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Crown Prince recalls late Amir's outstanding efforts

Amiri powers delegated to Sheikh Mishal detailed



KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivers a speech while opening the 18th National Conference yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday highlighted efforts and contributions made by the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Kuwait, the Gulf states, Arabs and the whole world. This came in HH the Crown Prince's speech while opening the 18th National Conference. HH the Crown Prince said: "We recall today the late Amir's efforts and those who served our dear homeland. His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad was an outstanding dignitary in Kuwaiti, Arab and Gulf history". The late Amir was known as a wise Arab leader and a leader of diplomacy and humanity, Sheikh Mishal said.

"I was brought up by two late Amir brothers - Sheikh Jaber and Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, may Allah bless their souls," he noted. They were an ideal of mercy, humanity, tolerance and appreciation to women, he said, indicating, "we will continue going on their paths, under His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's leadership". "Mankind, especially Kuwait, will not forget the efforts of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Sheikh Sabah made Kuwait, this small country, a center of humanity, diplomacy and moderation, and a pioneer of development," HH the Crown Prince noted. Sheikh Mishal added that Sheikh Sabah put Kuwait on a roadmap towards a "New 2035 Kuwait" with an insightful vision. Sheikh Sabah preserved the

bases of democracy and adopted tolerance and forgiveness, in line with the state of law, as well as established the concept of "Kuwait for all", HH the Crown Prince made clear. "Sheikh Sabah was a safe haven in the turbulent events that erupted amongst brothers in the Gulf Cooperation Council. He brought views closer together and harnessed Kuwait's potentials to achieve the cohesion of the Gulf home," Sheikh Mishal said.

Kuwait will enjoy appreciation and respect of the world, thanks to the diplomatic legacy, good international reputation, friendly relations, international and regional partnerships and alliances made by Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Mishal said. Sheikh Sabah was a leader who dedicated himself to diplomacy, its concerns and issues, the Crown Prince stressed. Sheikh Mishal finally prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow His mercy upon Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad and those who served the dear homeland of Kuwait.

According to an Amiri order published in the official gazette yesterday, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal has been entrusted temporarily with an array of HH the Amir's powers, including naming the prime minister, accepting ministers' resignations and issuing legislation. The Amiri order was issued on Monday to delegate some of the powers of HH the

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News in brief

Assad scraps grand mufti post

DAMASCUS: Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad has issued a decree eliminating the post of top Muslim cleric for the country and expanding the powers of a government ministry overseeing religious affairs. The new decree, which state media said came into effect on Monday, effectively forces Ahmed Badreddin Hassoun, appointed as grand mufti by Assad in 2004, into retirement. — AFP

Palestinian killed by Zionists

JERUSALEM: A Palestinian man was killed yesterday during dawn clashes with Zionist troops in the occupied West Bank. Saddam Bani Odeh, 26, died in hospital from a bullet wound to the lungs following the clashes on the road into the northern town of Tubas, the Palestinian health ministry said. — AFP

\$1,000 profit every second

WASHINGTON: Pfizer, BioNTech and Moderna are making combined profits of \$65,000 every minute from their highly successful COVID-19 vaccines while the world's poorest countries remain largely unvaccinated. The People's Vaccine Alliance estimates that the trio will make pre-tax profits of \$34 billion this year between them, which works out to over \$1,000 a second or \$93.5 million a day. — AFP (See Page 5)

Number of smokers shrinking

GENEVA: The number of smokers worldwide has dropped steadily in recent years, the World Health Organization said yesterday, urging countries to step up control measures further to kick deadly tobacco addiction. In 2020, some 1.30 billion people were using tobacco globally, down from 1.32 billion two years earlier, the WHO said in a fresh report. — AFP (See Page 5)

Libya strongman Haftar enters presidential race

BENGAZI: War-scarred Libya's eastern military chief Khalifa Haftar registered yesterday to run for president in a Dec 24 election also contested by a son of former dictator Muammar Gaddafi. "I declare my candidacy for the presidential election, not because I am chasing power but because I want to lead our people towards glory, progress and prosperity," Haftar said in a televised speech.

Russia destroys satellite with space strike

MOSCOW: Russia yesterday admitted to destroying one of its satellites during a missile test but rejected US accusations that it had endangered the International Space Station. US officials on Monday

Japan firm uses worms to sniff out cancer

TOKYO: A screening test using tiny worms to detect early signs of pancreatic cancer in urine has been developed by a Japanese biotech firm, which hopes it could help boost routine screening. Scientists have long known that the bodily fluids of cancer patients smell different to those of healthy people, with dogs trained to detect the disease in breath or urine samples.

But Hirotsu Bio Science has genetically modified a type of worm called

"C. elegans" - around one millimeter long, with an acute sense of smell - to react to the urine of people with pancreatic cancer, which is notoriously difficult to detect early. "This is a major technological advancement," CEO Takaaki Hirotsu, a former academic who studied the tiny worms known as nematodes, told AFP.

The Tokyo-based firm has already used the worms to detect cancer in screening tests, though without specifying which type. The new test is not meant to diagnose pancreatic cancer, but could help boost routine screening as urine samples can be collected at home without the need for a hospital visit, Hirotsu said at a press conference yesterday.

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Haftar's announcement came two days after Seif al-Islam Gaddafi declared his own candidacy, a decade on from his father's death in a 2011 NATO-backed rebellion. Both are deeply divisive figures. Gaddafi is wanted by the International Criminal Court for alleged war crimes, while many in western Libya despise Haftar after his year-long assault on Tripoli, accusing the military commander of seeking to establish a military dictatorship.

Yesterday, Haftar vowed to defend "Libya's unity, independence, sovereignty" and called for "reconciliation and peace, construction and stability". Haftar later officially submitted his bid at an electoral board office, where he told journalists: "The next stage will be difficult. I call on all Libyans to make the right choice, one they will not regret."

Continued on Page 2



BENGAZI: Libya's eastern military chief Khalifa Haftar gives a press conference in this eastern city yesterday. — AFP

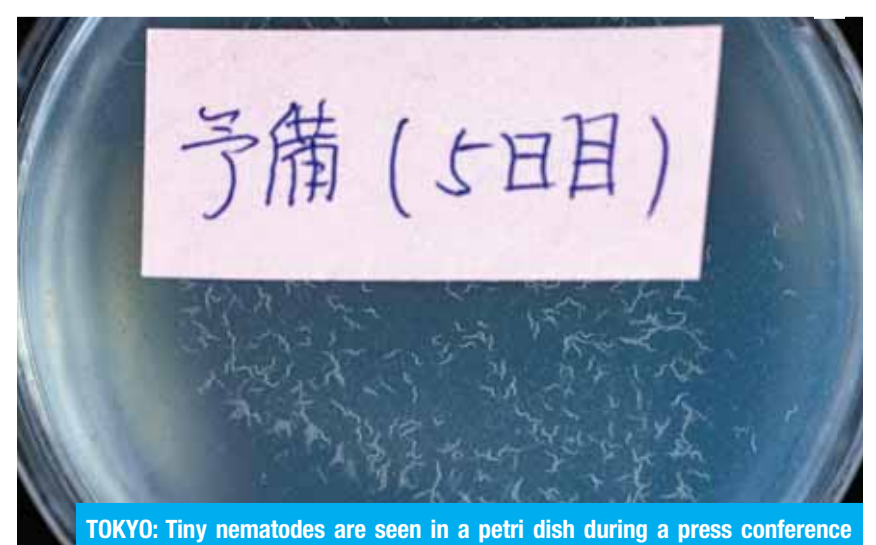
accused Russia of a "dangerous and irresponsible" strike on a satellite that had created a cloud of debris and forced the ISS crew to take evasive action.

The move reignited concerns about an escalating arms race in space, encompassing everything from laser weapons to satellites capable of shunting others out of orbit. "The Russian defense ministry successfully conducted a test, as a result of which the Russian spacecraft 'Tselina-D', which had been in orbit since 1982, was destroyed," the military said in a statement. Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu later said the launch used a "promising" system that

"accurately" struck its target. "The fragments that formed do not pose any threat to space activity," he added, as quoted by Russian news agencies. US officials said they were not informed in advance of the anti-satellite missile test - only the fourth ever to hit a spacecraft from the ground - which generated more than 1,500 pieces of trackable orbital debris.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Monday that the danger was far from over and the debris would continue to threaten satellites and activities on the ISS. NATO Secretary General Jens

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TOKYO: Tiny nematodes are seen in a petri dish during a press conference yesterday by Hirotsu Bio Science to introduce a cancer screening test. — AFP

Local

Kuwait calls for permanent Arab representation in UN Security Council

Reform should ensure geographical, regional groups fairly represented



NEW YORK: Kuwait's UN permanent representative Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks on behalf of the Arab Group before the UN General Assembly. — KUNA

NEW YORK: Kuwait's UN permanent representative Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi affirmed that the Arab League was demanding a permanent Arab representation in the Security Council. This came in Otaibi's speech on behalf of the Arab Group before the UN General Assembly during the discussion of the "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council."

Otaibi said that the UN's three major bodies need real and comprehensive reforms, especially in light of the current difficult situation the world is going through due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. This matter was stated in the declaration of the General Assembly on the UN 75th anniversary and the report of the UN Secretary-General (The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), he added.

He also stressed that the Arab Group reiterates that the governmental negotiations within the framework of the General Assembly are the only forum to reach an agreement on expanding

and reforming the Security Council in accordance with General Assembly resolution 557/62. Moreover, he noted that the main objective of the reform and expansion of the Security Council is to ensure that all geographical and regional groups are fairly and appropriately represented in the membership of the expanded council.

Otaibi stressed that the Arab group, in light of its political, cultural and heritage specificity, deserves, as a separate group, to be represented in the expanded Security Council. He stated that the Arab Group represents more than 400 million people and includes 22 countries in its membership, representing about 12 percent of the general membership of the UN. Most of the council's agenda include topics related to the Arab

region, which calls for a fair and proportionate Arab representation in the expanded Security Council. Otaibi said that the Arab Group would continue consultations with all other negotiating groups with the aim of reaching a real and comprehensive reform of the Security Council. — KUNA



Group represents
more than 400
million people

Deputy FM heads Kuwait's delegation in UNRWA's meeting

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Majdi Al-Dhafiri headed Kuwait's delegation yesterday in UNRWA's international ministerial conference, dubbed "preserving rights and human development for Palestinian refugees", taking place virtually. Ambassador Dhafiri gave a speech in which he commended UNRWA's significant role in aiding Palestinian refugees and affirmed Kuwait's ongoing

support for UNRWA and all the medical, social and educational services it provides for approximately 5.7 million Palestinian refugees. He also stressed the necessity of continuous support from the international community so that the agency can carry on its humanitarian role.

Dhafiri also highlighted the significance of UNRWA's strategic plans for the years 2023-2028 as it prioritized updating operations, incorporating digitalization, committing to United Nations principles and objective standards, and working to attain a sustainable financial base. Participating in the meeting are Foreign Minister Assistant for the office of the deputy, Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar, and Foreign Minister Assistant for international organizations Counselor Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Majdi Al-Dhafiri attends UNRWA's international ministerial virtual conference. — KUNA

Kuwait reiterates importance of education for all

PARIS: Kuwait on Monday affirmed its belief in protecting right to education for all through participation, and support to the "Global Education Coalition" launched by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This came in a speech delivered by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to UNESCO Dr Adam Al-Mulla at the 41st UNESCO conference.

Mulla conveyed greeting and appreciation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the organization for its efforts to serve the world. Kuwait believes in different challenges and opportunities amongst countries that require a special support to meet their needs, he said. He referred that Kuwait grants Al-Sumait Prize for African Development every year as part of the country's concern about the continent.

The prize aims at highlighting successful

achievements in education, food security and health on one hand, and contributing to boosting economic and social development, and the development of human resources as well as infrastructure in the African continent on the other. On the communication and information sector, Mulla voiced Kuwait's pride for awarding the UNESCO-Amir Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, which rewards distinguished contributions in integrating persons with disabilities into the society and improving their lives.

Concerning the essential role played by artificial intelligence in directing the future, Mulla emphasized that Kuwait seeks to boost cooperation and scientific progress, noting that the country appreciates efforts by Director-General and all countries that participated with its experts and representatives to find a consensual formula to the recommendations of the ethics of artificial intelligence. Kuwait chaired the meeting of the international government experts on the recommendations of artificial intelligence held at the organization in April and May.

Mulla urged all member states for close cooperation to achieve sustainable achievement. Kuwait is looking forward to being a member of the



UNESCO Expectative Board for 2021-2025 and to working with member states to push ahead with development towards building peace in human minds. The 41st conference kicked off on Monday and will run over two weeks to specify priorities for the next years. — KUNA

Libya strongman Haftar enters...

Continued from Page 1

His candidacy marks the latest stage in Haftar's dramatic trajectory from exile in the United States to becoming one of the most controversial figures in Libya's 10-year conflict. From 2014, he led a three-year battle against jihadists in Benghazi, establishing himself as the dominant power in the country's east. In April 2019, backed by Russia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, he launched an offensive on Tripoli on the pretext of rooting out militant groups.

The year-long battle left the outskirts of the capital in ruins and Libya more divided than ever. But a United Nations-brokered ceasefire in October last year paved the way for a peace process leading to elections set for Dec 24. In September, Haftar provisionally quit his military position in line with a controversial electoral law to allow him to run for president.

Yesterday, wearing a formal suit and tie instead of his military uniform, he said the vote is "the only way to pull Libya out of chaos". Libya's electoral process, already beset by disputes over who can stand and the legal basis for the polls, looks as shaky as ever just six weeks ahead of the vote. On Monday evening, the head of the UN-backed unity government Abdulhamid Dbeibah said the process was facing "huge" problems given the lack of laws and consensus over a constitutional framework for the vote.

Last week, Haftar's forces said 300 mercenaries fighting on his side would leave Libya at the request of France in a "unilateral gesture", expecting nothing in return from the government in Tripoli. But pro-Haftar forces remain in control of much of eastern and southern Libya, and some analysts have voiced skepticism over the chances of a free and fair vote.

Analyst Khaled Al-Montasir said Haftar had "imposed himself on the political scene, but he will remain a controversial figure rejected by many in western and southern Libya". "Moreover, there's no guarantee that any election process that brings him to power will be respected," he said. — AFP

"Oncotarget". In separate tests conducted by the firm, the worms correctly identified all 22 urine samples from pancreatic cancer patients, including people with early stages of the disease.

Tim Edwards, a senior lecturer in psychology at the University of Waikato in New Zealand, who has studied dogs' ability to detect lung cancer, said using the worms appeared "promising". Edwards, who is not affiliated with the Japanese firm, noted that unlike dogs, the worms needed no training to sniff out cancer in patients.

Daniel Kolarich, an associate professor at the Australian Centre for Cancer Glycomics, pointed out that the "unconventional" nature of the method could be "one reason why this has not received more attention". "Personally, I think we need to pursue every sensible strategy to develop and identify tests that can help us identify cancer as early as possible," he told AFP. But he cautioned that new diagnostics must "have superior specificity and sensitivity to ensure that cancer is detected as early as possible and that false-positive cancer diagnoses can be avoided". — AFP

Japan firm uses worms to sniff...

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And if the worms raise the alarm, the patient would then be referred to a doctor for further testing, he said. He is hopeful it could help boost cancer detection rates in Japan, which like many countries has seen screening rates drop during the pandemic as people avoided medical visits. Even before the pandemic, Japanese patients showed up for cancer screenings less often than many of their peers in developed countries, according to OECD data.

"This is a game-changer... People need to change the way they think about cancer screening," said Eric di Luccio, head of the firm's research center. Hirotsu and Osaka University detailed C. elegans' cancer-detecting skills in a joint study published earlier this year in the peer-reviewed journal

Russia destroys satellite with...

Continued from Page 1

Stoltenberg yesterday described the test as a "reckless" and "concerning" act. "It demonstrates that Russia is now developing new weapon systems that can shoot down satellites," he said at a meeting with EU defense ministers.

Yesterday, French Defense Minister Florence Parly on Twitter lashed out at "space vandals" who were producing dangerous amounts of debris. The satellite was a Soviet signals intelligence satellite that has been defunct for several decades.

The Russian military said it was carrying out planned activities to strengthen its defense capabilities but denied that the test was dangerous. "The United States knows for certain that the resulting fragments, in terms of test time and orbital parameters, did not and will not pose a threat to orbital stations, spacecraft and space activities," it said.

The confirmation of the US claims came moments after Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov had denied that Moscow had endangered the ISS. "To declare that the Russian Federation creates risks for the peaceful use of space is, at the very least, hypocrisy," Lavrov told a press conference in Moscow, adding that "there are no facts" behind the claims.

NASA said the crew aboard the orbital outpost - currently four Americans, a German and two Russians - were woken up and forced to take shelter in their return

ships. Earlier yesterday, Russia's Roscosmos space agency said its "automated warning system for dangerous situations" was continuing "to monitor the situation in order to prevent and counter all possible threats to the safety of the International Space Station and its crew".

"For us, the main priority has been and remains to ensure the unconditional safety of the crew," Roscosmos said in a statement. Russian state news agencies reported that Roscosmos chief Dmitry Rogozin was expected to meet NASA officials on Tuesday. NASA chief Bill Nelson said on Monday he was "outraged" by the "irresponsible and destabilizing action".

Yury Shvitykin, deputy chairman of the Russian lower house of parliament's defence committee, denied Russia was militarizing space. "We have been and are against the militarization of space," Interfax news agency quoted him as saying. But Russian military analyst Pavel Felgenhauer told AFP it had "long been known that we have anti-missile and anti-space weapons and that we are deploying them".

Anti-satellite weapons (ASATs) are high-tech missiles possessed by only a handful of nations. India was the last to carry out a test on a target in 2019, an incident criticized by the US and others after hundreds of pieces of "space junk" were created. The US shot down a satellite in 2008 in response to China demonstrating a similar knockout in 2007.

Last year, Britain and the US accused Russia of testing a "nesting doll" satellite that opened up and released a smaller craft to stalk an American satellite. Despite the tension, the US and Russia have maintained strong space ties since the end of the Cold War, cooperating closely on the ISS, which they built together. — AFP

Crown Prince recalls late...

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Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to HH the Crown Prince. According to the order, HH Sheikh Mishal, was also entrusted to propose legislation, sign and issue them, after their

approval by the National Assembly. He was also assigned to sign Amiri decrees and issue them, declare martial law, conclude international treaties, the Amir's powers regarding the National Assembly and swearing in the prime minister and ministers. HH Sheikh Mishal's first task is expected to be to name the next prime minister after HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah submitted his resignation last week. The Cabinet was asked to continue as a caretaker government. The Crown Prince could reappoint Sheikh Sabah as the new prime minister or name a new premier.

Local

US paraplegic athlete Radetic visits 312 Cafe

Racer took part in Aquabike World Championship's Kuwait Grand Prix



KUWAIT: Anthony Radetic poses with staff and management of 312 Cafe. —Photos Ben Garcia



US Embassy Cultural Attache Katherine Garry welcomes Anthony Radetic as he arrives at 312 Cafe.

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: 312 Cafe welcomed on Monday US athlete Anthony Radetic, a former US Army Black Hawk pilot and paraplegic athlete, at Dalal Complex in Salmiya. He represented his country at the Aquabike World Championship's Kuwait Grand Prix, which was held in Kuwait for the second time. 312 Cafe is a superstore that recruits staff with special needs. Radetic was welcomed at 312 Cafe by US Embassy Cultural Attache Katherine Garry and the 312 Cafe founders George El Khoury and Tareq Abdeen.

"Having you with us today is a privilege, and we thank you and the US Embassy for choosing our restaurant. We are very proud of Radetic as he is an inspiration to the people and our staff," Khoury said as he welcomed Radetic and introduced him to the staff. Radetic thanked the embassy for introducing him to 312 Cafe and its staff. "It's tough and very challenging for them, but by giving special needs people the opportunity to work as normal human beings is very commendable," he said.

Radetic was injured in a motor vehicle accident

in 2004. "I was 25 years old, and the doctors told me that I would never walk again, which reverberates in my mind even now," he said. "I was in the military, doing my routine work every day, flying a Black Hawk helicopter, jumping and engaging myself in sports. I have been to war zones, but getting this news from doctors that I would never walk again was a nightmare. It changed everything. All regular activities I was enjoying every day were shattered and my life changed entirely. The things that I loved could no longer be performed again, like brushing my teeth. It was a huge challenge and it took me years to accept and figure out what to do next," he said.

"I had to face reality and went on to discover various sports that could be played by people in a wheelchair. I tried the aquabike (jet ski) and felt that it was great, because I knew the sport and could

race and compete with normal guys. So I concentrated in aquabike sports: it empowered me, as if I was a normal person. We all want to be recognized as normal beings," he pointed out.

Radetic was asked about his experience in Kuwait in participating in the jet ski competition. "It was an amazing experience to compete here in Kuwait. People here are very hospitable, generous, positive, gracious and kind. The Aquabike Grand Prix in which I participated was one of the best. The races were all well planned and professionally handled. Although this was my first race in Kuwait, I liked the experience very

much," he added.

Katherine Garry took pride in Radetic and his accomplishments and recognition as a paraplegic athlete. "He is not just a great aquabike racing champion, but also an inspiration to everyone.

Sports diplomacy is a part of the US State Department's activities throughout the world. He came here in his capacity as a US athlete and competitor. We are grateful for meeting him and introducing him to the local community," she said.

Garry noted that last month, US Ambassador to Kuwait Alina L. Romanowski hosted a disability rights roundtable at the US Embassy with Khoury and Abdeen, the founders of the 312 Cafe. "312 Cafe employs people with disabilities by giving them hope, opportunity and a new life. We invited Anthony to meet the people behind this cafe and the people employed in the cafe. Kuwait is almost back to normal now and we are seeing a lot of outdoor activities and events, but we are also very much aware of the COVID-19 protocols. Our cultural calendar has been piling up with many events. In the near future, we hope to meet new celebrities from other countries too," she concluded.

The name 312 Cafe was derived from the soul of people with disabilities, as the International Day of Disabled Persons is observed annually on Dec 3 (3/12), based on a proclamation that was signed in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly.

“ Aquabike sports have empowered me ”



Kuwait's mobile elderly care: Above, beyond call of duty during pandemic

KUWAIT: The department of mobile services for the elderly, part of the Ministry of Social Affairs, went above and beyond the call of duty especially during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, providing necessary care for those in need. During full and partial lockdowns, the elderly care units not only attended to the needs of the elderly, but they also continued to follow up with them to ensure their safety and wellbeing both physically and psychologically. In this regard, undersecretary for the



social care sector at the Ministry of Social Affairs Musallam Al-Subaie revealed that the mobile elderly care unit served 3,263 individuals. He noted that the mobile units usually provide more than medical care, extending its services to include social services and moral support.

During the pandemic, phone hotlines were established to enable the elderly to release and ease their psychological pressure by speaking to operators throughout the difficult times, said Subaie. He pointed out that with the gradual return of normalcy, mobile elderly services will be resuming operations in a higher pace to attend to the needs of the elderly as quick and efficient as possible. From medical staff to professional social workers, the mobile elderly service units are all "revved up and ready to go", he affirmed. Meanwhile, the official touched on other services provided to the elderly, saying that there were some 26,204 individuals benefiting from the Awlawiya (priority) card, which enabled the elderly to finalize their documents and



News in brief

MP proposes less, more flexible working hours

KUWAIT: MP Mohammad Al-Huwaila yesterday proposed reducing working hours for public sector employees and giving workers the option to have more flexible working hours or choose to work part-time. The lawmaker said that there are studies which support the argument that reducing working hours could improve services and workers' productivity, arguing that the current system forces workers to focus mainly on working hours instead of productivity because attendance remains the main standard for performance assessment.

Labor allowance paid during military service

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Council has approved a Public Authority for Manpower request to continue paying labor allowance to Kuwaitis working in the private sector during their military service period. The proposal came as part of efforts to support citizens working in the private sector and encourage them to seek jobs outside of the public sector, the authority's deputy director general Abdullah Al-Mutawtah said in a press statement yesterday.

Kuwait slams Houthi's attack

KUWAIT: The Foreign Ministry condemned and denounced, in the strongest terms, the continued attempts by the terrorist Houthi militia in threatening the security of Saudi Arabia by targeting the city of Khamis Mushait with a drone. In a statement, the ministry added that the continuation of these aggressive acts and escalation, including the targeting of civilians, trade, and naval traffic represent a flagrant violation of international law and humanitarian law and requires, and forces the international community to act quickly and decisively to deter these threats and hold the perpetrators accountable. The ministry reiterated Kuwait' full support to the Kingdom and stand with all the measures it takes to preserve its security, stability and sovereignty.

Kuwait condemns Liverpool blast

KUWAIT: The Foreign Ministry on Monday expressed Kuwait's condemnation and denunciation of the terrorist bombing act that took place in Britain's Liverpool on Sunday. In a statement, the ministry affirmed Kuwait's solidarity with the United Kingdom, and support to all measures it takes to maintain security and stability. The statement stressed Kuwait's supportive stance rejecting all forms of terrorism and violence.

KRCS official: Kuwait embodies honorable image of tolerance

DUBAI: Kuwait Red Crescent Society official said yesterday that State of Kuwait has embodied an honorable image of tolerance and coexistence under the rule of law and the principles of justice and equality. This came in a lecture delivered by Abdulrahman Al-Furaih, head of the KRCS delegation participating in Expo 2020 Dubai at Kuwait's pavilion, about 'tolerance and promoting it in societies', on the International Day for Tolerance.

Kuwait played a prominent role in perpetuating tolerance and renouncing violence through its belief in human rights for peaceful coexistence, as asserted in its constitution, stated Furaih. He pointed out that the Kuwaiti experience in tolerance and coexistence has become a distinguished model to be followed on both Arab and regional fronts. Furaih explained that the rulers of Kuwait have established and preserved this model in the context of consolidating national unity and spreading a culture of moderation and coexistence.

KRCS provided a lot of humanitarian and medical aid to those in need and building medical and

educational projects, added Furaih. The projects included many countries that were exposed to natural disasters or humanitarian crises, in addition to providing aid to families in need in Kuwait throughout the year. He stressed the importance of spreading the values of tolerance and taking all positive measures necessary to strengthen it, considering it a necessity for peace and economic and social progress. Furaih mentioned that the UN General Assembly urged member states to celebrate the International Day for Tolerance on November 16th each year since 1996. — KUNA



DUBAI: Members of the KRCS delegation participating in Expo 2020 Dubai. —KUNA



papers at various state and private institutes. Those benefiting from parking spots dedicated to the elderly reached 1,959, he said. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Umm Al Hayman wastewater expansion project. — KUNA

Minister underlines importance of wastewater project

KUWAIT: Umm Al Hayman wastewater expansion project is the most vital venture in the Ministry's development plan, Minister of Public Works and State for Municipal Affairs Dr Rana Al-Fares said yesterday. In a statement, Fares said this project is being executed in coordination by Kuwait's Authority for Partnership Projects, the public and the private sectors. Moreover, it envisages treating sewage water in southern areas in Kuwait. Its treatment capacity of 500,000 m3/d can be expanded in the future and ultimately reach 700,000 m3/d. The Ministry of Public Works won the best project award on sewage water treatment for the Umm Al-Hayman project (PFI AWARDS 2020), presented by Infrastructure Journal. — KUNA

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VO and ASMEK sign MOU to build digital platform for Kuwait's SMEs

KUWAIT: VO, the first Kuwait-based integrated youth platform for incubating young talents, signed a memorandum of understanding with the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises of Kuwait (ASMEK) to feature Kuwait's small and medium businesses through a unified digital platform that will exhibit the country's businesses, products, services, and ideas across all markets.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in the presence of the Chairman of ASMEK, Mohammed Abdullah Al-Anjari, and the Chairman of VO, Sheikha Ohoud Al-Sabah, to establish a framework of collaboration between the two parties for the furtherance of their joint objectives in supporting and developing the SMEs in Kuwait, reinforce Kuwait's economic diversification, and position Kuwait's SMEs in the global market.

"It is no secret that Kuwait's SMEs have been highly affected during the pandemic. As the country recovers from the massive economic repercussions of the coronavirus, Kuwait's SMEs need new ways to rebuild themselves and recover from the lockdowns and market instability. One of those ways can be supporting the country's businesses to expand by entering new geographical markets without additional costs," stated Sheikha Ohoud Al-Sabah.

The MOU conceptualizes a series of activities and projects that aim to support Kuwait's SMEs to recover in a strategic and practical manner. One of those projects includes launching a digital directory that brings Kuwait's SMEs together in a unified, high-tech platform that promotes Kuwait's SMEs across the global market.

On the other hand, the Chairman of ASMEK, Mohammad Al-Anjari, stressed on the importance of developing a swift recovery plan for Kuwait's SMEs that offers strategic pathways ensuing economic recovery. "Due to the current market conditions that the country is going through, support to SMEs should become nimble amid very high economic uncertainty. Economic stimulus programs must be provided through enabling opportunities that expose Kuwait's SMEs to other rapidly recovering markets. We are proud to say that our partnership with VO will achieve that by providing the opportunities for Kuwait's SMEs to recover, grow, and reach a larger scale of customers," he added.

Founded in July 2020, VO nurtures and supports Kuwaiti talents and inspiring initiatives in various fields including entrepreneurship. The platform launched its all-inclusive creative hub in May 2021 to empower and express their ideas, and is currently establishing an academic program for Kuwaiti youth and a 'smart' app to nurture their talents while promoting their creative productions on a seamless, high-tech and efficient digital platform.



Paralympic fencing team leaves for Italy tournament

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Paralympic fencing team left for Pisa, Italy yesterday to participate in the world

fencing tournament to be held on November 17-21. Chairman of the Kuwait Paralympic Committee Torki Al-Shemmari was pleased with Kuwait's participation, which is the first outside participation since the COVID-19 pandemic and the formation of a new Paralympic committee. "We hope to present the best performance in the epee and foil events despite the expected stiff competition and the participation of the best fencers in the world," he said in a statement to the press.

Zain takes part in KU orientation exhibition

Company showcased its leading experience in telecom sector

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, took part in Kuwait University's recent orientation campaign and exhibition, held by the Department of Cultural and Arts Activities, Deanship of Student Affairs. The event came to commemorate the start of the new college year 2021-2022.

Zain was present at the event's inauguration ceremony held at the College of Life Sciences, which featured the attendance of Deputy Dean of Student Affairs Dr Salman Al-Enzi, Cultural and Arts Activities Department Manager Jamal Bouraki, and Dean's Consultant for Administrative Affairs Suleiman Al-Kandari.

Zain participated in the orientation campaign and exhibition, organized by the Department of Cultural and Arts Activities, through its dedicated booth, where the company showcased its leading experience in the Kuwaiti telecom sector. Zain also presented its latest and most competitive portfolio of promotional offerings to Kuwait University's students, faculty, and administrative staff.

During July, Zain took part in welcoming freshmen students at Kuwait University's Admission and Registration Hall in Shuwaikh. The initiative, which featured strict health measures, came in line with the start of the admission and registration period of the new academic year, and reflected the company's keenness in offering a comfortable atmosphere for students and staff.

This initiative came in continuation of the company's ongoing support of the hall's various activities and events all year-round. The hall, which serves over 14,000 students annually, is sponsored by Zain for over 11 years.

Last year, Zain supplied the Admission and Registration Hall in Shuwaikh with a number of MOH-approved precautionary health measures to curb the spread of COVID-19. The move came in line with Zain's commitment to contribute to the health and safety of the university's students, faculty, and staff.

Zain supplied the hall with signs and banners to remind visitors of the necessary health guidelines that must be followed while inside, as well as floor



KUWAIT: Dr Salman Al-Enzi recognizes Zain for its participation in the event.

stickers to achieve social distancing. The company also installed see-through dividers to separate students and staff in a safe manner during registration, while enabling sound to pass efficiently. In

offer a more comfortable atmosphere for students and staff. The company is keen on continuously supporting education by actively partnering with various education bodies from both the public and private sectors, as it is a firm believer in the importance of supporting the youth and preparing them to become tomorrow's leaders.

Zain partnered with Kuwait University's Deanship of Admission and Registration to fully renovate the Admission and Registration Hall and prepare it with the necessary furniture and equipment. The hall receives thousands of students throughout the year during the admission approval and freshmen registration period.

Zain firmly believes in the importance of developing education, as it is essential for individuals to then go-on to be successful and contributing members of society. The company is committed to playing an active role in the investment of the Kuwaiti human capital. By adopting such initiatives, Zain seeks to support students and allow them to apply their skills, achieve their potential, and fully develop their capabilities.



Held at the
College of Life
Sciences

addition, some seats were made unavailable inside the hall to guarantee a safe space between students while seated.

This initiative comes as an extension of Zain's contributions during the past two years, where the company fully renovated the hall in an effort to



KUWAIT: Jonathan Gilbert, Australian Ambassador to Kuwait visits KFH pavilion.



Dr Hilal Al-Sayer visits KFH pavilion.

KFH participates in campaign to spread diabetes awareness

KUWAIT: Considering its social responsibility in fostering health initiatives and ensuring the spread of health awareness among society members, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has participated in an integrated awareness campaign on the World Diabetes Day.

KFH fostering of the campaign organized by Dasman Diabetes Institute and hosted by Al-Hamra Shopping Center, aims to give the public the opportunity to be aware of diabetes disease and the steps they should take as individuals or corporates to enhance precautionary methods against this disease.

The campaign sheds light on the pioneering role

which KFH play in supporting the spread of awareness among public institutions, encouraging society members to follow a healthy lifestyle and highlights the needs of diabetic patients, precautionary methods, and solutions in this field. It is worth mentioning that KFH has always participated in the events organized by Dasman Diabetes Institute and supported its initiatives and efforts for several years.

KFH campaign events on the world diabetes day comprised competitions and awareness activities which KFH has conducted to spread awareness and encourage the public to conduct regular checkups in presence of several health crews and other teams interested in diabetes.

Furthermore, KFH hosted Dr Thamer Al-Essa - Diabetes Consultant at Dasman Diabetes Institute who highlighted the significance of the world diabetes day to start caring for the health of society members by measuring sugar ratios and performing an early diabetes examination and presented several awareness advice to society. Also, KFH has post-

ed, on its Instagram account, a series of awareness messages and videos to enhance health awareness for followers and the public.

Meanwhile, Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Dasman Diabetes Institute and President of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) and Jonathan Gilbert, Australian Ambassador to Kuwait visited KFH pavilion in Al-Hamra Shopping Center.

In affirmation of its role in encouraging society members to follow a healthy lifestyle and protection against diseases, KFH has organized, through its campaign, certain competitions giving participants a chance to enter the draw on Apple, iPhone 13 Pro, AirPods and Watch 7 against every 5,000 steps.

KFH lays great emphasis on the world diabetes day and other world health events as part of its support to the efforts extended by the state institutions and medical centers on health awareness. KFH awareness campaign comes as part of its social responsibility strategy.

Kuwait grabs more medals in women's cycling competition

CAIRO: Kuwait's cyclists Latifa Al-Yaseen and Noura Al-Ameeri won the silver and bronze

medals in the individuals' competition at the Arab Championship, held in Cairo, Egypt. The result comes after Kuwait's national women's cycling team took first place in the time category during the tournament on Sunday. The team's win came after beating Egypt and the UAE whose teams finished second and third respectively. Kuwait is participating in the six-day tournament with teams in the men's, women's and juniors' competitions in various categories.





Ugandan capital hit by twin explosions

Man arrested for selling 130 women in Afghanistan

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WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden meets with China's President Xi Jinping during a virtual summit from the Roosevelt Room of the White House in Washington, DC. — AFP

Biden, Xi at loggerheads on Taiwan

US, China leaders trade warnings on Taiwan at virtual summit

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden and China's Xi Jinping traded strong warnings on the future of Taiwan at a virtual summit meant to establish "guardrails" against conflict between their rival superpowers. The video-link summit, which took place late Monday in Washington and yesterday in Beijing, lasted a "longer than expected" three and a half hours, a senior US official told reporters. "The conversation was respectful and straightforward."

While the goal was to settle an increasingly volatile relationship between the giant economic and geopolitical competitors, tension over Taiwan - a self-governing democracy claimed by China - loomed large. Chinese state media reported after the summit that Xi cautioned Biden that encouraging Taiwanese independence would be "playing with fire." "Some people in the US intend to 'use Taiwan to control China.' This trend is very dangerous and is like playing with fire, and those who play with fire will get burned," he was quoted as saying by Xinhua news agency.

The White House readout after the summit was considerably more measured, but between the lines, Biden's pushback against Beijing's increasingly aggressive posture toward Taiwan was clear. "On Taiwan, President Biden underscored that the United States... strongly opposes unilateral efforts to change the status quo or undermine peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," the White House statement said.

The statement reiterated longstanding US policy that does not recognize Taiwan's independence but supports defense of the island. According to the US official, who asked not to be identified, there was "extended discussion of Taiwan" during the summit. Biden also raised "concerns" over wider issues of human rights abuses and mass repression against the Uyghurs in the northwest region of Xinjiang. The two leaders have spoken by phone twice since Biden's inauguration in January but with Xi refusing to travel

abroad because of the pandemic, an online video meeting was the only option short of an in-person summit.

Avoid veering into conflict

The White House emphasized it did not expect - or get - any concrete changes out of the summit. Rather the goal was to build on earlier contacts with Xi to manage a relationship that is too big to fail. Speaking from the White House to Xi on a television screen, Biden said it was their "responsibility as leaders of China and the United States to ensure that the competition between our countries does not veer into conflict, whether intended or unintended."



Tensions over Taiwan loom

"We need to establish some common sense guardrails," he said. Instead, the aim should be for "simple, straightforward competition," Biden said, promising a "candid" discussion. Xi, speaking from Beijing, called Biden "my old friend," but said their countries had to work more closely.

"We face multiple challenges together. As the world's two largest economies and permanent members of the UN Security Council, China and the United States need to increase communication and cooperation," he said, speaking through an interpreter in brief public remarks, before they went behind closed doors. Both Biden and Xi emphasized the need for working together on major global issues, especially COVID-19

and climate change. "A sound and steady China-US relationship" is needed "for safeguarding a peaceful and stable international environment," Xi said.

Biden gets domestic boost

Relations between the superpowers plummeted during the presidency of Donald Trump, who launched a trade war with China while assailing Beijing's response to an international probe into the origins of the Covid pandemic in the Chinese city of Wuhan. Biden has recast the confrontation more broadly as a struggle between democracy and autocracy. He got a boost Monday when he signed into law a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package, the biggest of its kind in more than half a century.

Biden describes the initiative as an important step in catching up with years of intensive Chinese government investments, thereby proving that democracies can compete. "The world is changing," he said in a White House speech. "We have to be ready." While the day-to-day tone is less erratic than in the Trump era, tension over Taiwan in particular is threatening to escalate into dangerous new territory. China has ramped up military activities near Taiwan in recent years, with a record number of warplanes intruding into the island's air defense zone in October.

The United States says it supports Taiwan's self-defense but is ambiguous about whether it would intervene to help directly. In the brief comments made in front of reporters, Xi referred to each country needing to "run our domestic affairs" but did not mention US criticism of Beijing's saber-rattling around Taiwan, mass human rights violations or other sore points. China's foreign ministry on Monday put the onus on Biden to improve relations. "We hope that the US will work in the same direction as China to get along with each other," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told reporters.— AFP

BioNTech, Moderna, Pfizer making \$1,000 profit every second

WASHINGTON: Pfizer, BioNTech and Moderna are making combined profits of \$65,000 every minute from their highly successful COVID-19 vaccines while the world's poorest countries remain largely unvaccinated, according to a new analysis. The companies have sold the vast majority of their doses to rich countries, leaving low-income nations in the lurch, said the People's Vaccine Alliance (PVA), a coalition campaigning for wider access to Covid vaccines, which based its calculations on the firms' own earnings reports.

The Alliance estimates that the trio will make pre-tax profits of \$34 billion this year between them, which works out to over \$1,000 a second, \$65,000 a minute or \$93.5 million a day. "It is obscene that just a few companies are making millions of dollars in profit every single hour, while just two percent of people in low-income countries have been fully vaccinated against coronavirus," Maaza Seyoum of the African Alliance and People's Vaccine Alliance Africa said.

"Pfizer, BioNTech and Moderna have used their monopolies to prioritize the most profitable contracts



KATHMANDU: A health worker shows a vial of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine against the COVID-19 coronavirus in Kathmandu after the government began a drive to vaccinate people above the age of 12 years and those with chronic health diseases. — AFP

with the richest governments, leaving low-income countries out in the cold." Pfizer and BioNTech have delivered less than one percent of their total supplies to low-income countries while Moderna has delivered just 0.2 percent, the PVA said. Currently, 98 percent of people in low-income countries have not been fully vaccinated.

The three companies' actions are in contrast to

AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson, which provided their vaccines on a not-for-profit basis, though both have announced they foresee ending this arrangement in future as the pandemic winds down. PVA said that despite receiving public funding of more than \$8 billion, Pfizer, BioNTech and Moderna have refused calls to transfer vaccine technology to producers in low- and middle-income countries via the World Health Organization, "a move that could increase global supply, drive down prices and save millions of lives."

"In Moderna's case, this is despite explicit pressure from the White House and requests from the WHO that the company collaborate in and help accelerate its plan to replicate the Moderna vaccine for wider production at its mRNA hub in South Africa," the group said. While Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla has dismissed technology transfer as "dangerous nonsense," the WHO's decision to grant emergency use approval to the Indian-developed Covaxin earlier this month proves that developing countries have the capacity and expertise, PVA added.

PVA, whose 80 members include the African Alliance, Global Justice Now, Oxfam, and UNAIDS, is calling for pharmaceutical corporations to immediately suspend intellectual property rights for COVID vaccines by agreeing to a proposed waiver of World Trade Organization's TRIPS agreement. More than 100 nations, including the United States, back that move, but it is being blocked by rich countries including the UK and Germany.— AFP

Number of smokers worldwide shrinking

GENEVA: The number of smokers worldwide has dropped steadily in recent years, the World Health Organization said yesterday, urging countries to step up control measures further to kick deadly tobacco addiction. In 2020, some 1.30 billion people were using tobacco globally, down from 1.32 billion two years earlier, the WHO said in a fresh report. And that number, it said, is expected to dwindle to 1.27 billion by 2025, indicating a decrease of some 50 million tobacco users over a seven-year-period, even as the global population has swelled.

The report showed that while nearly a third of the global population over the age of 15 used tobacco products back in 2000, only around a fifth is expected to be doing so by 2025. "It is very encouraging to see fewer people using tobacco each year," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement. But "we still have a long way to go, and tobacco companies will continue to use every trick in the book to defend the gigantic profits they make from peddling their deadly wares."

Over 8 million deaths

Tobacco use is estimated to kill more than eight million people each year, most of them directly due to their own tobacco use, while 1.2 million of them are non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke, according to WHO numbers. Yesterday's report cautioned that the annual numbers of deaths would continue climbing for some time even as tobacco use declines "because tobacco kills its users and people exposed to its emissions slowly." The report hailed that 60 countries were now on track to reduce tobacco use by 30 percent between 2010 and 2025.

When WHO published its last report on global tobacco trends two years ago, only 32 countries were on track to do so. "We are seeing great progress in many countries" but "this success is fragile," said Ruediger Krech, head of the WHO's health promotion department. The report called on countries to scale up their use of recognized measures to reduce tobacco use, including enforcing advertising bans, plastering health warnings on cigarette packages, raising tobacco taxes and providing assistance to those who want to quit.

The WHO calculated that investing just \$1.68 per capita each year in cessation interventions like providing advice via text message could help 152 million tobacco users successfully quit by 2030. While the numbers are coming down, the report, which did not include electronic cigarette use, highlighted that 36.7 percent of all men and 7.8 percent of the world's women were still using tobacco products last year.—AFP

International

Starvation kills 'nearly 200' children in Tigray hospitals

At least 1,000 arrested since Ethiopia state of emergency: UN

News in brief

France clears migrant camp

GRANDE-SYNTHE: French police cleared a major migrant camp yesterday that was home to around a thousand people hoping to reach Britain, amid tensions between London and Paris over Channel crossings. A record number of migrants crossed the Channel in small boats last Thursday - 1,185 according to British figures - which the British government described as "unacceptable". French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin spoke to his British counterpart Priti Patel on Monday, but only after giving a blunt interview in which he said Britain should "should stop using us as a punch-ball in their domestic politics". Yesterday morning, Darmanin announced that "on his orders" police had cleared a camp in Grande-Synthe, near the port of Dunkirk, which is one of the main departure points for Britain. "Thank to the police who were in action as well as our security personnel in the north who are finding shelters," Darmanin added. — AFP

Sudan frees Al Jazeera chief

KHARTOUM: Sudanese authorities released Al Jazeera television's Khartoum bureau chief yesterday, the Qatar-based network said, two days after security forces arrested him from his home. The arrest of Al-Musalami Al-Kabbashi was the latest since a military coup three weeks ago and came after tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets on Saturday to demand a transition to civilian rule. Kabbashi, a Sudanese citizen, "was released yesterday... the military has yet to give a reason for his detention," the network said. The editor in chief of the armed forces newspaper, Ibrahim al-Hory, charged that Al Jazeera had "published unrealistic reports and released old videos and hosted hostile personalities that instigated strife." Al Jazeera has given prominent coverage to the anti-coup demonstrations, but has also aired a detailed interview with top general Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan. — AFP

Six hurt in drive-by shooting

LOS ANGELES: An apparent drive-by shooting Monday near a Colorado high school left six teenagers in hospital, police said, as the specter of gun violence raised its head again in the United States. Witnesses spoke of around 30 shots being fired, and police said they had recovered multiple rounds of different calibers at a park in Aurora, a municipality in Denver's suburbs. Aurora Police Chief Vanessa Wilson said there appeared to have been more than one shooter, and that the department's gangs unit was involved in the investigation. "My understanding is it was a drive-by shooting as well as there may have been people on foot," she told reporters. "We do have suspects that are at large." Wilson said five teens aged between 14 and 17 had been taken to hospital, one of whom was in emergency surgery. A sixth person, age 18, was treated for minor injuries after arriving at hospital on their own. — AFP

Ukraine woos vaccine-wary

KIEV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that people will be offered a cash incentive to get double-vaccinated against COVID-19 in a bid to boost the country's low inoculation rate. "Everyone who has had two doses will be able to receive 1,000 hryvnias" or around 35 euros (\$40), Zelensky said in video message, a sizeable sum for the citizens of one of Europe's poorest countries and where fewer than a third of the population has been fully vaccinated. The money could be used to buy a sports club membership, tickets for the cinema, theatre or a museum, or go towards a train or plane ticket for a journey within Ukraine, the president said. "These are the sectors that have been hardest hit by the lockdowns," Zelensky said. — AFP

Ecuador 'seriously threatened'

GUAYAQUIL: Ecuador is "seriously threatened" by drug trafficking mafias who want to "take control of all the country's prisons," President Guillermo Lasso said Monday, after the heads of the armed forces and the prison service quit following jail riots that left 68 people dead. Lasso said a "massive operation" was underway by the police and the army in the overcrowded prison in Guayaquil, where two days of fighting between inmates armed with guns, machetes and explosives claimed dozens of lives. The president said the country faced "one of the biggest crises in recent decades" and warned that the same drug mafias "were bringing insecurity to our streets." He promised joint action to end the repeated slaughters at the country's prisons. Soldiers with rifles entered the perimeter of Guayas 1 prison, which includes several security rings, during the day, according to AFP journalists on the scene. — AFP

ADDIS ABABA: Nearly 200 young children have died of starvation in hospitals across Ethiopia's Tigray region as malnutrition soars one year after a brutal conflict broke out, according to a new survey. The data collected from 14 hospitals offers a rare look at the scale of suffering in Tigray, which is grappling with a communications blackout and what the UN describes as a de facto aid blockade, meaning most essential medical supplies are no longer available.

Yet the toll is hardly comprehensive, given that most health facilities are not functional and Tigrayan health workers have only been able to reach roughly half of the region's districts, said Dr Hagos Godefay, head of the health bureau in Tigray's pre-war government. Hagos described the unpublished findings, some of which were collected in partnership with Mekele University in Tigray's capital, in an interview with AFP this week. "We have registered more than 186 deaths," Hagos said, referring to fatalities caused by severe acute malnutrition in children younger than five. "We collected this information from hospitals only."

Some 29 percent of children are acutely malnourished, up from nine percent before the war, Hagos said. For severe acute malnutrition, the figure is 7.1 percent, up from 1.3 percent before the war, he said. Only 14 percent of surveyed households report having enough access to food, down from 60 percent, he said, adding that he fears what is unfolding in areas his teams have so far been unable to reach. "For those areas that are not accessible, you can only imagine how many children are dying because of starvation. They are living in remote

areas, there is no water... there is no food, no communication, no health facility," he said. "So I am telling you if we go to the remote areas it will double for sure."

'It's catastrophic'

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed sent troops into Tigray last November to topple the regional ruling party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), a move he said came in response to TPLF attacks on army camps. The 2019 Nobel Peace laureate promised a swift victory, but by late June the TPLF had retaken most of the region including Mekele and has since advanced south. Since mid-July less than 15 percent of needed aid has been able to enter Tigray, according to the UN, raising the spectre of the kind of mass starvation that turned Ethiopia into a byword for famine in the 1980s.

AFP has previously documented scattered starvation deaths in multiple parts of Tigray, describing how mothers feed leaves to their children in a desperate bid to keep them alive. The survey findings Hagos described cover the four months from late June, when the TPLF retook control of Mekele, to late October.

The 14 hospitals still functioning in the region are each recording between three and four deaths weekly due to ordinarily treatable illnesses like pneumonia and diarrhoea, Hagos said. He added he was especially worried for tens of thousands of Tigrayans under "chronic follow-up", including 55,000 HIV-positive patients and others battling conditions like cancer, hypertension and diabetes. "If we are not able to manage them, if we are not able to provide them drugs... it's catastrophic," he said.

'Frustrated' doctors

Abiy's government has rejected claims it is blocking aid to Tigray, saying access has been restricted because of TPLF advances into neighboring Amhara and Afar regions. In an interview with CNN last week, Abiy's spokeswoman Billene Seyoum said "the onus of responsibility on humanitarian access... is on the TPLF". The US, however, has said access to essential supplies and services was "being denied by the Ethiopian government" while denouncing "indications of a siege". And aid workers have sounded the alarm about government-imposed restrictions on medicines entering the region. Hagos said that with health facilities damaged across Tigray, banking services suspended and supply stocks now empty, there is little health workers can do.

At least 1,000 arrested

Meanwhile, the UN voiced alarm yesterday at surging arrests in Ethiopia since the country introduced a state of emergency on November 2. The United Nations human rights agency said most of those detained in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa as well as in Gondar, Bahir Dar and other locations were of Tigrayan origin. "According to reports, at least 1,000 individuals are believed to have been detained... with some reports putting the figure much higher," spokeswoman Liz Throssell told reporters in Geneva.

The arrests have occurred since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government declared a state of emergency two weeks ago, when Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) fighters threatened to march on the capital. Lawyers have also said that thousands of Tigrayans have been arbitrarily detained since the announcement of the measures, which allow the authorities to detain without a warrant anyone suspected of supporting "terrorist groups". — AFP



Malnutrition soars amid brutal conflict

Ugandan capital hit by twin explosions

KAMPALA: Two explosions hit Uganda's capital Kampala yesterday, injuring a number of people in what police termed an attack on the city, the latest in a string of blasts targeting the country. The explosions occurred in the central business district of Kampala near the central police station and the entrance to parliament, police said. "What we can say (is) this was an attack but who is responsible is a matter that is under investigation," Uganda's Assistant Inspector General of police Edward Ochom told AFP. Health ministry spokesman Ainebyoona Emmanuel said on Twitter that Kampala's Mulago Hospital was treating 24 people, four in critical condition.

"Following the unfortunate and cowardly act of terrorism, our health workers are working around the clock to save lives of those injured," he said. The explosion near the police station shattered windows while the one near the entrance to parliament saw cars parked nearby burst into flames, Ochom said. "We have dispatched a team" to the area, Uganda Red Cross spokeswoman Irene Nakasita told AFP. The twin attacks follow two blasts last month - a bus explosion near Kampala that wounded many people and a bombing at a roadside eatery in the capital that killed one woman.

Police said last month both those attacks were connected and were carried out by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) which the United States



KAMPALA: People extinguish fire on cars caused by a bomb explosion near Parliament building in Kampala, Uganda yesterday. — AFP

has linked to the Islamic State group. Kyle Spencer, the executive director of Uganda's Internet Exchange Point, told AFP that yesterday's explosions had sparked panic among many people nearby. "The road to parliament is closed off, there are people just crying, everyone else is just trying to get away from these areas," he said. "Everybody is evacuating office buildings and the buildings are locking up and not letting anybody inside."

Parliament cancelled

Parliament cancelled its session following the attacks, asking members to avoid the area "as security forces are working hard to restore order". The premises were put under tight security, with heavily

armed soldiers securing the area as forensics officers in white overalls inspected the blast site for clues.

The US embassy in Kampala warned its citizens to steer clear of the area and monitor local news. Ugandan police last month arrested a number of ADF operatives and warned that extremists were believed to be plotting a new attack on "major installations". The ADF, historically a Ugandan rebel group, has been accused of killing thousands of civilians in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. In March the United States officially linked the ADF to IS. The ADF is considered by experts to be the bloodiest of more than 120 armed groups that roam eastern DRC, many of them a legacy of two regional wars a quarter-century ago. — AFP

Heavy rains force evacuations, trap Canada motorists

OTTAWA: Relentless rain battered Canada's Pacific coast on Monday, forcing a town's evacuation and trapping motorists as mudslides, rocks and debris were washed across major highways. Some 275 people, according to local media, were stuck overnight in their cars between two mudslides on Highway 7 near the town of Agassiz in British Columbia. Since the morning, additional mudslides near Lillooet and Haig pinned down more travelers, the province's public safety minister, Mike Farnworth, told a news conference.

Meanwhile, Merritt—about 300 kilometers from the coast—ordered the evacuation of all 7,000 of its townsfolk after flooding compromised the local wastewater treatment plant and washed out two bridges. Barricades also went up restricting access to the town. Farnworth said search and rescue crews were dispatched to free people trapped for hours without food or water in 80 to 100 cars on Highway 7.

"Many people have been rescued by helicopters from mudslides near Agassiz and Hope with crews working to rescue the remaining people in the next few hours," he said. Those trapped in 50 vehicles in the Lillooet mudslide have all been rescued, while efforts were underway to free an unspecified number of people at the Haig site, he added. Video footage showed a military helicopter landing on a highway covered in mud and debris, to pick up stranded motorists.

British Columbia emergency health services said it transported nine patients to hospital with minor injuries overnight from the Agassiz landslide. Emergency centers were set up for displaced residents. "Please stay safe," Prime Minister Justin



MALAHAT, Canada: Photo shows storm water on the Malahat Highway on Vancouver Island. Relentless rain battered Canada's Pacific coast - forcing a town's evacuation and trapping motorists as mudslides, rocks and debris were washed across major highways. — AFP

Trudeau said in a Twitter message to British Columbians. "We're ready to provide whatever assistance is needed as you deal with and recover from the flooding and this extreme weather," he said.

Wettest ever

British Columbia's transportation ministry said several highways were closed Monday. "Heavy rains and subsequent mudslides/flooding have impacted various highways in the BC interior," it said.

The local utility issued flood alerts due to high water flows into its reservoirs, and said it was working to restore power to thousands hit by outages. Construction of the Trans Mountain pipeline connecting the Alberta oil sands to the Pacific coast was also paused, a company spokesperson told AFP, "due to widespread flooding and debris flows." — AFP

Police investigate 'Christian convert' in Liverpool attack

LIVERPOOL: British police are investigating the background of a mentally troubled Iraqi-Syrian convert to Christianity who died in a botched bomb attack in Liverpool, according to multiple reports yesterday. Counter-terrorism police in northwest England released four men held for questioning over the incident, which came seconds before Britain marked Remembrance Sunday.

"Police have been satisfied with their account and they have been released," security minister Damian Hinds told ITV News yesterday. Emad Al Swealmeen, 32, has been named by police as the would-be bomber whose crude improvised device went off in the back of a taxi outside a Liverpool hospital.

He was killed, while the quick-thinking taxi driver escaped with minor injuries after locking Al Swealmeen inside his cab. The government increased its terrorism threat assessment to "severe"—the second-highest level, meaning an attack is highly likely—following the second terror incident in a month after Conservative MP David Amess was stabbed to death. Police gave few other details about the Liverpool suspect. Hinds said he could not comment on the background of the suspect because of the investigation.

But reports by newspapers and broadcasters quoting unidentified security sources said Al Swealmeen was a failed asylum seeker of Iraqi and Syrian descent with a history of mental-health problems. He was taken in by Elizabeth and Malcolm Hitchcott, a Christian volunteer couple in Liverpool, for eight months from 2017 as his appeal for refugee status played out. Elizabeth Hitchcott told the BBC she felt "just so sad" and "very shocked" by Sunday's incident, adding: "We just loved him, he was a lovely guy." — AFP

International

'The water is poison': China's activist spends life protecting polluted lake

Campaigner challenges businesses to clean up their act

KUNMING: Environmental activist Zhang Zhengxiang is almost blind, and lives in poverty—but he has successfully faced down hundreds of companies on the banks of one of China's most polluted lakes. The 74-year-old strident campaigner has spent his life trying to protect the sprawling Lake Dian in southwestern China, challenging businesses to clean up their act around the local beauty spot and reporting those who pollute it. "When I was a child, we could see the bottom of the lake. When I was thirsty, I drank the water from the lake—we used it for cooking," he said.

"The water has become poison. We can't drink it, use it, or even touch it." It can be risky work. In China grassroots social movements are heavily suppressed by the government, and environmental activists and the lawyers that represent them have in the past faced stiff reprisals and even jail terms. Zhang says he has been attacked by disgruntled businesses, but is undeterred. Several times a week, he patrols the red-soil banks with binoculars in search of polluters, snapping pictures on a small compact camera.



KUNMING: Environmental activist Zhang Zhengxiang holds rocks that he says are polluted at an area which used to be a cement factory construction site near Dian Lake in Kunming, in southwestern China's Yunnan province. — AFP

wild, learning to forage in the wild to survive.

"The lake is a living being, but it has no voice in the story. It is my duty to defend it," he told AFP. "(The lake) is my second mother." China's decades of breakneck growth saw industrialists flock to the region's rich mining soil and natural resources. But the influx caused huge pollution. Zhang started to denounce polluting companies who exploited resources or built without permission—often facing an uphill struggle to reach sympathetic ears. Local officials simply haven't done enough to protect the local environment, he says. "Why? Because they had collaborated with these enterprises," he said.

Zhang's lakeside house is packed floor-to-ceiling with papers and reports about his work. Businessman Zhou Guangwen's quarry closed nearly two decades ago after Zhang reported it to the authorities. But the two men are close friends, and Zhou says although he lost all the money he invested in the mine, he now has sympathy for Zhang's environmental efforts. Zhang claims he has brought about the closure of more than 200 factories—but it has all taken a toll. "Local executives, the owners of mines and quarries whom he denounced... many people hate him," added Zhou.

tant because if authorized or approved, this oral drug is particularly well-suited for low- and middle-income countries and could play a critical role in saving lives." The drug "is to be taken together with ritonavir, an HIV medicine we know well, as we have had a license on it for many years, and we will be working with generic companies to ensure there is enough supply for both COVID-19 and HIV."

HIV drug mix

Pfizer will forego royalties on sales in all countries covered by the agreement while COVID-19 remains classified as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization. Last month, the WHO maintained the highest level of alert over the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19. Paxlovid, or PF-07321332, is an investigational antiviral therapy designed to block the activity of the SARS-CoV-2-3CL protease—an enzyme that the coronavirus needs to replicate.

Taking it together with a low dose of ritonavir helps slow the breakdown of PF-07321332. It therefore remains active in the body for a longer period at a high concentration, to help combat the virus. If taken at the first sign of infection or exposure to COVID-19, the pill could potentially help patients avoid severe illness, which can lead to hospitalization and death, Pfizer said. "We believe oral antiviral treatments can play a vital role in reducing the severity of COVID-19 infections, decreasing the strain on our healthcare systems and saving lives," said Pfizer chairman and chief executive Albert Bourla. "We must work to ensure that all people—regardless of where they live or their circumstances—have access to these breakthroughs." —AFP



Beijing invests over \$7.8 billion to protect lake

One of China's largest freshwater lakes, the vast expanse of water nestles the city of Kunming which recently hosted an international biodiversity conference. But decades of agricultural, industrial, mining and human waste are destroying it. Beijing has invested more than 50 billion yuan (\$7.8 billion) to protect the lake, building dozens of treatment plants and diverting a river to supply it with fresh water. But the surface of the water is still cloudy, and covered with green algae.

Duty to defend

Zhang was born in a village by the water's shore and spent years living off the lake, eating its fish and fruits from the surrounding forest. His father died when he was five, and his mother left shortly afterwards, leaving him and his two siblings to fend for themselves. His younger brothers died during the years of China's devastating famine, leaving Zhang entirely alone and living in the

Pfizer strikes global licensing deal for COVID-19 pill

GENEVA: US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer yesterday announced a deal to make its oral antiviral COVID-19 medication available more cheaply in poorer countries, if the promising pill passes trials and regulatory approval. Pfizer, which also produces a COVID vaccine with German lab BioNTech, said it had signed an agreement to sub-licence production of its Paxlovid pill to generic drug manufacturers, without receiving royalties. The deal with the global Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) would therefore make the candidate drug available at a lower cost in 95 low- and middle-income countries covering around 53 percent of the world's population. It follows a similar deal for US rival Merck & Co last month. The drug is to be taken with the HIV medicine ritonavir. Interim data from ongoing trials demonstrated an 89 percent reduction in the risk of COVID-19-related hospitalization or death compared to a placebo, in non-hospitalised high-risk adults with COVID-19 within three days of symptom onset, said Pfizer.

Similar results were seen within five days of symptom onset, it added. The Geneva-based MPP is a United Nations-backed international organization that works to facilitate the development of medicines for low- and middle-income nations. MPP executive director Charles Gore said: "This license is so impor-



GHAZNI: Afghan burqa-clad women walk on a street in a neighborhood of Ghazni City, in the province of Ghazni. — AFP

Man arrested for selling 130 women in Afghanistan

KUNDUZ: The Taliban have arrested a man for allegedly selling dozens of women in northern Afghanistan after duping them into believing they would be marrying into money, officials said yesterday. The man was arrested in northern Jawzjan province late on Monday, Damullah Seraj, the Taliban provincial police chief, told reporters. "We are still in our initial stages of the investigation. We hope to find out more about this case later," he said.

Mohammad Sardar Mubariz, a district police chief in Jawzjan, told AFP the man would target poor women desperate to improve their circumstances. After saying he would find them a wealthy husband, he would move them to a different province where they were instead sold into servitude. He allegedly trafficked around 130 women this way.

Crime, nepotism and corruption are not new in Afghanistan but rising poverty is undermining the Taliban government's claim to legitimacy. Since their return to power about three months ago, the Taliban are trying to contain a spate of crimes such as robberies and kidnappings in the big cities. Yesterday, the Taliban interior ministry said 60 people—including members of the passport department—were arrested for forging documents to obtain passports. The ministry said it was temporarily closing the passport office in Kabul for maintenance. — AFP

Steel tiger

In 2002, the activist was badly injured when hit by an unlicensed truck while gathering evidence about an illegal quarry. Zhang believes the collision—which left him partially blind and broke his arm—was deliberate. He says he has suffered other attacks over the years. "They beat me, hurt me, tore down my house and grabbed my farmland," he told AFP. "I'm not afraid. They are paper tigers and I am a steel tiger". Environmental campaigners in China must walk a fine line or risk the wrath of local officials and businesses.

Teenage campaigner Howey Ou braved years of intimidation, including being kicked out of school, before leaving the country to lobby from abroad. Zhang, who was lauded a "true ambassador of the environment" on the national TV show "Inspiring China", says he is finally being listened to. In May, a giant real estate project on the lake's eastern shore was declared illegal. And a former deputy mayor who held responsibility for tackling water pollution was placed under investigation last month. "We have seen a turning point in water pollution in China since the mid-2000s," said Chinese environmentalist Ma Jun. — AFP



SANTA FE: This handout photo shows a portrait of Ifeoma Ozoma at her home in Santa Fe, New Mexico. — AFP

Ifeoma Ozoma: US tech whistleblower helping others speak out

WASHINGTON: Being a whistleblower comes down to careful preparation but also an eye trained for dirty tricks, said Ifeoma Ozoma, an ex-employee of several Silicon Valley giants turned revealer of tech world wrongdoing. "I planned it like a program or product launch. Obviously the experience is something very personal, but I approached it like work," she said.

While Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen has become a figurehead for the fight against social media's faults, there are others in the tech world, like Ozoma, who have also taken big risks to stand up. An African-American, former policymaker relations specialist for Google, Pinterest and Facebook, she continues to work for ethics in tech, but from the outside, via her consulting firm Earthseed. She has marked a first big success via the recent adoption in California of a law she co-sponsored, called "Silenced No More."

Starting in January, this law will prohibit employers from using confidentiality clauses to prevent victims of harassment or discrimination in the workplace from speaking out. In mid-October, she posted online a guide for whistleblowers. "The difference with tech companies and other industries is on the power that they wield, but also they pretend they're better for workers, consumers, society than more traditional industries," she told AFP. "That's just not borne out in reality."

Keep the emails

A Yale University graduate in political science, the 29-year-old was born in Alaska to Nigerian immigrants. She left Pinterest at the end of May 2020, with six months of salary, after months of making complaints internally and also to the state of California, accusing the social network of discrimination and racist retaliation.

She said the company paid her less than if she had been a man, but she also complained about their lack of action after a colleague posted her personal details online to expose her to anonymous harassment. In mid-June 2020, as the Black Lives Matter anti-racism movements were in full swing in the United States, her damning account on Twitter of her experience sparked a scandal for the company that had largely avoided controversy. — AFP

News in brief

Prince Charles visits Jordan

AMMAN: Prince Charles and his wife Camilla arrived in Amman yesterday to begin a tour of Jordan and Egypt, their first since the coronavirus pandemic began last year. The prince's visit comes amid concerns about the health of Queen Elizabeth II, who missed the annual Remembrance service at the Cenotaph in London on Sunday "having sprained her back". Britain's heir apparent and his wife the Duchess of Cornwall were expected to meet King Abdullah II and Queen Rania later. They were also due to visit Al-Maghtas, or Bethany Beyond the Jordan, the site where the faithful believe Jesus Christ was baptized. Jordan is a close British ally but the king has recently come under pressure over leaks pointing to offshore wealth, as well as an alleged coup plot against him earlier this year. — AFP

900 kg lobsters seized

HONG KONG: Hong Kong customs officers seized nearly 900 kilograms of live lobsters on a speedboat on Monday night, as authorities step up a crackdown on the smuggling of Australian rock lobsters into mainland China. With relations between the two countries strained, China has restricted imports of several Australian products. Among them are lobsters, a sought-after delicacy in mainland China. Imports of Australian rock lobsters to Hong Kong - which has no such restrictions - have since skyrocketed, with suspicions that the vast majority end up on mainland tables. On Monday night, 890 kilograms of live lobsters and about 930 kilograms of sea cucumbers were found on a double-ended speedboat trying to leave harbor on the south of Hong Kong Island under cover of darkness, according to Lui Siu-fai, a divisional commander with the city's customs department. — AFP

Junta charges Suu Kyi

YANGON: Myanmar's junta has charged Aung San Suu Kyi with committing electoral fraud during the 2020 polls, state media reported yesterday, the latest in a barrage of allegations against her since her party won in a landslide. Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military coup in February sparked nationwide protests and a deadly crackdown on dissent. Detained since the putsch, Suu Kyi, 76, has been charged with illegally importing walkie talkies, sedition and corruption, and faces decades in jail if convicted. Suu Kyi is now also accused of "election fraud and lawless actions" during the polls, state-run newspaper Global New Light of Myanmar reported, without giving details on when court proceedings would begin. — AFP

Sikh pilgrimage to Pakistan

NEW DELHI: India gave the green light for thousands of Sikh pilgrims to cross the border into Pakistan from today ahead of the birth anniversary of the religion's founder Guru Nanak. The Kartarpur Corridor, a visa-free crossing allowing Indian Sikhs to visit the temple in Pakistan where Guru Nanak died in 1539, first opened in 2019 for Nanak's 550th birth anniversary but was closed last year because of the pandemic. India's Home Minister Amit Shah announced that the corridor will re-open from today ahead of Nanak's birth anniversary celebrations this Friday. "In a major decision, that will benefit large numbers of Sikh pilgrims, PM @narendramodi gov't has decided to re-open the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor from tomorrow," he said on Twitter. — AFP

'No Afghan-style evacuation'

WASHINGTON: The United States urged its nationals once again Monday to leave war-torn Ethiopia immediately on their own, warning that there will be no Afghanistan-style military evacuation from the country. The US embassy has been calling on US citizens for several days to take commercial flights to leave the country, where rebel groups no longer rule out marching on the capital Addis Ababa. The embassy offers loans to those who are unable to purchase a ticket immediately. "We are doing that not because we are pessimistic about the prospects for peace, but because we are practical," said State Department spokesman Ned Price. — AFP

Ex-minister's home attacked

DEHRADUN: Hindu militants attacked and set fire to the home of a former Indian foreign minister, police said, in the latest incident of religious violence that critics say has been inflamed under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Salman Khurshid, a Muslim from the main opposition Congress party, published a book last month in which he compared the kind of Hindu nationalism that has flourished under Modi to extremist Islamic groups like ISIS. Police said a mob of around 20 people from a hardline local Hindu group massed outside Khurshid's house near the northern city of Nainital on Monday. "They shouted slogans, threw stones, broke several windows, ransacked (the entry) and set fire (to a door)," local police chief Jagdish Chandra said. — AFP

Business

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2021

Abu Dhabi's ADNOC to invest \$6 billion for more oil drilling

New investment to enable UAE to boost crude output capacity to 5m bpd by 2030

ABU DHABI: Abu Dhabi's national oil company announced yesterday a \$6 billion investment in crude oil drilling as it ramps up production capacity. The announcement comes a day after the United Arab Emirates (UAE) said a recent UN climate summit in Glasgow was a "success" but that the world needs to keep investing billions in oil and gas. The UAE is one of the world's top crude exporters, with an average of 4.2 million barrels per day.

The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) said the \$6 billion investment would "enable drilling growth as it boosts its crude oil production capacity to 5 million barrels per day by 2030". The ADNOC investments include contracts with multiple companies, some lasting for a decade, according to a statement released on the second day of the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference. Both the UAE and neighboring Saudi Arabia, the world's number one oil exporter, have announced net zero carbon goals, despite efforts to ramp up oil production.

The UAE has said it hopes to be carbon neutral by 2050. Nearly 200 countries at the COP26

summit pledged Saturday to speed up the fight against rising temperatures, after two weeks of negotiations.

However, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned that "climate catastrophe" is still knocking at the door. But Sultan Al-Jaber, the UAE's minister of industry and advanced technology, said the COP26 summit "a success", speaking at the opening session of the Abu Dhabi conference on Monday.

He forecast that the oil and gas industry would have to invest "over \$600 billion every year until 2030" just to keep up with the expected demand. "Yes, renewable energy is the fastest growing segment of the energy mix, but oil and gas is still the biggest and will be for decades to come," he said.

"While the world has agreed to accelerate the energy transition, it is still heavily reliant on oil and gas," UAE Energy Minister Suhail Mohamed Al-Mazrouei said indications point to an oil supply surplus in the first quarter of 2022. "2022 will be a year of balance between supply and demand," he said on Monday. —AFP



Jazeera Airways to buy 28 A320neo aircraft valued in excess of \$3.3bn

DUBAI: Airbus has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Jazeera Airways, the Kuwait-based carrier, for twenty A320neos, eight A321neos and 5 further options. The deal is valued in excess of at \$3.3 billion at list prices - the actual deal remains confidential.

The MoU was signed by Rohit Ramchandran, Jazeera Airways Chief Executive Officer and Christian Scherer, Airbus Chief Commercial Officer and Head of Airbus International. Marwan Boodai, Chairman Jazeera Airways said, "Jazeera Airways is pleased to extend its long-term relationship with Airbus further with this significant new order. We will effectively double our current fleet size to 35 aircraft by 2026. The airline has pulled out of the pandemic strongly in Q3 with a return to profitability. We have exciting expansion plans ahead, which will further boost our contribution to the Kuwait economy and in particular the travel sector."

"We are proud to extend our partnership with Jazeera Airways through this latest agreement which will add an additional 28 Airbus aircraft to its all Airbus fleet", said Christian Scherer, Airbus Chief Commercial Officer, and Head of Airbus International. "The A320neo Family is without doubt the best platform to support Jazeera Airways' growth plans. This is the perfect illustration of how Airbus helps escort the growth of its successful customers."



DUBAI: Rohit Ramchandran and Christian Scherer during the signing of the memorandum of understanding.

Rohit Ramchandran, CEO Jazeera Airways added, "By taking both A320neo and A321neo versions we will have great flexibility to extend our network to medium and longer haul destinations from Kuwait, offering passengers more choice to travel and enjoy popular destinations as much as underserved ones"

Jazeera Airways commenced operations in 2005 and has since emerged as a leading carrier in the region. It is operating regionally and internationally serving Middle East, Europe and Asia's

top destinations from its home base Kuwait. The Kuwaiti airline supports the country's 2035 vision to further economic expansion and transformation into a commercial hub. The A320neo Family incorporates the very latest technologies including new generation engines, Sharklets and aerodynamics, which together deliver 20 percent in fuel savings and CO2 reduction compared to previous generation Airbus aircraft. The A320neo Family has received more than 7,400 orders from over 120 customers.

UK unemployment drops as vacancies hit new high

LONDON: Britain's unemployment rate has fallen further with the economy reopen following a pandemic lockdown, with vacancies hitting a fresh peak, data showed yesterday. The unemployment rate dropped to 4.3 percent in the three months to the end of September, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

That compared with a rate of 4.5 percent in the quarter to the end of August, the ONS added. At the same time job vacancies in the three months to the end of October hit a new record high at 1.17 million. This was despite the UK government ending in September its furlough jobs support program that kept millions of private sector workers in their roles during the pandemic.

"It might take a few months to see the full impact of furlough coming to an end, as people who lost their jobs at the end of September could still be receiving redundancy pay," noted Sam Beckett, head of economic statistics at the ONS. "However, October's early estimate shows the number of people on the payroll rose strongly on the month and stands well above its pre-pandemic level."

The number of people on UK company payrolls surged by 160,000 last month, the official data showed. —AFP



DUBAI: Emirates president Tim Clark said the airline expects to return to profitability "in the next 18 months" as the sector bounces back from the COVID pandemic.

Emirates expects to return to profit in 'next 18 months'

DUBAI: Aviation giant Emirates expects to return to profitability "in the next 18 months" as the sector bounces back from the COVID pandemic, its president Tim Clark said yesterday. The Dubai-based carrier said last week it was on the path to recovery as six-month losses dropped by more than half from a year earlier.

"The profitability of Emirates is a well-known fact... We'll restore that in the next 18 months, we're already on path to do that," Clark told reporters at the Dubai Air Show, the industry's first large gathering since the pandemic. "We were burning through \$250 million a month. We stopped that. We're now a

growing business again. "In the last four weeks, we've been profitable, even with 80 A380s on the ground."

Emirates posted an April-September loss of \$1.6 billion, compared with \$3.4 billion during the same period in 2020. Emirates specializes in long-haul flights, with its fleet solely composed of large A380 and B777 aircraft, dozens of which it grounded amid a lack of passenger traffic.

However, Clark said he was "fairly bullish" about the recovery. "As soon as it comes back, you will have 18 months of resurgence of demand, the likes of which you've never seen," he said.

Clark said that he expected global traffic to return to pre-crisis levels by 2023-2024, growing at about four percent every year after that. But with many airlines having sold off their older aircraft or downsized their fleet to cut costs, "capacity will not be there in international airlines to meet that demand", he said. This is the "biggest problem going forward over the next five to 10 years". —AFP

German regulator halts Nord Stream 2 approval process

BERLIN: Germany's energy regulator said yesterday it was temporarily halting the approval process for Russia's controversial Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, saying the operating company first needs to become compliant with German law. The move is the latest setback for the 10-billion-euro project (\$12 billion), which has been dogged by delays and become a geopolitical hot potato.

The Baltic Sea pipeline is set to double Russian gas supplies to Germany, which the EU's top economy says is needed to help it transition away from coal and nuclear energy. But opponents say the recently completed pipeline will increase Europe's energy reliance on Russia.

Crucially, the pipeline also bypasses Ukraine's gas infrastructure, depriving the country of much-needed transit fees. The dispute comes as Europe, which receives a third of its gas from Russia, is battling surging energy prices just as the continent heads into the colder winter season.

Germany's energy regulator said in a statement that "it would only be possible to certify an operator of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline if that operator was organized in a legal form under German law."

The certification procedure "will remain suspended until the main assets and human resources" have been transferred from the Nord Stream 2 parent company to its German subsidiary, that will own and operate the German part of the pipeline, it added. Critics have accused Moscow of intentionally limiting gas supplies to Europe and driving up prices in an effort to hasten the launch of Nord Stream 2, a claim Russia denies. Russian gas giant Gazprom said last week that it had begun implementing a plan to restock European gas storage facilities.

Germany's energy regulator has four months, until January 2022, to give its green light for Nord Stream 2. After that, the European Commission still needs to give its recommendation. —AFP



Business



KUWAIT: Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Isam Al-Sager, Salah Al-Fulaij, and a number of the bank's executive management during the opening of the branch.



NBK moves its Dasma branch to new location

Inauguration held in the presence of the capital governor and bank's top executive management

KUWAIT: In line with its commitment to provide top-notch advanced banking services to all customers, wherever they are, and its constant strides to strengthen its leading position in the banking sector, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has recently opened its new branch in Dasma area in the Capital Governorate.

The new branch opening was attended by Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Governor of the Capital Governorate, Isam Al-Sager, NBK Group CEO, Salah Al-Fulaij, CEO of NBK - Kuwait, and a number of the bank's executive management.

The opening of the new Dasma Branch comes in line with NBK's strategy to be closer to its customers, meet their needs and expectations, and ensure offering them a top-notch banking experience. It is worth mentioning that NBK's new branches are on par with international standards, reflecting the radical changes we are making to the traditional branches concept, start-

ing with the design, interactive services and advanced banking solutions provided by the branch, to keep pace with the rapid developments in the banking industry.

All the changes introduced in the new branches reflect the expectations of NBK Customers with whom the bank is always in touch to identify their needs and aspirations, and ensure that they find what they asked for during their visit to the branch. NBK has been proactive in upgrading its branches to integrate with digital channels to offer its customers a richer and more inclusive experience that suits all their segments, and ensures making all their transactions anytime, anywhere, in a quick and easy way.

The bank always strives to provide its customers with more convenience, and to be closer to them across residential, commercial and shopping areas, as well as entertainment destinations.



In the new Dasma Branch, the professional team of employees will provide advisory services to customers without waiting. In addition, NBK Thahabi

Package and Privilege Banking Customers will have access to VIP meeting rooms that are designed to offer utmost convenience while their transactions are being processed. Dasma Branch incorporates two CDMs, in addition to two drive-through ATMs outside the branch, and also provides safe deposit boxes for customers.

The new branch also features screens displaying new services, upgrades and available offers, in addition to spaces for holding meetings, all embraced in a modern design to ensure an exquisite and convenient banking experience for customers. NBK continues to strengthen its leading position in the banking sector, boasting the largest domestic banking network in Kuwait with 67 branches all over Kuwait, in addition to a large POS network exceeding 15,000 terminals, including the largest market share of NFC-enabled POS terminals in Kuwait.



BALTIMORE, US: Trucks transport cargo containers at the Port of Baltimore in Baltimore, Maryland. — AFP

How Washington could fight America's record inflation

WASHINGTON: With US prices rising at a rate not seen in decades, President Joe Biden's administration is looking for ways to turn the tide. From relaxing tariffs on China to addressing the semiconductor shortage, there are many actions Washington could take to keep price increases in check. However, analysts warn that few will offer immediate relief from the price surge that has struck the world's largest economy this year as it bounces back from the COVID-19 pandemic:

Roll back China tariffs

Under former president Donald Trump, the United States imposed tariffs on Chinese products worth \$370 billion in 2018, citing trade practices Washington deemed unfair. The Biden administration has kept those tariffs up, but announced it would review trade strategy towards China, as well as begin a process for some US firms to receive exemptions from the levies they say drive up costs.

China is the top supplier of goods to the United States, and Biden could choose to relax the tariffs further to address the price increases, which the Labor Department put at a year-on-year rate of 6.2 percent in October. In a Sunday interview with CBS, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen was noncommittal about changing tariff policy, but acknowledged that "it would make some difference."

"Tariffs do tend to raise domestic prices," she said. Jay Bryson, chief economist for Wells Fargo's corporate and investment bank, said a tariff rollback would help "at the margins" and lower the costs of some goods, but wouldn't strike the death blow against inflation Biden may be looking for.

Sort out supply chains

Even if tariffs were dropped, the United States would still have to deal with snarls at its ports. Ships have idled off the coasts of Los Angeles and Savannah, Georgia for months waiting for cargo to be offloaded, raising fears of disruptions to the holiday shopping season. The reasons for the broken supply chains are many, and Biden has attempted to address them by pushing the Port of Los Angeles to provide 24-hour service, as well as getting Walmart, FedEx and UPS to work extended hours to clear backlogs. The White House has said the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill Biden is set to sign on Monday will dedicate funds towards modernization projects that can further aid ports.

But Senior US Economist at Capital Economics Andrew Hunter wasn't so sure. He warned that the overhaul, along with a \$1.85 trillion effort to expand US social services Biden is pushing Congress to pass, "aren't going to do anything to contain inflation now, and could even increase it further if they result in a further fiscal expansion in the near term, which boosts demand."

Stimulate semiconductor production

American factories have struggled in recent months to secure semiconductors, with the auto sector particularly hard hit. The slowdown in new car production is

a factor in the surge in used car prices that has pushed overall inflation higher, while the efforts of rental car companies to rebuild their fleets has also played a role. Biden earlier this year met with leading CEOs in the semiconductor industry, and looked for ways to work with the European Union on addressing the shortages in a September summit.

Pressure the Fed

The branch of the US government best equipped to handle inflation is the Federal Reserve. However, its tools are blunt: the central bank could hike rates from their zero level, but doing that with the economy still bouncing back from the pandemic could spur a recession. Its top officials have also made clear there will be no rate hike until the Fed finishes winding down its monthly asset purchases, which is predicted to conclude in the middle of next year. "To the extent that (inflation) is being caused, at least partially, by supply constraints, there's very little the Fed can do about that. The Fed can't make more computer chips," Bryson said. Fed Chair Jerome Powell and other top officials are appointed by the White House but act independently, meaning that even if Biden wanted to change US monetary policy now, the decision is not his to make. — AFP

HK leader defends US bank head quarantine exemption

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's leader yesterday defended allowing the head of JP Morgan Chase to skip a three-week Covid quarantine imposed on most other visitors, saying he worked for "a very big bank". The comments came as Hong Kong also announced more than 100 cargo pilots had been ordered into mandatory quarantine and that the city was at risk of running out of air crew.

JP Morgan CEO Jamie Dimon landed on Monday for a 32-hour whirlwind tour without undergoing the usual 21-day hotel quarantine even as the international business hub tightens restrictions to adhere to China's "zero-COVID" strategy. Earlier this year HSBC's boss was forced to undergo a full quarantine during a trip to the city.

"As far as I know the reason was economic," Hong Kong's chief executive Carrie Lam told reporters when asked why Dimon had been given a rare exemption. "After all it's a very big bank with important businesses in Hong Kong," she said, adding that the risk of transmission was low because Dimon's itinerary was short. Hong Kong has maintained some of the world's harshest quarantine measures and travel restrictions during the pandemic.

The strategy has kept infections low but ensured a business hub that dubs itself "Asia's World City" has been cut off internationally for the past 20 months.—AFP

'Politics, politics, politics' as Biden searches for Fed leader

WASHINGTON: There are few apparent policy differences between the two top candidates to lead the US Federal Reserve, but that doesn't mean the decision will be an easy one for President Joe Biden.

He could reappoint Jerome Powell, a Republican who has won praise from officials in Biden's Democratic administration, or oust him in favor of Lael Brainard, whom progressive Democrats believe would be tougher on banking regulation. "It's politics, politics, politics," said Jay Bryson, chief economist for Wells Fargo's corporate and investment bank.

Biden met with both candidates recently, according to US media, and a decision could come as soon as this week. Regardless of whom he chooses, economists say the central bank is unlikely to shift its policies anytime soon, as a wave of inflation hampers the economy's recovery from the pandemic downturn and sends Biden's approval rating slumping. "In terms of monetary policy, we think there's very little daylight between Powell and Brainard," Bryson said.

Change or continuity?

Under Powell, the Federal Reserve has been at the center of the country's response to the pandemic, slashing its benchmark lending rate to zero and pledging to keep it there for longer than normal to help the economy regain maximum employment. But a price surge that saw the Labor Department's consumer price index register its biggest year-on-year jump in more than three decades last month has added pressure on the monetary institution. Biden's Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, who was also Fed Chair, has signaled her support for her former deputy to serve a second term. "I've said that I think Chair Powell has done a very good job of running the Fed," she told CBS in a Sunday interview.

But she added, "What's important is that President Biden choose someone who's experienced and credible and there are a range of candidates." Brainard is the only

registered Democrat on the Fed board from which Biden must choose the next leader, and progressive Democrats believe she would be tougher on banking regulation.

Economist Joel Naroff said Brainard could indeed choose to slow some easing of regulations on big banks. But one of the Fed's two mandates is controlling prices, and when it comes to that, it's unclear where her views differ from Powell's. "The only alternative policy at this point is to start raise rates right away," Naroff said, "which would likely decelerate demand and the economy overall. "And what does that accomplish? I'm not sure."

Temporary inflation

Biden also must fill an opening on the board and the position of Vice Chair, since Richard Clarida's term in office expires on January 31, as well as that of first vice chair overseeing banking supervision, which Randal Quarles said he would resign at the end of December. The new team will be at the forefront of Washington's fight against inflation.

Fed leaders have said the price increases will level off over time, and the bank won't raise its rates until it finishes tapering its monthly purchases of bonds and securities to help the economy recover from the downturn, likely in the middle of next year. Both Powell and Brainard are inflation "doves," inclined to keep rates lower for longer, Bryson said. He predicts control of the central bank will likely come down to politics. Powell, who took office in 2018 after then-president Donald Trump declined to give Yellen a second term as Fed chair, would likely attract both Democratic and Republican votes in the Senate confirmation process.

Brainard may also win approval in the Senate, which Biden's Democratic party narrowly controls, but Bryson said her path is more uncertain. "Does President Biden want to risk a big confirmation fight with everything else he has on his plate? It's a political decision here and I'm not sure how its going to break," he said. — AFP



EU urges Switzerland to show 'political will' on pact

BRUSSELS: The EU Monday urged Switzerland to show whether it still wants a far-reaching cooperation agreement with the bloc, months after the Swiss government stormed away from the negotiation table. European Commission Vice President Maros Sefcovic warned "it takes two to tango" following talks with Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis, the first high-level sit-down since years of negotiations suddenly collapsed in May.

EU-Swiss ties are currently governed by a patchwork of agreements, and for the past 13 years both sides have attempted to sign an overarching accord that would rule on all aspects of relations. But in a mirror of the bloc's post-Brexit feuds with Britain, Swiss

officials are reluctant to meet EU demands for budget contributions and alignment on European rules as the price to keep free access to the vast EU market.

The talks hit an impasse after the EU refused to budge on Swiss demands to exclude key issues relating to state aid, wage protections and freedom of movement from the pact. "What we now need from Switzerland is the unambiguous political will to engage with us on the real issues that count and a credible timetable," said Sefcovic.

"In other words, any political dialogue must be focused and substantial. It cannot be an empty shell," he added. Sefcovic said technical talks would intensify and he would meet his counterpart again next January in Davos with the aim of finalizing a timetable and confirming that the talks were back on track.

Switzerland is the EU's fourth biggest trading partner after China, the US and Britain. The EU is Switzerland's biggest trading partner. Sefcovic, a former Slovak MEP, also oversees the bloc's tumultuous ties with London. The EU and UK are on the cusp of a damaging trade war over Northern Ireland and fishing rights. — AFP

Kuwait real estate sales exceed pre-pandemic levels in 3Q21

Residential sector rally continues, investment sector picks up

KUWAIT: Real estate sales rose further in 3Q21, building on the full recovery seen in the first half of the year. Sales in the quarter totaled KD1.1 billion (+16 percent q/q; +63 percent y/y), averaging a robust KD 360 million per month, on the back of strong activity in the residential sector and a significant increase in home and land prices. The third quarter also witnessed an improvement in commercial and investment (i.e. apartment) sector sales, although both remain below pre-pandemic levels and the investment sector remains challenged by weaker fundamentals (lower demand and higher vacancies). Part of the reason for the divergence in performance between the residential and investment sector is a shift in investors' preference towards residential properties, which gained further momentum in 2017 after utilities tariffs on investment properties were increased.

The coronavirus pandemic was also a factor, pressuring the incomes and employment of expatriates, who are major drivers of the apartment rental market. Looking ahead, residential activity should benefit from healthier demand and a still-limited supply of new units. The proposed mortgage law, if passed, has the potential to boost the residential market, but should be accompanied by measures to prevent excessive price gains. Meanwhile, economic growth is returning and business activity is gradually recovering, which should be positive for both the commercial and investment sectors. Without a more significant shift in the preference of Kuwaitis for apartment rentals, the fortunes of the investment sector will likely remain linked to expatriate demand.

Residential sector activity

Residential sales reached KD 810 million in 3Q21 (+87 percent y/y), driven by a combination of higher volumes (+35 percent y/y) and a steep, general rise in land and home prices. The NBK residential home and land price indices were up by 27 percent y/y and 14 percent y/y, respectively, as of September. Solid fundamentals (limited supply and strong demand) continue to underpin gains in the residential sector, with demand partly driven by a young and growing population, in addition to increased investor interest due to stable returns: occupancy rates are higher than in the investment sector.

The divergence between the sectors is also due in part to several policy-related factors that have indirectly favored the residential sector. These include the exemption from higher utility tariffs since 2017, which has led to lower operating costs and thus stronger rental return margins in the residential sector and the absence of measures to curb price-raising and speculation, such as a second home tax or fees on long-standing vacant lots. The above factors, coupled with the pre-existing weakness in the alternative apartment sector, continue to contribute to the significant residential price increases seen since 2018. Looking



KUWAIT: The newly-inaugurated Assima Mall. Kuwait's real estate sales rose further in 3Q21, building on the full recovery seen in the first half of the year. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Highlights

- Quarterly sales totaled KD1.1 billion (+16% q/q; +63% y/y), averaging a solid KD 360 million per month.
- Real estate sales were led by the residential sector, with sales of KD 810 million in 3Q21 (+87% y/y).
- The investment sector saw a notable pickup in activity amid lower prices, but sales remain below pre-pandemic levels.
- Policy reforms and an accelerated supply of new homes will be key to ensuring a healthy and stable real estate market.
- The government's draft mortgage bill could be approved into law by 2022/23, but needs accompanying measures to curb excessive price gains.

ahead, absent reforms and an increase in the supply of units, residential prices should remain elevated. Given the steep gains seen this year however, it would be surprising if prices continued to rise at recent rates and could even moderate somewhat ahead.

The residential market should receive a further boost from the likely approval by parliament of the government's draft mortgage law that was submitted last May. Legislation could come as early as 2022/23. This will facilitate financing and likely provide a further boost to residential activity and prices. However, of concern is affordability, with home prices increasing significantly in relation to the increase in the average citizen's income. While the Public Authority for Housing Welfare has successfully planned and implemented, in partnership with the private sector, a number of large housing projects in recent years, the increase in the available stock of housing is insufficient to make a size-

able dent in the backlog of housing applications, estimated to be around 91,500 as of 2020 (this is before accounting for future demand). Therefore, the housing shortage will likely remain a challenge and require further initiatives in order to be resolved.

Investment sector

Investment sector (i.e. apartment) sales amounted to KD235 million in 3Q21 (+47 percent q/q; +70 percent y/y). This compares to a pre-pandemic quarterly average of KD279 million in 2019, reflecting a partial recovery.

Higher sales were driven by a marked pick-up in volumes (+83 percent y/y), likely encouraged by lower prices (building prices were down 9 percent y/y) as the market adjusts to weaker demand and a decline in the expat population due to the pandemic. This had added to pre-existing weaknesses in the sector-

Chart 1: Real estate sales



Source: Ministry of Justice/ NBK

Chart 3: NBK residential home and land prices indices



Source: Ministry of Justice/ NBK

declining rents, lower prices, and rising vacancies—even before the pandemic due to oversupply and slower economic growth. We expect a full recovery to take some time given the gradual pace of the economic recovery and the government's efforts to promote Kuwaitization and address the demographic imbalance by proposing to cap the number of expats (bill proposed late 2020). Policy reforms aimed at curbing house purchases while promoting demand for apartments would help in restoring balance between the two sectors.

Commercial sector sales

Commercial sector sales in 3Q21 were a subdued KD 36 million (-60 percent y/y), which is still well below pre-pandemic levels. Volumes were down 40 percent y/y. As the economy and the business environment picks up, supported by progress on the vaccine front, a gradual recovery is expected for the sector. It may take some time, however, for the negative impact of the pandemic on SMEs, expatriate jobs and the labor market to subside and demand for commercial space to rebound.

Shell-shocked Dutch rue new Brexit blow

THE HAGUE: For more than a century Shell has been an iconic presence in the Netherlands, making the energy giant's decision to move to Britain a painful one for the Dutch. Even more galling for the Netherlands is that its biggest company wants to follow consumer titan Unilever to London, despite a hoped-for economic boost from Brexit. Here are some key questions and answers about Shell's announcement on Monday:

How old is Shell?

Koninklijke Nederlandsche Petroleum Maatschappij, or Royal Dutch Petroleum, was founded in 1890 to explore for oil in what was then the Dutch East Indies and now Indonesia. On April 23, 1907 it merged with the British firm Shell Transport and Trading to take on their main competitor, Standard Oil of the United States. The "Shell" name and logo came from seashells imported in the 19th century by the father of Marcus and Samuel Samuel, the brothers who founded the British firm.

Due partly to national sensitivities, the company was dual-listed, much like Unilever, which was formed by a similar arrangement across the North Sea. Since 2005 the company has been incorporated in the UK with Dutch tax residence.

How big is its impact on the Dutch economy?

Shell is by far the biggest Dutch company, with turnover of \$180.5 billion (158 billion euros) in 2020. The hit to the Dutch treasury if Shell moves its taxation base to London will be in the "billions" annually. Dutch media reported without giving a precise figure.

It is also a top-25 employer with around 8,500 staff in the Netherlands, one tenth of its 87,000 employees worldwide. Shell says these numbers will remain about the same. Beyond the numbers, Shell is also something of a symbol for the Dutch of their

self-image as an outward-looking nation of traders and explorers. Shell buildings can be seen in various cities and its logos emblazon huge tankers on the skyline of Rotterdam, Europe's largest port.

What was the tax issue?

The Dutch have however in recent years appeared to cool on their giant multinationals, with concerns over issues like tax avoidance and the environment. Prime Minister Mark Rutte expended much political capital trying to ram through an unpopular policy scrapping a tax on dividends for companies, with firms like Shell and Unilever in mind. Meanwhile the multinationals were finding the financial and regulatory burdens of their dual status increasingly difficult.

Wasn't Brexit meant to boost the Netherlands?

Britain's departure from the European Union was meant to boost the Netherlands, but while Amsterdam has gained on London's financial hub, it hasn't all favored the Dutch. In 2018, Marmite-maker Unilever had to abandon a plan to locate its headquarters in the Netherlands after a shareholder revolt. In 2020 it went the opposite way, becoming a wholly British company.

Politically stung by the failure to keep Unilever, Rutte abandoned his unpopular tax breaks plan. That however caused trouble with Shell, whose chairman Andrew Mackenzie said the dividends tax row meant Shell was "driven to go to the UK".

Will it affect climate court case?

Shell's Dutch woes have also been compounded by a Dutch court verdict in April this year that the company must slash greenhouse gases. But both the firm and the environmentalists behind the court case say the ruling will stand even if Shell moves.

"It will have no effect on the case against Shell. This case will remain under the control of the Dutch court," Peer de Rijk of Friends of the Earth Netherlands told AFP. Shell said the plans "will have no impact on legal proceedings relating to the climate ruling... This applies regardless of our tax residence location." —AFP

ABK announces Waleed Al-Adehan as winner of KD 10,000

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced Waleed Mohammad Al-Adehan as the winner of KD 10,000 in the second Alfouz weekly draw. The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and announced live on Q8 Pulse Station FM88.8 on Monday 15th November 2021.

The Alfouz draw account offers ABK customers the chance to win life-changing



rewards. With Alfouz, ABK customers will get a chance to win KD 10,000 in Kuwait's highest single weekly draw and the ultimate grand prize of KD 5,000 monthly additional income for 10 years.

Both new and existing ABK customers can benefit from this opportunity, with a minimum account balance of KD 100 only. The next draw date will be on Sunday 21st November 2021.

Trend Micro blocked over 8m threats in Kuwait: H1 report

KUWAIT: Trend Micro Incorporated, a global leader in cybersecurity solutions, yesterday released its Midyear Security Roundup for H1 2021: Attacks from All Angles. The report shares insights on the evolved threat landscape from the first half of the year and provides strategic guidance for leaders to protect their organizations in the digital economy.

The report states that globally Trend Micro solutions blocked 40.9 billion email threats, malicious files and malicious URLs for customers in H1 2021, with a 47 percent year-on-year increase. Ransomware remained the standout threat in the first half of the year as cybercriminals continued to target big-name victims. They used Advanced Persistent Threat tools and techniques to steal and encrypt victims' data. The banking industry was disproportionately affected, experiencing a 1,318 percent year-on-year increase in ransomware attacks

in the first half of 2021.

In Kuwait, Trend Micro solutions detected and blocked nearly 6 million (5,997,116) email threats, prevented over 1.3 million (1,393,583) malicious URL victim attacks, and over 749K (749,723) malware attacks were identified and stopped. The report also shows that home networks in Kuwait were a major attraction for cybercriminals looking to pivot to corporate systems, devices, and networks. Trend Micro's Smart Home Network (SHN) solutions blocked over 78K (78,666) SHN inbound and outbound attacks combined, preventing nearly 660K (659,883) such SHN events for hackers to target or control home devices from executing malware, obtaining sensitive information, intercepting communications, or launching external attacks.

"In the last few months, organizations went through a series of changes whilst



accommodating the impact of the pandemic, one of the most significant ones was undergoing accelerated digital transformation," said Assad Arabi, Managing Director, Trend Micro Gulf Cluster. "Today, companies need robust security solutions that can safeguard their journeys at all stages to thrive in this new digital era. Our mid-year-round report for H1 2021 shares insights that will help enterprises in the country to take suitable decisions to tackle the modern-day threats effectively and prepare for the future.

Trend Micro has been collaborating with the public and private sectors to raise awareness and resolve gaps to enable secure digital transformation journeys for organizations in Kuwait. The company

is on the forefront in introducing new security solutions for businesses, leaving no stone unturned in providing enhanced visibility, threat intelligence, and extended detection and response at every stage of their IT journeys.

To continue its pursuit against the evolving threat landscape, Trend Micro will be hosting CLOUDSEC 2021 from November 16th to 18th, 2021, to further empower organizations in the MENA region to reimagine their cloud security. During the event industry leaders, experts, and specialists will discuss recent cyber security trends, followed by engaging panels discussions and seminars, and new-age initiatives securing every stage of the digital transformation, from the edge to the cloud.

Kuwait Times bids farewell to Managing Editor Jamie Etheridge



Kuwait Times management and staff pose for a group photo with outgoing Managing Editor Jamie Etheridge. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait Times gave a rousing farewell to outgoing Managing Editor Jamie Etheridge in the newsroom of the paper, attended by the management and editorial team. Speaking at the sendoff, Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan explained how Etheridge steered the newspaper through difficult times during the pandemic and gave it a clear direction, showing the path forward. Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain expressed gratitude to Etheridge for helping

Kuwait Times in its transition to the digital world, saying her "exemplary guidance helped us in our digital transformation". Kuwait Times staff thanked Etheridge and wished her all the best for the future.

"Thank you all for the lovely sendoff. I wish you all the best and a bountiful future," Etheridge said in an emotional vote of thanks. She reminded her colleagues that the journey into the digital world will be tough and fraught with challenges. "No doubt, you all are creative

people. Try to find your own niche in the new emerging world," she said.

Etheridge is heading back to the US, but not before leaving an indelible imprint on the paper. During her two stints in Kuwait Times, Etheridge contributed to the growth of the paper, particularly in the digital space. When the entire country was locked down during the coronavirus pandemic, Kuwait Times made sure that readers got accurate information through our website

and social media channels. Etheridge also played a key role in training the newspaper's staff and ensuring Kuwait Times is at the forefront of providing quality journalism and verified news.



Jamie Etheridge



Jamie Etheridge receives a gift from Kuwait Times Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain.



Jamie Etheridge with Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan (right) and Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain (left).



Jamie Etheridge with Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan.



Jamie Etheridge with Mustafa Qamhiya.



Jamie Etheridge with Islam Al-Sharaa.



Jamie Etheridge with Taleb Kanjo.



Jamie Etheridge with Nawara Fattahova.



Jamie Etheridge with Sahar Moussa.



Jamie Etheridge with her daughter Safyre.



Jamie Etheridge with Ahmad Jabr.



Jamie Etheridge with Tony Coelho.



Jamie Etheridge with Sajeev Peter.



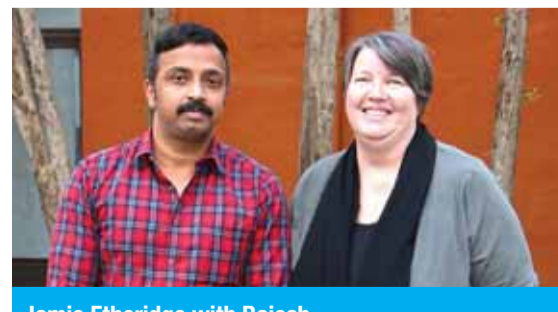
Jamie Etheridge with Shakir Reshamwala.



Jamie Etheridge with Chidi Emmanuel.



Jamie Etheridge with Sabastian Dsouza.



Jamie Etheridge with Rajesh.



Jamie Etheridge with Ben Garcia.



Jamie Etheridge with Rachelle De Leon.



Jamie Etheridge with Maryln S Doroja.



Jamie Etheridge with Ismaeil Elrewiny.



Sahar Moussa with Safyre.



Jamie Etheridge poses during the farewell party.

Lifestyle | Features



Chef Abdurahim Mirzayev, 59, cooks plov - a dish known around the world as pilaf, in a small cafe in Tashkent. — AFP photos



A man sells rice for plov - a dish known around the world as pilaf, at a bazaar in Termez.



Uzbek farmer Mukhtor Gazatov, 60, picks carrots - one of the core ingredients to plov - a dish known around the world as pilaf, at his farm outside Tashkent.

Extreme weather costly for Uzbeks' beloved plov dish

The sweet-flavored, yellow carrots grown by Uzbek farmer Mukhtor Gazatov are a key ingredient in his country's national pilaf dish-but extreme weather has devastated this year's harvest. Cooked with meat, onions, rice and plenty of oil, the carrots are a must-have to make Uzbekistan's beloved plov, a staple in the Central Asian country of 35 million people. "They are sweeter than the orange kind and lend a special flavor," the 60-year-old told AFP at his farm outside the isolated republic's capital. But one of the worst droughts in years has hit the ex-Soviet region.

Gizatov's crops were ruined while shoppers grumble over carrots that are four times more expensive than before, pushing up prices of a plate of plov. "When the weather is that hot, some carrots simply burn out. The carrots that survive are smaller," said Gazatov, whose annual income fell by a third. City temperatures surged past 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) in early June-a month when readings are typically in the mid-30s or lower. Unseasonably cold weather earlier in the spring had already delayed the harvest and compromised its quality, causing carrots to crack, Gazatov lamented. Scientists link such shifting weather patterns and extreme temperatures to the effects of climate change.

Whole lotta plov

In the capital Tashkent, it is not hard to see where the demand for Gazatov's crop is. Restaurants with plov-heavy menus are dotted throughout the city, whose region is one of several that claim to make the best version of the dish. Plov is served at weddings where ingredients are cooked in massive cast iron pots. Thursdays are earmarked for plov-making followed by love-making in married households-according to legend, at least. Plov's prominent role in public life motivated the government's decision last year to create a "plov index", echoing the Big Mac index used as a measure for the cost of living in other countries.

In the first nine months of this year the price of plov in Tashkent rose by nearly 30 percent, according to the index, due to steadily rising prices for meat and the explosion in carrot prices. Navruz Khurramov, an expert with the EastFruit information and analytics platform, said this year's climate swings had compounded rising costs observed from the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. "Uzbekistan had non-beneficial weather conditions, which limited this year's harvest. Local prices were also affected by the high prices in markets connected to Uzbekistan like Russia" where not enough carrots were planted, Khurramov



A man sells meat at a bazaar in Termez.

told AFP.

Water scarce-region

Uzbekistan is the most populous country in Central Asia, and looks to rivers that rise in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to feed its massive agriculture sector. In recent years the government has aimed to reduce areas sown for water-thirsty crops like cotton as well as the rice used in plov, while seeking out more water-effi-

cient methods of irrigation. A growing population and shrinking glaciers in its upstream neighbors have added urgency to these efforts. This summer water was particularly scarce, offering a snapshot of a potential future where many types of farming become unsustainable and prices run away from incomes.

Neighboring Kazakhstan's decision to restrict exports of animals and feed after a mass drought-related cattle die-off

added to the pressure on prices at Uzbek markets. If there is a check on rising prices for plov's ingredients, it is the ruthless competition between eateries focused on a single meal. Abdurahim Mirzayev, a 59-year-old career plov chef, said that he chose to sacrifice profits this year to ensure his rough-and-ready restaurant on the outskirts of Tashkent was full every lunchtime. His version of the dish, known as "wedding plov" or "holiday plov", is embellished with raisins and chickpeas.

But carrots are essential to plov's distinctive aroma and cannot be replaced, he said. "You have to make plov with love and from a pure heart," Mirzayev said, his hands moving quickly through pockets of steam from the meat and vegetables sizzling in the pot. Javokhir Djamoliddinov, deputy director of the national statistics committee that maintains the "plov index", said he believes Uzbekistan will always find a way to serve its favorite dish. He pointed hopefully to a recent dip in prices for carrots and government action to control food prices in general. "We have always eaten plov," he said, "and we will always eat it in the future." — AFP



Men eat plov - a dish known around the world as pilaf, in a small cafe in Tashkent.



A woman sells flatbread at a bazaar in Termez.



Chef Abdurahim Mirzayev, 59, cooks plov - a dish known around the world as pilaf, in a small cafe in Tashkent.

Marx and Lenin watch Engels wed in southern India

Marx, Lenin and Ho Chi Minh gathered in southern India on the weekend to watch their friend Engels tie the knot. But there wasn't a German, Russian or Vietnamese in sight as members of the local Communist Party in the state of Kerala attended the wedding at a boutique tourist destination. The hammer and sickle remain in vogue across Kerala, where the Communist Party has governed for much of the last six decades, with revolutionary names like Stalin and Trotsky popular. Engels and Lenin are brothers, while Marx and Ho Chi Minh are the sons of a local party activist, according to the newspaper

Mathrubhumi.

All four men are active members of the Communist Party, the report said, but Marx flew back from the hyper-capitalist Gulf city of Dubai to attend the wedding in Athirappilly. India leaned more towards the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and Russian monikers including even Pravda-the name of the USSR's state newspaper-are not unheard of, particularly in the south. Tamil Nadu's current chief minister is M.K. Stalin, named by his father in honor of the Soviet dictator just days before he died in Russia.

A wedding in that state in June saw Socialism married off in front of brothers Communism, Leninism and Marxism. His bride was P. Mamata Banerjee, named by her grandfather for a firebrand left-wing politician in West Bengal, who ironically ended decades of communist rule in the state back in 2011. — AFP



This photo shows groom Friedrich Engels (second left), bride Bismitha along with Communist party members Marx (left), Lenin (second right) and Ho Chi Minh (right) posing for pictures during their wedding ceremony held at Athirappilly, in Thrissur District of Kerala state. — AFP

Clapton guitar, Cobain setlist, Whitney jacket under hammer

Eric Clapton's guitar, Kurt Cobain's handwritten setlists and Whitney Houston's multi-print Versace jacket are among the star-powered music memorabilia hitting the auction block this weekend. Clapton's 1968 Martin D-45 acoustic instrument is the toast of this year's "Icons & Idols: Rock 'N' Roll" from Julien's Auctions, which anticipates the guitar could fetch \$300,000 to \$500,000 during bidding this weekend. "And I think that's a conservative estimate," said Martin Nolan, executive director of the house. "The collectible on the art market right now-it's very, very hot, these prices are going through the roof," he told AFP during a preview of the auction that will include some 1,000 pieces.

The 76-year-old Englishman Clapton, who in recent years has made a very public turn to far-right conservatism, taking an ardent anti-Covid-19 vaccination stance and facing accusations of racism-played the guitar during the 1970 debut live concert performance of Derek and the Dominos, the group he founded that was behind the classic "Layla."

A sheet of partial handwritten working

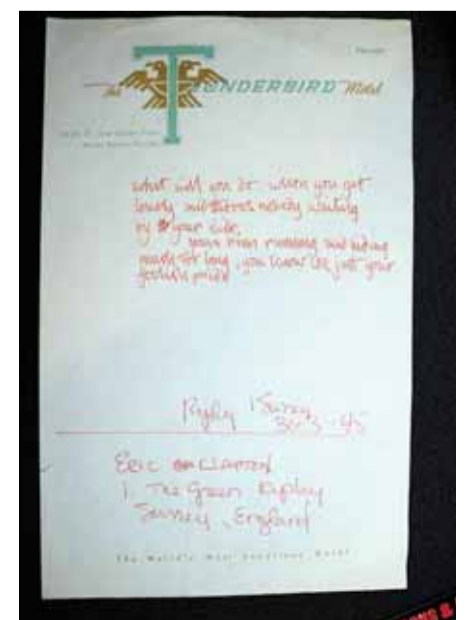
draft lyrics to that 1970 hit are also for sale, and estimated to go for \$30,000 to \$50,000. Asked if Julien's considered the controversy surrounding Clapton in choosing to highlight items connected to the rock star, Nolan said "there will always be something controversial." "I could go down the list with every star that's represented here," he said. "We don't focus on that; we focus on what's good, the amazing music that they've given us for many, many decades." Also included in the two-day auction-bidding will take place online and at Manhattan's Hard Rock Cafe November 19-20 — is a handwritten setlist from Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain. He scrawled songs including "Come As You Are" and "About A Girl" on a tablecloth he signed along with bandmates Dave Grohl and Krist Novoselic.

Last year at Julien's annual event a retro acoustic-electric guitar the late star played during the legendary 1993 MTV Unplugged performance snagged



Eric Clapton's 1968 Martin D-45 acoustic guitar is on display during a press preview. — AFP photos

a record \$6 million, the most expensive guitar ever sold at auction. The year prior, the cigarette-singed cardigan that grunge's reluctant poster boy wore during that same performance went for \$334,000. Several outfits worn on stage by the late American pop diva Whitney Houston are also going under the hammer, along with a plaid and paisley print Gianni Versace jacket and matching velvet trousers. Julien's estimates the ensemble, which the superstar wore circa 1992, could go for \$3,000 to \$5,000. — AFP



A sheet of partial handwritten working draft lyrics to Clapton's 1970 song 'Layla' written at The Thunderbird Motel, in Miami Beach is on display during a press preview.



A picture shows a view of the old city of Mardin, southeastern Turkey. — AFP photos

BEETHOVEN-LOVING DONKEYS CLEAN UP TURKISH TOWN

The sun peeks over the horizon of the medieval Turkish city of Mardin as a herd of cream-coloured donkeys begins its day job collecting rubbish before relaxing to classical music in the evenings. Guided by city workers, the animals carry waste bags, winding through the narrow alleys of the city, built on a cliff overlooking what was once Mesopotamia, 60 kilometers (37 miles) from Syria. "We have been using them to clean the city for centuries. They are the only ones who can access these narrow streets," says Kadri Toparli who works for the Mardin old town cleaning team.

"Otherwise, it would be impossible to do this work." With names like Gaddar (Cruel), Cefo (Indulgent) and Bozo (Pale), reflecting their personalities and features, the forty or so donkeys "have the status of municipal employees," Toparli explains. "They work like us, eight hours a day, with a break after four hours in the middle of the day." In the evenings, as they wind down from a long day that involves climbing at least 150 steps, the donkeys relax to music while vets care for them in their stables. "We take care of them. Every evening, we play classical music or traditional melodies for two



A municipal employee rides a donkey employed to collect garbage.

hours," Toparli says. "We see that they are happier when we play a piece of Beethoven," he quips.

Animal rights

At the start of the 20th century, when Mardin had just 20,000 people, the donkeys would carry the ashes produced from wood and coal heaters. Today, the old town alone has 60,000 residents, generating nearly 10 tons of waste every day. "We have mini-vehicles which we call 'garbage taxis'. We

use them as well, but they are not as efficient," says Abdulkadir Tutasi, the mayor of the old town.

Efforts to phase out the reliance on donkeys fits in with the growing sensitivity shown to animal welfare in Turkish society in recent years. In January 2020, Istanbul banned horse-drawn carriages from the Princes' Islands, a rustic archipelago at the entrance to the Bosphorus popular with weekend visitors.

The carriages, once emblematic of

the nine hilly islands, were replaced with electric vehicles. To ward off potential criticism, Mardin's old town officials say they are working with animal rights organizations to monitor the donkeys' working conditions.

Happy retirement

Toparli goes to great lengths to treat his donkeys with care and respect. "They are very intelligent animals. They know their zone by heart," he says. "Often, we don't need to guide them back to their stables." Recruited at the age of six, the donkeys are retired with great fanfare when they reach the age of 14 or 15. There is an official ceremony, with a plate of watermelon offered to the pension-age donkey instead of a cake, which is seen as too unhealthy. They spend their golden years in a local animal shelter, enjoying a well-deserved rest. According to the mayor, Mardin has served as a model for European cities, particularly those in France and Italy, which have used donkeys for municipal services in areas difficult to reach by car. "Plus it's ecological," Tutasi says. "The donkeys don't pollute." — AFP



Municipal employees prepare a donkey employed to collect garbage in the old city of Mardin.



A municipal employee guiding a mule collects garbage bags in a stairway in Mardin.



A municipal employee guiding a donkey collects garbage.



An employee takes care of mules employed for garbage collection.



A municipal employee guiding a mule collects garbage bags in a stairway in Mardin.

Sting: 'We're in a very dangerous political climate'

British singer Sting is back at the age of 70 with a hopeful new album, though he admits he sees a lot to worry him in the world right now. "I think we're in a very dangerous political climate at the moment where the working class have felt abandoned by what they call the elite," he told AFP on a recent trip to Paris. "It has left them vulnerable to demagogues, to right-wing nonsense, fakes, snake oil salesmen." For the famously mild-mannered rock star, real name Gordon Sumner, the attacks on his liberal way of life have been piling up in recent years—especially in Britain.

"For me, Brexit is a personal tragedy. I'm sad for my country. We knew it was going to be a disaster and we have to accept this, but I'm not happy," he said. "Young British people have been robbed of the opportunity to experience Europe. It's insane." He is also baffled by vaccine skepticism—putting him at odds with some other veteran rockers like Van Morrison and Eric Clapton who have opposed vaccine mandates at their concerts. Sting puts it politely: "I don't really understand the, uh, the science of the objection."

"I had no hesitation in taking the vaccine. I'm old enough to remember kids in my street with polio who were crippled, and that disease was eradicated overnight with the vaccine," he continued. "I would like people to come to my shows to be vaccinated. I'm not going to enforce it, but that's my desire."



In this file photo British singer Sting performs during the Nobel Peace Prize concert in Oslo.—AFP

The other side

His new album "The Bridge" is out Friday and is about finding a way forward from this quagmire. "All these people I'm writing about are in transition between relationships, between life and death, between being sick, being healthy. "We're all looking for this bridge to somewhere different, somewhere more comfortable. How do we get to the other side? I don't know. I don't think anyone knows, but we're looking for it." With 15 solo albums and 17 Grammy Awards to his name—as well as a guaranteed place in the rock pantheon as founder of 1980s legends The Police—Sting has little left to prove. But past traumas still reverberate.

New song "Loving You" appears to recall his mother's infidelity that helped estrange him from his parents (he admitted skipping both their funerals in his autobiography "Broken Music"). That did not stop him following a similar path—he had a decade-long affair with his current wife before finally getting a divorce from his first in 1992. It all feeds his songwriting.

"I always avoid writing love songs that say, 'I love you and you love me'. It's a closed circle. Whereas 'I love you, but you love somebody else'—that's an interesting scenario for a writer," he said. "As a man of my age, I've experienced the entire spectrum of emotions from the greatest joy to the greatest misery. So when I write about love, I feel I can be authentic." Sting has six children from his two marriages and most are following in his artistic footsteps. Two are actors, two are musicians and one is a filmmaker.

The youngest, however, wants to be a cop—and that has nothing to do with his father's early band. "He says 'You're all creative—I want to do something useful!'" Sting said with a smile.

Warm rapport

"The Bridge" was recorded during Europe's lockdowns, with musicians scattered around different locations and Sting in his English mansion. He didn't find that too unusual. "It's not such a novelty to record remotely. Often the drummer can be in Los Angeles, I could be here in Paris, somebody else in Italy... and the technology has existed to do this remotely for many years. "The secret is to make that situation intimate, to have a warm rapport that you can hear." Now he's back on the road, trying to make up all the dates that were cancelled by the pandemic. "I have to fulfill all my commitments. That may take me 18 months," he said. "But that's my life. I've been on the road since 1976!" — AFP

Sports

Ex-cricketer Rafiq tells UK MPs: 'I lost career to racism'

Racism in English cricket is institutional, Rafiq says

LONDON: Former Yorkshire cricketer Azeem Rafiq fought back tears as he told British lawmakers yesterday he had "lost my career to racism", detailing widespread discrimination within the English game in an emotional testimony.

An independent report found the Pakistan-born player was a victim of "racial harassment and bullying" while playing for the county club, with Rafiq himself revealing he had been driven to thoughts of suicide. Although Yorkshire apologized, they said they would take no disciplinary action against any staff — a decision the former player told MPs on the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport committee left him "staggered".

"I felt, isolated, humiliated at times," Rafiq told the hearing in London. "Pretty early on, me and other people from an Asian background... there were comments such as 'you'll sit over there near the toilets', 'elephant-washers'. The word 'Paki' was used constantly. And there just seemed to be an acceptance in the institution from the leaders and no one ever stamped it out."

Rafiq, who is a Muslim, also recounted a frightening experience of being forced to drink alcohol at the age of 15 as a club player in Yorkshire. "I got pinned down at my local cricket club and had red wine poured down my throat, literally down my throat," he said.

Rafiq, whose wife gave birth to a stillborn child in 2018, added that his two young children "have not

had a dad really because all I've been worried about is Yorkshire going after me... I just hope that today provides some kind of closure."

His voice breaking again towards the end of his testimony, the 30-year-old Rafiq, who had two spells at the club, said: "Do I believe I lost my career to racism? Yes, I do."

“ I felt, isolated, humiliated at times ”

'Box-ticking'

And Rafiq warned that racial prejudice within English cricket was not solely an issue at Yorkshire, saying it was replicated "up and down the country". "I've had messages from people who have played at Leicestershire, a guy who played at Middlesex, messages from people who played at Nottinghamshire," he said. He labelled diversity initiatives by the England and Wales Cricket Board as

examples of "box-ticking" and "tokenism".

The fallout for Yorkshire — one of England's most successful and historic clubs — over the scandal has been swift and devastating. Sponsors have pulled out and the club has been suspended from hosting lucrative international matches. Yorkshire chairman Roger Hutton and chief executive Mark Arthur both resigned, with head coach Andrew Gale suspended for using a racial slur. Subsequent allegations of racism have been made by other players, setting in motion additional investigations at Yorkshire and other clubs as the scandal spreads across English cricket.

On Monday, current England spinner Adil Rashid joined ex-Pakistan Test player Rana Naved-ul-Hasan in alleging that former England Test captain Michael Vaughan had said in front of a group of Yorkshire players of Asian ethnicity in 2009: "Too many of you lot, we need to do something about it."

Vaughan has "categorically" denied making the comment. Asked about Vaughan, Rafiq said: "Michael might not remember it... three of us, Adil, myself and Rana remember it. "He clearly had a snippet of my statement. He used his platform at the Daily Telegraph to tell everyone he hadn't said these things. To go on and put a snippet of my statement out and talk about other things, I thought was completely wrong."

New Yorkshire chairman Kamlesh Patel told the committee he was prepared to take "whatever



LONDON: A video grab from footage broadcast by the UK Parliament's Parliamentary Recording Unit (PRU) shows former Yorkshire cricketer Azeem Rafiq fighting back tears while testifying in front of a Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Committee in London yesterday as MPs probe racial harassment at the club. — AFP

decisions I need to take". "This is an organization that's been hammered left, right and center, maybe for the right reasons," he said. "Changes are going to have to be made and it's not going to be overnight, but we have got to move on it, really quickly and really hard." —AFP

'Players are not machines,' says Indian T20 captain Sharma

NEW DELHI: Indian T20 skipper Rohit Sharma said yesterday his players were "not machines" and needed rest, ahead of an imminent encounter with New Zealand on home turf just days after the World Cup.

New Zealand's tour begins with the first of three Twenty20 internationals today, only three days after the Kiwis lost in the Dubai tournament's final. The matches are spread across three Indian cities and wrap up just four days before Tests in Kanpur (Nov 25-29) and Mumbai (Dec 3-7).

"Workload management is very important to us. Players are not machines. Taking time off is necessary," Sharma said at a virtual press conference, with India's new coach Rahul Dravid at his side. "Some players who have been playing for long need to be rested to remain fresh. We want all our boys to be mentally fresh for the challenges ahead," he added. Indian Test captain Virat Kohli has opted out of the T20 series and will also miss the first Test. New Zealand captain Kane Williamson is also unavailable for the short-format matches but will return for the Kanpur encounter.

Former batting hero Dravid said cricketers needed to follow the example of footballers when it came to managing their workload. "Even in



JAIPUR: India's KL Rahul (right) talks with coach Rahul Dravid at the Sawai Mansingh stadium in Jaipur yesterday during a practice session ahead of today's first Twenty20 cricket match against New Zealand. —AFP

football, the big players don't play all the matches. A player's mental and physical well-being (is) very important," he said.

Earlier in the day, Kiwi paceman Tim Southee admitted the tight scheduling and the team's long spells in Covid bubbles were weighing on his side. "It's obviously a pretty busy schedule... even before leading into the T20 World Cup, we had a series in Bangladesh and Pakistan," said Southee, who will lead his squad in Williamson's absence. He added that the Kiwis "haven't really had a chance to stop and think" since Sunday's finals loss in Dubai. — AFP

News in brief

Kuwait, Lithuania tied

KUWAIT: Kuwait football team tied 1-1 with Lithuania in a friendly Monday. The match took place in Vilnius LFF stadions and saw the 'Blue' jerseys snatching a lead on the 43rd minute via Fawaz Aayedh before Lithuania evened the score in the 54th minute. The draw is the second for Kuwait throughout its 10 encounters since January. Kuwait recorded a single win during that span, while the team suffered a heavy 7-0 loss against the Czech Republic last week.

Timberwolves fined

NEW YORK: The Minnesota Timberwolves have been fined \$250,000 by the NBA after holding a pre-season training camp in Miami, the league said Monday. The Timberwolves visited Miami in September for events which included a party at new minority owner Alex Rodriguez's mansion. But the trip to Florida came with a hefty price tag, with the team in violation of NBA rules which prohibit clubs staging offseason practices and workouts outside a team's home market. US media reports have said the trip was paid for by former major league baseball star Rodriguez and business partner Marc Lore. Rodriguez and Lore joined the Timberwolves ownership group earlier this year in a deal worth \$1.5 billion. The duo are expected to take over full control of the team from long-time owner Glen Taylor in 2023. The Timberwolves have made a slow start to the season, with four wins and eight defeats leaving them 12th in the Western Conference standings.

Jordan demands investigation

AMMAN: Jordan has called on the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to launch an investigation to determine the sex of a goalkeeper on the Iranian women's football team, with Tehran denying foul play. Iran beat Jordan 4-2 on penalties after a goalless draw on September 25 to qualify for the 2022 Women's Asian Cup for the first time in its history. The president of the Jordan Football Association, Prince Ali Bin Al-Hussein, tweeted on Sunday a letter "requesting a gender verification check" on the Iranian player in question, suggesting that the keeper was a man posing as a woman. But Iran team's selector, Maryam Irandoost, dismissed the allegation. "The medical staff have carefully examined each player on the national team in terms of hormones to avoid any problems in this regard, and so I tell all fans not to worry," Irandoost told sports news site Varzesh3 on Sunday. Iranian goalkeeper Zohreh Koudaei blocked two goal attempts by the Jordanian team, resulting in Iran's qualification.



Benjamin Mendy

Mendy charged with two more counts of rape

LONDON: Manchester City and French international defender Benjamin Mendy has been charged with two additional counts of rape, prosecutors said yesterday. He now faces six counts of rape and one of sexual assault relating to four complainants aged over 16, with all the alleged offences relating to the period between October 2020 and August this year.

A second man, Louis Saha Maturie, has been charged with two more counts of rape and one of sexual assault, the Crown Prosecution Service said in a statement. Mendy, 27, from Prestbury, and Maturie, 40, from Eccles, both in northwest England, are due to appear before magistrates in Stockport, near Manchester, on Wednesday.

Court proceedings in Britain are subject to strict reporting restrictions before any trial, to avoid the risk of prejudicing a jury in their deliberations. Both men previously appeared at Chester Crown Court on September 10, and were told they would stand trial on January 24 next year. The pair were remanded in custody.

Mendy, a £52 million (\$70 million) signing from Monaco in 2017, has played 75 times for City, winning three Premier League titles, but his playing time has been limited by injuries and a loss of form. He has just under two years left to run on a six-year contract. The last of his 10 caps for France came in November 2019. The left-back, who won the World Cup in 2018, has been suspended by the Premier League champions pending the outcome of the criminal proceedings. — AFP



ITEN: Ibrahim Rotich (second right), husband of Kenyan distance runner Agnes Tirop who was found dead with stab wounds, arrives to a police station from Iten Law Courts after being arrested in Mombasa and transferred in Iten, Kenya, on October 18, 2021. — AFP

Husband of slain Kenyan Olympian charged with murder

NAIROBI: The husband of Kenyan distance running star Agnes Tirop was yesterday charged with her murder, a day after he was found fit to stand trial. Ibrahim Rotich, who is commonly known as Emmanuel, denied the charges when he appeared before the high court in the Rift Valley town of Eldoret.

Tirop's body was found with stab wounds at her home in the nearby town of Iten, a high-altitude training hub in western Kenya for top runners, on October 13. According to the charge sheet seen by AFP, Rotich is alleged to have killed the 25-year-old the day before her body was found in her bedroom.

The court had last week ordered Rotich to undergo a mental health test before entering a plea. Rotich, said by police to be aged about 41, took

officers on a dramatic late-night chase before his arrest on October 14 in the coastal city of Mombasa.

Tirop's death threw a spotlight on the pressures faced by the country's female athletes who pay a huge — and often tragic — price for their spectacular success in a male-dominated society. Devoted to sports from an early age, many young sports-women lack the necessary education to manage their finances, leaving them particularly vulnerable to exploitation at the hands of coaches, agents and even their loved ones.

Born to a peasant farming family, Tirop launched her athletics career less than a decade ago but swiftly ran up a host of second-place finishes in national and international cross-country races. She went on to become one of Kenya's rising stars — as the 2015 world cross-country champion, a two-time world medalist over 10,000 metres, and fourth over 5000m at the Tokyo Olympics this year. Tirop's shock murder came barely a month after she broke the world women-only record in the 10km in September. The court will rule on December 1 on an application to release Rotich on bail. —AFP

Sports



BANGKOK: This photo taken on November 13, 2021 shows Iranian Muay Thai boxer Keivan Soleimani (left) competing with Chinese opponent Yan Chaohong at Lumpinee Stadium in Bangkok. — AFP



This photo taken on November 13, 2021 shows Muay Thai boxer Kullanat Omok (left), fight name Nongnuk Rongriankilakorat, competing with Australian opponent Celest Hansen at Lumpinee Stadium in Bangkok.

Revolution at the home of Thai boxing after COVID

Lumpinee Stadium welcomes fans in January, with precautions

BANGKOK: Out with the gamblers and harsh neon lights, in with female fighters and fancy lasers — after a 20-month coronavirus break, Thai kickboxing's spiritual home is embarking on a revolution. On fight days before the pandemic, thousands of passionate fans would pack Bangkok's Lumpinee Stadium — the symbolic heart of the ancient, brutal art of Muay Thai. It was not just admiration for the fighters' skill that drew the crowds: on big days more than a million dollars could change hands in bets, in a country where gambling is largely illegal.

Then in March 2020 everything came to a halt as Thailand's first COVID-19 outbreak was traced back to the stadium, which was immediately closed. But rather than throw in the towel, the stadium owners — the Royal Thai Army — say they have bounced back off the canvas to turn the enforced break into an opportunity. Major General Ronnawut Ruangsawat, deputy chief of the stadium, said that the grand old arena was "taking advantage of the pandemic to revolutionize itself". "The arena has been completely renovated, betting is now prohibited and women are allowed to fight," he said.

'Clean up the sport'

Gone are the harsh neon lights that once bathed the ring in an unforgiving white glare, and on Saturday

fighter Sithichoke Kaewsanga stepped into the ring under a shower of ultra-modern red and silver lasers.

Behind him, giant state-of-the-art screens previewed the bout with pictures of the 21-year-old and details of his record. The stands were empty of fans and much had changed, but the hooks, jabs and knee strikes were the same, as was the backdrop of traditional Thai music played by a live band.



Women fighters compete for first time

Lumpinee will welcome fans back in January, albeit with a greatly reduced capacity and strict virus-prevention rules such as testing and social distancing. And betting will be off the cards because the army decided it "led to too much cheating with players sometimes being paid to lose the fight", Ronnawut said. "We want to clean up the sport and we hope that other venues in Thailand will follow."

But industry professionals are skeptical the army's good intentions will succeed. "They will continue to bet online — gambling is part of the Muay Thai DNA," Jade Sirisompan of the World Muay Thai Organization, one of the main international federations, warned. "Many gamblers, among them many gym owners, make a living from it and can pocket thousands of dollars on a good day. They are not going to give it up."

Taboo-smashing bout

No less revolutionary is the decision to allow female fighters to take part in bouts at Lumpinee's main arena. For years, women — including fans — were banned from even touching the ring because of a superstition that their menstruating bodies might break the magic protecting it. Other Muay Thai venues have accepted female fighters for some time, but Lumpinee — the sport's equivalent of Lord's in cricket or football's Wembley — held out. After a low-profile bout in a backroom in September, Saturday saw two women compete in the main ring for the first time. After beating Australia's Celest Muriel Hansen, 21-year-old Thai fighter Kullanat Omok said: "We are so proud to have been the first women to fight here. We've been fighting for more equality for years."

Wiping blood from her head, the 27-year-old Hansen added: "We have come such a very long way.

This was so much more than just a fight." For Kullanat, getting back in the ring to earn money after the long break was just as important. "I hadn't fought in almost a year. I used to earn a hundred dollars a match, then nothing for months to support my family," Kullanat said.

'Lost its soul'

Deprived of bouts because of the pandemic, thousands of professional boxers — men and the much smaller number of women fighters — returned to their villages. After so long away from the gruelling daily training regime the sport demands, many will never make it back to the same level and the government has offered no financial support.

Many fighters found themselves with no choice but to take side jobs. Sithichoke became a rider for a delivery service. His five-round victory in Saturday's bout earned him less than \$1,000. Before the pandemic he could earn triple that. "It was really strange to fight in an empty arena. It's not easy without the energy of the crowd," he said. And perhaps inevitably for a venue seen as a bastion of tradition, the changes have not gone down well with everyone. "We don't recognize anything. The Muay Thai temple has become a big showroom," lamented Jade Sirisompan after watching a broadcast of the matches. — AFP

DeRozan runs riot as Bulls torment Lakers

LOS ANGELES: DeMar DeRozan erupted for 38 points as the Chicago Bulls scored an emphatic road victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Monday. DeRozan was the tormentor-in-chief of a Lakers team who saw Anthony Davis ejected for only the second time in his career as the 2020 NBA champions slumped to a 121-103 loss. Barring two fleeting moments early in the first quarter, the Bulls led throughout, at one stage surging into a 28-point lead at the Staples Center. DeRozan found support from former Lakers player Lonzo Ball, who weighed in with 27 points while Zach Lavine added 26 points.

Talen Horton-Tucker led the Lakers scoring with 28 points while Russell Westbrook had 25 points. Davis finished with 20 points before being tossed late in the third quarter after remonstrating angrily with officials for restarting the game as he attempted to put a shoe on. The Chicago win leaves the Bulls in second place in the Eastern Conference standings with a 10-4 record. The loss dropped the Lakers to 8-7, just outside the playoff places in the Western Conference.

In Dallas, Kristaps Porzingis and Luka Doncic combined for 52 points as the Mavericks overturned a 13-

point third quarter deficit to defeat the Denver Nuggets 111-101 at the American Airlines Center. Porzingis finished with 29 points and Doncic added 23 points while laying on 11 assists in a see-saw contest which saw the lead change hands no fewer than 13 times. Reigning NBA MVP Nikola Jokic led the Denver scorers with 35 points, with Monte Morris adding 17. After trailing for all of the third quarter, the Mavs came roaring back in the fourth period, outscoring Denver 32-18 to close out the win.

There was a scare for the Mavs in the final second however as Slovenian star Doncic limped off injured in the final minute after appearing to twist his left ankle. Porzingis later told reporters Doncic appeared to be in good spirits in the locker room. "He's always just, 'Hey, I'll be good. I'll be good.' Hopefully he is good," Porzingis said. "I don't think we know yet what it is, but we're hoping he's healthy and he'll be back soon in a little bit of time." In Minneapolis, the Phoenix Suns stretched their winning streak to nine games with a 99-96 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves. A late burst by Phoenix veteran Chris Paul helped the Suns over the line while Devin Booker led the scoring with 29 points. Paul finished with 21 points — 19 of them coming in the fourth quarter — while Deandre Ayton added 22.

Karl Anthony-Towns led Minnesota's scorers with 35 points and 13 rebounds. The Timberwolves might have snatched victory in the final few seconds, but D'Angelo Russell's three-point attempt bounced off the backboard and the Suns held on. Suns head coach Monty Williams believes the win is yet more evidence that his team — who reached last season's NBA Finals — is rapidly maturing as a unit.



LOS ANGELES: DeMar DeRozan #11 of the Chicago Bulls shoots the ball during the game against the Los Angeles Lakers on Monday at STAPLES Center in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

"When I first came, we were the youngest team in the league and a lot of those close games didn't always go our way because of inexperience or calls or whatever," Williams said. "When you have a young team they really don't know what to stay. But when you've got a veteran squad, there's a communication back and forth with the staff that's pretty substantial."

In Washington meanwhile, the Wizards overturned a 19-point deficit before scoring a 105-100 win against the New Orleans Pelicans. The Wizards' fifth straight win saw them improve to 10-3 to lead the Eastern Conference standings. Spencer Dinwiddie had 27 points with nine assists while Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 18 points. — AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Kaifan	24849807
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Shamiya	24848913
Maternity Hospital	24843100	Shuwaikh	24814507
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700	Abdullah Salem	22549134
Chest Hospital	24849400	Nuzha	22526804
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010	Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Adan Hospital	23940620	Qadsiya	22515088
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300		Dasmah
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000		22532265
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9		Bneid Al-Gar
			22531908
			Shaab
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Swiss pip Italy for World Cup ticket as Kane fires England to Qatar



SERRAVALLE: England's forward Harry Kane controls the ball during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 qualification Group I football match between San Marino and England on Monday at Olympic stadium in Serravalle, San Marino. — AFP

PARIS: European champions Italy missed out on automatic qualification for next year's World Cup after being held to a goalless draw by Northern Ireland in Belfast on Monday, ceding top spot in Group C to Switzerland who beat Bulgaria 4-0.

The Italians needed to match Switzerland's result to qualify directly but while Roberto Mancini's side could only stutter to a stalemate, the Swiss went on the rampage in Lucerne to book their ticket for Qatar. There they will find England, the team the Italians beat in the Euro 2020 final in July, who clinched their qualification with a rampant Harry Kane bagging four goals in 15 minutes in a 10-0 win in San Marino.

"The qualification was earned away in Budapest, in Warsaw, in Albania and I've got to credit all of our players and staff on a really good year," said England manager Gareth Southgate. "The mentality, even in a game like tonight, we can't do anything about the level of the opposition but the way we played was terrific." Germany, Denmark, France, Belgium, Croatia, Spain and Serbia have also qualified directly from Europe.

Italy famously failed in 2018 to qualify for the World Cup after a miserable aggregate defeat to Sweden. "Right now it is what it is, we struggle to score goals, we always have control of the play... It's a shame because the group should have been finished before this match," Mancini told RAI. "I have faith, let's see in March, but we might even win it."

The Italians rarely troubled the home side, only coming to life when news trickled through of Switzer-



BELFAST: Italy's midfielder Jorginho (left) vies with Northern Ireland's midfielder Gavin Whyte during the FIFA World Cup 2022 round one Group C qualification football match between Northern Ireland and Italy at Windsor Park in Belfast, Northern Ireland on Monday. — AFP

land's goal-scoring in Lucerne. Noah Okafor's strike put the Swiss ahead three minutes into the second half and after Xherdan Shaqiri hit the post, Ruben Vargas doubled the score.

The Swiss then had two goals ruled out for offside

but when Cedric Itten headed in for 3-0 after 72 minutes, it meant Italy needed to win by two in Belfast. As the Italians grew more frantic and almost gave away a goal to Conor Washington, who had a shot scrambled off the line, the Swiss nailed the outcome with Remo Freuler making it 4-0 in added time.

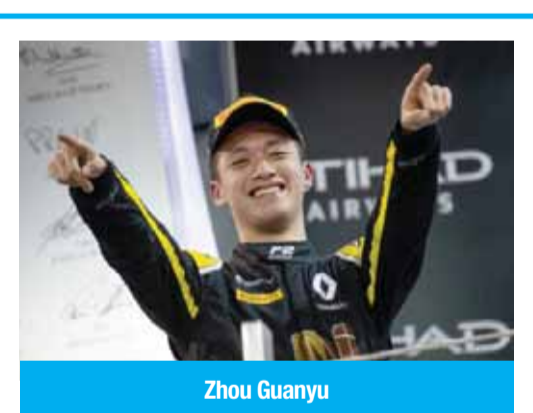
Hurry-Kane hits San Marino

England needed just a point from their trip to San Marino, the lowest ranked of FIFA's 210 competing nations. San Marino had lost 36 of their 37 previous home World Cup qualifiers, losing the last 35 in a row by an aggregate score of 146-7. The one non-defeat came in a 0-0 draw with Turkey in 1993.

This time they were unfortunate to come up against a hungry Kane who scored four goals in the space of 15 minutes in the first half. The outcome was never in doubt once Harry Maguire headed in the opener after five minutes.

A Filippo Fabbri own goal made matters worse but that set the stage for Kane. His first came from the penalty spot in the 27th minute and he netted again with a scuffed effort five minutes later. His second penalty in the 39th minute completed his fourth international hat-trick and his second in four days, having also put three past Albania on Friday.

Two minutes later he produced the best of the lot with some neat control inside the box to bag his fourth which took him to 48 goals for England, level with Gary Lineker and behind only Bobby Charlton (49) and Wayne Rooney (53). — AFP



Zhou Guanyu

Alfa Romeo sign 'trailblazer' Zhou, China's first F1 driver

PARIS: Guanyu Zhou will become China's first ever Formula One driver after Alfa Romeo announced yesterday the 22-year-old would drive for the team next season. Zhou has been making waves in Formula Two and replaces Antonio Giovinazzi alongside Valtteri Bottas, who is moving from Mercedes to replace the retiring Kimi Raikkonen.

"To be the first ever Chinese driver in Formula 1 is a breakthrough for Chinese motorsport history," said Zhou. "I know a lot of hopes will be resting on me and, as ever, I will take this as motivation to become better and achieve more."

Alfa Romeo described their new signing as "a trailblazer who will write a pivotal page of his country's motorsport history". Zhou has already had a taste of F1 as a test driver for Alpine and has long been mentioned as making the step up from F2.

"I dreamt from a young age of climbing as high as I can in a sport that I am passionate about and now the dream has come true," Alfa Romeo quoted Zhou, who was educated in Britain, as saying. "It is a privilege for me to start my Formula 1 racing career with an iconic team, a team that has introduced so much young talent into Formula 1 in the past. Now the dream is reality."

Zhou has enjoyed a breakthrough year in F2, and is lying second and challenging for the title with races in Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi to come. Alfa Romeo team principal Frederic Vasseur said he believed Zhou would establish "a very successful partnership with Valtteri". As well as the arrival of "a very talented driver" Vasseur welcomed "all the new Chinese fans who will join the team". — AFP

49ers pound hapless Rams in NFL upset

SAN FRANCISCO: Wide receiver Deebo Samuel scored two touchdowns as the San Francisco 49ers grabbed their first home victory in more than a year with a 31-10 upset of the Los Angeles Rams on Monday.

Samuel rushed for an eight-yard touchdown to put the 49ers 21-7 ahead shortly before half-time and then put the seal on San Francisco's victory with a 40-yard touchdown reception late in the fourth quarter. It was the 49ers' first win at home in 13 months, a winless streak at Levi's Stadium that stretched back to October last year.

The Rams headed into Monday's game with hopes of closing the gap on NFC West leaders Arizona after the Cardinals' shock loss to Carolina on Sunday.



SANTA CLARA: Deebo Samuel #19 of the San Francisco 49ers runs for a touchdown in the second half in the game against the Los Angeles Rams at Levi's Stadium on Monday in Santa Clara, California. — AFP

But the Rams' vaunted offense, which handed a debut to new receiver Odell Beckham Jr, was roughed up by a rampant 49ers defense, with defensive end Nick Bosa superb throughout. Bosa sacked Rams quarterback

Matthew Stafford once and finished with two more hits as the Los Angeles offense never got going. The Rams receiving corps also had a poor night, with Cooper Kupp and Tyler Higbee both dropping straightforward catches at key moments.

San Francisco quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo finished with 182 passing yards including two touchdowns with no interceptions. Running back Elijah Mitchell had 91 yards from 27 carries while Samuel had 36 rushing yards and 97 receiving yards. Rams quarterback Stafford meanwhile had 243 yards with one touchdown and two interceptions on a torrid night for the Los Angeles offense. Newly acquired receiver Beckham had an overwhelming debut with just 18 yards from two receptions.

San Francisco led from start to finish, taking control with touchdowns from George Kittle and a 27-yard interception return by Jimmie Ward to make it 14-0 at the end of the first quarter. The Rams responded with a Higbee touchdown, but Samuel's first touchdown of the night left San Francisco 21-7 up at half-time. — AFP