



3 One killed, two injured in Shuwaikh warehouse fire



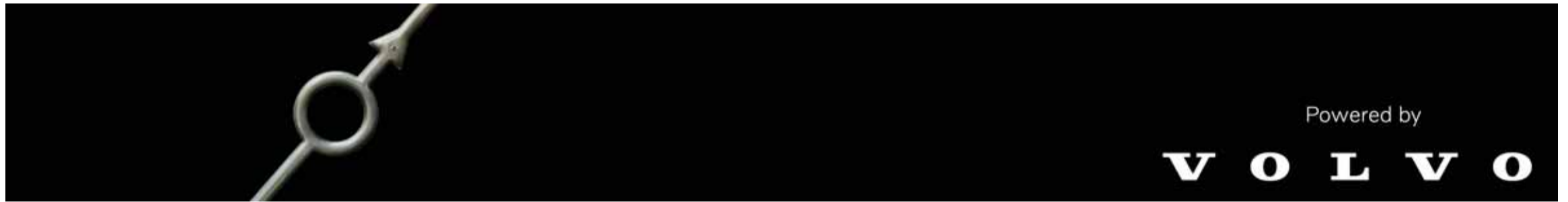
6 Global displacement from war, crises doubles in a decade: UN



8 Newest Boeing 737 MAX makes first test flight



13 As Cyberpunk reboots, can unloved games win extra life?



Ultraconservative cleric Raisi wins Iran presidential vote

Amir congratulates president-elect on victory • Turnout at record low



TEHRAN: Outgoing President Hassan Rouhani (left) takes part in a press conference with President-elect Ebrahim Raisi during his visit to congratulate the ultra-conservative cleric on winning the presidential election yesterday. — AFP

TEHRAN: Ultraconservative cleric Ebrahim Raisi was declared the winner yesterday of Iran's presidential election, a widely anticipated result after many political heavyweights were barred from running. Raisi won just shy of 62 percent of the vote in Friday's election, according to official figures, on a turnout of 48.8 percent, a record low for a presidential poll in the Islamic republic.

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable of congratulations to Raisi. In the cable, HH the Amir expressed sincere congratulations on Raisi's victory, wishing him further success and wellness, as well as for the friendly Islamic Republic to further progress and prosper. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the president-elect.

"I congratulate the people on their choice," said outgoing moderate President Hassan Rouhani, who has served the maximum of two consecutive four-year terms and leaves office in August. Raisi, 60, is set to take over at a critical time, as Iran seeks to salvage its tattered nuclear deal with major powers and free itself from punishing US sanctions that have driven a sharp economic downturn.

"God willing, we will do our best so that the hope for the future now alive in people's hearts grows further," said Raisi, adding that he wants to strengthen public trust in the government for a "bright and pleasant life together". The head of the Iranian judiciary, Raisi is seen as close to the 81-year-old supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who holds ultimate political power in Iran.

Friday's voting was extended by two hours past the original midnight deadline amid fears of a low turnout. Many voters

chose to stay away after the field of some 600 hopefuls including 40 women had been winnowed down to seven candidates, all men, excluding an ex-president and a former parliament speaker.

Three of the vetted candidates dropped out two days before Friday's vote. Populist former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, one of those barred from running by the Guardian Council of clerics and jurists, said he would not vote, declaring in a video message: "I do not want to have a part in this sin." Ultraconservative Mohsen Rezaei, a former commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, placed second with 11.8 percent of votes cast. He was followed by the only reformist left in the race, former central bank chief Abdolnasser Hemmati, who scored 8.4 percent. Another ultraconservative, Amirhossein Ghazizadeh-Hashemi, came last with 3.5 percent.

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WHO, MoH to tackle COVID together

KUWAIT: The World Health Organization (WHO) will work with the Kuwaiti Health Ministry to help tackle the COVID-19, the organization's representative in Kuwait Dr Assad Hafeez said on Friday. During an interview with KUNA, Dr Hafeez expressed his thanks to the government of Kuwait following unremitting efforts that resulted in opening a permanent office of the organization in the country.

Dr Hafeez also touched on Kuwait's five-year plan, stating that it includes multiple targets, such as improving healthcare, and global goals such as sustainable development. He also shed light on the projects that can take place between Kuwait and

the organization, including the health city project, which includes many aspects, including a healthy lifestyle, way of living, the environment and benefiting from human energies.

Regarding the detection of the Delta coronavirus variant in Kuwait and what WHO can provide in this regard, Dr Hafeez said they can provide detailed information about this virus. The organization can also provide the necessary information, experts and consultations for the benefit of local experts, which is reflected in treatment programs with the knowledge of the most effective vaccines and the best treatment and means of prevention, he added.

Dr Hafeez expressed gratitude to Kuwait for opening the permanent office after six years of joint work, despite the current COVID-19 obstacles, emphasizing the deep-rooted relationship between the two sides, which began in 1960, and has grown strongly thanks to a series of Kuwaiti support for the activities of the organization. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Domestic helpers are vaccinated against COVID-19 at the Kuwait Vaccination Center at the Mishref fairgrounds yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

US cutting forces, missile batteries in Kuwait, Mideast

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon said Friday it was cutting the number of troops and air defense units deployed to the Middle East, confirming a Wall Street Journal report that eight Patriot batteries were being moved out from the region. The move comes as President Joe Biden's administration seeks to ease tensions with Iran after they heated up in 2019 and saw a strong escalation in the US military presence across the region.

The Wall Street Journal said the Patriot anti-missile batteries were being removed from Kuwait, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and that a separate anti-missile system, called THAAD, was being transferred from Saudi Arabia as well. Each battery requires hundreds of troops and civilians to operate and support them.

Pentagon spokesperson Commander Jessica McNulty said that some of the units were being redeployed to other countries and some were returning to the United States for maintenance. She would not say where the redeployed units were being moved to. "This decision was made in close coordination with host nations and with a clear eye on preserving our ability to meet our security commitments," she said in an email.

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India mourns as 'Flying Sikh' dies of COVID

NEW DELHI: India yesterday mourned the loss of track legend Milkha Singh, who overcame childhood tragedy to seek Olympic glory, after he died aged 91 following a long battle with COVID-19. Singh, a four-time Asian Games gold medalist who

was dubbed the 'Flying Sikh', passed away at a hospital in the north Indian city of Chandigarh late Friday. His wife had also died from the virus earlier in the week.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the tributes for Singh, writing that India had "lost a colossal sportsperson, who captured the nation's imagination and had a special place in the hearts of countless Indians". Cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar said Singh's legacy would live on. "Rest in Peace our very own 'Flying Sikh' Milkha Singh ji," he tweeted. "Your demise has left a deep void in every Indian's heart today, but you shall keep inspiring several

generations to come."

India's cricket team led by star batsman Virat Kohli wore black armbands as a mark of respect to Singh in the World Test Championship final against New Zealand in the English city of Southampton yesterday. Another tribute came from women's tennis star Sania Mirza who said the "world will miss a legend like you".

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Biological links between red meat, cancer

WASHINGTON: Eating less red meat is standard medical advice for preventing colorectal cancer, but the way it causes cells to mutate has remained unclear, and not all experts were convinced there was a strong link. A new paper in the journal Cancer Discovery has now identified specific patterns of DNA damage triggered by diets rich in red meat - further implicating the food as a carcinogen while heralding the possibility of detecting the cancer early and designing new treatments.

Prior research establishing the connection was mainly epidemiologic, meaning that people who developed the condition were surveyed on their eating habits, and researchers spotted associations with colorectal cancer incidence. But a lack of clarity around the biology meant that the case wasn't quite slam dunk, and in 2019, one team of researchers made waves when they declared they only had a "low" degree of certainty that reducing consumption would prevent cancer deaths.

"When we say red meat is carcinogenic, and that it impacts incidence of cancer, there has to be some plausible way by which it does it," Dana-Farber Cancer Institute oncologist Marios Giannakis, who led the new study, told AFP.

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KABUL: A butcher cuts meat at his shop on June 10, 2021. — AFP



Milkha Singh

Local

NATO Official lauds progress made by women in Kuwait, Gulf region

BRUSSELS: NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security Clare Hutchinson, has expressed her admiration for the achievements made by women in Kuwait and the Gulf region. "We have heard today how we can learn in the euro-Atlantic region some of the step that have been taken by women in particular in Kuwait and the Gulf. I am really impressed," she said after attending a farewell lunch hosted in her honor by Kuwait's Ambassador to NATO, EU and Belgium Jasem Al-Budaiwi. "There is a lot that I have learnt and will take with me because I didn't know some of this. We need to do more to get these good stories out that are happening in Kuwait and the Gulf region."

Hutchinson said it was a farewell lunch for her hosted by Kuwait's ambassador with women from the region to discuss about women empowerment and about the progress in the region and the "wonderful" progress in the Gulf. "It is really very interesting for us to hear. We do not hear these stories. Women sitting together talking what is important to them. I am very impressed what I heard today," she said.

Clare Hutchinson, a dual British-Canadian national, took office as the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security in January 2018. Her three-year term ends in June. Hutchinson also worked as a Senior Gender Adviser with the United Nations for over a decade. She has been instrumental in setting the strategic development of Women, Peace and Security for the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping in New York, Kosovo and Lebanon.

She is now planning with Kuwait to organize a

course about women empowerment and women in peace and security later this year which will be the first of its kind in the region. "Thanks to the Ambassador and his leadership on this," she said. Hutchinson said her task as the NATO representative was to raise awareness how women empowerment make a country more empowered. "Having more women in economics, political and security environment makes a country stronger. Our allies and partners work together to get more women empowered in security. We can learn from our partners and share good practices," she said.

Meanwhile, Budaiwi, said that this was the fourth annual luncheon organized by the Kuwait embassy in Brussels to celebrate women achievement and women empowerment. He noted that this event was in honour of Clair Hutchinson with the participation of women ambassadors and diplomats from the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (GCC) and the Arab world and officials from EU, NATO.

"It was a very good opportunity to discuss issues related to women. It was an opportunity for us to explain to them what Kuwait has done in empowering women and to integrate women in all sectors of the society," he said. They talked about the achievements and challenges and about future plans to ensure that women are protected and fully integrated into the society, he said. "During the meeting we heard a lot of praises for Kuwait hosting an annual event for women. We are the only embassy in Brussels to host such events. It is unprecedented. I am honored that this is my fourth event for women issues," he added. — KUNA



BRUSSELS: Kuwait's Ambassador to NATO, EU and Belgium Jasem Al-Budaiwi (right) in a group photo during a lunch hosted for NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security Clare Hutchinson. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Iran's Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Irani led Iranian voters in casting their votes in the Islamic republic's presidential election at the Iranian embassy in Kuwait City on Friday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

India mourns as 'Flying Sikh'...

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Singh, who first tested positive for the virus on May 20 according to Indian media, is survived by three daughters and one son, leading pro golfer Jeev Milkha Singh. Singh was born in 1929 in Govindpura, in what is now Pakistan. He lost his family during the tumultuous partition of British-ruled India at independence in 1947, when it was divided into Pakistan and India, before going on to become one of the young country's first athletic heroes.

Singh won gold medals at the 1958 and 1962 Asian Games. However, he shot to fame at the 1960 Olympics in Rome when he finished fourth in the 400m, 0.66 seconds behind Otis Davis of the United States who set a new world record of 45.07sec to win. Singh was devastated but his time of 45.73sec stood as an Indian national record for almost 40 years. He never fulfilled his dream of winning an Olympic medal.

His rise to elite athlete made Singh a national

hero and inspired a Bollywood film in 2013 called "Bhaag Milkha Bhaag" (Run, Milkha, Run). The film's lead actor Farhan Akhtar, who won top awards for his portrayal of the star athlete, paid tribute to Singh in an emotional message. "You represented an idea. You represented a dream," Akhtar wrote on social media. "You represented (to use your own words) how hard work, honesty and determination can lift a person off his knees and get him to touch the sky."

The movie's title refers to the poignant last words spoken to Singh by his father. As he was dying, he told Singh to flee or he, too, would be killed in the post-partition riots sweeping the sub-continent. Singh ran for his life and boarded a train with other refugees. Millions are believed to have died in the bloody sectarian upheaval.

"We all grew up with the folklore of Milkha, he's a larger-than-life figure for us," said the film's director Rakeysh Mehra in 2013. "He's like what Pele meant to football, or what Jesse Owens meant for track and field for the West." Mehra was drawn to Singh's story not just for his sporting achievements but for the impact the athlete had on a newborn nation struggling to assert itself, describing him as one of the country's first heroes outside politics. "This man never ran away from his fears, he ran along with them," he said at the time. —AFP

To opposition and human rights groups, his name is linked to mass executions of political prisoners in 1988. The US government has sanctioned him over the purge, in which Raisi has denied involvement. Asked in 2018 and again last year about the executions, Raisi denied playing a role, even as he lauded an order he said was handed down by the Islamic republic's founder Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to proceed with the purge.

Ultimate power in Iran, since its 1979 revolution toppled the US-backed monarchy, rests with the supreme leader, but the president wields major influence in areas from industrial policy to foreign affairs. Rouhani's landmark achievement was the 2015 deal with world powers under which Iran agreed to limit its nuclear program in return for sanctions relief.

But high hopes for greater prosperity were crushed in 2018 when then-president Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the accord and launched a "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran. While Iran has always denied seeking a nuclear weapon, Trump charged it was still planning to build the bomb and destabilizing the Middle East through proxy groups in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen.

As old and new US sanctions hit Iran, trade dried up and foreign companies bolted. The economy nosedived and spiraling prices fueled repeated bouts of social unrest which were put down by security forces. Iran's ultraconservative camp - which deeply distrusts the US, labelled the "Great Satan" or the "Global Arrogance" in the Islamic republic - attacked Rouhani over the failing deal. Despite this, Iran's senior political figures, including Raisi, have voiced broad agreement that the country must seek an end to the US sanctions in ongoing talks in Vienna aimed at rescuing the nuclear accord. —AFP

Ultraconservative cleric Raisi wins...

Continued from Page 1

Khamenei hailed the election saying that "the great winner... is the Iranian nation because it has risen up once again in the face of the propaganda of the enemy's mercenary media".

On election day, pictures of often flag-waving voters dominated state TV coverage, but away from the polling stations some voiced anger at what they saw as a stage-managed election. "Whether I vote or not, someone has already been elected," said Tehran shopkeeper Saeed Zareie. "They organize the elections for the media."

Enthusiasm was dampened further by spiraling inflation and job losses, and the COVID pandemic that proved more deadly in Iran than anywhere else in the region, killing more than 80,000 people by the official count. Among those who queued to vote at schools, mosques and community centers, many said they supported Raisi, who has promised to fight corruption, help the poor and build millions of flats for low-income families.

A nurse named Sahebiyan said she backed him for his anti-graft credentials and on hopes he would "move the country forward" to "save the people from economic, cultural and social deprivation". Raisi, who holds deeply conservative views on many social issues including the role of women in public life, has been named in Iranian media as a possible successor to Khamenei.

Biological links between red...

Continued from Page 1

After all, scientists discovered long ago which chemicals in cigarette smoke are to blame for cancer, and how certain bands of UV light penetrate the skin and trigger mutations in genes that control how cells grow and divide.

To address the knowledge gap, Giannakis and his colleagues sequenced DNA data from 900 patients with colorectal cancer, who were drawn from a much larger group of 280,000 health workers participating in a years-long studies that included lifestyle surveys. The strength of this approach is that the people documenting their diet had no way of knowing of their future cancer diagnosis, rather than asking people to recall their eating habits after they became ill.

The analysis revealed a distinct mutational signature - a pattern that had never before been identified but was indicative of a type of DNA damage called "alkylation". Not all cells that contain these mutations will necessarily become cancerous, and the signature was present in some healthy colon samples too.

The mutation signature was significantly associated with intake of red meat, both processed and unprocessed, prior to the patient's diagnosis of cancer, but not with the intake of poultry, fish or other lifestyle factors that were examined. "With red meat, there are chemicals that can cause alkylation," explained Giannakis. The specific compounds are nitroso compounds that can be made from heme, which is plentiful in red meat, as well as nitrates, often found in processed meat.

The mutation patterns were strongly associated with the distal colon - the lower part of the bowels that leads to the anal canal, which is where past research suggested colon cancer linked to red meat mostly occurs. What's more, among the genes that were most affected by the alkylation patterns were those that previous research has shown are among the most common drivers of colorectal cancer when they mutate.

US cutting forces, missile batteries...

Continued from Page 1

"We maintain a robust force posture in the region appropriate to the threat and are comfortable that these changes do not negatively impact our national security interests," McNulty said. "We also retain the flexibility to rapidly flow forces back into the Middle East as conditions warrant."

The US military is rapidly adjusting its global

Taken as a whole, the multiple lines of evidence



KABUL: A butcher works at his shop in Kabul — AFP

build up a compelling argument, said Giannakis, likening the research to careful detective work. In this case, the suspicious mutation signature has a lot to answer for: Patients whose tumors had the highest levels of alkylation damage had a 47 percent greater risk of colorectal cancer-specific death, compared to patients with lower levels of damage.

But Giannakis, also a practicing doctor, said it was important to focus on how the research can be used to help patients. Future work might help physicians identify which patients are genetically predisposed to accumulating alkylation damage, then counsel them to limit their red meat intake. Identifying patients who have already started to accrue the mutational signature could help identify who's at greater risk of developing cancer, or catch the disease at an earlier stage.

And because the amount of alkylation damage appears to be a biomarker of patient survival, it could possibly be used to tell patients about their prognosis. Finally, understanding the biological pathway through which colorectal cancer occurs paves the way for medicines that interrupt or reverse the process, preventing the disease.

Giannakis stressed the takeaway message is not that people should totally abstain from red meat: "My recommendation would be that moderation and a balanced diet is key." High levels of tumor alkylation damage were only seen among patients eating on average more than 150 gm a day, roughly equal to two or more servings. —AFP

footprint as it pulls out of Afghanistan entirely and sees a greater threat from China in the Asia-Pacific region. The Pentagon also slashed its troop presence in Iraq last year to 2,500, supporting Iraqi forces in their fight against the Islamic State group.

Iran is still viewed as a major threat across the Middle East, but the Biden administration is in negotiations to restore the agreement on Tehran halting its nuclear development program, which would also see some sanctions on the country lifted. "The Defense Department maintains tens of thousands of forces in the Middle East, representing some of our most advanced air power and maritime capabilities, in support of US national interests and our regional partnerships," McNulty said. —AFP

Local

Unvaccinated mall employees in limbo after Kuwait's new ban

Workers fear shops would close until they get their shots

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: After the Cabinet decided on Thursday that unvaccinated people cannot enter large malls from June 27, many of the staff working in these malls are anxious about their jobs. Saleswomen at five different stores at The Avenues mall told Kuwait Times they haven't been vaccinated.

"Unfortunately I didn't receive the vaccine although I registered more than five months ago. Even during the vaccination campaign at the mall, me and my colleague didn't get vaccinated although we waited for over three hours in the queue. They told us the vaccines had run out," said a saleslady named Merisel, who works at a clothing store.

Sara, a saleswoman at a grocery store at The Avenues, also said she couldn't get vaccinated during the campaign due to the huge number of people waiting in the queue. "Unfortunately, the medical team was vaccinating all those waiting in the queue, which included a large number of visitors, so the number of vaccines was not enough for all the staff," she pointed out.

Other sales staff from various smaller stores who didn't get the vaccine wondered if their stores will be closed after the decision goes into effect on June 27. "There are only two salesmen in our store, and we both are not vaccinated. So I think the store will close until we get vaccinated," said Anas, a salesman at a shoe store.

Thursday's decision by the Cabinet only mentioned shopping malls of an area of over 6,000 square meters, without mentioning specific malls. This led to speculations, as most people are not sure which malls are included.

A security guard at Souq Sharq said he is not sure if this decision will be applied to this mall, as he assumes it is smaller than 6,000 sq m. "The mall's administration will definitely inform us next week. But I don't believe this decision can be applied. It will be very difficult to

check every visitor at all entrances. Also, we have a supermarket in the mall, which is open to those who are not vaccinated. Maybe they can enter the mall from there," he told Kuwait Times.

"A team from the ministry of health vaccinated staff working at the mall, but I guess not all

“ We waited three hours, but the vaccines ran out ”



KUWAIT: Employees of a shopping mall in Kuwait sit in distance while waiting to receive COVID-19 vaccine on May 9, 2021. — Xinhua

employees received the vaccine. The team was planning to hold the campaign for two days, but they only came once, and it got very crowded as many visitors also stood in the queue to get the

vaccine, which were not enough for all of them," added the guard. In addition to large malls, the decision also applies to restaurants, salons, health clubs and cinemas.



KUWAIT: Domestic helpers arrive to get vaccinated against COVID-19 at the Kuwait Vaccination Center at Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

One dead, 2 injured in warehouse fire

KUWAIT: An unidentified person died while two others were injured in a massive fire that broke out yesterday morning at a warehouse in Shuwaikh Industrial area, while seven firefighting teams controlled it, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) announced. The squads arrived from the fire departments of Shuwaikh Industrial, Sabhan, Salmiya, Ardiya and Mina Abdullah, extinguishing the blaze at the warehouse with an area of 10,000 square meters, KFF said in a statement. KFF opened an investigation into the incident. Meanwhile, KFF said that an Arab man fell ill while in Failaka Island, and due to weather conditions he was transported aboard a boat and handed to paramedics at Salmiya Fire and Sea Rescue Center.

Separately, Kuwait Customs found 5.4 kilograms of shabu (methamphetamine) in an air cargo shipment that arrived to the country yesterday. Customs officers grew suspicious of five packages that contained 18 boxes of chocolate bars, and found the drugs hidden under the candy when they searched the boxes. An Arab man was arrested after he arrived to claim the shipment, and was taken to the proper authorities for further action, Kuwait General Administration of Customs said in a statement.

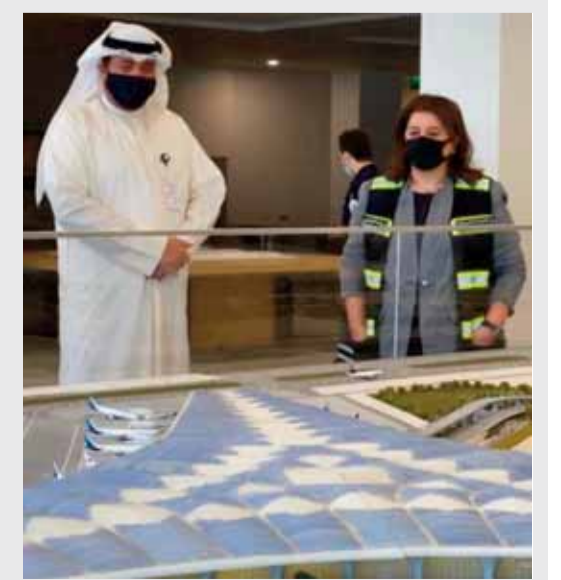


KUWAIT: Firefighters battle a massive fire that broke out yesterday morning at a warehouse in Shuwaikh Industrial area.



DGCA Chief, Minister visit new Kuwait Airport project

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology Dr Rana Al-Faris, and Head of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah visited Friday the new Kuwait Airport project. The visit came to stand on the project's progress and discuss ways to overcome all the challenges, the Ministry of Public Works said in a press release. The project represents one of the largest development plans in the country and aims to implement the standards of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) at the gold level, as it will become the first passenger building in the world to achieve this level of environmental accreditation, said the ministry. The building's concrete structure will provide thermal mass, while the roof includes large solar panels, it added. —KUNA



News in brief

Amir congratulates UN chief

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a letter on Friday to congratulate United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres on his reelection for a second term. His Highness the Amir wished the UN chief success in continuing his efforts to achieve UN goals, and global peace and security along with the prerequisites for global sustainable development. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah both sent similar messages. —KUNA

Lebanon's needs

KUWAIT: Kuwait's military is working to support the humanitarian needs of its Lebanese counterpart, Kuwait Armed Forces Chief-of-Staff Lt Gen Khaled Al-Sabah revealed. The remarks, which also underlined Kuwait's commitment to Lebanon's military, were made as the chief-of-staff attended remotely-held talks on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, according to a ministry statement. The talks, called for by France, were held to offer backing to Lebanon's armed forces. —KUNA

Food handouts

ADAN: Kuwait Society for Relief completed a campaign which delivered 2,500 food aid packages to displaced families in Yemen's governorate of Ta'ez. A statement by the Yemeni organization carrying out the project said the packs were handed out in five districts in Ta'ez. This package aims to relieve the suffering of the families and those affected by the war. The aid comes as part of a larger campaign which has thus far seen 24,000 food packs, provided by the Kuwait Society for Relief, distributed amongst 10 provinces throughout Yemen since Ramadan in mid-May. —KUNA

Oil price down

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by \$1.39 to \$72.11 per barrel Friday after being at \$73.50 pb the day before, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. The prices of the Brent crude and the West Texas Intermediate, globally, saw an increase with the first going up by 43 cents to \$73.51 per barrel, the same case with the latter, which also went up by 60 cents to \$71.64 pb. —KUNA

Kuwait FM attends diplomatic forum alongside counterparts in Turkey



ANTALYA: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah (right) and his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman (left) participate in the Antalya Diplomacy Forum. —KUNA photos



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi.



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Mohammad Hanif Atmar.



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Montenegro's Foreign Minister Djordje Radulovic.



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Mukhtar Tileuberdi.

ANTALYA: Kuwait's Foreign Minister and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah attended Antalya Diplomacy Forum alongside several foreign ministers in Turkey on Friday. The event was also attended by Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman as well as Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu. During the discussion, Kuwait's Foreign Minister spoke of his country's historical role in mediation efforts, particularly in regards to the successful reconciliation between Gulf Arab states and the hosting of peace consultations between opposing Yemeni sides in 2016.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Dr Ahmad and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif discussed Saturday bilateral ties between the two countries. The meeting came on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum. Kuwait's Foreign Minister held similar talks on the sidelines of the forum with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Afghanistan's Foreign



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov.



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets Kosovo's Foreign Minister Donika Gervalla-Schwarz.

Minister Mohammad Hanif Atmar, Montenegro's Foreign Minister Djordje Radulovic, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Mukhtar Tileuberdi,

Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and Kosovo's Foreign Minister Donika Gervalla-Schwarz. —KUNA



Ahmad Al-Sarraf and Khalid Bin Sabt honor Moayad Al-Saleh.



Khalid bin Sabt honors Faisal Al-Mushari.

Kuwait Humanitarian Friendship Society honors donors

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Board of Kuwait Humanitarian Friendship Society Ahmad Al-Sarraf and Director General Khalid bin Sabt visited Moayad Hamad Musaed Al-Saleh and Faisal Yousuf Al-Mushari to hand them plaques in appreciation of their continued support for the society. Sarraf said the donations go to help all society groups who deserve aid.

Khalid Sabt meanwhile thanked all those who support the society, both citizens and residents, to achieve its humanitarian goals to help reduce the suffering of the needy. He urged those who like to contribute to the society to make their donations on its official website: www.khf-kwt.com.

KRCS launches COVID-19 vaccination campaign for Syrian refugees in Lebanon

AKKAR: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) launched Friday a COVID-19 vaccination campaign for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The campaign began under the supervision of Board Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Hilal Al-Sayer at Al-Mohammara and Akkar refugee camps northern Lebanon. Sayer said that the campaign would help in spreading social immunity; it became necessary to enroll people back into their normal economic and social lives in the wake of the spread of COVID-19.

Relief coordinator of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Dr Hossam Al-Sharqawi praised the KRCS's initiative to provide vaccinations for the refugees. He said that the vaccine is not available in many countries, and launching such campaign has a positive impact on people of Lebanon and the region. Representative of the Lebanese Health Minister Dr Jamal Abdou expressed thanks for the KRCS's efforts, evaluating the humanitarian step to help the weak communities.

Meanwhile, a number of Syrian refugees who were vaccinated praised this humanitarian initiative,



valuing keenness to help and care for them. KRCS will begin a second campaign Saturday to vaccinate Palestinian refugees in Sidon southern Lebanon. On Thursday, Al-Sayer and Lebanese Health Minister Hamad Hassan signed an agreement to provide Lebanon, Syrian, and Palestinian refugees with the coronavirus vaccines. —KUNA





Myanmar protesters wear flowers to mark Suu Kyi's birthday

Putin's party holds congress amid opposition clampdown

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HONG KONG: Apple Daily deputy chief editor Chan Pui-man (centre R) gestures as she leaves court as fellow executives from the pro-democracy newspaper, chief editor Ryan Law and CEO Cheung Kim-hung were remanded in custody in Hong Kong yesterday. —AFP

HK pro-democracy media executives denied bail

Police needs time to examine more than 40 computers, 16 servers seized from newsroom

HONG KONG: Two executives from Hong Kong's pro-democracy Apple Daily appeared in court yesterday on charges of collusion and were denied bail after authorities deployed a sweeping security law to target the newspaper, a scathing critic of Beijing. Chief editor Ryan Law and CEO Cheung Kim-hung are accused of colluding with foreign forces to undermine China's national security over a series of articles that police said called for international sanctions.

Chief magistrate Victor So said there were insufficient grounds "for the court to believe that the defendants will not continue to commit acts endangering national security". The two will remain in custody until their next court appearance on August 13 as prosecutors said police needed time to examine more than 40 computers and 16 servers seized from the newsroom.

The case is the first time political views and opinions published by a Hong Kong media outlet have triggered the security law, which was imposed last year by Beijing to stamp out dissent in the financial hub. Apple Daily and its jailed owner Jimmy Lai have long been thorns in Beijing's side, with unapologetic support for the city's pro-democracy movement and caustic criticism of China's authoritarian leaders.

More than 500 police officers raided the paper's newsroom on Thursday. Five executives were arrested. Law and Cheung were charged on Friday while the

three others were released on bail pending further investigations.

"We will continue to publish our paper tomorrow," deputy chief editor Chan Pui-man said outside court. She was released late Friday on bail. Dozens of supporters were queuing to get seats in court yesterday morning, including many former and current employees of Apple Daily. A staff member, who gave her surname as Chang, said she and many other Apple Daily employees treat "every day like it is our last" working for the paper.

"At first, authorities said the national security law would only target a tiny number of people," she told AFP. "But what has happened showed us that is nonsense," she added. Another staff reporter, who gave her first name as Theresa, said she felt Apple Daily's legal troubles were a warning shot. "I think what has happened to Apple Daily today can eventually happen to every other news outlet in the city," she said.

Plunging press freedom

Multiple international media companies have regional headquarters in Hong Kong, attracted to the business-friendly regulations and free speech provisions written into the city's mini-constitution. But many are now questioning whether they have a future there and are drawing up contingency plans as Beijing presses on with a broad crackdown on dissent in the city.

Local media have an even tougher time, with journalist associations saying reporters are increasingly having to self-censor. Hong Kong has steadily plunged down an annual press freedom ranking by Reporters Without Borders, from 18th place in 2002 to 80th this year.

Mainland China languishes at 177th out of 180, above only Turkmenistan, North Korea and Eritrea. Hong Kong and Chinese officials say the arrests were not an attack on the media. Earlier this week, security secretary John Lee described Apple Daily as a "criminal syndicate".

Apple Daily is by far the most outspoken of Hong Kong's pro-democracy media outlets. But it is not clear how long it can survive. Its wealthy owner Lai, 73, is currently serving multiple jail sentences for his involvement in democracy rallies in 2019. He has also been charged

under the national security law and has had his Hong Kong assets frozen.

Authorities froze a further HK\$18 million (\$2.3 million) of Apple Daily's company assets on Thursday. Police say they also plan to prosecute three companies owned by Apple Daily under the security law, which could see the paper fined or banned. It is the first time companies, rather than an individual, have faced a national security investigation.

Mark Simon, an aide to Lai who lives overseas, said the paper would have difficulty paying its staff of about 700. Company lawyers were trying to work out the breadth of the asset freeze order, he added. "Money is not an issue. Draconian orders from Beijing via the NSL (national security law) are the issue," he told AFP. —AFP

UN chief sworn in for second term

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was sworn in Friday for a second term as head of the world body, promising to draw on the lessons of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic. "Our greatest challenge and which is at the same time our greatest opportunity—is to use this crisis to turn the tide, pivot towards a world that learns lessons," the former Portuguese prime minister said at the General Assembly re-appointed him for the 2022-2026 term.

This, Guterres added, would include promoting a "just, green and sustainable recovery" which shows the way forward "through increased and effective international cooperation to address global issues." In office since 2017, Guterres promised to act independently of member states and organizations during the swearing-in ceremony attended by Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, the first head of state to set foot in the United Nations building for more than a year because of the pandemic. Guterres added that it would be essential to "make prevention and preparedness—in the broad sense of the words—a top priority in the international system."

Speaking at a press conference after the ceremony, Guterres reiterated that "from the many lessons that we learned, the most important lesson is that alone we can do nothing. The most important lesson is that we need to rebuild solidarity and trust."

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken congratulated Guterres saying his country looked forward to "continuing our strong and constructive relationship" with the secretary-general.

Global issues "require a collaborative, effective, and results-oriented leader in the United Nations secretariat, and we have that in Antonio Guterres," Blinken added.

The 193-member General Assembly had approved a resolution extending Guterres' five-year term, rather than taking a vote. The UN Security Council, at a crucial stage in the nomination process, gave its blessing on June 8 to the reappointment of the 72-year-old, who had previously served as UN High Commissioner for Refugees between 2005 and 2015. —AFP

Hopes languish for Kurds in Iraq watching Iran vote

ARBIL: Stuck in Iraq for decades due to a lack of documents, Kurdish refugees from neighbouring Iran are watching elections in the Islamic republic this week with little hope for change. One of them, Behzad Mahmoudi, died after setting himself on fire last month in front of a UN office in Arbil, the capital of autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan.

His death put the spotlight on the plight of the refugees in Iraqi limbo. "The UN doesn't want to see us or hear our problems," said Ashkan Mirani, an Iranian Kurd in a United Nations refugee camp outside Arbil. Four months ago, Mirani decided to leave for Europe with his pregnant wife and four-year-old daughter.

They were smuggled from Iraq into Turkey, where they boarded a boat in the Black Sea with around 120 other would-be migrants. "After one hour on the boat, strong waves started hitting us. We all thought we were going to die," said the 30-year-old. "Thanks to the Afghan refugees who called the Turkish coastguard... they came to our rescue."

Hardship

A decade ago, Mirani joined a Kurdish opposition party in Iran, hoping to improve the lives of his people. But life there is "unbearable and unliveable due to economic and political hardship," he said. "And here... I can't promise my family that tomorrow will be any better than today. The only solution I can think of is to try to reach Europe once again."

Today, he struggles each day to feed for his children—a task the UN says is twice as difficult for refugees as for citizens of Iraq, whose lives have been battered by decades of war and the COVID-19 pandemic. Baghdad refuses to grant citizenship to Iranian refugees, even those who have been living in the country for more than 40 years.

Until 2003, under late dictator Saddam Hussein, there were 16,000 Kurdish refugees living in Iraq, the UN says. There are now more than 10,700, the vast majority in Iraqi Kurdistan. Arbil only grants them residency permits allowing them to work and travel within the autonomous region's three provinces if they can find a guarantor. Baghdad does not recognise their validity. That means the only way out for them is to obtain asylum in a third country—but few applications are accepted by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Sawen Goran, 29, was born in Arbil after her parents emigrated from Iran. "My father died without being able to return to Iran," she told AFP. "I'm afraid that one day my kids will say the same thing about their mother and father." But she cannot envisage moving to her homeland without a change of regime. —AFP

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International

Putin's party holds congress amid opposition clampdown

Survey shows 30 percent of voters support United Russia

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin's United Russia party will hold its congress ahead of September parliamentary elections that come amid a sweeping crackdown on the beleaguered opposition. The gathering, which will determine the ruling party's candidates and electoral programme for the lower house of parliament vote, comes after authorities took drastic measures to stop Russia's main opposition politician Alexei Navalny affecting their outcome.

Barring his organisations from working in Russia, a Moscow court earlier this month branded them as "extremist", while Putin signed legislation outlawing staff, members and sponsors of "extremist" groups from running in parliamentary elections.

Critics say the moves are aimed at ensuring that Navalny, who was jailed earlier this year for two-and-a-half years on old fraud charges he says are politically motivated, does not spoil the vote for the 68-year-old Kremlin chief and his deeply unpopular party.

In recent years, United Russia, which controls a majority of the lower house State Duma, has seen its support tumble amid economic stagnation, entrenched corruption and widespread voter fatigue.

On the eve of the party congress in Moscow, state-run pollster VTsIOM published a survey showing that 30 percent of voters support United Russia — a 10-point drop from the last State Duma elections in 2016.

The party, however, is projecting calm ahead of the vote. "It is a good base of support that can be further increased during the election campaign," party chairman and former president and prime minister Dmitry Medvedev said at the start of the month.

Putin, who will speak in person at the party con-

gress today alongside Medvedev, himself boasts much higher support than his party with an approval rating of 61.5 percent, according to VTsIOM. The pollster also predicts that three opposition parties that are seen as doing the Kremlin's bidding — the nationalist LDPR, the Communists and A Just Russia — will garner around 30 percent of the vote.

Arrested candidates

Even with Navalny and his allies sidelined, the authorities have not let up the pressure on the opposition. Dmitry Gudkov, a former opposition lawmaker who had said he would run for the State Duma, this month fled to Ukraine after he said sources close to the Kremlin told him if he did not leave he would be arrested.

Not everyone targeted has been able to flee, however. Andrei Pivovarov, the former head of Open Russia, a recently disbanded pro-democracy group, was placed in pre-trial detention this month after being yanked off a Warsaw-bound plane minutes before takeoff at the end of May. He had likewise said he would run in the parliamentary polls.

And this week police arrested municipal lawmakers Maxim Reznik in Russia's second city of Saint Petersburg and Ketevan Kharaidze in Moscow. Both had announced their intention to run. Despite the ongoing clampdown, Navalny's allies are promoting his Smart Voting strategy that backs candidates best placed to defeat Kremlin-linked politicians — a tactic that has seen United Russia lose a number of seats in recent local elections.

Fraud fears

But critics also claim that authorities will rig



MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin is seen on giant screens as he addresses the audience during the United Russia political party annual congress in Moscow, yesterday. —AFP

the vote in their favour in September. On Friday, Russia's elections chief announced that the parliamentary polls would be staggered from September 17 to September 19 to limit the spread of coronavirus.

Last summer, after authorities held a constitutional referendum over one week, independent election monitor Golos said it had received hundreds of complaints of violations including multiple voting and intimidation.

The opposition said the multi-day nature of the referendum — which paved the way for Putin to

stay in power until 2036 — gave election officials greater opportunities to fix the vote as the ballots were held overnight.

The congress comes as Russia grapples with a surge in coronavirus cases, with Moscow on Friday reporting the highest rate of new daily infections since the start of the pandemic.

As a precaution, United Russia party officials have restricted attendance down from 1,500 people to 500, who will have to present a negative COVID test and can even be vaccinated on location. —AFP

UK Conservatives lose safe seat in major upset

LONDON: Britain's ruling Conservative party suffered a major upset in a by-election result announced Friday, losing a safe seat it had held for nearly 50 years. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's party lost in the contest to elect an MP for Chesham and Amersham-prosperous commuter towns in Buckinghamshire, northwest of London.

The centrist Liberal Democrat candidate, Sarah Green, won more than 56 percent in a constituency that had been held by the Tories since it was set up in its current form in 1974. The Times newspaper said the defeat raised questions over the Conservative strategy of focusing efforts on seizing seats from the main opposition Labour party, rather than on defending traditional Tory seats, known as the "Blue Wall" due to the party's logo colour.

Johnson's party in May won a by-election in the traditional Labour-voting Hartlepool, adding another parliamentary seat in northeast England to those they secured in the last general election in December 2019, when Brexit was the main issue. The pro-European Lib Dems campaigned actively in Chesham and Amersham, tapping into local opposition to controversial projects in the area, with leader Ed Davey visiting 16 times, The Times said.

The BBC said voters this time round focused on local issues: The controversial construction of a high-speed rail link through the constituency and plans to build more houses in rural areas. Davey tweeted that the result "sent a shockwave through British politics" and proved the "blue wall can be smashed by @libdems". —AFP

Global displacement from war, crises doubles in a decade

GENEVA: Despite the coronavirus pandemic, the number of people fleeing war and persecution continued rising last year, with global displacement climbing to over 82 million-double the figure a decade ago, the UN said Friday.

A fresh report from the UN refugee agency showed global displacement figures swelled by around three million in 2020 after an already record-breaking year in 2019, leaving a full one percent of humanity uprooted and displaced.

The report highlighted how drawn-out crises like those in Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen were continuing to force people to flee, while eruptions of violence in places like Ethiopia and Mozambique were causing surging displacement.

The fact that the numbers rose for the ninth straight year was all the more devastating because Covid-19 restrictions had been expected to limit displacement.

During the pandemic, "everything else has stopped, including the economies, but wars and conflict and violence and discrimination and persecution, all the factors that pushed these people to flee, have continued," UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi told AFP.

The UN agency found that by the end of 2020, a record 82.4 million people were living as refugees or asylum seekers, or in so-called internal displacement within their own countries, up from some 40 million in 2011. —AFP

Several hurt as French police break up mass rave

REDON: Five police officers were injured overnight in western France as they broke up a 1,500-strong illegal rave, authorities said yesterday, with one partygoer losing a hand in the clashes. Defying an 11:00 pm coronavirus curfew, the group had attempted to set up the party at a horse racing track near Redon in Brittany.

There were "very violent clashes" when 400 police intervened, local prefect Emmanuel Berthier said, adding the violence lasted more than seven hours through the night. Two of the five injured police officers had to be taken to the hospital in Redon, Berthier said. He said the "people had an objective, to confront the forces of public order."

A police officer said it was not usual for people to bring the metal balls used in the French sport of boules or petanque to a rave. Berthier told AFP that the group threw "Molotov cocktails, metal balls and pieces of breeze block". They added that one of the partygoers, a 22-year-old man, had lost a hand in the violence.

Event organisers said police had chosen violence instead of dialogue by firing tear gas grenades. "There hasn't been any music since last night," but "people taking part in the illegal rave are still on the scene," the prefect's office told AFP early yesterday. Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin cancelled events he had planned and was regularly keeping abreast of the situation, aides said.

Fleeing gangs, Haitians unsure of their future

PORT-AU-PRINCE: Daniella Francois sleeps each night on a small foam mattress in a gymnasium in the Haitian capital that has been converted into an emergency shelter, as she is unable to return to her Port-au-Prince neighborhood which is in the grips of a gang war.

She is one of thousands of residents of the city's western Martissant district who have become refugees in their own city, living in sports centers or temporary accommodations in private homes. While the gym is just several hundred meters (yards) from the Martissant neighborhood where Francois has lived her entire life, the move has nonetheless been jarring.

The 18-year-old orphan, who lives alone with her four-year-old daughter, had to flee suddenly on June 1. "When the armed men finally arrived on my street, I had no choice, I had to leave," she said. "The guys don't play around-whoever is in front of them they do what they want with."

Undermined by insecurity and political instability, Haiti is struggling to emerge from a string of seemingly never-ending crises, which of late have resulted in an upsurge in kidnappings and gang violence. Joining a flood of families attempting to escape the insecurity, Francois ended up at the sports center in Carrefour, a neighboring community where municipal authorities have been providing assistance. "We receive lots of help from the community, churches, associations, individuals who voluntarily bring food, clothes," said Gutenberg Destin, who coordinates emergency preparedness for the municipality.



REDON: Participants take part in an illegal rave party in a field in Redon, north-western France, yesterday. Five police officers were injured overnight in western France as they broke up a 1,500-strong illegal rave, authorities said yesterday. —AFP

Local authorities had on Friday issued a legal order against the party, which came two days before the coronavirus curfew is set to be lifted as COVID-19 case numbers fall in France. The rave had originally been set up in memory of a young man killed in nearby city Nantes two years ago during France's annual nationwide Fete de la Musique celebration. Prosecutors said Friday that according to an investigation Steve Maia Canico fell into the Loire river when police moved to

break up the gathering.

His body was found more than a month later and protesters in Nantes have demanded "Justice for Steve," saying the police intervention was disproportionate. In early May, officials said, hundreds of people flouted France's coronavirus curfew with underground parties near Dijon and a village in western Brittany, while police managed to prevent organisers from staging a mass rave in Paris. —AFP

Gangs control the road

Aid from humanitarian agencies and other organizations in Port-au-Prince had to be mostly transported by helicopter to Carrefour, with gangs controlling two kilometers (1.2 miles) of the main road through Martissant.

An initial count on June 8 found more than 1,100 people staying at the sports center, but the arrival of destitute families has not abated since then. "Just last night, people arrived," Destin told AFP on Tuesday. "Until then they felt safe in the area in which they lived in Martissant, but gradually the hotbed of insecurity is spreading."

The hundreds staying at the center only represent the tip of the iceberg as far as the population of displaced people is concerned. More than 5,100 people are estimated to have taken refuge with host families scattered throughout Port-au-Prince or have otherwise fled to other provinces, a UN report released Monday said. The document warns that among the displaced, some who are living with host families are suffering sexual abuse and even rape, including offers of "sex for shelter."

Traumatized children

At the Carrefour gym, Kettelene Chateau said she can count on neighbors to look after her children when she leaves during the day to search for new housing accommodations with her husband. "When we fled, my children were really scared-they were shaking, they were crying, they were traumatized," the 38-year-old said.

Due to the noise and overcrowding at the gym, she sent the two youngest of her five to stay with a friend in Carrefour. At the sports center, NGOs organize daily games so that the hundreds of children, who otherwise have little to do except wander among the mattresses, momentarily forget the ordeal they



PORT-AU-PRINCE: Hundreds of families have taken shelter in the sport center of the city of Carrefour, in the suburbs of Port-au-Prince. —AFP

are living through.

"My children are smiling again and they are now able to sleep," Chateau said, somewhat relieved but still worried for the future. "My six-year-old is very aware and keeps asking me 'Mom, when are we going to go home? Will we have to live somewhere else?'" she said.

"I have to tell her that I do not know, I would like to be able to tell her something, but I do not know," Chateau said. —AFP

International

Myanmar protesters wear flowers to mark Suu Kyi's birthday

Protesters put up posters on power lines

YANGON: Anti-coup protesters in Myanmar donned flowers in their hair yesterday to mark the birthday of ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who remains under house arrest and is due to face court again next week.

Suu Kyi's elected government was overthrown in a February 1 coup that sparked mass protests and renewed clashes between the military and ethnic rebel armies in border regions. Flowers tucked into a bun have long been a signature look of Suu Kyi, who turned 76 yesterday.

Many replicated the floral hairstyle and uploaded pictures onto social media across Myanmar for the occasion. Among them was Myanmar Miss Universe beauty queen Thuzar Wint Lwin, who wore red flowers in her hair and wrote: "May our leader be healthy."

In Yangon's north, protesters put up posters on power lines wishing Suu Kyi a happy birthday and expressing solidarity. "Happy Birthday Mother Suu. We are right behind you," the signs read.

Some marched with black umbrellas and banners that read "freedom from fear" alongside pictures of Suu Kyi. In the border region of Karen state, some rebel soldiers were photographed holding their guns and yellow, white and purple posies, as well as single flowers tucked behind their ears.

Demonstrators in the south-eastern city of Dawei made a giant pink birthday cake and brought it to their street protest. The Noble Peace Prize

Laureate's international reputation was damaged after she defended Myanmar's military over allegations of genocide against the ethnic minority Rohingya population in troubled Rakhine state in 2017.

Back in court

Not all Myanmar flower protest participants were full of praise for Suu Kyi. "I am involved in this campaign because now she is unfairly detained by the military and her civilian rights... and freedom is denied," a 35-year-old activist told AFP, adding it wasn't personal support. "After she is free from her detention, she will have to take full responsibility over her silence concerning the suffering of Rohingya and other ethnic groups."

Czech Republic Prime Minister Andrej Babis sent birthday wishes to Suu Kyi from afar. "I wish you all the best for your health and strength... We stand with the people of Burma," he said. The civilian death toll since the coup is estimated to be at least 870 people and close to 5,000 protesters are in detention after being arrested, according to a local monitoring group.

Suu Kyi is due back in court next week and has been hit with an eclectic raft of criminal charges, including accepting illegal payments of gold and violating a colonial-era secrecy law. She went on trial for sedition on Tuesday, but journalists were barred from observing proceedings. —AFP



YANGON: Protesters make the three-finger salute and hold posters of Myanmar's detained civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi to mark her birthday as they take part in a demonstration against the military coup in Yangon yesterday. —AFP

Afghan president replaces security ministers

KABUL: Afghan President Ashraf Ghani replaced two top ministers charged with managing the country's faltering security yesterday, as the Taliban pressed on with their campaign to capture new territory in fierce battles with government forces.

The shake-up of the defence and interior ministry portfolios comes as violence surges and peace talks remain deadlocked, with the Taliban claiming to have seized more than 40 districts in recent weeks across the rugged countryside.

The presidency announced in a statement that General Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, who fought under the late anti-Taliban commander Ahmad Shah

Massoud during a 1990s civil war, has been appointed the new defence minister.

Mohammadi has previously held the defence and interior ministry portfolios and also served as the chief of army staff after the fall of the Taliban regime following a US-led invasion in 2001.

Ghani also appointed General Abdul Sattar Mirzakwal as interior minister, the presidency said. Mirzakwal has previously held several regional posts.

Mohammadi replaces Asadullah Khalid who has repeatedly flown out of the country for treatment to wounds suffered after a suicide bomber attacked him in 2012. The latest cabinet changes, which have to be approved by parliament, come with violence increasing since early May after the US military began the formal withdrawal of its last remaining troops.

US President Joe Biden has set September 11 — the 20th anniversary of the attacks in the United States that led to the invasion of Afghanistan — as the deadline to withdraw American soldiers. Since the Pentagon commenced the final withdrawal on May 1, the Taliban have

unleashed a wave of attacks targeting government forces.

The insurgents claim to have seized more than 40 districts since early May, forcing military leaders to strategically retreat from a number of rural districts.

In one attack at least 20 members of an elite commando unit were shot dead by the Taliban in an ambush in the northern province of Faryab on Wednesday, several officials told AFP.

The Taliban are now present in almost every province and are encircling several major cities — a strategy the militants employed in the mid-1990s when they overran most of Afghanistan until they were ousted by invading US-led forces.

Yesterday, the defence ministry confirmed that government troops had retreated from several districts but said they aimed to take them back.

"There is a new, robust and effective plan to retake areas from which we have pulled back our forces," ministry spokesman Rohullah Ahmadzai said, dismissing claims that hundreds of soldiers had surrendered to the Taliban. —AFP

UN calls for states to 'prevent the flow of arms' into Myanmar

UNITED NATIONS: The UN General Assembly on Friday took the rare step of calling on member states to "prevent the flow of arms" into Myanmar, part of a non-binding resolution condemning the military coup in the violence-wracked country. The resolution — which did not go so far as to call for a global arms embargo — also demands that the military "immediately stop all violence against peaceful demonstrators."

It was approved by 119 countries, with 36 abstaining including China, Myanmar's main ally. Only one country, Belarus, voted against it. This came on the same day that the Security Council was holding informal talks on the situation in the Southeast Asian nation, where the military ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi on February 1.

The resolution was not passed by consensus, as had been hoped, but rather through a vote, forcing all 193 UN countries to reveal their views.

In a quirk of history, Myanmar's envoy to the world body, Kyaw Moe Tun, voted in favor of the text. He has passionately rejected the coup and brushed aside the junta's claims that he no longer represents Myanmar. The United Nations still considers him as the rightful envoy.

After the vote, the diplomat voiced regret that it had taken three months for the Assembly to adopt the resolution and that it was not more explicit about an arms embargo.

Among the countries that abstained were Russia and Mali, where a second military coup in less than a year recently took place, Iran and Egypt, and Brunei, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand.

The UN General Assembly very rarely adopts resolutions condemning military coups or calling for limits on the arms supplied to the target country.

"It is the broadest and most universal condemnation of the situation in Myanmar to date," said Olof Skoog, the European Union's ambassador to the UN. "The EU is proud of the resolution just adopted by the UN General Assembly. It sends a strong and powerful message. It delegitimizes the military junta, condemns its abuse and violence against its own people and demonstrates its isolation in the eyes of the world," he said.

The resolution also calls for a restoration of democracy in Myanmar, and the release of all detained civilian leaders.

"We absolutely must create the conditions for democracy to be reinstated," said UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres before the vote on the resolution, hoping for a "very clear message" from the General Assembly.

'Do the obvious'

It asks for the implementation of a five-point plan drafted by ASEAN in April including the naming of an envoy from the bloc. The text also calls on the junta to allow the UN envoy to Myanmar, Christine Schraner Burgener, to visit the country, and for safe passage of humanitarian aid.

Burgener briefed the Security Council during its closed-door meeting on Myanmar on Friday. No joint statement was adopted at that meeting because of persistent divisions between its members, diplomats told AFP.

The Assembly resolution "calls on UN member states to do the obvious: stop providing weapons to Myanmar," said Human Rights Watch.

"Months of atrocities and grave human rights abuses by the junta's security forces have shown time and again why no government should be sending them a single bullet. The UN Security Council should now step up and pass its own resolution imposing a global arms embargo on Myanmar," said Louis Charbonneau, UN Director at HRW.

The resolution is an opportunity "to show that the world stands with the people of Myanmar, and not the military" who "committed horrific acts of violence against ordinary civilians," said British Ambassador to the UN Barbara Woodward. More than 860 civilians have been killed in Myanmar since the coup, according to the UN and the Association for the Assistance of Political Prisoners (AAPP). —AFP

Macron honors France's surviving WWII heroes

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron bestowed honours Friday on two of France's last surviving World War II resistance heroes, marking the anniversary of Charles de Gaulle's historic call to defy France's Nazi occupiers despite the country's capitulation. The military ceremony was held at Mount Valerien, the hilltop fortress west of Paris where German forces executed more than 1,000 captured fighters and hostages.

It has become an annual pilgrimage site for French leaders recalling De Gaulle's dramatic appeal of June 18, 1940 made from BBC studios in London after his escape from a defeated France. This year it was the occasion to honor the sole surviving member of the 1,038 fighters singled out as Heroes of the Resistance by De Gaulle after the war.

'Sangorians' take a page from insurgent playbook in fight against Taliban

LASHKAR GAH: They name themselves after a Turkish soap opera, count former Taliban insurgents among their ranks and dress like their enemies, but the shadowy "Sangorians" militia are among the fiercest forces on the Afghan battlefield.

They were established in 2015 by Abdul Jabar Qahraman, a high-ranking politician and military commander who was assassinated three years later by a Taliban bomb.

Local media reports say the covert group has received training from the country's spy agency as well as foreign forces. And the Jamestown Foundation—a US-based conservative think-tank—says it was established specifically to infiltrate and disrupt the Taliban.

"We are fighting all day and night," militia member Ahmad Jan told AFP recently, pointing towards insurgent positions not far from his outpost on the outskirts of Lashkar Gah, the capital of southern

Hubert Germain, 100, was helped from his wheelchair to accept a red sash from Macron, who embraced his cheeks, and then saluted the president before putting on his military cap. Also in appearance was Leon Gautier, 98, the last surviving member of 117 French soldiers who took part in the 1944 Allied landings at Normandy, the beginning of the Nazi retreat on the war's Western front.

The Kieffer Commando was long overlooked in French narratives of the war, its leader Philippe Kieffer getting his own sculpture near Sword Beach at the 75th anniversary of the landings only two years ago. Gautier, wearing his unit's traditional dark green beret, was also embraced by Macron after being elevated to the rank of Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour.

"Eighty-one years on, General de Gaulle's call still resonates. The flame of the resistance will not be extinguished," Macron wrote on Twitter after the ceremony. Ahead of the ceremony, Macron awarded a posthumous Medal of the Resistance to the brother of Colette Marin-Catherine, a nurse who also joined the underground fight to harass German soldiers and prepare for the Allied landings.

Helmand province.

"We don't get rest even for two hours. This has become our life," he said, dressed in traditional garments and sporting a beard. Afghanistan has a long history of local militias fighting for and against authorities in Kabul-frequently switching sides and allegiances depending on the tide of politics.

Government forces have been on the back foot for months as the Taliban step up operations ahead of the US withdrawal scheduled to finish by September 11. Enter the Sangorians, who took their name from a popular Turkish television serial about undercover operatives, and whom local media reports say the Taliban particularly loathe as many of the militiamen were former insurgents.

'No quarter given'

Clashes between the Taliban and defectors are known to be "vicious with no quarter given", the Jamestown Foundation said. "Consequently, the Taliban uses extreme violence to deal with Sangorian members. Captured Sangorian fighters are tortured brutally and killed by the Taliban," it said.

The foundation estimated the Sangorian strength at

Airport Group said in a statement on its official WeChat social media account.

City health officials said a 21-year-old waitress at Shenzhen Baoan International Airport had been infected with the Delta variant of the virus. The woman tested positive during a routine test for airport staff conducted Thursday, they said.

Shenzhen, a mainland Chinese city neighbouring Hong Kong, is home to some of Asia's biggest tech companies including telecoms equipment maker Huawei and gaming giant Tencent. China on Friday reported 30 new coronavirus cases, including six local transmissions



BRUSSELS: German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron address a press conference ahead of talks at the Chancellery in Berlin. —AFP

Marin-Catherine, 92, made headlines in April when a short documentary about her visit to the concentration camp where her brother was killed won an Oscar. Later on Friday, Macron is to travel to Berlin for a dinner with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, where further efforts at improving European integration are on the menu. —AFP



LASHKAR GAH: Photograph taken on March 28, 2021, shows members of the anti-Taliban "Sangorians" militia take position during an ongoing fight with Taliban insurgents in the village of Mukhtar. —AFP

between 500 to 1,000 fighters. For some militiamen, after losing relatives and comrades in battles with the Taliban, the fighting is personal.

"I lost my son, brother and three cousins," said Ezatullah Mama, a Sangorian commander leading a band of 25 militiamen in the area. —AFP

in the southern province of Guangdong where Shenzhen is located.

The airport entry restrictions came into effect from 1 pm local time yesterday (0500 GMT).

Nearly 400 flights to and from the airport were cancelled Friday, data from flight tracker VarioFlight showed. Dozens of flights scheduled for Saturday morning were also dropped.

Passengers would receive refunds on their tickets without penalty, the airport authority said. Millions of Shenzhen residents have been tested for the virus in recent weeks after a small outbreak at the city's port earlier this month. —AFP

South China airport cancels flights

BEIJING: The airport in China's southern city of Shenzhen cancelled hundreds of flights and tightened entry controls yesterday after a restaurant employee tested positive for the Delta coronavirus variant.

Anyone entering the facility must show a negative virus test from the last 48 hours, Shenzhen

Business

SUNDAY, JUNE 20, 2021

Electric auto startups hit speed bumps

Lordstown Motors in the throes of turmoil amid investment crisis

NEW YORK: Several electric auto startups that raised large sums from investors in the wake of Tesla's ascent are hitting potholes as they pursue next-generation vehicles. The most recent crisis occurred at Lordstown Motors, which announced Monday the sudden departure of two top executives after warning last week it needed more capital to keep operating.

Company officials plan a series of events dubbed "Lordstown Week" later this month to shore up investor support. But local government officials are not sure what to make of the company, which had discussed adding more than 2,000 jobs in a region plagued by plant closures. "Am I confident? Not as much as I was a week ago," Lordstown Mayor Arno Hill said earlier this week. "We're waiting and seeing what the next step is."

There have been similar leadership shakeups in at least two other electric auto companies that recently went public, raising questions about the transactions and underscoring the difficulties startups face in competing in the capital-intensive industry. "It's definitely more challenging for a small company," said Jessica Caldwell, executive director of insights at Edmunds.com, pointing to heavy spending needed to build and maintain factories and obtain key components.

"It does seem like Tesla is an overnight success story, which is not really the case," she told AFP. "But they came in and disrupted the space amongst automotive companies that have been around for decades. Everyone wants to believe that the dream could happen."

Lordstown's woes come in the wake of significant electric vehicle (EV) announcements since the November US presidential election from Ford,

General Motors and other auto giants, intensifying competition.

Rising costs

Lordstown Motors was launched by Steve Burns in November 2019 after the acquisition of a recently-shuttered Ohio auto plant owned by GM. The company raised \$675 million following an October 2020 merger with DiamondPeak Holdings, a special purpose acquisition company (SPAC) — essentially a shell company set up to merge with an operating business.

Lordstown Motors unveiled its flagship "Endurance" all-electric pickup truck in June 2020 when then-vice president Mike Pence visited its Ohio factory, nearly a year before Ford would present its all-electric F-150 pickup. Lordstown's share price topped \$30 in February of this year, but the company's fortunes began shifting in March, when short-selling firm Hindenburg Research released a damning report that called Lordstown a "mirage."

On Monday, Lordstown announced the resignation of Burns and Chief Financial Officer Julio Rodriguez after an investigation concluded Hindenburg's appraisal was "in significant respects, false and misleading," while acknowledging that some of its own statements about vehicle pre-orders were "in certain respects, inaccurate." That followed Lordstown's June 8 disclosure that it lacks sufficient capital to begin commercial production, and warned about its ability to keep operating.

The company's capital spending had swelled in part from "stress that the COVID-19 pandemic has put on the global automotive supply chain," according to a securities filing.

Lordstown shares tumbled after Monday's leader-



In this file photo The Lordstown Motors factory where GM once operated, in Lordstown, Ohio is viewed. — AFP

ship shakeup, but rallied Tuesday after its executives reaffirmed plans during a Detroit event to begin production in September, pointing to "firm" orders from clients, according to news reports. In a securities filing Thursday, Lordstown clarified some of those remarks, saying that purchase agreements "provide us with a significant indicator of demand" but "do not represent binding purchase orders."

Lordstown is hardly the only EV prospect to stumble after going public through a SPAC. These types of transactions—which allow companies to enter markets more quickly than with a traditional initial public offering (IPO) — have soared over the last year. Usha Rodrigues, a professor at the University of Georgia

School of Law, has described SPACs as a "Vegas wedding IPO" because a legal loophole gives them protection from lawsuits if their forecasts are not met—which traditional IPOs do not enjoy. EV startups that benefited from SPACs now appear prone to turbulence. Nikola suffered its own crisis last fall when its founder suddenly resigned following fraud allegations. The CEO and co-founder of Canoo resigned in April, while Lucid Motors in February delayed production of its EV sedan days after announcing a transaction valuing the company at \$11.75 billion. Going public through a SPAC may have resulted in some companies getting funds "before they deserved it," Karl Brauer at Carexper.com said. —AFP

Newest Boeing 737 MAX makes first test flight

NEW YORK: The newest version of Boeing's 737 MAX made its first test flight over Washington state on Friday, just months after the plane returned to service following a worldwide grounding after two fatal crashes.

Boeing said the 737 MAX 10 departed Renton, Washington at 1707 GMT into clear skies, flew over the central part of the state and landed about two-and-a-half hours later in Seattle.

"The airplane performed beautifully. The profile we flew allowed us to test the airplane's systems, flight controls and handling qualities, all of which checked out exactly as we expected," Chief Pilot Jennifer Henderson said in a statement. The mid-range jet initially was targeted to enter commercial service in 2020, but the timeframe slipped during the MAX's 20-month grounding, and the delay was compounded by the aviation industry downturn caused by COVID-19.

Boeing currently projects commercial deliveries of the MAX 10 will commence in 2023. Between now and that time, there will be additional test flights, as well as back-and-forth between the company and regulators at the US Federal Aviation Administration. "The 737-10 is an important part of our customers' fleet plans, giving them more capacity, greater fuel efficiency and the best per-seat economics of any single-aisle airplane," said



The largest airplane in the 737 MAX family, taking off for his successful first flight from Renton Field, Washington Friday. — AFP

Stan Deal, president and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

The jet was first announced at the Paris Air Show in June 2017, when company officials played up its larger size, calling it the "industry's most efficient, profitable, single-aisle airplane." The jet was positioned as a rival to Airbus' A321neo in the single-aisle category. The 737 MAX 10 can carry as many as 230 passengers, according to Boeing. The plane maker has been gradually increasing the seating capacity since the 737 MAX 7, which had between 138 and 153 seats. The new plane is

longer but has less flying range than earlier versions, employing a Leap-1B engine, which is constructed by a joint venture of GE Aviation and Safran Aircraft.

The MAX was grounded worldwide in March 2019 after two fatal crashes killed 346 people. US regulators approved the jet to resume service in November 2020, and most other major civil aviation bodies followed suit.

Since that time, Boeing has resumed new deliveries of the MAX and announced new contracts with several leading carriers. —AFP

Despite apartheid's end, S Africa's young grapple joblessness

SOWETO: Thirty years ago apartheid laws in South Africa were formally struck down, bringing a dizzying jolt of hope to millions of disenfranchised citizens. But today that optimism has all but fizzled out, particularly among the young. The "Born Frees"—those who came into the world after the end of apartheid and comprise roughly half the population—are struggling.

Two out of three young people are jobless, victims of endemic unemployment that shows no sign of abating under the African National Congress (ANC) government that has been in power since the first democratic elections in 1994.

Many say they are battling to see the benefits of this seismic event, which came just under three years after then president F. W. de Klerk struck down the country's last segregation statutes. "We wish to do what is right for South Africa," de Klerk had told parliament at the time.

Disillusioned, the young in present-day South Africa say the better life they were promised has been clouded by despair. "I wonder what those who have struggled and sacrificed would think," 21-year-old law student Tumelo Dire said outside the Hector Pieterse memorial, which commemorates the struggle against apartheid by students in Soweto.

Thanks to a government scholarship grant, his university studies are catered for, but he still needs

to hustle to find money for rent. And even when he finishes his studies, he is not guaranteed a job.

"Would they be disappointed in us?" said the young man carrying a box of muffins, hawking them on the street. Official statistics show that 63 percent of those aged 15-24 are jobless in a country where the youth makes up close to half of the population.

"Young people have seen how, since 1994, the kind of economic policies that have been put in place, have not only maintained privilege for those who are formally privileged in the country, but then has also created a new class of black privileged elites," Sphiwe Dube, a politics lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, said.

Dube was referring to the elections in 1994 won by the internationally revered anti-apartheid icon, Nelson Mandela.

'Fight not over'

"Mandela, it's just a name," scoffed unemployed Thabo Mogogosi, waiting by the roadside for casual work a few blocks from the former house of the country's first black president in Soweto. "There's nothing I am benefiting from his fight for freedom," said the young man who scrapes by with small odd jobs. On Wednesday, President Cyril Ramaphosa outlined a raft of plans to tackle joblessness among the young, including support in finding employment and training, as he marked the Soweto student uprising of 1976. These saw thousands of black students march to protest against a government order that schools could only teach in Afrikaans, the language of the ruling white elite. Several were killed or wounded, sparking a revolt that would culminate in the end of apartheid.

But Muzi Khoza, head of the youth wing of the



SOWETO: Seth Mazibuko gesturing while standing along a line that points to where Hector Pieterse was shot down in the street during the June 16, 1976 student uprising. —AFP

leftist radical Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party, is not convinced. For "young people there is absolutely nothing to celebrate, because we need jobs—there are no jobs in South Africa," said the 26-year-old at a youth day rally in Centurion, north of Johannesburg. One of the surviving leaders of the 1976 Soweto high school revolt, Seth Mazibuko, 64, said "the fight is not over."

"There are people who are still in poverty and see the politicians getting fatter and fatter while they are still getting thinner," he said. —AFP

Dow falls to end worst week since October

NEW YORK: The Dow capped the worst week since October with more losses Friday as markets continued to digest the latest pivot in Federal Reserve messaging towards more restrictive monetary policy. After European bourses fell nearly two percent, the Dow dropped more than 500 points, or 1.6 percent on weakness in energy and financial shares. That brought the blue-chip index's losses for the week to 3.4 percent, the biggest drop in eight months.

"It is turning into a bit of a black Friday for risk assets in what looks like a mini taper tantrum," said market analyst Fawad Razaqzada at ThinkMarkets. The reference is to a 2013 panic on markets after the Fed indicated it would begin to slowly reduce stimulus measures for the economy.

Analysts said the losses were likely exacerbated by Friday's expiration of key options and futures contracts. The Fed on Wednesday maintained highly accommodative monetary policy, but the central bank moved up the timeframe for hiking interest rates and Fed Chair Jay Powell said the central bank has started discussions on when to taper the pace of bond buying, now at \$120 billion a month.

Expectations of Fed tightening grew following comments on CNBC from St. Louis Federal Reserve President James Bullard predicting a first interest rate hike in late 2022 and saying it makes sense for the central bank to become "a little more hawkish" in light of recent inflation data.

Some analysts now expect the Fed to announce a plan to trim asset purchases at an August central bank conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. "The market seemed to be somewhat reassured by the Fed simultaneously raising its inflation forecast for the year but also sticking with its message that a spike in prices is only transitory," said TD Ameritrade's JJ Kinahan.

"Despite everything going on in the market, there hasn't been a general sense of disorder."

In other markets, the dollar continued to gain against most other major currencies in the aftermath of the Fed announcement. A stronger dollar frequently weighs on greenback-traded commodities, but oil prices rose Friday, with analysts pointing to an improving demand outlook as the economy recovers. —AFP

Business

CI affirms Gulf Bank's Long-term Foreign Currency Rating at 'A+'

Short-term Foreign Currency rating at 'A1' with a 'Stable' outlook

KUWAIT: Capital Intelligence Ratings ("CI Ratings"), the international credit rating agency, has affirmed the Long-term Foreign Currency and the Short-term Foreign Currency of Gulf Bank ratings at "A+" and "A1", respectively with a "Stable" Outlook.

According to CI Ratings, the affirmation is supported by Gulf Bank's well established business franchise, especially in retail banking, good loan asset quality, solid capital position, comfortable liquidity metrics and sound operating profitability. The Core Financial Strength reflects Gulf Bank's size as the fifth largest bank in Kuwait with a large distribution network and a sound market share of

both loans and deposits. Commenting on the Capital Intelligence credit rating announcement, Dalal Al-Dousari, Gulf Bank's head of Investor Relations said: "We are very pleased to receive the affirmation of our Bank's Long-term Foreign Currency rating at "A+" with "Stable" outlook. "This is an important acknowledgement of the Bank's sustained improvement in asset quality, solid capital and sound operating profitability," added Al-Dousari.

Gulf Bank continues to be well recognized in terms of its creditworthiness and financial strength internationally as it is rated "A" by all four leading credit rating agencies. In addition to

Capital Intelligence Ratings recent affirmation, Gulf Bank has a Long-term Issuer Default Rating of "A+" with a "Negative" Outlook by Fitch Ratings, an Issuer Credit Rating of "A-" with a "Negative" Outlook by S&P Global Ratings, and a Long Term Deposits rating of "A3" with a "Stable" Outlook by Moody's Investor Services.



Dalal Al-Dousari

Ten days left to enter Gulf Bank's quarterly Al-Danah draw of 2021

KUWAIT: With just ten days left until the end of June, Gulf Bank is reminding everyone that the last chance to participate in the year's third quarterly Al-Danah account draw for the chance to win KD 100,000 is Wednesday, June 30. The quarterly draw is currently scheduled to take place on October 14, 2021 in the presence of representatives from both the Ministry of Commerce and Ernst & Young.



Mohammed Al-Qattan

In addition to the upcoming draw, Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account offers account holders multiple services and features that are designed to encourage and reward clients for saving, with periodic draws worth valuable prizes. Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account offers monthly opportunities to win KD 1,000 to ten lucky winners, in addition to quarterly draws with KD 100,000 prizes each, a semiannual draw prize of KD 1,000,000 and a grand draw prize of KD 1,500,000. To enter the upcoming draws, Gulf Bank customers can open an Al-Danah account at any time. To increase their chances of winning, account holders must either maintain the minimum deposit amount of KD 200, or increase their Al-Danah savings - the higher the balances in an account, the more chances accumulated over time. Opening an Al-Danah account is also easier than ever, with customers being able to open their accounts online through Gulf Bank's Online and Mobile Banking services.

With the deadline to participate in the upcoming draw fast approaching, Gulf Bank's General Manager of Consumer Banking, Mohammed Al-Qattan, commented: "There are only ten days left to participate for the chance to win this year's third quarterly Al-Danah draw. That is why we are encouraging all our clients to act quickly, and start taking an even more active approach to habitual saving and managing their finances with an Al-Danah savings account. With an Al-Danah savings account, clients can take advantage of multiple chances to win exciting prizes, in addition to being rewarded for their loyalty throughout the year. We would like to remind everyone that there are still plenty of chances left to win our upcoming KD 100,000 quarterly prizes, the grand draw prize of KD 1,500,000, and the monthly draws of KD 1,000 each for ten lucky winners. We are wishing everyone the best of luck!"

Numerous benefits

The Al-Danah account is the only account that rewards customers for their loyalty by providing loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances gained in the previous year, which are then transferred to the current year to reward customers for their loyalty to the Bank. Accordingly, all chances gained by existing Al-Danah customers in 2020 have been transferred to the 2021 draws, and this will be repeated in 2022 onwards. Terms and conditions apply. It is also worth noting that all account draws are attended by a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, with the quarterly and annual draws also reviewed by Ernst & Young.

To enter the upcoming draws, Gulf Bank customers can open an Al-Danah account today with only KD 200. To open an Al-Danah account, existing Gulf Bank customers can apply through Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services, or book an appointment at their nearest branch by using the new "Visit Gulf Bank" app for a faster and more convenient branch visit. New customers can also open an Al-Danah account by visiting their nearest Gulf Bank branch or by scheduling an appointment through the app.

Deposit more for more Chances to win!

With Gulf Bank, depositing into an Al-Danah account is easier and more secure than ever, as clients can deposit into their accounts through the following channels: Online/Mobile Banking App which includes the ePay service, ATMs and ITMs, the Customer Contact Center which is available 24/7, in addition to the free standing order service from other Gulf Bank accounts.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to both Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. A minimum of KD 200 is required to open an account and the same amount must be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to the account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter Gulf Bank's Al-Danah draws throughout the year, for cash prizes totaling up to more than KD 2 million.

To deposit into an Al-Danah account, customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's branches, or transfer directly through Gulf Bank's Online/Mobile Banking services. Customers can also direct their queries via WhatsApp for round-the-clock assistance from Gulf Bank representatives, or call the Customer Contact Center on the same number. In addition, customers can visit the dedicated Al-Danah account website to learn more about the account and its winners.

HSBC says French retail bank sale to cost 1.9bn euros

LONDON: HSBC on Friday said it will incur a hefty charge of 1.9 billion euros with the sale of its French retail banking operations to French lender My Money Group. It comes as the Asia-focused banking giant is exiting also the retail sector in the United States. London-headquartered HSBC said in a statement that the French sale, for a nominal one euro, would generate an estimated pre-tax loss of 1.9 billion euros (\$2.25 billion). The business comprises 244 retail branches, serving 800,000 customers at the end of last year.

HSBC said that about 3,900 employees would transfer to the buyer. "The signing... for the potential sale of our French retail banking business represents a significant step in progressing



LONDON: This file photo shows an HSBC logo pictured on a wall outside a branch of the bank. —AFP

the actions we announced during our strategic update earlier this year," said HSBC chief executive Noel Quinn.

He said it would allow HSBC to "dramatically simplify" its business in mainland Europe. "We are committed to remaining as a leading international wholesale bank in continental Europe, capitalizing on our global network and serving our

multinational customers," Quinn added in the statement.

The bank aims to complete the sale in the first half of 2023. HSBC last month announced plans to exit the retail and small business banking market in the United States. Of its 148 US branches, 90 are to be sold, including to Citizens Bank and Cathay General Bancorp.

The bank plans to turn about 20 locations into international centers dedicated to high net worth individuals, and gradually wind down the remaining 35-40 branches.

HSBC recently announced a doubling of first-quarter profits, helped by a reversal in credit losses as well as its ongoing restructuring. It followed a tumultuous year that saw its fortunes take a hammering from the coronavirus pandemic. HSBC makes 90 percent of its profit in Asia, with China and Hong Kong the major drivers of growth. In February, it published a new strategy laying out plans to redouble its attempt to seize more of the Asian market. Weighed down by low interest rates, it is planning to seek out more fee-based income, especially wealth management for Asia's increasingly affluent. — AFP

Study highlights gender gap in health innovations

WASHINGTON: Harvard business professor Rem Koning studies how bias hurts innovation. But three years ago, his research hit too close to home when his wife, suffering from a rare post childbirth condition, couldn't find treatments designed with new moms in mind. "It came out of nowhere. And the whole thing was a lot more scary than I think it needed to be," Koning told AFP about the diagnosis of postpartum preeclampsia, which is characterized by high blood pressure.

The couple were also disappointed by the quality of tech products aimed at mothers—and realized it might be because most medical innovations were designed by men who dismissed or overlooked women's needs.

These experiences led Koning to conduct a machine learning text analysis of more than 440,000 US biomedical patents filed from 1976 to 2010, the results of which were published Thursday in the journal Science.

By tracking inventors' names and tying them to patents, Koning and his colleagues John-Paul Ferguson and Sampsa Samila found patents filed from all-female inventor teams were more than 35 percent more likely to focus on the health of women. Teams that were majority female were 18 percent more likely to make products with women in mind.

These patents were aimed at solving problems

that affect women either specifically-like menopause or preeclampsia-or disproportionately, such as fibromyalgia. Then there are conditions like atrial fibrillation that affect women differently, from risk factors to symptoms and even treatments. But while the impact of women innovators on women's health products was significant, their representation was small.

6,500 lost inventions

Women inventors represented 25 percent of the patents filed over the three decades analyzed—and the team estimated that if patents were invented equally during the period studied, there would be about 6,500 more female-focused inventions on the market. "Sadly, prior research has shown that women account for a minority of patents in the US, both in biomedicine and across other fields, too," Koning said. "So, we weren't surprised but still disappointed by how little the numbers had changed." Despite years of improvement, women make up only 27 percent of all US STEM workers, according to census data—and the gap in future products benefiting women's health needs will likely persist.

Writing in a related commentary, Fiona Murray, who researches innovation and inclusion at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, argued that innovators from diverse backgrounds identify research blind spots and improve the lives and health of more people. For example, African American ophthalmologist Patricia Bath was granted a patent in 1988 for a laser-based cataract removal system.

The invention not only benefited women, who suffer disproportionately from the eye disease, but ultimately everyone else. From a business perspective, Koning said a dearth of women



A biologist at OSE Immuno-therapeutics pharmaceutical lab works on a program to develop a vaccine against COVID-19 in Nantes. —AFP

inventors can negatively impact an economy struggling to recover from the effects of a global pandemic.

"When women don't get to invent or start new companies, we lose new ideas, new technologies and so end up with slower economic growth," he said. "Not only does society lose out on the ideas discovered by women, but women consumers are especially disadvantaged." On the other hand, Koning said not all inventors are guided by gender identity, and sometimes male inventors invent products for women, for example. Their study was also limited in its binary analysis of sex and gender.

"Unfortunately, the limitations of our data prevent us from delving deeper into the complex ways gender and sex are related," he explained. "Though my sense is that our findings suggest that transgender/nonbinary research is likely also overlooked given the barriers such researchers face in society and in the sciences." — AFP

UK retail sales drop as consumers eat out

LONDON: British retail sales fell last month on easing lockdown curbs, as people dined at bars and restaurants instead of buying food at supermarkets, data showed Friday.

Sales by volume declined 1.4 percent in May after a 9.2-percent bounce in April, the Office for National Statistics said. Food stores were the hardest hit, with sales sinking 5.7 percent as Britons took advantage of reopening hospitality. Under the phased reopening of Britain's battered economy, bars and restaurants restarted outdoor dining in April and indoor services in May.

"Instead of eating every meal at home as we all did during lockdowns, we were able to dine outside at cafes or restaurants," said Capital Economics analyst Paul Dales. "Spending just shifted from the shops to social activities," he said, but warned however that "soft retail sales data could mean May was not as strong for the economy as we had thought".

Overall UK retail sales in April and May were nevertheless 9.1 percent higher than the pre-pandemic level in February 2020. The UK also reopened non-essential retail in April, allowing the broader British economy to recover further from pandemic fallout on the rapid vaccines roll-out. The economy is now expected to fully reopen on July 19, after the government this week delayed the date by four weeks due to surging Delta infections. Britain's business lobby predict-



LONDON: British retail sales fell last month on easing lockdown curbs, as people dined at bars and restaurants instead of buying food at supermarkets, data showed Friday.

ed Friday that the economy is on course to reach its pre-Covid level by the end of 2021.

The Confederation of British Industry, the nation's biggest employers' organisation, now expects the economy to surge 8.2 percent this year and 6.1 percent in 2022.

The COVID-ravaged economy had collapsed by almost ten percent last year in Britain's biggest slump in three centuries — and the worst performance among the G7.

Exports fallout from Brexit

Stubborn Brexit worries also fester after Britain formally exited the EU single market at the start of 2021. Industry data showed Friday that UK food and drink exports to the bloc almost halved in the first quarter as a result of

both Brexit and pandemic fallout. The Food and Drink Federation (FDF) said EU sales slumped 47 percent from the same period a year earlier. Exports to the EU fell by £2.0 billion (\$2.8 billion, 2.3 billion euros) compared with the first quarter of 2019, before the pandemic struck.

The industry body blamed "the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and changes in the UK's trading relationships" after Brexit. Non-EU sales accounted for 55 percent of all UK food and drink exports in the first quarter, it added. "The loss of £2 billion of exports to the EU is a disaster for our industry," said Dominic Goudie, head of international trade at the federation. The news "is a very clear indication of the scale of losses that UK manufacturers face in the longer-term due to new trade barriers with the EU", he added. —AFP

NBK Capital wins The Banker's 'Deal of the Year Award 2021'

Award in recognition of NBK's \$700 million securities issuance

KUWAIT: NBK Capital, the leading investment management firm in the region and NBK Group's investment arm, has been awarded Deal of the Year - Middle East Award 2021 by The Banker magazine owned by The Financial Times, the world's leading global business publication. The award comes in recognition of the leading role of NBK Capital in successfully issuing \$700 million Regulation S/Rule 144A Perpetual callable 6-year Tier 1 capital securities for National Bank of Kuwait (NBK).

The capital securities will support NBK's endeavors towards further boosting its capital position and enhancing its capital adequacy ratios in accordance with Basel 3 accord and the instructions of the Central Bank of Kuwait. The Capital securities are

rated Baa3 by Moody's, and the transaction achieved a peak orderbook of \$1.9 billion, translating to an oversubscription of nearly 2.7-fold led by the robust demand of international investors, which had great impact in making the deal rank first among regional peers for this year. NBK Capital was appointed as a joint Global Coordinator, a Joint Bookrunner and a Joint Lead Manager.

Meanwhile, NBK Capital said in a statement, that The Banker's Deal of the Year Award is yet another testimony of the successful strategy aiming at creating value-add investment opportunities for the Firm's investors, not to mention a reflection of the professionalism and efficiency of the Firm's team.

"It's a great honor to receive this international

NBK CAPITAL

recognition that exemplifies the robust and sustainable performance of the Firm in the local and regional markets despite the prevailing challenging economic conditions," added NBK Capital, indicating that this is yet another proof of the unique and leading position of NBK Capital at all levels as a pioneer in the investment banking sector.

The Firm added that the awards received from international institutions specialized in financial and banking affairs are based on the accurate and sophis-

ticated business model of the Firm, which puts clients of all segments at the center of its operations, while simultaneously meeting all their financial and investment needs. It is worth mentioning that The Banker's panel received hundreds of international submissions for this year's awards. They selected the winners based on specific criteria considering meeting clients' goals, the deal's complexity, innovation, as well as the speed of implementation and pricing performance, which confirms the transparent process in selecting companies for the awards. NBK Capital is a leading advisor and arranger of debt securities in the region, having advised on more than \$24 billion of global and local conventional and Islamic debt capital markets mandates and restructuring assignments to date.

KFH's Al-Roshood receives Turkey's ambassador to Kuwait

KUWAIT: Acting Group Chief Executive Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Abdulwahab Al-Roshood received the Ambassador of The Republic of Turkey in Kuwait Ayse Hilal Koytak and the accompanying Commercial Attache at the bank's headquarters.

During the meeting, Al-Roshood reiterated the strong economic ties between Kuwait and Turkey, indicating KFH plays a significant role as a strategic partner in the Turkish economy and the Islamic finance industry in Turkey through KFH-Turkey. He added that KFH-Turkey, founded in 1989, is a clear-cut example of the cooperation in Islamic finance between Kuwait and Turkey. KFH-Turkey, the largest participation bank in Turkey, has huge network of branches across Turkey, which makes its financial services accessible to huge population in Turkey.

Al-Roshood pointed out that KFH has participated in several major transactions to finance infrastructure projects in Kuwait and overseas. KFH has offered financing of Euro 200 million Credit facilities for Limak Insaat for the construction of a bridge in Turkey, and financing of KD124.6 million syndicated

facility for constructing the new terminal of Kuwait International Airport. This project is part of Kuwait's development plan "New Kuwait Vision".

He explained "KFH offers a wide range of trade and financing solutions to investors in Kuwait and abroad. Our KT Bank AG in Germany, which is the first participation bank in the Euro zone, plays a key role in facilitating businesses by connecting Kuwait to Turkey to Europe. KFH offers instant cross-border payments service to beneficiaries at KFH-Turkey using Ripple's technology. This service comes to serve customers who want to perform instant transfers to Turkey for personal expenses or investments." Al-Roshood emphasized the importance of strengthening economic ties between Kuwait and Turkey for achieving further prosperity and development.

Meanwhile, HE Ambassador of The Republic of Turkey in Kuwait Ayse Hilal Koytak said that KFH is one of the largest Kuwaiti investors in Turkey, indicating KFH's subsidiary - KFH-Turkey has reached an asset size of 153 billion Turkish Lira and has 435 branches in Turkey in addition to its subsidiary KT Bank AG's 5 branches in Germany. More



Ambassador honoring Al-Roshood

importantly, KFH-Turkey is employing a huge number of Turkish people, which is a big contribution to Turkish labor market.

She added, during the meeting, "last year, the pandemic had a slight impact on our bilateral trade between Kuwait and Turkey", indicating the Turkish economy was one of the few economies growing last year (1.8 percent growth rate) despite the negative effects of global COVID-19 pandemic."

She pointed out that the Turkish economy continued to grow above market expectations (7 percent growth rate) in the first quarter of this year, noting of the 7 percent growth in the first quarter, 56 percent came from net

foreign demand and investments, which is an indicator of balanced and healthy growth, and confirms the rapid recovery of Turkish economy from the global turmoil caused by the pandemic. This also highlights an enormous potential with many opportunities for greater cooperation between Turkey and Kuwait in all areas of the economy. Koytak said: "I believe we can succeed not only a much higher bilateral trade volume, but also more mutual investments. Since 2002, 225 billion USD foreign investment has been directed to Turkey. There are more than 300 companies in Turkey having Kuwaiti investors. Total investment stock of Kuwaitis reached \$2 billion."

Lebanon leaders may face sanctions unless crisis solved

BEIRUT: EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned yesterday that Lebanese leaders could face sanctions unless they pull the country away from financial collapse and strike a deal with the IMF. Lebanon is facing what the World Bank has described as one of the world's worst economic crises since the 1850s.

A political crisis has left the country without a functioning government since the last one resigned after a massive explosion killed dozens and destroyed swathes of Beirut in August 2020. Speaking in Beirut after talks with Lebanese President Michel Aoun, Borrell said he had "a message of firmness to all Lebanese political leaders on behalf of the EU".

"The crisis Lebanon is facing is a domestic crisis, is a self-imposed crisis, not a crisis coming from abroad or from external factors," he said. "The Lebanese leadership must take its responsibility... a government must be formed and key reforms implemented immediately."

The EU's foreign policy chief said the bloc was willing to help Lebanon engage in reforms but only after a deal is struck with the International Monetary Fund. "Only an urgent agreement with IMF will rescue the country from a financial collapse... and there is no time to waste," he said. "You are on the edge of a financial collapse."

But Borrell added that should "further obstructions to solutions" emerge, the EU "will have to consider other courses of action as some member states have proposed". — AFP

AVEVA hosts word digital conference

DUBAI: AVEVA, a global leader in industrial software, driving digital transformation and sustainability, hosted its fourth AVEVA World Digital (AWD) conference on June 17, 2021. Aimed at leaders and decision makers interested in innovative industrial technology, to deliver digital transformation and strengthen resilience in a challenging environment, this was the first joint AVEVA and PI System event since the company acquired OSIsoft earlier this year.

AWD, a half-day event, explored how data-led insights infused with artificial intelligence could help organizations optimize their value chains for long-term business growth.

AVEVA's recently appointed CEO, Peter Herweck, kicked off proceedings with a session that laid out how performance intelligence, the concept developed by AVEVA to explain the outcome of combining information, artificial intelligence and human insight. Also, in the presenter line-up will be Nicole Malachowski, the first female United States Air Force fighter pilot to be part of the elite Thunderbirds squadron, who addressed resilience and innovation by speaking from her own debilitating experience with Lyme Disease. Having lost the ability to read, write, walk, and fly, the one-time advisor to former US First Lady Michelle Obama tapped into her aerodynamic training bounce back - a secret she shared with AWD attendees.

"I am looking forward to virtually engaging our customers and partners at my first AVEVA World Digital as the company CEO and the first for former OSIsoft customers. Over the past year, digital transformation has demonstrated how trusted data and artificial intelligence can reshape the future of industries, as well as create new experiences and business opportunities," commented Peter Herweck, CEO, AVEVA prior to the event. "We have witnessed how Cloud, and the Industrial Internet of Things



Peter Herweck



Lisa Johnston

(IIoT) continue to drive operational resilience in a digital-first environment. Today, AVEVA's software is enabling organizations, throughout the globe, to harness greater efficiencies, increase agility and accelerate growth - all key factors in also advancing sustainability for industries."

Other keynote speakers included a mix of AVEVA and former OSIsoft speakers - Lisa Johnston, Chief Marketing Officer and Chief Sustainability Officer, AVEVA, Norton Green, Director of Executive Engagements, AVEVA; Rob McGreevy, Executive Vice President of Operations Business, AVEVA and Ronan de Hooge, Head of Information Management Business Unit, AVEVA. A customer panel session comprising AVEVA and heritage OSIsoft customers, including Enbridge, Nutrien and General Mills, ended proceedings. AVEVA is a global leader in industrial software, driving digital transformation and sustainability. By connecting the power of information and artificial intelligence with human insight, AVEVA enables teams to use their data to unlock new value. We call this Performance Intelligence.

AVEVA's comprehensive portfolio enables more than 20,000 industrial enterprises to engineer smarter, operate better and drive sustainable efficiency. AVEVA supports customers through a trusted ecosystem that includes 5,500 partners and 5,700 certified developers around the world.

ABK launches rewarding summer campaign

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) cardholders now have a chance to win a stay in a Family Suite with breakfast for 4 adults at Hilton Garden Inn - The Avenues, and enjoy KD 500 cashback with the Bank's latest campaign, 'It's Bigger This Summer with ABK'. All existing ABK Credit and Prepaid cardholders will be entered into the draw automatically when spending a minimum of KD 500 locally or internationally. The campaign will run for three months from 10th June to 9th September 2021, and allows 30 eligible customers to earn one draw point for every KD 10 spent locally and three draw points spent internationally. Winners will not be eligible to participate in consecutive

monthly draws.

Johair Marafi, ABK's Acting General Manager - Retail Banking said: "It's Bigger This Summer with ABK reaffirms our commitment to enhancing our customers' experience by providing exclusive personalized offerings, rewarding value propositions and shopping experiences with added-value. With the current travel restrictions, we felt it was appropriate to choose a relaxing environment such as Hilton Garden Inn, where there is an opportunity for the winners to enjoy a weekend break, while also having one of the largest shopping malls in the region attached to the hotel, with ample entertainment available."



Johair Marafi

Africell vows to 'shake up' Angola market

JOHANNESBURG: US-owned mobile network operator Africell, the first wholly foreign-owned operator licensed to provide mobile services in oil-rich Angola, has vowed to shake up the "overly cosy" market there. The company had finalized a deal with the Angolan government in February to join three other mobile phone companies already operating in the southwest African country.

Angola's telecommunications market is dominated by Unitel, a private operator long led by the country's first daughter Isabel dos Santos. Accused of graft, she resigned from the company's board of directors in August last year, citing a "climate of permanent conflict".

President Joao Lourenco-who took office in 2017 — has launched a bid to recover Angola from 37 years of alleged corruption and nepotism under his predecessor, Jose Eduardo dos Santos.

Dos Santos was accused of placing cronies and relatives



in key government and business positions.

Lourenco came into office on promises to transform the oil-dependent economy. Transformation will require "bringing in an outsider that shakes up a bit of the overly cosy business environment," Africell non-executive director Peter Pham said Friday. Opening the tender to international players helped break "some of the monopolistic tendencies" that took hold "under the previous regime".

For Africell, moving into Angola is a "once-in-a-generation opportunity... to get into a market that has been closed for so long," he said. Africell currently operates telecommunications networks in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Uganda. — AFP

AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad draw

KUWAIT: In accordance with full preventive guidelines and measures set by health authorities, Ahli United Bank (AUB) held the weekly draw of 16 June 2021 of Al-Hassad Islamic account which is the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait and has won the "Best Savings Product in Kuwait 2019" by the prestigious Banker Middle East Magazine for the numerous unique features it provides. Al-Hassad Islamic account offers over 750 prizes, Over 12 Month Period and has reshaped the lives of thousands lucky winners.

The Bank announced 20 Winners of KD 1,000 as follows: Ahmad Abdullah Al-Failakawi, Sameer Najeeb Hanna, Shaker Eissa Al-Buloushi, Mona Ahmad Sttarian, Abdullah Ragab Mohammed, Hassan Mohammad Al-Ansari, Khaled Mohammad Al-Dousari, Ahmad Eissa Al-Muqahwi, Jujar Mulla Fakhruddin, Fawwaz Sultan Al-farhan, Mohammad Yousef Al-Shuaib, Faisal Khaled Awad, Baqer Darweesh Hasan, Khalid Salim Abdullah, Fatemah Mohammad Al-Shammari, Lafi Saad Al-Hatlani, Yousef Ahmed Al-Mailam, Ghaliyah Khaled Al-Marzouq, Muhalli Mashhi Al-Dhafeeri and Abrar Hasan Abbas.

The draws of Al-Hassad include several cash prizes, such as KD 100,000 each Eid and the grand quarterly draw of KD 250,000 prize which continues to be a key aspiration for customers who are wishing to fulfill their dreams. Al-Hassad offers 20 weekly prizes of KD 1,000 for each winner. In addition to this attractive package of rewards, Al-Hassad Islamic account incorporates a Wakala contract for projected annual profits, making this account beneficial to all customer segments that are aspiring to build their short and long-term savings through a unique savings account with many advantages.

Furthermore, for the first time in Kuwait, the AUB Al-Hassad presents the "Privilege Draw", which is a quarterly draw of KD 25,000 exclusively for Al-Hassad customers who maintained their balances for more than one year and have not won a prize in the past five years.

For all draws, the clients are eligible for one draw chance for each KD 50 deposited in their Al-Hassad account. It is worth mentioning that Al-Hassad Islamic account has won the "Best Savings Product in Kuwait 2019" by the prestigious Banker Middle East Magazine for the numerous unique features it provides. Such features include the simplest and easiest program, highest number of winners, largest prize value, unique draws during Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha, loyalty multipliers, unique online account opening feature, transparent draws held during radio shows with live broadcast on the Bank's social media platforms.

Lifestyle | Fashion

Live audience 'baby steps' back to normality

Fashion industry ready to start turning the page on virtual formats

Lights, camera, real live audiences - Milan fashion welcomes back actual people to its shows Friday, a sign the industry is ready to start turning the page on virtual formats adopted during the pandemic. The numbers are still modest, with only Armani, Dolce & Gabbana and Etro inviting an audience to their men's Spring/Summer 2022 collections. "This is the dress rehearsal of the return to normalcy," Federica Trotta Mureau, editor of the Italian fashion magazine Mia Le Journal, told AFP.

The shows represent baby steps but the effect of the live events, instead of the video presentations or short films relied on since early last year when coronavirus cut short the twice-yearly shows in Italy's business capital, would still be appreciated, Mureau said.

"The lights that go out and come back on, the music that sounds as soon as the first models come out... it's an emotion

that digital cannot give us," she said. Armani was the first in late May to announce the return of the public, after being the first to shut them out in February 2020. "I'm scared, like everyone else," Giorgio Armani, 86, said as the pandemic swept through Italy last year.

Goodbye dull shades

The bulk of the 47 fashion shows taking place over five days will remain digital. That was the case for Ermenegildo Zegna, which kicked off the shows on Friday with a virtual display featuring models wandering through labyrinths of greenery before returning to an urban concrete landscape.

"This marks a renaissance of luxury craftsmanship, a movement that liberates the man while preserving his uniqueness," said the brand's artistic director, Alessandro Sartori. Fendi came next, yesterday; Prada's virtual show is due today.



MILAN: Models present creations by Dolce & Gabbana during the men's & women's spring/summer 2019 collection fashion show in Milan in this file photo. — AFP

Though still a small minority, the return of even the few in-person shows was "an important signal of recovery", according to Carlo Capasa, president of the National Chamber for Italian Fashion.

After months of stop-start measures, coronavirus restrictions in most of Italy have now been lifted thanks to falling infection rates, although masks are still compulsory in public and social distancing must be respected. Capasa has estimated sales for the Italian fashion market will rise 17 percent this year to 80 billion

euros (\$95 billion), driven mostly by growth in China. Exports of "Made in Italy" fashion are expected to rise by 13 percent. But only in 2022 will the country's fashion industry regain its pre-pandemic levels, especially since orders during the first months of 2021 have fallen below expectations. Last year, revenue fell by 26 percent for the Italian industry, as stores shuttered and well-heeled tourists stayed home.

So what will Milan's men be wearing next year?

After the grey winter and the gloom of the pandemic, colors found in nature such as light green, ocean blue, terracotta, sunshine yellow or fire red should prevail, according to Mureau.

"Goodbye to sober colors and too punishing looks, the summer of 2022 in men's fashion will be marked by color and exaggeration," she said. — AFP



MILAN: A model presents a creation for fashion house Fendi during the presentation of its men's spring/summer 2020 fashion collection in Milan.



MILAN: A model presents a creation for fashion house Etro during the presentation of its men's spring/summer 2020 fashion collection in Milan.



MILAN: A model presents a creation by Prada during the men & women's spring/summer 2019 collection fashion show in Milan



MILAN: Italian fashion designers Stefano Gabbana (left) and Domenico Dolce acknowledge applause following the presentation of the Dolce & Gabbana men's spring/summer 2020 fashion collection in Milan.

Nigeria models look to rock the runways

In Nigeria's economic capital Lagos an international model casting was on the hunt for the face of the future. Elizabeth Elohor is sure that it will be an African one. The former top model created the first modelling agency in Nigeria back in 2004, when there was no Fashion Week on the continent, very few local designers and little high-end fashion. Now with her "Future Face Africa" casting, Elohor hopes to expand the search for future talent from Nigeria to the rest of the continent. Before the 2000s, there were few black faces gracing the covers of women's magazines with the exception of iconic figures like Naomi Campbell, Donyale Luna and Beverly Johnson.

In Nigeria, Africa's most populous country with more than 200 million people, the few who at the time dared to venture into modeling were independent, vulnerable, and had to distribute their own portfolios to companies specializing in events and advertising.

When Elohor returned from London in 2004 to start Beth Model Agency, she was breaking new ground, said Marius Isikalu, a former top model at barely 30, who now works alongside her. "Elizabeth was a pio-

neer. She signed all the known models back then and she said 'if you want to use them, this is how much you're going to pay, and those are the conditions,'" Isikalu said standing on the event's red carpet.

"She set the rules, the rates, she set the pace." The turning point for Africa's modeling world came in 2010 when South Africa and Nigeria organised fashion

Vuitton, Dolce & Gabbana, Balmain... have started realizing that a lot of their clients are actually from Africa," Elohor said, seated in a mustard yellow armchair by a Nigerian designer. "Back in the days, out of 50 agencies, you would probably have like five models and now, one agency can have up to 10, 15 African models."



LAGOS: Founder of Beth Modeling Agency, Elizabeth Elohor (center), pose with friends during a reception to mark the launch of the Future Face of Africa.

weeks that were recognized on the international scene as "select" in fashion world. The recent Black Lives Matter movement and high-profile advocates for the beauty of black women are also helping to change trends around the world. But the reasons are also economic.

"International designers like Louis

Africa is the future
Tobi Momoh is one of the new generation of models. Smiling and full of life, the 19-year-old goes from table to table in her fitted black dress, greeting stars from Nigeria's Nollywood film scene, Afropop music royalty or reality TV stars. "I grew up thinking that I would be like any other

girls struggling to find a job after school. But Elizabeth saw me on the road, she asked permission to my mom to sign me in her agency and now! Look at me! It was so simple," she said.

Tobi was just 15 when she won the Elite Model Look Africa competition, which propelled her onto the catwalks in Milan, Paris and in several international agencies. "We have the beauties to rock the runways," she said. Elizabeth knows that, too. And even if she no longer has time to walk the streets or the markets of Lagos, her passion for finding the rare pearls of African beauty remains with her. Through "Future Face Africa", a huge casting first via social networks and then in face-to-face castings, she wants to broaden her search to the whole continent and make fashion shake in Africa.

The growing sector has allowed the emergence of many actors, designers, makeup artists, but also photographers. Kola Oshalusi, a famous Nigerian fashion photographer, has also witnessed the explosion in demand and the professionalization of modeling in Africa over the past decade. Even Nigeria's growing security troubles, high inflation and economic woes can't take away the glitz and sense of hope. "Africa is the future," Oshalusi said sporting an elegant beige hat and cotton jacket. "Nigeria is Africa. Nigerian models are confident, they are bringing so much energy on the runways, they know what they want, and it's helped to build an incredible reputation on the international scene." — AFP

Diana statue event may 'break ice' for princes

The unveiling of a new statue of Diana, princess of Wales, next month could help thaw frosty ties between her sons prince William and Prince Harry, a royal biographer said Friday. The princes are due to attend the July 1 ceremony in the gardens of Kensington Palace, unveiling a statue they commissioned to mark what would have been their mother's 60th birthday.



Princess of Wales Diana

Omid Scobie, a journalist and writer whose 2020 book "Finding Freedom" covers Harry and Meghan's marriage and move to the United States, said he expects the event "will demonstrate that both of them are able to be cordial and respectful when it comes to remembering the life of their mother, despite their differences". The once-close brothers, who studied together at Britain's elite Eton school, and both served in the military, have become distant since Harry's marriage to Meghan and the couple's move to California. The brothers' meeting could remind them "how well" they work together to preserve the legacy of their mother, who was killed in a Paris car crash, aged 36, in 1997, Scobie told the Foreign Press Association in London, answering a question from AFP.

"Maybe that will be the icebreaker that is needed," he added, while saying the princes would not be able to talk privately at the large event and "there's a lot to be discussed". — AFP



LAGOS: Picture of an international model is projected to guests during a reception to mark the launch of the Future Face of Africa in Lagos.



LAGOS: Model Aramide Lopez (left) takes a selfie with founder of Beth Model Management, Elizabeth Elohor (center), and model Tobi Momoh (R) during the launch of the Future Face of Africa.—AFP photos



The Abeja Negra SOS (SOS Black Bee) organization -founded in 2018 and formed solely by women- ensure the conservation of bees in natural habitats in Mexico, carrying out more than 200 rescues a year.



View of a part of a comb at an apiary, in Xochimilco, Mexico City.



Veliz works in the removal of a swarm of bees from the garden of a house in Naucalpan de Juarez, Mexico.

Mexico's bee guardians on mission to save species

Adriana Veliz whispered affectionately as she removed a colony of bees from inside a statue in a Mexican backyard-part of her mission to help save them from extinction. "Relax babies, relax. You'll be fine," the 32-year-old veterinarian said as the bees swarmed around her and clung to the white suit she wore to protect against their stings.

Veliz's bee protection organization Abeja Negra SOS carries out more than 200 such rescues a year to protect the insects from dangers such as humans and pesticides. The five-woman team offers its services for free to help safeguard the bees, which Veliz said play a vital role including in pollination that enables crops to reproduce.

"Basically they keep an ecosystem in balance," she said. Despite their importance, some people kill bees they find in their homes or offices because they are afraid of being attacked, Veliz said.

Risky work

Lying on the grass, she stretched her



Beekeeping technician Luz Millan (right) and veterinarian Adriana Veliz (left) work in the removal of a swarm of bees from the garden of a house in Naucalpan de Juarez, Mexico state, Mexico. — AFP photos

arm as far as she could inside the 1.5-meter (five-foot) concrete statue where the bees made their hive in Naucalpan near Mexico City. Her partner Luz Millan puffed

smoke at the insects to neutralize the pheromones they use to communicate, and sprinkled water on them to make it harder to fly. After removing the colony,

home to the *Apis mellifera* species of honey bee, the team took it to an apiary on a mountain outside the urban sprawl of Mexico City.

Moving the insects is no easy task. Recently, Veliz and her team had to demolish the wall of a house to get to the bees inside. "It's dangerous because the bees defend their hive. Their queen orders them with pheromones when to attack," Veliz said. Abeja Negra SOS, which was founded in 2018, is not only saving bees-it is also empowering women, her colleague Millan said. "We don't need a man to do these jobs. Women aren't only here to do delicate things," she said.

'Vital indicator'

Mexico is home to nearly 2,000 bee species and, like in many countries, environmentalists are concerned for their future. More than a third of Mexico's *Apis mellifera* bee colonies were lost in 2020, according to Adriana Correa, a researcher at the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

The use of toxic agrochemicals and the impact of climate change on flowering cycles have taken their toll on the species, she said. "If they die, humans are not far from suffering the same fate. They are a vital indicator for humanity," Correa warned. For years the bees living in the statue caused no trouble, but a few weeks ago they began stinging the house's residents.

"Suddenly they started attacking, especially my parents," said Montserrat Moreno, a 54-year-old school teacher. "We wanted them to be taken away alive and be treated as well as possible," she added. In the mountainside apiary, Veliz, who describes herself as a "guardian of the bees," proudly showed off a dozen rescued hives, each of which can contain up to 80,000 specimens. "You'll be fine here," she told the bees as she sprinkled sugar in their new home. — AFP



NEW YORK: Jean Paul Engelen, Deputy Chairman and worldwide co-head of 20th century and contemporary art at Phillips Auction House speaks next to "The Moat, Breccles" painting made by Winston Churchill and owned by the Onassis family Friday.



Jean Paul Engelen stands next to a picture of Winston Churchill and Aristotle Onassis. — AFP photos

CHURCHILL PAINTING FROM ONASSIS SUPERYACHT TO AUCTION IN NEW YORK

A piece of art weaving together one of the great statesmen of the 20th century, an icon of the jet set and the world's first "super yacht" will go under the hammer at New York auction house Phillips on June 23.

"The Moat, Breccles," a signed 1921 oil landscape by Winston Churchill, is estimated by Phillips at \$1.5 million to \$2 million, far from the \$11.6 million netted by

another painting from the wartime British prime minister sold by Angelina Jolie at Christie's last March. But even if it doesn't shatter records, this landscape-which Churchill mentioned in a December 1921 essay titled "Painting as a Pastime"-could appeal to both history and celebrity buffs.

Churchill kept the painting for 40 years before offering it in 1961, four years before his death, to his friend the Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis, Phillips Deputy Chairman Jean-Paul Engelen told AFP. The tycoon was so proud of his gift that he hung it in a place of honor-behind the bar of his yacht-alongside works by Vermeer, Gauguin, Le Greco and Pissarro. This super yacht, named "Christina" after Onassis's daughter, was a former Canadian Navy frigate, nearly 100 meters long. It had been a part of the Normandy landings before Onassis bought the ship post-war for \$34,000.

Onassis had it lavishly renovated to the tune of \$4 million, making it "one of the most incredible structures that floated," Engelen said. It was a favored gathering spot for the rich and famous, including Elizabeth Taylor, John F and Jackie Kennedy, Richard Burton, Grace Kelly, J Paul Getty, Eva Peron and others. When Onassis died in 1975, seven years after his marriage to Jackie Kennedy, the yacht was sold and everything on board placed in storage, until his heirs recently decided to part with the painting. To spur interest in the canvas, Phillips has recreated the bar on the "Christina"-known as Ari's Bar-in its New York showroom, including facsimiles of its famous whale teeth, and filled the shelves with Pol Roger champagne, Churchill's preferred bubbly. — AFP

New museum gingerly explores German wartime suffering

A new museum dedicated to the long-silenced trauma of German civilians forced to flee eastern Europe at the end of World War II opens next week after decades of wrenching debate. Perhaps reflecting what its founders call their delicate "balancing act", the new institution in Berlin carries the unwieldy name of Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion and Reconciliation. Some 14 million Germans

fled or were ejected from what is today's Poland, Russia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Baltic states, Romania, Slovakia and the former Yugoslavia between 1944 and 1950.

Escaping the Russian army and later forced out by occupying powers and local authorities, an estimated 600,000 Germans lost their lives on the trek. Those who fled included people who had settled in Nazi-occupied territories as well

as ethnic Germans who had lived for centuries as minorities.

Seventy-six years after the conflict's end, director Gundula Bavendamm said Germany was finally ready to talk about their suffering, while still acknowledging the unparalleled guilt of the Nazis. "We are not the only country that needed quite some time to face up to painful and difficult chapters of its own history," she told reporters at a preview of the museum before it opens to the public on Wednesday.

"Sometimes it takes several generations, and the right political constellations." The 65-million-euro (\$78-million) museum takes pains to place the Germans' plight firmly in the context of Hitler's expansionist, genocidal policies. It is located between the museum at the former Gestapo headquarters and the ruins of Anhalter railway station from which people were sent to the Theresienstadt concentration camp. Just opposite is a planned Exile Museum devoted to those who fled Nazi Germany. Access to the second-floor space spotlighting the Germans' exodus can only be gained through a darkened room covering the Holocaust. —AFP



BERLIN: View of the "Displacement and Expulsion of Germans" exhibition at the "Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion and Reconciliation", in Berlin taken Friday. — AFP

'Women build the city': Vienna's space for female architects

Women may hold up half the sky, but when it comes to designing the public spaces and buildings in which they live, their voices have too often been silenced. A visionary project in Vienna aims to turn that notion on its head, with a suburb in the Austrian capital designed by and for women. It exemplifies how the city is trying to make urban space more inclusive, from brighter lights to broader pavements that make room for pushchairs, and how female architects and designers are driving the change.

The new Seestadt district has been in the throes of development since 2012, a sprawling building site on the city's eastern edge that is projected to expand from its 8,300 population now to 20,000 by 2030. Giant letters on hoardings around some of the construction sites proclaim "Women build the city".

By turning the focus on the role of women in urban design, Vienna is helping to highlight the still dominant role men play in shaping the built environment. The developers and bankers who often make the crucial decisions when it comes to urban development are still overwhelmingly male, says Sabina Riess, an architect and university researcher who studies the relationship between gender and urban planning.

Janis Joplin

She estimates that in most countries "the percentage of women in the decision-making process at between five and 10 percent at most". As well as being heavily involved in the design of the new buildings in Seestadt, women also take center-stage when it comes to naming the new streets. The philosopher Hannah Arendt, singer Janis Joplin and children's book heroine Pippi Longstocking are just a few of the names to grace the new addresses.

The district is also hosting a new exhibition showcasing female architects that runs until October 15. According to archi-

tect Carla Lo-who herself has contributed designs for one of Seestadt's interior courtyards-Vienna's planning policies have been refreshed since Kathrin Gaal in 2018 became the first woman to head the city's powerful housing department, overseeing an annual budget of more than a billion euros (\$1.2 billion).

"Since she has been there, suddenly



Katja Schechtner (left) and Wojciech Czaja, curators of the architecture exhibition "Women build the city", pose for a picture at Vienna's suburb Seestadt, Austria.

the particular needs of single mothers are considered when tenders go out for projects," Lo says. Having given her input to the development of Seestadt, Gaal says she wants the exhibition there to encourage other women "to make their visions reality".

Bright lights, safer city

The desire to cater to women's needs can be seen in many facets of Vienna's modern city planning, from the brighter street lights and more exits at sports venues to help women feel safer, to provision of better toilet facilities. In residential design too there are such innovations as common rooms shared between several flats to keep prices low and encourage families to collaborate for childcare. At the exhibition, visitors can learn about the often overlooked achievements of 18 female architects, artists and urban planners from across the world. For co-curator Wojciech Czaja, the show fits the ethos reflected in Seestadt's street names.

"Ninety-two percent of streets in Vienna are named after men," he says, adding: "This doesn't reflect history or the present. —AFP



VIENNA: A general view of apartment buildings of Vienna's suburb Seestadt, Austria. Women may hold up half the sky, but when it comes to designing the public spaces and buildings in which they live, their voices have too often been silenced.— AFP photos

Sports

Clippers rally to oust top seeded Jazz, Sixers set stage for game 7

LOS ANGELES: Terance Mann poured in a career-high 39 points as the Los Angeles Clippers advanced to their first NBA semi-finals in franchise history, rallying to beat the top seeded Utah Jazz 131-119 on Friday. The fourth seeded Clippers won their four straight match after losing the first two in Salt Lake City to take the Eastern Conference series in six games.

They stormed back in the second half on Friday after being down by 25 points in the third quarter to reach the league's final four, ending years of playoff frustration including a string of NBA quarter-final exits.

The 24-year-old Mann was electric in just his second career playoff start, shooting 15-of-21 from the field and draining seven of 10 three pointers in front of a crowd of 17,100 at Staples Center arena in downtown Los Angeles. "I just trust my work," said Mann. "Everybody was telling me to shoot the ball and that is what I did."

They next face the Phoenix Suns in game one of the Western Conference finals today. Second year player Mann got plenty of help from the veterans on the team. Paul George scored 28 points and added nine rebounds and seven assists for the Clippers, who won despite missing their top player Kawhi Leonard.

"It feels great," said George. "They wrote us off when Kawhi went down. He is one of the best young players I have been around," George said of Mann, whose previous regular season high was 25 points. "He reminds me a lot of myself."

The Clippers made history without star Leonard, who missed his second straight game with a sprained right knee. Reggie Jackson added 27 points and 10 assists. Nicolas Batum contributed 16 points and Patrick Beverley had 12 points in the win. The Jazz got star guard Mike Conley back on Friday but it wasn't enough to salvage their series. Conley finished with five points in 26 minutes of playing time.

Donovan Mitchell, who was playing with a sore ankle, scored a team high 39 points, dished out nine assists and had nine rebounds for the Jazz. "At the beginning of the third we started turning the ball over and that got them going," said Jazz coach Quin Snyder. "We were late on our rotations and they took advantage of that."

Elsewhere, Joel Embiid and the Philadelphia 76ers played with more urgency, using a collective offensive effort to come from behind and force a game seven in

their second-round NBA playoff series. Tobias Harris and Seth Curry each scored 24 points and Embiid tallied 22 points and grabbed 13 rebounds as the Sixers overcame a double-digit first-half deficit to beat the upstart Atlanta Hawks 104-99. Curry also had six threes. "You saw the fight and grit of a whole group," said Harris.

Game seven will be today at the home arena of the top-seeded 76ers. Philadelphia's win means both Eastern Conference semi-final series will go to a game seven after the Milwaukee Bucks won game six against the Brooklyn Nets on Thursday night.

The 76ers pushed the best-of-seven series to the limit after the heartbreak of letting two potential wins in games four and five slip through their fingers. "It's fun. It's a lot of fun," Curry said. "You've just got to weather the storm and come back at them at the other end."

Tyrese Maxey added 16 points and seven rebounds off the bench for the 76ers, who rebounded after blowing a 26-point lead at home in game five. Trae Young finished with 34 points and 12 assists for Atlanta, who are seeking to reach the Eastern Conference finals for the first time in six years. Philadelphia led 80-76 at the end of the third quarter. — AFP



LOS ANGELES: Paul George #13 of the Los Angeles Clippers hugs Terance Mann #14 of the Los Angeles Clippers after he scored a basket against Utah Jazz during the first half in Game Six of the Western Conference second-round playoff series at Staples Center on Friday in Los Angeles, California. — AFP



MONTREAL: Josh Anderson #17 of the Montreal Canadiens scores the game-winning goal past Marc-Andre Fleury #29 of the Vegas Golden Knights during the first overtime period in Game Three of the Stanley Cup Semifinals of the 2021 Stanley Cup Playoffs at Bell Centre on Friday in Montreal, Quebec. — AFP

Anderson scores in OT, Canadiens take 2-1 series lead

LOS ANGELES: Josh Anderson's second goal of the match in overtime lifted the Montreal Canadiens to a 3-2 victory over the Vegas Golden Knights in game three of their NHL Stanley Cup semi-final series Friday. Goaltender Carey Price was superb, making 43 saves for Montreal, who lead the best-of-seven series 2-1. Game four is today in Montreal.

The Canadiens won despite missing head coach Dominique Ducharme, who was isolating after testing positive for the coronavirus. All other tests administered to the players and coaches came back negative. The final play began with a Golden Knight turnover at

their own blue line. Montreal's Jesperi Kotkaniemi then ripped a long pass up the ice that Anderson knocked out of the air to teammate Paul Byron.

Anderson then got the return pass from Byron and drove it home, setting off a wild celebration in front of a pandemic-limited crowd of just 3,500 Montreal fans. Cole Caufield also scored for Montreal, who were the underdogs coming into the series but are surviving on grit and determination which has helped them get an important split of the first two games in Vegas.

Assistant coach Luke Richardson ran the bench with Alex Burrows and director of goaltending Sean Burke in Ducharme's absence. Nicolas Roy and Alex Pietrangolo scored for the Golden Knights, with Montreal native Marc-Andre Fleury stopping 24 shots for Vegas. There were no goals in the opening period before Vegas' Nicolas Ray drew first blood 3:16 in to make it 1-0. Caufield tied it up just 38 seconds later. It was just the sixth time in 16 playoff games the Knights have scored first. — AFP

This participation comes in coordination with Rafa Nadal Academy Kuwait, which trains the Kuwait national tennis team in cooperation with Kuwait Tennis Federation. The Tunisia Tennis Federation granted the national team wildcard entries at the request of Sheikh Ahmad to participate in these important international events, which are considered a good opportunity for Kuwait players and their Arab counterparts to improve their world rankings.

Sheikh Ahmad thanked President of Tunis Tennis Federation Salma Mouelhi for supporting Kuwait players and granting them wildcard entries to participate. Sheikh Ahmad, in his capacity as President of Arab Tennis Federation, lauded the support of TTF headed by Mouelhi to Arab players and hoped that more Arab players join the international rankings. He wished the Tunisia tournaments all success.

Kuwait tennis team off to Tunisia

By Abdellatif Sharaa

TUNIS: Kuwait national tennis team players Bader Abdelaziz Antar, Essa Salman Qabazard and Ali Abdelredha Al-Shatti left for Tunisia to participate in a series of international Futures championships that will continue until July 26. The participation of the team comes at the instructions of President of Kuwait and Arab Tennis Federations Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah following their good results in four similar championships in Egypt and Turkey.



Kuwait national tennis team members.

Celtics trade all-star Walker to Thunder

LOS ANGELES: Boston dealt all-star Kemba Walker and a first round draft pick to the Oklahoma City Thunder in deal that involves both players and draft picks changing hands, the Celtics announced on Friday. The Celtics are giving up guard Walker and a 2021 first round pick in exchange for centre Al Horford and prospect Moses Brown. This is the first significant move for Brad Stevens who replaced former president of basketball operations Danny Ainge in early June. The NBA clubs also exchanged second-round draft picks. Walker recently signed a four-year, \$140.8 million contract with the Hornets.

Walker, who is the Hornets' all-time leading scorer, struggled with knee injuries during the 2020-21 season. He was limited to 43 regular-season games and missed the final two games of the Celtics' loss to the Brooklyn Nets in the first round of the playoffs. The deal marks the return of Horford to the Celtics, where he played for three years before leaving in 2019.

'Adviser' Nowitzki

Dirk Nowitzki, who led the Dallas Mavericks to their lone championship in 2011, will help the NBA club hire its next head coach and manager. Nowitzki, 43, is joining the Mavericks as a special adviser after meeting with owner Mark Cuban, the team announced Friday.

"Mark Cuban approached me about a role as special adviser and I am happy to support my Mavs," Nowitzki said. "Donnie Nelson and Rick Carlisle were both my mentors and played huge roles in my career and the success of this franchise, and I am going to miss them. It is important for me now to join Mark and contribute as much as I can as we move forward."



Kemba Walker

Besides helping with key hires, Nowitzki is expected consult with Cuban on other key front office decisions. The move comes just days after owner Cuban fired general manager Nelson and coach Carlisle resigned. Nowitzki played over two decades with Dallas. He led the Mavericks to their lone NBA title in 2011 and was named the most valuable player of the NBA finals. A 14-time all-star, Nowitzki is the franchise's all-time leader in points (31,560), rebounds (11,489), and games played (1,522). — AFP



TOKYO: This file photo taken on December 18, 2020 shows an advertisement for the Cyberpunk 2077 video game for the Sony Playstation, as shoppers browse the gaming section of a shop in Tokyo. — AFP

As Cyberpunk reboots, can unloved games win an extra life?

ments-it has become a critical success and something of a classic.

Reinvention and constant updates are even more important in the world of the MMORPG-or massively-multiplayer online role-playing game-which relies on a loyal subscriber base to maintain longer-term revenue.

Real world money

In 2010, Japanese studio Square Enix's "Final Fantasy XIV"-as the number implies-inherited fans from a popular long-running series, only to disappoint them at first with a lack of varied content within the players' world. The first version was taken down and a relaunched, reworked virtual world returned in 2013. Bit by bit the community was restored, and by the middle of last year 20 million players were wandering its vast playable space. As journalist Daniel Andreyev explained, the huge user base becomes not only the strength of a game and the source of its profits, but also a powerful incentive not to just abandon a struggling title but to rework it over time to iron out problems.

Sometimes, it's not a technical failure that sinks a game, but a perceived betrayal. In 2017, US publisher Electronic Arts brought out "Star Wars: Battlefront II", a title that could rely on the goodwill of fans of both the iconic space opera franchise and a series of popular and accomplished battle games.

The problem was in the way players progressed in the game, with their digital avatars gaining prowess through "loot boxes": caches of virtual weapons and equipment to help them overcome increasingly dangerous foes. These boxes could be acquired through spending time in the game at the frontline-or paying real-world money to unlock them.

This wasn't a new concept, but it was not popular with fans. The Force was not with EA, and after months of online abuse the company dropped the in-game commerce and attempted to win back customers by adding new, fan-friendly Star Wars content like classic characters and locations. — AFP

BRUSSELS: Retro-futurist video game Cyberpunk 2077 will be back in the Playstation store tomorrow after a disastrous launch marred by bugs forced a 184-day time-out. But can a blockbuster game recover from the reputational hit of a failed roll-out? Sometimes, as other titles have shown, one can. "Redemption is possible," said Yohan Bensemhoun, game tester for jeuxvideo.com. "But it's risky. Fail twice and you're done."

CD Projekt's dark future roleplaying title had been hotly anticipated after the studio's work on the groundbreaking The Witcher III, but gamers were disappointed when the game first appeared and an online storm damaged confidence. Some games-even some studios-go under after such a botched start, but when the hopefully revamped Cyberpunk 2077 goes back on sale the developers will be hoping they emulate the revival of games like "No Man's Sky".

When that game came out in mid-2016, under the banner of UK studio Hello Games, the epic space explorer was billed as a revolution, set in an almost infinite universe featuring planets boasting unique ecosystems. "It's up there, yes, as one of the most exciting game I've ever awaited," said 31-year-old British gamer Matthew Winter. The resulting game, however, fell short as repetitive and bug-ridden. A social media furor erupted among the vocal gaming community. "I was very disappointed," admitted Winter. "I blame them for lying but I blame myself for allowing myself for being as hyped as I was." Many players demanded refunds, but five years later No Man's Sky has not only survived but after a series of free downloadable fixes and improve-

Sports

Rodriguez gives Argentina Copa edge in tense derby win over Uruguay

BRASILIA: Guido Rodriguez scored the only goal of the game as Argentina edged past fierce local rivals Uruguay in a disappointing Copa America clash on Friday. The victory sent Argentina joint top of Group A with Chile on four points while Uruguay remain without a point.

These two sides have played each other more times

Lautaro Martinez unable to turn in the rebound. Moments later, Cristian Romero rose highest in the area to meet a Rodrigo De Paul cross but Muslera made a comfortable save.

The pressure was relentless in the early stages and Argentina took a deserved lead on 13 minutes as Messi got to the byline and stood up a cross to the back post

rupted the flow of the game and chances were at a premium. Despite boasting Luis Suarez and Edinson Cavani up front, Uruguay struggled to create any chances of note.

When Matias Vina put in a devil of a ball across the six yard box, neither Suarez nor Cavani could get a touch to turn the ball in. Soon afterwards, Suarez went for the spectacular with a leaping bicycle kick but sent the ball high over the bar. Up the other end, Messi fired a free-kick from 20 yards straight into the wall as the game petered out into a scrappy affair.



Sergio Ramos

Ramos and Sevilla, a complex relationship unlikely to be revived

CAMAS: On the day of his tearful farewell to Real Madrid, Sergio Ramos said Sevilla is "the other club of my heart, the club of my life" while discarding the possibility of returning. Ramos bid an emotional farewell to Real on Thursday after failing to agree an extension to his contract. It marked the end of 16 years which brought 22 titles and the status of one of the club's greatest players. Before the glamour of the Santiago Bernabeu and the prestige of making his debut for Sevilla, Ramos started at his home-town side of Camas, just across the Guadalquivir river, on a pitch where now there is only dirt and wild flowers. "When he was three or four years old, he was already kicking balls out of the pitch," says the former Camas club president Juan Luis Angulo, whose cousin, Eloy Angulo, coached Ramos when he was six years old. Eloy still calls Ramos "my Sergio" and after training him at Camas, he continued to work with the talented youngster even after the player joined Sevilla's academy aged 12.

Mounds of mud

Eloy made Ramos run over mounds of mud "so that he would gain strength" and gave him exercises to improve his technique. "I forbid him from passing the ball long because that was where he could make mistakes," says Eloy, who at 65 is still coaching children. "I told him, 'you're young, play the safe pass so that you get picked every Sunday! When you're rich, you can play long passes.'"

Eloy was president of Camas during the nineties and in his living room at home, he still has a Ramos file from the 1995-96 season. He has only one regret, that he has lost contact with his former disciple as Ramos grew into a global superstar with more than 44 million followers on Instagram. Spain's former captain is rarely seen in his home town. If he returns it is more often to the horse farm that he owns nearby, in Bollullos de la Mitacion, where he likes to go with family and friends. None of his family remain in Camas either. When Ramos left for Madrid, most of them went with him, including his parents, Jose Maria and Paqui, and his brother Rene, who is also his agent. His sister Miriam left as well.

Ramos was handed his debut for the first team by Joaquin Caparros in 2004. Pablo Blanco, Sevilla's academy director, remembers the first time he saw Ramos play. "Sergio was blond, not very tall but strong and vivacious, with these very lively eyes," says Blanco. "We put on a trial match with other kids and we liked him a lot. Even then he had this personality and a lot of self-confidence." While in the changing room, Ramos was "talkative and cheerful", on the pitch he was serious, which immediately endeared him to Sevilla's coaches. "He wasn't shy and he came in believing in his own strength, in his own style," says Blanco.

'Why does he behave like that?'

In 2005, aged 19, with Sevilla struggling financially, Ramos was snapped up by Real Madrid for 27 million euros. It was an abrupt departure and while it never extinguished the admiration of Sevilla's coaches, it fuelled the "grumbles" of the fans at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan, when Ramos proceeded to celebrate Madrid goals against his former club.

"People said to themselves, 'we raised him here, he is from here, he is a Sevilla player, he is a friend of Jesus Navas, of Antonio Puerta, we took care of him when he was in the Spanish team. So why does he behave like that?'" Blanco says. Sevilla finished fourth in La Liga last season, with Diego Carlos and Jules Kounde, the 22-year-old Frenchman now tipped for stardom himself, forming an impressive partnership at the back. For Sevilla, there may be little need for Ramos, or his 12-million-euro salary. For a 35-year-old desperate to win trophies, Sevilla remain a level below Europe's elite. "As of today, I am not considering that option, and Sevilla the same, they're not considering it either," said Ramos. "It's a different moment now, for them and for me." —AFP

lowers on Instagram. He has branched out into different fields, including business, and also has an engineering degree from the prestigious Sharif University in Tehran.

Politically, he sometimes disagrees with the ruling government, in power since the Islamic revolution in 1979. A rare figure acting in civil society in Iran, he regularly takes a stand on major social and humanitarian issues.

In 2017, when aid from the authorities was slow to be provided, he launched a campaign to support the people in the western province of Kermanshah after an earthquake which killed more than 600 people.

But Daei has always said he would not enter politics. "My late father told me not to think about politics and never get involved personally," he told the Varzesh sports website last month. "I have never supported or will support any candidate in the Iranian presidential election."

Daei is now a successful businessman—he owns a sportswear company and is also the head of construction projects in northern Tehran. Maybe that is a field where he can still compete with Ronaldo, who promotes a hotel chain in his name, if the Portuguese takes his on-pitch record. —AFP



BRASILIA: Uruguay's Luis Suarez (right) is challenged by Argentina's Guido Rodriguez during their Conmebol Copa America 2021 football tournament group phase match at the Mane Garrincha Stadium in Brasilia, on Friday. — AFP

than any other local rivals and played the first ever international match to be held outside the United Kingdom. They have won the Copa 29 times between them but familiarity can breed caution and for much of the encounter they canceled each other out.

Six-time Ballon d'Or winner Lionel Messi had the first real chance, cutting in from the right onto his favored left foot to force a full stretch save from goalkeeper Fernando Muslera, who was relieved to see

where Rodriguez rose above his marker to head home off the far post.

Uruguay gradually stemmed the tide and started to get a foothold in the game, only to see Argentina counter at pace before Muslera parried a fierce Nahuel Molina drive at his near post. Despite enjoying the lion's share of possession, Uruguay were unable to test Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez.

A slew of early substitutions in the second half dis-

Lochte's Olympic career likely over after 200m medley defeat at trials

OMAHA: Ryan Lochte's bid to make a fifth Olympic team ended in an emotional 200m medley defeat at the US trials on Friday, almost certainly bringing down the curtain on the 36-year-old's Games career. "I still want to race," Lochte said. "As far as another Olympic trials, I don't know about that. I'll be 40 — that would be pushing it."

Lochte has won 12 medals, six of them gold, in four prior Olympics, making him the second-most decorated male swimmer in Olympic history after longtime teammate and rival Michael Phelps. He won silver in the 200m medley in London in 2012 and was fifth in 2016 in Rio, where his Games ended amid scandal after a drunken late-night episode after which he was found to have fabricated a story about a robbery.

Sponsors fled and Lochte was suspended for 10 months, a punishment that was followed by a 14-month ban for receiving a banned intravenous infusion of vitamins in May 2018. It was that year Lochte sought treatment for alcohol abuse, deciding that his life "needed a change."

"I think this is probably the most important swim meet that I ever had in my career," Lochte said. "I wanted to prove so much to everyone. I just want to make everyone happy, I guess, and prove to everyone I have changed. I'm a different person. My life has definitely changed."

Lochte, whose 200m medley record of 1:54.00 set at the 2011 World Championships still stands, clocked 1:59.67 on Friday to finish seventh in a race won by 22-year-old Michael Andrew in 1:55.44. As he climbed out of the pool a dejected Lochte was embraced by Andrew and runner-up Chase Kalisz.

Then there were hugs for Lochte's wife, Kayla, who was poolside with their four-year-old son Caiden and two-year-old daughter Liv. Phelps made his way down from the stands for another consolatory embrace. "Very emotional," Lochte said. "I was kind of taking it all in. I really wanted to be on that Olympic team."

Iran's 'King' Daei ready to be dethroned by Ronaldo

TEHRAN: Iranian football great Ali Daei is ready for Cristiano Ronaldo to break his all-time international goalscoring record, perhaps during Euro 2020. The 'Shariar' (King in Persian) scored a remarkable 109 goals in 149 appearances for Iran between 1993 and 2006, an achievement many thought would never be matched.

But Ronaldo is fast closing in, moving to 106 international goals from 176 games with his double in Portugal's 3-0 win over Hungary in Budapest on Tuesday. Daei has said on several occasions that he would be "delighted" if Ronaldo broke his record, as he believes the Juventus striker ranks among the best three players in history, alongside Lionel Messi and Diego Maradona.

"Records are made to be broken," Daei told Khobar Online news agency in 2018. "Ronaldo real-

Good heart

Sometimes a thorn in the side of authority, the fun-loving Lochte commanded a legion of fans attracted not only by his prowess in the pool but also by his forays into reality television. "Deep down he really has a good heart," backstroker Ryan Murphy said. "That's what I really appreciate about Lochte, he really does care about people. 'He's done so much for our sport and we will miss him on this team.'"

Andrew was grateful that Lochte, still hurting, found words of encouragement for him after the race. "I think what was amazing is after the end of the race, being able to embrace with Ryan and for him to tell me he's passing the torch to me, he's saying 'OK, you're the guy, go and do this, go and kick some butt.' It's a special moment that I will remember forever."

Lochte said those kinds of connections are what he values most in his career. "One thing about swimming that I love is you're a family. Anthony Ervin, Michael Phelps, Cullen Jones, all those guys, they're like my brothers. Being in a generation with them, in that era, means everything." Not that Lochte plans to go far from the sport, even when he does hang up his suit for good. "This is not the last you're going to see of me," he said. — AFP



OMAHA: Ryan Lochte speaks during a press conference during Day Six of the 2021 US Olympic Team Swimming Trials at CHI Health Center on Friday in Omaha, Nebraska. — AFP

ly has the qualities to do it. I have a lot of respect for him. He is such a great player that it isn't even necessary to sing his praises."

Ronaldo's record chase fascinates the Iranian press, with articles about him published every time the 36-year-old edges closer to Daei's tally. Daei was prolific against other Asian sides, netting five times in a 7-0 win over Sri Lanka in 1996 and scoring four goals in a game on four other occasions, including in a historic 17-0 World Cup qualifying victory over Guam. He was not just flat-track bully, though, setting up the winning goal, scored by Mehdi Mahdavi, in Iran's famous 2-1 victory over the United States at the 1998 World Cup.

Daei also captained his side at the 2006 World Cup before retiring from international football aged 37. He was the first Iranian to play in one of Europe's big leagues, in Germany, first with Arminia Bielefeld and then at Bayern Munich and Hertha Berlin. Having later turned to coaching, he became known for his outspokenness and spats with referees, opposing managers and club presidents.

Living legend

But the 52-year-old Daei remains a living legend in his home country, even boasting 6.7 million fol-

Malango could be Raja Casablanca's trump card

JOHANNESBURG: Prolific Raja Casablanca scorer Ben Malango looms as a huge threat to Pyramids when the clubs meet today in a CAF Confederation Cup semi-final first leg in Egypt. The Democratic Republic of Congo-born forward is in top form, bagging three of the five Raja goals in a quarter-finals demolition of South African side Orlando Pirates last month.

Pyramids know all about physically formidable Malango as he scored against them in Casablanca and Cairo when they met at the group stage, with Raja winning both matches convincingly. Here, AFP Sport looks ahead to the first legs with Coton Sport of Cameroon hosting JS Kabylie of Algeria in the other match.

Pyramids v Raja

Pyramids have played 12 matches in the African equivalent of the UEFA Europa League this season, winning nine, drawing one and losing 3-0 at home and 2-0 away to title favorites Raja. Apart from Malango, 2020 Confederation Cup runners-up Pyramids must contain Soufiane Rahimi if they hope to reach successive finals.

Rahimi was voted the outstanding footballer at the African Nations Championship for home-based players in Cameroon this year and has contributed four of the 19 Raja goals in 10 Confederation Cup matches.

The Moroccans are seeking an eighth CAF title and boast stars at both ends of the field with twice Nations Championship winner Anas Zniit among the outstanding goalkeepers in Africa. Pyramids will hope young forward Ibrahim Adel can replicate his form in the quarter-finals, where he scored three of the five goals that sank Nigerian club Enyimba.

Coton v Kabylie

Coton have moved their home match 640 kilometers (398 miles) southwest from Garoua to Yaounde because their ground lacks video assistant referee (VAR) facilities. The Cameroonians hope the change of venues brings a change of luck as they lost 2-1 to Kabylie in Garoua during the group stage having earlier fallen 1-0 in Algeria.

Coton played 14 times to reach the semi-finals and are the only title contenders not to have drawn, winning nine matches, losing five, scoring 19 goals and conceding nine. Central forward Lambert Araina leads the Confederation Cup Golden Boot race with six goals, but was unable to score in either match against the six-time CAF title winners from eastern Algeria.

The closest Coton have come to an African title is finishing runners-up in the 2003 CAF Cup and 2008 CAF Champions League while Kabylie last triumphed in 2002 when they won the CAF Cup for a third consecutive time. —AFP



England held by Scotland at Euro 2020 as Croatia face battle to qualify

LONDON: Lackluster England were denied an early ticket into the Euro 2020 last 16 on Friday as Scotland held their historic rivals to a goalless draw while World Cup finalists Croatia face an uphill task to progress.

England took on Scotland at Wembley for the 100th time in a competitive fixture but for just the second time

Southgate's side some scares as they sealed a deserved 0-0 draw. The home side started brightly, with John Stones hitting the post with a header, but lacked fluency and an attacking edge and captain Harry Kane was again peripheral.

"It was a frustrating night, we know we can play better," England boss Gareth Southgate told ITV. "Got to give Scotland credit, they defended valiantly and played

played when we had the ball and created a number of chances."

Earlier, Croatia picked up their first point with a 1-1 draw against the Czech Republic in Glasgow but captain Luka Modric was disappointed with his team's showing. Czech striker Patrik Schick's first-half penalty gave him the early lead in the race for the Golden Boot with his third goal of the tournament, but Ivan Perisic's excellent 47th-minute strike earned Croatia a draw.

However, the 2018 World Cup runners-up will have to beat Scotland on Tuesday and hope other results go their way if they are to reach the knockout rounds. "There is a bitter taste after this match, as we didn't win," said Modric. "We entered the match really disorganized. We looked better in the second half. We scored that goal and we could have scored even more, but unfortunately we didn't win. Now, we have to defeat Scotland to go through."

The Czechs and England, who meet on Tuesday, both have four points in Group D, with Scotland and Croatia on one apiece.

Eriksen discharged

Slovakia blew their chance to qualify for the last 16 with a match to spare after losing to Sweden in Saint Petersburg and conceding top spot in Group E to their opponents. The Swedes were heavily criticized for their ultra-defensive approach in their opening match, a goalless draw with Spain, but Janne Andersson's team were far more forward-looking on Friday.

Emil Forsberg's penalty 13 minutes from the end earned Sweden a win which gives them four points, one more than second-placed Slovakia. Spain sit third in the group with a single point ahead of their game against Poland in Seville on Saturday, boosted by the return of captain Sergio Busquets to Luis Enrique's squad after testing negative for COVID-19. Denmark's Eriksen was released from hospital following a "successful operation" nearly a week after suffering a cardiac arrest against Finland. Doctors said Thursday that Eriksen, 29, would have a heart defibrillator implanted to regulate his heart rhythm, casting doubt over whether he will be able to play again.

Wales' Ramsey a 'man for the big occasions' ahead of Italy return

BAKU: Wales midfielder Aaron Ramsey is used to performing in important fixtures for club and country. The Juventus playmaker has scored goals in crucial qualifying matches, claimed three assists at Euro 2016 and starred in three FA Cup final wins for former club Arsenal. Today, he heads to his adoptive Italy to face the Azzurri in Wales' final group game at Euro 2020.

The 30-year-old scored the opening goal in the midweek win over Turkey to put his country on the verge of reaching the last 16 for a second straight European Championship. He joined the record 36-time Italian champions two years ago but his time there so far has been littered with various injuries and he has only played 110 minutes for the Bianconeri since the end of March.

"I don't think that's a concern with Aaron," Wales midfielder Joe Allen said on Friday. "He's naturally incredibly fit. He works tirelessly off the pitch to keep himself in shape and I've never played with him and thought he looks anything other than fully fit and sharp and ready to go. As soon as he turned up here you could see it wasn't going to be a problem."

Ramsey underlined his ability as a box-to-box midfielder in the victory in Baku with a last-gasp 79th-minute challenge in his own box on Turkey's onrushing left-back Mert Muldur. "He showed that the other night with some of his touches, his movement and everything he did," Wales defender Connor Roberts said this week. "Towards the end of the game they attacked, and he made a tackle just behind me. I was thinking 'That's Aaron Ramsey — if he can do that, we all could show that.'" Ramsey came through Cardiff's academy and made his Wales bow a month before his 18th birthday. Gareth Bale set up Ramsey's goals in the Azeri capital after creating two other golden opportunities for the former Gunner. —AFP



Harry Kane

Kane's England place in question after Scotland flop

LONDON: Harry Kane's lackluster form at Euro 2020 has left Gareth Southgate facing a selection dilemma as England look to bounce back from their limp 0-0 draw against Scotland on Friday. Southgate's side missed a chance to book their place in the last 16 as they were frustrated by a determined Scotland side who could easily have beaten their old rivals for the first time since 1999.

England managed just one shot on target at Wembley and it was that lack of cutting edge which convinced Southgate to replace Kane with Marcus Rashford 15 minutes from full-time. The change made no difference as England were forced to settle for a point that stalled the momentum after a 1-0 against Croatia in their opening game on Sunday.

England can still qualify for the knockout stages if they avoid defeat in their last Group D match against the Czech Republic on Tuesday. But it is Kane's tepid contributions that will be giving Southgate cause for concern with England's goal of winning the tournament in mind.

Tottenham striker Kane went into the European Championship having just won the Premier League Golden Boot with 23 goals. But England's captain has been unable to replicate the prolific form that saw him finish as top scorer at the 2018 World Cup.

Kane has looked sluggish inside the penalty area and uninspired outside it. The creativity and predatory finishing that made him a transfer target for Premier League champions Manchester City have suddenly disappeared. Southgate conceded England's struggles against a well-drilled, combative Scotland team had forced him to look for an alternative to Kane, who only touched the ball once in the penalty area in the first half.

"We needed more runs in behind. I felt Marcus Rashford would give us that energy. At that point we had got to try and get the goal," Southgate said. "We have to make these decisions based on what we see. We're still working on those patterns. We're playing a high level of games under the intensity and to find space tonight was difficult. Scotland played well and we weren't able to open them up."

'Make the right decisions'

Isolated by Scotland's clever game-plan, Kane received minimal support from Raheem Sterling, Phil Foden and Mason Mount. Jack Grealish's introduction off the bench gave England more energy and Kane would surely relish the chance to feed off the Aston Villa playmaker. "I think the whole team, we have got to look at the whole performance and our use of the ball and review where we can be better," Southgate said when asked about Kane. "That's right across the board, so it's not just about one person. Scotland, I thought, marked him extremely well."

Whether the England manager will opt to replace Kane with Rashford or Everton's Dominic Calvert-Lewin for the crucial Czech clash is another matter entirely. Dropping a player with 34 England goals would be a hugely brave call. Asked if he would make changes for the Czech game, Southgate said: "We will see how everyone is, prepare for a different type of opponent and make the right decisions." Kane had also been hauled off in the final minutes against Croatia after failing to trouble the visitors. The 27-year-old took his second successive substitution on the chin, saying: "It's part of the game. The manager felt that was the right decision so you just have to take it. It is what it is. It was a tough game. Scotland defended really well. We know no game is going to be easy it's a European Championship and Scotland are playing for their lives." —AFP



LONDON: England's defender John Stones heads the ball during the UEFA EURO 2020 Group D football match between England and Scotland at Wembley Stadium in London on Friday. — AFP

at a major tournament, 25 years after they met at Euro 96. Despite having just 2,500 tickets in the crowd of 22,500 limited by coronavirus restrictions, Scottish fans made their presence felt in a sizzling atmosphere in the pouring rain.

England, who beat Croatia 1-0 in their opening match of the tournament, knew victory against their fierce foes would seal their progress with a match to spare. But Scotland dug deep and gave Gareth

well. "We didn't do enough to win the game but after that the thing we have to worry about in tournament football is we had to make sure we didn't lose it."

Scotland manager Steve Clarke said his team had been "unfairly criticized" after their 2-0 defeat against the Czech Republic on Monday. "We had chances to win, England had moments as well," he said. "Looking at this you wouldn't have known which is the favorite, which is a credit to us. The most pleasing thing was we

'Expectations sky high'

Expectations soared after he scored the winner against Juventus in October 2016. But after three years and just one more goal, Milan lost faith in their protege and eventually sold him to Sassuolo for 14 million euros.

"Expectations were sky-high, I wasn't even ready," recalled Locatelli. "It was devastating when I learned that I was no longer part of the project, no longer important to the team. But in the end this helped me. I needed to change too."



ROME: Manuel Locatelli (front) celebrates with Lorenzo Insigne after he scored Italy's first goal during the UEFA EURO 2020 Group A match vs Switzerland at the Olympic Stadium in Rome on June 16, 2021. — AFP

His dreams of emulating Andrea Pirlo would now be played out away from the bright lights of the San Siro in Emilia-Romagna where he flourished under Roberto De Zerbi. "De Zerbi changed my life, thanks to him I got rid of the unfinished label."

Legendary Milan coach Arrigo Sacchi estimates "it took Locatelli two years to recover his modesty after the good goal against Juve on his debut in Milan". In three seasons with Sassuolo he has scored seven goals in 99 games, and was a vital part of the team that pushed for European football last season. His club form has been transferred to the national set-up where he has played 12 times, scoring his first goal against Bulgaria in March, with his double against Switzerland ensuring he can no longer be considered as a simple replacement. —AFP

'Unfinished' Locatelli comes of age for Italy at Euro 2020

ROME: Italy midfielder Manuel Locatelli started Euro 2020 as a replacement for injured Marco Verratti but the once-promising youngster who fell out of favor with former club AC Milan has finally come of age. The 23-year-old's impressive brace in a 3-0 win over Switzerland midweek helped the Azzurri book their last-16 berth with a game to spare.

It gives coach Roberto Mancini a welcome selection headache with Verratti targeting a return from a knee injury for the final Group A game against Wales today. The coach could be reluctant to make adjustments to a well-tuned engine that has scored six goals in two games and conceded none.

For Sassuolo's Locatelli the postponed tournament has proven to be a welcome delay. "Locatelli has grown a lot," said Mancini, who called up the player for the first time last September. "We think he's a great player and can improve. He's a playmaker, he's physical, has technical qualities, he has everything."

"For a midfielder two goals are never a given," added the coach after Wednesday's game in Rome. Those goals have catapulted Locatelli back into the limelight, attracting interest from Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri who reportedly wants the 40-million-euro (\$47 million) rated player for his new midfield.

Known as 'Loca', the player from Lake Como in northern Italy, started his career in Atalanta's academy, among a crop of talented youngsters who would later form the backbone of Gian Piero Gasperini's successful side. Locatelli left Bergamo for AC Milan aged 11, progressing through the youth categories to sign a professional contract in 2015, making his first-team debut around the same time as goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Yusufi** have changed my name to Yusuf Ali Amjerawala s/o Tayeb Ali and now I would be known as Yusuf Ali Amjerawala s/o Tayeb Ali. Address: 251, Masakin Saifiya, Bijalpur, Indore, M.P (India). (C 0608) 18-6-2021

I, **Sahul** Mohamed Jabar Shadiq, S/o, Mohamed Hanif, born on 05.03.1959, (Native Place: Pallapatti, Karur District), residing at No. 111/1E, Dindigul Road,

Pallapatti, Pallapatti Bazaar & Post, Aravakurichi Taluk, Karur District - 639 207, shall henceforth be known as Mohamed Hanif Jabar Shadiq. (C 0606) 17-6-2021


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NOTICE
June 13, 2021

Mr. Adil Abdul Kalam Nagdade, son of Mr. Nagdade Abdul Kalam Mohiddin, resident of Pariwar Apt. Flat No 14, Gowalkot Road Tai Chiplun, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra-415605 and Ms. Saadiya Akber Kazi, daughter of Mr. Akber Dawood Kazi, resident of Kalina Vihar Darshan Vivek Apt, Wing F 2nd Flr Flat 217, Cst Rd Santacruz E, Mumbai, Maharashtra- 400098 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) First Secretary (CA) and Marriage Officer, Embassy of India, Kuwait

Griezmann rescues draw for France

BUDAPEST: Antoine Griezmann salvaged a 1-1 draw for France against Hungary in Budapest as the world champions missed the chance to clinch a place in the Euro 2020 last 16 yesterday. Hungary threatened to blow Group F wide open when Attila Fiola gave the hosts a shock lead in first-half stoppage time after catching out the France defence.

But Griezmann, the Golden Boot winner at Euro 2016, equalized on 66 minutes as an unconvincing France avoided a first competitive defeat since June 2019. Didier Deschamps' side top the section with four points, one above reigning champions Portugal who play Germany in Munich later. Hungary earned their first point and the Germans are bottom after losing to France in their opener.

France stay in Budapest for their final game against Portugal, while Hungary travel to Munich to take on Germany, still hoping to qualify for the knockout phase for a second straight tournament. Contending with stifling temperatures in excess of 30 degrees Celsius and a crowd approaching 60,000 at the Puskas Arena, the only Euro 2020 venue without capacity restrictions due to COVID-19, France controlled much of the first half.

Having lived up to their billing as tournament favorites in a 1-0 win over Germany, France dominated Hungary early on, creating numerous chances against a side that held out for 84 minutes before losing 3-0 to Portugal. Peter Gulacsi clawed away Karim Benzema's low drive, reacting sharply to keep out Griezmann's follow-up, despite the Barcelona star being flagged for offside.

Lucas Digne, brought into the side for Lucas Hernandez as the only change made by France coach Deschamps, then picked out an unmarked Kylian Mbappe whose glancing header flashed narrowly wide. Hungary lost captain Adam Szalai to injury

midway through the first half, and the hosts were living dangerously as Benzema sliced badly from a superb flick by Mbappe before the Paris Saint-Germain forward dragged wide himself.

France captain Hugo Lloris had warned of over confidence against a team expected to finish bottom of the group, and Les Bleus were punished for a brief lapse just before half-time. Fiola collected Adam Nagy's crossfield ball and played a one-two with Roland Sallai, outpacing Benjamin Pavard and holding off Raphael Varane to side-foot beyond Lloris at his near post.

Deschamps had waited until the 89th minute before making a substitute in the opener against Germany, but the introduction of Ousmane Dembele for Adrien Rabiot on the hour nearly brought an immediate equalizer as the Barcelona forward rattled the post. France pulled level when a long kick upfield by Lloris sailed over the head of Nagy, with Mbappe latching onto it ahead of Hungary's Paris-born Loic Nego.

His ball across goal was deflected into Griezmann's path by Willi Orban, allowing the forward to slam in his seventh European Championship goal. Gulacsi produced a fine save to turn away a fierce shot from Mbappe as France pressed for a victory that would have sent them through to the knockout phase. Instead, they must wait until Wednesday's clash with Portugal.

Turkey 'need a miracle'

Meanwhile, Turkey coach Senol Gunes said yesterday his side will need a "miracle" to reach the Euro 2020 last 16 ahead of their final group game against Switzerland. Turkey sit bottom of Group A, without a point or a goal after defeats by Italy in Rome and Wales in Baku. They face Switzerland today in the Azeri capital knowing they need to win to keep their



BUDAPEST: France's midfielder Paul Pogba and Hungary's midfielder Laszlo Kleinheisler vie during the UEFA Euro 2020 Group F match at Puskas Arena yesterday. — AFP

slim chances of booking a place in the knockout stage alive.

"We are in a situation where we need a miracle to happen," Gunes said. "It will be very sad to go home from this tournament without any success. After the first game against Italy it felt like it was the end of the world." Centre-back Caglar Soyuncu said the most disappointing aspect of the opening losses, a second straight European Championship where Turkey have started

with two defeats, was the defense. "I'm sorry for the result. We want to close the chapter with three points," he said. "We are all sad, tomorrow is a completely new game. We are really sad to have conceded five goals in two games."

Gunes took over in March 2019 and oversaw victories over World Cup holders France and Euro 2016 quarter-finalists Iceland during the qualifying campaign, losing just once. The 69-year-old said he is

likely to make alterations to his starting line-up from Wednesday's loss to Wales in Azerbaijan.

Left-back Umut Meras will miss the match with Switzerland and could be replaced by Sassuolo's Mert Muldur. The likes of AC Milan's Hakan Calhanoglu and Fenerbahce's Ozan Tufan could lose their spots in the team. "There can be changes. We are below our standard. We still have expectations," he said. — AFP



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