

3 Health minister visits new Farwaniya Hospital project



6 Indian party woos voters with sweet smell of socialism



12 Silkworm cat grub smells like success



16 New Zealand beat England to reach first T20 World Cup final



Kuwait to limit visas for Lebanese over Gulf row

Lebanon's Gulf envoys meet PM amid showdown over Hezbollah

Al-Kharafi: Zain Group's 9M performance a testament to the success of '4Sight' strategy



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi



Zain Group Chairman Ahmed Al-Tahous

KUWAIT: Zain Group, the leading telecom innovator in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the third-quarter (Q3) and nine-month periods (9M) ended Sept 30, 2021. The company ended the period with a stable customer base of 48.4 million customers. For 9M 2021, Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 1.1 billion (\$3.8 billion), down three percent year-on-year (Y-o-Y), while consolidated EBITDA for the period reached KD 478 million (\$1.6 billion), down 3 percent Y-o-Y, still reflecting a healthy EBITDA margin of 42 percent. Efficiency and optimization initiatives resulted in consolidated net income increasing 5 percent Y-o-Y, amounting to KD 135

million (\$450 million). Earnings per share amounted to 31 fils (USD 0.10) for the nine-month period.

Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi commented: "The operational performance that saw net profit growth over the 9M period, despite the huge impact of unavoidable currency devaluations, is testament to the successful implementation of the '4Sight' strategy. I am extremely proud of the digital transformation achievements and network rollouts our teams have accomplished across our footprint, enabling us to continue in our mission to foster sustainable systemic change and provide meaningful connectivity in offering high-quality and appealing services to our customers." (See Page 8)

KUWAIT: Kuwait is to limit the number of visas it issues for Lebanese nationals as a diplomatic row festers between Beirut and Gulf states, a security source in the state said yesterday. "A verbal decision has been taken to be stricter in granting tourist and business visas to Lebanese," the source told AFP, asking not to be identified.

The source stressed that no official decision had been made and that visas for visitors from Lebanon have not been suspended. Like neighboring Saudi Arabia, Kuwait recalled its ambassador from Beirut after Lebanon's information minister criticized a Riyadh-led military intervention in the Yemen conflict, sparking a row with Gulf states.

Kuwait, home to some 50,000 Lebanese, has also asked Beirut's charge d'affaires, its highest-ranking diplomat in the state, to leave the country. Lebanon's ambassadors to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain yesterday

met with Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati in Beirut to discuss the impact of the crisis on the country's expatriate community. They expressed "fears of worsening repercussions on bilateral ties between Lebanon and Gulf states and the interests of Lebanese living in these countries", according to a statement from the premier's office.

More than 300,000 Lebanese live in Gulf Arab states, providing a key lifeline for Lebanon's faltering economy, according to the Gulf Labor Markets and Migration think tank. The row has turned into a showdown over Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah movement, which is backed by Iran, the regional rival of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan has said Hezbollah's dominance of Lebanese politics made "dealing with Lebanon pointless for the kingdom".

Continued on Page 2

COP26 draft urges boost to emissions cutting goals by 2022

GLASGOW: A draft UN climate summit text yesterday urged countries to boost their emissions cutting goals by 2022 - three years earlier than planned - as British Prime Minister Boris Johnson dashed back to Glasgow to check the pulse of negotiations. Yesterday's text was the first indication of where nations are 10 days into the COP26 talks in Glasgow, after data showed promises made so far left the world far off track to limit heating to 1.5C.

Negotiators are tasked with accelerating national decarbonization plans, stumping up long-promised finance for vulnerable nations and finalizing rules of the Paris Agreement on carbon markets and transparency. "Some significant issues remain unresolved and I think as we know time is not on our side," COP26 President Alok Sharma told delegates. "We all know what is at stake in these negotiations and the urgency of our task."

The text, which will change as ministers begin the high-level wrangling as COP26 enters its last two days, called for nations to "revisit and strengthen" their decarbonization plans by next year, instead of 2025 as previously agreed. It said that limiting heating to 1.5C - the Paris deal's most ambitious temperature goal - "requires meaningful and effective action by all parties in this critical decade".

Continued on Page 2

News in brief

Emirates on 'recovery path'

DUBAI: Emirates airline said it was on the path to recovery from the COVID pandemic yesterday as six-month losses dropped by more than a half from a year earlier. The Dubai-based carrier posted an April-September loss of \$1.6 billion, compared with \$3.4 billion during the same period in 2020. Revenue was up 86 percent year-on-year and passenger numbers rose 319 percent to 6.1 million, Emirates said. — AFP

Iran releases seized tanker

TEHRAN: Iran's Revolutionary Guards said yesterday they had released a Vietnamese-flagged oil tanker they seized last month in the Sea of Oman in a tense incident also involving the US Navy. Yesterday, the official website of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said "the seized Sothys oil tanker was released by court order after it was emptied of oil belonging to the Islamic Republic of Iran in Bandar Abbas". — AFP (See Page 7)

COVID cases spike in Greece

ATHENS: Greece is experiencing a fourth wave of COVID. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis warned Tuesday as daily infections hit their highest since the pandemic began, with hospitals starting to buckle under the pressure of rising infections. The country notched up a record 8,613 new COVID-19 cases in 24 hours after cases more than doubled in less than a fortnight. Forty-six people died of the disease on Tuesday, after 65 a day earlier. — AFP

Nobel-winning activist Malala gets married

LONDON: Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, who was shot by the Pakistani Taliban for campaigning for girls' education, got married on Tuesday in a small ceremony in Birmingham, central England, she announced on social media. "Today marks a precious day in my life. Asser (Malik) and I tied the knot to be partners for life," she wrote on Twitter, where she also posted images of herself and her new husband on their wedding day.

"We celebrated a small nikah ceremony at home in Birmingham with our families. Please send us your prayers. We are excited to walk together for

the journey ahead," she added. A nikah ceremony is the first step in an Islamic marriage. When she was 15, Yousafzai was shot in the head by militants from the Tehreek-e-Taleban Pakistan, an offshoot of the Afghan Taliban, in her hometown in the Swat valley while on a school bus in 2012.

She recovered after months of treatment at home and abroad before co-writing a best-selling memoir titled "I am Malala." Yousafzai was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize as a 17-year-old in 2014, sharing the award with Kailash Satyarthi, a children's rights activist from India. She graduated last year from the University of Oxford with a degree in philosophy, politics and economics.

Now 24 years old, she advocates for girls' education, with her non-profit Malala Fund having invested \$2 million in Afghanistan. She has also signed a deal with Apple TV+ that will see her produce dramas and documentaries that focus on women and children. — AFP



Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai is seen with her husband Asser Malik in this image she posted on Twitter.

Singapore lions infected with coronavirus

SINGAPORE: Four lions at a Singapore wildlife park have tested positive for the coronavirus after coming into contact with infected zookeepers, and have symptoms including coughing and sneezing, officials said yesterday. The endangered Asiatic lions started displaying signs of illness at the weekend, prompting officials to order coronavirus tests.

The infected big cats along with five others at the Night Safari park have been placed in isolation in their den,

the government's animal and veterinary service said. "All the lions remain bright, alert and active," said Sonja Luz, from Mandai Wildlife Group, which operates the park. "We expect that the lions will make a full recovery with minor supportive treatment."

Three zookeepers from the Night Safari are confirmed to have been infected. The park is an open-air zoo home to hundreds of animals, which welcomes visitors at night. An African lion at Singapore Zoo - which is adjacent to the Night Safari - has also fallen sick, and officials have ordered virus tests. Luz added the risk of animals passing the virus to humans is low.

Both Singapore Zoo and the Night Safari remain open, although the lion exhibits have been temporarily closed. — AFP



SINGAPORE: Asiatic lions are seen in the Night Safari exhibit at the Singapore Zoo in this undated handout photo. — AFP

Local

Kuwait Assembly Speaker meets British parliament delegation

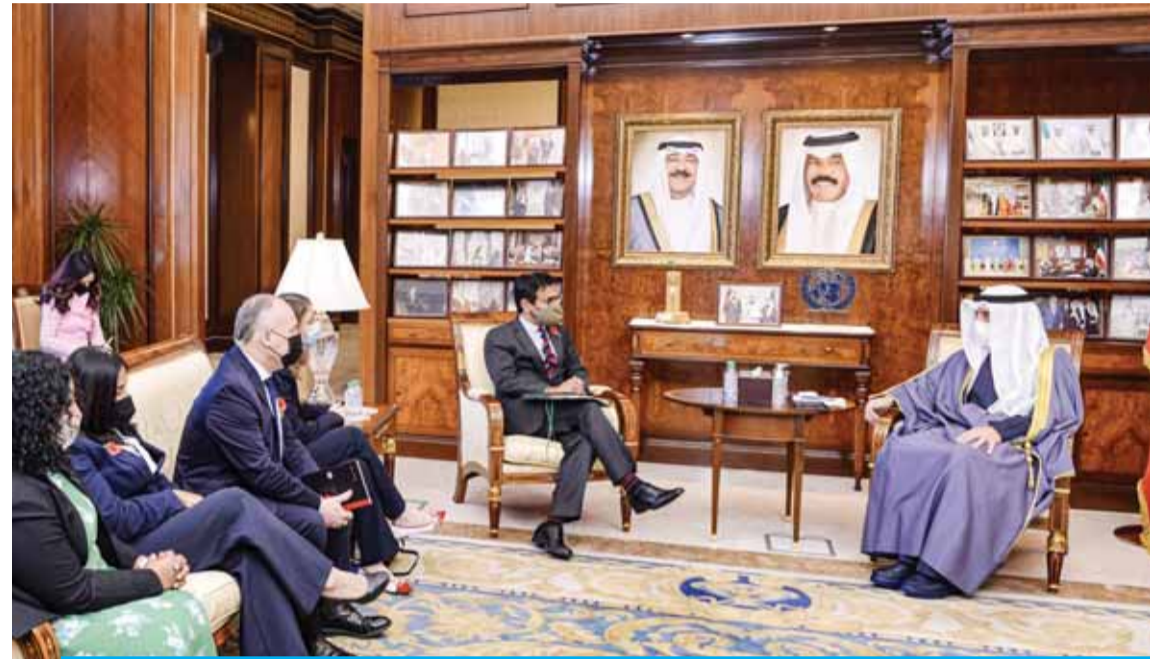
Ghanem receives invitation to visit UK House of Commons



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets the visiting delegation of the British House of Commons. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem received yesterday the visiting delegation of the British House of Commons. During the meeting, both sides discussed parliamentary cooperation, ways to enhance the relations between parliaments and latest regional and international devel-

opments. Head of the British delegation Rehman Chishti handed Ghanem an official invitation from Lindsay Hoyle, the Speaker of the House of Commons, to visit Britain. The British group included MPs David Morris, Royston Smith, Yasmin Qureshi and British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets the British House of Commons' delegation.

Lewis. Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah also met with the visiting British House of Commons group yesterday. During the meeting, which was held at the ministry's head-

quarter, both sides reviewed the historical relations, deep ties and firm friendship between Kuwait and the United Kingdom. The discussion also included various cooperative fields that aim to promote common interests and benefit both countries and their people. — KUNA

GCC Secretary General holds talks with India FM

NEW DELHI: India's External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar held talks with Dr Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), yesterday in New Delhi. GCC secretary general arrived on his first official visit to India on Tuesday, according to a press release issued by India's Ministry of External Affairs. Dr Hajraf served as Minister of Finance in Kuwait from December 2017 until December 2019 when he became the Secretary-General of the GCC.

Both officials recalled the historic and friendly India-GCC relations, which have seen robust progress in recent years. They undertook a detailed review of the India-GCC relations and discussed ways to further enhance them. The GCC secretary general lauded the contribution of the Indian community to the Gulf countries and said that GCC wants to be a partner of India in its economic growth.

Jaishankar thanked the GCC countries for taking care of the large Indian diaspora in their countries during the COVID-19 pandemic and medical assistance provided during the second wave in India in April-May 2021.

Both leaders expressed satisfaction over India-GCC cooperation in handling the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic. The minister hoped for further easing of restrictions by GCC countries on air travel from India and mutual recognition of vaccination certificates.

The minister and GCC secretary general also exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual concern. The minister congratulated the secretary general for the constructive role being played by GCC in promoting stability and prosperity in the region. Both sides decided to convene the next India-GCC Troika Political Dialogue at an early date. The last round of the dialogue was held virtually in November 2020. They also agreed to further institutionalize the annual meetings between EAM and GCC Troika by signing an MOU in the coming months.

Dr Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf also held discussions with India's Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal later in the day, the release added.



NEW DELHI: India's External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar meets GCC Secretary General Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf.

COP26 draft urges boost to emissions...

Continued from Page 1

"Rapid, deep and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions", said the text, were needed to avert the worst impacts of heating, which has already seen countries worldwide slammed by fiercer floods, droughts and storms. The 2015 accord contains a "ratchet" mechanism requiring countries to update emissions plans every five years.

Several large emitters missed the 2020 deadline for submitting new plans, known as nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Vulnerable nations say that the next deadline, in 2025, is too distant to deliver the short-term emissions cuts needed to avoid disastrous heating. In what observers said was a "significant first mention" of the fuels driving global warming, the draft summit called on countries to "accelerate the phasing out of coal and subsidies for fossil fuels".

Previous climate summit decisions and the Paris Agreement itself do not so much as mention fossil fuels, focusing instead on emissions. But the fossil fuel reference contained no deadline and it was unclear it

would make the final text. Countries' latest decarbonization plans submitted under the Paris Agreement are likely to see Earth warm 2.7C this century, according to a United Nations assessment.

Climate scientists and environmental groups criticized the draft for failing to reflect the urgency of the crisis facing the planet. "This draft deal is not a plan to solve the climate crisis, it's an agreement that we'll all cross our fingers and hope for the best," said Greenpeace International Director Jennifer Morgan. "It's a polite request that countries maybe, possibly, do more next year."

Johnson - who took the train back to Glasgow after flying to a leaders summit in the Scottish city last week - was expected to issue an update on progress. Delegates came to Glasgow with a laundry list of disputes to be resolved, including over how vulnerable nations' fight against rising temperatures is financed. Rich emitters promised over a decade ago to provide \$100 billion annually to help others green their grids and adapt to the changing climate.

But the draft text paid little attention to the figure, merely noting "with regret" that it had yet to materialize. "With this text our leaders are failing us all," said Teresa Anderson, climate policy coordinator at ActionAid International. "These empty words are way off target to meet the scale of the enormous challenge facing humanity." — AFP

suspected of helping to finance Hezbollah, according to local media. In 2015, Kuwait dismantled a cell accused of collusion with Iran and Hezbollah. Saudi Arabia also announced a ban on Lebanese imports. The kingdom is Lebanon's third-largest export market, accounting for six percent of the country's exports in 2020, worth around \$217 million, according to Lebanon's chamber of commerce. — AFP

Kuwait to limit visas for...

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait is currently holding 16 of its own nationals

KFH continues customer awareness efforts on secured saving, investment

KUWAIT: Considering its support to the banking awareness campaign "Be Aware", KFH continues to enhance financial culture for all customer categories and shed light on secured saving and investment through all its channels on social media and website.

KFH is keen on preparing well studied and meaningful materials and contents to enhance financial culture and spread awareness among customers on the difference between saving (saving part of the funds to use it later) and investment (allocation of a certain amount of money and place it in a certain product or service to realize profit).

These awareness efforts come as part of the "Be Aware" campaign which it had launched beginning of 2021 in collaboration with Kuwait Banking Association to spread banking awareness and enhance its social program and objectives. The social program aims to alleviate the level of the public awareness of the banking services and products and how to take protection measures against fraud, theft, and high-risk investments.

Kuwaiti banks provide various secured investment products and services to enable the customer to manage his investments and increase his returns. These products include various investment deposits i.e., an amount of money deposited by the customer in his bank account and invested by the bank to realize returns for the customer periodically. The customer may retrieve the deposit amount after the lapse of the contract period.

Investment funds are also part of the services offered by banks. They represent a combined investment tool that enables the bank to invest participants funds to realize profits. The fund is managed by a specialized manager in this field against certain fees. Investments in this fund are diversified as they include stocks, bonds, merchandise, money markets and others. It's worth mentioning that the investment funds of banks are under the control and authorization of the Capital Markets Authority.

The investment saving account is an account where the customer deposits the amounts he wishes to save, and the bank invests these funds and deposits the returns in the same account on

periodical basis. The difference between this account and the deposit account is that it is possible to withdraw from this account and deposit funds therein at any time.

KFH reiterated the significance of the customer's investment plans as they are the means to be prepared for future needs e.g., children education, starting a personal project, retirement, etc. These plans help in saving funds in a bank account on regular basis and invest such funds to realize profit. These returns are gathered with the amounts deposited by the customer during the plan period so that they would be ready at the end of the period.

Investments differ according to their risk level. High risk investments are those which are not governed or organized by any regulatory authorities or the laws that provide protection to the investor. Virtual currencies are considered as one of the high-risk investments as they don't fall under the control of the Central Bank of Kuwait or any authority local or globally. Virtual currencies are considered as an asset used for trading against services or commodities. They are not centralized or controllable and transactions made can't be monitored or tracked.

Many people do speculation (Mudarabah) transactions with these virtual currencies by running buy/sell transactions, thus hoping to realize profit when the virtual currency value increases against main currencies e.g., the US dollar. Speculations on virtual currencies have increased also because of the spread of offers promising huge profits on this kind of investments. However, the part which these offers did not cover is the massive fluctuation in the value of these virtual currencies as they move up and down sharply in an unpredictable manner. Some investors made fortunes while many others lost their wealth and savings.

It is worth mentioning that KFH focuses always on organizing several training courses for its employees to raise their experience level in their fields of specialty and encourage them to transfer this information in a simple and focused manner to customers through direct contact at service locations or through social media and e-channels of the bank.

Kuwaiti official dubs fourth master plan 2040 a considerable leap

DOHA: Kuwait's fourth master plan for the year 2040, which could be considered a great leap for the country, was revealed by head of the department responsible for updating master plans at Kuwait Municipality Suleiman Al-Rashed yesterday. Rashed stated on the sideline of 57th conference of International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) for the year 2021 that the new master plan divides the country into four regions. The four regions will be in the north, the west, the south and the fourth, which is the main region, is the urban area of six already existing governorates.

Rashed added that he will be focusing on the southern border area, bordering Saudi Arabia, while giving workshop for GCC master plans, as it includes residential development and supports industrial expansion. He projected that the southern border area

development will be in three economic sectors, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, and coastal tourism. He indicated that this will provide adequate job opportunities for residents, as it is expected that their numbers will surpass 500,000 by 2040. He clarified that industrial investment will mark a huge economic jump within the next two decades, as well as investments in oil, gas and added-value chain, adding that industrialization will comprise around 35 percent of expected rise in employment.

Rashed stated that agricultural activities will have strong presence in the area especially with increased investment in food security. However, expected rise in employment will be relatively low; around 1,500 jobs or less than two percent of total growth, he said. As for coastal tourism, Rashed expected that it would increase employment, and wholesale and retail trade as the sectors of hospitality and tourism would comprise 30 percent of expected rise in employment within next two decades. Participating in the conference are 350 persons from all over the world, 150 of whom participating remotely, and it handles matters of international planning, architectural strategies and other related topics. — KUNA

Local

Kuwait confirms arrest of person part of international ransomware network

Twenty-one-year-old college student caught in 'operation GoldDust'

KUWAIT: Kuwait's interior ministry confirmed yesterday arresting a person as part of an international operation against suspects who reportedly carried out cyber-attacks in several countries including Kuwait.

International investigators said on Monday they had arrested seven people in global raids targeting cyber criminals behind ransomware attacks worth more than half a million euros. Two people were arrested last Thursday in Romania and another in Kuwait, while three were held in South Korea and one in Poland during the months-long operation dubbed "GoldDust". The arrests were linked to the Russian-based hacker group REvil, also known as Sodinokibi, and the ransomware group GandCrab, the EU police agency Europol said in a statement.

"Kuwait police arrested a university student aged 21 years as part of an international operation called GoldDust," the interior ministry said in a press release yesterday, adding that an international collaboration led to the arrest of "a seven-member gang who carried out cyber-attacks in several countries around the world including Kuwait."

"The Interpol sent information of a person who used an account on social media to operate as a member of the gang which had activity" in Kuwait and 16 other countries, it added. Detectives were able to identify the account's holder: a 21-year-old Asian resident and were able to locate him. "Several

computers containing malware and a large number of fake emails were found" in the suspect's apartment, the ministry said, adding that the suspect confessed to committing numerous hackings "for several years". All seven detainees were apprehended at the same time following coordination between authorities in the countries of arrest, the ministry further noted.

The global police body Interpol and EU judicial agency Eurojust were also involved in the operation.



Computers containing malware found

"Suspected of about 7,000 infections, the arrested affiliates asked for more than 200 million euros in ransom," the Europol statement said. The two Romanians alone were responsible for around 5,000 infections which pocketed around half a million euros, it added. "All these arrests follow the joint international law enforcement efforts of identi-



fication, wiretapping and seizure of some of the infrastructure used by Sodinokibi/REvil ransomware family," it said.

Ransomware is an increasingly lucrative form of digital hostage-taking in which hackers encrypt

victims' data and then demand money for restored access. REvil, a group of Russian-speaking hackers, are prolific perpetrators blamed for a series of high-profile cyberattacks. It is said to be a successor organization of GandCrab.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant-General Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah meets US Central Force Air Commander Lieutenant-General Gregory Guillot. —Kuwait Army photos

Kuwait Army Chief meets US air commander

KUWAIT: Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant-General Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah

met yesterday with US Central Force Air Commander Lieutenant-General Gregory Guillot, who is currently on an official visit to the country. Kuwait Armed Forces stated in a press release that the two sides discussed bilateral ties, cooperation, and issues of common interest, especially in the military field and ways of strengthening the coordination between the two countries at the military level. Several senior officials attended the meeting.



Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant-General Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah meets Pakistani Chief of Naval Staff Mohammad Amjad Khan Niazi.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant-General Khaled Al-Sabah met with Pakistani Chief of Naval Staff Mohammad Amjad Khan Niazi, who also is currently on an official visit to the country. The two ranking military officials discuss bilateral relations, as well as cooperation and issues of common concern, in addition to ways of improving military coordination, Kuwait's army said in a statement. Several senior officials attended the two meetings. —KUNA

New laws and legislations to promote transparency and anti-corruption laws

By Dhari Buyabes

Combating corruption takes many forms. One of the most direct and effective means is enforcing anti-corruption laws. This can significantly promote transparency, accountability and the rule of law. While Kuwaiti legislators issued a law on anticorruption - namely law no. 2 of 2016 on the establishment of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) and the Special Provisions of Financial Disclosure - it is important to highlight the significance of other laws that further support anti-corruption efforts in the country.

Since its establishment, Nazaha has worked vehemently to enhance integrity and transparency through promoting anti-corruption laws and legislations. This task is reflected in article 5 of its establishment law, which mentions that one of its functions is "Studying the legislations and legal instruments related to anti-corruption periodically and proposing the necessary amendments thereto in order to keep pace with the international conventions and treaties ratified or acceded to by Kuwait."

Nazaha, in fact, has many contributions in this field. It has been promoting law no. 12 of 2020 on the right to access to information. This law allows persons to seek information from ministries, public institutions and state-owned companies. It also requires these entities to disclose information about their regulations, functions, programs, projects, job vacancies and more. On its part, Nazaha conducted many workshops to train officials in implementing this law.

Furthermore, Nazaha prepared a draft law to amend penal code no. 16 of 1960 and its amending law no. 31 of 1970 to include bribery in the private sector and the bribery of foreign public officials in line with articles 16 and 21 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

Another draft law that was prepared by Nazaha is related to extending the liability of legal persons in corruption offences. The draft law amends certain provisions of the penal code and its amending law. It identifies the appropriate penalties for legal persons for their participation in corruption offences, without prejudice to the liability of natural persons. This is similarly reflected in article 26 of UNCAC, which stipulates the following: "Each state party shall adopt such measures as may be necessary, consistent with its legal principles, to establish the liability of legal persons for participation in the offences established in accordance with this convention."

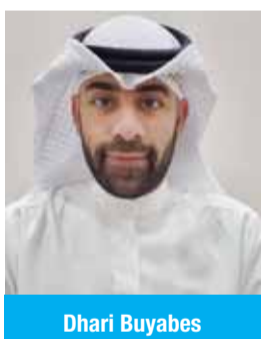
Another significant law is the conflict of interests' law which deals with situations that affect the integrity of the person's duties, in that it could cause personal gain or interest for him. Although a law on conflict of interests was adopted in 2018, it was ruled unconstitutional. Therefore, Nazaha prepared a draft law to address its gaps.

The abovementioned draft laws have been referred to the National Assembly for adoption. These laws are necessary for establishing integrity, transparency and accountability in both the public and private sectors. They contribute to eliminating corruption and improving Kuwait's ranking in international anti-corruption indices such as the Corruption Perception Index (CPI).

In support of Nazaha, the Council of Ministers has reiterated that issuing these laws will have a positive impact on Kuwait's ranking in international indices related to integrity, transparency and anti-corruption. Therefore, it has instructed the relevant authorities to expedite the issuance of the said draft laws.

Laws and legislations must continuously develop in order to combat corruption. Therefore, new laws are drafted to address corruption offences in line with relevant international treaties and conventions as well as best international practices. Laws regarding the right to access information, bribery in the private sector, liability of legal persons, and conflict of interests are essential for combating corruption and promoting integrity. Nazaha stresses the importance of these laws and looks forward to cooperating with the relevant bodies in the issuance and implementation of these laws.

- Dhari Buyabes is a specialist in the International Cooperation Department at the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha)



Dhari Buyabes

Crimes

Young man dies of drug overdose

KUWAIT: A drug overdose killed a young man despite his father's attempt to revive him, a local daily reported yesterday. The father had noticed his son was in abnormal condition and seemed to be in a lot of pain, so he called for an ambulance. The father could not wait for the ambulance to arrive and carried his son to hospital as his condition was getting worse, where he later died, Al-Rai Arabic newspaper reported. The medical report indicated that the cause of death was a drug overdose.

'Fake doctors' arrested

Kuwait police arrested two persons who allegedly performed plastic surgery operations without having proper medical licenses, according to a local report. The arrest came following investigations after a woman reported to police that her domestic helper had absconded. Police had tracked the helper to a clinic in Hawally where she had allegedly escaped. During the operation, police discovered the two alleged fake doctors and placed them under arrest, along with four other runaway domestic helpers. Al-Qabas Arabic daily reported yesterday quoting a source with knowledge of the case. The detainees were taken to the proper authorities for further action.

Banned tobacco

Shuwaikh customs officers confiscated 30 tons of banned chewing tobacco upon its arrival in two containers from Jebel Ali Port. The shipment was reportedly abandoned at Shuwaikh Port for 90 days. Officers searched the unclaimed containers and then transferred them to the relevant authorities for further inspection for any banned substances. The two containers were registered to be carrying sanitary materials, but when checked, 580,000 bags of chewing tobacco were found.

False alarm

A woman in Qurain called police and told them that her husband was keeping explosives in their house. Police responded quickly and discovered that the entire issue was fabricated. They found out that it was in fact a domestic dispute case, and that the woman made the false claim so police could respond as quickly as possible, Al-Rai reported. She was taken to the police station for further action.



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah visits the new Farwaniya Hospital. — KUNA photos



Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah is seen during the tour.

Health Minister visits new Farwaniya Hospital project

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah visited yesterday the new Farwaniya Hospital as part of an approach to follow-up on the ministry's development

projects. This visit comes as part of the ministry's keenness on achieving the goals of Kuwait vision 2035 in providing modern clinical services, said the ministry in a statement. This hospital project is considered an integrated medical edifice that provides all medical services, both diagnostic and therapeutic, and is provided with the latest medical equipment to enhance the medical sector in Kuwait. The total space of construction is 423,000 square meters, including 955 beds, 233 intensive care units, 318 clinics, 156 dental clinics, 31 operation rooms and 1,400 parking spaces. —KUNA

Aquabike World Championship Kuwait Grand Prix opens today

Over 60 participants from 27 countries take part in international event

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Over 60 participants from 27 countries will take part in the UIM-AUP Aquabike World Championship Kuwait Grand Prix, which will be held at the Marina Crescent from Nov 11 to 13, 2021. The event also includes side activities and entertainment. The opening ceremony for the public will be at 5:30 pm today with fireworks, laser show, flyboards and freestyle show by the riders.

Dr Saqer Al-Mulla, Deputy Director General for Competitive Sports, said this championship is an international event and Kuwait is pleased to host it. "We are glad that interest in this sport is



KUWAIT: Officials take part in a press conference yesterday to announce the UIM-AUP Aquabike World Championship Kuwait Grand Prix. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

will be announced, as this will be the final stage of the championship". Mohammad Al-Zanki, President of Water Sports Club, said seven Kuwaitis are participating in this year's championship along with participants from 27 countries.

Raimondo Di San Germano, GM, H2O Racing, praised the great organization of this event, expressing his satisfaction over the previous race held in Kuwait, expecting to witness a thrilling contest. Marco Pietrini, Aquabike Race Director, spoke about the details of the race. "On Thursday (today), participants will test the circuit and warm up with their aquabikes in the free practice hours of the morning and get ready for this contest. This will be the qualification session that will define the order of the start time for the first race," he said.

"Races will start on Friday morning and continue on Saturday, where riders will get points. There will

be two sessions - one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. The schedules are on the website. The activities will start on Friday at 10:30 am till 12:30 pm, then again from 2:00 pm until 4:30 pm," Pietrini added. In the following two days, riders will compete in races called motos. "The motos will give points to the riders that will be valid for the grand prix and for the aquabike world championship. The riders will be divided into two groups. The fastest rider at the end of the race will be the winner of the grand prix".

Pietrini also explained the slaloms, flags and other information about the race. "The race will be monitored from land and water by referees and judges to ensure the safety of riders, which is our priority, and respect for the rules of UIM. Freestyle riders will be given points by the judges according to UIM rules," concluded Pietrini.

ACK, LSE to study attitudes towards electric vehicles

KUWAIT: The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) has signed a two-year collaboration agreement with the prestigious London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Representing ACK, the agreement signed by the President, Prof Isam Zabalawi, and on LSE behalf, David Coombe, Director of Research and Innovation. The agreement intends to create mixed-methods study of attitudes towards the use and purchase of electric vehicles in Kuwait.

Every year, the Middle East Center of London School of Economics awards funding towards innovative projects submitted from various educational and research institutions in the country. This year, the proposal submitted by Dr Andri Ottesen,

Assistant Professor of Management at ACK, concerning 'Breaking the ICE reign: a mixed-methods study of attitudes towards using and purchasing EVs in Kuwait', was one of the two proposals that won the bid for funding.

The project will take place under the supervision and leadership of Dr Ottesen along with Dr Alasdair Jones, Associate Professor in Qualitative Research Methodology at LSE. Split into many operation phases, the project will include capturing the experience of existing electric vehicle owners in Kuwait and their perceptions of the future of electric vehicles in Kuwait, outlooks of electric vehicle sales from the perspectives of automobile dealers, also, capturing prior knowledge and attitude towards electric vehicles from general vehicle owners.

In addition, to host decision makers and authorities in the field of ground transport to understand precisely their vision of mass electric vehicle adoption and their objective towards a sustainable Kuwait for 2035. After the conclusion of the study, ACK is planning to host a conference inviting related stakeholders and researchers in the electric vehicle market in order to discuss the findings of the study along with the challenges facing the industry and implementation of technology in Kuwait.

Highlighting the importance of the research for the future of Kuwait, Dr Ottesen noted that the project can help build the expertise needed in order to help lower carbon dioxide emissions and benefit the environment in Kuwait and the world. He added: "We are trying to make a small step for a better world."

Kuwait's Nazaha: One step ahead, two steps back?

By Humaidi Al-Dhafiri

In a strange and shocking news report, Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) called for protection for whistleblowers from the abusive use of administrative powers by "some" government sectors, without specifying exactly which government sectors they mean nor clarifying further details and indications on which government sectors they are talking about and what kind of "abusive use of administrative powers" is being taken against "whistleblowers", leaving those concerned in a state of shock and bewilderment.

Since its established by law no. 2 of 2016 issued on Jan 24, 2016, Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) was set up for the purpose of combating corruption and in response to the requirements of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). This comes after nine years of Kuwait's ratification of the UNCAC treaty on Feb 16, 2007 in pursuance of international commitments, as UNCAC is considered to be the only international legally-binding anti-corruption convention in the world in which state parties are obligated to take actions against corruption according to the provisions of the convention. This also serves Kuwait's national interests to be a corruption-free state.

However, the road to corruption-free status was

First race outside Europe after pandemic

growing. This is the second time Kuwait is hosting this championship. The Public Authority for Sport is always supportive of all kinds of sporting events. We are happy and welcome all these champions to Kuwait. We wish them success," he pointed out.

Lavinia Cavallero, Vice President H2O Racing, noted that this is the first time a race is being held outside Europe after the pandemic. "After the race on Saturday, the new world champion 2020/2021

NBK extends Sadan Soccer Academy sponsorship

KUWAIT: In line with its commitment to provide all sorts of support to young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) extended its sponsorship of Sadan Soccer Academy for two years. This comes as part of NBK's efforts to promote public health and the practice of sports activities, underscoring its commitment towards delivering on its social responsibility and striving to achieve sustainable development. Sadan Football Academy located in Adailiya provides education and training sessions including all the basics of football for children aged 3 to 13 years, through a highly professional

team of international coaches, and is managed by a group of young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs.

On this occasion, Mohamed Al-Othman, GM - Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait said: "We seek to provide the necessary support to promising young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, with whom NBK has a partnership relationship from the beginning of their business journey by encouraging them and providing the required solutions and expertise for the success of their business." "We always strive to provide sponsorship and create partnerships with leading institutions in all fields, in line with NBK's commitment to deliver on its responsibility towards all segments of society, especially the youth, and to enrich our customers' banking experience," he added.

Othman stressed that NBK is keen to promote and raise awareness on the importance of practicing sports and following a healthy lifestyle, in line with its leading strategy to achieve sustain-



KUWAIT: NBK and Sadan Soccer Academy officials at the signing ceremony.

ability. It is worth mentioning that National Bank of Kuwait has a leading position and plays a vital role in supporting private sector enterprises in Kuwait in the areas of social and economic sustainability and entrepreneur-

ship. The bank is also committed to maintain this role and boost its noticeable impact in providing the necessary support to develop entrepreneurship and creativity among youth and all national cadres.

Kuwait Equestrian Federation launches showjumping league

KUWAIT: The newly formed Kuwait Equestrian Federation (KEF) announced the launch of the 2021-22 showjumping league, which kicks off tomorrow including eight local competitions. The league, which ends in April 2022, will begin with a two-day competition for the beginners, intermediate and advanced classes at Kuwait Riding Center, with similar events hosted by the Hunting and Equestrian Club and Messila Equestrian Club. The federation,

established early this year, has prepared an ambitious plan to raise the levels of the sport, preparing Kuwaiti riders for international participations, KEF Secretary Nabila Al-Ali told a press conference. To this effect, KEF has enlisted the help of Switzerland's Olympic silver-medalist Markus Fuchs, tying him down to a contract for the training of Kuwait's up-and-coming riders for future international competitions, according to board member Ali Al-Kharafi. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A scene from the Kuwait Equestrian Federation's press conference. — KUNA

not "paved with roses", as challenges rose quickly just a few months after the authority's existence. On Nov 24, 2016, the first Secretary General of the Authority Ahmed Al-Rumaihi was surprisingly referred to retirement without any further explanations behind the decision, according to Rumaihi. He therefore rejected this referral and filed a lawsuit against it; however, his claims were overturned by both the first instance court and appeals court. In a later statement given at a symposium organized by Kuwait's Bar Association, he declared that Nazaha wants to hunt the corrupt "big fish" but is failing to do so, as there have only been referral actions without any convictions served as punishment. He gave examples of cases such as the multibillion-dollar Eurofighter aircraft deal, which has been referred by the public prosecutor to investigation. He also mentioned the famous global Panama Papers, indicating Kuwaiti citizens were mentioned in those papers without any investigation nor actions taken against them.

Looking at the official statistics since its establishment, Nazaha received 340 reports of corruption, 12 of them in its first year of work (2016). A year later, this number skyrocketed to 78, 80 in 2018, 81 reports in 2019, and reached its highest number in 2020 with 87 corruption reports. Interestingly, corruption reports dropped to only two in 2021! Resultingly, 135 reports were saved with no further actions, 80 are still under study, 11 were referred to specialized sectors and 45 referrals were made to the public prosecution, with only six convictions in total (three conviction sentences at the first instance court, two at the court of appeals and one reaching the supreme court), against two acquittals.

Getting back to the calls of Nazaha for protection

of whistleblowers and having a look at Nazaha's charter 5, articles 37-43, we see it gives exclusive protection to reporting persons, starting with article 37 by reminding people of their legal obligation to report corruption crimes and assuring the legal obligation on Nazaha under article 40 to protect whistleblowers along with their husbands/wives, relatives and all people closely related to him/her when needed. However, we see that there are no articles in the charter mentioning any such protection for witnesses, experts and victims, as they must also be protected no less than the reporting persons, as clearly stated and assured under article 32 of UNCAC, leaving Nazaha's charter suffering from a serious legal loophole that can compromise the safety of many witnesses, experts and victims and having their rights violated even more than the whistleblowers.

Under article 26, paragraph A, Nazaha's charter states that "Persons may not refrain - without a legal excuse - from providing the authority with any documents, records or information that can be useful to expose corruption acts". However, given the missing provisions in the charter for protecting witnesses, experts and victims, it will be difficult for those mentioned to be guaranteed their safety under the charter when being asked by the authority to provide the needed documents for aiding and assisting the authority's work, without having clearly mentioned articles in the charter and enforcing those articles as a means to protect them. So an urgent amendment, in my view, is needed to insert this protection for witnesses, experts and victims to comply with UNCAC provisions, as they should not be less protected than the reporting persons, given the high risks they can face when being called by the authority.

Kofi Annan, the former Secretary of the United

Nations, commented on corruption by saying: "Corruption is an insidious plague that has a wide range of corrosive effects on societies. It undermines democracy and the rule of law, leads to violations of human rights, distorts markets, erodes the quality of life and allows organized crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish."

Since the birth of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority and looking at the abovementioned facts and progress until this moment, Nazaha had faced, and is still facing, difficult times to fight the "insidious plague" of corruption and uphold the responsibilities of its charter to accomplish the state's goal of a "corruption-free" Kuwait, and is failing to protect those who risk their lives, reputation and work to report corruption. With the ninth session of the Conference of the State Parties to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption just around the corner, as it will be held less than a month from now for state parties to present their periodic reports about their progress in combating corruption, it's important for Kuwait - in order to protect its national interests and uphold its international obligations in combating corruption - to take great steps in changing its current situation in combating corruption by providing more support to Nazaha and push forward the needed amendments by enhancing the legal status of protected whistleblowers and inserting the needed provisions to protect those who are not mentioned in it - witnesses, experts and victims - along with more cooperation to facilitate the work of the Anti-Corruption Authority.

- Humaidi Al-Dhafiri is a legal expert and researcher in public international law, with an LL.M in transnational crime and justice.



Azerbaijan activists sound alarm over wave of killings

Tigray rebels 'raped, beat women' in Ethiopian war

Page 6

Page 6

Poland sees surge at border

West accuses Belarus of orchestrating crisis

SOKOLKA: Poland said yesterday it had seen a surge in attempts to breach its border and had pushed back hundreds of migrants to Belarus, after it accused Minsk and Moscow of trying to orchestrate a crisis on Europe's borders. The migrants, mainly from the Middle East, have spent days in freezing temperatures on the border, blocked by rows of Polish border guards behind razor-wire. Western governments have accused Belarusian strongman Alexander Lukashenko of luring the migrants to his country and sending them to cross over into EU member Poland in retaliation for sanctions.

Poland has gone a step further, saying Lukashenko's main backer, Russian President Vladimir Putin, is masterminding the crisis. Between 2,000 and 4,000 migrants, reported to be mainly Kurds, have set up a camp near the border after they made a concerted effort to cross on Monday but were pushed back by Polish border guards. Polish officials said yesterday there had been a spike in attempted crossings in the previous 24 hours.

Poland's border guard said that large groups of migrants, ranging from 200 to several dozen persons, crossed the border illegally from Belarus in three places overnight in Podlaskie province, but were all pushed back. "All these attempts were thwarted, all these people were redirected back to Belarus," Podlaskie region border guard spokeswoman Major Katarzyna Zdanowicz told reporters. Polish police said more than 50 migrants were detained and handed over to border guards to be sent back to Belarus.



GRODNO: Photo shows migrants in a camp on the Belarusian-Polish border in the Grodno region. — AFP

15,000 Polish troops
"The situation is not calm," Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszczak told Polish radio. "Now we are dealing with smaller groups, although numerous, which are simultaneously attacking the Polish border in several places," he said. The defense ministry said Belarus was using intimidation to force migrants to breach the border, tweeting two short videos that it said showed a shot fired on the Belarusian side by a man in uniform. Blaszczak said on Twitter that 15,000 troops had been deployed along with police and border guards "to protect our homeland from the attack of the Lukashenko regime." Belarus has leveled its own accusations against Poland, saying Warsaw is violating international norms by blocking the migrants and beating them back with violence.

Its border service said that four Kurds had been severely beaten by Polish guards and that Polish military forces were firing over the heads of migrants attempting to cross. Journalists have been blocked from areas close to the border, but in the nearby town of Sokolka AFP reporters saw a patrol stopping vehicles to check the trunks for migrants, as well as several military trucks and police vans driving out of the town.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki on Tuesday said the migrants were being used as

"human shields to destabilise the situation in Poland and the EU" and pointed the finger at Russia. "This attack which Lukashenko is conducting has its mastermind in Moscow, the mastermind is President Putin," Morawiecki told the Polish parliament. The European Union, NATO and the United States have all said Lukashenko is provoking the crisis in response to Western sanctions imposed over his heavy crackdown on the opposition following a disputed election last year.

Merkel calls Putin

The EU is now considering new sanctions for human trafficking and EU chief Charles Michel was due to hold talks on the crisis with Mateusz Morawiecki in Warsaw later. German Chancellor

Angela Merkel telephoned Putin to ask him to get Belarus to stop the "inhumane" instrumentalisation of migrants, her spokesman said yesterday. Belarus and Moscow have hit back at the accusations, saying the West should deal with migrant flows caused by its military interventions in the Middle East. The Kremlin said yesterday it was "irresponsible" for Poland to blame Putin for the crisis, while Belarus's foreign minister said the EU was causing the crisis because it wanted a reason to impose new sanctions.

"The migrant crisis was provoked by the EU itself and its states that border Belarus," Vladimir

Makei said on a visit to Moscow to meet his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov. Lavrov, who has said the EU should provide financial aid to Belarus to deal with migrants, like it did for Turkey, reiterated Russian support for its ally. Accusing Western institutions of mounting an "anti-Belarusian campaign", Lavrov said Russia and Belarus had "closely coordinated our approaches" to countering it.

In a show of force, Russia's defense ministry said

two of its Tu-22M3 long-range bombers had flown over Belarus yesterday as part of longstanding efforts at military integration. Thousands of migrants have crossed or attempted to cross from Belarus into the eastern EU member states of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in recent months. Lithuanian lawmakers voted Tuesday to impose a state of emergency along the Belarus border, effective from midnight. — AFP



Putin accused of masterminding migrant 'attack'

Journalist killed on way to hospital to give birth

DUBAI: A pregnant Yemeni journalist was killed and her reporter husband wounded in a bomb attack on their car as they travelled to hospital for her to give birth, the husband and a security source said. "An explosive device planted in the car of journalist Mahmud Al-Atmi blew up as he was taking his wife Rasha Abdallah to hospital to deliver her baby," the source from government forces said. The bombing took place in the southern city of Aden, the temporary seat of the Yemeni administration.

Abdallah, 27, also a journalist, and her husband had worked with a number of local and regional media outlets. They have a two-year-old child. There was no immediate claim for the bombing but Atmi said he suspected Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels of being behind the attack. "They were trying to find out my home address," he said. The Houthis

seized the capital Sanaa in 2014, leading the internationally-recognized government to relocate to Aden and prompting intervention of a Saudi-led military coalition which supports it.

Tens of thousands of people, mostly civilians, have been killed and millions displaced since the conflict erupted in 2014, in what the UN calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis. At least 12 civilians, including children, were killed late last month in a car bomb blast near the airport of Aden. The explosion came almost three weeks after six people were killed in a car-bomb attack that targeted Aden's governor, who survived.

Aden is home to a separatist movement that last year precariously integrated into the central government, and both have long been aligned against the Houthi rebels in the grinding civil war. Yemeni journalists have been among the casualties of the conflict. Last year Nabil Hasan Al-Quaety, a Yemeni journalist who contributed to AFP, was gunned down and killed, also in Aden. The 34-year-old videographer and photographer, who also worked for other major news organizations in the region, was shot in his car by unknown assailants shortly after leaving his home. — AFP

instead are attacking women's fundamental rights," said HRW's senior Iran researcher Tara Sepehri Far. "The population growth law blatantly undermines the rights, dignity and health of half of the country's population, denying them access to essential reproductive health care and information."

Over the past decade, Iran has shifted its population policy from providing family planning and access to contraception, to boosting the population growth by limiting women's access to sexual and reproductive health care. HRW said that several articles in the new legislation further limit already restricted access to safe abortion. Currently, abortion can be legally performed during the first four months of pregnancy if three doctors agree that a pregnancy threatens a woman's life or the foetus has severe physical or mental disabilities that would create extreme hardship for the mother. — AFP

Iran's new law will endanger women

NICOSIA: Human Rights Watch warned yesterday that a new Iranian law aimed at raising the birth rate would put women's lives at risk by denying them access to reproductive health care. The bill, which is expected to become law later this month, provides various additional benefits to families with children and outlaws sterilization and free distribution of contraceptives in the public health care system unless a pregnancy threatens a woman's health.

"Iranian legislators are avoiding addressing Iranians' many serious problems, including government incompetence, corruption and repression, and

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International

Azerbaijan activists sound alarm over wave of killings of women

Thousands of women subjected to domestic violence

News in brief

'Provocative' Taiwan visit

BEIJING: China reacted with fury yesterday to a visit by a delegation of US lawmakers to Taiwan, as tensions between Beijing and Taipei reach their highest in years. China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its territory and has vowed to retake it by force if necessary, with the democratic island living under the constant threat of invasion from its increasingly belligerent neighbor. Taiwan's foreign ministry confirmed the visit was arranged by the American Institute in Taiwan-Washington's de facto embassy on the island-and said it would provide "necessary administrative assistance". Beijing responded by saying the "risky and provocative actions" are "doomed to end in failure". "Colluding with Taiwan independence forces is a dangerous game and playing with fire will result in burning themselves," said foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin at a press briefing, calling the visit a "clumsy performance".—AFP

Morocco lifts COVID curfew

RABAT: Morocco said it was lifting a nationwide pandemic curfew thanks to an improving health situation and widespread vaccinations. Infections had surged in the North African country after it initially eased the curfew - imposed early in the pandemic - and opened its borders to travelers in June. The government on Tuesday cited "improvement in the epidemiological situation" for its decision to lift the curfew "following positive results realized in the framework of the national vaccination campaign," the government said in a statement published by the official MAP news agency. COVID-19 infection rates in Morocco, a country of around 36 million people, have been down for the past several weeks, and more than 22 million people have received two vaccine doses.—AFP

Turkish drone strike kills 3

QAMISHLI: The Kurdish administration in northeastern Syria said yesterday that a Turkish drone strike targeting a car in the border city of Qamishli killed three civilians. The strike, which was carried out on Tuesday, "killed three members of a single family", including an 82-year-old man, a statement released by the autonomous administration said. Nuri Mahmoud, a spokesman for the Kurdish security forces, named the dead as "national figure Yusuf Kello and his two grandsons Mazloum and Muhammad." "The treacherous targeting of the patriots of northeastern Syria by the Turkish occupation will not discourage us," the spokesman said on Twitter. Turkey, which considers the Kurdish movement that dominates the administration to be a terrorist organization, has thousands of troops deployed across northern Syria.—AFP

Ukraine arrests 'executioner'

KIEV: Ukraine said it arrested the former head of a notorious separatist prison camp, dubbed "the executioner" by the media after years of alleged torture. Kiev announced the arrest of 37-year-old Denys Kulykovsky, with its SBU security service saying he organized the "murders and tortures of illegally detained people" in the separatist capital, Donetsk. Kiev has fought pro-Moscow separatists in its eastern regions since 2014, when Russia annexed its Crimea peninsula. Kulykovsky allegedly ran the "Izolyatsia" prison camp in the separatist capital Donetsk between 2015 and 2018. It was set up by rebels in a former art centre on the premises of an abandoned factory in the city. Thousands went through the detention centre. Charged with war crimes and creating an illegal armed group, Kulykovsky faces up to fifteen years behind bars.—AFP

President 'nude' picture case

HARARE: A Zimbabwean judge has thrown out a case against a couple who shared a photoshopped nude of the country's president on a WhatsApp group, their lawyer said yesterday. Sarudzayi Ambiri Jani, 39, and Remember Neube, 35, were arrested in June 2020 for sharing the image on a neighborhood group in the southern border town of Beitbridge. The image showed President Emmerson Mnangagwa, 79, naked except for regalia from his Zanu-PF party. Zimbabwe has strict laws that forbid undermining or insulting the president. But magistrate Takudzwa Gwazemba tossed out the charges on Tuesday, saying the state had failed to prosecute them after more than a year.—AFP

BAKU: Dilara Bagiyeva's face grew pale as she recounted how, after suffering abuse from her husband for a decade, he turned on their eight-year-old daughter in a drunken fit last year. That evening in November, he returned home intoxicated to their 13th-floor apartment in Azerbaijan's capital Baku, beating Bagiyeva first in the bedroom, then the hallway and finally the kitchen, where he tried to throw her from the balcony. Before the 41-year-old English teacher lost consciousness, she remembered her daughter Farah pleading: "Daddy, don't hit my mom."

When she came to, Farah was nowhere to be seen. Police who arrived at the scene shortly after refused to let Bagiyeva see the body. "He dragged me out onto the balcony that night to throw me off. Instead, he threw my baby out the window," Bagiyeva said. "She was my everything," she added, looking at a picture of her daughter on her phone. Bagiyeva is among thousands of women subjected to domestic violence in Azerbaijan, where activists are sounding the alarm over femicide despite considerable barriers in the conservative Caspian Sea country.

Seventy-one women were killed in the ex-Soviet republic by husbands or male relatives last year and 48 more in the first eight months of 2021, the office of Azerbaijan's prosecutor general told AFP in an email. The first Muslim nation to introduce universal suffrage in 1919, Azerbaijan is one of the most

secular countries in the Islamic world. But wives and daughters are often limited to carrying out family duties in its male-dominated society, which tolerates abuse against women.

'Fear of retribution'

Officials said the approximately 2,000 cases of domestic violence against women that are reported annually are just the tip of the iceberg, as most victims remain silent. "Many women don't phone the police for fear of retribution from family members," said Taliya Ibrahimova of the state committee for women's affairs. The government last year adopted a four-year action plan to combat domestic violence that included setting up a hotline and a state-run shelter for victims.

Ibrahimova said a 2010 law to tackle domestic violence was being updated, and the violation would soon

“

Daddy, don't hit my mom

”

become a separate category of offence in the penal code. But activists say the measures are not enough, and accuse the authoritarian government of President Ilham Aliyev of failing to protect women. "Femicide is a political issue because tackling

Myanmar charges US journalist with terrorism, sedition

YANGON: Myanmar's junta has charged a US journalist detained since May with sedition and terrorism, which carry a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, his lawyer said yesterday. The military has squeezed the press since taking power in a February coup, arresting dozens of journalists critical of its crackdown on dissent that has killed over 1,200 people, according to a local monitoring group. Danny Fenster, who had been working for local outlet Frontier Myanmar for around a year, was arrested as he was heading home to see his family in May and has been held in Yangon's Insein prison since.

The 37-year-old is already on trial for allegedly encouraging dissent against the military, unlawful association and breaching immigration law. The additional charges under Myanmar's anti-terrorism and sedition laws open Fenster up to a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. The trial is scheduled to begin on November 16. "He has become quite thin," Than Zaw Aung said. Fenster was "disappointed" at being hit with the new charges, which were filed on Tuesday, the lawyer added.

They come days after former US diplomat and

hostage negotiator Bill Richardson met junta chief Min Aung Hlaing in the capital Naypyidaw, handing the increasingly isolated junta some rare publicity. Richardson has previously negotiated the release of prisoners and US servicemen in North Korea, Cuba, Iraq and Sudan and has recently sought to free US-affiliated inmates in Venezuela. The former UN ambassador said he was hopeful he had brokered a deal for a resumption of visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross to prisons-which have been filled with political prisoners.

Richardson, declining to give further details, said the US State Department asked him not to raise Fenster's case during his visit. "Danny's case has become emblematic of the utter contempt Myanmar's military has for independent media," Emerlynne Gil, Amnesty International's deputy regional director for research, said in a statement. "These harsh new charges only further highlight the clumsy attempt to prosecute an independent journalist who should be freed immediately and unconditionally so he can be reunited with his family and friends."

Press clampdown

Fenster is believed to have contracted COVID-19 during his detention, family members said during a conference call with American journalists in August. He last spoke with US consular officials by phone on October 31, State Department spokesman Ned Price said Monday, adding Washington remained "deeply concerned over his continued detention". The



BAKU: Dilara Bagiyeva, 41, a victim of domestic violence, looks at a picture of her daughter Farah in a family photo album during an interview with AFP in Baku.—AFP

the problem requires political will," said Gulnara Mehdiyeva, a prominent women's rights activist.

She described Azerbaijan's political system as "despotic", and said the authorities "don't want citizens to know their rights". Mehdiyeva said activists had come under pressure from conservative groups since March 8 last year, when they held their first rally to raise awareness of violence against women. She said a pro-government website had even leaked recordings of her conversations with a friend "to portray me as a whore and to shame me".

There is a prevalent "negative attitude in society that accuses us of eroding family values", Mehdiyeva said. The US embassy this year raised concerns over the killings of women, while the British embassy urged

Azerbaijan to join the 2011 Istanbul Convention on combating violence against women and domestic violence. Azerbaijan is among just a handful of countries that have not ratified the first legally binding international treaty to address the issue.

'Until my last breath'

The United Nations says Azerbaijan lacks the statistics to accurately track trends on women's rights, including on the pay gap and physical and sexual harassment. But it noted that, as of February this year, women held only 18 percent of seats in parliament. "Women lack the foundational representation in public office that would ensure that others hear their voices," the Borgen Project, a US-based women's rights group said last year.—AFP



HUNTINGTON WOODS: A person wears a t-shirt calling for the release of US journalist Danny Fenster from detention in Myanmar.—AFP

Southeast Asian country has been mired in chaos since the military ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government, with the junta trying to crush widespread democracy protests and stamp out dissent. The military has tightened control over the flow of information, throttling internet access and revoking the licenses of local media outlets. Several journalists critical of the military government were among those released last month in a junta amnesty to mark a Buddhist festival. More than 100 journalists have been arrested since the putsch, according to Reporting ASEAN, a monitoring group. It says 31 are still in detention.—AFP

Tigray rebels 'raped, beat women' in Ethiopian war

NAIROBI: Tigrayan rebels raped, robbed and beat up several women during an attack on a town in Ethiopia's Amhara region, Amnesty International said yesterday, the latest disturbing testimony from the year-long conflict. The investigation, which draws on interviews with 16 sexual assault survivors in the town of Nifas Mewcha, follows an earlier report by the rights group that documented the rape of hundreds of women and girls by Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers in the Tigray region.

Yesterday's report focused on assaults that took place in August during an offensive by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), with 14 of the 16 women interviewed telling Amnesty they were gang-raped by the rebels, in some cases at gunpoint and with their children watching. "The testimonies we heard from survivors describe despicable acts by TPLF fighters that amount to war crimes, and potentially crimes against humanity," said Amnesty's secretary general Agnes Callamard. "They defy morality or any iota of humanity." In one of the many horrific incidents detailed in the report, Gebeyanesh-not her real name-said TPLF fighters gang-raped her while her children, aged nine and 10, wept. "Three of them raped me while my children were crying," the 30-year-old food seller said. "They slapped me (and) kicked me. They were cocking their guns as if they are going to shoot me."

Many of the rapists used ethnic slurs against their victims, with a 28-year-old mother-of-two telling Amnesty that one of the four men who assaulted her called her a donkey while her daughter watched. "He was saying: 'Amhara is a donkey. Amhara has massacred our people, the Federal



ADDIS ABABA: Women in mourning clothes attend a memorial service for the victims of the Tigray conflict organized by the city administration in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.—AFP

Defense forces have raped my wife, now we can rape you as we want." Another woman told Amnesty she fell unconscious after TPLF fighters raped her and beat her, using the butts of their guns. The men also stole her jewelry after assaulting her, she said.

Amhara government officials told Amnesty more than 70 women reported rapes in Nifas Mewcha during the TPLF's nine-day rule over the town. The rights group said the vast majority of the women interviewed were suffering from health problems as a result of the sexual assaults but were unable to get the help they needed after Nifas Mewcha hospital was damaged in the TPLF offensive.

The war, which has ravaged northern Ethiopia since November 2020, has been punctuated by accounts of massacres and mass rapes, with thousands of people killed and two million displaced. A joint investigation by the office of UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published last week found evidence of "serious abuses" by all sides in the conflict, saying some of the violations may amount to crimes against humanity.—AFP

Indian party woos voters with sweet smell of socialism

NEW DELHI: A left-wing Indian opposition party has launched a perfume with what it calls the "fragrance of brotherhood, love and socialism" that will "end hatred". The product was unveiled on Tuesday by the Samajwadi Party in the hopes of wooing voters in elections in early 2022 in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh.

Pushpraj Jain, a state lawmaker from the party, said it took "22 natural fragrances"—a reference to the 2022 vote-to-develop the scent. "When you use it the anger and hatred in the air will be defeated. We will also prepare another scent with 24 natural fragrances (for 2024 national elections)," Jain said. The fragrance comes in a bottle in the party's red and green colours embossed with its workmanlike election logo of a bicycle.

Party leader Akhilesh Yadav is hoping it will help unseat Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the huge state, India's most populous with around 230 million people. The state has been run by the BJP since 2017 under saffron-robed, firebrand Hindu monk Yogi Adityanath, a hardliner known for his inflammatory rhetoric against Muslims. Adityanath, 49, could strengthen his claim as a possible successor to 71-year-old Modi if he retains power in the poll, which will likely be held in February or March.

Uttar Pradesh's huge population makes it a key political battleground. There and in other states, politicians and parties use all kind of sops, freebies and even cash bribes to win over voters. Yadav's party distributed the perfume to journalists and party workers at a press conference without detailing when, where and how it will be available for potential voters. It is not the first time Yadav has launched a perfume. Local media reports say the state's former chief minister released four fragrances inspired by four cities in Uttar Pradesh to celebrate his four years in office in 2016.—AFP

International

Despite the dangers, many Iraqi Kurds dream of reaching Europe

'We tried to cross but soldiers fired tear gas to force us back'

ARBIL: "Our life is awful," says Iraqi taxi driver Himen Gabriel, who no longer believes he has a future in his war-battered country and says he is about to try to reach Europe. He won't say whether he will try to enter the EU across the Belarus-Poland border like thousands of others, but is determined to leave his home in Arbil in Iraq's Kurdistan region. Sporting a long, black beard and a fashionable haircut, Himen, 28, says he has no professional prospects, blaming local systems of patronage and nepotism.

He pointed to his four brothers, saying "all have degrees and none has found a job in the public sector because they do not belong to any political party". He prefers not to say whether his itinerary will run via Belarus where up to 4,000 migrants, many of them Kurds, now huddle in an improvised camp in freezing weather. As troops mass on both sides of the border, Poland has accused Russia of orchestrating a wave of migrants trying to illegally enter via Belarus in a bid to destabilize the European Union.

One Iraqi man now in Belarus, who asked not to be named, told AFP by telephone that he and his family had made it all the way to the razor wire fence at the Polish border. When they arrived, he said their group was confronted by "Polish soldiers" on the other side. "We tried to cross," he said, "but the soldiers fired tear gas to force us back." Now back in the capital Minsk, he said he remained in contact with relatives living

inside the European Union, eager to find another way to enter and cross to Germany.



UN denounces arbitrary arrests

Belarus tourist visas

Gabriel, the taxi driver, remains convinced that even an arduous and dangerous journey is worth it, given the prospect of "leading a quiet life" in Europe. Kurdistan, an autonomous region in northern Iraq, presents itself as a haven of relative stability, but is regularly criticized for restricting freedom of expression.

The region has been ruled for decades by two parties, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Last May, the UN denounced "arbitrary arrests", unfair trials and "intimidation of journalists, activists and protesters" in Iraqi Kurdistan. About 3,000 Kurds have left the region in the past three months, of whom 1,600 have gone to

Belarus on tourist visas, according to the Kurdistan Refugee Association.

The Belarusian honorary consul in Arbil, Fouad Mamend, told AFP that they were using travel agencies to obtain tourist visas and plane tickets. He added that the Belarus missions in Arbil and in Baghdad had now been "closed for a week at the request of the Iraqi government". The head of the foreign relations committee in the Kurdistan parliament, Rebouar Babki, said that "initiatives are underway to bring these migrants back" to Iraqi Kurdistan. "But some of them are not in favor of returning," he said.

'A better future'

Belarus is also the immediate destination for Hiwa Fariq Mohammed, a printer in Sulaimaniyah in eastern Kurdistan. After four unsuccessful attempts to try to reach Europe, he said he will keep trying. "I want to leave because of the lack of security and the difficult economic situation," the 44-year-old told AFP. "I want to ensure a better future for my son and daughter." Diler Ismael Mahmoud, 55, was grieving his son's death. He said Kilan, 25, died less than two weeks ago in Belarus, while planning to enter Poland with a trafficker. "He had diabetes and a spinal cord disease," the father said.

The tough journey in harsh weather killed Kilan, who had set off with two brothers, his sister, her hus-



ARBIL: Iraqi Kurd Himen Gabriel, 28, a taxi driver who wants to immigrate to Europe, is pictured during an interview with AFP in Arbil, the capital of Iraq's northern Kurdish autonomous region. — AFP

band and their five-year-old child in the hope of reaching Germany. "We thought this route was easy," compared to risky Mediterranean crossings, said the bereaved father. "Many have done it and they say it is a safe route, with a four-hour walk." Today, he said, his daughter is being treated in Poland after breaking her leg during the journey, while the rest of the family is stuck in Belarus, awaiting an uncertain future.— AFP



SAN JUAN: People attend the first mass vaccination event to get inoculated with the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine at the Puerto Rico Convention Center in San Juan, Puerto Rico. — AFP

'Science and solidarity': Why Puerto Rico leads in COVID-19 vaccinations

SAN JUAN: Puerto Rico has an underfunded health care system, high levels of poverty and its infrastructure remains devastated by a major hurricane that swept through the island in 2017. So how is the US territory leading the rest of the country in COVID vaccinations? Experts credit the surprising success to two major factors: a sense of solidarity forged from past brushes with disasters, and a public health response untainted by political polarization seen on the mainland.

No fewer than 74 percent of the island's 3.2 million people are now fully vaccinated—well above the US total of 58 percent—but also ahead of wealthy and liberal northeastern states such as Massachusetts and Vermont. "Everyone should get vaccinated," Jose de Jesus, a retired government employee said. "You have to take care of yourself, you have to live life until you can," added the 74-year-old, who happily got a Moderna booster shot last week.

As a result of the high uptake, Puerto Rico is crushing its coronavirus curve, with daily cases currently running at three per 100,000 people compared to 22 for the country as a whole, and deaths at 0.1 per 100,000. The situation is the complete opposite of what was expected at the start of the pandemic, when the odds seemed stacked against the Caribbean archipelago. Puerto Rico's poverty rate is 43 percent, more than double that of Mississippi, the poorest US state. Its government is facing an ongoing financial crisis that skyrocketed debt in 2017, and forced the imposition of a drastic austerity

policy. A hammer blow came in September 2017, when Hurricane Maria ravaged the island, leaving nearly 3,000 dead. Many of the victims perished from a lack of resources and poor post-disaster response. The storm struck the island less than a month after Hurricane Irma passed by, causing vast power outages. After that, protests in 2019 led to the resignation of a governor, Ricardo Rossello, and an earthquake destroyed nearly 8,000 homes in January 2020.

Lessons learned

"I couldn't sleep, I kept thinking the pandemic would be handled as badly as the responses to Hurricane Irma and Maria," Monica Felu Mojer, spokesperson for the nonprofit Ciencia Puerto Rico organization that advocates for science in Puerto Rico said. Instead, though, the memory of these disasters has made "people do their part," creating a critical wave of unity to respond to the challenge.

The Puerto Rican government began vaccinating in December 2020, like the rest of the United States. And in just a few weeks, professional groups, hospitals, universities, private corporations and non-profit organizations joined the effort, collaborations key to the later COVID vaccination campaign. Paradoxically, the trauma of Hurricane Maria prepared Puerto Ricans to face the coronavirus. The work of the NGO VOCES, which has administered more than 378,000 doses since January, is an example of this.—AFP

Still fighting: WWII Warsaw Uprising veteran defends EU

WARSAW: Wearing a military beret and a Polish wartime resistance armband, 94-year-old Wanda Traczyk-Stawska stunned the crowd at a pro-EU rally when she thundered "Be quiet, stupid boy!" at a member of a far-right group attempting to disrupt the gathering over a loudspeaker. Despite her advancing years and tiny stature, the Warsaw Uprising veteran has lost none of her fighting spirit when it comes to defending Poland's presence in the European Union and migrant rights.

Tens of thousands of people had turned out in October in support of Poland's EU membership after the Constitutional Court contested the primacy of EU law, in what experts saw as a step towards a "Polexit" given the nationalist ruling party's euroscepticism. "I'm a soldier, I tell it like it is," Traczyk-Stawska told AFP, smiling coyly as she took a sip of tea at her home in Warsaw filled with Polish and EU flags.

'Doughnut'

Traczyk-Stawska was a 12-year-old girl guide when the German army invaded Poland. She joined the resistance movement and went on to carry out acts of sabotage under the sweet pseudonym of "Doughnut". At the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising on August 1, 1944, she was one of 50,000 fighters to revolt against

Iran Guards release seized Vietnamese tanker

TEHRAN: Iran's Revolutionary Guards said yesterday they had released a Vietnamese-flagged oil tanker they seized last month in the Sea of Oman in a tense incident also involving the US Navy. Releasing the ship ends the latest maritime confrontation in waters near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, at a time when Tehran is preparing to resume talks with major powers aimed at ending a standoff over its nuclear deal. Iran and its arch enemy the United States gave sharply differing accounts of what happened to the MV Sothys, reportedly carrying 26 crew, in the incident on October 24.

Iran's Guards claimed they thwarted an attempt by a US naval vessel to seize the Sothys which was carrying Iranian oil. US defense officials rejected that account and said they took no action as Iran seized the tanker and took it into its territorial waters. Yesterday, Sepah News, the official website of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), said "the seized Sothys oil tanker was released by court order after it was emptied of oil belonging to the Islamic Republic of Iran in Bandar Abbas".

The Tanker Trackers website said earlier that "Iran's IRGC appears to have now released the Sothys. She is currently empty and underway in a southward direction. "Though her reported destination is Dubai, her current trajectory is the Gulf of Oman," the service said overnight, adding that Iran was holding the \$50 million worth of oil which the ship had received in June. The IRGC's Navy Commander Alireza Tangsiri mocked the US version of the incident as a "big lie", in a meeting yesterday attended by the Guards' commander-in-chief, Hossein Salami. Tangsiri also praised the "determination, intelligence and courage of the children of Iran who defeated the Americans". The incident came in the wake of a series of attacks on commercial vessels in the sea lanes serving the Gulf, where a large portion of the world's oil is produced and shipped. Iran was blamed for a July 29 drone strike on the tanker MT Mercer Street operated by a London-based firm ultimately owned by Israeli shipping magnate Eyal Ofer.—AFP

the Nazis - as well as a rare girl with a machine gun, an assignment usually reserved for men at the time. Over the course of 63 days of battle, nearly 200,000 civilians and fighters died and the city was reduced to a pile of rubble.

Traczyk-Stawska later passed through four German prisoner-of-war camps, before Polish forces operating in the Netherlands and Germany freed her from a camp in Oberlangen, northwest Germany, in 1945. Once back home, she worked as a teacher at a centre for handicapped children. The last order she received, her life's mission, has been to watch over the cemetery bearing the remains of nearly half of the wartime dead found in the ruins of the Polish capital.

'A fly against an elephant'

Remaining in the EU "is a question of national security... Were we to quit the union, where would that leave us?" Traczyk-Stawska asked. "We already know what 1939 was like," when Poland found itself alone in the face of a two-front invasion by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. "It's our greatest danger... We'd end up like a fly up against an elephant," she added, her robust voice contrasting with her fragile frame.

She said she was "furious" at the rally when she chose to call out the far right, who have received funding from the state and plan to go ahead with a march through Warsaw on Thursday, Poland's Independence Day. The controversial march, which has drawn upwards of 10,000 people in past years and has often turned violent, has been the subject of intense legal wrangling. "I got up on stage to speak of the Poland of our dreams, us veterans of the uprising... a Poland that is kind and tolerant," Traczyk-Stawska added. She soon received death threats.—AFP

Climate change and fires: Bolivia forests in peril

SANTO CORAZON: The road through San Matias, Bolivia, is a no man's land. Hundreds of thousands of hectares of once lush forest are now a wasteland of twisted, carbonized tree stumps. It is a protected area, but San Matias - which also hosts subsistence farmers, cattle ranches and quartz mines - burns every year as land is cleared for the next planting season. The practice is legal during May and June, after the rainy season, with each farmer allowed to burn 20 hectares - also in the reserve located in Bolivia's eastern Santa Cruz department, near the border with Brazil.

The limit is often deliberately exceeded, and the fires negligible. And increasingly, the fires just take on a life of their own, fueled by ever drier, hotter conditions. "It came from that bush... over there!" said Antonio Tacuchava, 76, pointing to the spot where the most recent blaze came within a kilometer of his straw house in September. A former farmer who now keeps a few chickens and other small animals for domestic consumption, Tacuchava is one of 130 families in Comunidad Candelaria, a hamlet at the gates of the San Matias park. Locals raise cattle and grow corn, cassava, bananas and sugar cane on small plots.

'Like a match'

Like the handful of large, commercial ranches in the park, the subsistence farmers take part in the annual burning at the start of the dry season - before it gets too hot, dry and risky. "A spark here, near these houses, is like a match," said Tacuchava, with his neat white moustache and sun-tanned face. Yet despite their precautions, multiple out-of-control fires raged around the settlement from July to September this year.

Authorities said wildfires, mostly originating from land-clearing activities, had scorched 2.6 million hectares of land in Santa Cruz in the first ten months of the year. The Friends of Nature Foundation, a Bolivian NGO, estimates that forest fires destroyed more than 2.3 million hectares of forests and grassland in the country in 2020, and 6.4 million hectares in 2019. According to the NGO Global Forest Watch, Bolivia in 2020 became the country with the third-largest loss of virgin forest after Brazil and the Democratic Republic of Congo - passing Indonesia for the first time. It is a vicious cycle of climate change fueling forest fires, and vice versa.

Forest fires release vast amounts of planet-warming carbon dioxide into the air. According to green group WWF: "To have any chance of restricting the rise in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius in line with the Paris Agreement (on curbing climate change), more needs to be done to cut carbon emissions from forest fires." As temperatures rise in step with greenhouse gas emissions, dwindling green vegetation and water resources make fires more likely. Already, the WWF said, fires in many parts of the world are bigger, more intense and longer-lasting than they used to be. In 2009, Bolivia's environment ministry estimated that at loss rates then, all the country's forests would be gone by 2100.—AFP



SANTO CORAZON: Photo shows an indigenous family of the Ayoreo ethnic group in Santo Corazon, one of the communities most affected by the drought caused by forest fires, in the municipality of San Matias, Santa Cruz province, east of Bolivia. — AFP



WARSAW: Wanda Traczyk-Stawska attends commemorations on the 77th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising at the Warsaw Insurgents Cemetery in Warsaw, Poland. — AFP

Business

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2021

Al-Kharafi: Zain Group's 9M performance a testament to the success of '4Sight' strategy

Zain Group's net profit for 9 months ended Sept 2021 grows 5% to reach \$450m

KUWAIT: Zain Group, the leading telecom innovator in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the third-quarter (Q3) and nine-month periods (9M) ended September 30, 2021. The company ended the period with a stable customer base of 48.4 million customers.

For 9M 2021, Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 1.1 billion (\$3.8 billion), down three percent year-on-year (Y-o-Y), while consolidated EBITDA for the period reached KD 478 million (\$1.6 billion), down 3 percent Y-o-Y, still reflecting a healthy EBITDA margin of 42 percent. Efficiency and optimization initiatives resulted in consolidated net income increasing 5 percent Y-o-Y, amounting to KD 135 million (\$450 million). Earnings per share amounted to 31 fils (USD 0.10) for the nine-month period.

The increase in 9M consolidated net income is attributable mainly to the impressive revenue performance of the majority of Group operations, except primarily for Zain Iraq, which had its profitability impacted by the currency devaluation in the country. Moreover, Group net income increased on account of successful cost optimization initiatives and loan restructuring across operations and the Group, which resulted in significant savings in financing costs.

For 9M 2021, foreign currency translation was impacted mainly due to the currency devaluation in Sudan from 55 in January 2021 to 439 (SDG /USD) end of September 2021, and a 19 percent currency devaluation in Iraq from 1,190 to 1,470 (IQD /USD). These movements cost the Group \$609 million in revenue and \$316 million in EBITDA.

Notably, if the \$609 million currency translation impact on revenue was excluded, Y-o-Y revenue would have grown by 12 percent for 9M 2021.

In Q3 21, Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 385 million (\$1.3 billion), down 4 percent Y-o-Y EBITDA for the quarter reached KD 168 million (\$557 million), an increase of 3 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting a 43 percent EBITDA margin. Net income for the three months amounted to KD 49 million (\$165 million), a 5 percent increase Y-o-Y. Earnings per share for Q3'21 amounted to 11 fils (USD 0.04).

For Q3 2021, foreign currency translation was impacted mainly due to the currency devaluation in Sudan from 55 in January 2021 to 439 (SDG /USD) end of September 2021, and a 19 percent currency devaluation in Iraq from an 1,190 to 1,470 (IQD /USD), costing the Group \$231 million in revenue and \$132 million in EBITDA.

Key operational notes for 9M 2021

1. The Ordinary General Assembly on October 12 approved distribution of an interim cash dividend of 10 fils, totaling \$143 million as part of 33 fils per share annual minimum dividend policy

2. The 9M 2021 period was highlighted by the 104 percent Y-o-Y increase in net income at Zain Sudan, a 23 percent net income increase in Zain Jordan and a 18 percent net income rise in Zain Bahrain

3. Data revenue reached \$1.58 billion representing 42 percent of the Group's consolidated revenue

4. The first nine months saw Zain Group invest over \$665 million in CAPEX reflecting 18 percent of revenue, mainly in Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH); spectrum fees; 4G upgrades and 5G rollouts

5. Zain Kuwait witnessed impressive growth in 5G consumer and B2B customers, with Zain Saudi Arabia expanding its 5G network to over 51 cities covering all regions in the Kingdom

6. Zain joins forces with four regional operators to implement Open Radio Access Network (Open RAN) solutions to drive innovation, cost efficiencies, and customer mobile experience

7. The growth of Zain Esports continues, holding 16 tournaments since the beginning of the year with over 18,000 participants and attracting over 35 million social media impressions

8. The Zain Group Application Program Interface (API) platform enabling faster deployment of digital partnerships, continues to grow exponentially, offering 32 live services resulting in a robust 43 percent Y-o-Y increase in revenue and a 70 percent Y-o-Y increase in API transactions per month

9. Zain receives three awards from SAMENA Council-MEA Business Technology Achievement Awards for: New Technology Leadership for 5G launches in Kuwait and KSA; Innovative Collaborations for Zain Esports; Ground-breaking services for fintech solution Tamam in KSA

Commenting on the 9M performance, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Ahmed Al-Tahous said, "We continue to roll out high quality



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi

- An exceptional 9M performance with significant progress on our '4Sight' strategy, fintech plans and development of numerous digital revenue streams
- \$143 million interim dividend distributed in Q4, a first by a Premier listed entity in Kuwait
- Data revenue represents 42% of consolidated revenue for the nine months
- Establishment of ZainTech targeting lucrative enterprise and government business
- Zain seeks digital banking license to become first telco-led challenger bank in Middle East
- Healthy growth in Fintech services, API platform and Esports participants
- Launch of Zain Ventures sees investment in fast-growing startups
- Revamp of Group's Wholesale aiming to be a carrier of choice for Telcos, other carriers and OTTs

telecommunications services across our markets in an inclusive manner, empowering and improving the socio-economic well-being of the communities we serve. We are also focused on driving efficiencies and seeking new lucrative opportunities to create shareholder value. We thank government authorities across our markets for their vision and support in helping us overcome the many challenges faced by the telecom sector at large."

Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi commented, "The operational performance that saw net profit growth over the 9M period, despite the huge impact of unavoidable currency devaluations, is testament to the successful implementation of the '4Sight' strategy. I am extremely proud of the digital transformation achievements and network rollouts our



teams have accomplished across our footprint, enabling us to continue in our mission to foster sustainable systemic change and provide meaningful connectivity in offering high-quality and appealing services to our customers."

Regarding the huge impact of unavoidable currency devaluations in Iraq and Sudan, Al-Kharafi noted, "It is unfortunate that factors beyond our control have impacted several key financial indicators. Management is taking concrete steps to mitigate the impact, including revamping of prices, and offering new lucrative digital services and packages to individual and enterprise customers to capitalize on the comprehensive 4G roll-outs in these countries."

Al-Kharafi continued, "We are operating at optimal efficiency levels and are confident of the future prosperity of the company, evident by the minimum dividend policy we set in 2019 and the recent decision to distribute interim dividends in Q4 '21, a step that provides a clear indication of the strength of our financial solvency, and the company's ability to execute on its strategic growth and financial plans."

"We remain focused on several new lucrative and strategic business opportunities with a priority today on obtaining a digital banking license and becoming the first telco-led challenger bank across the Middle East. We are keen on fostering innovations in the fintech space, given the success and exponential growth we have achieved to date with Tamam in Saudi Arabia and Zain Cash in Iraq and Jordan."

"Similarly, a priority that will create enormous value, is the recent establishment of ZainTech, a vital development in Zain's determination to transform into a multi-core digital business. A first among telecom operators in the Middle East, ZainTech unifies the Group's ICT assets under one roof to provide comprehensive digital solutions and transformation services to enterprises and governments across the region. The new entity also incorporates NXX and Zain Data Park, both specialized ICT establishments in their respective fields. ZainTech offerings will range from solutions for cloud, cybersecurity, and associated managed and professional services. The company will also provide standard and customized digital solutions addressing the unique needs of different verticals leveraging the latest innovations in IoT, big data, artificial intelligence, and emerging technologies."

"To support the ever-growing demand for high-quality data and benefit from the many lucrative opportunities especially in the enterprise space, sound international connectivity and capacity is critical in offering customers quality services across all our markets. Accordingly, the company has revamped the Group's Wholesale business, aiming to become the carrier-of-choice in the region for telcos, other carriers and OTTs. The entity will act as the single interface between Zain opcos and other international carriers, thereby operating at scale and achieving efficiencies. It will also invest in its own infrastructure, including platforms, international cables and data centers."

"I'm extremely excited by the recent creation of Zain Ventures, formalizing Zain's entrepreneurial start-up-related investments under a single entity and opening the door to future investment opportunities in the venture capital, fintech and tech world. We will support and create enormous value from recent investments we've made in fast-growing innovative startups such as PIPE and SWVL."

Al-Kharafi concluded, "As the world continues to



Zain Group Chairman Ahmed Al-Tahous

The Board focused on driving efficiencies and seeking new lucrative opportunities to create shareholder value

deal and co-exist with the pandemic, Zain's resilience and agility to adapt to a vastly changing environment primes us well to tap into the many lucrative opportunities that are brought forth by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. New business verticals and opportune investments we proactively made in the digital arena in recent times will ensure Zain achieves healthy cash-flows and sustainable returns for shareholders. We will continue fostering new value-accretive areas as we drive the business forward."

Operational review of key markets for the nine months ended 30 September, 2021

Kuwait: Maintaining its market leadership, Zain Group's flagship operation saw its customer base serve 2.3 million. It remains the Group's most profitable operation with revenue for 9M 2021 growing 1 percent and reaching KD 235 million (\$779 million), EBITDA grew 9 percent to reach KD 91 million (\$303 million), representing an EBITDA margin of 39 percent. Net income grew by 2 percent to reach KD 58 million (\$193 million) for 9M 2021, with data revenue accounting for 41 percent of total revenue, representing 6 percent growth.

Saudi Arabia: For the 9M 2021, Zain KSA generated revenue of SAR 5.8 billion (\$1.6 billion), EBITDA for the period reached SAR 2.3 billion (\$616 million), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 40 percent. Net income for the nine months reached SAR 143 million (\$38 million). Data revenue represents 49 percent of total revenue and customers served stood at 7.5 million. For the 3rd quarter of 2021, Zain KSA revenues increased by 3 percent to reach \$530 million, EBITDA increased by 5 percent to reach \$215 million, with an impressive EBITDA margin of 41 percent, and net profit stable at \$16 million.

Iraq: Zain Iraq's 9M 2021 revenue reached \$574 million and EBITDA amounted to \$226 million, reflecting EBITDA margin of 39 percent. Net income reached \$31 million for 9M 2021. The operator served 16.5 million customers maintaining its market leading position.

Sudan: For 9M 2021, Zain Sudan generated revenue of \$241 million, with EBITDA amounting to \$118 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 49 percent. The operation reported an impressive net profit of \$72 million, reflecting a 104 percent increase in USD terms. Data revenue represented 28 percent of total revenue, while the operator's customer base reached 16.4 million, maintaining its market leadership.

Jordan: For 9M 2021, Zain Jordan revenue increased by 4 percent to \$373 million, EBITDA grew by 16 percent and reached \$186 million, reflecting a healthy EBITDA margin of 50 percent, with net income increasing an impressive 23 percent reaching \$69 million. With the ongoing expansion of 4G services across the country, data revenue represented 50 percent of total revenue. Zain Jordan served 3.7 million customers maintaining its market leading position.

Bahrain: Zain Bahrain generated revenue of \$127 million for 9M 2021 (4 percent growth). EBITDA grew by 4 percent to reach \$44 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 34 percent, while Net income grew by an impressive 18 percent to reach \$12 million, for 9M 2021.

Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for the first nine months (9M) 2021

Consolidated Revenue	KD 1.1 billion - USD 3.8 billion
EBITDA	KD 478 million - USD 1.6 billion
EBITDA Margin	42%
Net Income	KD 135 million - USD 450 million
EPS	31 fils - USD 0.10

Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for third-quarter (Q3) 2021

Consolidated Revenue	KD 385 million - USD 1.3 billion
EBITDA	KD 168 million - USD 557 million
EBITDA Margin	43%
Net Income	KD 49 million - USD 165 million
EPS	11 fils - USD 0.04

Business

Biden looks to reap rewards of huge infrastructure bill

President to explain why and how the country will spend \$1.2tn on infrastructure

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden hits the road yesterday to show off the huge new infrastructure bill passed last week, hoping to reap its benefits politically even as he watches his approval ratings slump. The Democratic president chose Baltimore, a port city less than an hour's drive from Washington, to explain to the nation why and how the country will spend \$1.2 trillion on its sagging infrastructure.

On Monday evening, in an interview on local television in Cincinnati, Ohio, the Democratic leader insisted it would only be a "matter of weeks" before the effects of the massive investment plan would start to be seen. Days earlier he had predicted it would be "two to three months" before the public starts to see the real effects of the bill on expanding internet networks, roads, bridges, drinking water pipes, electric car charging stations and a slew of other projects.

The president is counting on the program producing an impact—at least politically—before Americans vote in midterm elections in a year's time. That election, traditionally a challenge for the party in pow-

er, could well cost the Democrats their slim majority in Congress.

In the meantime, Biden's cabinet has been rallying to play up the legislative win, while the president is trying to mobilize local party officials to provide after-sales service for the gigantic spending bill.

It is popular in principle, but its precise details remain unclear to the wider public, especially after weeks of complicated negotiations in Congress. And another battle is already underway in Congress over the other part of Biden's ambitious economic and social reform agenda: an up to \$1.85 trillion plan that includes major investments in health, education, tackling climate change and expanding social welfare programs.

After Baltimore, the president will continue to plug his message on the ground, deputy White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said Tuesday. Biden likely has the experience of Barack Obama—under whom he served as vice president—in mind.

Obama steered through a huge stimulus package totaling almost \$800 billion in 2009, with vastly differing economic and

political results. While the measure rebooted the recession-hit economy, Republicans racked up a strong surge in the following midterm elections.

Obama later surmised that his mistake had been to forget that, beyond the process of making decisions, the president must also "tell a story to the American people that gives them a sense of unity and purpose and optimism, especially during tough times."

That is what Biden, whose White House is full of former senior officials from the Obama administration, appears to be trying to do now. The president said on Saturday he was convinced that "50 years from now, folks are going to look back and say, 'This was the moment, this was the period, this year and the next couple years, when America decided to win the competition of the 21st century'" in the face of rivalry with China and the threat of climate change.

Right now, however, Americans are more concerned about skyrocketing gasoline prices, supply chain problems and a pandemic that has yet to be fully reined in. On Tuesday, Biden's approval rating stood



BALTIMORE, Maryland: DNC celebrates President Biden and Democrats delivering on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal by projecting video on a wall in the Inner Harbor of Baltimore on November 9 in Baltimore, Maryland. — AFP

at 42.8 percent, according to political analysis website FiveThirtyEight, which amalgamates various polls.

At the same point in their terms, only two presidents in recent US history have

polled worse, according to FiveThirtyEight: Gerald Ford, with 38.4 percent in November 1974, and Donald Trump, with just 37.9 percent in November 2017. —AFP

Beauty startup IPO mints India's 7th woman billionaire

MUMBAI: India's only woman-led unicorn Nykaa made its market debut yesterday, tripling founder Falguni Nayar's net worth and making her the country's newest self-made billionaire in an ongoing IPO boom. Nayar, 58, joined only six other Indian women dollar billionaires as her beauty and fashion retailer Nykaa's parent company FSN floated on the Mumbai stock exchange, hitting a valuation of 1 trillion rupees (\$13.5 billion) in the first five minutes of trade. Investment banker Nayar turned entrepreneur at 50 with the launch of the e-commerce platform in 2012, selling beauty and personal care products via its

mobile app and website.

"I hope the Nykaa journey—an Indian-born, Indian-owned and Indian-managed dream-come-true-can inspire each of you," Nayar said at the listing ceremony yesterday. Nykaa (the Sanskrit word for actress) quickly became popular with young tech-savvy Indians—predominantly women—who preferred the wide selection of brands compared with what was on offer at their local shops.

"The best part about Nykaa is that it lets me access so many global brands that had never been sold in India before," 30-year-old loyal customer Sanaeya told AFP. "They have everything from major luxury brands to smaller niche ones and even lesser-known Korean skin care products. I always find something new there."

Endorsements from social media influencers and celebrities—Bollywood actress Katrina Kaif has invested in the firm—helped cement Nykaa's popularity as it battles giants such as Amazon and Flipkart. Nykaa has also

manufactured its own in-house brand of products since 2015 and recently began selling clothes and household products. It has a growing high street presence with 80 stores across 40 Indian cities. Nykaa expects India's beauty and personal care market to nearly double in size from 2020 to 2025, reaching nearly 2 trillion rupees.

Even after selling 4.8 million shares via the IPO, Nayar—along with her husband and twin children—continues to own more than half of the company, valuing her stake at \$7 billion.

In the list of India's other superrich women, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (Biocon) and Divya Gokulnath (Byju's) are the only other self-made billionaires. Nykaa's three-day IPO was over-subscribed by nearly 82 times last week. Technology start-ups in India have attracted record investment this year, with more than 33 "unicorns"—companies valued at more than \$1 billion—created, benefiting from investors spooked by a crackdown on technology giants in China. — AFP

UK sets out post-Brexit financial regulation aims

LONDON: Britain outlined plans for new financial regulation laws following its departure from the European Union, with the aim of securing long-term UK economic growth and international competitiveness. The country finalized its divorce from the European Union late last year, but a Brexit trade deal omitted the powerhouse financial services sector and has hampered its access to the continent.

The UK's key financial sector known as the City and based in the heart of London is already facing

fierce competition from Amsterdam, Frankfurt, New York and Singapore. "Reflecting the importance of the sector as an engine for growth, the government will set UK regulators an objective to facilitate the long-term growth and international competitiveness of the UK economy," a statement from Britain's Treasury said Tuesday.

UK regulators will be handed powers to set their own rules, it added. Finance minister Rishi Sunak said the "proposals will support the future strength of the UK as a global financial center". — AFP

zain

Net Income
135
Million KD

48.4 Million	1.1 Billion KD	478 Million KD	31 Fils
Customers	Revenue	EBITDA	EPS

9M 2021 results

zain.com

A Wonderful World

China's slowdown raises fresh questions for global economy

Electricity shortages and vast real estate crisis hit Chinese growth

BEIJING: The Chinese economy, weighed down by electricity shortages and a vast real estate crisis, has lost its luster recently, to the point where economists are starting to question its impact on the global growth it has helped drive for more than 20 years. The difficulties of the real estate sector in China triggered by the troubles of giant Evergrande could pose risks for the world economy and affect the United States, the Federal Reserve warned in its report on financial stability released Monday.

That is a marked change of tone from September, when Fed Chairman Jerome Powell still believed the world's largest economy was not really directly exposed to difficulties in China. Evergrande, estimated to be worth some 260 billion euros, is one of the biggest companies in China. Its financial situation is closely scrutinized because its collapse would deal a serious blow to the growth of the Asian giant.

The real estate sector is estimated to account for 25-30 percent of China's GDP. In the third quarter, gross domestic product, suffering drag from the Evergrande crisis, grew by 4.9 percent year-on-year, down from 7.9 percent in the second quarter. "So far, the likes of the Evergrande debacle has been contained by Chinese official sector buffering," said Padhraic Garvey, regional head of research for the Americas at financial institution ING.

But he admitted there were "unknown risks." And he said the Fed cannot ignore the fact that "China is right up there as a factor given its size, and the size of its financial sector." In October, the International Monetary Fund revised downwards its

expansion forecasts for China, counting on eight percent, or down 0.1 percent.

Its chief economist Gita Gopinath stressed that the institution is "paying very close attention" to developments in the Evergrande crisis. "Our view is that the [Chinese] government has the resources and the ability to ring-fence the problem, which means that while we will see a shakeup happening in the real estate sector, that it will be contained and will not spill over more broadly" to China's economy, Gopinath told CBS news.

The IMF expects global GDP to rise 5.9 percent this year against six percent in July. Beyond the real estate crisis, a slowdown in the world's second-largest economy had been anticipated by many economists as the Chinese government, which is anxious to reduce debt, slows down investments by local authorities and tightens conditions for bank loans.

'Extinction of engines'

China is expected to experience an average growth of around 3.5 percent for the next decade, or about half the growth rate of the 2010s, according to Conference Board projections released last week.

The US research group estimates that the Chinese economy will settle on "a long soft fall" trajectory over the next decade. Still, "the economic slowdown in China represents a kind of extinction of engines for the world economy," said Gregory Daco at Oxford Economics.

However, he noted that "the dynamic still remains



BEIJING: The Chinese economy has lost its luster recently, to the point where economists are starting to question its impact on the global growth it has helped drive for more than 20 years.

favorable for the moment," especially since the slowdown in China is partly offset by "relatively robust growth in the United States" and in Europe. "We are witnessing a kind of pendulum effect which made it possible to avoid a pronounced slowdown in the third quarter of the world economy," and this effect will undoubtedly continue until the end of the year, Daco said. In the longer term, the inevitable

slowdown in Chinese growth, which is also linked to the aging of its population, will lead to a reshuffle of regional economies. Countries that are currently very dependent on China such as Indonesia, Vietnam or Thailand should loom larger in the global economy, as is India already. As for Latin America, "everything will depend on political stability", said Daco. —AFP

Gulf Bank announces Ali Al-Owaidi as winner of cash prize worth 12 times his salary

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank conducted its tenth monthly Salary Package draw of the year to announce the winner for October 2021. The lucky winner, Ali Hamad Mohammad Al-Owaidi, will claim a cash prize worth 12 times his salary. The draw was held on Monday at Gulf Bank's main branch, in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

Mohammad Al-Qattan, the General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, said: "We would like to congratulate Ali Al-Owaidi, this year's tenth Salary Package draw winner. We would also like to encourage everyone to seize this opportunity and gain a chance to win our annual grand prize of 100 times the winner's salary. Gulf Bank's Salary Account is the only account in Kuwait that offers cash prizes to reward its clients, in addition to exclusive offers that are specifically tailored to meet our clients' needs."

Throughout 2021, Gulf Bank's Salary Package offers clients a wide range of exclusive offers, including the ability to choose between an interest-free loan or a cash prize of up to KD 300, and a free credit card, with these offers being valid for workers in both the public and private sectors. Gulf Bank is also providing special offers for frontline workers in appreciation of their continuous efforts in combating the pandemic.

Frontline workers salary package

Gulf Bank recently tailored a special offer for employed Kuwaiti frontline workers who wish to



Mohammad Al-Qattan

transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank. Upon transferring their salaries, these clients will immediately receive a set of benefits, including a cash gift of up to KD 300, or an interest-free loan of up to KD 25,000 or a special card loan offer from approved showrooms. They will also be eligible to receive a Visa or MasterCard credit card with all annual fees waived for the first year, a free MasterCard World card (upon KD 5,000 expenditure). The frontline offer also consists of other benefits, including a free safety deposit box for a period of one year upon opening the account, free concierge services, and a customer segment upgrade. The new frontline offer is open to Kuwaiti employees working in the Fire Brigade, National Guard, Civil Aviation (including Kuwait Airways) and in the following Ministries: Health, Defense, Information and Interior.

Salary package - exclusive offer

As part of the vast range of services and benefits available to Salary Account customers, Gulf Bank offers its clients the opportunity to choose the most appropriate benefits from a wide selection of attractive options. With the 2021 Kuwaiti Salary Offer, new customers who transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank are automatically enrolled in the monthly draws, giving them the chance to win cash prizes of up to 12 times their salary. Customers are also enrolled in a yearly draw of Kuwait's largest salary prize, a cash prize of up to 100 times the winner's salary.

Gulf Bank's Salary Account also gives new customers the opportunity to receive either a cash gift of up to KD 300 upon transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank, or an interest-free loan of up to KD

25,000. Customers must have a minimum salary of KD 500 and are eligible for the offer following their first salary transfer to Gulf Bank. Customers can also enjoy additional benefits like a Visa or MasterCard credit card free of charge for a year. They can also apply for a loan of up to KD 70,000 with a repayment period of 15 years, or a consumer loan of up to KD 25,000.

Salary Account draws

Gulf Bank conducts monthly and annual Salary Account draws, in which all salaried customers who transferred their salaries to Gulf Bank in 2019, 2020 and 2021 are automatically enrolled. During the monthly draws, Salary Account customers have the chance to win a prize of up to 12 times their salaries and can even win up to 100 times their salaries in the annual draw.

It is worth noting that Gulf Bank is the only bank in Kuwait that offers its salaried customers the opportunity to win sums of these amounts on a monthly and annual basis, as a reward for transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank. Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust sustainability program at the community, economic, and environmental levels through sustainability initiatives that are strategically selected to benefit both the country and the Bank. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with the different relevant parties to achieve it.

Ooredoo Business, Cisco hold webinar on cybersecurity solutions

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Business, the trusted technology partner for all business solutions, in collaboration with Cisco held an interactive webinar to shed light on the latest local and international trends, mechanisms and technological practices related to cyber security and network security solutions and how to utilize them to overcome any cyber threats that may expose companies' sensitive data to danger by unauthorized parties. The webinar was held online in order to widen the reach of audience, targeting technology enthusiasts.

The webinar came as part of Ooredoo's continuing efforts to better help the participated parties to bring the latest technologies and best practices and as a result better face the challenges of the cybersecurity attacks, in addition to sharpening the technological, and technical skills of ICT employees, which lead to the expansion of their awareness, knowledge and expertise, which contribute to achieving the company's goals and building the desired future. During the webinar, participants were able to ask questions and share real life challenges and learn how to overcome them.

Further, the webinar introduced the participants to the different types of common cyber-attacks that occur in the digital world today, and explained that unlike individual users, companies require highly advanced systems, solutions and technologies for protection and continuous monitoring to maintain high levels of security.

Commenting on the webinar, Essa Al-Moosa, Executive Director of Business & Consumer Sales at Ooredoo Kuwait, said: "Disasters and malicious threats are always a possibility and can completely wipe out important data, or compromise sensitive data, which will ultimately hurt any business. Along with the data, companies will risk losing time, productivity, clients, and customers. Hence, all of these losses will add up over time to put a huge dent on any business profits. When taking a decision to protect enterprises network data, companies need a reliable and secure network with efficient backup and recovery."

"This will help enterprises to avoid major data losses and sensitive data breaches that can ruin any business; and this is what Ooredoo Business is offering today to enterprises in association with Cisco being one of the world's leading companies in cybersecurity solutions," Al-Moosa added.

The association between Ooredoo and Cisco is not limited to providing cybersecurity solutions and products only, but also includes providing networking, Internet of Things (IoT), data center, cloud and computing, and security solutions and services to meet the needs of companies and the changing Kuwaiti market.

It is worth mentioning that Ooredoo has achieved the Cisco Gold Partner certification which indicates that Ooredoo Kuwait meets the rigorous global standards set out by Cisco. The official evaluation criteria cover networking competency, service, support, and customer satisfaction. In every technical activity area under scrutiny, Ooredoo Kuwait's provision was found to meet the high standards required.

Grand Hyper marks a new milestone with its 25th store opening at Shuwaikh

KUWAIT: Grand Hyper, the retail wing of Regency Group, has announced the opening of its 77th outlet as a part of its aggressive expansion in the GCC region. Grand currently has 24 outlets in Kuwait and this Hypermarket is the 25th store. Situated on a single basement floor in an area spanning around 50,000 sq ft, at Panda Mall in Shuwaikh Block 2, Industrial Area, the store celebrated a grand opening on Tuesday (9th November) at 11.30 am.

Grand Hypermarket is a household name in Kuwait with 25 stores spanning across Kuwait. It has a strong reputation of offering high quality products for the best price. This makes Grand Hyper the preferred choice for both citizens and residents as one-stop shopping destination for grocery, food, personal care garments, electronics and household.

Dr Anver Ameen, MD Regency Group, addressing a press conference said, "It gives us immense joy to announce yet another milestone achievement of Grand Hyper. Despite the pandemic situation, Grand was able to open six new stores during this period, venture into digital platforms and commence home delivery service to reach maximum customers. All this was possible with the well wishes and support of the Ministry of Kuwait. I also convey my sincere gratitude and best wishes to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His leadership has steered Kuwait through tough times and now Kuwait has emerged more stronger than before. Kuwait today is the most favored destination in GCC for investment and Regency Group plans to expand further in Kuwait with plans to open 50 stores by 2025.

Ayyoob Kachery, Regional Director said, "More than 50,000 people are working in Shuwaikh Industrial area. Panda Mall is a major complex in the



KUWAIT: Shaikh Dawood Salman Al-Sabah, Chief Patron, Kuwait, Dr Anver Ameen, MD, Regency Group, Jassim Mohammed Al-Sharrah, Chairman, Grand Hyper Kuwait, Ayyoob Kachery, Regional Director, Kuwait; Mohammed Suneer, Chief Executive Officer, Kuwait, Thehaseer Ali, Director - Operations, Kuwait and Rahil Bassim K, Chief Operating Officer- Kuwait, during the press conference.

area which is frequently visited by Kuwaitis where household items and garments are predominantly sold. These factors indicate that there is an opportunity for a hypermarket in Shuwaikh which makes it convenient for people working in Shuwaikh area. Now, with 25 stores covering all major locations in Kuwait, Grand Hyper has become a household name serving more than 75,000 customers daily in Kuwait.

Mohammed Suneer, Chief Executive Officer - Kuwait region said, "the biggest achievement of Grand was the 'Customer First Approach' we adopted during the pandemic. We followed high standards of COVID protocols in stores and making home delivery. Huge efforts were also taken to ensure availability of all products during pre-COVID and post-COVID period at the best price in the market."

Rahil Bassim, Chief Operating Officer, said, "As part of our strategy to further strengthen our presence in the digital space with our 'GO Digital initiative', we had introduced Grand Online during the early days of COVID-19 outbreak. Grand Online, the online shopping arm of Grand that started during the pandemic, is now a full-fledged app and is available on all app stores.

Explaining the group's strategy in retailing, Thehaseer Ali, Director of Operations, Kuwait, said, "In order to achieve our mission of reaching every customer, we aim to open our outlets in all the major areas of Kuwait and serve the Kuwait population

with the right mix of products at the most competitive prices possible. In fact, we are also planning to open more outlets not just in Kuwait and other GCC countries but also in Asia, Africa and Europe.

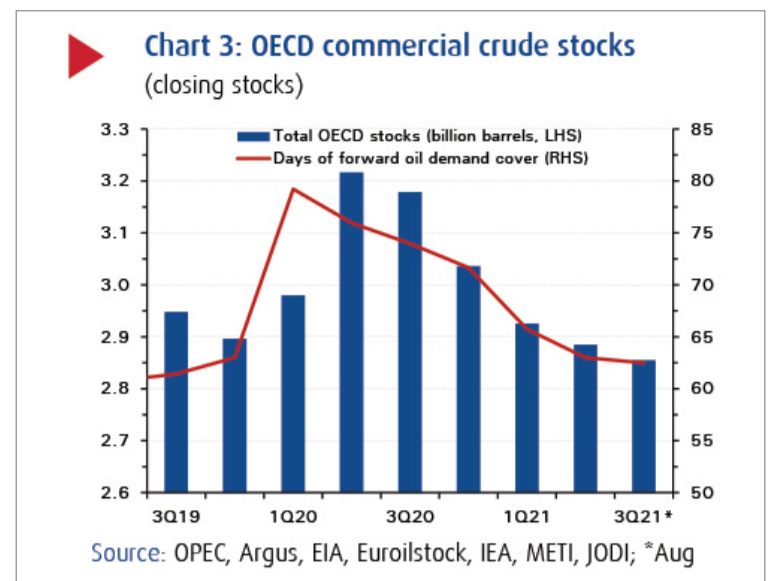
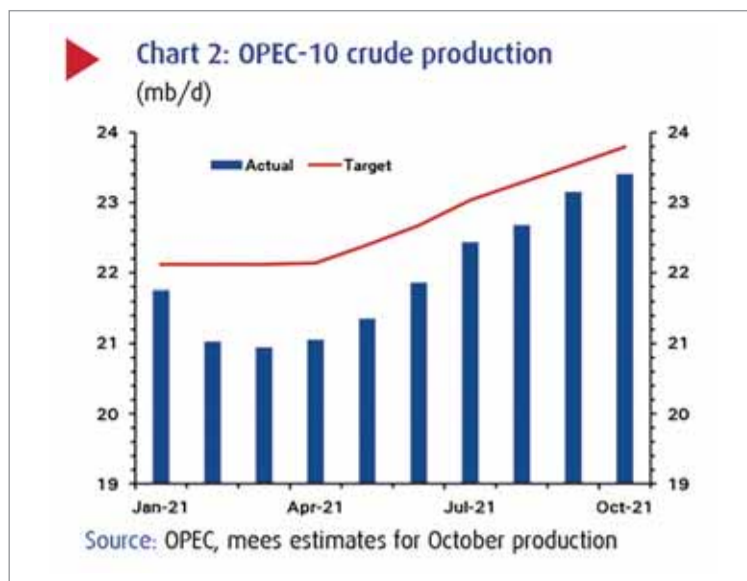
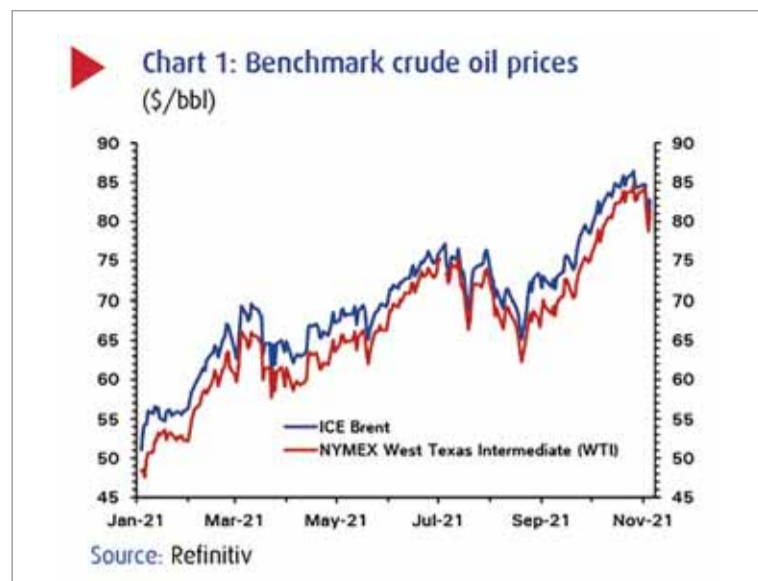
Shaikh Dawood Salman Al-Sabah, Chief Patron, Kuwait, Dr Anver Ameen, MD, Regency Group, Jassim Mohammed Al-Sharrah, Chairman, Grand Hyper Kuwait, Ayyoob Kachery, Regional Director, Kuwait; Mohammed Suneer, Chief Executive Officer, Kuwait, Thehaseer Ali, Director - Operations, Kuwait and Rahil Bassim K, Chief Operating Officer- Kuwait, attended the press conference.

Grand Hyper Management further announced the launch of Grand Connect, a prepaid SIM card powered by Ooredoo which has high value benefits for a very nominal cost. Grand Connect SIM cards and recharge coupons will be available at all Grand Hyper outlets in Kuwait from 12th November, 2021.

Regency Group Regency Group for Corporate Management, incorporated in 1994, is a multinational company having proven track record in retail and diversified business activities like steel manufacturing, general trading, hospitality, food and beverages, healthcare, etc. across many countries. The group owns a chain of shopping malls and hypermarket operation under its brand "Grand". The group employs more than 6,200 people of different nationalities and serves over 150,000 customers daily. The group has a collective turnover of over \$1.5 billion.

Business

NBK Oil Market Report



Oil prices at near 7-year highs as OPEC+ sticks to output hike plan

Clamor to pump more oil to rebalance a tight market amid natural gas shortage

KUWAIT: In October, oil prices reached levels last recorded in 2014 amid continued market tightness. ICE Brent topped its previous high of \$86.3/bbl from October 2018 to reach \$86.4/bbl, before settling at \$84.4/bbl (+7.5 percent; +62.9 percent ytd) at month-end. As of 5 November, Brent had slipped to \$82.7/bbl as the market took stock of Iran's intention to resume stalled nuclear negotiations and a fifth increase in six weeks of US commercial crude inventories.

It was, however, the OPEC+ meeting on 4 November that dominated headlines and which bolstered market sentiment, after the group ratified its existing monthly schedule of supply increases (+400 kb/d).

The US and others had been urging the group to pump more oil to rebalance a market that had grown increasingly tight amid a highly publicized natural gas shortage. In explaining the OPEC+ decision, Saudi oil

minister Prince Abdulaziz stated that it was this shortage (which has seen gas demand diverted to oil) and under-investment that was the real issue and not OPEC+ oil policy. But OPEC+ supply growth has not kept pace with its own schedule due to outages among several members, including Angola and Nigeria. In fact, OPEC-10 has yet to meet its monthly output quota this year.

Preliminary estimates for October reveal OPEC-10 production fell short of its target by 387 kb/d, with aggregate output at 23.4 mb/d. OPEC+ has likely undershot its quota by 700 kb/d. The Saudi-led group is worried about overshooting supply, seeing recent oil demand growth gains as sustainable; the OPEC outlook for 1Q22 anticipates a market oversupplied by about 2 mb/d. The Saudis especially do not want to reverse supply gains should demand turn out weaker than expected. Moreover, managing the group's internal production

policy to enable producers with excess capacity, such as the UAE, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, to offset declines from others appears too complicated and politically contentious.

The drawdown in global crude oil stocks provides the most visible evidence of the recovery in oil consumption. OECD commercial crude stocks fell to 2.85 billion barrels by end-August, which is sufficient to cover 62.5 days of forward oil demand, according to OPEC. Stocks were 183 mb below the 5-yr average (2016-2020), a key OPEC+ gauge to assess market rebalancing efforts.

Estimates of the balance of market demand and supply this quarter show a further stock draw, of around 0.5 mb/d, down from 3Q21's sizeable draw of nearly 1.5 mb/d on the back of supply increases from both OPEC and non-OPEC producers. US crude production reversed all its Hurricane Ida-related losses to reach 11.5

mb/d by end-October (+200 kb/d in October), according to the EIA.

The outlook for 2022 looks markedly different, though. Based on IEA demand and non-OPEC supply estimates and scheduled OPEC+ output increases, a surplus of 1.3 mb/d could materialize in 1Q22 and increase further during the year (averaging 3 mb/d for 2022). Further US output gains and Iran's return to the markets (+1.3-1.5 mb/d) could be potential supply-side spoilers. The Raisi government agreed recently to restart log-jammed JCPOA nuclear negotiations on the 29 November. Oil demand could also undershoot expectations if COVID-19 continues to stress global economic activity. The IEA pegs oil demand growth at 3.3 mb/d (average) in 2022, down from 5.5 mb/d this year. With these dynamics on the horizon, OPEC+ will not likely throw caution to the wind.

Kalyan Jewellers records a revenue growth of 61%, posts PAT of Rs 69 crore in Q2FY22

THRISSUR, India: Kalyan Jewellers India Limited's consolidated revenue grew by 61 percent in Q2FY22 compared to Q2FY21. The revenue growth was broad-based across geographies with both India and international markets growing at the same pace. Total revenue for the quarter was Rs 2,889 crore, compared to a total revenue of Rs 1,798 crore for the same period during the last financial year. The company recorded Earnings Before Interest, and Tax, Depreciation & Amortization (EBITDA) of Rs 228 crore for the quarter compared to Rs 18 crore in the same quarter of the previous year. Consolidated PAT for the quarter was Rs 69 crore as against a loss of Rs 136 crore in Q2FY21.

Depreciation & Amortization (EBITDA) of Rs 201 crore for the quarter compared to Rs 147 crore in the same quarter of the previous year. PAT for the quarter was Rs 68 crore as against Rs 29 crore in Q2FY21. In the Middle East, we witnessed a significant improvement in customer sentiment during the quarter, resulting in a revenue growth of 61 percent as compared to the same quarter during the prior year. This, despite the continuing travel restrictions between India and the region, for most parts of the recently concluded quarter. Total revenue from the Middle East operations for the recently concluded quarter was Rs 360 crore as against Rs 224 crore for the same period in the previous year.

The growth was largely same store sales driven since we did not add any new showrooms in the region during the last 12 months. Middle East region contributed ~12 percent to the overall consolidated revenue of the company.

The Middle East operations recorded Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation & Amortization (EBITDA) of Rs 26 crore for the quarter compared to a loss of Rs 132 crore in the same quarter of the previous year. PAT for the quarter was Rs 35 lakhs as against a loss of Rs 165 crore in Q2FY21.

The e-commerce division Candere has continued its growth momentum. The revenue for the recently concluded quarter was Rs 32 crore versus Rs 22 crore in Q2FY21, a growth of 47 percent. The company recorded a PAT of Rs 54 lakhs compared to a PAT of Rs 1 crore for the same period of the last financial year. Presently, the Company's retail footprint is spread across 150 stores in 21 Indian states and four countries in the Middle East, with a retail area exceeding 5,00,000 sq. ft.

Ramesh Kalyanaraman, Executive Director, Kalyan Jewellers India Limited said, "The Company's performance during the recently concluded quarter has been very strong and we remain confident of the current quarter given the continued easing of COVID-19 related restrictions as well as the return of buoyancy in consumer sentiments across markets. We are witnessing a continuation in revenue momentum that had started around the same time last year and are encouraged by the trends that we are seeing in our operating performance."

The revenue growth in India was approximately 61 percent during the recently concluded quarter as compared to the same period in the previous year. This was despite the fact that there were lockdown related disruptions in showroom operations during the recently concluded quarter in one of our key markets - Kerala. Showrooms in Kerala resumed full operations only by the second week of August. Total standalone revenue for the company in India, for the recently concluded quarter was Rs 2,503 crore, as against Rs 1,556 crore for the same period in the previous year.

The Same Store Sales Growth (SSSG) in Non-South markets was 72 percent compared to the Southern markets, which had an SSSG of 44 percent. This differential was predominantly due to COVID-19 related closures of showrooms in Kerala during the recently concluded quarter. The overall SSSG in India during the quarter was 52 percent.

The India operations recorded Earnings Before Interest, Tax,



stc launches exclusive offers on iPhone 13 series

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the launch of its unique and exceptional offers on the iPhone 13 series, drawing in a large crowd of iPhone fans and customers. The launch event included a variety of activities hosted on the company's social media channels, as well as gifts distributed to attendees who participated in the various initiatives.

During stc's iPhone 13 launch event, the company set up a drive-thru car service on Salem Al-Mubarak Street in Salmiya, where it also organized numerous competitions and distributed prizes to customers.

The launch, with its exclusive and unique approach, attracted a line of cars and participants wanting to partake in the various competitions for a chance to win one of the prizes. stc's branches in select areas around Kuwait also witnessed a large number of visitors who wanted to get their hands on the new Apple device through the "Always ON" voice plans that also provide a wealth of added benefits.

The hashtag #stc13 was used to promote the launch event by stc on Twitter, which appeared on Kuwait's trending hashtags list. For viewers tuning in from home, the event was broadcasted by the famous radio host Ali Najm on instagr. Commenting on the new device launch, engineer Amer Atoui, Chief Consumer Officer at stc, said, "We consistently focus on ways to enhance the customer experience by providing seamless

and convenient access to our wide range of products and services."

Atoui confirmed that stc will continue to provide the latest devices, allowing customers to access a variety of plans that suit their diverse needs. With the objective of enhancing the lifestyles of its customers, stc strives to provide a well-rounded experience that reflects the latest innovations in today's rapidly evolving digital era.

Atoui said, "Whether it is through one of our branches, digital platforms, or our call

The "Always ON" plans offered by stc are designed to meet the diverse telecom and digital needs of customers. Subscribers can explore a new world of enhanced services through any of the various plans offered, which include exclusive voice and internet packages ranging from unlimited calls to continuous internet, as well as other value adding benefits. Redesigned inside and out, iPhone 13 Pro and iPhone 13 Pro Max introduce the most advanced pro camera system ever on iPhone. Super



center, we are determined to provide our valued customers with the latest 5G enabled and highly demanded products in the market. Through this launch event, we explored new methods to streamline and simplify the process of obtaining Apple's latest flagship device. We wanted this to be more than a transactional process, which is why we incorporated a variety of engaging activities and concepts that would provide participants and customers with a memorable experience."

Retina XDR display with ProMotion, improved battery life, the Apple-designed A15 Bionic chip with 5-core GPU, and an advanced 5G experience. iPhone 13 and iPhone 13 mini feature the most advanced dual camera system ever in iPhone and powerhouse A15 Bionic chip in a sleek and durable design. stc has listed the pricing and details of the newly launched devices on its website as part of its commitment to provide customers with a seamless experience: www.stc.com.kw



Lifestyle | Features

LITERARY STAR VIET THANH NGUYEN
ON THE ROOTS OF IDENTITY POLITICS

By offering up a new perspective on US and French imperialism, Viet Thanh Nguyen has become a literary star. But the Pulitzer-winning author insists that reducing everything to identity politics misses the point about the horrors of the past, and how to move forward. "I'm often called a Vietnamese-American writer, which I don't have a problem with," Nguyen told AFP. "But I do have a problem with it when other writers are just called 'writers'."

"My books are not only speaking about Vietnamese issues. They are speaking about France, the US, and global issues like colonialism, racism and imperialism." Nguyen won international acclaim for his million-selling 2015 novel "The Sympathizer" about a half-Vietnamese, half-French double agent during the Vietnam War, who later remains embedded among exiles in the



In this file photo US novelist, 2016 Pulitzer prize winner for Fiction, vietnamese-born Viet Thanh Nguyen poses during a photo session. —AFP

United States. He has followed it with a sequel, "The Committed", which follows the same character to France where he confronts discrimination and his own guilt over the violence in his past.

"The identity crises in France and the

US are only symptoms, and if we focus on symptoms we don't understand the actual problems," Nguyen said. "We wouldn't have these identity crises if it hadn't been for colonization and conquest that brought these people to these countries."

'Painful memories'

Nguyen was speaking to AFP ahead of the release of the French translation of "The Committed". The novels have particular resonance in France—the former colonial power in Vietnam, and a nation that has often seemed reluctant to question its imperial past. "The French still have a really hard time dealing with not only the Algerian past but the Indo-Chinese past," Nguyen said. He is sympathetic to these historical blind spots, however—having suffered some of his own. Born in Vietnam, Nguyen

arrived in the US at the age of five.

He remembers little of his native country or the war, though the memory of being separated from his parents when he arrived at a refugee center in the US has stayed with him. "Sometimes painful memories can scar you forever," he said. Nguyen blanked out his experience in the refugee camp for many years—"as a survival mechanism". "I'm fully aware that memory is very unreliable whether we're talking about personal or national memory, and every nation is deeply reluctant to recognise the crimes it has committed in the past."

Doomed approaches

Growing up in California, Nguyen found refuge in books and his own tentative steps at writing, though literature could also be a dangerous pastime. "As a very precocious young reader, I would

venture outside the children's section—for instance reading books about the Vietnam War by American soldiers where the Vietnamese were depicted very negatively." Those painful early encounters fuelled his later studies, and he has ended up specializing in post-colonial memory at the University of Southern California.

France's official approach to race is often contrasted with the US-promoting the idea of universal liberal values rather than multi-culturalism. For Nguyen, both systems are lacking. "The French and American systems are doomed because they are both racist in their own way," he said. "They cannot solve the problems unless they are able to address their history of slavery and colonialism." —AFP

Australian man, 60, uses pocket knife to fight off crocodile

northern Cape York Peninsula. "There was a struggle and he fortunately escaped the grip of a four to four-and-a-half-meter crocodile. The odds of doing that are about zero," said the Queensland state environment department's Matt Brien. The man had gone fishing on his property last week near Hope Vale, about five hours' drive from Cairns, and he shooed away a bull from the riverbank so he could take over the spot. Then, the crocodile struck.

lost the tug-of-war and was pulled in. "The man said that as he entered the water, he managed to retrieve his knife from his belt and stabbed the crocodile in its head until it let him go."

The man then scrambled up the bank to escape the predator. After emergency treatment at Cooktown Hospital, he was later flown to Cairns Hospital where he was still recovering a week later. A health department spokeswoman said he was in a "stable" condition.

'It lunged at him'

"He described seeing the crocodile seconds before it lunged at him, knocking him over as he was about to cast his fishing rod," the department said in a statement. He grabbed onto the branch of a mangrove tree in a desperate attempt to stay out of the river as the crocodile's jaws clamped around his boots. But he quickly

'Harrowing experience'

Wildlife officers who interviewed the man Tuesday confirmed that his injuries were consistent with a crocodile attack. "It appears that the crocodile was targeting the bull or the cow at the time, and he's just ended up in the wrong place at the wrong time," Brien told reporters. "It's an absolutely harrowing experience. He won't forget that in a long time." Brien said the man had been left "quite traumatized" by the incident, adding he would need "time for healing, both mentally and physically".

Saltwater crocodile numbers have exploded in Australia's "croc country" since they were declared a protected species in 1971, with attacks increasing in recent years. The "salties", which can grow up to seven meters long and weigh more than a ton, are a common feature of the vast continent's tropical north. Fatalities remain relatively rare, with locals and visitors warned to keep their distance from crocodile-inhabited waterways. — AFP

A 60-year-old Australian man escaped the jaws of a large crocodile by stabbing it repeatedly in the head with his pocket knife as it dragged him into a river, local authorities said yesterday. Wildlife officers said the man was "lucky to be alive" after the terrifying attack at a remote riverbank in Australia's far



A person walks past Alberto Giacometti's 'Le Nez', part of The Macklowe Collection, at Sotheby's in New York City. — AFP

Art worth more than \$200m sold on first night of New York fall auctions

Christie's first in-person auction in New York since the pandemic began netted more than \$200 million on Tuesday night, with paintings by Basquiat and Banksy going under the hammer. In a sign of the vitality of the current art market, all forty lots found a buyer in the '21st Century' sale at the Christie's auction room in the Rockefeller Center, which was open to the public for the first time since March 2020.

But it took place in a hybrid format, where it was possible to bid physically from New York or connected real-time bidding rooms in London and Hong Kong, as well as online. The auction's total sales were \$219 million, with bidders registered from 27 countries, Christie's said. The most anticipated piece was "Guilt of Gold Teeth" by Jean-Michel Basquiat, a 1982 painting on a large-scale canvas that went for \$40 million. The piece "depicts Baron Samedi, a spirit of Haitian

Vodou and leader of the Gede" and was "created at the peak of the artist's career," the auction house said. "Flash in Naples", another piece by the New York artist who died aged 27 in 1988, sold for over \$19.8 million, exceeding its high estimate.

Scotsman Peter Doig's 1990 painting "Swamped" sold for more than \$39.8 million, a record for the artist. Two paintings by British street artist Banksy, "Sunflowers from Petrol Station" and "Monkey Detonator", sold for \$14.5 million and \$2.19 million respectively. "HUMAN ONE", the first hybrid physical and digital work by American artist Beeple, the holder of the record sale of an NFT (non-fungible token), sold for over \$28.9 million. Ten artists set new records for their top auction bids on Tuesday, while the sale of lots from 20th-century artists is slated for today.



This picture shows a worker inspecting a sample can of cat food, its base ingredient made out of silkworm pupae, at a pet food factory in Miaoli. — AFP photos



This picture shows resident felines being fed with canned cat food containing silkworm pupae as its main ingredient at the Mao Thai Thai cat cafe in New Taipei City.



This picture shows silkworms feeding on mulberry leaves at a silkworm farm in Miaoli.

Silkworm cat grub smells like success

Licking its lips imperiously, a ginger cat mops up every last morsel of food from its curly whiskers, clearly undaunted by its supper's rather unusual base ingredient—silkworm pupae. The 15 feline res-

idents of the Mao Thai Thai cat cafe in Taiwan are among volunteer taste testers sampling a new cat food developed by silkworm experts. As well as making use of what was previously just a byproduct of silk production, the scientists say the food eliminates harmful intestinal bacteria—with the added bonus of reducing the odor of the cats' own byproducts.

"They have more energy and less smelly faeces, which is more than I expected," says the cafe's manager Rosa Su. The food comes in various normal-sounding flavors—tuna and milkfish, beef and chicken—but the main protein component of the pink glop is insect. That doesn't seem to bother Su's cats, who clamor around her,

impatient for their dinner. The research team says much of the feedback from other owners involved in the trial has been positive too.

More than just fabric

At the century-old Miaoli Agricultural Research and Extension Station, where the food was created, hundreds of caterpillars wriggle around in trays as they munch on mulberry leaves. The facility houses 136 different silkworm varieties from all over the world. The pupa is the intermediate stage in their lifecycles, when they form cocoons to transition from larva to adult. "When we see silkworms, we think of silk fabrics," researcher Liao Chiu-hsun tells AFP as she carefully slices the top off a silk

cocoon to extract a squirming brown grub. "But these highly domesticated insects have a lot more to offer."

The pupae are already rich in protein, fat and minerals, but the Miaoli team has also developed a technique to boost their content of immune proteins that kill harmful bacteria inside the host. Stressing the silkworms and making them think they are in danger means they produce more of these proteins in the cocoon, after which they are harvested and turned into cat food.

Lucrative gloop

This innovative use of what was previously mainly a waste product could also be a potential lifeline for Taiwan's last remaining silkworm farmers. They once numbered in the hundreds, but nowadays only two are still in business. Hsu Wei-chun, 30, a third-generation farmer, says it is no longer economically feasible to cultivate the insects for fabric alone. Mulberry leaves are already used to make tea, for example, and cocoons can be used in cosmetics.

"Our competitiveness comes from the ability to use everything," Hsu explains. "We make use of every portion to keep costs down." The pet food market in Taiwan presents a lucrative opportunity—animal ownership is on the rise, and the economy around it is valued at more than US\$1 billion. A can of the silkworm cat food sells for NT\$68 (US\$2.43), a little more than average canned wet food.

"Even though it's a bit more expensive... I feel the acceptance level for sustainable and eco-friendly canned

(pet) food is quite high in Taiwan," says Lee Wei-ting, department head of Cultural Creativity and Digital Marketing at National United University. And pet stores in Korea, Japan, Thailand and the United States have already expressed interest in the product as well. The CEO of the company that



A resident cat looking on at the Mao Thai Thai cat cafe in New Taipei City.

started mass producing the new food a month ago says the response has been overwhelming. "I feel pet owners nowadays are more focused on ingredients," says Eva Liu. "We used crowd funding in the beginning as a pre-sale. On the first day, within 24 hours we reached our preliminary goal." — AFP



This picture shows a worker laying out mulberry leaves for silkworms to feed on at a silkworm farm in Miaoli.



This picture shows customers at the Mao Thai Thai cat cafe in New Taipei City.



Marie Antoinette's bracelets dazzle at auction

Two diamond bracelets once belonging to Marie Antoinette and imbued with her "glamour, glory and drama" according to Christie's auction house, sold for more than \$8 million on Tuesday. It was the first time that the bracelets, made up of 112 old-cut diamonds, had ever gone under the hammer. Marie Antoinette, the last queen of France before the French Revolution, was guillotined in Paris aged

37 in October 1793. "Her style defines the unique aesthetics of Versailles: opulent and regal, yet youthful and romantic. A tastemaker extraordinaire, then and now," said Christie's Europe chairman Francois Curiel.

"Their royal provenance is impeccable; not only is their line of heritage unbroken and traceable from 1776 onwards, but the bracelets have been featured in two

famous historic paintings," said Curiel. "These bracelets travelled through time to recount a most important era of French history, with its glamour, glory and drama." The bracelets are 18.7 centimeters long and each weighs 97 grams. They sold for 7,459,000 Swiss francs (\$8.19 million), including premiums, at the auction in Geneva. They had been estimated to go for 2-4 million Swiss francs.

"The first bid was five million francs—that's how excited collectors were to try to acquire a real piece of history that has remained in the same family for 200 years," Rahul Kadakia, international head of jewelry at Christie's, told AFP. "In the end, the bracelets achieved \$8 million; really an astonishing price for a really, really great jewel." When king Louis XVI, his wife Marie Antoinette and their children

tried to flee the French Revolution in March 1791, the royal jewels were smuggled out of the country into the trust of a confidant in Brussels. They were then sent on to relatives in the queen's Austrian homeland and passed down through the generations. The bracelets were auctioned as part of Christie's Geneva Magnificent Jewels sale. — AFP



Flowers are seen on the Hollywood Walk of Fame star of actor Dean Stockwell. — AFP



'Quantum Leap' actor Dean Stockwell dies

"Quantum Leap" actor Dean Stockwell, who was a regular on film and television over eight decades, has died in Hollywood, his publicist said. He was 85. Stockwell died at his home of natural causes, according to the publicist. The son of acting parents, Stockwell began performing at the age of just seven, appearing in the Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra musical "Anchors Aweigh."

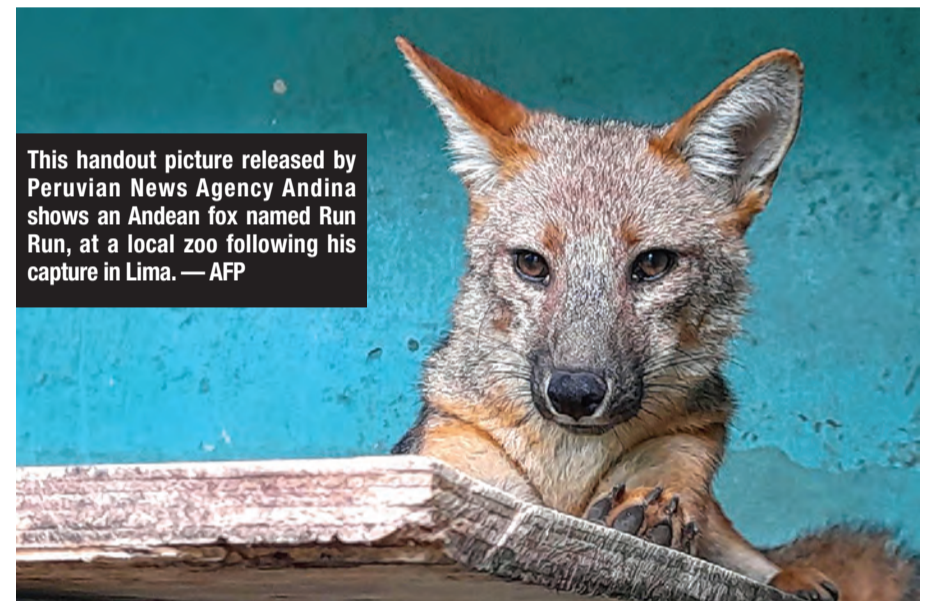
But his most memorable role was opposite a time-travelling scientist played by Scott Bakula in "Quantum Leap," which ran for five seasons. A lengthy screen career notched up credits in films such as Wim Wenders' 1984 classic "Paris, Texas" and David Lynch's adaptation of "Dune" the same year. Stockwell teamed up again with Lynch for "Blue Velvet," which also starred Dennis Hopper and Kyle MacLachlan, where he lip-synched the Roy Orbison song "In Dreams."

He picked up an Oscar nomination for his mafia boss Tony "the Tiger" Russo in the 1988 comedy "Married to the Mob." "Quantum Leap" earned him a Golden Globe and four Emmy nominations. He is survived by his wife and two children. — AFP

Escaped fox raised as a dog caught in Peru

An escaped fox, whose owners thought it was a dog, has been caught and sent to a zoo after terrorizing a Lima neighborhood, Peruvian authorities said Tuesday. The medium-sized, eight-month old Andean fox named Run Run wreaked havoc on small farms in the Comas neighborhood, eating ducks, chickens and guinea pigs much to the chagrin of its owners' neighbors. "Following a patient pursuit, the Forest and Wildlife Service (Serfor) managed to catch the Andean fox, called Run Run, while it wandered close to the Comas district," said the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation in a statement.

Serfor officials used a tranquilizer dart to catch the fox after throwing it food on Monday night, the ministry said. Run Run is in good health and has been taken to a Lima zoo, where the fox has quickly become the star attraction. A local newspa-



This handout picture released by Peruvian News Agency Andina shows an Andean fox named Run Run, at a local zoo following his capture in Lima. — AFP

per said Run Run devoured 15 guinea pigs and six chickens over the weekend alone. Another newspaper spoke to a neighbor who said she had befriended the fox and had been feeding it grilled chicken. The fox's former owners paid 50 soles (close to \$15) to buy what they thought was a Siberian Husky for their daughter at a back street animal market where they were conned by animal traffickers.

"They said it's a wolf-dog, but we didn't know it was a fox. It ate normally, like any

dog, but as it was growing it was clear that it wasn't a dog," Maribel Sotelo, who bought the animal for her daughter, told America Television. The government says the Andean fox is a victim of wild animal trafficking, a crime that is punishable by three to five years in jail. — AFP

Branagh draws on 'other lockdown' of Troubles for Oscar frontrunner 'Belfast'

"Belfast," a hot favorite to become the first Oscar best picture winner made during the pandemic, was inspired by the "other lockdown" of Northern Ireland's Troubles, its writer-director Kenneth Branagh said Tuesday. The critically acclaimed black-and-white drama-out Friday-received its glitzy Los Angeles premiere at the newly minted Academy Museum this week, as its studio Focus Features gears up for a lengthy award season campaign for the movie based on Branagh's childhood.

"It came out of that silence that a lot of us stared into at the beginning of the lock-

down and it certainly sent me back to this other lockdown that we experienced where both ends of the street were barricaded," said Branagh. The Shakespearean stage actor-turned-movie star and director moved with his family to England in the late 1960s to escape escalating violence in Northern Ireland. The movie begins with a scene of street violence in the summer of 1969, when Protestant gangs attack Catholic families to force them out of streets where the two groups had lived side by side.

"I was 16 when 1969 arrived and I have memories of the thrill of this explosion, and it was only a day later that I started to see the menace of it," said co-star Ciaran Hinds, who, like many of the cast, grew up in Belfast. "My childhood at that time was the sound of the city at night, and explosions in the distance echoed off the hills of Belfast, or gunfire at night." The so-called "Troubles" would blight the British province for the next three decades, dividing communities along religious and nationalist lines. Set against the outbreak of that violence, the film cen-

ters on a family whose young father (Jamie Dornan) reluctantly wants to leave Belfast to secure a better future.

His wife (Caitriona Balfe) and young son (Jude Hill) wish to remain in a tightly knit neighborhood where they have deep roots. "Belfast" entered production in August of 2020, with daily Covid-19 testing and departments such as props and sound given strict windows to set up in isolation. "I wanted to shake hands with that nine-year-old kid, and also try to understand what my parents have gone through," said Branagh. "In this pandemic a lot of people have made enormous numbers of sacrifices. And I think in this time, and in these communities, people did (too)."

'Emotional release'

The film blends humor and emotional family scenes, with wry performances from Hinds and Judi Dench as young Buddy's ailing but quick-witted grandparents also earning rave reviews. "I think it's to do with maybe us not being fully put back together again, after what we've been through," said Branagh, of the film's popularity. "There's still a couple of layers of skin missing. And maybe we need some emotional release, and storytelling has always helped provide that." The movie presents a chance for Branagh, 60, to win a first Oscar after five Academy Award nominations—all in different categories.

His first nods came in 1990 — best actor and director for "Henry V"—and three years later he was nominated again for best live action short film for "Swan Song," before another for the adapted screenplay of "Hamlet" in 1997. Having lost his Irish accent as a child who "just wanted to not stick out" in England, Branagh said theater and film had finally enabled him to reconnect with his roots. In recent years, Northern Ireland has emerged as a major film and television production hub, providing many of the settings for smash hit series "Game of Thrones." "The Irish were born for leaving, but that leaving comes at a price," said Branagh. "I most certainly lost my way for quite some time, I would say. It took me a long way to find our way back home. And with this film I did." — AFP



(From left) Director Kenneth Branagh, actors Ciaran Hinds, Caitriona Balfe, Jude Hill and Jamie Dornan attend the premiere of Focus Features' "Belfast" at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles. — AFP



In this file photo Rapper Travis Scott performs. — AFP

Travis Scott sued by family of nine-year-old coma patient

Travis Scott is being sued for \$1 million by the family of a nine-year-old boy who was "nearly crushed to death" at Astroworld Festival. Ezra Blount is currently in a medically-induced coma as doctors attempt to alleviate the trauma he suffered to his brain, liver and kidney when he was "kicked, stepped on, and trampled, and nearly crushed to death" during the rapper's set at his event in Houston, Texas on Friday. The complaint stated: "To his young, growing body, these injuries will have life-long effects, impairing his quality of life and ability to grow and thrive as he would have had he not been subjected to this incident."

The lawsuit - which refers to the youngster only as E.B. - has alleged "negligence in a great number of aspects, including crowd control, failure to provide proper medical attention, hiring, training, supervision and retention" from Travis, Live Nation Entertainment, Scoremore Mgmt, and others involved in organizing the event at NRG Park. Personal injury attorney Ben Crump explained the lawsuit had been filed in court so independent experts commissioned by the Blount family's legal team would be able to access the roped-off crime scene at the venue, where hundreds

were injured and eight died following a crowd surge.

He added: "The suffering that this family is going through is immeasurable. This little boy had his whole life ahead of him - a life that is currently hanging in the balance because of the reckless mismanagement that ensued at the Astroworld Festival. "We ask everyone to send up the most powerful prayers they can as this family tries to grapple with the undoable damage that has been done to their son. We demand justice for EB, his family, and all of our clients that left Astroworld with trauma." The defendants are accused of failing to stop the 'Sicko Mode' hitmaker's performance until more than 40 minutes after the "mass casualty event" started and the family are seeking damages "for negligent and grossly negligent conduct".

Live Nation said in a statement to People magazine: "[We will] continue to support and assist local authorities in their ongoing investigation so that both the fans who attended and their families can get the answers they want and deserve, and we will address all legal matters at the appropriate time." Ezra had been at the concert with his father Treston. — AFP

Brazil, Argentina eye Qatar World Cup qualification

South American arch rivals face off next week in San Juan

MONTEVIDEO: Brazil host Colombia in Sao Paulo today knowing victory will book their ticket to Qatar with six World Cup qualifiers to spare following a near perfect record so far.

Even a draw for the Selecao would be enough if Uruguay lose at home to Argentina on Friday, and Brazilian media have reported that coach Tite is already planning to head to the Arab Cup in Qatar next month to check out World Cup venues and facilities.

Publicly, though, Tite is not getting ahead of himself with a trip to face arch rivals Argentina in San Juan on the horizon next week. "We have two important matches against two teams that, for me, are of the highest level," said Tite. "A good performance and a good result against Colombia will provide us with a good preparation for Argentina."

Tite caused a surprise by recalling Barcelona's Philippe Coutinho to his squad after more than a year out, largely due to a nine-month absence with a knee injury that required three surgeries. "It feels like it did the first time, that's how I see it every time I'm in the squad. It's an honor to wear this jersey," said Coutinho, who has struggled for playing time this season at his club.

Brazil have dominated the single CONMEBOL World Cup qualifying group, winning 10 of their 11 matches and scoring 26 goals. Their only blemish was a 0-0 draw away to Colombia last month that brought to an end a nine-match winning run.

Another tight game is likely against a team on a run of three consecutive goalless draws. Colombia welcome back playmaker James Rodriguez for the first time in a year despite his ignominious start to life at Al-Rayyan, his new Qatari club.

Lats month, in only his third league match since leaving Everton, the former Real Madrid and Bayern Munich player was bizarrely sent off after picking up two quickfire yellow cards for protesting after he was awarded a free-kick. James's inclusion is a welcome boost for Colombia, who will be without injured veteran striker Radamel Falcao.

Colombia are currently locked in a tight battle to qualify automatically for the World Cup alongside Ecuador and Uruguay. The three sides are separated by a single point in the battle to finish in the top four places, with the fifth-placed finishers heading into an inter-confederation play-off.

Messi a doubt

Like Brazil, second-placed Argentina could also secure qualification this month, although they would need other results to go their way. And they may have to do without star player Lionel Messi, who is suffering from knee and hamstring problems and has missed his club Paris Saint-Germain's last two matches.

After their trip to Uruguay, Argentina, unbeaten in 25 matches, host Brazil next week and victories in both could be enough to book their ticket to Qatar. Uruguay, though, will be out for revenge after their 3-0 capitulation in Buenos



Uruguay without Cavani; Suarez suits up



EZEIZA: Argentina's forward Lionel Messi (center), midfielder Rodrigo de Paul (left), midfielder Nahuel Molina (second left) and forward Paulo Dybala (third left), attend a training session in Ezeiza, Buenos Aires, on Tuesday, ahead of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 qualifier matches against Uruguay on November 12 and against Brazil on November 16. — AFP

Aires last month.

They will be without injured Manchester United forward Edinson Cavani, although Atletico Madrid's Luis Suarez has traveled back to South America. Having also crumbled 4-1 away to Brazil last month, iconic Uruguay coach Oscar Tabarez finds himself under pressure, with many fans believing the 74-year-old's record-breaking 15-year tenure should come to an end.

He will also have to do without Real Madrid's

Federico Valverde amongst eight absentees. Free-scoring Ecuador, in third, will look to bolster their qualification hopes as they host rock-bottom Venezuela today, before a trip to Chile next week.

Only Venezuela appear out of the qualification picture, sitting nine points behind the top five, although Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Bolivia have some ground to make up with just six qualifiers left. Crucially, Paraguay host Chile and Peru entertain Bolivia on Thursday in must-win matches. — AFP

Chelsea power to 7-goal thrashing in Women's Champions League

PARIS: Chelsea laid down a marker to their Women's Champions League rivals on Tuesday as a destructive first-half performance set up a 7-0 thumping of Servette in Switzerland. Paris Saint-Germain also eased to a comfortable 4-0 win at home to Real Madrid but the power of Chelsea's performance will send shivers down the spines of their rivals.

Sam Kerr and Fran Kirby both scored twice as last season's runners-up raced into a six-goal half-time lead. Melanie Leupolz and Canada international Jessie Fleming both also netted in the opening period before Guro Reiten completed the rout less than five minutes after the break.

"I think in the first half we were unbelievable," England striker Kirby told uefa.com. "We set the tone from the beginning. We were really happy to come away with seven goals and three points. Everyone played an amazing game."

This was the biggest winning margin in the inaugural Champions League group stage, although somewhat short of the all-time record — Apollon's 21-0 victory over Ada Velipoje in 2012. Chelsea suffered a first-half nightmare of their own when losing 4-0 to Barcelona in the 2020-21 final in May. The English champions top Group A, two points ahead of Wolfsburg with whom they shared a 3-3 draw last month.

The Germans thought they had secured all three points against Juventus in Turin after goals from Lena Lattwein and Tabea Wassmuth wiped out Cristiana Girelli's opener for the home side. Wolfsburg's Felicitas Rauch, however, collected a second yellow card in the 90th minute and from the resulting free-kick, the ball fell to Girelli to fire home her second and secure a 2-2 draw.

PSG made it three wins from three in Group B with a comfortable 4-0 victory over Real Madrid at the Parc des Princes. Marie-Antoinette Katoto kept her head to put PSG into a 13th minute lead and, after Sara Dabritz had doubled the score shortly before half-time, added a second — her 18th goal in all competitions this season — to make it 3-0 early in the second half.

Madrid defender Rocío Galvez then sliced an attempted clearance past her own goalkeeper to complete a miserable evening for the Spaniards. PSG top the group with nine points, three ahead of Madrid. The Spanish side still look likely to qualify after the other game in Group B between Ukrainians Kharkiv and Icelandic side Breidablik ended in a goalless draw, giving both sides their first point of the campaign. — AFP

Salah has two goals as African World Cup qualifying intensifies

JOHANNESBURG: Liverpool marksman Mo Salah leads Egypt against Angola this weekend with the clear objective of ending his scoring drought to help lift his nation into the final stage of Africa World Cup qualifying. Qualifying for the 2022 tournament in Qatar intensifies on the continent with the last two group rounds, with victory in Luanda moving Egypt into the next stage as Group F winners.

The two-time African Footballer of the Year wants to get back on the goal trail in Angola having failed to find the net in his last three appearances for the Merseysiders. Before his mini-slump, Salah had scored in 10 consecutive matches in all competitions for Liverpool. Victory will take Salah and his team into the final qualifying phase to decide which five countries represent Africa in Qatar next year. Here, AFP Sport highlights matchdays 5 and 6, which run from today through Tuesday, with 21 nations chasing eight final-round places, 17 out of contention and Senegal and Morocco already through.

Group A

Riyad Mahrez-captained African champions Algeria and Burkina Faso are heading for a final round showdown on a Blida pitch publicly criticized by both teams as unsuitable for international football. While Algeria can pick nine starters from the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations final against Senegal, Burkina Faso will lack leading scorer Abdou Traore and Aston Villa forward Bertrand Traore due to injuries.

Group B

Victory for Tunisia away to closest challengers Equatorial Guinea will clinch first place with a match to spare, and Wahbi Khazri is a potential match-winner for the Carthage Eagles. He scored a 68-metre goal recently in the French Ligue 1 and has notched three in four World Cup qualifiers, including the last in a 3-0 home win over the Equatoguineans.

Kuwaiti Red Bull Neymar Champions win place at Qatar World Finals

KUWAIT: The Juniors team secured the country title this year at the Kuwait edition of the wildly popular accelerated football tournament. Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five took place throughout October 2021, with the final match played on November 4, 2021. This year the qualifiers rounds were divided into four groups, one for each day of competition. The first group division brought the following results:

Team Red Castle defeated team AFG 5-0. Red Castle went on to lose to Caspion 0-2 in their second match. Caspion were the division leaders that day, also taking a win against AFG by a score of 1-0. Red Castle were the runners-up for their group.

In the second group division, The Juniors took both matches that day to come out on top. First game was against Al-Nashami with a final score of 2-0, and second against Golden Boys with a 5-0 score. Golden Boys also suffered a loss to Al-Nashami by 0-5, who came second place in their

group. The third group saw team Jayeenkom take first place by winning their matches against their scheduled opponents. First match was against Trend, 5-0. Second game they were matched up with Morocco, which they won by a final tally of 4-0. Trend went on to beat Morocco 1-0 to qualify for the runner-up position.

The fourth group saw team Al-Najjar take their division with decisive wins against Yellows Time (4-1), and Abaden (2-0). For second position, Abaden defeated Yellows Time, 3-1.

Division champions and runner-ups automatically qualified for the quarter-finals.

Quarterfinals first match went to Al-Nashami, who took the win 3-1 over Caspian.

Second quarter-final game saw Al-Najjar take a strong win against Trend, 5-0.

The third quarter final was a 4-0 win for The Juniors against Red Castle.

Group C

Nigeria recovered swiftly from a stunning home defeat by the Central African Republic and will take an unassailable lead if they defeat Liberia in matchday 5 and Cape Verde fail to secure maximum points. The Super Eagles have recalled former Manchester United forward Odion Ighalo and Premier League midfielders Wilfred Ndidi and Alex Iwobi have overcome injuries that sidelined them last month.

Group D

Matchday 5 wins for leaders the Ivory Coast at home to Mozambique and Cameroon away to Malawi will leave one point separating them heading into a final round showdown in Yaounde. Ivory Coast will miss unavailable Crystal Palace winger Wilfried Zaha while Cameroon have called up Ajax Amsterdam goalkeeper Andre Onana, who has completed a lengthy ban for a doping violation.

Group E

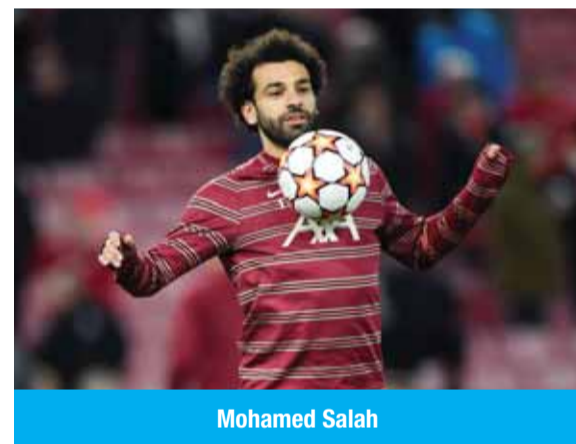
Mali appear the strongest of the African challengers who have never qualified for the World Cup and hold a two-point advantage over Uganda in a section where Kenya have fared dimly. A Malian Eagles squad including Southampton winger Moussa Djenepo will seal top spot with a match to spare if they win in Rwanda and Uganda fail to secure maximum points when they host Kenya.

Group F

Former Real Madrid manager and twice Manchester United assistant Carlos Queiroz has had an immediate impact on Egypt since replacing sacked Hossam el Badry after matchday 2. Home and away victories over Libya gave the record seven-time African champions a four-point advantage and even if they lose in Angola, a win over Gabon in Alexandria will ensure progress.

Group G

A groin injury could prevent Arsenal midfielder Thomas Partey playing for Ghana against Ethiopia, but he is a likely starter in a probable group decider at home to leaders South Africa. South Africa forward Victor Letsoalo, who has impressed for newcomers Royal AM in the domestic league, misses the home



Mohamed Salah

match against Zimbabwe through suspension.

Group H

Only pride is at stake in a group where Senegal boast a perfect four-match record and clinched first place last month by winning away to Namibia through a Famara Diedhiou hat-trick. Senegal have a powerful 'spine' of goalkeeper Edouard Mendy, center-back Kalidou Koulibaly, midfielder Idrissa Gueye and forward Sadio Mane and are expected to qualify for Qatar.

Group I

Morocco have also secured a final-round place, helped by playing away matches against Guinea and Guinea-Bissau at home because of a Conakry coup and a Bissau stadium not up to international standards. Bottom team Sudan are another country without a suitable venue for World Cup qualifying so they must tackle the Wahid Halilhodzic-coached Moroccans in Rabat.

Group J

The most intriguing section with co-leaders Benin and Tanzania, top seeds the Democratic Republic of Congo and surprise 2019 Cup of Nations quarter-finalists Madagascar all capable of finishing first. Madagascar may be four points behind the pacesetters, but will snatch top spot if they defeat Benin and Tanzania and DR Congo draw their two fixtures. — AFP



Fourth and last quarter-final match went to Jayeenkom winning 3-0 over Abaden.

Semi-finals first match went to The Juniors, taking a 1-0 lead over Nashami.

Second semi-finals had Al-Najjar squeak by Jayeenkom by 2-1.

At a packed Red Bull Neymar Jr's Country Finals attendance, The Juniors won with a maximum score of 5-0 over Al-Najjar to close out the tournament with confidence. The worldwide tour-

namment includes over 30 participating countries. For the first time in the history of Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five, the World Finals will be held in an Arab Gulf country, Qatar.

The events were held in cooperation with sports group, Puma, and water company Acqua Eva, who both proudly supported the major event as well as Kuwait Times. To find out more about the Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five, follow @RedBullKuwait on Instagram and Twitter, and @RedBull on Facebook.

Sports

Antetokounmpo carries Bucks to one-sided win over Sixers

NBA MVP Jokic suspended one game, Morris fined after tussle

LOS ANGELES: Giannis Antetokounmpo got back to business on Tuesday, scoring 31 points and grabbing 16 rebounds as the Milwaukee Bucks snapped a two-game losing skid by beating the short-handed Philadelphia 76ers 118-109.

"Always feels good to get a win," Antetokounmpo said. "I was just trying to be competitive and trying to do whatever it takes to get a win. That's what my team wants me to do, that's what my team needs me to do."



Sixers' Embiid out with COVID

The victory comes one day after the Bucks visited the White House as guests of American President Joe Biden to honor their NBA championship. But so far this season, Milwaukee has hardly resembled the defending champs with six losses in their first 11 games.

Grayson Allen added 25 points and Bobby Portis contributed 19 points and 10 rebounds for the Bucks, who hope Tuesday's win will help them reverse their fortunes in the new season. Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said Antetokounmpo had an added spring in his step.

"I think he had that extra competitiveness tonight," Budenholzer said. "He made some plays that are special. He can do some unique things, and he did it multiple times tonight. There was just that extra desire, that

extra competitive gear that he needed, that we needed." The Bucks were missing Khris Middleton (COVID-19), Brook Lopez (back) and Donte DiVincenzo (ankle).

Tyrese Maxey led the depleted Sixers with 31 points while Georges Niang added 21 and Shake Milton 20. Andre Drummond compiled his second double-double in as many nights with 17 points and 20 rebounds. The 28-year-old Drummond was brought in in the offseason after the Sixers parted ways with ageing veteran Dwight Howard.

The Sixers have dropped two in a row. Sixers coach Doc Rivers has had to get creative with the lineup because of all the missing players. In their last game on Monday night, Philadelphia lost 103-96 to the New York Knicks, giving them no time to rest before facing the reigning champs. The Sixers played without Joel Embiid, who tested positive for COVID-19 and will likely be out for 10 days. Also absent for the Sixers were Tobias Harris, Isaiah Joe and Matisse Thybulle for health and safety protocols. Ben Simmons (personal reasons) has yet to play this season.

Jokic suspended

Elsewhere, reigning league MVP Nikola Jokic, whose first triple double of the season was overshadowed by his ejection from Monday's game, was hit with a one-game suspension on Tuesday for an illegal check on Markieff Morris.

Miami's Morris was fined \$50,000 for committing a flagrant foul when he and Jokic tangled late in the 113-96 Denver Nuggets' win over the Heat. Jokic was scheduled to serve his suspension last night when the Nuggets faced the Indiana Pacers.

Miami's Jimmy Butler was fined \$30,000 for what the NBA termed, "attempting to escalate the altercation," after he appeared to move towards the Nuggets bench and challenge Jokic after the initial altercation



PHILADELPHIA: Giannis Antetokounmpo #34 of the Milwaukee Bucks shoots the ball against the Milwaukee Bucks on Tuesday at Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. — AFP

had been broken up.

Monday's game was essentially over, with Denver leading 111-94 with 2:39 left, when the kerfuffle started. Jokic grabbed a defensive rebound and was bringing the ball upcourt when Morris slammed into him from the side with a hard elbow.

Jokic was knocked backward and then quickly went

after Morris, lowering his shoulder and delivering a forceful check into the center of his back. Morris crashed to the floor and was attended to by the Heat medical staff, which brought out a stretcher. However, Morris was able to walk off the court and left for the locker room. Both players were ejected. The teams meet again November 29 in Miami. — AFP

Czech billionaire buys 27 percent stake in West Ham

LONDON: Czech billionaire Daniel Kretinsky has completed his purchase of a 27 percent stake in West Ham, the Premier League club announced yesterday. West Ham said in a statement "it is intended" that Kretinsky and his colleague Pavel Horský would become members of the board at the London Stadium alongside joint-chairmen David Sullivan and David Gold and vice-chair Karren Brady. The London club said the deal would help reduce long-term debt and continue the "positive progress" made in recent years. "On behalf of the board I am very pleased to welcome Daniel Kretinsky, Pavel Horský and (investment group) 1890s Holdings as to West Ham United," said Brady.

"We are always looking to continue to progress and Daniel's involvement brings investment which strengthens the club's position and in turn will assist in the development of the club's key areas of focus. David Sullivan and David Gold have always been very open about finding the right investors to join them on the journey as custodians of West Ham United and Daniel's strong business acumen and football experience will be of huge benefit to the club."

Kretinsky, who is co-owner of Czech club Sparta Prague, said he was delighted the process had been successfully concluded. "I am passionate about football," he said. "I greatly appreciate and respect the exceptional history and tradition of West Ham United as well as its loyal and passionate supporter base and also the highly inspiring role it plays in many social programs and initiatives. The development and growth of the club in recent years has been clear for everyone to see and I am delighted to be part of what I believe is a very exciting future ahead." David Moyes' team are currently third in the Premier League after their 3-2 win against Liverpool on Sunday. — AFP



LINZ: Britain's Emma Raducanu (right) congratulates winner China's Wang Xinyu after their women's singles match of the WTA Upper Austria Ladies tennis tournament in Linz, Austria on Tuesday. — AFP

Raducanu stumbles to new early defeat in Linz

LINZ: US Open champion Emma Raducanu ended her breakthrough season on Tuesday when she was knocked out of the WTA event in Linz, losing her second round match 6-1, 6-7 (0/7), 7-5 to world number 106 Wang Xinyu. The 18-year-old top seed Raducanu, who confirmed after the match that Torben Beltz will be her new coach, stunned the tennis world in September when she became the first qualifier ever to win a major.

Playing in just her third tournament since her Flushing Meadows success, the British teenager, now ranked 20 in the world, struggled against the 20-year-old Chinese who galloped through the first set as Raducanu battled to keep her service together. The Briton was far from her most fluent in the second set but made short work of Wang in the tie-break which she took to love as she won 10 points in a row.

Wang, however, stayed with her in the decider, breaking to go 5-4 up after which Raducanu took a

medical time-out for treatment for a hip spasm. She picked herself up to save two match points and level at 5-5 but again failed to hold, allowing Wang to take her second opportunity to serve out the match, closing it out after two hours and 36 minutes on court.

It marked another disappointing day at the office for Raducanu who has been without a coach since parting company with Andrew Richardson shortly after her triumph in New York. Raducanu, however, confirmed British media reports that Beltz, 44, who previously coached former world number one Angelique Kerber during her successful 2016 Australian Open and 2016 US Open campaigns, will take over for next season.

"I'm definitely very excited to work with him throughout the pre-season and into next year," said Raducanu. "I'm feeling excited about all the work that is to come. I think he brings a lot of experience. Obviously he's worked with Kerber, who's such a great player and has done extremely well, won three slams. I think that experience definitely helps with someone as inexperienced as me. He can help guide me through."

Wang now faces American eighth seed Alison Riske in the quarter-finals after her 6-4, 6-4 win over Alize Cornet. Second seed Simona Halep, who missed this year's French Open and Wimbledon due to a left calf tear, eased into the last eight with a 7-5, 6-3 win over Aliaksandra Sasnovich. — AFP

Three detained over packed eSports celebration in Wuhan

BEIJING: Chinese police detained three people after thousands of cheering fans packed a square in Wuhan to watch a Chinese team win a major eSports world title, state media said. More than 2,000 people burst into celebration in Wuhan — where the coronavirus emerged in late 2019 — after watching an outdoor livestream of Edward Gaming (EDG) winning the League of Legends crown. The Shanghai-based professional gaming team defeated South Korean titleholders Damwon in Reykjavik on Saturday, sparking scenes of night-time jubilation in China. Footage of the Wuhan party published by Chinese media showed a large crowd gathered outdoors in front of a big screen, with cheering fans waving flags bearing EDG's logo and packed into a square.

At least 2,000 people attended the unauthorized viewing party, the state-run People's Daily reported, and cited police as saying that the three organizers had failed to obtain a permit. The organizers "caused hidden risks for safety and order at the scene of the activity", the People's Daily said.

"Some crazy eSports fans went a bit too far," the English-language version of the Global Times added. Police detained the three organizers for up to 10 days and fined them at least 500 yuan (\$80). League of Legends (LoL) is a massively popular multiplayer online battle arena game and EDG's championship success was widely celebrated in China.

Images on Chinese social media showed chanting fans gathering at university dormitories and rushing out into the streets. Unverified footage of what appeared to be the Wuhan celebrations were also widely viewed on Twitter. China's eSports industry has exploded in recent years. The market was worth more than 147 billion yuan in 2020, according to industry research firm iResearch. — AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Kaifan	24849807
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Shamiya	24848913
Maternity Hospital	24843100	Shuwaikh	24814507
Mubarak Al-Kabir		Abdullah Salem	22549134
Hospital	25312700	Nuzha	22526804
Chest Hospital	24849400	Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010	Qadsiya	22515088
Adan Hospital	23940620	Dasmah	
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300	22532265	
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000	Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9	Shaab	22518752
		Qibla	22459381
		Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
		Mirqab	22456536
		Sharq	22465401
		Salmiya	25746401

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075

CHANGE OF NAME

I, NOORUL AMEEN S/o MOHAMED MOOSA, Passport No. K7915173, D/O/B-19.04.1975, I have changed my name to MOHAMED NOORUL AMEEN. (C 0969) 10-11-2021

Old name: Chennareddy Subbareddy S/o Chennareddy Narayana Reddy Passport no. K4765901. Address 5, Dirasavantha Brahmamangarimattam, ys. Kadapa District Pin 516502, Andhra Pradesh India New Name Katterapalle Subbareddy S/o Katterapalle Narayana Reddy (a.d no=930829459042). New Address: Door No 8-3-106 Koti Reddy Nagar Gopavaram (mandal) Badvel Municipality ys. Kadapa District, A.P India Pin Code 516227. I have change name & address. (C 0968) 8-11-2021

EMERGENCY

112



Mr. Akhil Neelithodika, son of Mr. Krishnan Neelithodika, resident of Neelithodika House, Ravirangalam, Chathangottupuzam PO, Porur GP, Malappuram - 679328, Kerala and Mrs. Sruthi Preman, daughter of Mr. Preman Balan, resident of Pulingol House, Thekkogramam PO, Chittur, Palakkad- 678103, Kerala both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (cw2.kowalt@mea.gov.in) / letters/ telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).

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

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988



ABU DHABI: New Zealand's Devon Conway plays a shot as England's wicketkeeper Jos Buttler watches during the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup semifinal at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium yesterday. — AFP

New Zealand reach T20 World Cup final

Mitchell, Neesham star as Kiwis beat England by five wickets

ABU DHABI: Daryl Mitchell smashed an unbeaten 72 to lead New Zealand into their first ever Twenty20 World Cup final with a thrilling five-wicket victory over England yesterday. Chasing 166 for victory, New Zealand were in trouble at 13-2 and 107-4 when Jimmy Neesham turned the semifinal on its head with an 11-ball 27 to help achieve the target with one over to spare in Abu Dhabi. With 20 needed off the final 12 balls, Mitchell smashed Chris Woakes for two sixes and a four before his 47-ball blitz triggered wild celebrations in the New Zealand dug out.

"We've played each other on a number of occasions, so we knew it would be a great game of cricket," said New Zealand captain Kane Williamson whose team lost the 50-over World Cup to England on a Super Over in 2019. "I am really chuffed with the heart that was shown throughout that performance." New Zealand will face either Australia or Pakistan in

Sunday's final. "It was outstanding from Mitchell at the top. His character stood out, an incredible knock," added Williamson. "T20 cricket is a game of small margins. Jimmy came out and hit the ball hard, and changed the momentum of the game. Ultimately the deciding factor."

Mitchell, the son of former All Blacks rugby coach John, said he was delighted to reach the final. "It was a bit of a whirlwind, but nice to get the job done and move onto the big dance," he said. They suffered early blows after Woakes struck on the third ball to send Martin Guptill trudging back to the pavilion for four. The fast bowler then got skipper Kane Williamson's prized scalp for five after the batsman attempted a scoop shot to be caught at fine-leg.

Mitchell and Devon Conway put on 82 runs for the third wicket but Liam Livingstone struck with his leg spin to have Conway stumped for 46. New

man Neesham took the bowling head on as he smashed Chris Jordan for two sixes - one of them nearly caught at the boundary by Bairstow but his knee touched the rope - and a four to get 23 runs from the over.

He finally fell to Adil Rashid's googly with skipper Eoin Morgan holding on to a catch at extra cover. "Full credit to Kane and his team, they outplayed us today," said Morgan. Earlier Moeen Ali smashed an unbeaten 51 to steer England to 166-four after being invited to bat as Kiwi skipper Williamson won an all-important toss. England lost their openers including Jos Buttler for 29, lbw off Ish Sodhi.

In-form Moeen

But Moeen hit back with his 37-ball knock and put on a key partnership of 63 with Dawid Malan, who hit 41, for the third wicket. Pace bowlers Tim

Southee and Trent Boult kept a tight leash in the first three overs before Buttler smashed two successive boundaries. In-form Buttler tried to rebuild but an attempt to reverse sweep leg-spinner Sodhi got him trapped lbw for 29 off 24 deliveries.

The opener, who moved past Pakistan's Babar Azam as the leading batsman in the tournament with 269 runs, reviewed the call but replays suggested the ball would have hit his off stump. The left-handed Malan, who was dropped on 10 by wicketkeeper Conway off Neesham, hit the first six of the innings off Southee in the 16th over but departed next ball caught behind.

But Moeen launched an attack as he hit Sodhi for a six and then smashed Milne for two hits over the fence. Livingstone hit 17 off 10 balls before departing and Moeen completed his first fifty of the tournament with a boundary off Neesham. — AFP

Australia look to halt Pakistan juggernaut in World Cup semifinal

DUBAI: Australia are looking to their top-order batting led by the explosive David Warner as well as Adam Zampa's bag of leg-spin tricks to get past a red-hot Pakistan in today's second semifinal of the Twenty20 World Cup. The Aussies made their first semifinal of the tournament since 2012 with four wins and a better run-rate than South Africa. But they are up against an unbeaten Pakistan who stormed into the final four with five wins in the Super 12 stage including their first ever in the tournament against rivals India.

Australia have won five 50-over World Cup crowns, including three in a row, but still await a T20 world title in six attempts. The left-handed Warner has led the charge with 89 not out in Australia's win over West Indies and a quickfire 65 against Sri Lanka, an innings that silenced his critics. He now has 187 runs for the tournament.

"I was never worried one bit about Dave's form. He's one of the all-time great batsmen of our era," said captain Aaron Finch of his opening partner who came into the World Cup on the back of being dropped from his IPL team. All-rounder Glenn Maxwell said the Australian batsmen will not hold back and

go for the runs to unsettle the Pakistan attack led by left-arm quick Shaheen Shah Afridi.

"I've seen teams go the other way and try and hold wickets back to make sure they get to go at the back end," said Maxwell. "But for us it's probably that playing with freedom at the start and really trying to make the most of the powerplay and put the opposition on the back foot."

Zampa is the tournament's joint second-highest wicket-taker with 11 victims but the 29-year-old has gone about his business under the radar. "I don't think that anyone has underrated him," insisted Finch of Zampa who claimed a tournament-best return of 5-19 against Bangladesh in Dubai. "He's someone who loves the competitiveness, loves the fight."

'Renewed focus'

Inside the Pakistan camp is Matthew Hayden, the former Australia opener who is the team's batting coach. Hayden sees the partnership between skipper Babar Azam, the leading run maker at the World Cup ahead of the semifinals with 264, and Mohammad Rizwan as key. "They are very

independent players with their own styles but that blend and mix make for the perfect combination. They are unique," explained Hayden.

Babar and Rizwan hit the ground running at the World Cup with an unbroken 152-run stand as Pakistan trounced India in Dubai by 10 wickets - their first win over their archrivals in 13 World Cup matches. "We will try to continue with the kind of consistency that we have shown in the tournament so far and hope to play good cricket in the semifinals," said Babar who has four half-centuries in five innings.

On facing Australia, Babar said: "You can't take any team lightly in T20 cricket. You have to play good cricket on that day." Pakistan have got a finisher in Asif Ali who hit four sixes off Afghanistan bowler Karim Janat to get his team the required 25 runs in the penultimate over of their Super 12 clash.

Veteran batsmen Shoaib Malik, who hit an 18-ball 54 in his side's last pool win over Scotland, and Mohammad Hafeez add experience to the batting order. And with Afridi in threatening form with the new ball, the 2009 champions seem to have their bases covered. But former Pakistan speedster Shoaib Akhtar warned the side of complacency in their knockout contest. "Forget the Super 12 now, just use the momentum but go into semis with a renewed focus," Akhtar wrote on Twitter. — AFP

Man arrested over threats to Indian cricketer's toddler

MUMBAI: Indian police arrested a software engineer yesterday for allegedly threatening to rape the infant daughter of cricketer Virat Kohli following India's defeat to archrival Pakistan in the T20 World Cup. Indian cricketers have faced a barrage of online hate and threats after crashing out of the Twenty20 international tournament.

Police said investigators from the Mumbai Police Cyber Cell arrested Akubathini Ramnagesh after his tweet targeting the cricketer's 10-month-old daughter went viral. The 23-year-old suspect is facing charges of sexual harassment, criminal intimidation, defamation and publishing obscene material. "He has been detained and is being brought to Mumbai," a police officer told AFP.

Kohli is married to Bollywood actress Anushka Sharma and the couple welcomed their first child in January. Ramnagesh is alleged to have issued the threats from his Twitter account following India's first-ever World Cup defeat to Pakistan in the opening game of the tournament on Oct 24.

The humiliating, 10-wicket loss prompted trolling of the Indian team, including the side's only Muslim player, Mohammed Shami, who was subjected to a storm of social media abuse. Several former cricketers and Shami's teammates, including Kohli, denounced the hateful outpouring against the bowler. — AFP