



5 Hunt for Florida collapse survivors; 159 still missing



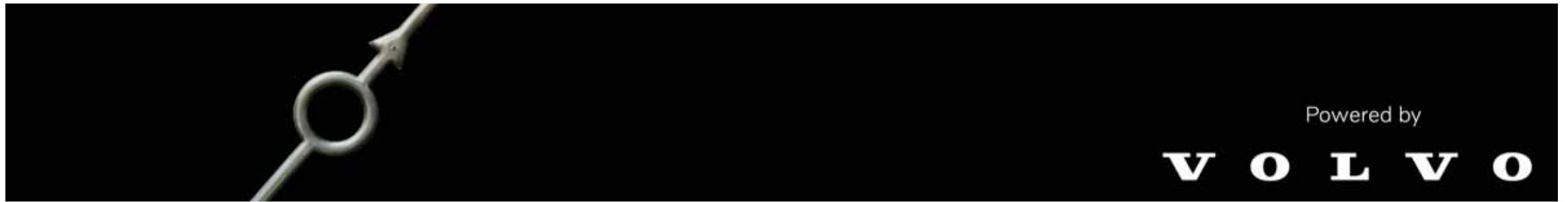
7 Afghan leader meets Biden as US exit looms



12 Hong Kong artists revive city's bygone era with miniatures



15 Ronaldo makes Portugal believe again before Belgium



Fledgling UAE rail network step towards bridging Gulf

Rail project envisions bigger goals of regional integration



A picture taken on April 1, 2021 shows an employee standing near a train of the Etihad Rail network, in Al-Mirfa, in the UAE. — AFP

ABU DHABI: In the desert emirate of Abu Dhabi, Ibrahim Al-Hammadi inspects a freight train on the UAE's first railway line. He climbs aboard the locomotive, does a final systems check and then it's full steam ahead.

Hammadi is the first Emirati to become a train driver-in a country which already has a space program and two of the world's biggest airlines, but is only now developing a rail network to connect all seven of its emirates. "I was intrigued when I saw the train operating," the 23-year-old told AFP. "It was something new, and it pushed me to ask around about learning how to drive it."

The United Arab Emirates is well known for its audacious infrastructure and technology projects. It successfully sent a probe to Mars earlier this year, and the world's first superfast hyperloop system is planned to link its two main cities, Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

When completed, Etihad Rail will operate 1,200 kilometers (750 miles) of track connecting all of the emirates—from Ghweifat in the western region of Abu Dhabi to the emirate of Fujairah on the eastern coast—and link with neighboring Saudi Arabia.

The long-term plan is to be part of a wider railway network that would connect all six Gulf Cooperation Council countries, including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar as well as the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

A spirit of competition between the emirates, which each have their own specialties and areas of

interest, is credited with holding back the national rail project. "There has been some hesitance from the federal government to spend on national economic integration projects... along with traditional issues on emirate-level sovereignty," Karen Young, senior fellow at the Middle East Institute, told AFP.

"The UAE is a federal system and its centralization of authority and economic and development policy within (the federal capital) Abu Dhabi are still relatively new."

And so far there has been little progress on the multi-billion-dollar GCC railway, which has languished after a feasibility study was approved by the six countries back in 2004. "The rail projects within the GCC have been in a planning process for years, part of bigger goals of trade and economic integration within the regional organization of the Arabian peninsula," Young said.

"That integration has faced a number of obstacles, from a shared currency policy that is now moot, to the dispute with Qatar which severed basic investor rights, citizen travel and trade."

That dispute, which lasted for more than three years before being resolved in January, saw Saudi Arabia and its allies, including the UAE, sever ties with Qatar in June 2017.

Hammadi works on Etihad Rail's first section of line, which covers 264 kilometers and has been operational since 2016. He drives trains transporting

Continued on Page 2

Delta variant forces new lockdowns

SAINT PETERSBURG, Russia: Australia's largest city Sydney entered a two-week lockdown yesterday to contain a sudden coronavirus surge and Russia's Saint Petersburg announced a record death toll, as several European nations lifted restrictions despite the global spread of a highly contagious COVID-19 variant.

While vaccination drives have brought down infections in numerous-wealthy-countries, the rise of the Delta variant, which first emerged in India, has stoked fears of new waves of a virus that has already killed nearly four million people. Bangladesh announced that it would impose a new national lockdown from Monday over the variant, with offices shut for a week and only medical-related transport allowed. Sydney's normally bustling harborside center was nearly deserted after people were ordered to stay home except for essential trips.

New Zealand, citing "multiple outbreaks" in Australia, announced a three-day suspension of its quarantine-free travel arrangement with its larger neighbor. COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins said the suspension would give officials time to consider measures "to make the bubble safer, such as pre-departure testing for all flights" between the two countries. Sydney's new restrictions apply to some five million people, along with hundreds of thousands of others living in nearby towns.

Many are reeling from the shock of the sudden outbreak, in a city that had returned to relative normality after months with very few cases. "We've been struggling to get back from the lockdowns of last year," said Chris Kriketos, 32, who works at a bakery in central Sydney.

"Today just feels like another kick while you're slowly getting up." Globally, the pandemic is still slowing down, with the World Health Organization (WHO) reporting the lowest number of new cases worldwide since February and decreasing deaths attributed to COVID-19.

Continued on Page 2

Ex-cop Chauvin sentenced to over 22 years

MINNEAPOLIS, United States: Former policeman Derek Chauvin was sentenced to 22 and a half years in prison on Friday for the murder of African American George Floyd, the killing that sparked America's biggest demonstrations for racial justice in decades. The white, 45-year-old Chauvin gave his "condolences" to the Floyd family in a Minneapolis court, without apologizing, before Judge Peter Cahill handed down a lesser sentence than the 30 years the prosecution had sought.

"This (jail term) is based on your

abuse of a position of trust and authority and also the particular cruelty shown to George Floyd," Cahill told Chauvin, who listened impassively. The decision was read out at the end of a tense hearing in which the court watched a recorded message by Floyd's seven-year-old daughter and heard from Chauvin's mother.

The Floyd family's lawyer called the sentencing a "historic" step towards racial reconciliation in the United States. "(It) brings the Floyd family and our nation one step closer to healing by delivering closure and accountability," Ben Crump tweeted.

President Joe Biden said: "I don't know all the circumstances that were considered but it seems to me, under the guidelines, that seems to be appropriate." After the sentence was announced, chanting marchers with

Continued on Page 2



MINNEAPOLIS: Nekima Levy Armstrong, local civil rights lawyer and activist flanked by members of the George Floyd family, Al Sharpton, the founder and president of National Action Network, and Floyd family attorney Ben Crump (right) following the sentencing of Chauvin Friday. — AFP

Drones hit Arbil near US consulate

ARBIL, Iraq: Three explosives-laden drones hit near the northern Iraqi city of Arbil, where the United States has a consulate, Iraqi Kurdish officials said yesterday. The attack came as the Hashed Al-Shaabi, a pro-Iran paramilitary alliance opposed to the US presence in Iraq, held a military parade near Baghdad attended by senior officials.

The drone attack occurred overnight, the anti-terrorist unit in Kurdistan said, with two striking a house and causing damage while the payload on the third did not explode. The US consulate condemned the assault in a tweet, saying "this attack represents a clear violation of Iraqi sovereignty". US interests in Iraq have come under repeated attack in recent months but the use of drones is a relatively new tactic.

The United States consistently blames Iran-linked Iraqi factions for rocket and other attacks against Iraqi installations housing its personnel. Since the start of the year there have been 43 attacks against US interests in Iraq, where 2,500 American troops are deployed as part of an international coalition to fight the jihadist Islamic State group.



KHALES, Iraq: The Iranian-backed Hashed Al-Shaabi paramilitary forces taking part in a parade to celebrate the 7th anniversary of their founding at Camp Ashraf in Khalis, in the Diyala province, yesterday. — AFP

The vast majority have been bombs against logistics convoys, while 14 were rocket attacks, some of them claimed by pro-Iran factions that aim to pressure Washington into withdrawing all their troops. In April, a drone packed with explosives hit the coalition's Iraqi headquarters in the military part of the airport in Arbil, the Iraqi Kurdish regional capital. The tactic poses a headache for the coalition, as drones can evade air defenses.

Continued on Page 2

Jihadist motive not ruled out in German attack

WUERZBURG, Germany: Investigators said yesterday they were examining if radicalization or psychiatric problems drove a 24-year-old man to go on a knife rampage in the German city of Wuerzburg, stabbing three women to death and leaving six other people seriously injured.

The suspect, a Somali who arrived in Germany in 2015, struck in the city center on Friday evening, first at a household goods store before moving on to a bank. He was then overpowered by police after they shot him in the thigh.

Investigators found records showing that the man had been treated at a psychiatric institution, and police said he was previously not a known Islamist. Bavaria interior minister Joachim Herrmann said police were still combing through the evidence including two mobile phones.

But he stressed that "the indications of a possible radical Islamist mindset and the indications of a

Continued on Page 2

Local

Factuality, activeness and emotionality between the memory of the poet and the sailor's memoirs

A study of the pearls paradox between two poets' works

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: 'The Pearl Mirrors' book joins many other publications, though with a different taste, in analyzing the poetry experience of Dr Suad Al-Sabah. The book - titled 'The Pearl Mirrors in Kuwait's Poetry between Mohammad Al-Fayez and Suad Al-Sabah' - that was issued by Dar Suad Al-Sabah for Publishing and Distribution recently, uses a different tone of critique as it adopts the method of studying phenomena that was represented by the word 'pearl' in Suad Al-Sabah's and Mohammad Al-Fayez's poetry, through tracing the relationship between the signifier and the significance in a way that surpasses unilateralism especially when it is built in various contexts and heterogeneous formats.

The book's author Mohammad Mustafa Khamees starts with the introduction of the word 'pearl' and how it is used by two pioneers of Kuwait poetry: Mohammad Al-Fayez and Suad Al-Sabah, especially in terms of the symbolism it carries as something more valuable than the main goal of the ancestors' historical pearl diving journeys. Khamees explains in the introduction of his book his adoption of integration as a method for his study in order to benefit from many approaches such as the structural, psy-

chological and social methods as well as the reception theory as a reference.

After giving general glimpses about the linguistic and poetic symbolisms for the word 'pearl', he designates the first chapter of the book for the induction of 'The Pearl Mirrors in the Poetry of Mohammad Al-Fayez'. He points to what he describes as the 'pearl complex' as reflected in Fayez's 'A Sailor's Memoirs' poem, as it becomes clear the pearl represented a source of hardship more than a source of happiness and income. The term 'pearl' in this poem became synonymous to poverty and its repercussions, and it was also linked to the impoverished classes whose efforts are lost in achieving the rich class's happiness.

The author highlights the symptoms of what he describes as the 'pearl complex', showcased through the continuous struggle between its ownership and its loss, and represents it as a subjective equivalent of the peak for man while it represents the equivalent of beauty and femininity for woman. Furthermore, it represents the sacrifice for the luxury of beauties, and the class disparity between a merchant and a diver. Then the pearl is portrayed as an equivalent of the full moon that carries the message of change and the sentimental paradox between the images of pearl and sand.

Meanwhile, the author in the second chapter which he built around the images of pearl mirrors in Suad Al-Sabah poetry, stresses that Suad Al-Sabah presents the pearl image in clarity that is not found in other Kuwaiti poems' works, because it represents the main reason for the beauty of that era, including the sacrifices of the family and loved one, as well as elevating the woman's value and the instilment of the noble traditions and the rosy dreams of men.

The author explains the pearl's features in Suad Al-Sabah's 'the Era of Pearls' poem through its interconnection with the text ingredients in the indicative structure in a way that pays attention to the context of address and conditions of its production. The text shows that the poet sees pearls as and equivalent of the beautiful and the past dream era, compared with oil as an equivalent of the fake current era. The poem portrays oil as a force that blinds people to the point where they see its blackness shining brighter and more beautifully than pearls.

The author in his analysis reaches the conclusion that the poet yearns to the beautiful past, and that is why she expresses utter longing to it, and sadness for leaving it behind, and that her clinging to the image of pearls is a form of expressing that longing and sadness. The pearl in her texts does not stop at



KUWAIT: The cover of 'The Pearl Mirrors' book by author Mohammad Mustafa Khamees.

its literal indication which means the expensive jewels that the ancestors used to extract from the heart of oysters, rather it is the beautiful past, the past of our ancestors and values.

Fledgling UAE rail network step...

Continued from Page 1

granulated sulfur from Abu Dhabi's inland fields in Shah and Habshan to the port of Ruwais. Freight is currently the line's main focus but as it is extended through the mountains between the emirates of Dubai and Fujairah, the line is also set to offer passenger services that will run at speeds of up to 200 kph (125 mph).

That will provide an alternative to the UAE's network of mega-highways, some more than a dozen lanes wide, which carry endless streams of motorists in a car-dependent nation, as they zip through canyons of skyscrapers or rocky mountains, and towering dunes.

The UAE hopes the rail network's supply chain will help diversify its oil-dependent economy. "Railways have always been a vital component in the economic, social and strategic growth of countries around the world," Hammadi said. "It devel-

oped the infrastructure in the western region (of the UAE), increased security and safety on the roads and lessened congestion. "The Etihad Rail project will connect the country's key centers of trade, industry and population."

For the project's first stage, Etihad Rail operates seven locomotives and 240 freight wagons, with each locomotive hauling up to 110 wagons as it crosses the country's vast desert. In the Abu Dhabi control room, Maitha Al-Remeithi, the first female Emirati train controller, walks from one section to another monitoring the dozens of screens in the room. For Remeithi—who started working with Etihad Rail in 2017 — it was her passion for something "unique, exciting and new" that drove her towards the rail industry. "The railway is growing every day, and as I am involved in the daily running of the operation, I can see its positive impact within the transport sector from safety, environmental and logistics perspectives," the 30-year-old said. — AFP Etihad Rail says that one full freight train can replace 300 trucks, and cut CO2 emissions by 70-80 percent. "Using rail as a mode of transport means fewer trucks on the roads; the need for road maintenance is less and CO2 emissions are less," Remeithi said. — AFP

Iraqi authorities released Hashed commander Qassem Muslah. Muslah had been arrested on May 26 by police intelligence on suspicion of ordering the killing of Ihab al-Wazni, a pro-democracy activist shot dead earlier that month by unidentified gunmen on motorbikes. Yesterday, the Hashed, which analysts say has become the predominant force in Iraqi politics, held a military parade in Diyala province bordering Baghdad.

It was marking the seventh anniversary of the group which in 2014 to battle the IS jihadist group that had seized almost one third of Iraq in a lightning offensive. At the parade, Hashed displayed various weapons including rocket launchers mounted on vehicles, according to footage broadcast on Iraqi state television, to an audience comprising Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhemi. — AFP

end to racism and police brutality. It took weeks for the mass demonstrations to taper off, but the debate around the pressing social issues remains vivid in the United States, where Biden has been slow to come up with the police reforms he promised during his campaign. Minnesota law provides for a minimum sentence of 12.5 years but Floyd's brother, Terrence Floyd, his voice choking, told the court Cahill should hand Chauvin the stiffest term possible.

"Why? What were you thinking? What was going through your head when you had your knee on my brother's neck?" demanded Floyd, urging Chauvin to explain the reason for the murder. Cahill said his sentence was "not based on emotion or sympathy," but the law, and in a 22-page sentencing memorandum identified aggravating circumstances that brought a heavier punishment.

They included that Chauvin's offense occurred in front of minors and that he "committed the crime as a group with the active participation of at least three other" officers.

Chauvin's trial was closely followed across the country. His lawyer said Chauvin had followed police procedures in force at the time and that Floyd's death was due to health problems exacerbated by drug use. The jurors took less than 10 hours to convict. Their decision was greeted with a huge sigh of relief across the country. Many had feared an acquittal would lead to worse unrest, while others worried that once again a white police officer would get away with what they saw as murder.

With good behavior, Chauvin could serve just two-thirds of any prison sentence, with the remaining third on supervised release. The defense will appeal the verdict, Nelson has said, citing doubts over the impartiality of some jurors. On the eve of sentencing, the judge denied the defense's request for a new trial. Neither will the case end with Chauvin: his three former colleagues will face trial in March 2022 on charges of complicity in homicide.

In parallel, the four men also face federal charges of violating Floyd's constitutional rights. No date has yet been set for that trial. — AFP

Slovak Ambassador visits social care homes



KUWAIT: Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Kuwait Igor Hajdusek (third left) and his spouse (second left) pose for a group picture during the visit.

KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Muslim Al-Subaie received Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Kuwait Igor Hajdusek and his spouse, during the ambassador's visit to the complex of the social care

homes, where the two sides exchanged the experiences of the two countries in the field of childhood and social care. The guests were briefed on the services provided to the residents of social care homes for children.

Drones hit Arbil near US consulate...

Continued from Page 1

In May a drone packed with explosives hit the Ain Al-Asad air base housing US troops.

On June 9 three explosives-laden drones targeted Baghdad airport, where US soldiers are also deployed. One was intercepted by the Iraqi army. Earlier that day five rockets were fired at Balad air base, where American contractors are based, causing no casualties or damage.

The attacks on the airport and Balad came as

Ex-cop Chauvin sentenced to...

Continued from Page 1

megaphones and motorcycle escorts took over some of the city's busiest blocks during rush hour. No serious incidents were reported as they wound their way through stopped traffic.

The sentencing was long awaited in Minnesota, with hundreds of people gathering near the courthouse into the evening. Many said Chauvin should have gotten 30 or 40 years. Chauvin, who has been behind bars since being convicted on three counts of murder and manslaughter two months ago, wore a light gray suit as he learnt his fate following a trial that captivated the world. He spoke briefly, after declining to testify during his six-week trial. "I do want to give my condolences to the Floyd family," Chauvin said after removing his face mask. "At this time due to some additional legal matters at hand, I'm not able to give a full formal statement at this time." "There's going to be some other information in the future that would be of interest and I hope things will give you some peace of mind," he added. Earlier, the court watched a moving video from the late Floyd's daughter, Gianna Floyd. "I miss you and I love you," the girl said when asked in the recorded message what she said would say to her father today.

Chauvin and three colleagues arrested Floyd, 46, in May 2020 on suspicion of having passed a fake \$20 bill in a store in Minneapolis, a northern city of around 420,000. They handcuffed him and pinned him to the ground in the street. Chauvin then knelt on the back of Floyd's neck for nearly 10 minutes, indifferent to the dying man's groans and to the pleas of distraught passers-by.

The scene, filmed and uploaded by a young woman, quickly went viral. After weeks of home confinement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, hundreds of thousands of people poured onto streets across the country and overseas, to demand an

Jihadist motive not ruled out in...

Continued from Page 1

possible psychiatric issue of the perpetrator do not exclude each other".

Chancellor Angela Merkel said "what is certain is that the horrific act is directed at all humanity and every religion", her spokesman Steffen Seibert tweeted. But the far-right AfD party immediately seized on the violence that has erupted just three months before general elections.

The anti-immigration party's co-leader Joerg Meuthen lamented the latest "Islamist knife murders in the middle of Germany," adding that it was a "tragedy for the victims, who have my sympathy and another manifestation of Merkel's failed migration policy". Police said they could not confirm the reports. If confirmed as an Islamist act, the case risks reopening a bitter debate in Germany over immigration—a topic that has taken a backseat so far in this year's election campaign, compared to the last polls in 2017 when the AfD won seats in parliament for the first time.

In the Bavarian city, residents placed flowers and candles at the scene. "I'm extremely sad and shocked and that's why I'm here. I find that's the least one can do—show sympathy," said Wuerzburg resident Franziska, who brought candles with a friend.

Delta variant forces new...

Continued from Page 1

But concerns over the Delta variant have prompted new restrictions in countries that had previously managed to bring the virus under control. "There is currently a lot of concern about the Delta variant," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a Friday press conference.

"Delta is the most transmissible of the variants identified so far, has been identified in at least 85 countries and is spreading rapidly among unvaccinated populations."

Russia's Euro 2020 host Saint Petersburg yesterday reported the country's highest daily COVID-19 death toll for a city since the start of the pandemic. Official figures said the city, which has already hosted six Euro 2020 matches and is due to host a quarter-final next Friday, recorded 107 virus deaths over the last 24 hours.

Russia has seen an explosion of new cases since mid-June, driven by the Delta variant, which has now spread to Europe. Spain nonetheless brought an end to mandatory outdoor mask-wearing yester-

President Frank-Walter Steinmeier voiced shock at the "extreme brutality" of the crime, saying that the country was in mourning with the relatives of the victims. One of the six seriously hurt was still in a critical condition, police said.

Investigators piecing together the attack said the suspect had gone into the household goods store where he approached a saleswoman to ask where he could find knives. After he took hold of a knife, he turned back to the saleswoman and stabbed her "many times", killing her, said police chief for the Unterfranken region Gerhard Kallert.

He then fatally stabbed two other women before leaving the store. Video footage circulating online showed passers-by, some armed with folded chairs, trying to stop the suspect. A crowd of people gave chase before a police car arrived on the scene, one video showed.

While the perpetrator's motive remains unclear, Germany has been on high alert after several Islamist attacks. Wuerzburg was itself hit five years ago by an axe-wielding man who seriously wounded four people on a train. The suspect, an Afghan, sought to attack a passer-by before being shot dead by police. The attack was claimed by the IS group. In Germany's deadliest Islamist attack, a Tunisian jihadist rammed a truck into a Berlin Christmas market in December 2016, killing 12 people. The number of Islamists considered dangerous in Germany stands at 615 at the last count, compared with 730 in January 2018. — AFP

day, a year after the rule was first introduced during Europe's devastating first wave of the virus.

The decision came despite the announcement of a major coronavirus cluster in Madrid, traced to a student trip to the holiday island Mallorca, with more than 2,000 people ordered to self-isolate.

The Netherlands also ended its rules on outdoor mask-wearing, while easing restrictions on indoor dining and reopening nightclubs to people who have tested negative. And Switzerland scrapped most of its remaining coronavirus restrictions yesterday, after Health Minister Alain Berset said this week that the country's use of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines gave adequate protection against the Delta variant.

But Delta is so contagious that experts say more than 80 percent of a population would need to be jabbed in order to contain it—a challenging target even for nations with significant vaccination programs. While several studies have shown that vaccines are slightly less effective against Delta, they are still highly effective—but only after the second dose. Infections are also surging at an alarming rate in at least 12 countries in Africa, with the Delta variant fuelling unprecedented hospitalizations, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has warned. According to the WHO, only one percent of Africans are fully vaccinated—the lowest ratio globally. — AFP

Local

Kuwait's daily virus cases, deaths drop slightly after two-day jump

WHO hails safety standards of COVID-19 vaccine centers

KUWAIT: Kuwait's daily coronavirus cases jumped by 1,661 to 349,923 as deaths rose by six to 1,919, the Ministry of Health said yesterday. Meanwhile, the ministry announced that 1,689 people were cured of the virus during the same period, raising the total of those to have overcome the disease to 329,423. Kuwait had reported 1,702 new cases, 10 deaths and 1,632 on Friday, while Thursday's figures were reported at 1,761 new cases, nine deaths and 1,524 recoveries. All deaths reported in the past three days were for people who have not received vaccines against COVID-19, save for a single case of a fully vaccinated patient in his 80s who was already suffering from a kidney disease, the health ministry explained.

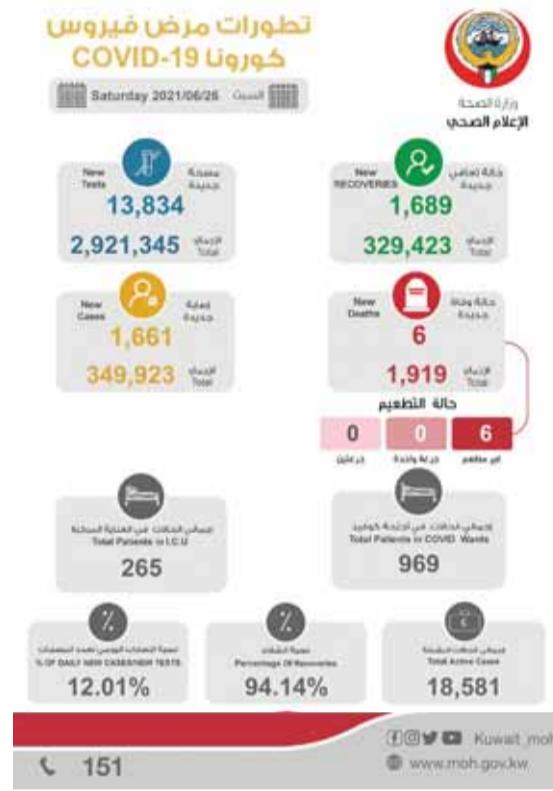
The number of people hospitalized with the virus stood at 18,581, with 265 of them in intensive care units, down from 18,615 and 271 respectively a day before, while Thursday's patients were at 18,555 and 267 respectively. Of the new cases announced yesterday, 32 percent were recorded in the Ahmadi governorate, while 25 percent were recorded in Hawally, 21 percent in Farwaniya, 14 percent in Jahra and eight percent in the Capital. Health ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad urged the public to abide by health precautions, mainly following social distancing in order to help limit the spread of the virus.

Safety standards

Separately, the World Health Organization (WHO) commended the Kuwaiti government's COVID-19 vaccination arrangements as operating under the 'highest safety standards.' "I am genuinely impressed with the efficient organization of the vaccination centers and commitment of the staff," WHO representative in Kuwait Dr Assad Hafeez said during a visit to two such facilities, accompanied by another two regional WHO officials.

"I am thankful for their help in vaccination while applying the highest level of professionalism to ensure the safety and efficacy of vaccines," added Dr Hafeez in a statement by WHO. The WHO representative's visits extended to the Kuwait Vaccination Center in Mishref, which has been offering free vaccinations to citizens and residents alike since December 2020, alongside the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway drive-in center, introduced in May, this year.

Both makeshift centers have the capacity to inoculate a combined number of over 30,000 people a day, operating under government COVID-19 regulations, approved by WHO. WHO went on to describe the centers as being "comparable to any other such facility around the globe," pointing out the leadership of Health Minister Dr Basel Al-Sabah on the matter.



Kuwait-chaired UNESCO committee approves AI code of ethics

PARIS: A Kuwait-chaired UNESCO ad hoc committee endorsed Friday the final draft text of the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Kuwait's delegate to the UN organization and the Chairperson of the UNESCO intergovernmental special committee meeting of technical and legal experts Dr Adam Al-Mulla said that the committee had ratified the draft text today at the conclusion of its second meeting which lasted for five days. He said the approved text, the first of its kind, will serve as an ethical guiding compass and a global normative bedrock to respect the rule of law in the digital world. Mulla noted that 300 experts from 102 countries and 49 observers participated in the meeting. The text will be submitted to member states for adoption at the 41st UNESCO General Conference in November 2021, he pointed out. UNESCO's efforts to write and negotiate an international code of ethics for artificial intelligence had begun in November 2019. According to the UNESCO, the negotiated text aims to find international and national policies and regulatory frameworks to ensure that artificial intelligence technologies benefit humanity as a whole. It stressed that the world needs a human-centered artificial intelligence to be used for the greater interest of the people, not the other way around. UNESCO believes that the development of a comprehensive global standard-setting instrument would provide artificial intelligence with a strong ethical basis, that will not only protect but also promote human rights and human dignity. — KUNA

Kuwait, US officials inspect naval base

KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lt Gen Essam Al-Naham and Commander of US Naval Forces Central Command, US Fifth Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, underscored Friday the importance of enhancing security cooperation in the field of maritime security between Kuwait and the US. Naham and Cooper inspected the Sabah Al-Ahmad Naval Base and Operations Room, according to a statement by the ministry's General Department of Security Relations and Media. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lt Gen Essam Al-Naham and Commander of US Naval Forces Central Command, US Fifth Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces Vice Admiral Brad Cooper inspect the Sabah Al-Ahmad Naval Base. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Force men conducted inspection tours recently to check safety measures taken at construction sites around Kuwait.

Two saved from muddy area

KUWAIT: Firemen managed to save two people after their vehicle sunk in a muddy area near the Doha Beach yesterday. Three fire stations responded to an emergency call reporting the case, as firemen managed to safely remove the two men from their car in good condition, Kuwait Fire Force said.



THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

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

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125
COMMERCIAL : 24835618
P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

News in brief

Amir sends condolences to Czech President

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a letter on Friday to Czech Republic President Milos Zeman, extending his condolences over the victims of a tornado, southeast of the country, which left dozens killed and injured. His Highness the Amir also wished those injured a speedy recovery. 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

No Kuwaitis affected

PRAGUE: Kuwait's embassy in Prague confirmed that no Kuwaiti citizens were present in areas affected by a devastating tornado that hit the Czech Republic on Friday. The embassy did not receive any notifications regarding the presence of Kuwaitis in those areas, Kuwait's Ambassador Rashed Al-Hajeri said in a statement. He said that Kuwaitis usually flock to areas that are far from those affected. Reports said that the tornado struck villages and towns in the southeast of the country, killing at least three people and injuring dozens more. Several buildings and homes have been reduced to rubble, with electricity cut off for more than 40,000 families. — KUNA

Oil price down

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by 21 cents to \$74.58 per barrel Friday after being at \$74.79 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 62 cents to \$76.18 per barrel, the same case with the latter, which also went up by 75 cents to \$74.05 pb. — KUNA

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: The full Strawberry moon, the last super moon of the year, rises above Kuwait City, on June 24, 2021. — AFP

STAY CONNECTED



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

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

French Ambassador meets Sheikh Mubarak

KUWAIT: French Ambassador to Kuwait Anne-Claire Legendre received Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah at the headquarters of the French Embassy recently. During the meeting, many issues were discussed, mainly those pertaining to strengthening economic relations between the two friendly countries, as well as some cultural and social issues of mutual concerns. At the end of the meeting, Sheikh Mubarak presented a commemorative plaque to the ambassador.



KUWAIT: French Ambassador to Kuwait Anne-Claire Legendre receives a commemorative plaque from Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.



KUWAIT: Members of the Diplomatic Women's Committee pose for a group photo.

Diplomatic Women's Committee concludes cultural exchange season

KUWAIT: The Diplomatic Women's Committee concluded its cultural exchange season for the year 2020/2021 in an exclusive farewell meeting with the wives of the departing ambassadors after the end of their diplomatic tenures in the State of Kuwait.

The meeting was headed by the president of the committee Maria Angela, Spouse of the Ambassador of the Republic of Venezuela, Narjis Al-Shatti, the Advisor of the Committee and

Fouzia Abdul Basit, Media and Public Relations officer. The invitees were Spouse of the Ambassador of the Republic of Djibouti, Spouse of the Ambassador of the Republic of Ethiopia, Spouse of the Ambassador of the Republic of Mauritania and the Consular of Embassy of the Republic of South Africa and members of DWC from other countries.

Participants shared their memorable experience in Kuwait and said that Kuwait truly deserves the title of "the country of humanity and peace" for what the State of Kuwait has provided them with great support, valuable assistance and a distinguished social life during their stay. They also acknowledged the DWC for playing a great role as a bridge that links Kuwaiti society with the countries of the world in all aspects.



Afghan leader meets Biden as US exit looms

18 killed, 16 injured in fire at China martial arts school

Page 6

Page 7



SURFSIDE, Florida: Photos of missing residents are posted at a makeshift memorial at the site of a collapsed building in Surfside, Florida, north of Miami Beach yesterday. —AFP

159 still missing after Florida collapse

Families seek explanation on freak disaster

MIAMI, US: Four people were confirmed dead and 159 unaccounted for Friday following the collapse of an oceanfront apartment building near Miami Beach, as rescue teams scoured a mountain of rubble in a desperate search for survivors. As shock set in among the local community in Surfside, the state's governor called for full light to be shed without delay on the causes of the freak disaster—which reduced one wing of a 12-story tower to a gigantic pile of debris.

Miami-Dade County mayor Daniella Levine Cava said late Friday authorities were still without news of 159 people who may have been asleep in Champlain Tower South at the time of the collapse, fueling fears of a much higher death toll. "We have not found anybody else in today's search," she told a news conference. "But through the night we will continue, and God willing, there will be some good news later tonight or in the morning." Rescue teams with sniffer dogs were searching the site—with recovered bodies put into yellow bags and transported away as homicide detectives worked to confirm the identities of the victims.

But faced with the painstakingly slow search operation, some began to voice their frustration. "Not enough is being done," said Mike Salberg, who came from New York after the accident. Five of his family members, including his parents, are unaccounted for. "I want answers," he told AFP. "The families are sidelined. We're being told that they have the best crews but they don't have the ability and the capacity... 40 hours later, four dead."

support to the families, calling it a "tough, tough time." "There are so many people waiting. Are they alive? What will happen? So our heart goes out to them," he said at the White House. Biden spoke earlier Friday with Governor Ron DeSantis, who said the families deserved "a definitive explanation for how this could have happened." DeSantis said it was important to "do this right, but also to do it timely—so that we get the answers to the families and that we get the answers to the people of Florida." The Surfside building was occupied by a mix of full-time and seasonal residents and renters, and officials have stressed it is unclear how many people were actually inside at the time of the collapse, which pancaked around 55 apartments.

Relatives of the missing have been gathering at a local community center, while occupants lucky enough to have been away when disaster struck are contemplating sudden homelessness. Canada said Friday at least four of its citizens may be "affected" by the collapse, without elaborating. At least 18 Latin American nationals are known to be among the missing—including Uruguayans, Argentines and Paraguayans. Miami-Dade Fire Rescue assistant chief Ray Jadallah said search teams were being guided by sound. "It's not specifically, you know, human sounds—it could be, you know, tapping, it could be steel, you know, kind of twisting, it could be some of the debris kind of raining down," he explained to reporters. "We have hope. And every time that we hear sound, we concentrate in that area."

Questions over building

While the reasons for the collapse remain unclear, the condition of the 40-year-old waterfront building is certain to face scrutiny.

Completed in 1981, Champlain Towers was due to be recertified this year in line with Miami-Dade county safety regulations, and was undergoing construction work on its roof as part of that process. According to a study led by Florida International University environment professor Shimon Wdowinski, based on space-based radar data, the site showed signs of land subsidence in the mid-1990s. "I don't know if the collapse was predictable. But we did detect that the building moved in the 1990s," Wdowinski told CNN Friday, describing what was happening as a "slow process" of settling, rather than sinking.

Another of the university's experts, Atorod

Aziznamini, chair of its department of civil and environmental engineering, said in an online video that it was too soon to speculate on a cause. He said structural engineers would collect vast quantities of data on design plans and construction methods, take samples of steel and concrete, look at signs of corrosion, examine the foundation, and try to detect any unusual event before the collapse. "Once we have all the information we can simulate exactly different scenarios, and we can pinpoint how the collapse took place," Aziznamini said. "Unfortunately that is not going to be happening in a matter of days, weeks." "It's going to take some time." —AFP

'We have hope'

President Joe Biden—who has ordered federal assistance for the relief effort—sent a message of

Keep border open: UN Syria envoy

THE UNITED NATIONS: The UN's special envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, on Friday added his voice to calls to keep open the only border crossing through which humanitarian aid reaches the insurgent Idlib region, a move opposed by Moscow. Aside from being the sole point through which aid can reach some three million people, the fate of the crossing is seen as a test of the new Russia-US relationship under the leadership of President Joe Biden. It is due to close on July 10, and will require a UN vote to stay open.

But Russia, which is allied with Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and has made clear its opposition to a move which it says threatens Syrian sovereignty, may use its veto power on the UN Security Council to block it. "Civilians across the country desperately need life-saving assistance and help building resilience. It is absolutely vital to maintain and expand access, including cross-border and cross-line operations," Pedersen told the Security Council. "A large-scale cross-border response is essential for an additional 12 months to save lives," he said. —AFP



AAA HOUSING
FURNISHED APARTMENTS

FOR RENT

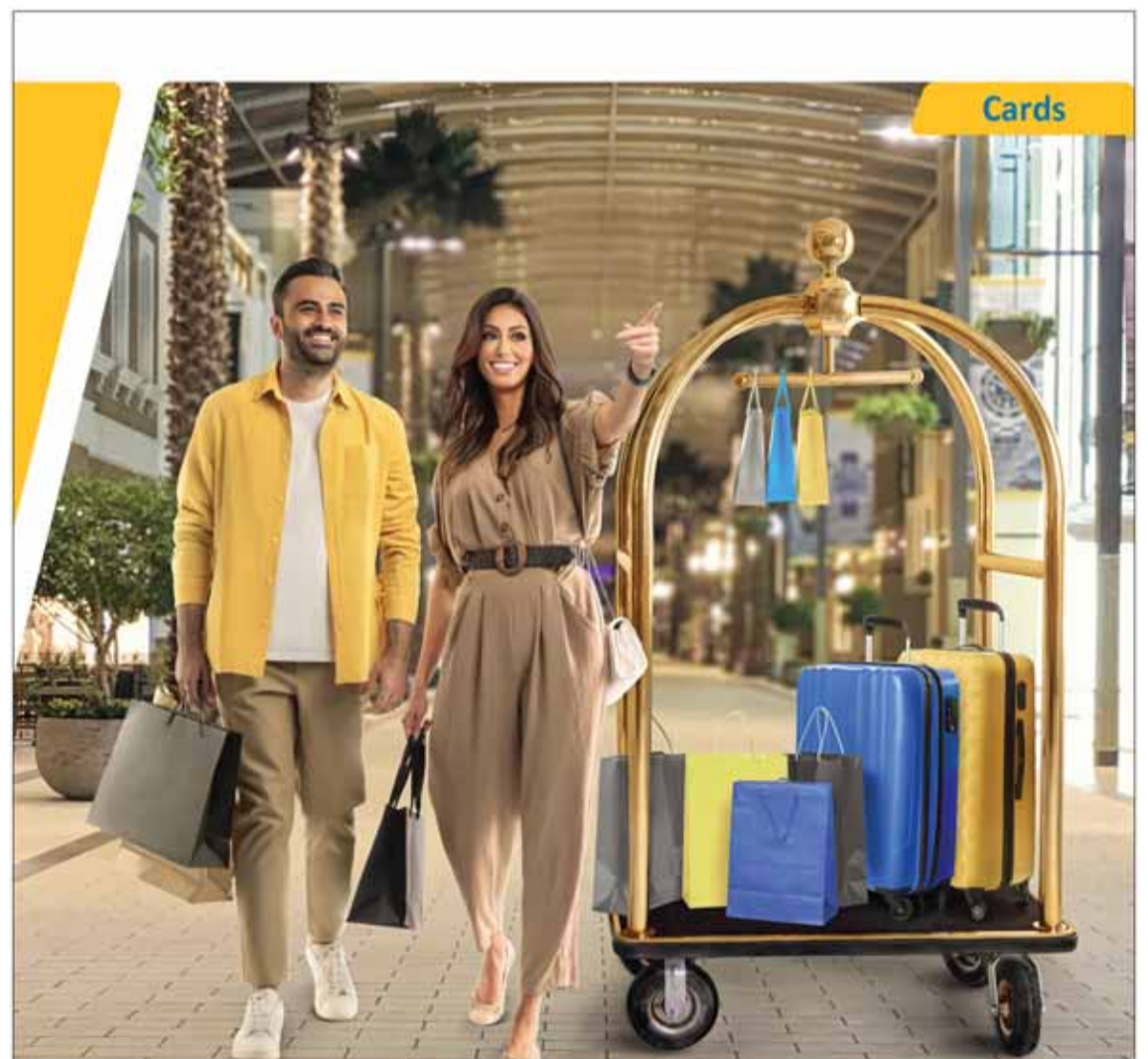
**Residential Building
Fully Furnished & Serviced
Apartments**

located in : **Abu Halifa**

- 46 apartments
- 2 Bedrooms + 2 bathrooms + Lounge + Kitchen
- 24 Hours Maintenance
- Satellite Cable & Internet + CCTV cameras
- Swimming pool + Gym + Car parking

Contact Details

Office: +965 22268700 / 22465888
Website: www.aaahousing.com
Email: house@aaahousing.com



STAY THE NIGHT AND SHOP ALL DAY AT THE AVENUES

Use your ABK credit or prepaid card for a chance to win a 2-night stay at Hilton Garden Inn plus KD500 shopping allowance!

- Campaign duration: 10 June - 9 September 2021
- Monthly draws in July, August, and September
- 10 winners per draw, 30 winners in total

For more information, please call Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit eahli.com

Simpler Banking



International

18 killed, 16 injured in fire at China martial arts school

There were 34 boarding students when the fire broke out

BEIJING: At least 18 people were killed and 16 injured when a fire broke out at a martial arts school in central China in the early hours of Friday, according to the local government. Official state news agency Xinhua reported that all victims were boarding pupils, while local media said they were aged between seven and 16. The fire had been extinguished and authorities were investigating the cause of the blaze, a statement from the Zhecheng county government in Henan province, said.

Four local officials including the county party secretary were fired over the incident, reported the Henan Daily, a local state-backed newspaper, yesterday. Two more suspects were arrested in addition to the school's manager Chen Lin, the Henan Daily said. There were 34 boarding students on the premises when the fire broke out, according to government staff quoted by Beijing Toutiao News. Those hurt—four of whom had severe injuries—were rushed to a local hospital, where an unnamed doctor told local media they were “doing everything they could” to save them. The cause of the fire was still unclear. An official confirmed to AFP that the school was the Zhenxing Martial Arts Centre.

Local media reports described it as a “comprehensive martial arts training institution” that aimed to “strengthen the body through morality and martial arts”. An online listing for the school advertised

hour-long classes each day for a range of martial arts disciplines and said the school “recruits boarding students year-round”, but offered no further details. Provincial party chief Lou Yangsheng told local media that the blaze was a “profound lesson”. The school had not gone through the fire safety auditing process required for martial arts training institutions, as the building had originally been a privately built house intended for other purposes, Xinhua reported Friday.

Cradle of kung fu

Henan is the birthplace of traditional Chinese martial arts and is home to many kung fu academies. Among the largest is the famous Shaolin Martial Arts School, which has hundreds of teachers and tens of thousands of students, according to its website. Social media users started to call for better fire safety standards online as a hashtag for the fire quickly garnered over 1.5 million views. Fatal fires are common in China, with safety regulations often flouted and patchy enforcement. More than two dozen people were killed in two blazes in Beijing's migrant neighborhoods in 2017.

The first, which killed 19 people in November that year, prompted authorities to begin tearing down unsafe buildings in the capital, driving hundreds of thousands of residents out in the middle of winter. A



BEIJING: Fire broke out at a martial arts school in central China, Zhecheng county, Henan province, on Friday morning.

huge blaze that swept a 28-storey Shanghai residential block in 2010 killed 58 people. Friday's blaze comes at a sensitive time for China's ruling Communist Party as it ramps up security preparations before its 100th anniversary celebrations on July 1.

Following a spate of deadly mine accidents in the

past few weeks, local authorities this month suspended operations at coal mines in Henan, Jiangxi and Hubei provinces in the run-up to the anniversary. In one week in June alone, more than 30 workers were killed in two separate gas explosions at mines in Henan and Hubei. —AFP

Tajikistan celebrates Day of National Unity

KUWAIT: Dr Zubaydullo Zubaydov, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the State of Kuwait, released the following statement on Tajikistan's Day of National Unity:

Every year on June 27, Tajikistan celebrates a national holiday - the Day of National Unity, also known as the Day of National Reconciliation. It was established by the decree of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon in 1998 in honor of the end of the five-year civil war in Tajikistan.

The Day of National Unity is intended to remind young generations at what cost peace was achieved in the republic and how important it is to preserve it and prevent internal conflicts in the future. The holiday is called the Day of National Unity, as it symbolizes the unity of the Tajik people, the solidarity in a single nation of residents of all cities, towns and villages of Tajikistan.

This is a holiday of reconciliation of the entire population, therefore, in all cities and regions of the republic, abroad, people congratulate each other, wish peace and tranquility. Self-confidence, selflessness, patriotism of our people are a solid foundation for the development of the country.

On this day, the citizens of Tajikistan remember the events that played a key role in the history of the country. At all times, the main thing for Tajikistan was the unity of the people. This is the historical basis that connects our past, present and future.

And on this day, national harmony and the unity of society, based on moral values tested for centuries, are a prerequisite for the stable and dynamic development of Tajikistan, a calm and peaceful life of its citizens. The holiday symbolizes the unity of the people, the involvement of each of us in the fate of the country, the desire for its further prosperity.



Dr Zubaydullo Zubaydov

Haiti ex-president Aristide being treated for COVID in Cuba

HAVANA, Cuba: Haitian ex-president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who is battling COVID-19 at the age of 68, has arrived in Cuba for medical treatment, Haiti's President Jovenel Moïse has announced. On Twitter late Thursday, Moïse wished Aristide “a prompt recovery” and said the Haitian embassy in Cuba would provide him with “all the necessary assistance.” The Haitian embassy in Cuba would not confirm Aristide's arrival to AFP, and the Cuban government generally does not comment on these types of visits. Haitian media has reported that Moïse had sought a diplomatic passport for the former head of state for humanitarian reasons.

Aristide became Haiti's first democratically elected president in 1991. But just months later, that same year, he was ousted in a bloody military coup led by General Raoul Cedras. He returned to power in 1994 when the United States sent in troops to drive Cedras out. But Aristide was again forced out in 2004 under threat of another armed insurrection, popular demonstrations and pressure from the United States and France, going into exile in South Africa. He returned to Haiti in 2011. —AFP

US, France warn Iran that time running out to revive deal

PARIS: The United States and France on Friday warned Iran that time is running out to return to a nuclear deal, voicing fear that Tehran's sensitive atomic activities could advance if talks drag on. On the first high-level visit to Paris by President Joe Biden's administration, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his French hosts saluted a new spirit of cooperation after four years of turbulence under Donald Trump. But the two sides said that one key Biden promise—to return to the 2015 Iran accord that was trashed by Trump—is at risk if the clerical regime does not make concessions during talks that have been going on for more than two months in Vienna. Blinken warned that the United States still has “serious differences” with Iran, which has kept negotiating since last week's presidential election won by hardliner Ebrahim Raisi.

“There will come a point, yes, where it will be very hard to return

back to the standards set by the JCPOA,” Blinken told reporters, using the acronym for the accord's formal name. “We haven't reached that point—I can't put a date on it—but it's something that we're conscious of.” Blinken warned that if Iran “continues to spin ever more sophisticated centrifuges” and steps up uranium enrichment, it will bring nearer the “breakout” time at which it will be dangerously close to the ability to develop a nuclear bomb. But Blinken said that Biden still supports a return to the accord, under which Iran had drastically scaled back its nuclear work until Trump withdrew in 2018 and imposed crippling sanctions. “We have a national interest in trying to put the nuclear problem back in the box that it was in the JCPOA,” Blinken said.

Stalling as strategy?

France—which like Britain, Germany, Russia and China had stayed in the

Colombia leader says chopper hit by gunfire near Venezuela border

BOGOTA: President Ivan Duque said the helicopter he was flying in Friday near the border with Venezuela was hit by gunfire in the first attack against a Colombian head of state in nearly 20 years.

No one was injured, and authorities did not say which side of the border the shots came from. Colombia regularly accuses Venezuela of harboring Colombian rebels on its territory. “It is a cowardly attack, where you can see bullet holes in the presidential aircraft,” Duque said in a statement. Duque said he was flying with the defense and interior ministers and the governor of Norte de Santander province, which borders Venezuela, when the helicopter was attacked. Photos released by the president's office showed the tail and main blade had been hit.

Duque said the aircraft's “safety features” prevented a “lethal” attack. “I have given very clear instructions to the entire security team to go after those who shot at the aircraft,” he said. The US, European Union and UN mission in Colombia all con-

demned the attack. The presidential delegation had left the town of Sardinata and was headed to the border city of Cucuta when they came under fire. Duque had attended an event in the Catatumbo region, one of the main coca-growing areas of the country. Colombia is the world's largest cocaine producer. Holdouts from the disbanded FARC rebel group, an active guerrilla group called the National Liberation Army (ELN), and other armed bands fight drug trafficking turf wars along the long and porous border with Venezuela.

The two countries broke off relations after Duque, a conservative, came to power in 2018. Venezuela is governed by socialist President Nicolas Maduro. The Duque government has repeatedly accused Venezuela of giving refuge to ELN fighters. “We are not frightened by violence or acts of terrorism. Our state is strong and Colombia is strong to confront this kind of threat,” Duque said after the attack on his chopper. The border area has been violent of late.

Trudeau doesn't rule out criminal probe of indigenous school graves

CANADA: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau apologized Friday for “harmful government policies” and did not rule out a criminal probe after hundreds of unmarked graves were discovered at a former indigenous residential school in western Canada. The public mea culpa for the policy of indigenous assimilation and other historical wrongs comes one day after the Cowessess First Nation said it had found at least 751 unmarked graves at the former Marieval Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan province. It was the second such discovery in less than a month. “This was an incredibly harmful government policy that was Canada's reality for many, many decades and Canadians today

are horrified and ashamed of how our country behaved, about a policy that ripped kids from their homes, from their communities, from their culture and their language and forced assimilation upon them,” Trudeau told a news conference in Ottawa.

“To the members of the Cowessess community and Treaty Four communities, we are sorry,” he said. “It was something that we cannot undo in the past, but we can pledge ourselves every day to fix it in the present and into the future.” The graves—some of which may at one time have been marked—were found through ground-penetrating radar mapping. Excavations at the Marieval school,



PARIS: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (left) meets French President Emmanuel Macron at the Elysee Palace in Paris. —AFP

2015 accord despite pressure from Trump—also ramped up pressure on Iran to move ahead. “We expect the Iranian authorities to take the final decisions—no doubt difficult ones—which will allow the negotiations to be concluded,” Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said at the joint news conference with Blinken. Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a statement in response: “The opposing sides are the ones who must take the decisions.” The

UN nuclear watchdog said Friday it had received no reply from Tehran over the possible extension of a temporary agreement covering inspections at Iranian nuclear facilities which expired on Thursday. Under that deal, which had allowed for some IAEA inspections to continue after Iran limited access to sites in February, Tehran pledged to keep recordings “of some activities and monitoring equipment” and hand them over to the IAEA as and when US sanctions are lifted. —AFP



CUCUTA, Colombia: Colombia's President Ivan Duque (left) walks surrounded by bodyguards close to the presidential helicopter at the tarmac of the Gamilo Daza International Airport after it was hit by gunfire in Cucuta, Colombia. —AFP

Anger in the streets

On June 16, a car bomb exploded on a military base in Cucuta, wounding 36 people. The government blamed the ELN, with which it ended peace negotiations in 2019. Those talks started after the government concluded a historic peace accord in 2016 with the much bigger FARC that ended decades of civil war. The last attack against a presi-

dent in Colombia was a bombing that targeted then leader Alvaro Uribe in 2003. A 20-kilogram (44-pound) bomb hidden in a building near the airport in the southwest city of Neiva exploded prior to the landing of a plane carrying Uribe, who is Duque's political mentor. The blast killed 15 people and wounded 66. The government blamed the FARC for that attack. —AFP

about 150 kilometers (90 miles) east of the provincial capital Regina, began at the end of May, after the discovery of the remains of 215 schoolchildren at another former indigenous residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia.

Since the grim find in Kamloops, searches have also started at other such former boarding schools across Canada, with government help. Nearly Can\$5 million (US\$4 million) would be made available to the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN), which represents 74 tribes in Saskatchewan, to search for more burial sites in the province, Trudeau said Friday.

Pressed about whether a criminal probe demanded by indigenous leaders was warranted, Trudeau said: “I think people want to properly understand what happened.” “We are open to taking whatever steps are necessary to learn the truth,” he added in



OTTAWA, Ontario: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks during a news conference at Rideau Cottage in Ottawa. —AFP

French, and to “ensure that there are consequences for organizations, institutions, and perhaps in some cases individuals.” —AFP

International

Afghan leader meets Biden as US exit looms

‘The partnership between the US and Afghanistan is not ending’

WASHINGTON/ AFGHANISTAN: US President Joe Biden promised Afghan leader Ashraf Ghani strong support during a White House meeting Friday but made clear he was not planning to slow the US withdrawal after nearly two decades of fighting. Less than three months before his deadline for the removal of all troops, Biden told Ghani that Afghans had to determine their own fate even as they face a mounting offensive by Taliban insurgents.

“The partnership between the United States and Afghanistan is not ending,” Biden said in the Oval Office. “Our troops may be leaving, but support for Afghanistan is not ending.” Even so, Biden told the Afghan president, “Afghans are going to have to decide their future, what they want.” “The senseless violence, it has to stop. It’s going to be very difficult.”

Deal with Taliban pushed

Ghani was in Washington along with Abdullah Abdullah, who oversees Kabul’s peace negotiations with the Taliban, amid rising uncertainty over the group’s recent gains and the possibility of their return to power. The extremists subjected the population to a brutal version of Islam when they ruled from 1996-2001. Sitting next to Biden, Ghani acknowledged that Biden was not going to change course from his April announcement ordering the end to America’s longest war. “President Biden’s decision has been historic, it has made everybody recalculate and reconsider,” Ghani said.

“We are here to respect it and support it.” But he also said not to count his government out, amid reports that an internal US intelligence assessment says the Taliban could possibly take over Kabul within six months of the US departure. Ghani said Afghan government forces retook six districts, in the north and south, on Friday, reversing recent Taliban gains. “You will see that with determination, with unity and with the partnership, we will overcome all odds.”

Ghani met with top members of Congress, the CIA, and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on his two-day visit to Washington. With the US military’s on-the-ground support for Afghan security forces about to disappear completely, Washington is expecting him to reach a negotiated settlement on power sharing with the Taliban before it is too late. “The Department of Defense is deeply invested in the security and stability of Afghanistan and in the pursuit of a negotiated settlement that ends the war,” Austin



WASHINGTON: Afghanistan High Commission for National Reconciliation Chair Abdullah Abdullah (left), President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani (center) and US President Joe Biden sit during a meeting at the White House in Washington, DC. —AFP

told Ghani and Abdullah at the Pentagon. The top Democrat in Congress, Nancy Pelosi, also indicated that there was no turning back. Meeting Ghani, she stressed future humanitarian assistance to the country “as we enter a new phase of that relationship.”

No abandonment

The US pullout, of some 2,500 troops and 16,000 civilian contractors in the country earlier this year, could be mostly completed next month. The situation was being compared to the US withdrawal from Vietnam in 1973, which saw the South Vietnamese government that Washington had backed fall to North Vietnamese troops within two years. “The false narrative of abandonment is just false,” Ghani said before his meeting with Austin.

He added that predictions like that of the intelligence report on a possible Taliban takeover “have all turned out false.” Biden is expected to reaffirm billions of dollars in US aid for the country, and make arrangements for US civilian contractors—essential to keep the Afghan air force flying—to remain there. The administration is also working on a plan to evacuate some 18,000 Afghan interpreters and others who worked for US forces and who are under personal threat from the Taliban.

Thousands displaced

About 5,000 Afghan families have fled their

homes in Kunduz after days of fighting between the Taliban and government forces, officials said yesterday, with the insurgents continuing to surround the key northern city. The Taliban briefly seized the city twice in recent years but have now captured the surrounding districts and a nearby border crossing with Tajikistan. “About 5,000 families have been displaced by the fighting,” Ghulam Sakhi Rasouli, director of the Kunduz Refugees and Repatriation Department, told AFP.

He said up to 2,000 of those families had fled to Kabul and other provinces. Many people took refuge in a school in the city and had been provided with food and other relief items, Kunduz provincial council member Ghulam Rabbani Rabbani said.

Video footage taken by AFP showed dozens of people, many of them women and children, sitting inside tents set up in a school compound. “We are six families living together here for three days... you can see my children are sitting on the ground,” Juma Khan, who fled with his family, told AFP. “We have still not received any help. A team came today to survey some families but after a few minutes they left,” said Akhtar Mohammad, who has also taken refuge in the school. Another 8,000 families have been displaced across the province of Kunduz following a month of sporadic clashes between the insurgents and government forces, Rasouli added. —AFP

News in brief

4 dead in Egypt building collapse

CAIRO: Four women were killed by the collapse of a residential building in the northern Egyptian city of Alexandria, a security official said yesterday. The dilapidated building, located in the Al-Attarine district, collapsed on Friday, the source told AFP, on condition of anonymity. Along with the four fatalities, civil protection workers “extracted four survivors,” one of whom was wounded, the source added. The five-storey building was the subject of a renovation order in 2018, according to the Alexandria governorate’s Facebook page, and authorities had ordered that the top floor be dismantled. —AFP

Cartel shootout leaves 18 dead

MEXICO CITY: A shootout between suspected drug cartels left 18 people dead Friday in Mexico, a government official said. The gunfight happened in a remote area of Zacatecas state in the country’s north, said Rocío Aguilar, a spokeswoman for the state government. Drug-related violence has claimed more than 300,000 lives in Mexico since 2006, when the government started deploying federal troops to fight the cartels. “There were 18 dead, and the confrontation occurred in the community of San Juan Capistrano, in the municipality of Valparaiso,” Aguilar added. —AFP

6 killed, 15 wounded in Mali attacks

BAMAKO, Mali: Six Malian soldiers were killed on Friday in a raid in the center of the war-torn Sahel state, in a violent day which also saw 15 United Nations peacekeepers wounded in a car-bomb attack further north. The UN said on Twitter that an evacuation was under way after a car bomb struck a temporary base near Tarkint, in the lawless north of Mali. German Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer said 12 of the peacekeepers were German and that three were seriously injured. —AFP

Ganges exposes India’s COVID graves

ALLAHABAD, India: Seasonal flooding of the Ganges is flushing out shallow graves and exposing some of the hundreds of bodies that were buried by the river during India’s recent COVID-19 surge. Neeraj Kumar Singh, an official in the northern city of Allahabad, said that almost 150 bodies have had to be cremated in the past three weeks. “We are not exhuming any bodies but only those which are floating up due to rising water levels are being cremated,” he said. “The area is spread over a kilometer (half a mile) and our guess is there are around 500-600 bodies buried,” Singh told AFP. “Every precaution is taken in dealing with the bodies while performing their final rites.”

Most are believed to have died from coronavirus in April and May when India was hit by a spike in infections that overwhelmed hospitals in many areas. Some families were unable to afford firewood for traditional Hindu cremations so bodies were immersed in the Ganges or



ALLAHABAD, India: Municipal corporation workers prepare to cremate a body buried in a shallow grave on the banks of the Ganges River. —AFP

buried in sandbanks adjacent to the river. These are now becoming flooded because of annual monsoon rains swelling the river, washing away the sand and revealing the corpses. The number of such graves has stoked suspicions that India’s total deaths from the pandemic may be over a million, several times the official toll of almost 400,000. —AFP

Thousands climb Indonesian volcano for ritual sacrifice

PROBOLINGGO, Indonesia: Thousands of worshippers trudged up an active Indonesian volcano yesterday to cast livestock and other offerings down its smoldering crater in a centuries-old religious ceremony. Every year people from the Tengger tribe gather from the surrounding highlands throw fruit, vegetables, flowers and even livestock such as goats and chickens into Mount Bromo’s crater as part of the Yadnya Kasada festival. A long line of worshippers, some with goats slung across their

backs, made their way to the top in the hopes of pleasing ancestors and Hindu gods—and bringing prosperity to their communities.

“Today I brought a chicken for the ancestors,” said Purwanto, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, as he showed off his colorful hen. Another worshipper, Wantoko, carried his own crops in the hopes that casting them into the volcano would bring good luck. “I brought these crops so that my fields will be fertile and I have a good harvest,” he said. “I come here every year.” Standing

on the crater’s steep slopes, other villagers—who are not members of the Tengger tribe—try to catch the offerings using nets and sarongs before they disappear into the billowing smoke. This is not technically part of the ritual but reflects local frugal urges not to waste the offerings. Yesterday’s ritual marked the second Yadnya Kasada festival since the COVID-19 pandemic hit Indonesia. “It can’t be held in another place or be done virtually,” said Bambang Suprpto, head of the area’s Hindu community association. “But organizers applied strict health protocols and they’ve been tested for the virus so we can protect everyone who attended.”

The month-long festival dates back to the 15th-century legends of the Javanese Hindu Majapahit kingdom’s princess and her husband. Unable to bear children after years of marriage, the couple begged the gods for help. Their prayers were answered and they were promised 25 children, as long as they agreed to sacrifice their youngest child by throwing him into Mount Bromo. Legend has it this son willingly jumped into the volcano to guarantee the prosperity of the Tengger people. The sacrifice tradition continues to this day—though the Tengger sacrifice their harvest and farm animals instead of humans. —AFP



PROBOLINGGO, Indonesia: People try to catch offerings thrown by Tengger tribe people off the summit of the active Mount Bromo volcano in Probolinggo, East Java province yesterday. —AFP

KUFPEC
Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and subsidiaries
مؤسسة البترول الكويتية وشركاتها

Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) and Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI),
Subsidiaries of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), announce vacant positions for experienced individuals for the post:

Manager - Legal Affairs

You are kindly requested to navigate through the Recruitment Webpage: www.kpc.com.kw. After accessing the KPC Website, click on “KPC Careers” and then follow the steps to submit your application.

Minimum requirements:

- Academic background: Bachelor of Laws degree.
- Applicant’s GPA must not be less than 3.00 out of a 4.0 point grade and a grade average must not be less than VERY GOOD.
- Applicant must not exceed the age of (55) years on 27 of June 27, 2021.
- Minimum (15) years of legal experience including Oil & Gas sector, Commercial sector. Related international legal experience with agreements/Financial issues and drafting legal commercial contracts and agreements.
- Applicant should not be a current employee of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation or any of its subsidiaries.
- Applicant must first meet all the minimum requirements stated above, be able to perform the roles and responsibilities of the job and pass an English Language Assessment (must not be less than 70%) to be selected for an interview.

Required documents to be included and attached on the KPC Website:

- Qualification and supporting official transcripts. Any qualification obtained from a Kuwaiti private university, or any overseas university must be accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education.
- To Whom it May Concern Certificate issued by the Public Institution for Social Security showing current and former employers and years of service.
- Letters of Reference from current and former employers are required showing total years of experience.
- Detailed and updated CV / a copy of Civil ID / Most recent individual photograph.

Kindly note:

- Incomplete applications or applications failing to fulfill the requirements mentioned above shall not be accepted.
- Applications must be submitted through the recruitment webpage indicated above.
- It should be noted that successful submission of an application on the Website does not give any guarantee that the application is accepted.
- For any inquiries, please feel free to contact us during our working days (Sunday to Thursday) from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. by email or phone numbers shown on the application page.

Applications to be received during the period from June 27, 2021 to July 8, 2021

SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 2021

Business

Business group urges Biden to lift travel ban on Europe

Investment from Europe in US plunged by a third in 2020

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration is under pressure from a major business group and diplomats to scrap a travel ban on Europeans, as investment from the continent in the United States plunged by nearly a third last year. While countries in the European Union have reopened their borders to Americans who are vaccinated or test negative for COVID-19, the United States has not reciprocated, to the frustration of the business world.

The US Chamber of Commerce on Friday urged Washington to allow the return of European travelers "as soon as possible." "The resumption of safe transatlantic travel is critically important for our nation's economic recovery, as in-person business engagements and international tourism will help drive economic growth and job creation for Americans across the country," said Marjorie Chorzynski, the chamber's senior vice president for European affairs. Travelers from the Schengen zone, Britain and Ireland have been banned from entering the United States since March 2020. Also banned from entry are travelers from South Africa, Brazil, China, India and Iran.

'Interconnected'

The EU ambassador to the United States, Stavros Lambrinidis, told AFP that Brussels is "pushing" for

reciprocity, and emphasizing the positive impact such a move would have on both economies. "Our economies and people are deeply interconnected, and our vaccination rates are the highest in the world—it would be crucial to safely open up this side of the Atlantic too as we both kick-start our economies," he said.

During President Joe Biden's visit to Europe last week, the EU stressed that the bilateral economic relationship is the largest in the world, making up a whopping 42 percent of both global GDP and global trade in goods and services.

But beyond trade, huge investments are at stake.

'Backbone'

"Mutual investment dwarfs trade and is the real backbone of the transatlantic economy," noted a 2021 joint report from the US Chamber, AmCham EU, Johns Hopkins University and the Wilson Center think tank. Mutual investment "has become essential to US and European jobs and prosperity," it added.

Europe accounted for more than 60 percent of foreign direct investment flowing into the United States in the first three quarters of 2020. But compared to the same period from the previous year, investments from the continent plunged to \$81 billion in 2020 from \$120

billion in 2019, a drop of 32.5 percent. On Friday, during a visit to France, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken expressed hope that Europeans will soon be able to visit the United States again.

"I hope that this will happen quickly. We really want to. I hope it will be a matter of weeks rather than months," he told an online forum in fluent French.

But he pointed to the rise of the Delta variant, which first emerged in India and has caused renewed concerns in Western countries. "We are of course worried about the Delta variant and following its movement closely," Lambrinidis noted.

He pointed out that vaccinated people are "well protected" against the variant. Instead of closed borders, he called for speeding up inoculation campaigns, masking and social distancing. For their part, airlines insist traveling by plane remains safe.

"Numerous scientific studies have validated that air travel presents a low transmission risk," a United Airlines spokeswoman said. "As the vaccine becomes more widely available, now is the time to implement a reopening strategy for the benefit of both the economy and the traveling public," she added. In a sign that Biden is optimistic about the reopening of US borders, it recently added flights to destinations in France, Italy, Greece, Croatia, Iceland and Portugal. — AFP



WASHINGTON, DC: US President Joe Biden points to staff members from the South Lawn as he departs the White House Friday in Washington, DC. — AFP

Toshiba shareholders vote to oust board chair

TOKYO: Toshiba shareholders voted to oust the board's chairman on Friday, in the latest twist for the company after scandals and losses, and a rare victory for activist investors in corporate Japan.

CEO Satoshi Tsunakawa said shareholders had voted down a bid to reappoint Osamu Nagayama and a member of the firm's audit committee, a result that surprised some observers in Japan's often-staid corporate environment. It came despite Tsunakawa offering his backing for the chairman of the board, and pledging to work on re-establishing trust after the damaging revelations of an independent probe.

In a statement announcing the results, Toshiba said only that it "recognizes the seriousness of the rejection of some candidates for directors." Later in the day, Toshiba said Tsunakawa will serve as interim chairman of the board. Earlier this month, an inquiry found that the troubled industrial conglomerate "devised a plan to effectively prevent shareholders from exercising their shareholder proposal rights and voting rights" at a meeting in July 2020. The meeting, at which the activist shareholders' resolutions were rejected, was "not fairly managed", the 140-page report concluded.

It also detailed how Toshiba had pursued an intervention from Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry to help sway the vote.

The probe was only launched after pressure from shareholders. Toshiba apologized after the report and said it would remove two directors, but declined to address the allegations it attempted to collude with the government on votes. The firm has been through months of turmoil, which only deepened after an unexpected buyout offer in April from a private equity fund associated with then-CEO Nobuaki Kurumatani.

The offer sparked uproar and reports of other possible buyout interest. Kurumatani resigned in April though he insisted it was not related to the fallout. Toshiba was once a symbol of Japan's advanced technology and economic power. It has lurched from scandals and losses to a recovery in recent years.

At Friday's meeting, Tsunakawa sought to rally shareholder support for Nagayama. "The chairman of the board immediately took action" after the probe, the CEO said, citing the removal of two directors and withdrawal of two other candidates, and moves to formulate "preventive measures." Tsunakawa also told shareholders he took the recent crisis "seriously" and pledged "transparent communication." But his backing for Nagayama was not sufficient to convince shareholders, with some analysts expressing surprise at the result. "We thought the results of the vote would be more like fifty-fifty," said Hideki Yasuda, an analyst at Ace Research Institute in Tokyo. — AFP



TOKYO: A staff (left) guides shareholders to attend Toshiba annual general meeting of its shareholders in Tokyo Friday. — AFP



WASHINGTON, DC: Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell testifies at a House Coronavirus Subcommittee hearing on the Federal Reserve's response to the coronavirus pandemic on Capitol Hill. — AFP

Data confirm US inflation spike

WASHINGTON: Prices have indeed spiked in the United States, government data released Friday said, but analysts believe the increase isn't enough to change minds at the Federal Reserve, which is planning to keep rates low to help the economy recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Commerce Department's personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index in May rose 3.9 percent from the same month in 2020, its largest year-on-year increase since August 2008, the data said. However much of the increase was in energy prices, which a year ago were languishing after business restrictions to stop the virus from spreading caused a sharp downturn in demand.

The dynamic—a big price spike relative to 2020 in sectors hit hard by the pandemic—was what Fed officials led by Chair Jerome Powell had bet would happen as the US economy reopens, and is unlikely to change minds at the central bank. "From the Fed's perspective, price pressures are transient and will abate as reopening effects fade and supply constraints ease," Rubeela Farooqi of High Frequency Economics said.

Economists have debated for months over whether the Fed's zero interest rates and the US government's trillions of dollars in stimulus spending will cause inflation to soar when Covid-19 vaccines allow business to return to normal. The PCE data is particularly closely watched because it is what the Fed uses to gauge inflation, which it aims to keep around two percent. "Core" inflation with volatile food and energy prices excluded was at 3.4 percent year-on-year last month, and Gregory Daco of Oxford Economics predicted it would run around three percent for the second half of this year. "We don't foresee runaway inflation," he said in a note.

Study: Whites still dominate S African executive jobs

PRETORIA: South Africa's top jobs are still heavily skewed in favour of whites, with just 15.8 percent held by blacks three decades after the end of apartheid, a report showed Friday.

"At top management, 64.7 percent of the population is white," Tabea Kabinde, the lead author of an annual employment equity study, told AFP. Whites represent around nine percent of the country's economi-

Rates cut

As the severity of the COVID-19 crisis became clear, the Fed cut interest rates to zero in March 2020, then announced a new framework that would keep them lower for longer to help the economy achieve maximum employment, particularly for less-educated people and racial minorities. But with the country rebounding strongly from the record downturn the pandemic caused that year, some economists say the Fed will have to raise rates sooner than expected.

There is evidence of agreement on the rate-setting Federal Open Market Committee. At its meeting earlier this month, a majority of members predicted rates will increase in 2023, a change from March, when members didn't see rate hikes until at least 2024. In testimony before a House committee earlier this week, Powell downplayed recent inflation data, predicting it would be temporary. "Look at the categories where these prices are really going up, you'll see that it tends to be areas that are directly affected by the reopening. That's something (they) will go through over a period that will then be over," he said. Friday's PCE data supported that. The sector that saw the largest price jump was energy, which was up 27.4 percent year-on-year, while food prices rose 0.4 percent, much less than in recent months.

Compared to April, prices overall rose 0.4 percent, slower than that month's 0.6 percent month-on-month rate. The data also showed consumers were steering their dollars away from expensive goods and towards restaurants, hotels and recreation activities that had been disrupted during the pandemic.

However spending overall increased just \$2.9 billion, less than expected and basically flat from the month prior. Personal income fell two percent, less than forecast, in what the report said was due to the fading of government stimulus payments approved in March that inflation hawks had seized on to say the economy would overheat. Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics said it is still possible inflation could accelerate. — AFP

cally active population. The report, based on data collected in 2020, showed that the remainder of the jobs are held by Indians and workers of mixed race, also known as coloureds. Whites "are highly over-represented," said Kabinde, who chaired the special commission studying the employment trends. "This continues to follow the patterns created by apartheid policies," said the report, confirming that "the pace of transformation continues to be slow."

Reacting to the findings, Labour Minister Thulas Nxesi said the situation was unacceptable. "It's a wake-up call and we have to respond urgently," he said during an online briefing.

"It is disconcerting to say the least, that whilst we are consolidating 27 years of democracy... we are still lamenting" the pace of change in the labour market. "We might have political power but there is no

NZ suspends travel bubble with Australia

WELLINGTON: New Zealand announced a three-day suspension of its quarantine-free travel arrangement with Australia yesterday, with Wellington citing "multiple" outbreaks of COVID-19 in the neighboring country.

The announcement comes as a two-week lockdown begins in Sydney to contain a rapidly spreading outbreak of the Delta coronavirus variant.

More than 80 cases have been reported so far in Australia's largest city, while a handful of community cases have also been recorded in the Northern Territory, Victoria and Queensland in recent days. "But given the high level of transmissibility of what appears to be the Delta variant, and the fact that there are now multiple community clusters (in Australia), it is the right thing to do to keep COVID-19 out of New Zealand," said New Zealand's COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins.

Hipkins said he understood the inconvenience the pause would cause and added that New Zealand remained committed to quarantine-free travel with Australia. He added that the suspension would give officials time to consider measures "to make the bubble safer, such as pre-departure testing for all flights" between the two countries.

New Zealand has previously paused the bubble arrangement five times with individual states but this is the first time it has put a blanket halt to quarantine-free travel from all of Australia.

Both countries have been among the world's most successful in containing COVID-19. New Zealand has recorded just 26 COVID-19 deaths in a population of five million, and Australia has had fewer than 1,000 deaths in a population of 25 million.

The trans-Tasman travel bubble opened in mid-April, more than a year after both countries closed their international borders due to the pandemic. It has been hailed as a major milestone in restarting the global travel industry. — AFP



economic power. We still remain a very unequal society particularly in the upper echelons of our economy," he said.

The disparity at the top of South Africa's corporate ladder exists despite legislation aimed at correcting the legacy of racial exclusion under apartheid. The minister pointed to "resistance to change with people trying to protect the privileges of the past".

He is pushing for amending laws to force employment equity through specific numerical targets.

"We feel that if we don't compel them... they are not going to move," he said. The report came as unemployment rose to 32.6 percent in the first three months of this year, a record high in 13 years, with the total number of jobless increasing to 7.2 million partly as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. — AFP



All-new Land Cruiser 2022 being unveiled at Toyota's Abu Futeira showroom.



KUWAIT: Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer (right), Martin Aherne, Bader Faisal Al-Sayer and Hamad Al-Fouzan during the launch.

Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer, Toyota launch all-new Land Cruiser 2022 in Middle East

The most powerful, intelligent and advanced Land Cruiser ever made

KUWAIT: Reinforcing the legendary status of one of the Middle East's best-loved vehicles, Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer and Toyota have launched the eagerly-awaited new generation of its iconic Land Cruiser in Kuwait. The all-new Land Cruiser combines outstanding all-terrain performance with a spacious, high-quality interior to bring drivers and passengers an elevated experience on every trip.

ed evolution, with groundbreaking enhancements to the platform and powertrain, an overwhelming exterior presence and an interior appointed with enough luxury and functionality to make customers forget they are traveling over harsh terrain. The launch of the all-new Land Cruiser is a celebration of its 70th year as an icon, and I sincerely hope it can be a source of vitality and support for

gating today's urban cityscapes, the Land Cruiser's go-anywhere capability truly delivers the joy of mobility, bringing unrivaled performance, safety, and comfort to drivers and passengers alike."

"The legendary Land Cruiser embodies Toyota's reputation for reliability, durability, and capability, and has become an integral part of people's lives for 70 years not only in the Middle East, but in virtually every part of the globe. We thank our loyal customers for their enduring support and remain committed to working hand-in-hand to create ever-better cars," Fujita added.

Design dimensions

Toyota is so confident in the vehicle's proven design dimensions that its engineers have kept virtually all aspects unchanged, even with the implementation of the new TNGA platform. The all-new Land Cruiser retains its iconic size, while gaining an even stronger stance through its increased front and rear wheel tread. Technologies accumulated over many years have been paired with the latest breakthroughs to achieve improvements such as weight reduction, lowering the center of gravity, the adoption of new powertrains, new interior and exterior designs, and advanced safety features.

The 2022 Land Cruiser comes with a choice of three powertrain options, including two newly developed V6 twin-turbo engines. The V6 twin-turbo 3.5-liter petrol engine achieves class-leading performance that surpasses that of a conventional V8, producing 409 hp and up to 650 nm. Meanwhile, the V6 twin-turbo engine 3.3-liter diesel variant, which will be available to buy in the region soon, is capable of 302 hp and up to 700 nm. Both of these newly developed engines are mated to a 10-speed automatic transmission. The vehicle is also available with a naturally aspirated 4.0-liter V6 petrol engine that produces

271 hp and up to 385 nm mated to a 6-speed automatic transmission.

The all-new suspension setup features double-wishbone suspension at the front and a 4-link rigid suspension at the rear, delivering a higher level of on-road stability and off-road performance. The vehicle's lightweight, high-strength structure ensures excellent reliability and fuel efficiency. Additionally, the vehicle is available with Adaptive Variable Suspension System (AVS), depending on the grade, which optimally controls the damping force based on driving conditions to ensure refined ride comfort. The all-new Land Cruiser also introduces the All-Wheel Drive Integrated Management (AIM) concept, which delivers integrated control of the vehicle's drive force, AWD, suspension, braking and steering systems according to driving conditions to

Cruiser, enhancing cabin rigidity. The wide rear bumper also doubles as a step to offer greater convenience.

The all-new interior cocoons passengers in a sophisticated and comfortable space unaffected by the external environment. Controls and switches are intuitively grouped and easy to operate, even when driving on challenging roads. The cabin offers a range of advanced features such as wireless charging for smartphones, Active Noise Control, and a 4-zone automatic air conditioning system with rear control switches. The cluster gauge features a 7-inch color Multi-information Display (MID) and a 12.3-inch Multimedia display. Additional features available include a 14-speaker JBL sound system, ventilation for the first and second-row seats, a multi-adjustable power driver seat, 60:40 split-folding second-row seats, fully



KUWAIT: Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer (second left) with the Ambassador of Japan Masato Takaoka (second right).

Al-Sayer held the Kuwait premier for valued partners of Toyota as well as distinguished members of the press and media in adherence to the Ministry guidelines. The event was attended by the Ambassador of Japan Masato Takaoka, in the presence of Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer CEO, Martin Aherne Business Director, Bader Faisal Al-Sayer Toyota Marketing Manager and Hamad Al-Fouzan Senior Manager Product Planning representing Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer.

According to Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer "I feel extremely happy when I see members of my family, my friends and of course our customers, enjoying their Land Cruisers. They share a great bond with it, they are so confident in its ability, and they truly believe - Once a Land Cruiser, Always a Land Cruiser."

Since first launching in 1951, the Land Cruiser has become renowned for its exceptional off-road capabilities in adverse environments. Throughout its 70-year history, it has served as an indispensable tool that supports people's livelihoods in remote destinations, contributes to humanitarian aid and disaster relief efforts, and enriches people's lives through experiences only the Land Cruiser can provide.

A cumulative total of approximately 10.4 million units have been enjoyed by customers in 170 countries all over the world, and particularly in the Middle East where the Land Cruiser has attained a loyal following thanks to its reliability, durability, and superlative off-road performance. To continue responding to customers' expectations of the Land Cruiser as "a vehicle that allows people to go anywhere and everywhere and come back safe and sound," Toyota has been advancing and evolving the model by setting ever-higher development and evaluation standards based on the needs of drivers across the globe.

Martin Aherne said "Toyota designed the all new Land Cruiser drawing feedback from people right here from this region, our valued customers told Toyota what they wanted, Toyota listened and have developed the new Land Cruiser 300 based on your feedback".

Takami Yokoo, Chief Engineer in charge of development, commented: "I believe that regardless of how times change, Land Cruiser must remain true to its roots. As such, our goals for the new Land Cruiser are best-ever off-road performance as well as setting a new benchmark in body-on-frame on-road performance. My team and I are eager for customers to experience this long-anticipat-

our customers around the world."

"Land Cruiser is going to elevate its "King Of The Road" status to a whole new level, with an even better presence, and performance - appealing to both young & old, male or female, city lifestyle or desert camps," commented Bader Faisal Al-Sayer.

"We are excited to introduce the all-new Land Cruiser, an iconic vehicle that has earned its place in the hearts of drivers around the world and remains one of the region's most popular SUVs," said Kei Fujita, Chief Representative, Middle East and Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation. "Equally at home during off-road adventures or navi-

Taking mankind to new horizons

- Vehicle is available with choice of newly developed twin-turbocharged petrol and diesel engines for superior performance
- The all-new Land Cruiser's strong stance and robust exterior are complemented by a high-quality interior with exceptional cabin comfort
- Host of new technologies enhance both off-road handling and on-road comfort and stability
- High-strength structure ensures excellent reliability and durability
- Drivers and passengers enjoy greater peace of mind thanks to a host of advanced safety features
- 3500cc Twin Turbo - 409hp - 6 cylinder
- Automatic transmission - 10 Speed
- Hill-Start Assist Control (HAC)
- Down Hill Assist Control (DAC)
- Vehicle Dynamic Integrated Management (VDIM)
- Adaptive Variable Suspension System (AVS)
- Electronic Parking Brake (EPB) + Hold Function
- Radar Cruise Control and Pre-Crash Safety System
- BSM (Blind Spot Monitor) + RCTA (Rear Cross Traffic Alert)
- LDA (Lane Departure Alert)
- LTA (Lane Tracing Assist)
- Crawl Control
- 8 Airbags
- Alloy wheels 20 inches
- Power Back Door
- Sunroof
- LED headlights + Daytime Running Lamp (DRL) + Adaptive High Beam System (AHS)
- 7-inch Multi information Display
- 12.3-inch touch screen Display (Apple Carplay & Android Auto)
- Automatic 4 zones Air-conditioning
- 4 Cameras (Panoramic View Monitor + Multi Terrain Monitor)
- Mobile Wireless Charger
- Head-Up Display (HUD)
- Cooler Box
- Smooth Leather seats
- Power Front Seats + Ventilation & Heater Systems
- JBL Sound system with 14 Speakers
- Front & Rear Differential Lock System
- Drive Mode Select (ECO/Normal/Sport)
- Multi-Terrain Select (Auto/Rock/Dir/Mud/Sand/Dee p Snow)



The all-new Land Cruiser 2022

enhance driving pleasure.

The all-new Land Cruiser is equipped with the latest off-road driver assistance features, including a three Differential Lock system (front, central and rear) that is unique in the segment and provides enhanced off-road capabilities on rough terrain. Toyota's all-new Electronic-Kinetic Dynamic Suspension System (E-KDSS) enables independent front and rear suspension control with two independent loops mounted on a solid frame, a global first that allows customers to enjoy greater ride comfort and stability both on and off-road.

In addition, the new 3D-Multi Terrain Monitor (3D-MTM) assists the driver in determining the road conditions around the vehicle, a first for Toyota that facilitates safer and more confident low-speed maneuvering. A new AUTO mode enhances the capabilities of Multi-Terrain Select by adjusting according to road conditions such as sand, rock, dirt, and mud. The vehicle also features crawl control and turn assist functions.

A one-of-a-kind vehicle

The all-new Land Cruiser has evolved into a one-of-a-kind vehicle with the sophisticated charm of a flagship model, while inheriting the traditional traits of robustness and authenticity appropriate for a full-fledged off-roader. The front design builds on the heritage of previous models, with functional features such as headlamps and the radiator grille set higher to reduce the risk of damage during off-road driving. Constantly illuminated clearance lamps are connected with the radiator grille in a straight line to express the Land Cruiser's iconic design signature. The side of the vehicle features a powerful silhouette defined by sharply contrasting lines. The perfectly flat bonnet meets a vertical grille at a near 90-degree angle, which is matched by the roof and back door. The rear of the cabin brings the design together in a refined, modern shape that mirrors the straight lines of the front and side while underscoring the vehicle's powerful stance. A single-piece aluminum back door is used for the first time on a Land

flat-folding third-row seats, a power tailgate, and smart entry and start systems.

As with any other Toyota model, safety remains a top priority for the all-new Land Cruiser, which comes with an advanced safety system. This is complemented by Toyota Safety Sense, an advanced safety technology package that includes a Pre-Collision System (PCS) that introduces new features including Emergency Steering Assist (ESA) and Intersection Turn Assistance to help prevent collisions with vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. The package also includes Dynamic Radar Cruise Control (DRCC) with Full-Speed Range, Lane Tracing Assist (LTA), Lane Departure Alert (LDA), and Automatic High Beam (AHB).

In addition, the car features a comprehensive array of safety features to protect its occupants, such as 8 SR airbags, including side-curtain airbags for all three rows, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Traction Control (TRC), Anti-lock Brake System (ABS), Brake Assist (BA), Parking Support Brake (PKSB), Blind Spot Monitor (BSM), Multi-terrain Monitor (MTM) including Panoramic View Monitor (PVM), Rear Cross Traffic Alert (RCTA), Downhill Assist Control (DAC), Tire Pressure Warning System (TPWS), Drive Start Control (DSC), driver and front passenger seatbelts with pre-tensioners and force limiters, and a clearance sonar featuring eight sensors located in the front and rear bumpers.

Available in 10 distinctive exterior colors, the all-new Land Cruiser allows customers to express their individuality. These include three newly available colors: Precious White Pearl, with true pearl texture and high brightness; Dark Blue MC, a high-quality dark blue that reflects urban styling; and Avant-garde Bronze ME, a rich bronze with a strong presence. Meanwhile, the interior is available in a choice of Neutral Beige, Black, or Dark Red. The vehicle also comes equipped with new 17-inch, 18-inch, or 20-inch alloy wheels. The 18-inch wheels are available in a choice of two designs, one of which offers better off-road performance while the other expresses functional beauty and practicality.



This photo shows model maker Maggie Chan of Toma Miniatures working at her studio in Hong Kong. — AFP photos



A recreation of a scene from old Hong Kong, created by model makers Maggie Chan and Tony Lai of Toma Miniatures, pictured at their studio in Hong Kong.



Model maker Maggie Chan of Toma Miniatures working at her studio in Hong Kong.



Model maker Maggie Chan of Toma Miniatures working at her studio in Hong Kong.



Model makers Maggie Chan (right) and Tony Lai of Toma Miniatures posing for a photo at their studio in Hong Kong.



A recreation of a scene from old Hong Kong, created by model makers Maggie Chan and Tony Lai of Toma Miniatures.



Model maker Maggie Chan of Toma Miniatures working at her studio in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong artists revive city's bygone era with miniatures

In a packed metropolis where old buildings are frequently replaced by gleaming skyscrapers, two Hong Kong model makers are trying to preserve the city's architectural past in painstakingly detailed miniature form. Stepping into Tony Lai and Maggie Chan's studio is like walking into a time machine, if that time machine also shrunk everything around except yourself. In one corner, an entire fairground is laid out, complete with moving rides and a revolving ferris wheel. On the other side, a tiny reenactment of the city's fire dragon festival is underway. Elsewhere is a meticulously recreated revolving restaurant and an entire housing block, complete with window laundry and the fast disappearing neon signs that once lit up Hong Kong's streets with kaleidoscopic abandon.

The two artists share a common passion in bringing their childhood scenes back to life, and say that Hong Kongers are keen to glimpse into the past or recapture faded memories. "When elderly people see our creations, it ignites their memories," said Lai, gesturing to their recreation of Kai Tak Amusement Park, which was demolished in 1982. "We would often even see elderly people whose eyes would tear up when they saw our models," he added. Preserving the past is difficult in Hong Kong. Historical buildings are often pitted against powerful billionaire real estate developers and government planners who are eager to build more high rise apartment blocks in a city where housing is in desperately short supply. Many colonial buildings and features that were prized by architects, historians and locals have been torn down, although more recent governments have begun to take a slightly more pro-active role in protecting heritage sites.

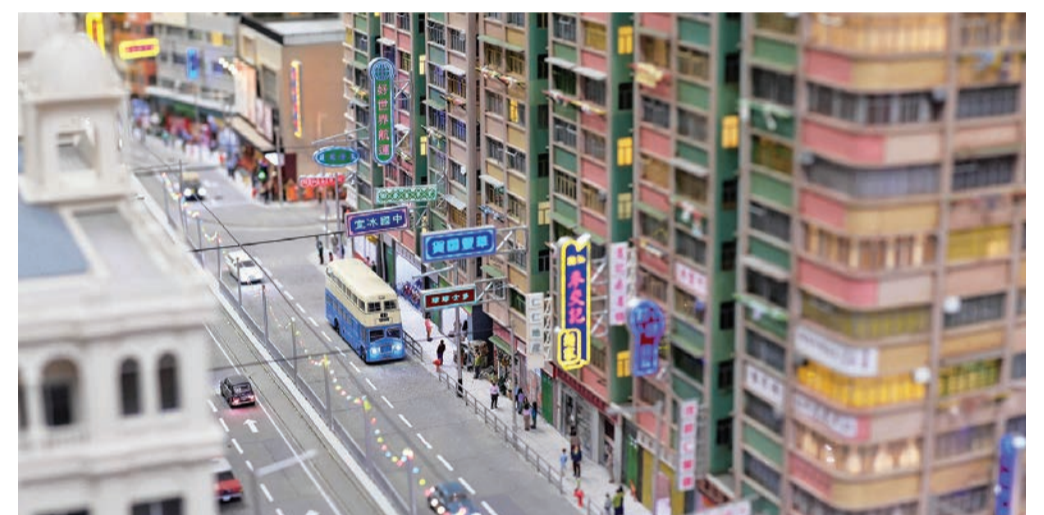
Fishing for memories

Born and raised in Hong Kong, Lai fondly remembers his father taking him out on a boat to the city's outlying Lamma Island, where fishing communities lived in tumble down wooden houses on the shoreline. One of the most complex creations in Chan and

Lai's TOMA Miniatures studio is a diorama depicting residents doing their daily chores in such a village. "That memory has stuck with me up until now," he said. Chan is equally talented in her memory and penchant for details. "Tony focuses on the big structures, I focus on the smaller details," she said. Chan drew inspiration from her father bringing home local dishes and snacks, and began

'Disappearing one by one'

Other buildings are not so lucky. Hong Kong authorities recently gave the green light to demolish a four-story pre-war heritage building in Jordan district, a move which has been condemned by heritage conservation groups. Another likely victim is the city's General Post Office, a post-war modernist block on a prime piece of harbourfront land



A recreation of a scene from old Hong Kong, created by model makers Maggie Chan and Tony Lai of Toma Miniatures, pictured at their studio in Hong Kong.

her career by creating miniature versions of Hong Kong foods.

"Even just a poster or a bowl of beef brisket noodles, it could get people to remember something and become emotional," she explained. Last year, a historic theatre in the city's North Point district that first opened in 1952 faced an uncertain fate after being purchased by real estate developers.

With its distinctive parabolic concrete arched roofs, it was featured in the 1978 film "Game of Death" starring Bruce Lee, during the golden era of Hong Kong cinema. The theatre was only saved from demolition last month, when property developers instead announced that it would be revamped as a multi-billion dollar heritage site.

that is slated to be replaced by a glitzy commercial development. "Hong Kong is a big city, so there's lots of architecture or things from our childhood that have disappeared one by one," said Lai. "If we can use our abilities with miniature models as a way to recreate these, then it's a happy thing."

Aside from whipping up joyful, nostalgic memories for residents young and old, the two also hope that international travellers can see their models again once the pandemic ends. "Hopefully when they visit, they can see that there's lots of things here that they have not yet discovered," says Chan. "I hope our creations can bring a sense of what Hong Kong is actually like." — AFP

Petzone: Celebrating 10 years of outstanding animal care

It all started in 2010 with a vision. That vision was to provide outstanding animal care to the growing number of pet owners in Kuwait. As demand grew, Petzone expanded. Today, Petzone is a pet care leader in the region, celebrating over ten years in business. It has an expansive empire of 19 stores across Kuwait and the UAE and delivery services in Saudi Arabia.

Petzone is more than just a pet supply superstore. It is a community. Employees have a passion for caring for animals, just like the customers and pets who visit. This dedication is what has made Petzone thrive throughout the past decade. In the next decade, Petzone plans to continue improving services for pet owners and expanding to serve even more clientele.

Products and services

Petzone stores have all of the supplies that a pet owner could need and want. These massive stores carry accessories, food, and supplies for dogs, cats, birds, horses, small animals, reptiles, and

aquatic animals. Their stores carry trusted top-of-the-line international brands. Its variety makes it convenient for pet owners to choose the best products for their beloved animals.

Petzone carries harnesses, clothing, food, toys, and healthcare products for its cats, dogs, and small animals. In addition, there are food, aquariums, and habitats for its reptile and aquatic animal owning clientele. Bird owners can find a wide range of cages, bird feed, and grooming and bathing products for their pets. However, Petzone doesn't just carry pet products. It offers many services for pet owners.

Stores have certified cat and dog stylists and professionally trained groomers ready to pamper their client's pets. They can accommodate all sizes of cats and dogs. Petzone's basic grooming services include bathing, nail trimming, and ear and eye cleaning. Full services also include grooming.

In addition to these packages, there are many individual services that

Petzone groomers offer. Pets can get any of these a la carte and add teeth brushing, back shaving, dry showers, anal gland expressions, and paw trimming. Birds can also feel pampered at Petzone. Groomers offer full-service bathing, nail clipping, wing clipping, and beak trimming to customers.

The Petzone experience

Petzone offers some unique experiences that you can't find anywhere else. Not only do they store sell high-quality products, but they also have educational activities and events. One inventive idea that Petzone came up with within their ten years of business is affordable educational programming for school children.

School children can take an indoor Petzone Tour of all the store's facilities. They visit the showroom, take a pet training course, and interact with cute animals. Another experience is Kids Adventure. Kids aged four and older will spend two hours with the Petzone family and choose up to two educational activities.

Participants also receive a fish, plastic aquarium, and food. Lastly, Petzone has event spaces to throw birthday parties for children. Kids can have a two-hour birthday party in Petzone's theater for up to twenty guests. There are games, gifts, photos, and plenty of adorable pets. Providing these services is an innovative business model that Petzone has created to foster a sense of community. These activities inspire the next generation to care for animals. Perhaps some of these children will be the future of Petzone!

Looking forward to the future

With ten years of experience under their belt, what is next for this pet care business? One thing is sure, Petzone will continue to expand and innovate. With significant world events like COVID-19, the store chain has already shown that it can pivot and adapt.

Throughout the pandemic, Petzone has continued to be a leader in the animal care community. The store provided service for those unable to visit in person by

offering free delivery and online ordering. Their mobile app made it even easier to access these services. This focus on providing outstanding care will be an integral part of the store's growth in the next decade.

Petzone is also continually expanding its territory to provide coverage to more pet owners. This year, it opened a new location in Aswaq Al-Qurain. While the store chain started in Kuwait, it now offers services in the UAE and shipping to Saudi Arabia. It will be exciting to see where Petzone will go next and build new communities of animal lovers. Finally, another cornerstone of Petzone's business model in the past decade has been giving back. The company works closely with local animal welfare by supporting them, providing shelters, and hosting educational activities. The past ten years have been exciting for Petzone, and the next ten will surely be just as sensational.



Romanian seasonal worker Constantin Anghel picks strawberries at Hugh Lowe Farms, near Maidstone, Kent. — AFP photos



Strawberries are the only fruit for Wimbledon spectators

The players who dominated Wimbledon over the past three decades may have changed, from Pete Sampras and Steffi Graf to Roger Federer and Serena Williams, but one feature has remained constant—the supplier of its trademark strawberries. Hugh Lowe Farms, situated near Maidstone in Kent, the county known as ‘The Garden of England’, has been the sole supplier of the fruit so closely associated with the Grand Slam event for almost 30 years. It is a family business with present managing director Marion Regan having taken over from her father, Hugh Lowe, who had succeeded his grandfather in running the operation.

Regan told AFP the importance to the business of the 30 tons they supply over the fortnight—a freshly picked delivery arriving in south-west London every day is huge even though it is a tiny percentage of their annual sales of 5000 tons. After a year’s hiatus due to the championships being cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic it is all systems go even if last year’s strawberries did find eager consumers in the children of key workers, at local schools and food banks. “To us the Wimbledon order is absolutely pivotal because it is such a high profile event and you realize people from all over the world are eating your strawberries,” she told AFP.

“It does rather focus the mind and is



Romanian seasonal worker Constantin Anghel picks strawberries at Hugh Lowe Farms.



A box of strawberries destined for the Wimbledon tennis tournament, are pictured at Hugh Lowe Farms.



Romanian seasonal worker Constantin Anghel picks strawberries at Hugh Lowe Farms.

slightly nerve wracking as it is a very high-profile strawberry outing.” Regan, whose daughter is the fifth generation of the family to become involved in the business, says there is daily feedback from the chefs and those who procure the fruit for the championships. “Yes I think I would be wrong to say I don’t have nerves over supplying two weeks of the championships,” she said.

“It is nerve wracking with us being reliant on the weather and the vagaries of the market. “Wimbledon food and drink is

a very special event with fantastic chefs and people in the food and drink department. “I do not want to let anyone down with what we are sending.”

‘Pickers from Barbados’

Her nerves are understandable as the strawberries do not come cheap once they are sold on at Wimbledon. Based on 2019, spectators were forking out £2.50 (\$3.50) for a minimum of 10 strawberries. The consumers may be unaware but there is a skilled and tireless set of

fruit pickers who have played an integral role in their enjoyment. The fruit pickers make up the majority of the 700 farm employees through the season which runs from April to November—a stark contrast to when the strawberries used to peak at the end of June.

“The historic association (between Wimbledon and strawberries) is the strawberry season always peaked at the end of June back in the days when it was a very short season, so it was a ‘get them while you can’ sort of spirit and associated with

the height of summer,” she said. The farm used to rely largely on workers from Bulgaria and Romania. However, since Brexit they have had to cast their net wider and this year she even has pickers from Barbados. One of her star pickers, though, is Romanian.

Constantin Anghel has been coming for four years after hearing about the opportunity from a friend. Anghel goes up and down the lanes of the polytunnel placing the good strawberries into the punnets and the bad ones into a wastebin on the side of his trolley, without damaging the plants.

He averages, he says, 40 kilos an hour. “It is a very skilled job,” says Regan. “To those starting out that must look almost impossible but everyone who comes has full training and given time to get up to speed. “It does take a lot of experience to get to that level of skill.” To Regan they may not be dressed in the tennis whites of the Wimbledon players but they do share similarities. “It (fruit-picking) really suits those who are competitive and sporty as you are measuring your performance against your own targets and others in your team,” she said. “So yes it (them possessing sporting ability) is the best way at looking at it.” — AFP



Romanian seasonal worker Constantin Anghel picks strawberries at Hugh Lowe Farms.



Managing Director, Marion Regan poses amongst the strawberries at Hugh Lowe Farms.

‘Dragon Man’: Scientists say new human species is our closest ancestor

A skull preserved almost perfectly for more than 140,000 years in north-eastern China represents a new species of ancient people more closely related to us than even Neanderthals—and could fundamentally alter our understanding of human evolution, scientists announced Friday. It belonged to a large-brained male in his 50s with deep set eyes and thick brow ridges. Though his face was wide, it had flat, low cheekbones that made him resemble modern people more closely than other extinct members of the

human family tree. The research team has linked the specimen to other Chinese fossil findings and is calling the species Homo longi or “Dragon Man,” a reference to the region where it was discovered.

The Harbin cranium was first found in 1933 in the city of the same name but was reportedly hidden in a well for 85 years to protect it from the Japanese army. It was later dug up and handed to Ji Qiang, a professor at Hebei GEO University, in 2018. “On our analyses, the Harbin group is more closely linked to H. sapiens than the Neanderthals are—that is, Harbin shared a more recent common ancestor with us than the Neanderthals did,” co-author Chris Stringer of the Natural History Museum, London told AFP. This, he said, would make Dragon Man our “sister species” and a closer ancestor of modern man than the Neanderthals. The findings were published in three papers in the journal The Innovation.

The skull dates back at least 146,000 years, placing it in the Middle Pleistocene. “While it shows typical archaic human fea-



A handout photo shows a virtual reconstruction of the Harbin cranium.

tures, the Harbin cranium presents a mosaic combination of primitive and derived characters setting itself apart from all the other previously named Homo species,” said Ji, who led the research. The name is derived from Long Jiang, which literally means “Dragon River.” Dragon Man probably lived in a forested floodplain environment as part of a small community. “This population would have been hunter-gatherers, living off the land,” said Stringer. “From the winter temperatures in Harbin today, it looks like they were coping with even harsher cold than the Neanderthals.” Given the location where the skull was found as well as the large-sized man it implies, the team believe H. longi may have been well adapted for harsh environments and would have been able to disperse throughout Asia.

Family tree

Researchers first studied the cranium, identifying over 600 traits they fed into a computer model that ran millions of simu-

lations to determine the evolutionary history and relationships between different species. “These suggest that Harbin and some other fossils from China form a third lineage of later humans alongside the Neanderthals and H. sapiens,” explained Stringer. The other findings include a fossilized skull from the Chinese province of Dali that is thought to be 200,000 years old and was found in 1978, and a jaw found in Tibet dating to 160,000 years ago.

Stringer explained that his Chinese colleagues had decided upon the name H. longi, which he called a “great name,” but said he would have been equally happy to refer to the species as H. daliensis, which was previously used for the Dali cranium.

More than 100,000 years ago, several human species coexisted across Eurasia and Africa, including our own, Neanderthals and Denisovans, a recently discovered sister species to Neanderthals. “Dragon man” might now be added to that list. An alternative explanation is that H. longi and Denisovans are in fact one and the same. Fossils so far attributed to Denisovans include teeth and bones but not a full skull, so scientists are unsure what they looked like. But Neanderthals and Denisovans were genetically closer to each other than to Sapiens, while the new study suggests H. longi were more anatomically similar to us than Neanderthals. The lingering uncertainty may therefore require future genetic sequencing to help clear up. — AFP



A handout photo shows a reconstruction of Dragon Man in his habitat.



A handout photo shows an illustration of a portrait of Dragon Man. — AFP photos



Relentless Ronaldo makes Portugal believe again before Belgium

MADRID: Portugal felt the full range of emotions during the Euro 2020 group stage and with Cristiano Ronaldo in the groove again, they can really begin to believe. After scoring three late goals to beat Hungary, Portugal were shaken by a 4-2 loss to Germany, only for a 2-2 draw against France to restore morale and ensure they snuck out of Group F in third place.

The result is a last-16 clash with Belgium in Seville tonight, when one of the tournament favorites will bow out in what is surely the blockbuster tie of the round. One of the frontrunners for the Golden Boot will fall too, with Ronaldo and Belgium's Romelu Lukaku both in contention. Ronaldo leads the scoring charts on five goals with Lukaku not far behind on three.

Portugal may have taken only a point from a sweaty contest with France at the Puskas Arena in Budapest but the belief and confidence gained from going toe-to-toe with the world champions could be pivotal for the rest of their tournament. After chaos against Germany came concentration against the French, a committed, organized and aggressive performance which was a reminder of what carried Portugal to success at Euro 2016 and in the Nations League three years later.

"We were strong and consistent. The players helped each other, we had possession, we attacked well. We improved a lot from the game against Germany," said Portugal's coach Fernando Santos afterwards. Santos had responded too, reacting to criticism by reverting to his traditional 4-3-3 system of the past two years and making some bold changes to his starting line-up.

'We can beat anyone'

William Carvalho and Bruno Fernandes, who both struggled in the first two games, made way for the

young Renato Sanches and the veteran Joao Moutinho, who both rose to the challenge against Paul Pogba and N'Golo Kante.

Sanches brought some much-needed dynamism to the team while the 34-year-old Moutinho's surgical passing gave Portugal the guile and direction they had lacked against Germany. "We can fight against the best teams," said Santos. "Either we believe or we don't because we can beat anyone and I'll keep saying it — no team thinks they will have an easy time against Portugal."

The principal threat against Belgium will be Ronaldo who, at 36, is sparkling again on the biggest stage, delivering goals and breaking records from the outset. Ronaldo had never previously scored in six meetings with France but his two penalties means he has already achieved his best Euro tally, after scoring twice in 2004, once in 2008 and three times in both 2012 and 2016.

He has pulled five clear of Michel Platini's previous record of nine goals in total at European Championships and became the first ever to score in five different editions of the competition. Against France, Ronaldo also equaled the world record for international goals held since 2006 by Ali Daei, who has 109 for Iran.

There may be an added personal incentive for Ronaldo to outshine Lukaku, who pipped the Juventus striker to Serie A's player of the season award last season despite scoring five fewer goals. Lukaku's 24 goals were fundamental to Inter Milan's Scudetto success but the 28-year-old's work rate, pressing and link-up play meant he was more of an overall contributor than Ronaldo. In contrast, Ronaldo is all about the end-game — the goals, the victories and the trophies, with Portugal hoping to follow his lead. —AFP



SEVILLE: A combination of file pictures shows Belgium's forward Romelu Lukaku (left) and Portugal's forward Cristiano Ronaldo. —AFP



Germany's Mueller declares himself fit for England showdown

HERZOGENAUACH: Germany forward Thomas Mueller insists his knee injury will not stop him facing England in Tuesday's blockbuster Euro 2020 last 16 clash at Wembley. "If I it was a problem, I wouldn't have trained today," Mueller said yesterday at Germany's Euro 2020 base camp in Bavaria. "The capsular injury does not hold me back and I am experienced enough to deal with it. I'm convinced it won't be a problem for Tuesday."

Mueller is expected to start against England having been left out of the line-up for Wednesday's 2-2 draw with Hungary, in which he came on as a second-half replacement. The 31-year-old Mueller and Germany captain Manuel Neuer, 35, are the only survivors from the team which beat England 4-1 in the last 16 of the 2010 World Cup. Sunday marks exactly 11 years since that match.

"We won against England in 2010 - that has nothing to do with Tuesday, but it might give some of you a good feeling," he told reporters. "We are looking forward to playing a big name in England. Both teams had convincing performances in the group stages, but also had games where they were criticized. We were hoping to play better against

Hungary, but now it's a knockout game." Yesterday was the 25-year anniversary of Germany's Euro 96 semi-final win over England at Wembley where current Three Lions manager Gareth Southgate missed the crucial penalty in the shoot-out.

Keep Kane quiet

"It was the first tournament that I was really aware of," said Bayern Munich star Mueller, who was six years old at the time. "But even then it was a close result. Personally, I have a good experience of playing at Wembley Stadium having won the Champions League final there in 2013."

This is Mueller's third European Championship, yet he is still waiting for his first goal at the tournament. "It would be nice to score on Tuesday, but the most important thing for me is that we go through," he said.

Like Mueller, England striker Harry Kane has yet to open his goal account at the finals and the Germans aim to keep the opposing captain quiet at Wembley.

"Great strikers are the best at being patient," said Mueller, who has scored 39 goals in 105 internationals since his Germany debut in 2010. "A striker is always waiting for his chances. He usually has the least contact with the ball, but the biggest picture in the newspaper after the game. I don't know why he hasn't got into the final positions that he usually gets into. For us, it would be no problem at all if the discussion (about Kane's form) lasts until Wednesday and we don't concede a goal."



HERZOGENAUACH: Germany's midfielder Jamal Musiala and forward Thomas Mueller (right) attend an autograph-signing session with supporters after their training at the team base camp in Herzogenaurach yesterday during the UEFA Euro 2020 football competition. —AFP

Czechs miss training in Budapest over bizarre plane defect

PRAGUE: A plane door defect involving an inflated evacuation slide stopped the Czech Republic on their way to a Euro 2020 knockout game against the Netherlands in Budapest, the team said yesterday. The Czechs, who qualified as the third best team in Group D, are facing Group C winners the Netherlands at the Puskas Arena in a last-16 tie tonight.

The players were already sitting on the special plane on Saturday morning, but they had to get off over the defect. "I have experienced delayed flights, postponed flights, even cancelled flights because of the coronavirus," tweeted midfielder Alex Kral. "But this is my first flight that didn't happen because of an evacuation slide inflated by mistake," said the Spartak Moscow player. He added photos of the slide from inside and outside the plane, complete with a "slidesandjumpingcastles" hashtag. National team spokesman Petr Sedivy said later the flight was "not cancelled over an evacuation slide inflated BY MISTAKE but over technical problems with the plane door". —AFP

Czechs face Netherlands with history on their side

PRAGUE: The Czech Republic will enter tonight's last-16 game against the Netherlands at Euro 2020 as the odds-on favorites, at least when it comes to the history of their head-to-head encounters. Since the Czech Republic emerged as an independent state in 1993, its national team has won five games and lost three against the Dutch, on top of three draws.

Before that, Czechoslovakia memorably beat the Netherlands on the way to their only European Championship title in Belgrade in 1976, having edged Johan Cruyff and company 3-1 after extra time in the semi-final. Czechoslovakia were not there to stop the Dutch when they won the 1988 title in West Germany.

But Czech fans cherish above all the memory of an epic

battle at Euro 2004 in Portugal, won by the Czechs who came back from 2-0 down to win 3-2. "People still remember that one best," says Vladimir Smicer, the former Lens and Liverpool winger, who scored the decider after a selfless pass from Karel Poborsky.

Aside from those two, the star-studded Czech team comprised Petr Cech, Pavel Nedved, Tomas Rosicky, Jan Koller, Milan Baros and Tomas Galasek, who spent a decade playing in the Netherlands. Galasek is now an assistant to Czech coach Jaroslav Silhavy, who was in turn an assistant to coach Karel Bruckner in Portugal. "The team was really fantastic. We all played in top clubs. It was the most total football we ever played," said Smicer, who now works as a Euro studio pundit for Czech Television.

'A pretty crazy game'

"Everyone at home went crazy after the comeback. People started to believe we could win the whole Euro," Smicer added. Both teams went on to reach the last four at the 2004 tournament, with the trophy lifted by Greece who beat the Czech Republic on a silver goal in the semi-finals.

The first win by an independent Czech Republic dates from Euro qualifying in 1995 — the Czechs won 3-1,

advanced to the tournament and finished as runners-up. The latest sweet memories are as recent as the Euro 2016 qualifying campaign.

The Czech Republic beat the Netherlands twice, 2-1 at home and 3-2 in Amsterdam, the latter when Robin van Persie scored a bizarre own goal to help the 10-man Czechs advance to the finals while the Dutch stayed at home. In that game, the first goal was scored by Pavel Kaderabek, who may appear in the Czech line-up tonight as a replacement for Jan Boril, ruled out by suspension.

"Every player remembers his national team goals, so I can still recall that game," said the Hoffenheim defender. "It was a pretty crazy game. But if people ask me to pick one special game against the Netherlands, I won't say 2004 but 2015," Kaderabek added.

Boril's place may also be taken by Brescia defender Ales Mateju, who spent half a season at PSV Eindhoven as a youth player in 2014. "I remember meeting Memphis Depay on the pitch, but it's been a really long time," Mateju said, refusing to view the history as an advantage. "I guess we have a better head-to-head record, but time has passed and we are now facing a really strong team. They won the group so easily." —AFP



PRAGUE: Czech Republic's players take part in a training session on Friday in Prague, during the UEFA Euro 2020 football competition. —AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals

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

CHANGE OF NAME

Mathews Palookunnel Thomas, holder of Indian Passport K5707962 issued at Kuwait on 17/06/2012, resident of Palookunnel House Nimalagiri Peruvanthanam Kerala, and presently residing at Kuwait Po Box 5640 safat 13057, do hereby change the name of my minor child Alen Mathews Palookunnel, holder of Indian Passport R2318945

issued at Kuwait on 04/04/2017, from Alen Mathews Palookunnel to Alen Mathews with immediate effect. (C 0612) 27-6-2021

I have changed my name from Shehzad Shabbir Siddiqui to Shehzad Shabbir Ratlamwala as per gazette no. (M-19118033). (C 0611) 23-6-2021

EMERGENCY ☎ 112

Dolberg stars as Denmark outclass Wales to reach Euro 2020 quarter-finals

AMSTERDAM: Denmark marked the 29th anniversary of their greatest triumph by marching on to the quarter-finals of Euro 2020 yesterday as Kasper Dolberg scored twice in an emphatic 4-0 win over Wales before an exultant travelling support in Amsterdam.

In the city where Christian Eriksen made his name, it was Dolberg—another former Ajax player—who opened the scoring with a fizzing strike in the 27th minute. That came after Wales had started so well but Denmark never looked back and Dolberg struck again just after the restart before Joakim Maehle and Martin Braithwaite added more goals late on.

Carried by a wave of emotion, Danish dreams are still intact in a tournament that began in such traumatic circumstances for them with Eriksen's collapse in their opening match against Finland in Copenhagen. They now go on to a last-eight tie in Baku against the Netherlands or the Czech Republic.

Eriksen, still recovering at home after his cardiac arrest, was present in everyone's minds at the home of Ajax, and that combined with a vast Danish support inside the one-third full Johan Cruyff Arena made this occasion really like a home game for them.

European champions against all odds when they beat Germany in the final on this day in 1992, Denmark finally have their first win in the knockout phase of a Euro since then and it would be a truly extraordinary story if they could repeat the feat this time.

Nobody in Denmark will want to get ahead of themselves but Wales—who finished with 10 men after Harry Wilson's late red card—could certainly have no complaints about the outcome and there will be no repeat of their run to the semi-finals at Euro 2016.

Wales up against it

They needed a moment of magic from captain Gareth Bale or Aaron Ramsey which never came, but in truth they were up against it from the outset. Aside from the universal goodwill towards Denmark following Eriksen's collapse, a ban on travellers from the United Kingdom entering the Netherlands meant there were very few Welsh supporters inside the stadium.

Danes, in contrast, descended in their droves on Amsterdam, creating an atmosphere not far off that seen at the Parken Stadium in Copenhagen when they beat Russia to qualify for the last 16 — even the Danish Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, was in attendance.

To their credit Wales started well, with the probing Bale leading by example in the early stages. He crashed a shot just wide in the 10th minute, but then Chelsea's Andreas Christensen—Denmark's third center-back—stepped up into midfield and they took control.

They were rewarded when Dolberg, now of Nice in France and selected ahead of Yussuf Poulsen in attack, collected the ball just outside the area and unleashed a superb strike into the far corner of the net.

For Wales, the signs that it was not to



AMSTERDAM: Denmark's forward Martin Braithwaite (center) and team-mates celebrate with their fans at the end of the UEFA Euro 2020 round of 16 football match between Wales and Denmark at the Johan Cruyff Arena in Amsterdam. — AFP

be their night kept coming, as right-back Connor Roberts suffered a groin injury and had to come off. Then giant striker Kieffer Moore was booked for a foul on Danish captain Simon Kjaer, meaning a suspension for the next round if Wales made it through.

Robert Page's side would not make it through as they fell further behind three

minutes into the second half. Neco Williams, the Liverpool full-back who had replaced Roberts, tried to clear a Braithwaite cross but only succeeded in playing the ball straight to Dolberg who seized the chance to make it 2-0.

Bale and his teammates felt there had been a foul on Moore at the start of the move but the German referee waved

away the complaints and the only surprise was that it took until the dying minutes for more goals to come.

Mathias Jensen picked out the unmarked Maehle to score the third in the 88th minute, before Wilson saw red for a foul on Maehle and Braithwaite made it 4-0, a goal given after a lengthy VAR review. — AFP



Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in the Arabian Gulf

REGISTER TODAY
for the **COVID-19 vaccine**

Free for all residents of Kuwait. To register visit:

www.moh.gov.kw

STEP 1: Click on COVID-19 VACCINE REGISTRATION STEP 2: FILL OUT BASIC INFORMATION STEP 3: SUBMIT FORM

The COVID-19 vaccine is safe, effective and approved by Kuwait's Ministry of Health