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Hunt for Florida collapse survivors; 159 still missing



Afghan leader meets
Biden as US exit looms



Hong Kong artists revive city's bygone era with miniatures



Ronaldo makes Portugal believe again before Belgium



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V O L V O

# 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 aboad

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 rail-way 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-mostly 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 Iranlinked 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 Iraq 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.

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

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#### 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

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

**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 sixweek 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

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

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.

sador's visit to the complex of the social care

**KUWAIT:** Undersecretary of the Ministry of homes, where the two sides exchanged the expe-Social Affairs Muslim Al-Subaie received riences of the two countries in the field of child-Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Kuwait hood and social care. The guests were briefed on Igor Hajdusek and his spouse, during the ambas- the services provided to the residents of social care homes for children

#### Jihadist motive not ruled out in...

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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

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. 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

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

#### **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 yesterday, 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

Sunday, June 27, 2021 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.

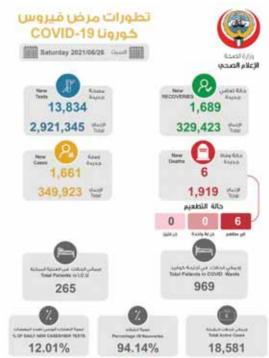
The number of people hospitalized with the virus stood at 18,581, with 265 of them in intensive care units, down from 18,615 and 271 respectively a day before, while Thursday's patients were at 18,555 and 267 respectively. Of the new cases announced yesterday, 32 percent were recorded in the Ahmadi governorate, 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

#### 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





#### **Kuwait-chaired UNESCO** committee approves AI code of ethics

PARIS: A Kuwait-chaired UNESCO an 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. Nahham 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.







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#### **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

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#### 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.



#### 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.

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

Afghan leader meets Biden as



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## 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 12story 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."

#### 'We have hope'

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

support to the families, calling it a "tough, tough "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

Azizinamini, 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," Azizinamini said. "Unfortunately that is not going to be happening in a matter of days, weeks." "It's going to take some time."—AFP



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#### 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 largescale cross-border response is essential for an additional 12 months to save lives," he said. —AFP



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International Sunday, June 27, 2021

# 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.

fore 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.

Dr Zubaydullo

Zubaydov

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.

#### 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 Moise has announced. On Twitter late Thursday, Moise 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 Moise 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

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 oneswhich 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

#### 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.



CUCUTA, Colombia: Colombia's President Ivan Duque (left) walks surrounded by bodyguards close to the presidential helicopter at the tarmac of the Camilo 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

## 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,

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

Sunday, June 27, 2021 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 Taleban 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 Taleban pushed

Ghani was in Washington along with Abdullah Abdullah, who oversees Kabul's peace negotiations with the Taleban, 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 Taleban 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 Taleban 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 twoday visit to Washington. With the US military's onthe-ground support for Afghan security forces about to disappear completely, Washington is expecting him to reach a negotiated settlement on power sharing with the Taleban 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 Taleban 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 Taleban.

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 Taleban 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

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 Rocio 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 carbomb 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

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



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

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

#### Thousands climb Indonesian volcano for ritual sacrifice

PROBOLINGGO, Indonesia: backs, made their way to the top 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

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



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

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 Suprapto, 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

**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 Chorlins, 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 United 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. — AFF

#### **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. — AFF



Subcommittee hearing on the Federal Reserves 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 yearon-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 economiRates 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 threeday suspension of its quarantine-free travel arrangement with Australia yesterday, with Wellington citing "multiple" outbreaks of COVID-19 in the neighboring

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 Oueensland 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

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 quarantinefree 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

Sunday, June 27, 2021

**NBK Economic Report** 

## Kuwait's economic activity gaining traction in Q2 on consumer spending

#### Low-skilled resident workers depart, wage growth slows

**KUWAIT:** The gradual recovery observed during the first quarter of the year looks to be proceeding through Q2. Consumer spending has rebounded, business activity is slowly improving, household borrowing is gaining traction and projects activity has inched up. Inflation has also increased, driven by both rising food prices and ongoing supply chain constraints, while the stock market has continued to rally, motivated by increased bullishness about regional and international economic growth amid the easing of mobility restrictions and increased vaccine penetration.

Still, recent national accounts data show that the economy has a long way to go to recover the ground lost last year due to the pandemic. The same goes for the public finances, which were severely affected by the precipitous drop in oil prices last year and which has caused liquidity at the state's General Reserve Fund to tighten. While the recent increase in oil prices to above \$70/bbl will provide some much-needed relief, high rates of spending mean that the budget will remain in deficit unless oil prices rise (sustainably) even further, while deficit financing will continue to be a challenge without the passage of the debt law.

#### GDP falls sharply in 2020

The negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic on economic activity last year was evident in the GDP figures recently published by the Central Statistical Bureau. Output declined by 8.9 percent in 2020 (-11.2 percent y/y in 4Q20), a second consecutive annual contraction (-0.6 percent in 2019) and the steepest since the global financial crisis in 2009. Both the oil and the non-oil sectors registered falls of around 8.8 percent in 2020. Oil output was curtailed by Kuwait's participation in the OPEC+ production cuts-a response to the record drop in oil demand and prices caused by the pandemic in April 2020.

Non-oil GDP (-8.8 percent; -7.4 percent y/y in 4Q20) experienced its most severe contraction in the annual data series available. Indeed, output was back at levels last seen in 2014. 'Other services', (-7.6 percent in 2020) which includes real estate, manufacturing (-32.6 percent), trade (-12.1 percent) and telecommunications (-6.8 percent) were especially hard-hit. Construction, however, was the worst performing sector, declining 43.2 percent, with many projects understandably delayed. In contrast, public administration and defense, education and health and social work posted gains.

Looking ahead, with vaccination efforts stepping up and mobility restrictions lifted, business activity is benefitting from considerable pent-up consumer demand. The government's expansionary fiscal stance as per its FY2021/22 budget should also support activity. The fact that oil prices have topped \$70/bbl will help in that regard. We expect that non-oil growth could rebound to 3.0 percent in 2021, helping push headline growth to 0.5 percent. Oil GDP could fall by less than previously estimated (-1.6 percent), if

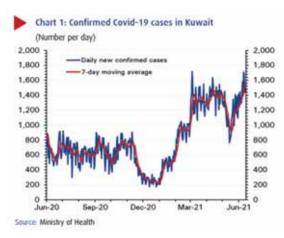
#### Burgan Bank announces its 'Mega Hit' offer

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank's prepaid and credit cardholders can now benefit from the exclusive monthly 'Mega Hit Offer' through its partnership with 'Best Al-Yousifi', the leading electronics store in Kuwait. The bank's valued customers will be given the chance to purchase "Apple Airpods Max" for a special discounted price on Sunday, 27th of June, 2021.

The offer provides limited quantities of the highly demanded headphone and is valid for 24 hours only. Customers can benefit from the 'Mega Hit Offer' while making other purchases only through the "Best Al-Yousifi" website or mobile application. As the only bank in Kuwait to provide this special offer, the selected product's price can also be viewed on Burgan Bank's social media platforms on the same day of the offer.

OPEC opens the taps and Kuwait's output increases more than was tabled in the original schedule (average of 2.40 mb/d).

Oil prices at 2-year highs
Oil prices in June topped levels not seen in more than two years, as markets bet on a robust recovery in global oil demand while OPEC+ continues to keep the market tight by restraining oil supplies. Brent crude broke through the \$70/bbl level on 1 June and extended its gains to \$72.7/bbl (+14.4 percent quarter-to-date qtd) more recently. Kuwait Export Crude



(KEC), the local crude blend, was last trading at \$72.4/bbl, (+13.3 percent qtd) and averaging \$71.3/bbl in June so far. With near-term price risks tilted to the upside, there is pressure on OPEC+ to raise output further to prevent the market from overheating.

For Kuwait, which has kept its crude production in-line with or within its OPEC+ quota obligations, output inched up by 28 kb/d to 2.355 mb/d in May (107 percent compliance). Production should increase by 28 kb/d to 2.387 mb/d in June and rise further by 38 kb/d to 2.425 mb/d in July

Should OPEC+ agree in the next few months to accelerate tapering of its production cuts further, which we think could be on the cards. Kuwait will then stand to benefit from the extra oil revenue this will bring. We have also revised up our oil price estimate (Brent) for 2021 (average) from \$62/bbl to \$65/bbl in light of recent price firmness.

#### Inflation rising

Consumer price inflation slowed slightly to 3.1 percent y/y in April (from 3.2 percent in March), the first time since September that the headline rate has eased. This was driven by slowing inflation in the clothing, household goods and communications segments, which nevertheless remain in the 4-6 percent range amid both cost pressures facing businesses (including from supply chains) and also the strong post-pandemic rebound in consumer spending (see below). Inflation in the food and beverages category

#### **AUB** congratulates winners of Al-Hassad weekly draw

**KUWAIT:** In accordance with full preventive guidelines and measures set by health authorities, Ahli United Bank (AUB) held the weekly draw of 23 June 2021 of Al-Hassad Islamic account which is the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait and has won the "Best Savings Product in Kuwait 2019" by the prestigious Banker Middle East Magazine for the numerous unique features it provides. Al-Hassad Islamic account offers over 750 prizes over 12month period and has reshaped the lives of thousand of lucky winners.

The bank announced 20 winners of KD 1,000 as

is the highest (+10.8 percent) among all components of the CPI and echoes the surge in international food prices over the last year.

#### Real estate activity

Activity in the real estate sector has rebounded to pre-pandemic levels. From a historic low in 2020, average monthly sales rose 26 percent y/y to KD 280 million in 1021. The trend continued through April and May, with sales of KD 322 million logged in May despite ongoing weakness in the commercial and investment sectors. Their levels have only partially recovered from their 2020 lows due to the deterioration of business and labor market conditions caused by the pandemic.

Residential sector sales have proved resilient, reaching KD 268 million in May, supported by pentup demand and increased offerings in several emerging areas. It is also worth noting that overall sales in April, though decent, were likely affected by the start of the Holy month of Ramadan, which is usually a slow month for real estate activity.

Looking ahead, we expect residential sector activity to remain solid in the near-to-medium term, backed by strong demand by nationals. The recently announced draft mortgage law, which awaits parliamentary ratification, should help boost demand in this regard.

#### **Project awards**

Project activity looks to be tentatively accelerating. The value of projects awarded so far in 2Q21 increased to KD 382 million (versus KD 258 million in 1Q21), according to the latest figures from MEED Projects. The largest contract awarded (KD 230 million) was for the Kuwait Environmental Remediation Program's (KERP) Excavation Transportation & Remediation project. MEED estimates that about KD 2.2 billion worth of projects are still to be tendered in 2021, including KOC's Jurassic Production Facilities (KD 294 million) and a further phase of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Seaport (KD 271 million). Needless to say that the award of projects does not necessarily translate into execution, which is often delayed due to some cumbersome procedures and long-approval

#### Consumer spending surging Wage growth slows

According to the Public Authority for Civil Information, more than 130,000 expatriates left the country in 2020 (mainly low-paid and low-skilled workers) following the retrenchment of business activity. Kuwait's population fell by 2.2 percent and the employed population by 4.2 percent. More expatriate workers are expected to leave in the coming quarters due to the proposed changes to the residency law, continued enforcement of Kuwaitization policies and the generally challenging economic environment.

Meanwhile, according to Labor Market

follows: Wadhha Traiheeb Al-Mutairi, Nawal Saleh Al-Shemaimri, Zayed Raheel Al-Enezi, Jawad Abdulraheem Al-Saffar, Yousef Abdullah Jawli, Seham Mazyad Al-Rjaan, Hassan Farhan Al-Shamari, Suad Mohammad Sabah, Yaqoub Khalad Al-Khedry, Anaam Khaleel Ibrahim, Khadeejha Ghloum Hussan, Saritha Alikx Monteiro, Haya Abdulrahman Al-Rasheedi, Muhareb Saad Al-Otaibi, Nawal Bneyah Al- Kherainej, Marzouq Mubarak Alsultan, Meshari Abdulrahman Al-Bahar, Ali Marji, Abdulaziz Ayman Al-Muzaini And Mohammad Arshed Bhatti.

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

Information System data, total wage growth (Kuwaitis and expats) decelerated slightly to 3.5 percent y/y in 4Q20 from 3.6 percent in the previous quarter, amid low oil prices and a weaker economic climate. The last quarter of 2020 saw Kuwaiti wages in the private sector grow more slowly than in the government sector, a first in the 6 years or so of available quarterly data. Relatively rapid private sector wage growth has been helping to reduce the gap in public and private sector salaries, which in the long term would encourage more Kuwaitis to move to the private sector and thus relieve some of the pressure on the budget.

#### Record fiscal deficit seen

The budget deficit for FY20/21 is expected to come in at KD 9.3 billion (28.6 percent of GDP) due to a combination of lower oil production and markedly lower oil prices. Data for the first 11 months of FY20/21 (April-February) show a deficit of KD 6.0 billion on the back of lower oil revenues (KEC averaged \$41.5/bbl, -35.0 percent y/y) and lower oil output (-12.6 percent) due to OPEC+ production cuts. Non-oil revenues, which declined by 16.1 percent y/y, continued to suffer from the repercussions of the pandemic. On the other hand, total spending declined by 7.4 percent due to the fall in current spending (93 percent of total spending). Capital spending plummeted by 28.9 percent, one of the weakest performances in the last five years. In the absence of debt issuance, it not clear how the deficit will be financed as the resources in the General Reserve Fund have reportedly been drawn-down to critical levels.

For the current fiscal year (FY21/22), the deficit is expected to decline mainly due to the increase in oil prices, which will help bolster oil revenues - but remain sizeable at KD5.4 billion (13.8 percent of GDP). This is still much lower than the KD 12.1 billion in the government's draft budget that was approved by parliament in mid-June (but details of which were still not available at time of writing).

#### Equities up

Kuwaiti equities continued to build on the decent gains observed in 1Q20 (+4.1 percent q/q). Boursa Kuwait's All-Share Index rose a further 10 percent in the quarter-to-date (14 June), buoyed by higher oil prices and increased bullishness about the prospects for the local and international economy now that vaccination efforts are appearing to bear fruit. The main market has outperformed the All-Share Index, with investors' preferences shifting to smaller cap stocks following a two-year rally in the premier market in the run up to the classification upgrade.

Market capitalization has recovered to KD 37.1 billion, its highest level since 2010, and market liquidity has risen noticeably to reach an average daily turnover of about KD 60.3 million (in the quarter-todate), reflecting the continued interest and confidence in Kuwaiti equities, largely by citizens who have mostly been net buyers since February.

aspiring to build their short and long-term savings through a unique savings account with many

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

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

#### Gulf Bank encourages clients to invest excess savings with WISE Investments

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank is encouraging clients to put their hard-earned savings into good use with WISE Investments, the Bank's digital investment platform that allows customers to customize their investing experience and start growing their wealth. In light of recent socio-economic conditions, and in light of the postponement of loan installments over the past few months, Gulf Bank is offering clients the opportunity to invest a portion of their excess funds through WISE. The advisory and portfolio management platform follows a Nobel Prize-winning investment strategy that allows clients to invest in international markets in an easy, transparent and cost-efficient way.

Dalya Al-Qassem, Head of Investment Management at Gulf Bank, commented: "With so many of us having to shift gears when it comes to planning during the past two years, one thing is for certain: it is never too late to start planning for the future. For many of us, the past year has posed a great opportunity to start prioritizing our savings and take advantage of the multitude of simplified investment tools that Gulf Bank has made available through WISE Investments - from cost-efficient portfolios, to certified advisors, and more. That is why we are encouraging all our clients to seize the opportunity to start planning their financial futures and start achieving their various financial goals.'

As a low-cost investment solution, the WISE

Investments platform continues to prove its advantages over other investment alternatives in the long term. In addition to robust returns, WISE clients enjoy a high level of transparency and constant flexibility with their portfolios, with the option to liquidate their investments easily and quickly. When investing with



WISE Investments, clients also ensure they are investing in tax-efficient funds that aim to maximize their returns, while avoiding hidden fees. The objective of WISE Investments is to encourage investors of all ages to actively manage their finances in an effort to safeguard their futures. To further simplify the

investment process, WISE

Investments' certified Investment Advisors are also ready to advise, manage, and assist clients in achieving their financial goals. All WISE advisors are experienced in local and global markets. By building a uniquely tailored Investment Policy Statement (IPS) that clearly states the customer's financial goal, investment horizon and risk appetite, WISE advisors can assist customers in attaining their investment goals and growing their wealth.

It is worth noting that WISE Investments portfolios have also performed remarkably well in the past few years,. Since its inception, WISE Investments portfolios have achieved 53.2 percent cumulative total returns for portfolios with aggressive investment strategies, and 27.0 percent cumulative total returns for portfolios with conservative investment strategies. The rates of return for both investment strategies mark an impressive feat for the digital investment platform, outperforming most GCC market returns. Since its launch in 2017, WISE Investments has also achieved an annualized return of 10.4 percent across its various investment strategies.

Investing with WISE Investments is also remarkably simple, and clients can start building their wealth with a small startup amount of only \$10,000, meaning anyone can start investing with only a portion of their savings. Because flexibility is key, clients also have the option of daily liquidity, meaning they can withdraw their funds anytime, anywhere. WISE Investments is also available for anyone who is a legal Kuwaiti resident, or a Kuwaiti citizen with a permanent Kuwaiti address. Anyone residing abroad who is an existing Gulf Bank account holder can also open a WISE portfolio with Gulf Bank.

#### ABK congratulates 'Experience the Change' campaign winners

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced the 4 winners of the fourth salary transfer campaign "Experience the Change", for Al-Raed, Prestige and Elite Salary account holders. The draw took place on the 15th June 2021, under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and

The winners are: Hussain Abbas Hussain Alsaffar, Traiheeb Abdul Mohsen Mohammad Albassam, Ismail Fouad Hasan, and Saebrahul Venkitesh Babu

The 5th draw will be held on 20th July, 2021 Every month 4 winners can win back their salary (Two Kuwaitis and two residents). To be eligible to enter the draw, customers need to have one salary credited into their account in the month prior to the draw date. Furthermore, upon opening a salary account with ABK, customers can choose one of the

following rewards: Up to KD 1,000 cash gift for Kuwaitis

• Up to KD 10,000 interest free loan for Kuwaitis

• Up to KD 5,000 interest free loan for residents The offer is open to new salary clients only, with one salary credited into their account a month prior to the draw date.

Business Sunday, June 27, 2021

# FDI in Arab countries rises by 2.5% to \$40.5 billion in 2020: Dhaman

#### Corporation releases 36th report on investment climate in Arab countries for 2021

**KUWAIT:** The Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) has released its 36th annual report on the investment climate in Arab countries for 2021. The report has monitored an unexpected hike in FDI inflows into Arab countries by 2.5 percent to \$40.5 billion in 2020, making up 6.1 percent of the overall inflows into developing countries and 4 percent of the total global figure, which amounted to around \$999 billion.

The report showed that the top five countries held roughly 95 percent of the overall inflows. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) came first by \$19.9 billion (49 percent), followed by Egypt by \$5.9 billion (14.5 percent), Saudi Arabia by \$5.5 billion (13.6 percent), Oman by \$4.1 billion (10.1 percent) and Lebanon by \$3.1 billion (13.1 percent).

Arab FDI stocks dropped by \$3.75 billion or 0.4 percent to \$908.6 billion in late 2020 from \$912.3 billion in 2019, said the report, citing the statistics of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). In addition, the top three countries held around 58 percent of the accumulated FDI stocks into the region. Saudi Arabia came first by \$241.9 billion (26.6 percent), followed by United Arab Emirates (UAE) by \$150.9 billion (16.6 percent) and Egypt by \$132.5 billion (14.6 percent).

The corporation's Director-General, Abdullah Ahmad Al-Sabeeh said in a press statement that according to Dhaman's previous predictions, the investment climate in Arab countries has been negatively affected by the regional events and developments, taking into consideration the ramifications of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and measures taken to curb it, which were monitored by several compound indexes released by specialized international agencies for evaluating different components of the investment climate and busi-

- Abdullah Ahmad Al-Sabeeh: The value of our accumulated insurance operations hit \$21 billion in late 2020
- The number of (FDI) projects in Arab countries falls by 38.3%, and capital investment by 40.5%

ness environment as well as risk levels.

Al-Sabeeh added that the rating of several Arab countries fell during 2020 in sovereign rating indexes and a number of key risk indexes as well as innovation, human development, governance and competitiveness indexes. But, the position of Arab countries was stable in the indexes of e-government and regulatory restrictions on foreign direct investment (FDI).

However, the ranking of Arab countries in the World Bank's Doing Business Index, which measures the performance between June 2019 and June 2020, improved by four spots thanks to Arab countries' fast-track reforms by a total of 55 reforms, a rise of six compared with 2019, even though the average ranking remained below the global average

#### FDI projects in Arab countries

In this context and based on the database of the FDI Markets, the number of FDI projects in Arab countries went down by 38.8 percent to 616 projects, and the capital investment dipped by 40.5 percent to \$34 billion, in the worst performance in the region since 2003

As for geographical distribution, North America was the top investor in the region in terms of the capital investment; led by the USA by 22.4 percent of the overall investments. These projects were

mainly in the UAE by 347 projects and Saudi Arabia by a capital investment of \$10.4 billion.

With regard to sectoral distribution, the sectors of business services, software and financial services had the first three places respectively by a combined share of 50 percent of the total projects, while chemicals, coal, oil and gas and renewable energy held the first three positions respectively with a combined share of 55 percent of capital investment.

In relation to inter-Arab investment projects, they nosedived by 42 percent to 110 projects, and the capital investment dipped by 68.8 percent to \$4.8 billion, accounting for 14 percent of the overall foreign direct investments in Arab countries. Saudi Arabia was the top destination by 29 projects with capital investment of \$1.35 billion. Software was the top sector by 20 projects, while communications came first in view of the capital investment by over \$842 million.

In conclusion, the corporation's director general stressed that Dhaman is well aware that amid extraordinary events, when confidence and certainty drop, its role becomes more significant since it has to come up with mechanisms and tools that can ensure continuing Arab trade and FDI inflows into Arab countries by means of providing protection to Arab export, investment and banking entities in the light of the current epidemic and politi-

## FDI inflows in the Arab countries

2019 and 2020 (Millions of dollars)

UAE

Egypt

S852

Saudi

S486

Oman

Lebanon

3067

Morocco

1763

Algeria

1125

Bahrain

1007

Mauritania

978

Jordan

726

Sudan

717

Tunisia

652

Somalia

464

Djibouti

240

Palestine

52

Comoros

Yemen

(319) Kuwait

(2434) Qater

(2896) France

cal developments, through insurance operations against political and commercial risks at an accumulated value of \$21 billion until late 2020.

The report, through its four sections, handles the changes in the investment climate during 2020 and their reflections on the volume of foreign direct investment (FDI) projects and inflows into the region, taking into consideration the expected impact of the political and economic developments and the ramifications of the novel coronavirus and measures taken to curb it.

#### NBK mobile banking, a leading digital experience: Al-Shoaibi

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) strives to enrich the banking experience of its customers and enable them make all their transactions with ease and convenience, utilizing the most advanced technologies. In this context, the bank is working on upgrading NBK Mobile Banking, in a way that contributes to meet all cu



contributes to meet all customer needs without the need to visit the branch.

NBK Mobile Banking allows customers to make most of their transactions anytime, anywhere, including the following key services:

Local and international transfers NBK Quick Pay

E-payments

Bill Splitting

Adding beneficiaries Increasing monthly transfer limit

Viewing account statement Paying credit card dues

Opening accounts and term deposits Cardless cash withdrawal

Transfer money from your credit card to your account (Cash Advance)

Updating contact information

eQMatic Service for getting a queue number

NBK Geo Alerts Service.

NBK Push Notifications service via NBK Mobile Banking App where customers receive the notifications around the clock whether they are in Kuwait or abroad as long as they are connected to the Internet.

NBK Customers can download the NBK Mobile Banking App, which is available in Arabic and English, on all app stores, and install it on more than one device.

On this occasion, Hala Al-Shoaibi, Head of Digital Service Quality Management, National Bank of Kuwait said: "We are consistently upgrading the NBK Mobile Banking App to enable our customers enjoy an exquisite digital banking experience that allows them make all their transactions anytime, anywhere, without the need to visit our branches."

"NBK Mobile Banking has become our largest branch, as it has the largest share of transactions made among all digital channels, which reflects our digital excellence and our leadership that builds on our superior capabilities and huge technological infrastructure," she added.

Al-Shoaibi pointed out that NBK encourages customers to use digital channels by giving them the chance to enter draws and win prizes when using the NBK Mobile Banking, in line with the bank's strategy to achieve financial inclusion and its care for customer convenience. NBK Customers' interest in using NBK Digital Channels during the pandemic manifests NBK's efforts to offer the most advanced technological solutions and digital services she noted.

It is worth mentioning that over the past period, NBK added many new services and updates to the NBK Mobile Banking App, which contributed to increase customer satisfaction, by enabling them to do their banking quickly and easily, including Bill Splitting and NBK Push Notifications that keeps customers notified of all transactions made on their accounts.

# The Banker names KFH 'Best Islamic Bank in the Middle East and Kuwait'

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has won "Best Islamic Bank in Middle East" and "Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait" 2021 Awards from the prestigious "The Banker Magazine" owned by The Financial Times.

'The Banker' jury named KFH best Islamic bank in the Middle East and Kuwait due to the bank's leading role in adopting digital technologies in areas like cross-border remittances and cardless withdraws.

The Magazine said that this year's awards recognize Islamic lenders that have managed to keep pace with the growing sophistication and increasing demands of Islamic banking customers around the world, particularly within the digital realm. Acting Group Chief Executive Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Abdulwahab Al-Roshood, said: "We are proud of this recognition because it confirms our efficient performance and excellence in delivering high-quality innovative products through developed digital infrastructure. It also reflects KFH's successful digital transformation strategy which has been a milestone during COVID-19 crisis".

He confirmed that KFH Group is keen on maintaining its proactive approach in embracing technology and innovation and focusing on reshaping customer experience by delivering best developed banking solutions. Al-Roshood said that winning the two awards added to the previous prestigious well-deserved awards KFH won this year, thanks to the continuous improvement in products and services offered by the bank and its keenness to keep up with innovations and developments in the global banking sector and to boost the banking industry in Kuwait.

He added that the digital services offered recently by KFH witnessed big boom through launching a series of innovative digital banking solutions. These solutions include, for example and not limited to, opening bank account online service for citizens and residents, digital signature service in personal financing products that includes the electronic handling of all paper documents, Baiti Online that allows viewing and managing children's accounts through the father's account via KFHonline, and ProgressSoft's Electronic Forms solution which fully transforms tra-

ditional banking forms into electronic, secured and automatically validated forms. Moreover, KFH was the first bank in the world to launch the service of instant card issuance without a prior request through over 100 ATMs.

**Abdulwahab** 

**Al-Roshood** 

In addition to its high reputation in offering innovative banking solutions, KFH harnesses all its capabilities and long-standing banking experience in providing the best banking services. This complements its leading role in supporting the economy and enhancing the vital role of the Kuwaiti banking sector as well as improving customer experience. KFH focuses on making customers' life easier by enabling them to carry out their transactions in a safe and secure way without visiting a branch, achieving their aspirations and enriching their lifestyle.

The Banker Magazine said that in 2019 KFH became the first Kuwaiti Islamic bank to offer zero-fee instant cross-border remittance services using Ripple's blockchain technology, extending the service to KFH-Turkey in January 2021. It added that KFH enabled full digital onboarding for new-to-bank customers in 2020, with clients also able to take advantage of 24/7 card issuance to print bank cards instantly using self-service kiosks.

KFH launched its first fully automated self-banking branch in 2018. It now has 10 of these "KFH Go" e-branches across Kuwait, which provide more than 80 percent of the services supplied by traditional branches. The bank has invested in technology ungranded and investments since the start of 2020.

upgrades and investments since the start of 2020. Furthermore, the Magazine pointed out that KFH



continues to leverage its strong presence in areas like private banking to reach and attract new customers across the region and beyond.

This year's awards highlighted the solid and accelerated growth of the Islamic financial industry in 2021. At the same time, the majority of winners in 2021 have also demonstrated a strong philanthropic side in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, with initiatives put in place to support individuals, families and students, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises struggling with the effects of the pandemic.

Thanks to the efforts it exerts to keep up with the latest developments in FinTech and digitization by using AI, KFH has achieved significant and well-deserved leaps in the digital banking services that would enable the bank to experience the digital banking future, maintain its leading position in digital solutions and deliver exclusive and developed service offerings that meet customer aspirations.

# Kaico (Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar) signs deal with Portarage

KUWAIT: Kuwait Automotive Imports Co W.L.L (Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar), exclusive authorized distributors of Michelin Tyres & Mobil lubes in Kuwait for over 71 years, recently signed a business partnership agreement with Portarage Roadside assistance. The top two prominent automotive solution providers sharing equal vision & motive took this initiative to serve customers of Kuwait 24X7 with superior Door to Door services, by offering premium Michelin tyres & Mobil oil.

Kaico Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar is known in automotive field for representing premium brands like Mazda, Peugeot in passenger vehicles Eicher, Iveco in commercial vehicles, Michelin, BFGodrich, Tigar and Apollo in tyres and Mobil, Eneos and Texol in oil. With aim of reaching customer and providing them quality products and services no matter where they reside, Kaico is spread across Kuwait in prime locations. In addition to this, Kaico also maintains a fleet of seven fully equipped vehicles for superior Door to Door service, managed by professional team and factory trained technicians.

Portarage is a roadside assistance service

found by local young Kuwaiti's as a service-providing solution to any car issues that need quick roadside assistance. Serving customers by providing the peace of mind and security is their core value. For serving over 5 years in industry with more 117,000 customers, shows the sustainability, stability, professionalism, and reliability of

Yousef Al-Shaya CEO of Kaico expressed during the meet "We are very positive about our partnership with Portarage roadside assistance, we look ahead to achieve great success and business growth opportunities from this partnership"



Ashish Tandon, General Manager of Kaico Al-Shaya and Al-Sagar added "We are glad to tie-up with Portarage Roadside assistance. He also stated that, this collaboration allows us to reach customers 24X7 by providing quality products & services also by ensuring the safety, comfort & convenience of customers."

Sadiq Ali, Divisional Manager of Tyres and Lubricants at Kaico Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar said "It's a great initiative taken to expand tyres & oil business through Portarage. We have executed through a clearly defined vision and mission and we look forward for a potential outcome."

Sunday, June 27, 2021 Business





KUWAIT: Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer (right), Martin Aherne, Bader Faisal Al-Sayer and Hamad

# 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 handin-hand to create ever-better cars," Fujita



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 vears 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 twinturbo engines. The V6 twin-turbo 3.5liter petrol engine achieves class-leading performance that surpasses that of a conventional V8, producing 409 hp and up to 650 nm. Meanwhile, the V6 twinturbo 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 6speed 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

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-Saver 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-anticipatour 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 voung & old, male or female, city lifestyle or desert camps," commented Bader Faisal Al-Sayer.

"We are excited to introduce the allnew 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-

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 con-

trol 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.

#### 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 cvlinder **Automatic transmission - 10**
- Speed Hill-Start Assist Control (HAC)
- **Down Hill Assist Control 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-condi-
- 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/Dirt/Mud/Sand/Dee p Snow)

#### Lifestyle | Features



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



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.

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

n 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 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



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

#### Petzone: Celebrating 10 years of outstanding animal care

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

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 their stores 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 education-

al 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

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.

#### Lifestyle | Features





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

# Strawberries are the only fruit for Wimbledon spectators

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

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 dayis 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.

e told AFP.
"It does rather focus the mind and is



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

HUGH LOWE FARMS
HUGH LOWE FARMS
WIMBLEDON

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 highprofile 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 (fruitpicking) 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.



 ${\bf Managing\ Director,\ Marion\ Regan\ poses\ amongst\ the\ strawberries\ at\ Hugh\ Lowe\ Farms.}$ 

# 'Dragon Man': Scientists say new human species is our closest ancestor

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," coauthor 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 an illustration of a portrait of Dragon Man. — AFP photos



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.

Sunday, June 27, 2021 Sports

## Bucks dominate game two to even East final series

LOS ANGELES: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 25 points and Jrue Holiday delivered 22 as the third-seeded Milwaukee Bucks crushed the Atlanta Hawks 125-91 to level their Eastern Conference final series at 1-1.

Milwaukee used a 20-0 run in the second quarter to seize command on Friday, outscoring the fifth-seeded Hawks 43-17 in the quarter to grab a 77-45 halftime lead in front of a crowd of 16,400 at the Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee. "We just needed to do more things better in this game. The effort was great," said Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer. "The guys were committed and now we got to go do it again."

Two-time league MVP Antetokounmpo made 11 of 18 shots from the field and Holiday went nine-of-14 for the Bucks, who shot 52 percent overall. Both Antetokounmpo and Holiday rested in the fourth quarter. Game three is tonight in Atlanta. "We came in focused on each possession at a time in game two, and we were able to do it together as a team," Antetokounmpo said.

Brook Lopez scored 16 points and Khris Middleton added 15 points and eight assists in the win. "We wanted to set the tone," said Middleton. "We wanted to make sure they weren't comfortable and have the aggression that we didn't have in

The Bucks took advantage of 20 turnovers by Atlanta, including nine by Trae Young. The Hawks' rising star finished with a team-high 15 points on sixof-16 shooting from the floor. "I take responsibility for what happened tonight. Taking care of the ball is something I got to be better at," said Young.

Young left the game for good with 3:48 remaining in the third quarter. He shot six of 16 overall, and one of eight on three-point attempts. "Last game he was living in the paint, had a lot of floaters (and) those are pretty much layups for him," Holiday said. 'We didn't really want that to get him started early. And I don't think he went to the free-throw line much tonight, which is also pretty big for us."

Danilo Gallinari came off the bench to score 12 points, and John Collins and Cam Reddish scored 11 points apiece for the Hawks, who are now 6-3 on the road in the postseason. "There's another level we have to get to in order to win games and advance," said Hawks coach Nate McMillan. "That intensity they came out with wasn't a surprise to us. They just totally dominated the entire game." The Bucks extended their lead to a game-high 41 points, 105-64, when Jordan Nwora made a layup early in the fourth quarter.

#### Mays hire Kidd

Jason Kidd, who won an NBA title with the Dallas Mavericks as a player in 2011, has agreed to a deal to coach the club, according to multiple media reports on Friday. The Mavericks also hired long-time Nike executive Nico Harrison as general manager, according to The Athletic, ESPN, USA Today and other media, citing unnamed sources.

Kidd, who played on US Olympic gold medal squads in 2000 at Sydney and 2008 at Beijing, has spent the past two seasons as an assistant coach for the Los Angeles Lakers, helping them to an NBA title in that role last vear.

The Hall of Fame point guard, taken second overall by Dallas in the 2004 NBA Draft, was a 10-time NBA All-Star in his 19 league seasons with the Mavericks, Phoenix Suns, New Jersey Nets and New York Knicks. Kidd averaged 12.6 points, 6.3 rebounds, 8.7 assists and 1.9 steals a game over 1,391 league contests and ranks second on the NBA all-time assists list with 12,091.

Harrison, who spent two decades with Nike, reportedly has a strong relationship with Dallas star Luka Doncic, a two-time NBA All-Star guard from Slovenia. The moves would give the Mavericks new leadership in key roles, replacing coach Rick Carlisle, who departed as coach last week and signed this week with Indiana, and Donnie Nelson. The Mavericks also recently hired former Mavs star Dirk Nowitzki as an advisor to owner Mark Cuban.

Kidd, 48, retired in June 2013 and within days was named coach of the Brooklyn Nets, but he only spent one season guiding the club, reportedly

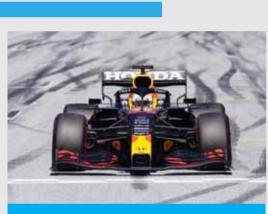


MILWAUKEE: Giannis Antetokounmpo #34 of the Milwaukee Bucks goes up for a shot against Clint Capela #15 of the Atlanta Hawks during the second half in game two of the Eastern Conference Finals at Fiserv Forum on Friday in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. —AFP

departing for Milwaukee after a failed bid to direct all Nets basketball operations as well as coach.

Kidd went 139-152 in just over three seasons with the Bucks before being fired

in the 2017-18 campaign after a 23-22 start. Milwaukee lost twice in the first round of the playoffs in his tenure, but oversaw the development of Antetokounmpo in his first three seasons in the NBA.—AFP



SPIELBERG: Red Bull's Dutch driver Max Verstappen crosses the finish line to take the first place and claim the pole position after the qualifying session at the Red Bull Ring race track in Spielberg, Austria, yesterday, ahead of the Formula One Styrian Grand Prix. —AFP

#### Red Bull's Verstappen takes pole position for Styrian GP

SPIELBERG: World Championship leader Max Verstappen of Red Bull produced the quickest lap in qualifying yesterday to claim pole position for the Styrian Grand Prix. Mercedes' Valterri Bottas was second quickest but drops to fifth on the grid because of a three-place penalty imposed on Friday, leaving teammate Lewis Hamilton to start on the front row with Verstappen.

McLaren's Lando Norris produced the performance of the day, pushing the front runners all the way and finishing fourth, meaning he will start from third. Norris was followed by the second Red Bull of Sergio Perez and the Alphatauris of Pierre Gasly and Yuki Tsunoda who were split by Charles Leclerc's Ferrari in seventh.

Fernando Alonso in the Alpine and Lance Stroll's Aston Martin rounded out the top 10 with George Russell just missing out in his Williams. Verstappen had been the standout performer in practice on Friday and looked in supreme control as he claimed his third pole position of the season, clocking a fastest time of 1min 3.841secs. "It has been a very good weekend," said Verstappen. "The car was very good to drive in qualifying. It was not easy to deal with the traffic, the fifth lap in Q3 was good enough in the end."

Bottas made a late dart and finished 0.194secs behind Verstappen. The Finn, however, was penalised on Friday for "dangerous driving" after spinning in the pit lane and will start from fifth on the third row of the grid. That penalty opened the door for his teammate Lewis Hamilton to keep up the pressure on Verstappen who leads him by just 12 points after seven rounds of the championship.

They (Red Bull) have been so fast this weekend, been giving it absolutely everything," said Hamilton. "It wasn't the greatest of sessions but still on the front row after the penalty. I did everything I could and we go into the race tomorrow for a fight." —AFP

#### medalist Abdalelah Haroun dies aged 24

DOHA: Qatari runner Abdalelah Haroun, who won a bronze medal at the 2017 world championships, died vesterday in a traffic incident, according to the Qatar Athletics Federation. He was 24. "Haroun died in a car accident in Doha," the federation's secretary general, Mohammed Issa al-Fadala, told AFP. "He was in a rehabilitation program after recovering from an injury (in preparation) to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics. Qatar sports and athletics, on a global level, lost a great hero."

Secretary General of Kuwait Paralympics Committee Shareefa Al-Ghanim said it was a historic day for the disabled sports in Kuwait, as all standards set by the committee were observed. She commended the collective efforts "towards the development of the disabled sports" in Kuwait, as well as the improvement of the disabled women's sports in the country.

#### Kuwait's Mutawa becomes world's Portugal scraped through after a 2-2 draw with most capped player

**DOHA:** Veteran Kuwaiti footballer Bader Al-Mutawa became the world's most capped international player when he ran out against Bahrain in an Arab Cup qualifier in Doha on Friday. Kuwait failed to qualify to the Arab tournament after losing 0-2 in the match that was held at Khalifa International Stadium.

For 36-year-old Mutawa; a striker who scored two goals on his international debut in 2003, it was his 185th appearance with the national team, beating a record long held by retired Egyptian star Ahmed Hassan. But many top players are well placed in the race to break Mutawa's record.

Cristiano Ronaldo, 36, is set to mark his 179th international appearance tonight when he skippers Portugal against Belgium, the world's top-ranked team, in the Euro 2020 round of 16.

France in Budapest on Wednesday, with Ronaldo scoring two penalties that allowed him to equal the all-time international record of 109 goals set by

Iran's Ali Daei. Another competitor is Spain's veteran defender Sergio Ramos, who has played 180 internationals but was excluded from the national squad for Euro 2020. Mutawa started his international career on

September 4, 2003, in an AFC Asian Cup qualifier at the age of 18 and 237 days. Since his debut with the Gulf "Blues", the Kuwaiti captain has faced 44 different national teams and scored 54 goals. The 2021 Arab Cup is scheduled to run between November 30 and December 18 in Doha, a year before it plays host to the 2022 World Cup. —AFP



DOHA: Kuwait's forward and captain Bader Al-Mutawa walks on the pitch with his captain's badge after the 2021 FIFA Arab Cup qualifier match between Bahrain and Kuwait at Khalifa International Stadium in Doha on Friday. —AFP

#### Defending champs Tampa oust Isles, to face Canadiens in final

LOS ANGELES: Forward Yanni Gourde scored a shorthanded goal and Andrei Vasilevskiy recorded his fourth shutout of the postseason as the Tampa Bay Lightning booked their spot in the NHL finals with a 1-0 victory over the New York Islanders. Vasilevskiy stopped 18 shots to earn his fifth career playoff shutout and fourth of these playoffs as the defending Stanley Cup champion Lightning edged the Islanders in game seven on Friday.

The Lightning will now square off against the upstart Montreal Canadiens in the NHL best-of-seven championship series which begins Monday in Florida. "They're going to get the best team that they've played against so far, and we're going to get the best team that we've played against so far," Lightning forward Steven Stamkos said of the Canadiens.

Tampa Bay have now won 14 straight games after a playoff defeat, which says plenty about their ability to bounce back after a loss. Head coach Jon Cooper and

Qatari world 400m

his players were not taking anything for granted in their bid to become the first repeat champions since the Pittsburgh Penguins in 2016 and 2017. "I love the way our team has responded in the play-

offs after losses," Cooper said. Vasilevskiy has been a big part of their success, earning a shutout in each of Tampa Bay's past four series-clinching victories, including game six of last year's Stanley Cup finals against Dallas. The Lightning have outscored the Islanders 9-0 in their last two home games. They also lost game six to New York 3-2 in overtime, in a series which has featured five games decided by just one goal.

Gourde scored early in the second period while the Islanders were enjoying the man advantage. He charged off the bench and took a pass from teammate Anthony Cirelli in the slot and blasted a one-timer past Islanders goalie Semyon Varlamov for the only goal.

Varlamov stopped 30 shots for the Islanders, who have been eliminated by

The Qatar Olympic Committee also mourned the loss yesterday. "Team #Qatar sprinter and world 400m bronze medalist Abdalelah Haroun died today," it posted on Twitter — along with a blackand-white picture of the athlete holding a bouquet of flowers and the Qatari flag. Haroun, of Sudanese origins, first represented Qatar in 2015, stealing the spotlight in his early days by recording remarkable times over 400m. Haroun won his world bronze in 44.48sec behind South African winner Wayde van Niekerk and Steven Gardiner of the Bahamas. Haroun also won silver at the 2016 world indoor championships in Portland and gold at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta. —AFP



TAMPA: The Tampa Bay Lightning pose with the Prince of Wales Trophy after their 1-0 win against the New York Islanders in Game Seven of the NHL Stanley Cup Semifinals during the 2021 NHL Stanley Cup Finals at Amalie Arena on Friday in Tampa, Florida. —AFP

the Lightning in the final four for the second consecutive year. The Islanders were hoping to reach the Stanley Cup finals for the first time since 1984, when their run of four consecutive titles was snapped by the Edmonton Oilers.

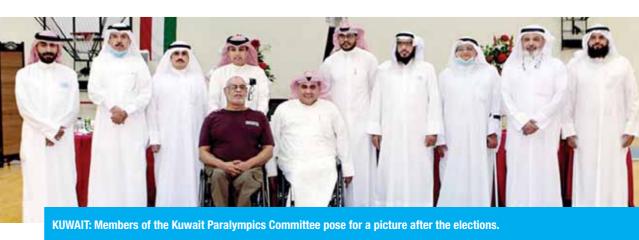
Tampa's Brayden Point had his ninegame goal streak ended. He finished one shy of tying the NHL record set by Reggie Leach, who scored in 10 straight playoff games with the Philadelphia Flyers in 1976. —AFP



Haroun reacts after coming third in the final of the men's 400m athletics event at the 2017 IAAF World Championships at the London Stadium in

#### **Kuwait Paralympics Committee** holds elections

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Board of the Kuwait Paralympics Committee said elections were held for the paralympic subcommittees for the following sports: wheelchair basketball, athletics, shooting, bocce, swimming, badminton, sitting volleyball, archery, table tennis, fencing, weight lifting and the blind games. Members of the Kuwait Paralympics Committee as well as representatives from the Public Authority for Sport and clubs attended the elections.



Sports Sunday, June 27, 202



# 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

#### Germany's Mueller declares himself fit for England showdown

HERZOGENAURACH: 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

#### 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 oddson 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

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 endgame — the goals, the victories and the trophies, with Portugal hoping to follow his lead. —AFP

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

"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."

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 self-less 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,





HERZOGENAURACH: 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

The Germans have won the last four meetings between the countries in the knockout stages of major tournaments. Yet Germany winger Serge Gnabry talked up England's chances. "England have great players in their ranks," said the Bayern Munich forward who began his career with Arsenal. "We have a lot of respect, no matter what the media reports are."

"We want to play and beat them with a performance like the one we had against Portugal," referring to Germany's 4-2 win over the holders in the group stage.—AFP

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 pasily."—AED

# 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



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

#### CHANGE OF NAME

Mathews Palookunnel Thomas, holder of Indian Passport K5707962 issued at Kuwait on 17/06/2012, resident of Palookunnel House Nirmalagiri 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 gazzate no. (M-19118033). (C 0611) 23-6-2021

EMERGENCY © 112

# Sport Times

**SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 2021** 

## 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 quarterfinals 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 lasteight 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 semifinals 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 unleased 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



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