technologies that not only improve the customer experience, but also enhance the country's economy and digital infrastructure that go in line with the Kuwait vision 2035 "New Kuwait".

The eSIM (Embedded SIM) is the equivalent of a digital or electronic version of the traditional SIM, which gives customers the opportunity to store multiple SIMs in the smartphone and is activated by scanning the QR code from the phone's camera. Note that the eSIM is built into the phone and cannot be removed, and it only works with devices that support it. Customers can activate the eSIM with simple easy steps: visit Ooredoo eShop, select the phone number, package and commitment, enter your civil ID number and verify it through the "Kuwait Mobile ID" app, choose the payment method and use the camera to scan the QR and follow the instructions on your screen.

Empowering local talents

The company has invested heavily in developing local human talents as part of its human development strategy. At



Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdullah Al-Thani



Abdulaziz Yaqoub Al-Babtain

the center of this success is the empowerment program, a milestone training and development initiative aimed at shaping the future leaders of Ooredoo Kuwait.

Furthermore, Ooredoo Kuwait invested great efforts in recruiting and developing the skillsets of young Kuwaiti talents during H1/2021. The company will continue attracting young Kuwaiti talents as part of its development and growth plans that invest in Kuwaitis to foster and mentor promising professionals in the telecom sector.

Fastest network in Kuwait

Another key achievement Ooredoo Kuwait celebrated during H1/2021 was winning a prestigious award from Ookla: the

com-related services and smart solutions. The company, in coordination with MoH medical team, organized a special vaccination day for all Ooredoo employees in Ooredoo Kuwait headquarter.

ProPing 2.0

Ooredoo Kuwait successfully launched ProPing 2.0, which offers less than 10 milliseconds on the most popular games in Kuwait. ProPing is a one of kind service launched by Ooredoo Kuwait exclusively for gamers using Ooredoo's 5G technology. The low ping rates make gaming experience faster and better for all gamers and ProPing from Ooredoo will always offer consistent speed; seamless and more reliable gameplay online.

Highlights

- EBITDA improved by 17% during Q2/21 vs. Q2/20
- Robust performance and excellent 5G coverage nationwide with an investment of KD 68 million from Ooredoo Kuwait
- Strategic initiatives took place to empower local talents
- Ooredoo Kuwait invested great efforts in recruiting and developing the skills of young Kuwaiti talents during H1/21
- Ooredoo Kuwait named the "Fastest Network in Kuwait 2021" by Ookla
- The highest QOQ 5G customer base growth ever reported
- Ooredoo Kuwait the first to offer 7-day money back guarantee on competitive data offers exhibiting confidence in network and services
- Ooredoo Kuwait gained the trust of the government sector due to its strong network
- Ooredoo Kuwait partnered with British Telecom's Communications and Security Solutions to offer customers the best cloud-based solutions and service
- A successful ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Health supporting their efforts in the National Vaccination Campaign

company behind Speedtest and the global leader in fixed broadband and mobile network testing applications, data and analysis. Ooredoo Kuwait is proudly named the "Fastest Network in Kuwait 2021". The company has taken major steps in the world of telecommunications over the past two years and during the pandemic, and continued to strengthen its networks while successfully continuing to achieve key milestones in its network development journey. Moreover, the company has taken proactive steps in the Kuwaiti market and outperformed its competitors in providing the best and fastest coverage nationwide. Ooredoo Kuwait witnessed the highest QOQ 5G customer base growth ever reported.

7-day cash back

Ooredoo Kuwait was also the first to offer 7-day money back guarantee on data postpaid offers exhibiting our confidence in our network and services. This feature is available to new customers on Postpaid data offers (12/24 months commitment) with Routers.

Government trust in Ooredoo's network

Ooredoo Kuwait has proudly gained the government sector trust and reliance. The company has taken the lead in this field and worked closely with different government entities to provide them with the best and latest telecom services and innovative solutions. This trust and strong relationship came to prove that Ooredoo's wireless network and its owned company FASTelco's wired network are both most preferred in town. In light of the above, Ooredoo has celebrated a milestone achievement and won a tender with MoI to provide interconnectivity solutions across all MoI's sectors. This service is a building block for MoI transition to the next generation network that will pave the way for utilizing latest technologies such as SD-WAN and 5G technology.

It is worth mentioning that Ooredoo business have been supporting the government throughout the pandemic to run operations across Kuwait while securing data transfer across all entities.

Ooredoo & BT partnership

Due to the rapid development of the cyber threat landscape, the tremendous growth in remote workers and the acceleration of the adoption of cloud services, security has become one of the key priorities for businesses and governments. Hence, Ooredoo Kuwait has been proudly selected by the British Telecom's Communications and Security Solutions to offer customers the best cloud-based solutions and services. The services included managed connectivity and voice services, collaboration and contact center solutions, as well as cloud-based security services and consultancy. Ooredoo's wireless network and its owned company FASTelco's wired network were selected due to the cutting-edge and efficiency. BT is considered a leading provider of global communications services and solutions.

Taking CSR to another level

Ooredoo Kuwait collaborated with the Ministry of Health (MoH), in rolling out the National Vaccination Campaign. The collaboration allows Ooredoo Kuwait and MoH to work together hand in hand to unify the efforts to enhance public awareness about the importance of receiving the vaccine. Moreover, Ooredoo Kuwait provided MoH with various tele-

Ooredoo Tunisia
Revenues increased by 6 percent to KD 65.7 million in H1 2021 compared to KD 61.8 million in H1 2020. EBITDA increased to KD 27.3 million in H1 2021 compared to KD 26.6 million in H1 2020. Ooredoo's customer base in Tunisia decreased to 7.2 million customers in H1 2021, due to a change in Ooredoo Tunisia's reporting methodology of its prepaid customer base from the original life-cycle definition to the 90 days network activity definition to align with a common methodology across mobile operators within Tunisia. This change translates into a drop in the reported customer base of approximately 1.6 million with no impact on the reported financials.

Ooredoo Algeria

Business in Algeria was negatively impacted by the devaluation of the Algerian dinar, which depreciated by 9 percent year on year. Consequently, revenues decreased to KD 92.6 million in H1 2021, compared to KD 94.1 million in H1 2020. In local currency terms, revenues were up by 8 percent. EBITDA increased by 6 percent to KD 33.1 million in H1 2021 compared to KD 31.3 million in H1 2020. Customer base in Algeria decreased by 2 percent to 12.6 million in H1 2021 compared to 12.9 million in H1 2020.

Ooredoo Palestine

Revenues increased by 10 percent to KD 16.6 million in H1 2021, compared to KD 15.1 million in H1 2020. EBITDA was strong, increasing by 22 percent to KD 5.8 million in H1 2021, compared to KD 4.8 million in H1 2020, driven by operational efficiencies across the business. Customer base in Palestine decreased to 1.3 million customers in H1 2021 compared to 1.4 million in H1 2020.

Ooredoo Maldives

Ooredoo Maldives reported 10 percent decrease in revenues to KD 17.0 million in H1 2021, compared to KD 19.0 million in H1 2020. EBITDA was KD 8.9 million in H1 2021 compared to KD 9.7 million in H1 2020. Ooredoo Maldives now serves a total of 362k customers.



Financial Results for the First Half of 2021

+320%
NET PROFIT to NMTC

+17%

EBITDA

295
KD Million

Consolidated Revenue

23.9
Million customers

Consolidated Customer Base



Based on analysis by Ookla® of Speedtest Intelligence® data for Q1-Q2 2021. Ookla trademarks used under license and reprinted with permission.



	Half Year Analysis		
	H1 2021	H1 2020	% change
Consolidated Revenue (KWD m)	294.7	294.1	0%
EBITDA (KWD m)	104.9	99.0	6%
EBITDA margin (%)	36%	34%	-
Net Profit attributable to NMTC (KWD m)	7.0	1.7	320%

Business

S&P affirms NBK's credit rating at 'A'



Outlook cut to 'Negative' reflecting downgrade of Kuwait's sovereign credit rating

KUWAIT: S&P announced that it has affirmed National Bank of Kuwait's (NBK) Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at "A", and cut the Outlook to "Negative". Affirming NBK's credit rating proves that the bank maintains one of the highest standalone credit ratings among all regional banks, according to all international credit rating agencies. S&P attributed cutting the bank's outlook to the downgrade of Kuwait's long-term sovereign credit rating to "A+" from "AA-", and maintaining the "negative" outlook, in the absence of a long-term funding strategy due to the failure to adopt the Public Debt Law.

The affirmed credit rating reflects the bank's high ability to meet its financial obligations, despite the implications of the pandemic on the economy and the downgrade of the country's sovereign credit rating. It also confirms the bank's strong franchise, diversified

business model, high asset quality, solid capital base, as well as stable funding and liquidity ratios. NBK maintains strong capitalization, ample liquidity, as capital adequacy ratio stands at 18.2 percent; ahead of all regulatory requirements. NBK also succeeded in pricing its latest bond issues at the lowest rates among conventional banks in the region, which reflects global investors' appetite for NBK name, despite the current exceptional circumstances, and confirms the bank's leadership and its strong credit position enabling it to attract international investors.

It is worth mentioning that National Bank of Kuwait reported a net profit of KD 160.8 million for 1H ended 30 June 2021, growing by 44.7 percent compared to the same period of 2020, and a net profit of KD 76.5 million for 2Q ended 30 June 2021, with a year-on-year increase of 128.8 percent.

KFH announces winners of 12kg of gold in Al-Rabeh draw

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has announced the winners of the quarterly and monthly draws of Al-Rabeh account. In the quarterly draw of Al-Rabeh account, Khaled Al-Jumaa, Khaznah Al-Otaibi and Amal Al-Saeed were the winners of 3kg of gold each, whereas in the monthly draw, Hajer Al-Azmi, Bader Al-Shammari and Batool Al-Obaidan won 1kg of gold each.

Through monthly, quarterly and annual draws, KFH gives 45 Al-Rabeh account holders the opportunity to win up to 77kg of gold in prizes ranging from 1 to 3kg of gold over a full year, in addition to the annual draw of a grand prize of 12kg of gold. The prizes are targeted to existing and new customers of Al-Rabeh account, with salaries not less than KD 500. When their salaries are transferred to the Al-Rabeh account, they will be eligible to win unprecedented prizes by being entered into the draws, which are: a monthly draw, except the month of December, with three individuals winning 1kg of gold each, and a quarterly draw with three winners per draw winning 3kg of gold each (except the fourth quarter draw, which has only one winner). At the end of the campaign, an annual draw is made to pick three winners, the first-place winner receives a grand prize of 12kg of gold. The second-place winner receives 3kg of gold and the third-place winner receives 2kg of gold. The total number of winners is 45 customers, and the total prizes at the end of the campaign is 77kg of gold.

Al-Rabeh account is available in Kuwaiti dinar for individuals, with a salary transfer required for customers to enter the draw. Regarding the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer should deposit three salaries during the three months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the three months prior to the draw. Every additional KD 50 in the account increases the customer's chances to win, thus with these benefits and rewards, Al-Rabeh account, is suitable for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts, with the possibility of saving and investing.

Al-Rabeh account confirms KFH's continued keenness to deliver premium products that meet customers' aspirations and enhance the bank's leadership in the market.

Toyota, Community Jameel hand over 8 Toyota vehicles to IRC

KUWAIT: Underlining a shared commitment to supporting humanitarian causes in the region, Toyota Motor Corporation and Community Jameel recently completed the handover of eight brand-new vehicles to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Lebanon. The vehicles were provided as part of a multifaceted collaboration announced in March that leverages the three partners' diverse but complementary resources and expertise in response to global challenges.

The gift of the eight Toyota vehicles, which will be used to support the IRC's team of humanitarian aid workers in Lebanon, strengthens their mission to support refugees and vulnerable communities in the country. The IRC has been working in Lebanon since 2012, providing emergency aid, education, and protection to refugees, in addition to emergency economic assistance to those affected by the 2020 explosion in Beirut. The donation reflects Toyota's dedication to creating a positive impact and contributing to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals through its activities by always putting 'people first' at the heart of its mission.

Toyota President Akio Toyoda stated last year that, regardless of their actual contents, when Toyota vehicles are used in humanitarian efforts across the globe they are "carrying kokoro (heart)". His comments came as he recalled the powerful emotions he encountered as he traveled to the disaster-stricken area of Tohoku following the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. Toyoda said: "I have never felt as strongly as I did then that a car is also a vehicle for conveying emotions. I want to keep that experience with me for the rest of my life." This experience inspired the launch of Toyota's 'Kokoro Hakobu Project', an initiative originally intended to support the areas affected by the earthquake that has since been extended to encompass Toyota's activities aimed at helping people recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Reflecting recently on his 12-year presidency, Toyoda commented: "Looking at the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a set of squares laid out in three rows of six, you will see that the space for the last square is empty. I believe that people's happiness is the 18th goal. Producing Happiness for All does not mean producing the same thing for everyone. Thinking through diversification and engaging in high-mix, low-volume production is the kind of 'production of happiness for all' for which we aim. As we move step-by-step towards the future, I hope that we will one day arrive at a world of the 18th SDG."

Yumi Otsuka, Operating Officer and Chief Sustainability Officer, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "At Toyota, we remain fully committed to Producing Happiness for All and Creating Mobility for All, ensuring that no one is left behind. We are humbled to be in a position to work hand-in-hand with our partners at Community Jameel to support the IRC's humanitarian efforts in the region in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as address the long-term impacts of the disaster that took place in Beirut last August, which displaced thousands of people. We will continue to seek out innovative ways of contributing to the UN's SDGs by diversifying our solutions to accommodate the needs of communities around the world and be the best in town."

George Richards, Director of Community Jameel, commented: "We are proud to be a part of this unique collaboration, which sees three very different organizations join hands to leverage our resources and collective expertise in support of the local community. Through the deployment of Toyota's vehicles, responders can get to where they need to be, faster. Together, we are enhancing mobility to meet the evolving needs of the people of Lebanon, many of whom continue to face a public health emergency. We look forward to working closely with Toyota and the IRC to help build a better future."

Matias Meier, Country Director for the IRC in Lebanon said: "One year on from the Beirut explosion that displaced hundreds of thousands from their homes, the needs of vulnerable communities remain dire. Weakened health facilities are still struggling from the impact of COVID-19 and the economy is still under collapse, with one million people living under the poverty line. Lebanon urgently needs support from the international community more than ever, and this partnership with Community Jameel and Toyota comes at a crucial moment. The contribution of these vehicles will have a direct and tangible impact on our team's operations and their mission to reach the people of Lebanon with life-saving services."

The exclusive distributor of Toyota and Lexus in Lebanon, Boustany United Machineries Company s.a.l. (BUMC), will serve as the on-the-ground service provider for the eight vehicles as they are put to use across Lebanon in support of the IRC's humanitarian programs.

Maria Rita Boustany, Manager of Marketing & Human Resources, at BUMC, said: "On behalf of the Lebanese people, BUMC s.a.l. would like to thank the IRC, Community Jameel and Toyota Motor Corporation for their generous support, which demonstrates a love and respect for humanity that transcends borders. Many families were displaced in the aftermath of the Beirut explosion and are continuing to rebuild their lives and homes during a challenging economic situation, all of which is further complicated by COVID-19. We are extremely grateful and certain that these Toyota vehicles will make a huge difference in the lives of those who need help the most."



NBK Equity Market Report

Bullish sentiment lifts global equities to new highs in 2Q

KUWAIT: Global equity markets continued to rally in 2Q21, with several indices reaching fresh all-time highs. The bullish sentiment was supported by continued economic recovery optimism amid stronger macroeconomic data, vaccine progress and lowered restrictions, despite rising inflation uncertainty, resurging COVID concerns, and a hawkish Fed shift towards the end of the quarter and in early July (in line with a positive outlook and rising inflation). Meanwhile, GCC markets outperformed, supported by higher oil prices and in turn reduced fiscal pressures, improving economic data, and positive sentiment.

While the equity market trend and outlook remains fairly positive, downside risks include record stock prices and steep valuations, in addition to the possibility of high US inflation triggering early Fed tapering which would likely raise the risk-free rate of return and squeeze equity risk premiums. COVID uncertainty also continues to be a key underlying factor, with the potential to hamper the economic recovery and dent sentiment, especially amid the spread of the new Delta strain. More recently, in July, weaker than expected US macroeconomic data has raised concerns of a slowdown in the pace of economic growth. The possible combination of slower growth and high inflation is one of special concern, as it leaves policy makers with difficult decisions (QE tapering/rate hike signals may control inflation but may also weigh on growth).

Global equities advance

The bullish global sentiment for equities is reflected in the MSCI AC World index, which rose a solid 6.6 percent q/q, with US markets outperforming their peers, as the S&P500 and DJIA rose 8.2 percent and 4.6 percent respectively. Strong earnings expectations for 2Q may have been supportive of higher prices in late June/ early July. The performance disparity between the DJI and S&P can be owed to shifting investor preferences, in favor of cyclical stocks that stand to benefit the most from an economic recovery, which the SP500 is heavier with (ie financial, energy stocks). Meanwhile, European and emerging market stocks trailed behind, but were still up a decent 3.7 percent and 3.2 percent for the MSCI EM and Euro Stoxx 50 respectively. With that said, stock gains in Europe, usually lagging, were roughly on par with US stocks this year (15 percent year to end-June), helped by improved economic prospects, low inflation, continued monetary and fiscal support, and much lower valuations.

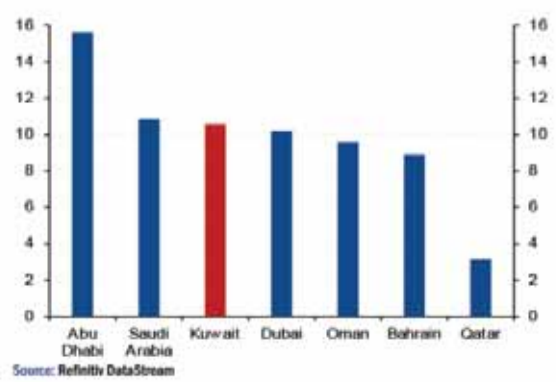


For these reasons, there is a growing consensus that European stocks are to outperform peer markets in 2021. In contrast, emerging markets continue to be severely weighed down by pandemic woes mainly in Asia, hindering growth and denting sentiment.

Finally, virus uncertainty, rising inflation, planned QE tapering and record high valuations in the US continue to be key downside risks for equities in the near-to-medium term.

GCC markets

GCC markets outperformed their global counterparts in 2Q21, building on the strong gains of 1Q, with the MSCI GCC up a solid 8.7 percent q/q helped by higher oil prices, vaccine rollouts, and a better fiscal outlook. In the lead were Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia up 16 percent 11 percent and 11 percent respectively, with investor confidence in the latter boosted by improving macro data and the announcement of a series of large investment



plans as part of a major economic diversification push. Solid gains were also seen in Dubai, Oman and Bahrain (9-10 percent q/q).

Kuwait's strong performance was led once again by the main market (13.4 percent q/q), with the strongest gains coming from the technology, oil and gas, real estate, and industrial sectors. Market capitalization in turn rose to KD 37 billion, the highest since 2010, while average daily turnover was an elevated KD 59 million/day, reflecting a well-endowed, liquid and active market. Kuwait's All-Share was up an impressive 15 percent in the year to end-June, trailing Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia.

A positive but uncertain outlook

Accommodative central bank policies and economic recovery expectations will likely continue to lend support to markets in 2H21. This bullish sentiment is reflected in global stocks continuing to set all-time highs, versus softer demand for some safe-haven assets such as gold and the US dollar, which despite recent increases remain relatively subdued. With that said, near-to-medium term market prospects are subject to notable downside risks stemming from pandemic, inflation, and policy-related uncertainty (tapering soon and rate hikes on the medium-term horizon), factors which have led to softer market momentum as of late.

Steep valuations, especially in US markets, are an additional source of concern. The possibility of higher bond yields in line with the expected unwinding of stimulus, higher inflation, and planned US policy rate hikes in 2023, may also prove to be a drag on equity market sentiment. Moreover, GCC markets will continue to be influenced by oil prices, the pace of structural reforms, geopolitics, and pandemic-related developments.



Britney Spears files to replace her father as guardian

Britney Spears has launched a legal bid to remove her father from a controversial guardianship controlling her finances and replace him with an independent accountant, according to court documents filed Monday. Mathew Rosengart, who was appointed as the pop star's attorney this month, had pledged to move swiftly to remove Jamie Spears after the singer delivered two emotional testimonies to a Los Angeles court labeling the conservatorship as "cruelty." "If the court doesn't see this as abuse... I don't know what is," said Spears, 39, telling the court via telephone earlier this month that she wanted her father removed and to "press charges" against him.

The Los Angeles Superior Court website on Monday listed a new petition to "Appoint Conservator of Estate (Successor)", and California-based accountant Jason Rubin is listed as "Nominee." Rosengart argued in the petition that as a recent judge's ruling found "Ms. Spears has sufficient capacity to choose her own legal counsel, she likewise has sufficient capacity to make this nomination," The New York Times reported. At a brief hearing later Monday, Judge Brenda Penny said she will rule in late September on the bid to remove Jamie Spears from control of an estate estimated to be worth \$60 million. Jamie Spears' removal has been a longstanding demand of devoted global fans campaigning under

the #FreeBritney slogan. Spears was placed under a unique legal guardianship largely governed by her father after she suffered a highly public 2007 breakdown. But the "Toxic" singer has become increasingly vocal and public in opposing the conservatorship since emotional court testimonies and social media posts in which she slammed the system as "cruelty" and accused her father and others of profiting from the system. Spears alleged in court that she had been prevented from having a contraceptive IUD removed, despite wanting more children, and forcefully put on medication that made her feel "drunk." She recently wrote on Instagram that she was "not gonna be performing on any stages anytime soon with my dad

handling what I wear, say, do, or think." Following a July 14 hearing, Rosengart told AFP his team would be "filing a petition as soon as possible to move Mr Spears," while also calling on the singer's father to step down voluntarily. But Jamie Spears' lawyer told the court he would not be standing down, and disputed Britney Spears' account of the conservatorship. A previous petition to remove Jamie Spears from his role last year was rejected by the judge. A court hearing has been set for September 29. — AFP

Jessica Hart is having a baby boy

The Australian supermodel is expecting her second child with her partner James Kirkham - with whom she already has eight-month-old Baby-Rae - and the pair have just found that a little son will be joining their clan later this year. Taking to her Instagram account, the 35-year-old catwalk star uploaded a series of photographs from their gender reveal and wrote: "ITS A BIRD, ITS A PLANE, ITS A... What a special day. Children are #miracles. We are beyond grateful (sic)." The second photograph showed a plane travelling across the sky with the words "It's a boy" being held up with a piece of string. Poppy Delevingne was among the guests invited to share the special moment with the expectant parents and revealed that Jessica and James were secretly hoping their second child would be a little baby boy. Alongside a video of the couple looking up at the sky as the gender of the next bundle of joy shot across the sky, Poppy wrote: "Luckily it was what they wished for...Congratulations my loves (sic)" Jessica announced her pregnancy last month and admitted that she was worried



about having two babies under two. She said: "The announcement is that I've just found out I'm pregnant again. It's exciting, after the initial shock of having two babes under two." The blonde beauty felt the need to share her happy news with fans early on because she needs to focus on her nutrition at the moment as she's pregnant and breastfeeding, all whilst being "predominantly vegan." She added: "I'm sharing this so early because I want to go through it all with a community, so no matter what happens, you'll find out, but we'll have two kids under two, it'll be a wild ride and an exciting journey and I'm excited to share it with you."

Legend and Teigen sold their mansion

John Legend and Chrissy Teigen have sold their mansion for \$16.8 million. The 'All of Me' hitmaker, 42, and the 35-year-old model have finally managed to shift their lavish Beverly Hills property - which was once owned by Rihanna - after they were forced to relist it last year when their sale of \$24 million fell through. Realtor Marshall Peck of Douglas Elliman in Beverly Hills told the New York Post newspaper that the impressive deal, which was offered just one week after it was advertised last August, didn't go through but other potential purchasers weren't aware that it was still on the market. The couple - who have daughter Luna, five, and son Miles, three, together - decided to move out of the family home and into a bigger one that was being renovated after Chrissy discovered she was pregnant with their third child, which she later lost due to a miscarriage. Mr Peck told the publication that the mansion - which John and Chrissy bought in

2016 for \$14.1 million - "is hands down the most beautiful home in Beverly Hills" and that it has the "finest finishes" he's ever seen. He added: "It features 33-foot ceilings, a sculptural staircase, floor-to-ceiling windows and sweeping canyon views while bespoke teak ceilings from Thailand, cerused oak floors steel-rolled clay walls exude sensuality." Meanwhile, Chrissy is currently caught up in a bullying scandal, which has seen her step back from her and Kris Jenner's cleaning supplies company, Safely, as well as face other repercussions such as endorsement deals being stripped from her. The former Sports Illustrated model has admitted being a part of "cancel club" has been a learning experience, though it also "sucks". She said previously: "Cancel club is a fascinating thing and I have learned a wholllllle lot. Only a few understand it and it's impossible to know til you're in it. And it's hard to talk about it in that sense because obviously you sound whiney when you've clearly done something wrong. It just sucks. There is no winning. But there never is here anyhow.(sic)" Chrissy came under fire earlier this year when she was accused of posting cruel jibes on social media earlier on in her career - including one incident in which she told Courtney Stodden to take her own life.



Lopez misses clash with ex Rodriguez

Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck almost had an awkward run-in with her ex-fiance Alex Rodriguez at a posh restaurant this week. The 'On the Floor' hitmaker's assistant had to quickly cancel the couple's reservation at the Bagatelle St. Tropez on the French Riviera after she turned up at the fancy eatery to do some checks and realized the 46-year-old sportsman was dining there with another woman. A source told the DailyMail.com: "JLo had made a reservation at the same restaurant, the same day. Her assistant turned up to check everything was OK, and there was A-Rod having lunch. She alerted JLo and the reservation was quickly cancelled." Alex - who split from Jennifer in April 2021 following four years of dating - was reportedly dining with blonde sports presenter Melanie Collins. The 'Hustlers' star is currently in the South of France celebrating her 52nd birthday with the 48-year-old actor - who she had been set to wed in 2003 but postponed their wedding before calling off their relationship - after they rekindled their romance a few months ago. A source said recently: "They are having a beautiful trip. They celebrated Jen's birthday at a club last night. She looked gorgeous and very happy." Jennifer is said to be "fully committed" to Ben but doesn't want to jump into an engagement or marriage any time soon. A source explained: "[They] are fully committed to each other... They have been meshing their lives and families and don't feel the need to get engaged yet or even tie the knot. They have both been there and don't feel it's necessary. They are both very secure within their relationship and Ben worships her. It's truly meant to be and everyone around them thinks they are a perfect match." But it doesn't look like it will be long before the loved-up pair take their relationship to the next level by moving in together. An insider said: "Their friends wouldn't be surprised if they move in together and ultimately end up together. They're spending all of their free time together and making each other a priority." Ben has children Violet, 15, Seraphina, 12, and Samuel, nine, with his ex-wife Jennifer Garner, while Jennifer has 13-year-old twins Emme and Max with her ex-husband Marc Anthony.



Robbie Williams is losing his hair

The 'Angels' hitmaker had no choice but to shave his entire head when he realized he had unsightly sparse areas recently, but he's decided to make his new look a little more eye-catching by styling his short 'do into a Mohican - just without the height. Speaking in a video uploaded to his wife Ayda Field's Instagram account, the 42-year-old actress said: "So Robbie Williams, you're sporting a new look. What's going on?" To which Robbie replied: "Ok, so I'm losing my hair, I'm thinning and I thought instead of fighting against it I should just lean into it. The first step was me doing a number one all over and to see how that looked. I thought that was OK. And then I thought while you [Ayda] was out, I'd just shave a Mohican because I knew you'd say no. This is what has happened." Ayda joked: "You kind of look like Pepe Le Pew [an animated character from 'Looney Tunes']" The 47-year-old singer previously revealed his hairless look when he let his wife loose with the clippers last month. Captioning the video at the time, she wrote: "@robbiewilliams Is all or nothing when it comes to his hair ... and apparently, it's nothing now #nohairdontcare #instamood #thebaldandthebeautiful

#who'snext? AWxx (sic) In the clip, the couple posed for a "before" picture before she got to work on his long locks, using the clippers to shave his head. She even blew a bit of his hair into his face as she admired her handy work. Meanwhile, Robbie recently admitted his wife "gave him a life". He said: "I look back at 15 years of being with my wife, she did, she gave me a life. Here I am on the telly get-



ting emotional. She absolutely did." Robbie has spent most of the last 12 months as a "stay at home father" to his children amid the coronavirus pandemic and he admitted it has been a "beautiful" experience being around his kids for so much time. He added: "I had my hands full [in lockdown] but it's been incredible as they now think I'm a stay at home father. They get all of me, all the time. This is the first time I've been out of the house for eight or nine months."

E Grant didn't want to catch COVID from Prince Charles

Richard E Grant didn't want to catch COVID-19 from Prince Charles. The 64-year-old actor raised eyebrows when he wore protective rubber gloves to meet the 72-year-old royal at the Prince's Trust And TK Maxx & Homesense Awards at London Palladium on March 11 last year but he has revealed he did so because he had been advised by a medical professional to protect himself from the potentially deadly virus that has swept the globe over the last year and a half. Speaking to the Radio Times magazine, he said: "I've been vigilant about it. [COVID] I'm not a hypochondriac, by any means, I've just been careful. Another (New York party) guest, who was in the medical profession, said, 'Get face masks and gloves.' So I got a whole box and when I came back to England wore them wherever I went." Detailing the reaction he got from onlookers when he met Prince Charles, Richard added: "Someone said, 'What the hell are you doing [shaking his hand with gloves on]?' But I didn't want to catch it." Prince Charles later revealed that he had caught Coronavirus - just days after he had appeared at the event - but was only experiencing "mild symptoms." A statement said at the time: "The Prince of Wales has tested positive for coronavirus. He has been displaying mild symptoms but otherwise remains in good health and has been working from home throughout the last few days as usual. The Duchess of Cornwall has also been tested but does



not have the virus. In accordance with government and medical advice, the Prince and the Duchess are now self-isolating at home in Scotland. "The tests were carried out by the NHS in Aberdeenshire where they met the criteria required for testing. It is not possible to ascertain from whom the Prince caught the virus owing to the high number of engagements he carried out in his public role during recent weeks." Prince Charles made a full recovery.



Alba felt 'disconnected' from self-image

Jessica Alba felt "disconnected" from herself before social media. The 40-year-old actress - who launched her ethical brand Honest in 2011 - feels "empowered" now that she can use her social networking sites to give fans a glimpse of the real her, rather than allowing photographers to edit her pictures and portray her in an unrealistic way. Speaking to Coveteur, she said: "After I had my kids and started Honest, I think I sort of fell into the groove of being comfortable with myself in a different way. The entertainment industry is a very difficult place to have a strong sense of confidence. Before the internet, magazine editors and journalists had control over how

people saw me. However, someone wanted to sell me to their audience is how I was portrayed. It wasn't until social media that I felt empowered to take control of my own narrative and my own image. I get to be my own megaphone-everything feels connected. Before, I think I just felt really disconnected from my own image." The 'Sin City' star loves experimenting with make-up because she watched how passionate her mother was about looking polished at all times. She explained: "I've always been a make-up and beauty enthusiast. My mom wouldn't leave the house without her face on-not even to take me to school or to just go to the grocery store. And we never had any money

growing up, but she still always had her face together. Even if she pulled her hair back in a clip-my mom loves a red lip, black eyeliner, strong blush situation. "My grandmother also had a big influence on me. She had one red lipstick that she used for everything-it was the OG multitasker. So my grandmother was very minimalistic when it came to her make-up, and my mom was on the opposite side of the spectrum. I fell somewhere in between." However, Jessica has seen a big change in how she does her make-up now compared to the start of her career. She said: "I started acting when I was 12. Hair and makeup transformed me into whatever character I was playing. I was

exposed to so many makeup artists along the way, and I did so many shoots with iconic photographers. Make-up felt like a way to bring out the person you wanted to be. "I learned how to do make-up through all my mistakes. Unfortunately, I had to see myself on a big screen and realize that I looked busted. Like, maybe I shouldn't do my own hair and make-up for a red carpet. But then it got extreme because I was doing super over-the-top glam. People were treating me like a doll and it was way too much."

— Bang Showbiz



Members of the Japanese senior cheerleading squad 'Japan Pom Pom' take part in a practice in Tokyo as the city hosts the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. — AFP photos



Eighty-nine-year-old Fumie Takino (second right) joins members of the Japanese senior cheerleading squad "Japan Pom Pom".



Members of the Japanese senior cheerleading squad "Japan Pom Pom" stretch before taking part in a practice in Tokyo.



Members of the Japanese senior cheerleading squad "Japan Pom Pom".



Eighty-nine-year-old Fumie Takino (center) joins members of the Japanese senior cheerleading squad "Japan Pom Pom".

Pompom girls: Japan seniors find joy in cheerleading

Cheerleading is frowned upon at the virus-postponed Olympics, but training continues at a Tokyo gym for an energetic squad of cheerleaders whose average age is 70. To the beat of Taylor Swift's "Shake It Off", Fumie Takino, 89, twirled and waved her pom-poms as her fellow cheerleaders showed off their standing splits. "Members suffer from leg or back pain, but they're working hard," Takino, who founded the senior cheerleading squad "Japan Pom Pom" when she was 64 years old, told AFP. There is a strict selection process for members, who must be over 55, and have to pass an audition and three-month trial period. All applicants must also have "self-proclaimed good looks", the squad stipulates.

They are currently rehearsing for their 25th-anniversary show, which was postponed until next year because of the pandemic. Takino said it was once difficult to share her hobby with others, who didn't see the appeal of senior cheerleading at first. "I couldn't say I was doing cheerleading... I struggled a lot." Their original sparkly costumes with a mini-skirt weren't so popular either, she recalls. But as the squad became better known and attracted the attention of local media, views about them changed, Takino said. "There are many other groups like us... I think (senior cheerleading) has started to be widely accepted." Japan has the world's oldest population, with around 28 percent of the population aged 65 or over, according to the government.

Cheerleading is a fun way to stay fit for the "Japan Pom Pom" girls, who get together once a week for a rigorous two-hour practice with almost no break. Masako Matsuoka, a 73-year-old member of the squad, said the activity is her "ikigai"—Japanese for purpose in life. "It's fun to do something different in your everyday life," she explained. — AFP



Members of the Japanese senior cheerleading squad "Japan Pom Pom" stretch before taking part in a practice.



Members of the Japanese senior cheerleading squad "Japan Pom Pom".



Eighty-nine-year-old Fumie Takino (second right) joins members of the Japanese senior cheerleading squad "Japan Pom Pom".



Members of the Japanese senior cheerleading squad "Japan Pom Pom".

Kazuo Ishiguro among 13 contenders for 2021 Booker Prize

British author Kazuo Ishiguro could win his second Booker Prize after judges Tuesday named him among 13 finalists on this year's longlist for one of literature's most prestigious awards. Ishiguro, who first landed the prize in 1989 with "The Remains Of The Day" as well as the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2017, was nominated for his latest novel "Klara And The Sun". He joins several other previously shortlisted or winning writers on the longlist, including American Richard Powers, who won in 2018 for "The Overstory" and will hope to be lauded again for his new work, "Bewilderment".

The Booker Prize has launched careers and courted controversy since its creation in 1969, expanding its remit

since 2013 to include authors outside the Commonwealth, Ireland and Zimbabwe. Past laureates have included other celebrated authors like Ian McEwan, Julian Barnes and Roddy Doyle. Douglas Stuart's debut novel "Shuggie Bain", about a boy growing up amid poverty and addiction in 1980s Glasgow, won last year's prize. The winning writer receives £50,000 (\$69,000, 59,000 euros) and huge international attention. This year's victor will be announced on November 3 after the longlist is whittled down to a shortlist of six in September. South African Damon Galgut ("The Promise"), Briton Sunjeev Sahota,



Kazuo Ishiguro

("China Room") and Canadian Mary Lawson, ("A Town Called Solace") are among the past Booker contenders to make the longlist.

American novelists Patricia Lockwood ("No One is Talking About This"), Nathan Harris ("The Sweetness of Water") and Maggie Shipstead, ("Great Circle") received their first nominations. Sri Lankan writer Anuk Arudpragasam ("A Passage North"), British-Canadian Rachel Cusk ("Second Place"), South African Karen Jennings ("An Island"), British-Somali author Nadifa Mohamed ("The Fortune Men") and Briton Francis Spufford, ("Light Perpetual") make up the rest of the field. Gaby Wood, director of the Booker Prize Foundation, said this year's list was notable "for the engrossing stories within it, for the geographical range of its points of view and for its recognition of writers who have been working at an exceptionally high standard for many years". "To see them brought together, and to hear from them in these books, is to know that literature is in the most capable and creative of hands," she added. — AFP

Henri Vernes, prolific writer of French adventure novels, dies

Henri Vernes, the prolific Belgian author of popular French-language adventure and science fiction novels, has died at the age of 102, his publisher announced Monday. The creator of the French adventurer Bob Morane who featured in 200 novels that sold 40 million copies worldwide died on Sunday, his publisher Lombard said. "I would love to write a hundred more books, woo a few women and leave the rest to chance," Vernes told Belgium's French-language broadcaster RTBF for his 100th birthday.

Jacky Legge, curator at the Folklore Museum in Tournai which set up a permanent exhibition after his 100th birthday, said he was amazed at Verne's powerful memory, grasp of detail and passion for telling stories. "It was what surprised me each time I saw him," said Legge, who added that Vernes died as a result of general decline. While a journalist in Paris in the years after World War II, Vernes was asked in 1953 by



This file photo taken in Brussels on February 24, 2012 shows Belgian scriptwriter Henri Vernes, creator of the comic strip "Bob Morane", posing with his book "Memoires" during an interview. — AFP

publishing house Marabout to write a book series for young people. Thus was born the steely-eyed Bob Morane, a 33-year-old multi-lingual Frenchman, specialist in martial arts and former war hero who took on pirates, space monsters, Miss Ylang-Ylang and the "Yellow Shadow." — AFP



Bermuda's Duffy celebrates 'cool moment' after making Olympic history

TOKYO: Triathlete Flora Duffy reveled in a "cool moment" after delivering the first Olympic gold medal in history for the tiny island of Bermuda in Tokyo yesterday. The 33-year-old crossed the line in the women's race in 1hr 55min 36sec, more than a minute ahead of Britain's Georgia Taylor-Brown, with US athlete Katie Zaferes taking bronze.

Duffy's success makes Bermuda the smallest nation or territory in terms of population — around 70,000 — ever to win a gold medal at a Summer Games. "I have achieved my dream of winning a gold medal, but also winning Bermuda's first gold medal," she said. "It's bigger than me and that's a really cool moment. That was the longest kilometer of my life (the final one of the run). I think I can get used to being called Olympic champion for the rest of my life."

Bermuda's only previous Olympic medalist was boxer Clarence Hill, who won a bronze in 1976. For Duffy it was a welcome reward after persistent injuries and a diagnosis of anemia in 2013. She quit the sport after failing to finish the event at the 2008 Beijing Games and started working in a shop before studying for a degree and returning to the sport.

In a race delayed by 15 minutes because of slippery conditions following heavy overnight rain in the Japanese capital, Duffy took control in the final running section. She had opened up a lead of almost a minute after the first of four laps and was never under



TOKYO: Bermuda's Flora Duffy celebrates after crossing the finish line to win the women's individual triathlon competition during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games at the Odaiba Marine Park in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

threat from then on. The broad grin she sported entering the finishing straight gave way to tears at the realization of what she had achieved as she crossed the line.

"I tried to just keep my composure and not allow my mind to drift to the fact that this was really happening until about the last kilometer of the run," said Duffy. "I saw my husband, he's my coach, on the side of the road, and just gave him a little smile. From there I just sort of allowed all the emotions to come but I truly don't think it'll hit me until a couple of days from now."

'Hey Dad'

Taylor-Brown suffered the intense frustration of a flat rear tire in the cycling section of the race, leaving her 22 seconds behind the leading quartet going into the running section but she quickly made up the lost ground. "Coming in the bike with 1km, 1.5km to go I just heard 'tzzzsss' and I thought, 'fantastic,'" said the 27-year-old. "I decided not to stop and change my wheel. I just tried to see what could have happened as I had already lost time, but only 15 seconds so it wasn't all too bad. Then I just went really fast on the third lap of the run. I suffered after that but it paid off."

It was an emotional moment for Zaferes, whose father, Bill, died suddenly in April. He was responsible for her taking up the sport after persuading her to compete with him in a Father's Day Triathlon in 2007. "We saw a rainbow during the race and I thought 'hey dad'," she said. "I mean, everything came together for me. I know I didn't win but it feels like it." — AFP



TOKYO: Philippines' Hidilyn Diaz reacts after placing first in the women's 55kg weightlifting competition during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games at the Tokyo International Forum in Tokyo on Monday. — AFP

Philippine weightlifter Diaz hailed for historic Olympic gold

MANILA: With their eyes glued to a television in the southern Philippines, the family of weightlifter Hidilyn Diaz yelled "push, push, push!" as she hoisted the bar to win the country's first Olympic gold medal. "Then we erupted in joy — we were shouting, some shed tears of joy," Emelita Diaz said yesterday, a day after watching her daughter's historic performance in Tokyo — far from her hometown of Zamboanga. "We didn't know what to feel because we were extremely happy."

After nearly 18 months of training in Malaysia because of COVID-19 restrictions, Diaz smashed her personal best and won gold with a final clean and jerk of 127kg in the women's 55kg class. The 30-year-old's triumph — which followed her silver medal in Rio five years ago — has made her a national hero, alongside the likes of boxing legend Manny Pacquiao.

"Thank you, Hidilyn Diaz, for the first-ever Olympic Gold for the Philippines! We are so proud of you!" Pacquiao tweeted from the United States where he is training for his upcoming fight against American Errol Spence. The feat is also a life-changing windfall for Diaz, the daughter of a tricycle driver on the southern island of Mindanao.

As a reward for winning gold, Diaz will receive at least 33 million pesos (\$655,000) from the government and private sector, as well as a house. Property developer Megaworld Corporation also announced yesterday it would give the Philippine Air Force woman a residential condominium worth 14 million pesos.

It could also prove a "game-changer" for other Filipino athletes, presidential spokesman Harry Roque said yesterday, acknowledging government financial support was insufficient. "It's as if our athletes are only getting minimum wage," he said.

'We feel empowered'

Diaz's stunning victory was splashed across the front pages of Philippine newspapers and dominated internet platforms. The Philippine Star's headline "Finally, Olympic Gold" reflected the collective relief of Filipinos at winning their first gold medal after 97 years of Olympic competition.

Diaz's win was an inspiration for other women, said Karen Afurong, an instructional designer in Manila. "We feel empowered," the 29-year-old told AFP. Emelita said the family spoke with Diaz Tuesday morning and congratulated her.

"I told her... 'It's a big honor to our family that you brought another honor to the country,'" Emelita told AFP via telephone. More than 20 relatives, including nieces and nephews, crowded onto the porch of the family home to watch Diaz's performance, using a smartphone connected to their television. "We were nervous," said Emelita. "They were shouting 'push, push, push'. get it, Haidie!'. They were shouting and jumping for joy."

Diaz has not seen her family since December 2019 and has spoken openly of the sacrifices she has made in pursuit of her dream. But after a sleepless night, Diaz said Tuesday she was already thinking about the Paris Olympics in 2024. "Qualifying will be difficult, but if my strength is there I will continue," she told reporters on Zoom. "I cannot quit after winning. I need to continue until someone succeeds me." — AFP



LONDON: Cameroon-born Cyrille Tchatchet II trains in a gym at Middlesex University in Hendon, north London on July 8, 2021 ahead of the Tokyo Olympics. — AFP

'Can't help but cheer': Some in Japan warm to Olympics

TOKYO: After months of opposition, some in Japan are warming to the pandemic-hit Olympics, with fans defying authorities to cheer athletes on public roads and rushing to snap up Games merchandise. It hasn't hurt that Japan's athletes have enjoyed a gold rush in the first four days of the Games, triumphing in sports ranging from judo to skateboarding.

Fans are barred from almost all events over virus fears, and have been asked to stay away from competitions on public roads. But they've been showing up anyway, determined for a glimpse of Olympic action. "If you see these athletes running in front of you, you can't help but cheer for them," said 42-year-old Hirochika Takeda, who popped out of his apartment to see the women's triathlon passing by in the rain.

"I had questions about holding the Olympics right up until the opening ceremony," the IT professional said. "But once the sport began, I started to feel that maybe this is a good thing." The Games opened on Friday, with tens of thousands of athletes, officials and media arriving in Japan from around the world.

Because of the virus, the Olympics are taking place under a state of emergency in Tokyo that means fans are barred from venues and there is high anxiety about rising infections. But when the opening ceremony rolled around on Friday, thousands of people crowded around the Olympic Stadium to soak in the atmosphere and see the fireworks from outside, far outnumbering a group of anti-Games protesters.

'Explosively busy'

And those at home were equally intrigued, with viewing figures showing over 50 percent of households in Tokyo watched the ceremony live on TV. There has also been a surge in demand for Tokyo 2020 trinkets, according to shopowners and organizers.

"Stores have become explosively busy," said Hikari Iinuma, of Tokyo 2020's licensing department. Stores



TOKYO: Fans watch as athletes compete in the women's individual triathlon competition during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games at the Odaiba Marine Park in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

"I feel very excited not just to represent myself but about 80 million displaced people around the world. To represent refugees and the underprivileged will be a big responsibility," he added. The Cameroonian has a first-class degree in mental health nursing and worked on the frontline during Britain's first coronavirus lockdown last March. But his prospects appeared bleak when he first arrived. The Yaounde-born athlete competed for Cameroon at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow before learning that it was not safe for him to return home for reasons he prefers not to reveal. He fled the team base with just his backpack, some clothes and weightlifting gear and ended up homeless for two months in Brighton, a city in southern England.

"It was a very difficult experience. I had to escape. I was very young, very scared. I didn't think much about the future," he recalled. Eking out a miserable existence under a bridge with no money, food or water and suffering from depression, Tchatchet II, haunted by suicidal thoughts, had sunk to his lowest ebb. A call to Samaritans, a charity supporting those in emotional dis-

set up specifically to sell Tokyo Olympic items that had shut down for lack of customers are now reopening, she said.

"The trend is very clear in Tokyo," added Iinuma, who declined to give figures on sales, but said popular items included T-shirts, mugs and towels. It might be no coincidence that the change of heart has coincided with a winning streak for home athletes.

Japan's nine gold medalists up to Tuesday afternoon include 13-year-old skateboarder Momiji Nishiya, brother-and-sister judokas Hifumi and Uta Abe and table tennis pair Jun Mizutani and Mima Ito. Yuji Ishizaka, a sports sociologist at Nara Women's University, said the post-victory comments from Japanese athletes might be helping to soften opposition to the Games. "Rather than bursts of raw emotions, they are... voicing their appreciation for this opportunity," he told AFP. "What we are seeing is restrained enthusiasm," Ishizaka said.

'Happy to see them'

The change of heart is not universal, and many people are still worried about virus risks. A poll in the Nikkei newspaper published Monday found 31 percent still believed the Games should have been postponed or cancelled, though nearly 70 percent backed holding it in some form.

"I feel people are forgetting the coronavirus," said Chintan Makwana, an Indian resident of Tokyo who said he was unnerved by the crowds in his neighborhood watching events. "For those of us who live here, it is scary," the software engineer said.

Tokyo reported a record 2,848 new daily virus cases yesterday. The figure may include cases that were not reported over the long weekend, but infections were already rising. In Tokyo's Odaiba area, hundreds of people defied authorities and the rain to cheer competitors in the women's triathlon yesterday.

Nearly all wore masks and restricted themselves to clapping, and those who did shout stood a distance from others. "Ganbatte, ganbatte (go, go)," cheered Atsuko Kawata, a retiree from a nearby neighborhood as the athletes ran past. "I don't know anything about this sport, but I'm happy to see them. I'm going to brag about this to my kids," she added cheerfully. "All kinds of things were said about the Olympics, but I wanted to support these athletes." — AFP



TOKYO: Gold medalist Isabell Werth of Germany rides on her horse together with other medalists after the medal ceremony of dressage grand prix special team competition during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games at the Equestrian Park in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

Werth makes Olympic history as Germans win team dressage

TOKYO: Isabell Werth became the first rider to win seven equestrian Olympic gold medals when Germany took the team dressage title in Tokyo yesterday. The 52-year-old has accrued six team titles and one individual gold in six different Games.

Werth — who also extended her record haul of Olympic medals to 11 — takes sole possession of the record she held jointly with late compatriot Reiner Klimke. Werth and her horse Bella Rose 2 — who performed to a musical medley of Ode To Joy, Madama Butterfly and Beethoven — scored 2740.5 points.

The German all-female trio won a 14th team crown since 1928 with 8178 points. Werth, Dorothee Schneider and Jessica von Bredow-Werndl will also be serious contenders for the individual title today. Despite the victory, Werth was unimpressed by the seven judges' tally. "I'm so happy about her (Bella Rose 2) and I'm long enough in the sport to deal with it, and to cope with it," she said. "I think she deserves more, but it is like it is."

Bredow-Werndl — the last to ride — was a figure of joy at the end as she jumped off TSF Valera and hugged one of the coaches. The United States took silver with 7747 points. Their three riders — including Steffen Peters who was on the bronze medal-winning team in 2016 — shedding a few tears. Britain added bronze to the gold and silver they won in 2012 and 2016 respectively, scoring 7723 points. —AFP

Cameroon refugee achieves Olympic dream after UK ordeal

LONDON: Cyrille Tchatchet II is preparing to make history at the Tokyo Olympics — seven years after finding himself homeless and penniless on Britain's streets. In June, the weightlifter was officially selected for the International Olympic Committee's refugee team in a ceremony co-hosted by IOC president Thomas Bach, making him the first UK-based refugee Olympian. The IOC Refugee Olympic Team first appeared at the 2016 Rio Games. In Tokyo, Tchatchet II will compete in the 96kg weight class on July 31 as part of a 29-strong contingent of displaced athletes. "I feel like I was brought back to life. It's a dream come true," he told AFP. "I'm proud — it sends a big message of hope and solidarity."

ress, pulled him back from the brink. Police removed him from the streets and an asylum application was submitted. Tchatchet II's mental health continued to suffer as the authorities rejected and reconsidered his application and transferred him to three separate detention facilities during a two-year period. "When you're waiting for an asylum application, it's a very stressful experience," he told AFP. "You always think, 'What are they doing? Are they going to deport me?'"

With his life in limbo, Tchatchet II found solace in sport and took British weightlifting by storm, achieving five English titles, three British titles and five national records across two weight classes. Sporting success helped alleviate persistent mental struggles. "If you get into exercise, you forget those things. It played a very important part in my recovery," he explained. Having taken antidepressants for years, Tchatchet II received leave to remain in 2016 and seized the opportunity to study mental health nursing at London's Middlesex University, to emulate the doctors who helped him battle his own psychological difficulties. —AFP



Biles says 'mental health' concerns led to Olympic final withdrawal

TOKYO: Gymnastics superstar Simone Biles said "mental health" concerns had led to her withdrawal from the women's team final at the Tokyo Olympics yesterday. "I have to do what's right for me and focus on my mental health and not jeopardize my health and my wellbeing," the 24-year-old American said after her team were beaten by the Russian quartet in her absence.

Biles exited the final at the Ariake Gymnastics Center after a lackluster opening vault and walked off the competition floor before returning a short time later. The US team immediately withdrew her from the rest of the final. After she joined her teammates to collect their silver medals, four-time Olympic champion Biles confirmed she had not been injured. She said: "I just don't trust myself as much as I used to, and I don't know if it's age. I'm a little bit more nervous when I do gymnastics."

"I feel like I'm also not having as much fun, and I know that this Olympic Games, I wanted it to be for myself," she said, as she began to cry. "It just sucks that it happens here at the Olympics Games... with the year that it's been, I'm really not surprised the way it played out." A statement from USA Gymnastics said earlier that Biles was suffering from an unspecified "medical issue" and would now face daily

assessment to determine whether she can continue her Olympic campaign.

"Simone has withdrawn from the team final competition due to a medical issue," the statement to AFP said. "She will be assessed daily to determine medical clearance for future competitions." Biles spent the remainder of the competition enthusiastically cheering on her teammates who took silver with the bronze going to Britain, their first medal in the event since 1928.

She said she had had faith in her teammates Grace McCallum, Jordan Chiles and Sunisa Lee. Biles has qualified for all finals available to her in Tokyo but her performance in preliminary rounds on Sunday had been littered with uncharacteristic mistakes.

In a candid Instagram post on Monday the 24-year-old said she was feeling the pressure during Sunday's qualifying. "I truly do feel like I have the weight of the world on my shoulders at times," Biles wrote. "I know I brush it off and make it seem like pressure doesn't affect me but damn sometimes it's hard...the Olympics is no joke!" If Biles is unable to continue in Tokyo, it would mark a stunning turn of events at a Games she had been strongly expected to dominate. She had been bidding to become the first woman in more than half a century to

retain the all-around title, and had a realistic chance of equaling Soviet gymnast Larisa Latynina's record of nine Olympic gold medals. Prior to the Olympics, Biles revealed she had battled depression after revealing she was among the hundreds of gymnasts who had been sexually abused by former Olympic team doctor Larry Nassar, who is now serving a life prison sentence for his crimes.

In a recent multi-part documentary series posted on Facebook, Biles also revealed she had been bothered by a right ankle problem this year after landing awkwardly during training in May. "Right now, what we're dealing with is I just have a lot of fluid built up in there," Biles said during the episode. "There's nothing we can do at this point. We don't have time for rest, we don't have time for shots and all of that stuff, so tape it is." The US team, clearly unbalanced by the drama surrounding their talismanic leader rated by many as the greatest gymnast of all time, were foiled in their bid for a third straight Olympic title after wins in London and Rio.

With Biles watching on, the Americans approached the concluding floor exercise less than a point behind the Russians. But when Jordan Chiles failed to win the judges' approval with her performance it was all over. Russia,



TOKYO: USA's Simone Biles gestures during the artistic gymnastics women's team final during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games at the Ariake Gymnastics Center in Tokyo yesterday. —AFP

who under the Soviet era dominated this event from 1952 to 1980 winning eight straight Olympic titles, prevailed with a total of 169.528. The US scored on 166.096 and Britain had

164.096. Led by Angelina Melnikova, the Russians emulated their men's team who won gold 24 hours earlier - the first time in Olympic history one country has won both titles. —AFP

Duplantis aims to deliver on Olympic 'childhood dream'

TOKYO: Armand Duplantis has firmly established himself as one of the stars of track and field and is adamant nothing will stand in his way when he takes to the pole vault runway at the Tokyo Olympics. It is easy to forget that the Swede, who describes being at the Olympics as a "childhood dream", is still just 21, after a career-changing year in which he has re-written the record books.

In 2020, despite a season ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, Duplantis set a sensational world record of 6.18m indoors before vaulting 6.15m outdoors, finally eclipsing the 1994 mark set by all-time great Sergey Bubka. Heading to Japan, Duplantis says he feels in good shape, though he concedes a new world record would be secondary to winning. "I don't have any complaint, I feel I'm in the position I wanted to be, the shape is coming nicely," said the vaulter known as "Mondo". "I'm ready to go and do what I want to do."

One would have expected the 68,000-capacity Olympic stadium to have been filled to the brim for the athletics, but fans have been banned as part of Japan's fight against coronavirus. "It's unfortunate. Of course I'd love a packed stadium, that would be more exciting, but it is what it is," said Duplantis, who divides his time between Sweden and Louisiana in the United States. "I had a while year last year with no crowd, so I am starting to get used to it in a way. It's not going to be something completely new to me or the other guys."

All eyes on victory

Duplantis was born in the United States to American father and coach Greg — himself a former pole vaulter who cleared 5.80m — and Swedish heptathlete mother Helena. He was vaccinated against COVID-19 while training in the States.

He said he only had one objective in Tokyo — and improving his record came a distant second. "Winning is the only goal really," he said. "In a dream world I would like to go and break the world record and do something very legendary at the Games. But it's my first Games, I just want to win, that's the only thing on my mind."

Duplantis faces stiff competition from American Sam Kendricks, the defending two-time world champion and bronze medalist in Rio, and France's Renaud Lavillenie, the 2012 Olympic gold medalist who won silver four years later. Lavillenie, Duplantis admitted, had been one of his childhood heroes. "I was a huge fan of Renaud," he said. "Just to be in the situation that I'm now able to compete against him, learned a little bit from him. It's a really cool thing, especially from a guy like that." Their contact, he added, went "from idol, competitor, to friend, to everything in between". "He's a big brother, a mentor, a friend, I look at him a way very similar I look at my two older brothers for sure." —AFP

'Sensible' to review marijuana status after Richardson ban: Coe

TOKYO: World Athletics chief Sebastian Coe yesterday backed calls to review the status of marijuana on the list of sport's banned substances following the suspension of US sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson. Speaking to news agency journalists in Tokyo at the Olympic Games, Coe said it was "sensible" to look at the question of whether marijuana should remain on the World Anti-Doping Agency's prohibited list.

Rising sprint star Richardson was expected to be one of the faces of the Tokyo Games after a series of blistering 100m displays earlier this season. However the 21-year-old was ruled out of the Games earlier this month after being handed a 30-day suspension following a positive test for marijuana in the wake of her 100m victory at the US Olympic trials in Eugene in June.

Her case triggered debate about marijuana's continued inclusion on WADA's banned list, with celebrities and fellow athletes criticizing the rule as outdated and unnecessary. Coe said yesterday he agreed with calls to review marijuana's status. "I think it's not an unreasonable moment to have a review," he said. "It's sensible — nothing is set in stone. You adapt and occasionally reassess." —AFP

Osaka says painful home Olympic defeat 'sucks'

TOKYO: Japanese tennis star Naomi Osaka conceded the pressure of trying to win an Olympic gold at home was a "bit much" after a 6-1, 6-4 defeat to Marketa Vondrousova ended her title dreams yesterday.

Osaka, who lit the Olympic cauldron and was one of the faces of the Games, struggled in an error-strewn display that blew the draw wide open after the earlier exits of world number one Ashleigh Barty and third seed Aryna Sabalenka.

"How disappointed am I? I mean, I'm disappointed in every loss, but I feel like this one sucks more than the others," said the four-time Grand Slam winner. Asked what went wrong, she replied: "Everything — if you watch the match then you would probably see. I feel like there's a lot of things that I counted on that I couldn't rely on today."

The third-round defeat follows a turbulent few months for Osaka, who abandoned her French Open campaign in May after refusing to attend press conferences, citing the need to preserve her mental health.

Osaka also skipped Wimbledon, saying she had been battling depression and anxiety, before returning in Tokyo for her first Olympics, including her starring role at the opening ceremony. But ultimately the sky-high expectations placed on the world's highest-paid female athlete proved tough to handle.

"I definitely feel like there was a lot of pressure for this. I think it's maybe because I haven't played in the Olympics before and for the first year (it) was a bit much," said Osaka. After looking assured in the first two rounds after

her eight-week hiatus, Osaka made a dreadful start under the center court roof at a rain-hit Ariake Tennis Park and never recovered.

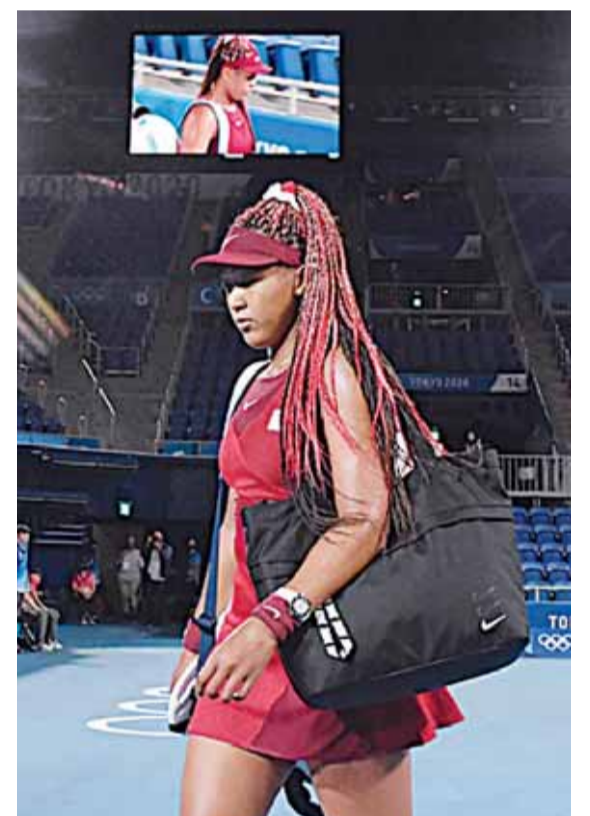
'Pressure'

She dropped serve five times against the 42nd-ranked Vondrousova, who will face Spain's Paula Badosa in the quarter-finals. "I've taken long breaks before and I've managed to do well," Osaka said. "I'm not saying that I did bad right now, but I do know that my expectations were a lot higher. I feel like my attitude wasn't that great because I don't really know how to cope with that pressure so that's the best that I could have done in this situation."

Vondrousova, the 2019 French Open runner-up, called it "one of the biggest wins of my career". Ukrainian fourth seed Elina Svitolina, the highest-ranked women's player left in the competition, recovered to defeat Greece's Maria Sakkari 5-7, 6-3, 6-4.

Wimbledon runner-up Karolina Pliskova, seeded fifth, slumped to a 6-4, 6-2 loss to Italy's Camila Giorgi. There were also third-round wins for Switzerland's Belinda Bencic and Garbine Muguruza while Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova ended the run of Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo, who dumped Barty out in round one.

Earlier, men's third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas advanced to the third round as he avenged last month's Wimbledon loss to Frances Tiafoe, winning 6-3, 6-4. Kei Nishikori will now single-handedly take on the challenge of becoming Japan's first Olympic tennis champion after Osaka's exit. The 2016 bronze medalist overcame a second-set wobble to defeat American Marcos Giron 7-6 (7/5), 3-6, 6-1. Former world number four Nishikori could be a quarter-final opponent for Novak Djokovic, who resumes his quest for gold against Spain's Alejandro Davidovich Fokina today. Britain's Liam Broady upset Polish seventh seed Hubert Hurkacz 7-5, 3-6, 6-3. He will meet Frenchman Jeremy Chardy, who beat 11th-seeded Aslan Karatsev in three sets. —AFP



TOKYO: Japan's Naomi Osaka leaves the court after being beaten by Czech Republic's Marketa Vondrousova in their Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games women's singles third round tennis match at the Ariake Tennis Park in Tokyo yesterday. —AFP

Thomas seeks to follow in Felix's footsteps in 200m tilt

TOKYO: Gabby Thomas is out to emulate childhood hero and now team-mate Allyson Felix as she targets gold for the United States at the Tokyo Olympics. The 24-year-old Harvard-educated sprinter starts as favorite for the 200 meters title after a dazzling season in which she has become the second fastest woman in history over the distance.

Only the late Florence Griffith Joyner — whose world record of 21.34sec from the drug-tarnished 1988 Olympics remains intact — has ever run a faster time in the event. Thomas, who stormed to victory in a world-leading 21.61sec at the US Olympic Trials in Oregon last month, is now poised to follow in the footsteps of Felix, the most decorated female Olympian in track and field history. Thomas describes Felix, the 2012 200m champion, who is competing in her fifth and final Olympics in Tokyo, as her "inspiration."

"She's the first person I remember," Thomas says. "I remember sitting at my granny's house and my mom told me to turn on the TV because she saw someone who reminded her of me — Allyson Felix. That's the person that's been at the back of my mind for so many years. Her humility, her grace, and how good she is at what she does. She's really the one that has been inspiring."

Thomas's power and speed over the 200m has left some wondering whether Griffith Joyner's long-standing record may be within her grasp. With her victory at the US trials last month, Thomas raised her arms in celebration well before the finish line, suggesting she is capable of edging closer to Flo-Jo's 33-year-old mark. Thomas is cautious about whether she thinks a world record is achievable. "I don't want to say 'no'," she said. "But I don't want to put a limit on myself. So I'm not going to say it's unattainable."

Juggling college and track

Thomas failed to make the US team for the 2016 Olympics, when as a 19-year-old she admits she was still learning her craft while juggling the rigors of a degree in neurobiology and global health pol-

icy. She is now pursuing a Masters in epidemiology at the University of Texas in Austin, where she trains under Tonja Buford-Bailey, the 1996 Olympics 400m hurdles bronze medalist.

Buford-Bailey's so-called "Bailey Bunch" is one of the few training groups in the United States run by a Black woman. "A training group of all Black women who are all so inspirational and driven and motivated and succeeding, it's very empowering," Thomas said. "We all have experienced similar struggles. It's just really nice to have that support system."

Thomas says athletics has been a crucial outlet during her academic career. "Being in school really makes me appreciate what I'm doing on the track," she said. "Being able to compartmentalize two different things that I love doing really makes you appreciate the time when you're doing it. When I finish my schoolwork and finish class and go to the track, it's my time to be free and let loose and love what I'm doing. I think (studying) helped and motivated me with track."

Thomas also spends time working as a volunteer at a free healthcare clinic in Austin that aims to provide medical services for the city's uninsured and working poor, an extension of her passion for epidemiology. —AFP

Moroccan boxer tries to bite opponent in Tokyo Olympics defeat

TOKYO: Moroccan heavyweight boxer Youness Baalla attempted to bite David Nyika's ear during his defeat to the New Zealander at the Tokyo Olympics yesterday. The 22-year-old was subsequently disqualified for unsportsmanlike behavior, although he was already out of the Games anyway following his unanimous-points loss in the round-of-16 bout.

A Tokyo 2020 statement called Baalla's actions "intolerable", saying that he "very clearly intended to bite the ear/face of his opponent in the third round of the bout". Footage shows Baalla trying to bite Nyika's right ear as the two boxers hold each other.

Nyika, a two-time Commonwealth Games gold medalist who has already fought as a professional, said: "He didn't get a full mouthful. "Luckily he had his mouthguard in and I was a bit sweaty. "I was bitten on the chest at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games (2018), but come on man, this is the Olympics." —AFP



TOKYO: Morocco's Youness Baalla (red) and New Zealand's David Nyika fight during their men's heavy (81-91kg) preliminaries round of 16 boxing match during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games at the Kokugikan Arena in Tokyo yesterday. —AFP



Surfing's coming home: Hawaiian wins historic Olympic gold

ICHINOMIYA: Hawaiian surfer Carissa Moore said she was bringing Olympic gold home to the sport's roots after winning a historic inaugural title at the Tokyo Games yesterday. Moore beat South African Bianca Buitendag in the final to become surfing's first women's Olympic champion, shortly after Brazil's Italo Ferreira won the men's title.

The American dedicated her victory to her home island, more than a century after legendary Hawaiian Duke Kahanamoku first pushed for surfing to be included at the Games. "It means everything—surfing is Hawaii's sport, and that's where it started," she said. "I hope I am a good ambassador for our sport and the aloha spirit and for our people. It gives the people of Hawaii hope that they can do anything they dream of."

despite snapping his board on the first wave in his final against Japan's Kanoa Igarashi. Ferreira, who learned to surf standing on the foam box his father sold fish from, had to bob up and down in the ocean as a team official brought him a replacement.

But he recovered to turn in an imperious performance, dominating the contest before being carried back up the beach on his teammates' shoulders. "I think it's one of the best days of my life, for sure," said Ferreira, the 2019 world champion. "For me that was a long day, and it was a dream come true. In the last couple of months I have been training a lot, just to live in this moment."

'Olympic sport forever'

Australia's Owen Wright took the bronze medal.



CHIBA: US's Carissa Moore competes during the women's Surfing gold medal final at the Tsurigasaki Surfing Beach, in Chiba, yesterday during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. — AFP

Dressel outpaces Chalmers in 100m free heats

TOKYO: US superstar and two-time world champion Caeleb Dressel limbered up for a crack at more gold yesterday by narrowly outpacing reigning Olympic champion Kyle Chalmers in the 100m freestyle heats. The imposing 24-year-old is tackling three individual events in Tokyo — the 50m and 100m freestyle and the 100m butterfly — and could feature in a possible four relays. He already has one gold medal secure after spearheading the United States to the 4x100m relay title on Monday.

While Dressel only finished sixth in the 100m free at the Rio Olympics, he has since dominated, claiming back-to-back world titles. But he has a high-quality opponent in Chalmers, who stunned the world to win in Rio and has earned a reputation for closing his races like a freight train.

Dressel clocked 47.73secs with Chalmers powering to 47.77 in the heat beforehand, although neither was quickest. That accolade went to Italy's Thomas Ceccon who touched in 47.71. "I know what my job is as I hit the water. It's not different if it's relay or individual," said Dressel, who added that his first swims at a meet were "usually a bit rocky".

But he said he was comfortable with his grueling task in Tokyo. "I've handled two world championships with the same schedule so I'm used to it," he said. Chalmers said it was hard to read too much into the heats. "It's funny everyone's just playing the games, and I'm one of them, so I can't really say anything else other than that," he said. "It's good to tick the box."

"Tomorrow morning is going to be a big one with the semi-final and the 4x200 at the end of the (morning) program so I just got to get through the rounds, conserve as much energy as I can sleep well tonight," he added. —AFP

Aussie surfer caps incredible comeback with Olympic medal

ICHINOMIYA: Australian Owen Wright had to relearn how to surf and walk after suffering a horrific brain injury in 2015 — now he's an Olympic bronze medalist. Wright claimed a podium finish yesterday as surfing made its Olympic debut, beating Brazil's world number one Gabriel Medina in a tense play-off at Tsurigasaki Beach. But the 31-year-old had times when he couldn't even remember his name less than six years ago, after a huge wipeout in training left him with bleeding on the brain. "I didn't count myself out—that's the thing," an emotional Wright said after the medal ceremony. "I guess that's why I still imagined these big, lofty goals. Because I've come back from something that I wouldn't expect to come back from anyway. I don't mind aiming for the top."



CHIBA: Brazil's Italo Ferreira (center), gold medalist, Japan's Kanoa Igarashi (left) silver medalist and Australia's Owen Wright, bronze medalist celebrate on the podium at the Tsurigasaki Surfing Beach, in Chiba, yesterday during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. — AFP

less than six years after suffering a serious head injury that left him needing to learn to walk and surf again. He beat much-fancied Brazilian Gabriel Medina for the bronze, after Igarashi had ousted the world number one in a spectacular semi-final.

But the Japanese rider could not repeat the achievement in the final, with Ferreira in unstoppable form. "I started surfing on a cooler, and then I won my first event, and after that I had a lot of passion for the sport and then I started to make history," said Ferreira. "I'm so proud to grow up in a place where I had great people behind me. They gave me a lot of support to be here, and this is what motivates me."

Moore went into the women's competition as the world number one, and was helped along the way by upsets that eliminated several of her main rivals. Underdog Buitendag knocked out seven-time world champion Stephanie Gilmore and world number six Caroline Marks on her way to the final, but Moore was just too hot to handle.

"I couldn't have asked for a better end to this whole day," said Moore. "I was happy to finally find a couple of waves and do a couple of good turns and feel like I got to surf a little bit. I'm so honored to be representing the US and wearing the gold medal and bringing it back to Hawaii."

Japan's Amuro Tsuzuki beat Marks to win the women's bronze medal. The medal events—originally scheduled to take place today—were moved forward to yesterday to take advantage of favorable wave conditions. Fans were locked out of Tsurigasaki Beach, around 100 kilometers (60 miles) east of Tokyo, but the surfers were happy with their sport's Olympic debut. "No matter what happens in the future, we're going to be an Olympic sport forever," said Igarashi, whose dashing good looks and run to the final whipped Japanese fans into a frenzy. "This week was historical. To be represented at an Olympics is something that every sport wants to achieve." — AFP

Wright said his symptoms persisted for three years after the accident, with memory loss, motor issues and "a roller-coaster of emotions". But he refused to give up on his dream of winning an Olympic medal, and kept himself going by visualizing it around his neck.

"I had to push each limit and with all that came massive breakdowns, to the point where I didn't even know who I was or my name," he said. "I pushed myself to the absolute nth degree to get here today. I think that's what gave me my strength and why I'm standing up here today." Wright said he and his teammates had been given a pep talk by some of Australia's Olympic legends, including Cathy Freeman. He said he felt like he "had the whole country there supporting" him in the bronze-medal match against Medina, which went down to the wire.

"It was coming down to the last 10, 20 seconds," Wright said. "Those little moments like that, you have your coaches, your support team—they were saying 'Don't let up a single moment'. That was my moment." And he credited the Australian team as "a big reason" for his recovery, saying surfing's inclusion at the Games had brought access to better doctors and physios. —AFP



TOKYO: USA's Lydia Jacoby (left) celebrates winning with third-placed USA's Lilly King after the final of the women's 100m breaststroke swimming event during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

US teen dethrones King to claim 'insane' Olympic breaststroke gold

TOKYO: US teenager Lydia Jacoby eclipsed teammate and Olympic champion Lilly King to claim 100m breaststroke gold yesterday in one of the biggest upsets yet in the Tokyo pool. The 17-year-old Games debutant shocked even herself when she stormed home from third to touch in 1min 04.95sec, staring open-mouthed at the scoreboard.

Her manic dash over the final 15m put her ahead of South Africa's Tatjana Schoenmaker (1:05.22) and a fading King on 1:05.54 — the veteran American's first defeat since 2015 in her pet event. King, 24, a two-time world champion and world record-holder over the distance, had been regarded as a near-certainty to defend the Olympic title she won comfortably in Rio.

Instead, Jacoby announced herself as a rising star and ended King's quest to become the first woman to win back-to-back Olympic titles. "It was crazy. I was definitely racing for a medal. I knew that I had it in me," said the teenager, the first Olympic swimmer to hail from Alaska state. "I wasn't really expecting a gold medal. So, when I looked up and saw that scoreboard it was insane."

King led over the first 50m but was challenged after the turn by Schoenmaker, who set an Olympic record in the heats. As the pair battled it out, Jacoby pulled out all the stops and unleashed a turbo-charged final 15m. She said her focus was on staying positive after a solid but uninspiring swim in the qualifiers. "I definitely stressed myself out yesterday so I was just trying to feel good and feel happy going into it, and I feel like I did that," she said.

King, renowned as a gritty competitor who relishes psyching out her opponents, was gracious in defeat, declaring: "The kid just had the swim of her life and I'm so proud to be her teammate." She said the fact her crown had been taken by a fellow American took some sting from the loss. "I'm surprisingly OK right now. I'm very happy with my race and so excited for Lydia," she said. "I mean, I love to see the future of American breaststroke coming up like this."

Schoenmaker said the Tokyo schedule, with finals taking place in the morning, hindered her ability to repeat the sizzling form she showed in the heats. "We knew it was going to be a tough race and it's obviously harder doing it in the morning, waking up and being on fire, especially in 100 meters," the South African said. "But it's the same for everyone. I'm not here to complain. I hope I give my country a bit of hope, we're going through a tough time." — AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Lijo Davis holder of passport number R5453235 on behalf of my son Antonio holder of passport number R8271668 Do hereby change name to ANTONIO LIJO. (C.0620) 26-7-2021

EMERGENCY 112

Kuwait Times
Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



Mr. Anil Babu Bokka, son of Mr. Satyanarayana Bokka, resident of H No: 1-6-659 31st Ward, Bapuji Nagar, Kadakatta, Tadepalligudem, West Godavari, Andhra Pradesh- 534101 and Ms. Pavan Durga Sadi, daughter of Mr. Ramu Sadi, resident of 12-11-82B, Kasi Visweswara Street, Kobbarithota, Tadepalligudem, West Godavari, Andhra Pradesh -534101 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. S. Rathore
(K.S. Rathore) First Secretary (CA) and Marriage Officer, Embassy of India, Kuwait

Biles withdrawal stuns Olympics

Osaka crashes out; Ferreira, Moore claim first-ever Olympic surfing gold

TOKYO: US gymnastics superstar Simone Biles sent shockwaves through the Olympics yesterday, tearfully citing concerns for her mental health after a dramatic withdrawal mid-competition during the women's team final. The 24-year-old four-time Olympic gold medalist — one of the faces of the Tokyo Games — got off to a shaky start at the Ariake Gymnastics Centre with a lackluster opening vault.

Stunned onlookers watched as Biles was led off the competition floor before returning wearing a tracksuit. Soon afterwards, USA Gymnastics confirmed she would sit out the remainder of the final with an unspecified medical issue.

Speaking to reporters after the final — eventually won by Russia's team — Biles said concerns for her mental wellbeing prompted her decision to withdraw. "At the end of the day, I have to do what's right for me and focus on my mental health and not jeopardize my health and my wellbeing," she said.

"I just think mental health is more prevalent now in sports and it's not just like we have to set everything aside, we also have to focus on ourselves. Because at the end of the day, we're human too so we have to protect our mind and our body rather than just go out there and do what the world wants us to do."

If Biles fails to recover in time for Thursday's individual all-around competition, it would mark a stunning turn of events at a Games which she had been strongly expected to dominate.

No longer fun

Biles later began crying as she revealed a loss of confidence in her abilities. "I just don't trust myself as much as I used to," she said, flanked by her US teammates. "I feel like I am also not having as much fun. That just hurts my heart that doing what I love has been taken."

Another face of the Games — Japan tennis star

Naomi Osaka — also fell by the wayside yesterday after losing 6-1, 6-4 to Marketa Vondrousova following an error-strewn performance. The 23-year-old Osaka had not played since May when she walked out of the French Open saying media commitments were harming her mental health.

The second seed was bitterly disappointed at missing out on a chance of Olympic gold, especially after the early exit of world number one Ashleigh Barty. "How disappointed am I? I mean, I'm disappointed in every loss, but I feel like this one sucks more than the others," said the four-time Grand Slam winner, who lit the Olympic cauldron at last Friday's opening ceremony.

Brazil's Italo Ferreira and America's Carissa Moore claimed the first-ever Olympic gold medals in surfing. In the men's competition Ferreira, who learned his trade standing on the foam box from which his father sold fish, snapped his board on the first wave but soon recovered his composure to take gold. "It's one of the best days of my life for sure," said the Brazilian. "I was so nervous at the beginning but I just tried to surf and have fun." Hawaiian Moore beat South Africa's Bianca Buitendijck in the women's final.

First for Bermuda

Triathlete Flora Duffy won the first gold of the day in the women's event, making Bermuda the smallest territory or nation in terms of population to win a gold medal at a Summer Games. "It's bigger than me and that's a really cool moment. That was the longest kilometer of my life (the final one of the run)."

Elsewhere, swimming powerhouses Australia and the United States won one gold medal each in the morning session and are on three golds apiece. Australian world-record holder Kaylee McKeown



TOKYO: Russia's Angelina Melnikova (left) is congratulated by USA's Simone Biles as Russia wins the artistic gymnastics women's team final during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games at the Ariake Gymnastics Center in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

upstaged American arch-rival Regan Smith to claim the women's 100m backstroke crown as Russia and Britain also won golds. McKeown flew through the water at the Tokyo Aquatic Center to touch in 57.47 seconds, a new Olympic record and only fractionally outside her own world best while Smith had to settle for bronze.

On a day of upsets, American women's 100m breaststroke world-record holder and defending

champion Lilly King was beaten by 17-year-old compatriot Lydia Jacoby and teammate and defending 100m backstroke champion Ryan Murphy also tasted defeat. Russian swimmer Evgeny Rylov took gold in the final, with Murphy pushed into third place. Britain's Tom Dean came back from two bouts of coronavirus to edge out team-mate Duncan Scott and win the 200m freestyle. — AFP

Netherlands set up Olympic quarter-final with USA

TOKYO: The Netherlands rounded off their high-scoring group-stage campaign with an 8-2 thrashing of China yesterday to set up a quarter-final clash with the United States in the Olympic women's football tournament. Earlier, the USA again produced a below-par performance again in a 0-0 draw with Australia which was enough to see them finish second in Group G behind Sweden, who beat the world champions 3-0 in their opening game.

The Dutch only brought on star striker Vivianne Miedema in the 62nd minute in Yokohama, but she still scored twice to set a new record of eight goals in a women's Olympics event. Barcelona midfielder Lieke Martens also netted a double, as did Lineth Beerensteyn, while Shanice van der Sanden and Victoria Pevlova got on the scoresheet as well.

European champions the Netherlands finished top of Group F having scored 21 goals, after a 10-3

thrashing of Zambia and 3-3 draw with runners-up Brazil, who beat the Zambians 1-0 yesterday. The Dutch will pose a serious threat to the Americans' gold-medal hopes in the last eight.

Team USA knew defeat by Australia could have put them in danger of a shock exit, but played out a dull encounter in Kashima. The loss to Sweden ended the Americans' 44-match unbeaten run and they struggled to create chances again, the closest they came to a winner when Alex Morgan's header was ruled out by a tight offside call.

The other game in the group saw Sweden make it three wins from three by seeing off pointless New Zealand 2-0. Anna Anvegard and Madelen Janogy scored the goals as the Scandinavians booked a quarter-final clash with Japan. The hosts, the 2011 World Cup winners, edged through as one of the best two third-placed teams



YOKOHAMA: Netherlands' coach Sarina Wiegman (third left) celebrates with players after Netherlands won the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games women's group F first round football match between Netherlands and China at the Yokohama International Stadium in Yokohama yesterday. — AFP

after a tense 1-0 win over Chile. Half-time substitute Mina Tanaka netted the winner with 13 minutes remaining.

Britain, bidding for a first women's Olympic football medal, finished top of Group E thanks to Canadian Nichelle Prince's 85th-minute own

goal in a 1-1 draw. Canada had looked set for a last-eight tie against Australia after Adriana Leon's opener, but instead will face Brazil, with the Britons taking on the Aussies. The quarter-finals will all be played on Saturday. — AFP



Tokyo Olympics medals table after yesterday's events (G = Gold, S = Silver, B = Bronze, T = Total):

	G	S	B	T
Japan	10	3	5	18
United States	9	8	8	25
China	9	5	7	21
Russian Olympic Committee	7	7	4	18
Great Britain	4	5	4	13
South Korea	3	2	5	10
Australia	3	1	5	9
Canada	2	3	3	8
France	2	2	3	7
Germany	2	0	3	5
Kosovo	2	0	0	2
Italy	1	5	6	12
Taiwan	1	2	3	6
Brazil	1	2	2	5
Switzerland	1	2	2	5
Serbia	1	1	1	3
Slovenia	1	1	1	3
Hungary	1	1	0	2
Tunisia	1	1	0	2
Austria	1	0	1	2
Croatia	1	0	1	2
Estonia	1	0	1	2
Bermuda	1	0	0	1
Ecuador	1	0	0	1
Hong Kong	1	0	0	1
Iran	1	0	0	1
Norway	1	0	0	1
Philippines	1	0	0	1
Thailand	1	0	0	1
Uzbekistan	1	0	0	1
Netherlands	0	3	0	3
Spain	0	2	1	3
Georgia	0	2	0	2
South Africa	0	2	0	2
Mongolia	0	1	2	3
Belgium	0	1	1	2
Czech Republic	0	1	1	2
Indonesia	0	1	1	2
Bulgaria	0	1	0	1
Colombia	0	1	0	1
Denmark	0	1	0	1
India	0	1	0	1
Jordan	0	1	0	1
North Macedonia	0	1	0	1
Romania	0	1	0	1
Turkmenistan	0	1	0	1
Kazakhstan	0	0	3	3
Ukraine	0	0	3	3
Egypt	0	0	2	2
Mexico	0	0	2	2
Turkey	0	0	2	2
Cuba	0	0	1	1
Ivory Coast	0	0	1	1
Kuwait	0	0	1	1
New Zealand	0	0	1	1
Zionist entity	0	0	1	1



Artistic Gymnastics - Women's Team
GOLD - Russian Olympic Committee
SILVER - United States of America
BRONZE - Great Britain

Softball
GOLD - Japan
SILVER - United States of America
BRONZE - Mexico

Canoe Slalom - Women's Kayak
GOLD - FUNK Ricarda - Germany
SILVER - CHOURRAUT Maialen - Spain
BRONZE - FOX Jessica - Australia

Cycling Mountain Bike - Women's Cross-country
GOLD - NEFF Jolanda - Switzerland
SILVER - FREI Sina - Switzerland
BRONZE - INDERGAND Linda SUI - Switzerland

Diving - Women's Synchronized 10m Platform
GOLD - People's Republic of China
SILVER - United States of America
BRONZE - Mexico
Equestrian - Dressage Team

Tokyo Olympics medals won yesterday

GOLD - Germany
Silver - United States of America
BRONZE - Great Britain

Shooting - 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team
GOLD - People's Republic of China
SILVER - Russian Olympic Committee
BRONZE - Ukraine

Shooting - 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team
GOLD - People's Republic of China
SILVER - United States of America
BRONZE - Russian Olympic Committee

Swimming - Men's 200m Freestyle
GOLD - DEAN Tom - Great Britain
SILVER - SCOTT Duncan - Great Britain
BRONZE - SCHEFFER Fernando - Brazil

Swimming - Women's 100m Backstroke
GOLD - McKEOWN Kaylee - Australia
SILVER - MASSE Kylie - Canada
BRONZE - SMITH Regan - United States of America

Swimming - Men's 100m Backstroke
GOLD - RYLOV Evgeny - Russian Olympic Committee

SILVER - KOLESNIKOV Kliment - Russian Olympic Committee
BRONZE - MURPHY Ryan - United States of America

Women's 100m Breaststroke
GOLD - JACOBY Lydia - United States of America
SILVER - SCHOENMAKER Tatjana - South Africa
BRONZE - KING Lilly - United States of America

Triathlon - Women's Individual
GOLD - DUFFY Flora - Bermuda
SILVER - TAYLOR-BROWN Georgia - Great Britain
BRONZE - ZAFERES Katie - United States of America

Weightlifting - Women's 59kg
GOLD - KUO Hsing-Chun - Chinese Taipei
SILVER - GURYEVA Polina - Turkmenistan
BRONZE - ANDOH Mikiko - Japan

Weightlifting - Women's 64kg
GOLD - CHARRON Maude G - Canada
SILVER - BORDIGNON Giorgia - Italy
BRONZE - CHEN Wen-Huei - Chinese Taipei