

**2** Oil prices drop sharply due to Omicron, supply spike fears



**12** Monkey business at Thai town fruit festival



**15** Lewandowski tipped for Ballon d'Or



# Cabinet says situation calls for third dose after Omicron

## Top court confirms jail terms for Bangladeshi MP, senior officials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet meeting yesterday. —KUNA

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** The Council of Ministers yesterday called on the public to take the third booster dose to boost immunity against the deadly COVID-19 virus and its latest Omicron variant. The Cabinet, holding an extraordinary meeting, was briefed on the latest developments by Health Minister Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah who assured the government that the health situation in the country was very assuring and that there are no COVID-19 patients in the intensive care units. The minister stressed the need to get the third booster dose to strengthen protection against the COVID-19 variants.

A new COVID-19 variant named Omicron has caused worldwide concern with a large number of countries suspending commercial flights with South Africa, where the variant was detected, and several other African nations.

At an extraordinary meeting late on Saturday, the Cabinet imposed a ban on commercial flights from nine African nations over Omicron but allowed cargo. The indefinite ban became effective yesterday.

The countries are South Africa, where the new variant originated, in addition to Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Eswatini, Zambia and Malawi.

The Cabinet also decided to ban entry of foreigners from those African countries unless they have spent at least 14 days in a third country. Kuwaiti citizens arriving from those nations must undergo institutional quarantine for seven days with a PCR test done on the day of arrival and a second on the sixth day.

The Council of Ministers also called on citizens to avoid travel out of Kuwait now unless it is extremely necessary, especially to countries that have reported cases of Omicron. The Cabinet expressed satisfaction over the stability of the health situation in the country but urged citizens and residents to continue to implement health conditions especially wearing face masks.

Meanwhile, the court of cassation yesterday upheld jail sentences and hefty fines imposed on a Bangladeshi MP, a number of former senior officials and a former lawmaker after convicting them of money-laundering, bribery, and trafficking in persons.

Continued on Page 2

### News in brief

#### Iran nuke talks to restart today

**VIENNA:** The long-awaited resumption of international talks in Vienna to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal will take place today afternoon, a diplomatic source said. The talks between the remaining partners to the deal-Iran, China, Russia, Germany, France and the UK-will restart at around 2 pm local time (1300 GMT), a European diplomat said yesterday. The US will also send a delegation headed by Washington's Special Envoy for Iran, Rob Malley, which will participate in the talks indirectly. —AFP

#### UK warns of 'Arctic shot'

**LONDON:** Britain braced for an Arctic freeze yesterday in the aftermath of a powerful storm that left three people dead and thousands in Scotland facing days without power. "Storm Arwen" brought wind gusts of almost 100 miles (160 kilometers) per hour late Friday, before weakening and drifting towards continental Europe. —AFP

#### Belgium arrests 6 Britons

**BRUSSELS:** Belgium authorities said yesterday that six British men have been arrested as part of an international ring that used Airbnb properties to store smuggled cocaine. The six suspects, all from London and aged between 25 and 43, were apprehended this week and remain in custody while an investigation is carried out, the national prosecutor's service said in a statement.

#### Malawi blasts 'Afrophobic' bans

**JOHANNESBURG:** Malawi's President Lazarus Chakwera yesterday accused Western countries of "Afrophobia" for shutting their borders to his and other neighboring nations after South Africa flagged a new coronavirus variant last week. Dozens of countries have barred flights from southern Africa in a bid to keep the variant, named Omicron, off their shores. Chakwera is currently chairing the 16-nation Southern African Development Community (SADC) which has seen most of its members blacklisted, sparking outrage. —AFP

## New variant shuts borders across the globe

**THE HAGUE:** A new, heavily mutated COVID-19 variant spread across the globe yesterday, shutting borders, renewing curbs, and sparking fears for the fight against the nearly two-year-old coronavirus pandemic. Dubbed Omicron, the strain has cast doubt on global efforts to battle the pandemic because of fears that it is highly infectious, forcing countries to reimpose measures many had hoped were a thing of the past.

Dutch health authorities said they

had identified at least 13 cases of Omicron among 61 quarantined passengers who tested positive for coronavirus after arriving from South Africa. "The investigation has not yet been completed. The new variant may be found in more test samples," the National Institute for Public Health warned.

Britain's government yesterday defended the pace and scale of its response to the new Omicron strain of COVID-19 as officials reported a third case of the emerging variant, and warned of more to come. Health Secretary Sajid Javid said mandatory mask-wearing would return to shops and public transport in England tomorrow, but told families to plan for Christmas "as normal", despite new rules to combat Omicron.

Continued on Page 2

## US Navy rescues Iranian seamen adrift in Gulf

**MANAMA:** The US Navy has rescued two Iranian seamen who had been adrift for eight days on a fishing boat in Gulf waters, a statement said yesterday. The men were in "good health and spirits" despite their ordeal, the navy said.

"A US Navy vessel rescued two Iranian mariners (on Saturday) from a fishing vessel after

it was adrift for eight days in the Gulf of Oman," the US Naval Forces Central Command, or NAVCENT, said. Navy cargo ship Charles Drew arrived at the scene with food, water and medical care six hours after a distress call from the mariners, the statement said.

The two men were transported to an Omani coastguard vessel near the capital Muscat. "The mariners were in good health and spirits at the time of the transfer," it added. "We appreciate the government of Oman for its assistance and support in helping us return the mariners home," NAVCENT commander Vice Admiral Brad Cooper said in the statement.

Continued on Page 2

## Britain snubbed as France hosts Channel talks

**CALAIS, France:** France sought help from its European neighbors yesterday to crack down on Channel people-smuggling gangs, with Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin saying he could "not accept" any more deaths after an unprecedented accident claimed 27 lives.

Ministers responsible for immigration from France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium convened in the northern French port of Calais yesterday afternoon, but without Britain which was

excluded after a row last week.

"The biggest point for this meeting is the fight against people-smugglers who take advantage of our borders and countries," Darmanin said at the start of the event, adding that "migratory pressures continue and are constantly increasing".

"These deaths are too many," he said of the accident which saw 27 people drown on Wednesday after their inflatable dinghy began losing air crossing the English Channel in wintry temperatures. "We cannot accept that any more people die." The main focus was to have been scheduled talks between Darmanin and British counterpart Priti Patel after both countries vowed to cooperate to tackle a surge in crossings this year which has seen around 26,000 people set off from France to England.

Continued on Page 2



LONDON: Passengers, some wearing face coverings to combat the spread of COVID-19, travel on the London underground in central London yesterday. — AFP

## Three dead in Sulaibiya house fire



KUWAIT: A photo issued by the KFSF shows a fire tender outside a house in Sulaibiya where three people were killed in a blaze yesterday.

**KUWAIT:** Three people were killed and one injured in a house fire in Sulaibiya yesterday. The victims, two women and two children - all bedoon - were unconscious when firefighters entered the house and evacuated them, Kuwait Fire Force said in a statement.

When emergency medical technicians examined them, they discovered that the two women and one of the children had already succumbed to their burn injuries, it explained. The two women were in their 70s and 40s respectively, KFF noted without revealing the age of the children. An investigation has been ordered to determine the cause of the fire.

## Local

# Oil prices decline sharply due to Omicron, supply increase fears

## Investors anticipate OPEC+ meeting Thursday to determine policies

**KUWAIT:** The prices of oil last Friday saw their sharpest decline in two months, the biggest since April 2020, due to the announcement of the new coronavirus variant Omicron and fears of supply increase. The prices also fell as fears over travel restrictions seemed to be looming on the horizon, which might cause a decline in economic growth as well as demand for energy. The price of Kuwaiti oil saw a drop by \$4.45 to \$77.80 per barrel last Friday, the same case with the Brent crude and the West Texas Intermediate, which went down respectively by \$9.50 and \$10.24 to settle on \$72.72 and \$68.15 per barrels. The fears of an increase of oil supplies in the first quarter of 2022 also might affect the prices especially with the US announcement concerning strategic reserve withdraws in coordination with major oil consuming countries.

In this regard, several oil experts said that investors would keep a close eye on the upcoming meeting for the OPEC+ group next Thursday to determine oil policies in January. Oil analyst Ahmad Karam indicated that oil prices reached over \$80 pb in recently helped by the return to normalcy in Kuwait and elsewhere.

With the announcement of Omicron, pushing price down by \$10 per barrel, the world went into panic especially with the World Health Organization (WHO) deeming this variant as the "most contagious". He



**Biggest drop since April 2020**

added that the announcement by US President Joe Biden concerning the usage of 50 million barrels from the US strategic reserve had also contributed to the sharp decline. However, Karam predicted that the decline would be short-lived due to the vast develop-

ment in the treatment of COVID-19 via vaccines. In addition, the fact that countries were taking from their reserves would have to compensate with supplies of oil, which would lead an increase in prices.

Meanwhile, oil refining and marketing expert Abdulhameed Al-Awadhi said that there were geopolitical reasons for the decline other than the appearance of Omicron and fears of supply increase. Important happenings like the Iranian nuclear file, the elections in Libya and other matters have an impact on prices, he affirmed. He viewed the American decision to withdraw from its strategic reserve as a matter of low impact, indicating that the amount could be reproduced in three days by American refineries, which has a capacity of 18 million barrels a day. The whole process of withdrawing from the strategic reserve and pumping that into the oil market will take weeks, Awadhi said, adding that the current maximum US export capacity on a global scale was only at four million barrels per day. He predicted that OPEC+ would keep production levels as is to keep global market balance.



Oil expert and advisor Abdulsamee Bahbahani said in the meantime that Biden's announcement aimed at reducing oil prices globally via increase in production, which in turn would stifle the increase of fuel prices in the US. He added that the withdrawal from strategic reserves would not be of benefit unless it was met with an increase in daily production on a world-scale. — KUNA



**DUBAI:** Crown Prince of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan visits Kuwait's pavilion. — KUNA photos



## UAE Crown Prince visits Kuwait, Qatar pavilions

**DUBAI:** Crown Prince of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan visited yesterday the Kuwaiti and Qatari pavilions participating in Expo 2020 Dubai. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed viewed contents of the two

pavilions, including exhibits and innovative projects, while exchanging conversations with the officials of the two sections on solutions and initiatives they presented in the areas of sustainability, said the Emirates News Agency (WAM). Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed was happy to visit the pavilions of Kuwait and Qatar and got to know more about their important initiatives in future projects and their historic, cultural and social heritage, WAM added. The two pavilions were designed in a way that embodies the two countries' vision and their orientation towards the future, in addition to providing an opportunity to view their history, cultural heritage, achievements and their future vision, combining modernity and history, stated WAM. — KUNA

## Cabinet says situation calls...

Continued from Page 1

The Bangladeshi MP was sentenced to seven years in jail and fined KD 2.7 million while former Kuwaiti MP Salah Khorshed was sentenced to seven years in jail and fined KD 740,000.

Former interior ministry assistant undersecretary

## New variant shuts borders...

Continued from Page 1

Also effective tomorrow, the government's website is instructing all passengers entering the UK to take a PCR test for COVID-19 two days after their arrival, and to self-isolate until they receive a negative result.

Morocco will halt incoming passenger flights for two weeks starting today night amid concern over the spread of a new, heavily mutated COVID-19 variant dubbed Omicron, a government committee said. "The decision has been taken because of the quick spread of the new COVID variant, Omicron, namely in Europe and Africa, and in order... to protect the health of Moroccan citizens," the committee tasked with overseeing Morocco's COVID response said in a statement.

Despite the alarm, in Austria tens of thousands rallied to protest against the government's introduction of compulsory vaccination—the first EU country to do so. Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg said it was "a minor interference" compared to the alternative for a country with one of the lowest vaccination rates in Western Europe.

With many European nations, including Germany and France, already bringing back curbs

Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah, a member of the ruling family, was sentenced to seven years in jail and fined KD 2 million. Nawaf Al-Shallahi, a former official of the Public Manpower Authority, was sentenced to four years in jail and fined KD 2 million while Hussein Al-Khader, another former official, was sentenced to seven years in jail and fined KD 180,000. The rulings are final.

The court however upheld the acquittal of MP Saadoun Hammad of all charges. Hammad thanked the Kuwaiti judiciary for clearing his name of charges that had been illegally accused of. He added that he was acquitted by all courts.

to counter surges in infections, Swiss voters broadly backed a proposed COVID pass law in a referendum yesterday. In Britain, Health Secretary Avid Javid said new COVID rules will be enforced from tomorrow. Mask-wearing will again be mandatory in shops and on public transport in England. All passengers arriving in Britain will have to take a PCR test and self-isolate until negative.

Scientists are racing to determine the threat posed by the heavily mutated strain—particularly whether it can evade existing vaccines. But a long list of countries have already imposed travel restrictions on southern Africa, where it was first detected, including key travel hub Qatar, the United States, Britain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Netherlands.

Angola became the first southern African country to suspend all flights from its regional neighbors Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa.

The arrival of the new variant comes just a month after Australia lifted a ban on travelling overseas without permission. Denmark confirmed its first Omicron infections, in two passengers who arrived on a flight from South Africa. The speed at which governments slammed their borders shut took many by surprise, with travellers thronging Johannesburg international airport, desperate to squeeze onto the last flights to countries that had imposed sudden travel bans. In Amsterdam, 61 passengers tested positive after arriving on two flights from South Africa in an ordeal one passenger described as "Dystopia Central Airline Hallway". — AFP

## Britain snubbed as France hosts...

Continued from Page 1

But within 48 hours of Wednesday's disaster, French President Emmanuel Macron had accused British Prime Minister Boris Johnson of being "not serious". Paris was irked by Johnson's initial reaction, which was seen as deflecting blame onto France, and then by his decision to write a letter to Macron which he published in full on his Twitter account before the French leader had received it.

Patel's invitation to Sunday's talks was withdrawn over the breach of diplomatic protocol, with an aide to Darmanin calling Johnson's letter "unacceptable". Britain's departure from the European Union has caused years of ill-will between Paris and London, with relations seen as at their lowest point in at least two decades.

### Cross-border crime

Under-fire Patel called her absence "unfortunate" but said she would be holding "urgent talks" with European counterparts this week. She spoke yesterday morning with Dutch Immigration Minister Ankie Broekers-Knol, with a statement from the Home Office saying "the tragic incidents of last week demonstrate the need for European partners to work together".

Without the participation of Britain—the intend-

## US Navy rescues Iranian seamen...

Continued from Page 1

The United States and its regional allies share concerns about Iran, which has previously been accused of orchestrating attacks on shipping in the

ed destination country for the thousands of migrants and asylum seekers massed in northern France—there are limits to what can be achieved at Sunday's meeting in Calais. The EU's home affairs commissioner Ylva Johansson, as well as the directors of the border force Frontex and police agency Europol also attended.

People-smuggling gangs are known to use Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany as bases to organise their operations. Many migrants are believed to travel to launch sites in northern France from Belgium, while inflatables and life jackets can be bought in other countries such as the Netherlands and Germany without raising suspicion. One of the five men arrested in connection with Wednesday's tragedy was driving a car with German registration, according to French officials.

While France and Britain agree on the need to tackle people-smugglers more effectively, they remain at odds over how to prevent people taking to the water. In his public letter to Macron, Johnson again pressed for British police and border agents to patrol alongside their French counterparts on the coast of northern France—something rejected by Paris in the past as an infringement on sovereignty.

More controversially, he also proposed sending back all migrants who land in England, a move which he claimed would save "thousands of lives by fundamentally breaking the business model of the criminal gangs". Patel said that in her call with Dutch Immigration Minister Broekers-Knol "both agreed that returns agreements are essential for breaking the criminal business model." — AFP

region. Tehran rejects the allegations.

Since February, Iran and the Zionist entity have been accused of engaging in what analysts have called a "shadow war", in which vessels linked to each nation have come under attack in tit-for-tat exchanges in waters around the Gulf. Earlier this month, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain held their first joint naval exercise with the Zionist state, together with the US, a year after normalizing ties with the Jewish state. — AFP

Local

# Kuwait reiterates need to follow health precautions, maintain stable status

## Cabinet holds extraordinary session to discuss latest on new variant

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwaiti Cabinet held an extraordinary meeting at Bayan Palace yesterday under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Following the special session, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah stated that the ministers were briefed by Minister of Health Dr Basel Al-Sabah about the global epidemiological situation, particularly after the emergence of the new variant of the coronavirus, Omicron, in South Africa and other African countries. In this respect, the minister of health assured his peers that the health status in the State of Kuwait was stable, noting that there were no coronavirus cases at hospitals' intensive care units and there was a drop in the infection cases.



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's extraordinary meeting yesterday. — KUNA



(From left) Ministers of justice Abdullah Al-Roumi, health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah and Foreign Affairs Sheikh Ahmad Al-Sabah attend the meeting.

However, the minister advised the Cabinet on the necessity to take precautions regarding arrivals to Kuwait from some countries, and update quarantine measures for arrivals in order to maintain the relevant positive indexes. The ministers expressed relief at the local stable health situation but urged citizens and residents not to be complacent with respect to adhering to the health conditions, namely wearing masks. Moreover, they affirmed the necessity of taking the third booster jab of the anti-coronavirus vaccine for the sake of individuals and society's wellbeing.

**Airport open**

Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Sabah had said on Saturday that the airport and the land and maritime borders will not be shut down. Sheikh Hamad, also

head of the ministerial coronavirus emergency committee, made the statement after a meeting by the committee following the emergence of a new variant of coronavirus in some African countries. He said that the committee discussed the steps relating to the developments of the new variant in a number of African countries and decisions taken in this regard. He noted that there are some steps should be followed by those who are inside and outside Kuwait as a result of this strain. "The mutated virus is dangerous and all countries have decided to halt flights from nine African countries," he said.

This was recommended by the committee and flights will be suspended from some other countries, Sheikh Hamad Jaber noted. The minister stressed that "the country's health situation is excellent, thanks to Allah Almighty and the efforts of our heroes at the

Ministry of Health." Meanwhile, Minister of Health Dr Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah said that the World Health Organization (WHO) named the new variant 'Omicron'. "Information on the variant is still preliminary, and the ministry's workers are following these developments," he added.

He noted there are several questions that need answers on how quickly the mutated virus spreads, its strength and resistance to vaccine, or natural immunity to the previous infection. He emphasized that the health measures implemented since the beginning of the corona pandemic have been still in place. The measures include wearing mask, keeping physical distancing, and taking vaccines and the booster dose for those who have exceeded six months from receiving the second dose to reduce the infections, he stated. — KUNA

## Kuwait embassy urges UK arrivals to conduct PCR on second day

**LONDON:** Kuwait's embassy to the United Kingdom yesterday called on citizens coming to Britain from tomorrow to abide by the new instructions, which require conducting PCR test on the second day of arrival. The embassy said in a statement that all arrivals must register their personal data on the British government website, which will be provided through the airlines before 48 hours of the flight, which includes booking PCR test appointment. The statement stressed on wearing face masks in shops and public transportation, adding that Omicron contacts will have to self-isolate for 10 days. The embassy asked Kuwaiti nationals not to hesitate when seeking assistance on this matter, indicating that +442075903400, +447988329622 lines will be available to address this issue and other important matters. — KUNA

## NCCAL organizes 21st Kuwait Theater Festival Wednesday

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi will patronize the 21st version of Kuwait Theater Festival, due to be held on December 1-10, the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) said. Assistant

Secretary General of Art sector at NCCAL, and Head of the Higher Committee of the Festival Dr Bader Al-Duwaish said in a speech delivered during a press conference held at Abdul Razzaq Al-Basir Hall in the Council's headquarters that NCCAL is facing big challenges due to the coronavirus pandemic that led to the postponement of most of the activities organized by the council. The regula-



Dr Bader Al-Duwaish

tions governing the work of this festival stipulate that the number of performances does not exceed eight and should not be less than six, Duwaish explained. He stressed the keenness of the organizing committee headed by the director of the festival Faleh Al-Mutairi to implement the regulation. The new session of the festival will witness the opening ceremony, presentation of right shows, as well as honoring 6 personalities, he added. It will also include an intellectual symposium and three theatrical workshops, will be held on Dasma and Kaifan theaters. In a similar speech, Mutairi stressed the importance of the event on the Arabic artistic and cultural. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** A group photo taken during the Kuwait-British Friendship Society's luncheon in honor of a group of visiting British parliamentarians.

## Kuwait-British Friendship Society hosts lunch for UK MPs

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait-British Friendship Society recently hosted a luncheon in honor of a group of visiting British parliamentarians. The event, which was held at the Chairman's Club, was the first function organized by the Society since the eruption of the coronavirus pandemic two years ago.

Attending the lunch were the representatives of the Kuwait and British parliaments, representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the UK Ambassador to Kuwait, and Board Members of the Kuwait - British Friendship Society.

The objective of the meeting was to reiterate the importance of the relationship between Kuwait and Great Britain and to discuss past activities organized

by the Society aimed at solidifying relations between the two countries.

Speaking on behalf of the Society, the coordinator, Ambassador Abdullah Bishara, said: "The fundamental aim of visits such as these is to emphasize to the public of both countries, the importance of retaining and building on the historic partnership that bonds the two countries for more than a century. Great Britain has always been a loyal friend of Kuwait. The people of Kuwait have full confidence in Britain's continuous loyalty, be it in prosperity or adversity."

During the lunch, the visiting party voiced their appreciation for the hospitality and genuine feeling of friendship towards Great Britain. They also expressed their admiration for the democratic principles Kuwait proudly cherishes and showed their willingness to convey their positive views of Kuwait to the British Parliament. In closing, both parties agreed on the importance of ensuring continuation of the friendship and support, with a view to consolidating these historic ties.



Major General Fahad Al-Turajji

## Kuwaiti official stresses importance of updating military training programs

**CAIRO:** Chairman of Kuwait Military Education Authority of Ministry of Defense Major General Fahad Al-Turajji affirmed yesterday the importance of modernizing the programs and military training procedures to take on current and future threats in the region. This came in his statement to the press on the sidelines of the 25th symposium for the heads of training authorities in the Arab armed forces. The five-day symposium discusses a study on field medical training systems needed to keep pace with the requirements of medical support for joint operations.

Turajji, who heads Kuwait's delegation, said that the symposium included several topics, notably the ratification of programs related to medical affairs and field aid, in addition to the exchange of experiences and benefit from the measures taken by some armies in the region. In this context, he noted that many Arab countries are engaging their armies in military operations, explaining that techniques and procedures are constantly changing, and that this matter requires modernizing programs and training

procedures to take on different forms of threats. Our participation in the symposium benefits us, as we are taking the new product for medical support and field aid operations and working with it as fit to our military organization and the operations we carry out, added Turajji.

Kuwait cooperates with most Arab countries, as we have cooperation agreements in the various fields of training including the medical field, Turajji said on Kuwait's cooperation. The Medical Services Authority in the Kuwaiti army has bilateral and collective cooperation with several countries, noted Turajji. He explained that cooperation with all Arab countries is ongoing, noting that yesterday's activities were not related to the mechanism of cooperation with Arab countries, but are considered a new addition in the modernization of brochures related to the medical system. — KUNA

## On the occasion of the



Subscribe or renew your subscription  
KD 20 instead of KD 30 for 1 year

For individuals only

Tel: 24833199 ext.: 163-325-353- 354 or 66500982



kuwaittimes.net

## Local

**Kuwait Times**  
Established 1961  
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT  
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF  
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher  
**YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN**

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

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

**ORGANON**  
Here for her health



KUWAIT: (From left) Dr Dunya Bastaki, Dr Kalthoum Hussein and Athar Al-Shaiba.

## Event sheds light on women's health needs

KUWAIT: Chairwoman of the Arab Union for Specialized Women - Kuwait branch Dr Kalthoum Hussein Awadh participated in the 'Here for Her Health' event that was held at Salwa Al-Sabah Hall in the presence of Dr Dunya Bastaki, the chairperson of the health sector in the union and Athar Al-Shaiba, head of communications in the union. The event aims at discovering unique experiences of women in the region and concentrating on understanding women's health needs that are not met. It also sheds light on economic empowerment as a pre-condition for women's health.

Dr Kalthoum said, "we were keen to attend the event to reflect the role of Kuwaiti women, strengthen their role in the society, and know their rights and duties in the field of family health. We also wanted to educate all society groups about the importance of girls' education and prepare strategic plans to prevent work accidents and vocational illnesses of women."

## Gulf forum praises Kuwait's response to COVID-19

DOHA: Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies Forum (GAPSF) extolled Kuwait's huge efforts made to implement clear policies so as to benefit from several modern strategies in terms of dealing with the novel coronavirus. Kuwait has taken several effective executive measures to alleviate consequences of the pandemic through cooperation and coordination amongst governmental efforts and societal initiatives, the forum said during a session themed "Kuwait's response to COVID-19 and its repercussions". Speaking in the session, Dr Fahad Al-Fadala, advisor at Arab Planning Institute, said that Kuwait has implemented a flexible public policy to contain the pandemic and taken many effective executive measures to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. This came through cooperation, coordination and harmony between government efforts and societal initiatives, he added. The forum included another session titled "the impact of outbreak of COVID-19 and the collapse of oil prices". Speaking in this session, Dr Nayef Al-Shammari, Professor of Economics at Kuwait University, presented a paper on negative effects of the pandemic on the economies of the GCC countries in light of the blow they faced due to the outbreak of the pandemic. In addition, the forum discusses GCC countries' response to the COVID-19 and the impacts of the Gulf reconciliation on GCC countries' regional and international ties as well as other topics. — KUNA

## stc launches prostate cancer awareness campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the launch of its prostate cancer "November" awareness campaign under the because\_we\_care umbrella that is comprised of several awareness and fitness initiatives that aim to promote a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

Considering that November is recognized worldwide as the international

prostate awareness month, stc launched its campaign this year in collaboration with Dr Omar Al-Hunaidi. The collaboration includes multiple videos published on stc's social media channels covering valuable information and tips on ways to possibly prevent prostate cancer.

stc also published several videos highlighting exercises and fitness activities that men can practice and adopt to their daily routines to promote a healthier lifestyle, whether they are at work or out of office. The videos were produced in collaboration with the fitness coach and nutritionist expert Ali Hussain.

stc indicated in a statement that the initiative falls within the Company's corporate social responsibility framework with the aim of raising awareness on the disease amongst the members of the local community. The Company stressed, through the campaign, the importance of performing regular check ups to detect prostate cancer at an early stage. Early



Dr Omar Al-Hunaidi

detection examinations today are much simpler and straightforward than they were in the past and can be performed through a simple blood test.

stc will continue the activities under the campaign until the end of November with the objective of providing valuable tips on prostate cancer through the Company's social media channels. The campaign also builds on the Company's continuous efforts to spread awareness

and provide valuable information to the public on various health topics that impact the community.

stc expressed that it consistently organizes initiatives that spread awareness on various forms of cancer through campaigns on its social media channels. This stems from stc's well-established policy to promote health and well-being through humanitarian actions directed towards society. During the month of November, stc stressed the importance of early detection screening tests, while encouraging members of the community to perform these tests on a regular basis to detect the specific form of cancer at an early stage.

In addition to its objective of raising awareness, stc strives to organize and participate in events that enhance its role in supporting the healthcare field, as well as other fields such as education and the environment through various impactful contributions. stc added that it will spare



Coach Ali Hussain

no effort in continuing its various health and awareness campaigns by collaborating with institutions that help spread awareness on important causes that benefit the Kuwaiti society.

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A photo taken from Kuwait's beach showing a cargo ship in the Arabian Gulf waters. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

# Japan Embassy holds 'Operation Turtle' beach cleanup drive

Annual environmental campaign back after last year's event canceled



KUWAIT: People take part in the Operation Turtle beach cleanup drive.



By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Under the auspices of Japan's embassy in Kuwait, the Japanese Society in Kuwait (JSK) organized the 'Operation Turtle' beach cleanup drive on Saturday at Shuwaikh Beach. Several Japanese citizens and locals participated in the event, including Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Director-General of Environment Public Authority. In his speech before the cleanup started, Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Masato Takaoka thanked everyone who attended the 'Operation Turtle', the annual beach cleanup to support Kuwait's environment. "I thank the authorities and organizations supporting the event, which are the Environment Public Authority, Kuwait Environment Protection Society, Kuwait Oil Company, Dasman Bilingual School, and Kuwait Boy Scouts Association. I salute to all the volunteers, friends of Japan and the members of the Japanese community," he

said. The 'Operation Turtle' was first launched by the Japanese community in 2000 with the intention of Japanese residents in Kuwait to contribute to the Kuwaiti society through environmental protection efforts.



### Making beaches safe for turtles

According to the envoy, the campaign was named 'Operation Turtle' because the purpose is to make Kuwait's beaches clean and safe for turtles. "I am grateful that over the past twenty years,

many organizations and people in Kuwait have joined hands with the Japanese community to work together in this beach cleaning campaign. I am particularly delighted that we are here today, because we had to cancel the 'Operation Turtle' last year under the coronavirus pandemic. The situation has improved so much now that we can gather here and enjoy outside activities," he said.

He also mentioned that this year, Japan and Kuwait marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between them. "As we celebrate this important milestone, there is no better event other than the 'Operation Turtle' for many of us in Kuwait to demonstrate our goodwill and friendship," he added. The ambassador said he was also looking forward to seeing the Kuwait Towers illuminate with Japanese and Kuwaiti national flags to commemorate the 60th anniversary. "We are working in that, and it will be wonderful if we could count down the lighting up in the evening," he concluded.





Powerful by  
all means

Only

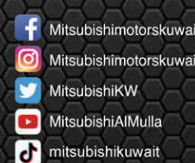
**7,499** KD

**MONTERO  
SPORT**

Scan for  
Whatsapp



Hotline 22055888  
Fleetsales 22055887



www.mitsubishi-motors.com.kw



## International

## Swiss voters back COVID pass law

## Referendum comes as new variant Omicron rattles countries across the world

GENEVA: Swiss voters firmly backed the law behind the country's COVID pass in a referendum yesterday, following a tense campaign that saw unprecedented levels of hostility. Early results showed around two-thirds of voters supported the law, with market researchers GFS Bern projecting 63 percent backing across the wealthy Alpine nation.

The police fenced off the seat of government and parliament in Bern in anticipation of protests. Results from 16 of Switzerland's 26 cantons showed 61.9 percent had voted in favor of the law, on a 64 percent turnout.

The referendum came as the new COVID-19 variant Omicron, classified as a variant of concern by the World Health Organization, shook countries and markets around the world. The vote also came at a time when the numbers of new COVID-19 cases in Switzerland were more than seven times higher than they were in mid-October.

## Pass used in restaurants

The law provides the legal basis for the so-called COVID certificate, indicating that a person has been vaccinated or has recovered from the disease. Opponents have said the certificate, which has been required since September for access to restaurants and other indoor spaces and activities, is creating an "apartheid" system.

As in much of Europe, Switzerland has seen growing anger over restrictions aimed at reining in

the pandemic, and pressure to get vaccinated. But in a country where referendums take place every few months in a climate of civility and measured debate, the soaring tensions around the vote came as a shock. Police upped security around several politicians who have faced a flood of insults and even death threats.

The campaign saw repeated protests, often led by the so-called "Freiheitsrychler", or "Freedom ringers" — men dressed in white shirts embroidered with edelweiss flowers and with two large cowbells suspended from a yoke resting on their shoulders. Some of the demonstrations led to violent clashes with police, who used rubber bullets and tear gas to rein in the crowds.

## 'Extremely shocking'

Michelle Cailler, a spokeswoman for the Friends of the Constitution group which opposed the law, said that granting such powers to the government was "extremely dangerous for democracy". "What is very embarrassing is that this law violates a number of constitutional rights, and in particular Article 10 on personal freedom with this COVID certificate, which establishes a disguised mandatory vaccination," she told AFP after the vote.

"So it's extremely shocking for a country like Switzerland." As for violence surrounding the vote — which her group does not condone, she said: "The government should ask itself if it is not responsible for any possible excesses, by pushing



BERN, Switzerland: Protesters against the current measures to tackle the spread of the coronavirus demonstrate with national and Italian flags under the snow in front of the Swiss House Parliament following the result a nationwide vote on a COVID-19 law, in Bern yesterday. —AFP

people to the limit with coercive measures which have extremely serious collateral damage — much worse than this epidemic — and well, maybe that pushes people to have over-the-top reactions."

In the Sunday newspapers, Swiss President Guy Parmelin urged more people to come forward to get

vaccinated. Some 67 percent of the Swiss population is fully immunized, with a further two percent having had the first of two doses. A Link Institute survey of 1,300 people, for SonntagsBlick newspaper, found that 53 percent were in favor of mandatory vaccination. —AFP

## News in brief

## Five Iraqi Kurdish fighters killed

ARBIL: Five Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga fighters were killed and four wounded in a roadside bombing blamed on jihadists of the Islamic State group, regional authorities said yesterday. The Saturday evening bombing south of the city of Sulaimaniyah underlined the "serious threat" IS still poses to the Kurdistan region four years after the Iraqi government declared victory over the jihadists, the region's prime minister Masrour Barzani said. The region's peshmerga ministry said the slain fighters who were hit had been on their way to reinforce comrades who had come under attack by IS fighters. —AFP

## 7.5-magnitude quake hits Peru

LIMA: A 7.5-magnitude earthquake struck Peru at 5:52 am (1052 GMT) yesterday sending shock waves across the northern and central regions. The strong quake hit at a depth of 131 kilometers (81 miles), according to the Geophysical Institute of Peru. Its epicenter was 98 kilometers east of the town of Santa Maria de Nieva in the Peruvian Amazon—a sparsely populated area inhabited by Amazonian indigenous people. The deep quake affected almost half of the country, including coastal and Andean regions, and the capital Lima. —AFP

## China captures N Korean convict

BEIJING: Chinese police have captured a North Korean prisoner who staged a daring escape from jail in October and had been on the run for more than forty days, authorities said yesterday. Officials in northeast China were offering a \$23,000 bounty for the recapture of the escapee, in a manhunt that has sparked massive interest on social media. The 39-year-old prisoner, identified by the Chinese name Zhu Xianjian, was jailed in China after fleeing reclusive North Korea. —AFP

## 3 civilians killed in Syria blast

BEIRUT: Two women and a child from the same family were killed and five other people were wounded in an attack Saturday in Syria's northern city of Minbej, authorities said. A "terrorist explosion" occurred as a vehicle carrying civilians passed the entrance to Minbej, an Arab-majority city under Kurdish administration, the Minbej military council said without providing further details. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said the blast was a car bomb. It said two civilians were killed and five wounded, including two members of the Kurdish Asayesh security forces. —AFP

## Former Cambodian PM dies in France

PHNOM PENH: Former Cambodian prime minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh died in France yesterday, the country's information minister announced on Facebook. The prince was elected prime minister in 1993 after years of civil war only to be ousted in a bloody coup in 1997 led by forces loyal to current strongman ruler Hun Sen. Ranariddh, who was 77, died yesterday morning following an illness, Information Minister Khieu Kanharith wrote on Facebook, citing a palace official. —AFP

## EU and NATO vow action against hybrid threats on Baltic visit

VILNIUS, Lithuania: EU and NATO leaders yesterday vowed to step up cooperation against hybrid threats on a visit to Lithuania dominated by talks on the Belarus migrant crisis and Russia's military build-up near Ukraine. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg also repeated his call on Russia to "de-escalate" its military build-up on the border with Ukraine and warned of "costs and consequences" if it used force.

The visit by Stoltenberg and European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen comes ahead of a meeting of NATO foreign ministers including US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Latvia this week. Stoltenberg and von der Leyen both accused Belarus of orchestrating the migrant crisis on its border as a "hybrid" threat against the European Union—a charge that the regime has denied.

A hybrid threat is a security challenge combining traditional military means and non-military tactics such as disinformation. "To respond to such

events, it is important that the European Union and NATO work hand in hand," von der Leyen said at a joint press conference with Stoltenberg and Lithuanian leaders.

Stoltenberg said: "We discussed how we could step up our joint work between NATO and the EU including through a new joint declaration because we are stronger and safer when we work together".

Thousands of migrants—mostly from the Middle East—have crossed or tried to cross the Belarus border in recent months into the eastern members of the EU and NATO: Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Referring to the situation on the Belarus border, Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda said that "if the security situation gets even worse, we do not rule out consultations under NATO's Article 4."

Under NATO's founding treaty, any member can convene a meeting of NATO to consult when it feels its security or independence are threatened. Poland has also warned it may invoke this article. The two-day meet-



VILNIUS, Lithuania: (Left to right) European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and Lithuania's President Gitanas Nausėda enter the room to address a joint press conference after their meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania, yesterday. —AFP

ing of NATO foreign ministers starting in neighboring Latvia tomorrow is set to be dominated by concern about Russia's military build-up near the border with Ukraine.

Stoltenberg said the "unusual" build-up of tanks, artillery, drones and thousands of combat-ready troops

was "very concerning for many reasons", also "because it is unprovoked and unexplained". "The message to Russia is that they should de-escalate, reduce tensions and be transparent" he said, adding that "if they decide to use force, then of course, there will be consequences". —AFP

## Barbados to become a republic, replacing British queen

BRIDGETOWN: Barbados is about to cut ties with the British monarchy, but the legacy of a sometimes brutal colonial past and the pandemic's impact on tourism pose major challenges for the Caribbean island as it becomes the world's newest republic. Famed for its beaches and love of cricket, Barbados will this week replace its head of state, Queen Elizabeth II, with her current representative, Governor General Sandra Mason.

Ceremonies on Monday evening into Tuesday will include military parades and celebrations as Mason is inaugurated as president, with Prince Charles—her heir to the British throne—looking on.

The dawn of a new era has fueled debate among the population of 285,000 over Britain's centuries of influence, including more than 200 years of slavery until 1834, and Barbados finally becoming independent in 1966. "As a young girl, when I heard about the queen, I would be really excited," said Sharon Bellamy-Thompson, 50, a fish vendor in the capital Bridgetown who remembers being about eight and seeing the monarch on a visit.

## Honduras braces for trouble as election begins

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras: Honduras braced for potential violence as polls opened yesterday to elect a new president to replace Juan Orlando Hernandez, a controversial figure accused of drug trafficking in the United States. Voters queued up from dawn at some polling stations before they opened officially at 7:30 am (1330 GMT).

"I call on everyone to proceed with this process in peace, calm, without fear and without violence," said National Electoral Council president Kelvin Aguirre. More than five million people are registered to vote in what is expected to be a tight race.

Leftist opposition candidate Xiomara Castro led opinion polls last month, but the ruling right-wing National Party (PN) — whose candidate is charismatic Tegucigalpa mayor Nasry Asfura—has had the benefit of better campaign organization and resources.



BRIDGETOWN, Barbados: Barbados Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley (second right) and Member of Parliament Trevor Prescott (right) unveil the plaque at the official opening of Golden Square Freedom Park in Bridgetown, Barbados on Saturday. —AFP

"As I grow older and older, I started to wonder what this queen really means for me and for my nation. It didn't make any sense," she said. "Having a female Barbadian president will be great."

Opposition fears of a rigged poll and reports of pre-election intimidation have led to tension.

"If the PN wins the election, even legitimately, there will be a worrying level of violence," political analyst Raul Pineda, a lawyer and former PN lawmaker, predicted to AFP. Four years ago, Hernandez won an unconstitutional second successive term amid cries of fraud from the opposition and international observers.

That sparked a widespread month-long protest, with the subsequent government crackdown leaving more than 30 people dead. "We are afraid because we work close to where the votes are counted," Luis Andino, 27, a Tegucigalpa street vendor, said. "We're afraid of losing our jobs if there are riots ... and we get kicked out of here."

## 'Preparing for war'

The concerns come for a country already ravaged by violent gangs, drug trafficking and hurricanes, in which 59 percent of the population of 10 million live in poverty. "A kind of paranoia has developed, people are preparing for war" by stocking up on food and water, said Pineda.

But he insists that pressure from Washington—which wants to reduce the triggers for mass Central

## Colonialism and slavery

For young activists such as Firhaana Bulbulia, founder of the Barbados Muslim Association, British colonialism and slavery lie behind the island's modern inequalities. "The wealth gap, the ability to own land, and even access to loans from banks all have a lot to do with structures built out of being ruled by Britain," Bulbulia, 26, said. "The actual chains (of slavery) were broken and we no longer wore them, but the mental chains continue to persist in our mindsets."

In October, Barbados elected Mason to become its first president, one year after Prime Minister Mia Mottley declared that the country would "fully" leave its colonial past. But some Barbadians argue there are more pressing national issues, including economic turmoil caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exposed overreliance on tourism—which, ironically, is dependent on British visitors.

Eerie calm in usually bustling Bridgetown, paltry numbers at popular tourist spots and a dead nightlife scene all point to a country struggling after years of relative prosperity. Unemployment is at nearly 16 percent, up from nine percent in recent years, despite sharply increased government borrowing to fund public sector projects and create jobs.

The country has just eased a longstanding COVID curfew, pushing it back from 9:00 pm to midnight. Opposition leader Bishop Joseph Atherley said this week's celebrations among dignitaries would largely not be accessible to ordinary people. —AFP



TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras: A woman casts her vote at a polling station during general elections, in Tegucigalpa, yesterday. —AFP

American mass migration to the US—along with a large corps of international observers, should at least ensure a transparent vote. The crucial moment will come three hours after polls close at 5:00 pm, when the National Electoral Council (CNE) is due to announce early results, said Gustavo Irias, executive director of the Center for Democracy Studies. —AFP

## International

# Petr Fiala named new Czech PM by COVID-stricken president

## Fiala faces urgent task of tackling soaring virus cases in the country

**PRAGUE:** Right-winger Petr Fiala was named the Czech Republic's new prime minister yesterday in an unusual ceremony, with wheelchair-bound President Milos Zeman speaking from behind a plastic barrier because he has COVID-19.

Fiala, a bearded, bespectacled former political scientist, will face the urgent task of grappling with one of the world's highest COVID infection rates including a case of the new Omicron variant.

"I am convinced we will soon have a strong and stable government," Fiala said at the ceremony.

Zeman said he aimed to wrap up meetings with possible ministers by December 13 "and we can then prepare the appointment of the government". Fiala teamed up his Civic Democratic Party with two smaller parties to form the Together alliance which came first in last month's general election.

The grouping, which includes the centrist Christian Democrats and the center-right TOP 09 parties, narrowly beat the ANO movement of outgoing populist billionaire Prime Minister Andrej Babis.

The alliance has since forged a coalition with two centrist parties—the Mayors and Independents, and the Pirate Party—to secure a majority of 108 votes in the 200-seat parliament. The five parties have agreed on the composition of the future government and on a policy statement.

Post-election talks were held without the 77-year-old president, who was taken to hospital by ambulance on October 10, a day after the election, to be treated for liver problems.

### Delays as COVID spikes

Zeman, a left-winger with a soft spot for Russia and China, had originally been expected to name Fiala as prime minister on Friday, a day after he was released from Prague's military hospital.

But he was rushed back to hospital on the same day after testing positive for COVID. Zeman was discharged again on Saturday. Under the Czech constitution, Zeman also has to name the government.

Fiala has said Zeman should name the government by mid-December as the EU member of 10.7 million people is grappling with record daily COVID-19 infections. "I really appreciate that even in this difficult situation with the president suffering from COVID and being in isolation, he is looking for ways to lead talks with ministerial candidates." "The president has assured me that the talks will begin tomorrow and will be held in the same format in which I met the president today," Fiala said.

The COVID surge led the outgoing government to announce new restrictions on Thursday, including the closure of restaurants, bars and discos at night, as well as all Christmas markets. But observers say stricter measures may be needed. Hospitals in the east are running out of capacity and some have begun to move patients to less congested facilities elsewhere in the country.

The Czech Republic is also struggling with unprecedented growth in energy prices and soaring inflation, which have thrown many people into uncertainty before Christmas. "I am well aware



LANY, Czech Republic: Newly-appointed Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala (center), a former political scientist, gives a press statement in Lany, west of Prague, Czech Republic, yesterday. —AFP

that the new government is facing a very difficult period and many challenges that it will have to

face from the start," Fiala told reporters after being appointed. —AFP

## Kyrgyzstan holds parliamentary vote as tensions rise

**BISHKEK:** Kyrgyzstan went to parliamentary polls yesterday as tensions simmer after claims of a plot to unseat populist President Sadyr Japarov, who rose to power in post-vote unrest last year. In three decades of independence, the impoverished ex-Soviet Central Asian nation has become a byword for volatility, with three presidents unseated during street protests fuelled by a combination of corruption, crackdowns and anger over perceived election irregularities.

While opinion polls show that Japarov's government still enjoys popular support, critics say the recent jailing of potential rivals and a constitutional overhaul earlier this year show he is repeating the mistakes of predecessors. His cash-strapped government also faces a difficult future, with a winter energy crisis looming, living costs rising and trade with next-door China hammered by the pandemic.

In the capital Bishkek, where both Russian and Kyrgyz are spoken, there was little sign of excitement about the vote, which is expected to deliver a 90-seat parliament largely loyal to Japarov. "Our country is

very beautiful. I want our elections to be cultured and honest, for us to live in a real country," said a 58-year-old voter who gave her first name, Lyudmila.

But Lyudmila said she had already been offered cash in exchange for her vote. A 36-year-old voter called Ulugbek Abdrashev said he would be voting for the opposition Ata-Meken party, and expressed hope that the next parliament would be more vocal than the outgoing legislature.

It was impossible to discount further unrest after the vote, he said. "Everything is possible here. We (live) in a Wonderland," he said, laughing. Polling stations in the mountainous, land-locked country of 6.5 million opened at 8 am (0200 GMT) yesterday with first results expected shortly after counting starts at 8 pm.

### A 'coup plot'?

Kyrgyzstan's most recent round of instability came after parliamentary elections a year ago, when losing parties took to the streets to denounce a vote they said was rigged in favor of parties close to then-president Sooronbay Jeenbekov. The vote results were annulled and current leader Japarov, freed from prison during the unrest, was elected president in January.

Japarov voted at a polling station in Bishkek in the morning with his wife Aigul Japarova and called on others to do the same. "The future of the country depends on your vote," he said, after casting his ballot.

"I want to show the nation that the government is fully intent and nothing will move us. We must and will never bow down to the evil intention of a few people," Sogavare said. Many residents of the Pacific island nation of 800,000 people believe his government is corrupt and beholden to Beijing and other foreign interests. During the riots, mobs attempted to torch the prime minister's private residence and parliament before being dispersed by police firing tear gas and warning shots. Sogavare has already blamed the violence, which incinerated swathes of the capital, on an unscrupulous few leading the people astray with false information. He has claimed that foreign powers opposed to his 2019 decision to switch the Solomons' diplomatic allegiance from Taiwan to China are behind the disturbances.

Yesterday, the prime minister said the violence had caused 200 million Solomon Islander dollars (US\$ 25 million) in damage and destroyed 1,000 jobs in an economy already squeezed by the impact of the COVID pandemic. The government was working on a recovery package to help damaged businesses recover, Sogavare said. And he repeated a promise that the unidentified "instigators" would face the "full brunt" of the law. Over 100 people

concern among experts. For Pronk, vaccines "are weapons made to kill". He also embraces the QAnon conspiracy group's narrative about "satanic child abuse" by a "globalized elite".

But the unemployed former computer technician, who had chosen a banner for the group with a lion against a backdrop of flames, rejects any responsibility for the unrest in the Netherlands. Five people were shot when police opened fire in Rotterdam, and riots spread around the country for the next three days. "Violence is not the best way, of course not. The best is to do things peacefully," he told AFP.

### Surge in disinformation

Both in January, during the Netherlands' worst riots in 40 years over a curfew, and last week's

handed down in a junta court that could jail her for decades. The Nobel laureate has been detained since the generals ousted her government in the early hours of February 1, ending the Southeast Asian country's brief democratic interlude.

More than 1,200 people have been killed and over 10,000 arrested in a crackdown on dissent, according to a local monitoring group. Suu Kyi faces three years in jail if found guilty of incitement against the military—just one of the charges that analysts say are aimed at removing the democracy icon from the political arena for good.



KOY-TASH, Kyrgyzstan: Citizens vote during Kyrgyzstan's parliamentary election in the village of Koy-Tash, outside Bishkek yesterday. —AFP

The Central Election Commission reported a turnout of just over 16 percent at the halfway stage of the vote.

Having cemented power by overseeing constitutional changes that stripped away single-term limits for sitting presidents and strengthened his office at the legislature's expense, Japarov pledged to "show the world" Kyrgyzstan can hold free and fair elections.

But opposition candidates have complained of administrative pressure. One popular independent lawmaker, Ryskeldi Mombekov, was removed from the race by electoral authorities before his candidacy was reinstated by a judge as supporters from his home region threatened to rally. —AFP



Manasseh Sogavare

have been arrested for riot-related activity, the Solomon Islands police said this weekend.

Despite the relative calm of the weekend, people were fearful of the outlook, Red Cross official Kennedy Waitara said. Waitara said many of the food shops in Chinatown had been burned down in the riots. "It will not be surprising if we have to experience food shortages and a hike in prices," he said. —AFP

unrest, social media were used not only to organize protests, but also to spread disinformation. "What is unique about the Netherlands is that we have repeatedly seen COVID protests turn into riots just this year," said Cianan O'Connor, an analyst at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue in London, which specializes in countering radicalism. While Prime Minister Mark Rutte has branded rioters "scum" and "idiots", O'Connor pointed the finger at the epidemic of conspiracy theories on the internet in the Netherlands.

On Facebook alone, the top 125 groups disseminating false information about COVID-19 saw a 63-percent rise in followers in six months, comprising 789,000 members in this country of 17 million people, an ISD study said. —AFP

But the junta's plans for Suu Kyi remain unknown, they add, and authorities could also delay the verdict. Journalists have been barred from proceedings in the special court in the military-built capital Naypyidaw and her lawyers are banned from speaking to the media.

Days after the coup Suu Kyi was hit with obscure charges for possessing unlicensed walkie-talkies, and for violating coronavirus restrictions during elections her National League for Democracy (NLD) won in 2020. The junta has steadily added a slew of other indictments, including violating the official

## Australian govt vows to unmask online trolls

**SYDNEY:** Australia's government said yesterday it will introduce legislation to unmask online trolls, and hold social media giants like Facebook and Twitter responsible for identifying them. Prime Minister Scott Morrison, whose conservative coalition government faces an election in the first half of 2022, said the law would protect Australians from online abuse and harassment.

"The online world should not be a wild west where bots and bigots and trolls and others can just anonymously go around and harm people and hurt people, harass them and bully them and sledge them," Morrison told reporters. "That is not what can happen in the real world, and there is no case for it to be able to be happening in the digital world."

Attorney General Michaelia Cash said the legislation, reportedly to be introduced to parliament by early 2022, was needed to clarify that the social media platforms, and not the users, were responsible for defamatory comments by other people. Confusion had been sown by a High Court ruling in September that found Australian media, as users managing their own pages on a social network, could be held liable for defamatory third-party comments posted on their pages, Cash said.

Under the planned Australian legislation, the social media companies themselves would be responsible for such defamatory content, not the users, she said. It would also aim to stop people making defamatory comments without being identified, she said.

"You should not be able to use the cloak of online anonymity to spread your vile, defamatory comments," the attorney general said. The legislation would demand that social media platforms have a nominated entity based in Australia, she said.

The platforms could defend themselves from being sued as the publisher of defamatory comment only if they complied with the new legislation's demands to have a complaints system in place that could provide the details of the person making the comment, if necessary, Cash said.

People would also be able to apply to the High Court for an "information disclosure order" demanding a social media service provide details "to unmask the troll", the attorney general said.

In some cases, she said, the "troll" may be asked to take down the comment, which could end the matter if the other side is satisfied. Australia's opposition leader Anthony Albanese said he would support a safer online environment for everyone.

But he said the government had failed to propose action to stop the spread of misinformation on social media and accused some of the government's own members of spreading misinformation about Covid and vaccinations. —AFP

secrets act, corruption and electoral fraud.

Suu Kyi now appears most weekdays at the junta courtroom, with her legal team saying last month the hectic schedule was taking a toll on the 76-year-old's health.

"I think it's almost certain Suu Kyi will get a harsh sentence," said David Mathieson, an analyst formerly based in Myanmar. "The question is what will her incarceration look like?... will she get average convict treatment in a crowded women's cell block, or privilege in a VIP statehouse?" —AFP

## Riot-hit Solomon Islands PM vows to stay in power

**HONIARA, Solomon Islands:** The prime minister of the riot-hit Solomon Islands defied pressure to resign yesterday, saying a wave of torching and looting that swept the capital had been orchestrated by a few people with "evil intention" to topple him. Shattered glass and rubble still lined the streets of Honiara as Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare addressed the nation, a reminder of the three-day eruption in violence blamed partly on poverty, hunger and frustration with his policies.

"It is very clear that the recent events were well planned and orchestrated to remove me as the prime minister for unsubstantiated reasons," Sogavare said, after a night-time curfew and roughly 150 foreign peacekeepers from Australia and Papua New Guinea helped to restore some calm over the weekend.

## Online conspiracies fuel Dutch COVID unrest

**AMSTERDAM:** When COVID riots rocked the Netherlands for the second time in a year, Ricardo Pronk was there to livestream it all to his followers on social media. The 50-year-old anti-vaccination activist administered a Facebook group with 10,000 followers, which had shared a call for a demonstration in the port city of Rotterdam on November 19 that later turned violent.

The group, which was recently removed by Facebook, is part of a network of conspiracy theorists and COVID-deniers on social media reaching as far as the Dutch parliament, whose influence has sparked

## Myanmar's Suu Kyi due to hear first verdict in junta trial

**YANGON:** Ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi is expected to hear the verdict in her incitement trial tomorrow, the first in a catalogue of judgments to be

# Business

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2021

## Shoppers return for 'Black Friday'

### E-commerce shoppers in United States spent \$76 billion since early November

NEW YORK: Americans returned to stores for the "Black Friday" kickoff of the holiday shopping season, but online data shows that consumers have been spending big for weeks amid worries over shortages. The day after the US Thanksgiving celebration is the traditional start to the holiday shopping season, and normally sees Americans line up outside stores before they open to clinch deals on popular items.

After the pandemic kept crowds away last year, many shoppers were out in force Friday, a sign of how COVID-19 vaccines have returned life in the United States to something closer to normal. "I just wanted to make sure that this Christmas was a good Christmas for all my friends and family," said a masked Sylvia Gonzalez as she waited in line outside the jewelry chain Pandora in New York.

But even before retailers opened their doors early Friday morning, e-commerce shoppers in the United States had already spent \$76 billion since early November, up more than 20 percent from the year-ago period, according to data from software company Adobe, which has projected somewhat fewer promotions this year in light of rising costs.

The jump has added to companies' optimism about the season, suggesting some shoppers heeded calls from businesses to purchase items early this year after port backlogs and other logistics problems sparked worries that popular goods would be in short supply.

Toys led the buying spree, with Adobe pointing to actions by "anxious parents increasingly aware of supply chain challenges." The National Retail Federation projects overall spending could rise as much as 10.5 percent to \$859 billion. Nonetheless, out-of-stock listings online are up 261 percent compared with two years ago, according to Adobe.

## CBK, CMA launch awareness campaign on crypto assets

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) in collaboration with the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) launched a joint financial literacy campaign regarding investing or dealing in crypto assets, or so-called "virtual currencies".

In a joint statement, the CBK Governor Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel said that the campaign reflects social responsibility towards the public, and aims to raise awareness of the risks associated with crypto assets due to their sharp price fluctuations, and the fact that they are not subject to any regula-

### Item in hand

Retailers and market watchers are broadly optimistic about the holiday shopping season in light of low unemployment and relatively strong household finances due in part to pandemic stimulus bills enacted by the government.

Countering those positive trends are lingering supply chain problems, spiking consumer prices that have affected household staples such as food and fuel, and the COVID-19 pandemic, which is still far from over. On Friday, stock markets worldwide tumbled on worries that the latest strain of the virus found in South Africa could derail the global recovery. Reminders of the pandemic were visible throughout shopping districts in the New York borough of Manhattan.

Signs at Macy's reminded customers to keep six feet apart and pop-up COVID-19 testing sites were positioned outside stores where mostly masked crowds were large, but not as sizeable as before the pandemic. "In 2018, it was more like the New York you heard of," said German tourist Ilke Zienteck. "Now, it's a little bit like a small town."

Still, the hum of customers inside shops suggested that many had adjusted to the "new normal" of pandemic living. There were obvious gaps at some stores. At a Best Buy near Grand Central Station, a shelf of Apple accessories was almost completely empty, while the camera bags section had few remaining offerings.

Other chains like Victoria's Secret and Foot Locker have acknowledged shortages of some choice products. Taylor Schreiner, a digital research expert at Adobe, expects more consumers to order online and pay for expedited shipping, or pick up goods at stores.

"It's not just because people want it quickly," he



HOUSTON: A customer shops in a Walmart store during Black Friday on November 26, 2021 in Houston, Texas. Retailers are anticipating a busier holiday season than last year after the COVID-19 pandemic caused the quietest Black Friday in 20 years. —AFP

said in an interview. "Having the item in hand is the surest way to have the gift for the person."

### January glut?

An emerging worry in the industry is that retailers will be stuck with goods originally intended for the holidays but that don't arrive until January. Macy's is generally canceling orders for items with a Christmas motif, but plans to keep other items if they are cold-weather-oriented and could sell later in the winter, executives said earlier this month.

Gap Chief Financial Officer Katrina O'Connell

said the apparel chain was planning to hold some items for next winter. "If we think items are going to be too late for the holiday season, we won't put them in stores or online and have them generate markdowns," she said earlier this week on a conference call with Wall Street analysts. "We'll hold them for next year." Gap has been one of the companies hardest hit by supply chain problems due to lengthy factory shutdowns in Vietnam caused by the country's COVID-19 restrictions, which contributed to a loss of some \$300 million in sales in the most recent quarter. —AFP



Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel and Prof Ahmed A Al-Melhem

tory authority in Kuwait, exposing speculators to large losses and fraud.

The Chairman of CMA Board of Commissioners and Managing Director Prof Ahmed A Al-Melhem

railway will cut this delivery time in half.

And he says it will also be easier for tourists to travel to camp under the stars and pick berries. "In the future, foreign tourists coming to the farm could be in the tens of thousands," he told AFP. The train route will connect the Chinese city of Kunming to the Laos capital, with grand plans for high-speed rail to ultimately snake down through Thailand and Malaysia to Singapore.

Infrastructure-poor Laos, a reclusive communist-run country of 7.2 million people, previously had only four kilometres of railway tracks. But now sleek red, blue and white bullet trains will speed along the new line at up to 160 kmh (100 mph), passing through 75 tunnels and across 167 bridges, stopping at 10 passenger stations.

### Economic boost

Despite registering only dozens of COVID cases until April, Laos' economy took a pandemic battering — economic growth declined to 0.4 percent in 2020, the lowest level in three decades, according to the World Bank.

Hopes for a 2021 rebound were dashed — Laos locked down as it clocked up roughly 70,000 infec-

typical credit card but without the associated paperwork and the complexities of fees and interest payments.

They've also proven useful for consumers who do not have access to traditional credit, such as new immigrants to the United States. But consumer advocates say they carry the same risks as credit cards and shoppers must be careful not to saddle themselves with excessive debt and stay mindful of the services' differing terms. "The concern is that people could get overextended if they're not careful," said Chuck Bell, a program director at Consumer Reports.

### Don't 'overextend your finances'

The concept of paying in installments is nothing new in American commerce, but the disruptions of the Covid-19 pandemic were a boost to these new services, as more shoppers bought online. From chain stores to small online sites, retailers have organized partnerships to offer such payment services to customers and help them afford what they usually could not, while financial institutions from Mastercard to Goldman

added that the campaign focuses on a number of issues, including crypto assets and high-risk investments, as well as investing through fake or misleading sites. He added that it is pertinent to raise the public's awareness of the changing landscape consisting of emerging financial technologies, and ease of access to financial services, online transfers and shopping. While this represents an opportunity to develop and facilitate exchanges, it also poses threats and risks that dealers must consider, especially with the communication channels that could be exploited for promoting high-risk investments.

The governor concluded by stating that this is the second awareness campaign mutually organized by the CBK and CMA, stressing the continuous collaboration between the two authorities to raise awareness amongst the general public on issues related to investments, savings and finance.



VIENTIANE: Laos' Minister of Public Works and Transport Viengsavath Siphandone (L) and China's Ambassador to Laos Jiang Zaidong attending an unveiling ceremony for the Lane Xang bullet train in Vientiane. — AFP

tions in the past eight months. And while the railway could boost tourism, freight and agriculture, according to a World Bank report, the government needs to undertake substantial reforms, including improving border clearance processes. —AFP

Sachs are looking to offer their own.

According to a study by consulting firm McKinsey, these payment solutions represented six percent of unsecured loans in the United States in 2016, nine percent in 2020 and are expected to rise to 13 percent in 2023. "It's practical, it saves consumers because of lower interest costs and it's disruptive," said Kenneth Leon, CFRA's banking industry specialist.

Big business agrees: Australia's AfterPay was purchased by Square for \$29 billion this summer and Affirm is valued at \$37 billion on Wall Street. Regulators have taken notice of their success, with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau over the summer warning consumers to be wise and not "overextend your finances" when it comes to these products. At the same time, officials said current regulations on the firms are sufficient.

Michels, the shopper from Washington state, admits that the risk is there. She has never missed a payment on anything she's purchased, but she spends more than she usually would. "It's almost like a game. What can I do to get my limit increased?" she told AFP. —AFP

## Iran banks hail arbitration panel win over Bahrain

TEHRAN: Two leading Iranian banks have welcomed a decision by a Hague-based tribunal to order Bahrain to pay them more than \$270 million in compensation for its 2015 closure of a bank they had supported. The November 9 ruling from the Permanent Court of Arbitration found that reporting failures that Bahrain alleged showed Future Bank was a front for sanctions-busting were insufficient grounds for effectively expropriating the Iranian banks' money.

It found that Bahrain's motives had been primarily political, reflecting Gulf Arab anger at the nuclear agreement world powers had struck with Iran a few weeks earlier. The private award was not published by the tribunal but has been disclosed by the Iranian banks which sought its arbitration. Reacting to the award's disclosure, Bahrain charged that it contained "serious procedural, evidential and legal deficiencies". Even though the tribunal's awards are generally final, Bahrain vowed to mount an appeal through the Dutch courts.

Iran's state-owned Bank Melli and Bank Saderat sought arbitration in the case in 2017, citing the terms of an investment agreement signed by Tehran and Manama at a time of less strained relations in 2002. The banks' lead counsel Hamid Gharavi said he was "very satisfied with the tribunal's decision, because of the size of the compensation, the finding that international law has been violated, and the court's conclusion that the expropriation was not based on alleged breaches by Future Bank but motivated by a deliberately political agenda in the context of tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia".

### Tensions over nuclear deal

Future Bank was set up in Bahrain with tacit Saudi blessing in 2004 as a joint venture between the two Iranian banks and Bahrain's Ahli United Bank. Gharavi said the bank had been a success, right up to its abrupt closure by the Bahraini authorities. In 2014, the bank had become the kingdom's largest and the seventh largest in the six Gulf Arab states.

But everything had changed with the announcement of the Iran nuclear agreement, which was fiercely opposed by Saudi Arabia and its allies, on April 2, 2015. Bahrain confiscated Iranian assets worth more than \$1 billion and placed both Future Bank and the local branch of Iran Insurance Company under administration on April 30.

"We are going to implement the arbitral award, which is final and legally binding," Gharavi said. "Bahrain will not be able to challenge it by alleging what it claims are procedural flaws." Gharavi said the case created a precedent for other Iranian institutions to seek compensation for their losses from the Bahraini authorities. —AFP

## For Americans, convenience of buy now, pay later services come with risks

NEW YORK: Krista Michels can't get enough of the online services that allow American shoppers to pay for everything from Christmas presents to monthly bills without fees, known as "buy now, pay later." "I'm kind of addicted now," said the young mother in Washington state.

She first turned to these solutions offered at check-out stores or online to rebuild her credit rating, which was too low to access a traditional credit card. Michels now uses them whenever possible, at the supermarket or to pay her internet bills.

Startups like Affirm, AfterPay, Klarna and Sezzle usually allow consumers to pay for a purchase in four installments without fees or interest, like a



NBK Money Markets Report

# New COVID variant spurs risk off mode and volatility in markets

## Amid labor shortages and raw materials delays, US business activity slows moderately

**KUWAIT:** The Federal Reserve released the minutes of their meeting from earlier this month expressing their concern about inflation. Fed officials said they would be willing to raise interest rates if inflation keeps on rising. The minutes also signaled that the Fed could be reducing their stimulus for the pandemic relief. "Various participants noted that the committee should be prepared to adjust the pace of asset purchases and raise the target range for the federal funds rate sooner than participants currently anticipated if inflation continued to run higher than levels consistent with the committee's objectives," the minutes stated. The central bank will be reducing its monthly purchases by \$15 billion of which \$10 billion in treasuries and \$5 billion in mortgage backed securities.

Some members also wanted a faster pace to raise interest rates. The Fed Funds Futures was pricing in 3 rate hikes for 2022 following the release of the minutes on Wednesday. However, fears spurred in global markets and risk off mode was the sentiment on Friday after a new COVID variant was identified in South Africa. Worries of outbreaks and further disruptions worries markets and a selloff in global markets was the theme on Friday. Probabilities for interest rate hikes in the US fell and currently only 2 rate hikes are priced in for 2022.

The risk off mode sent the 10-year US treasury yield tumbling by 16 basis points from 1.63% to 1.47% in one day. As for safe-haven currencies, both the Japanese yen and Swiss franc reversed their trend and gained up to 1.51% in one day. As for the greenback, although the dollar index was gaining momentum throughout last

week, the dollar retreated and fell below 96.500 level to close the week at 96.089.

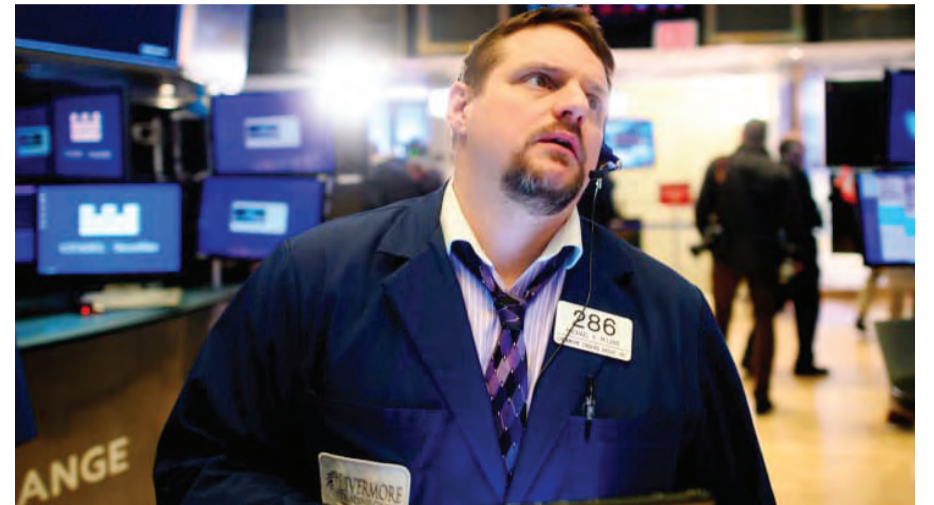
**Business activity slows**  
Amid labor shortages and raw materials delays, US business activity slowed moderately in November. Growth softened as service providers and manufacturers continue to struggle with higher inflation and an uncertain path to recovery. The IHS Markit flash composite purchasing managers' index slipped to 56.5 in November from 57.6 a month prior. Digging into the report, the gauge of manufacturing activity improved while services growth eased. The flash services PMI rose to 59.1 in November from 58.4 a month earlier, aided by stronger output and orders. Meanwhile, manufacturing activity slipped to 57 from 58.7 in October.

**EU & UK**  
**Eurozone economic growth accelerates**  
The flash reading for the Eurozone composite output index increased to

55.8 in November from 54.2 in October, marking a two-month high according to data released by IHS Markit last week. "A stronger expansion of business activity in November defied economists' expectations of a slowdown, but is unlikely to prevent the Eurozone from suffering slower growth in the fourth quarter, especially as rising virus cases look set to cause renewed disruptions to the economy in December," IHS Markit's chief business economist Chris Williamson said.

Looking at the data by sector, services outperformed manufacturing for a third straight month. Both far above the 50-expansion mark, Europe's manufacturing PMI came in at 58.6 while services registered at 56.6. The survey took place between November 10 and 19, likely not capturing the full effect of coronavirus restrictions recently imposed in some countries.

On the FX front, the single currency kept shedding value and broke the 1.12 level reaching a low of 1.1186 on Thursday. However, the news about the new variant and the volatility caused in FX markets pushed the EUR to a high of 1.1331.



**New Zealand RBNZ lifts interest rates for second time**

In its final policy meeting of the year, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand raised the official cash rate by 25 basis points to 0.75% as widely expected. Today, forecasters are expecting borrowing costs to rise to at least 2% by next year and possibly higher.

Driven by rising inflationary pressures and easing coronavirus restrictions, the decision came after annual inflation hit 4.9% in Q3 and the jobless rate fell to 3.4%. Meanwhile, house prices have doubled over the past seven years and are currently the most unaffordable among OECD nations. The country is set to end lockdowns starting December 3rd, allowing all business to resume operations.

oil reserves to combat higher energy prices. The Department of Energy declared it would release 50 million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the largest release from the reserve in US history. Meanwhile other nations such as the UK, India, Japan, Korea and China were said to be releasing about 11 million barrels in total. The coordinated effort to reduce prices follows a decision by OPEC+ to ignore calls to accelerate supply. However, the plan fell short of expectations and prices rose instead. Attention will now shift to how OPEC and its allies respond.

Crude prices tumbled on Friday as the new COVID variant spooked markets and worries of potential supply chain disruptions and demand caused the black gold prices to drop by more than 10% on Friday.

**Commodities**  
**Emergency oil reserves**  
Last week, President Joe Biden announced the release of emergency

**Kuwait**  
Kuwaiti Dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.32095.

**Rates - 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2021**

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1307	1.1186	1.1331	1.1317	1.1120	1.1505	1.1366
GBP	1.3459	1.3279	1.3465	1.3337	1.3130	1.3560	1.3360
JPY	113.95	113.05	115.52	113.36	111.40	115.50	113.00
CHF	0.9273	0.9373	0.9373	0.9239	0.9050	0.9440	0.9195



شركة الصفاء للاستثمار  
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

## KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 25 NOVEMBER 2021

(965) 22 675 140  
Al-Safat Tower, Hawalli, Beirut St.  
alsafatinvest.com  
research@alsafatinvest.com  
alsafatinvestment  
al-safat-investment-company

Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	31,451	7,719.97	-2.1%	0.4%	27.6%	370,127,977	145,647,727	22,828	30.7	2.2	75.0%
Main Market	10,462	5,983.82	-2.3%	0.1%	31.4%	1,155,755,632	131,215,532	38,361	24.7	1.6	25.0%
All Share	41,913	7,128.21	-2.1%	0.3%	28.5%	1,525,883,609	276,863,259	61,189	30.1	2.1	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
BANKS	24,282	1,631.59	-1.9%	0.7%	29.2%	194,063,258	76,675,062	10,264	30.3	2.3	57.30%
BASIC MATERIALS	949	1,063.55	-3.1%	-3.3%	18.4%	4,521,835	2,740,251	745	25.9	1.6	2.24%
CONSUMER DISCRETIONARY	701	1,336.17	-2.4%	5.7%	79.0%	31,799,588	5,597,971	2,358	16.8	5.3	1.65%
CONSUMER STAPLES	227	743.74	-2.0%	-4.2%	-9.1%	3,745,913	2,031,770	312	15.0	1.6	0.54%
ENERGY	303	1,454.31	-0.2%	-0.3%	13.9%	28,048,759	1,008,321	754	13.1	1.4	0.72%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	4,075	1,432.68	-2.3%	-0.4%	54.1%	704,595,265	81,188,520	21,867	8.8	1.7	9.62%
HEALTH CARE	396	798.89	0.9%	0.5%	-3.4%	11,248	5,656	9	29.0	5.2	0.93%
INDUSTRIALS	4,233	1,194.26	-3.3%	-0.7%	34.0%	91,075,014	37,494,069	8,083	37.6	1.3	9.99%
INSURANCE	663	1,594.23	-2.6%	7.9%	37.9%	10,116,375	2,145,657	881	7.8	1.2	1.56%
REAL ESTATE	2,928	1,362.56	-3.8%	-0.5%	43.0%	372,150,369	58,105,586	13,219	19.4	1.2	6.91%
TECHNOLOGY	11	771.15	0.0%	0.0%	53.4%	12,911	1,302	8	n.a	0.9	0.03%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	3,345	1,090.71	-0.8%	-1.1%	-1.1%	82,721,621	9,149,881	2,409	21.1	1.4	7.89%
UTILITIES	263	628.95	0.0%	1.3%	-13.7%	3,021,453	719,213	280	20.3	4.2	0.62%

**Top Gainers**

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
TAHSSILAT	64	22.61	23,887,480	1,480,429	1
KHOT	99.9	10.51	12,058	1,205	5
AGHC	195	6.56	2,018,267	376,694	231
KPROJ	151	6.34	20,614,596	3,081,672	743
KSHC	55.3	6.14	13,540,118	753,064	518

**Top Losers**

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
MARAKEZ	86	-25.22	1,723,091	153,589	236
EDU	598	-12.06	1,681,097	1,041,025	491
WARBACAP	100.5	-10.27	1,125,744	114,699	106
WARBABANK	287	-9.75	23,050,447	7,129,845	1,761
EQUIPMENT	66.9	-9.72	2,798,455	189,837	192

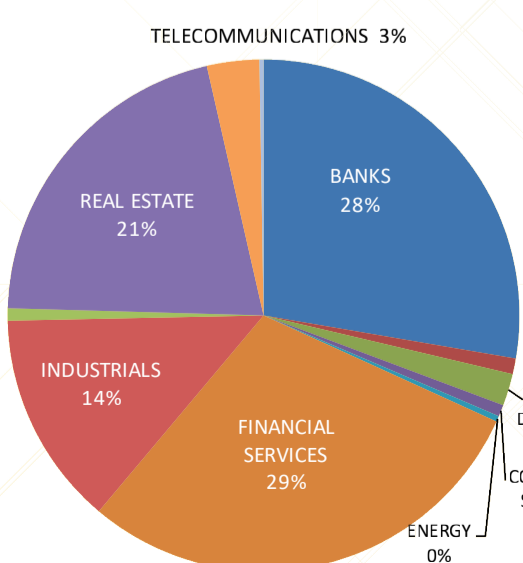
**Top Volume**

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
GFH	91.9	-9.01	296,117,790	28,494,963	5
NRE	224	-6.67	138,974,727	32,191,928	2
AAN	19.1	0.53	68,061,614	1,298,237	867
KRE	180	-2.17	54,112,865	9,929,732	2
GBK	254	-3.79	43,741,209	1,124,858	678

**Top Value**

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
NRE	224	-6.67	138,974,727	3,219,193	2,400
GFH	91.9	-9.01	296,117,790	28,494,963	5,436
AGLTY	997	-4.41	18,331,634	18,551,952	2,979
KFH	834	-1.42	21,030,654	17,635,834	2,621
NBK	1,017	-1.83	14,604,972	14,978,325	1,956

**Value Traded**



**Market Summary:**

- Premier market volume and value decreased by 11% and 24%, respectively. Main market volume and value decreased 37% and 29%, respectively.
- All indices closed below last week closing due to reaching a resistance level of which it couldn't overcome. The market is under correction.
- Technically, the All-Share index closed at 7128, support levels at 7105, 7042 and 7000. Premier index closed 7719, support levels at 7692, 7606, and 7533. Main index closed at 5983, support levels at 5959, 5925 and 5880.

## Business

## GCC quarterly profits reach a new record high in Q3-2021

## KAMCO GCC Corporate Earnings Report

KUWAIT: Aggregate net profits reported by companies listed on GCC exchanges reached a new record high during Q3-21 at \$55.5bn, an increase of 123.4% y-o-y and 22.7% q-o-q. The increase reflected positive earnings growth across the seven exchanges in the region with Kuwait leading during the quarter led by an aggregate net profit of \$5.6bn, an increase of almost six folds. Profits for Saudi Arabia, Dubai and Bahraini companies also more than doubled during the quarter, whereas Omani companies reported only marginal growth of 1.2%.

Higher profitability reflected accelerated economic activity in the region with the PMI figures for Saudi Arabia and UAE consistently and comfortably above the growth mark of 50 at 57.7 and 55.7 during October-21, respectively. The COVID-19 pandemic has largely remained under control over the last few months with declining cases as well as due to a fast paced vaccination effort in the GCC. As a result, bulk of the economic sectors are back at pre-pandemic capacities barring a few that include tourism and hospitality sectors.

The sector performance chart once again saw a repeat of last quarter with energy, banks and materials companies leading the quarterly net profit growth. The transportation sector was next with a net profit of \$3.34bn in Q3-2021 vs 0.04 bn in Q3-2020. The increase in profits was mainly led by Agility that reported net profits of \$3.1bn during the quarter mainly due to a gain on sale of its logistics unit to DSV Panalpina. On the other hand, the telecom sector reported a y-o-y fall in profits mainly led by a steep drop in profits reported by Ooredoo and Du.

Net profits for 9M-2021 more than doubled to \$139.1bn as compared to \$65.6bn during 9M-2020. The increase was mainly led by higher profits reported by Saudi Arabian companies with a net profit growth of 127.5% to reach \$101.0bn in 9M-2021 vs \$44.4bn in 9M-2020 followed by Abu Dhabi and Qatar with net profits reaching \$11.6bn and \$9.1bn, respectively.

The resumption of economic activity in the GCC to almost full scale was reflected in corporate profits booked during Q2-2021. Aggregate profits during the quarter breached pre-COVID levels to reach \$45.0bn during Q2-2021 vs. \$14.2bn during Q2-2020. The sequential growth in net profit was also healthy at 17.6% as a majority of the sectors posted growth as compared to last year.

Saudi Arabian companies reported the biggest absolute increase in earnings that rose by \$26.5bn or 356.6% y-o-y to reach \$33.9bn during Q2-2021. Quarterly net profit of Saudi Aramco was up 258.3% y-o-y to reach \$24.2bn mainly backed by higher oil and other commodity prices globally during the quarter. Companies in Kuwait also reported multi-

fold increase in quarterly profits from a record low profit last year, whereas Abu Dhabi-listed companies posted a profit growth of 49%. Omani companies reported the smallest y-o-y increase in earnings during the quarter at 22.3% to reach \$0.52bn.

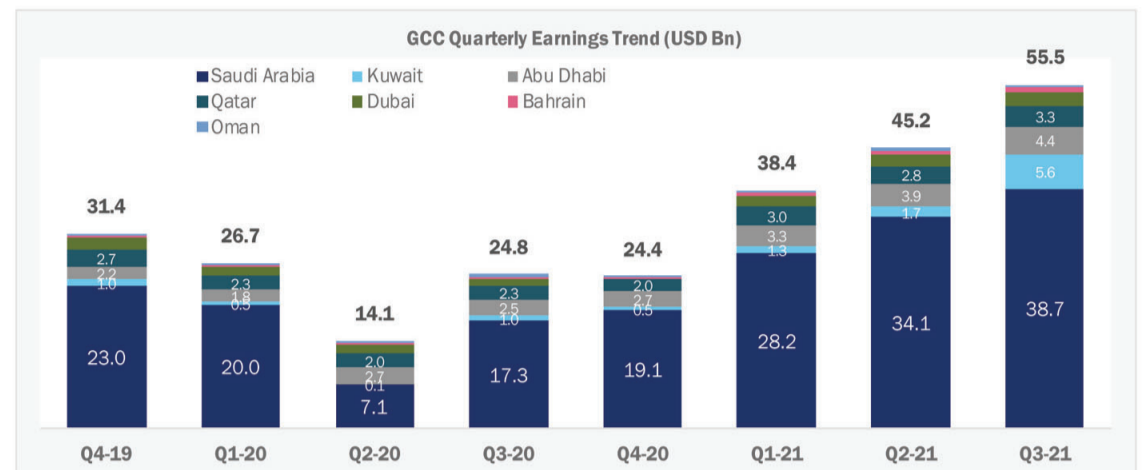
In terms of sector performance, the energy sector once again led the y-o-y rise in earnings posting \$24.5bn or 267.4% y-o-y jump in earnings up from \$6.7bn in Q2-2020. Profits for the banking sector almost doubled y-o-y to \$8.2bn during Q2-2021. Companies in the materials sector posted profits during Q2-2021 to the tune of \$4.3bn as compared to a net loss of \$0.78bn during Q2-2020.

On the other hand, sectors that were resilient during the pandemic witnessed a y-o-y decline in profits. Telecom was the one of the four sectors that posted a y-o-y decline with profits reaching \$1.64bn during Q2-2021, a decline of 11.6% y-o-y and 18.6% q-o-q. Insurance, Retailing and Food & Staples Retailing sectors also posted marginal y-o-y decline in profits during Q2-2021. Insurers in Saudi Arabia posted the biggest y-o-y decline in earnings during Q2-2021 with profits more than halved to \$118mn during the quarter as compared to \$253mn during Q2-2020.

Earnings reported by GCC-listed companies witnessed a faster-than-expected recovery during Q1-2021 backed by healthy growth seen in almost all sectors. The recovery was led by a resumption in economic activity in the region despite controlled restrictions as COVID-19 cases remerged at the start of the year resulting in partial-lockdowns. Business sentiments have remained upbeat as a result of one of the fastest vaccine administration in the world achieved by the GCC countries. This was also reflected in the monthly PMI, which indicates trends in manufacturing activity, for Saudi Arabia and UAE. According to Markit, Saudi Arabia's PMI in January-2021 was at 57.1, the highest since November-19 and remained elevated above the 50 mark during February-2021 and March-2021. Similarly, the PMI for UAE also remained above 50 during the first three months of this year. A PMI of above 50 indicates growth in manufacturing activity.

Quarterly net profits reached \$40.0bn during Q1-2021, up 49.2% or \$13.2bn as compared to \$26.8bn reported in Q1-2020. Earnings during the quarter also surpassed Q1-2019 level by 4.4%. The q-o-q growth as compared to Q4-2020 was even stronger at 59.9%. Out of the 21 sectors on the exchange, 17 sectors reported y-o-y as well as q-o-q growth in profits during Q1-2021. Moreover, the top 5 sectors in the region reported a y-o-y profit growth of 42% with the bulk of the growth coming from the materials sector.

On the other hand, the three sectors that reported y-o-y decline in profits included Consumer Services, Food & Staples Retailing and Software &



Source: Company Financials, Reuters, Bloomberg, Kamco Invest Research

Services. Companies in the Food & Staples Retailing and Software & Services sectors reported smaller profits due to a higher base in Q1-2020 that resulted in a decline in Q1-2021, whereas the decline in the Consumer Services sector was mainly led by losses reported by companies that continue to be affected by COVID-19 restrictions, including airlines and related industries.

In terms of sequential growth, excluding Bahraini companies, the growth in net profit was almost 80% or an absolute growth of \$10.9bn to reach \$25.1bn in Q3-2020. The biggest q-o-q growth was seen in the energy sector with the profits up by \$4.9bn or 72.9% to reach \$11.5bn. The banking sector was next with a profit growth of 66.9% after banks reported higher topline coupled with a decline in provisions that supported earnings. The materials sector reported profits of \$634.5mn during the quarter as compared to losses during Q2-2020. On the other hand, the Insurance and Real Estate sectors reported the biggest q-o-q decline in earnings at 36.8% and 22.4%, respectively.

Earnings performance when compared to last year was broadly negative with a decline of 34.5% in Q3-2020 with steep declines in some of the key large-cap sectors on the GCC exchanges. Saudi Arabian companies reported the biggest absolute decline in earnings that fell by \$10.2bn or 37.0% y-o-y to reach \$17.4bn during Q3-2020. Excluding the quarterly net profit of Saudi Aramco that declined by 44.5% y-o-y, aggregate profits for Saudi Arabia declined at a much smaller pace of 11.9% y-o-y. Companies in Dubai and Kuwait were next with declines of \$1.8bn and \$430.6mn, corresponding to y-o-y percentage declines of 59.2% and 30.4%, respectively. Companies listed in Abu Dhabi reported the smallest q-o-q decline in earnings at 2.9% to reach \$2.39bn.

## November-2021

The Energy sector reported the biggest absolute profits in the GCC that reached \$29.7bn, more than double y-o-y and 19.2% q-o-q. Profits for Saudi Aramco was up 146.3% y-o-y during Q3-2021 at \$29.1bn, whereas the rest of the companies in the sector reported profits of \$596.1mn in Q3-2021 as compared to a loss of \$145.4mn in Q3-2020. Profits for Aramco was supported by higher crude oil prices led by recovery in oil demand globally coupled with higher output during the quarter. In terms of segments, results also got a boost from improved refining and chemicals margins during the quarter. Sectors peers like Dana Gas and Al Rabigh Refining reported profits during Q3-2021 mainly led by higher revenues as compared to losses during Q3-2020.

The banking sector also reported higher profits during Q3-2021 that reached \$9.6bn, an increase of 36.1% y-o-y and 17.1% q-o-q. The y-o-y growth in profits was seen across the region after a steep decline in profits reported last year. Dubai-listed banks reported more than two fold increase in net profits in Q3-2021 followed by Kuwait and Bahrain listed banks. Saudi-listed banks posted profit growth of 24.3% y-o-y and 21.3% q-o-q and accounted for 37% of the sector profits during the quarter.

Profits for the materials sector stood at \$3.9bn during Q3-2021 as compared to a profit of \$0.7bn in Q3-2020. However, profits declined as compared to Q2-2021 by 13.0% mainly on the back of smaller q-o-q profits reported by Materials companies listed on Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The q-o-q decline was mainly led by higher input costs that led to lower profits for sector majors like SABIC and Yanbu National Petrochemicals. SABIC also reported a 2% q-o-q decline in volumes during Q3-2021 which was more than offset by higher selling prices.

## KIPCO raises KD 80m in rights issue

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - announced the successful completion of the company's share capital increase and the allocation of the shares to the subscribed shareholders. The rights issue of the 640 million shares on offer was oversubscribed, and KIPCO raised KD 80 million in equity. The company's issued and paid-up capital now stands at KD 264 million.

KIPCO's Board of Directors approved the rights issue in early August, announcing that it intended to raise the company's issued and paid-up capital by 32%, from KD 200 million to KD 264 million. The subscription period extended from November 1st to 21st. The rights issue saw the participation of a wide range of KIPCO's



Faisal Al Ayyar

shareholders, including financial institutions, funds, portfolios and individuals. The price offer was set at 125 fils per issue share. Kamco Invest acted as the issuance advisor and subscription agent.

Faisal Al Ayyar, KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive), said: "The success of KIPCO's right issue subscription reflects the relationship of confidence and trust that we share with our shareholders, for which we thank them. We would also like to thank the Capital Markets Authority and regulatory agencies for facilitating the capital increase."

He added: "The money raised from this rights issue will support our long-term strategy of growing our core companies, as they expand their activities in Kuwait and the region. This exercise also allows us to maintain a balanced capital structure."

## • Zubair Ashraf

The campaign ran from 22nd August until 24th November 2021, awarding 2 lucky winners every month with KD100 cash. With 'Push Notifications' customers will benefit from the convenience of transaction updates and smoothbrowsing of saved transaction history. The service is particularly valuable to travellers, who in the absence of a roaming network, can access the service as long as they are connected to a WIFI network. To enable the Push Notifications service on the ABK app, customers should go to 'My Profile', click on 'Notification Settings', and enable Push Notifications to enter the monthly draw and win.

employees and residents working in the government, oil sectors and companies listed with the Bank as well as retirees, and take advantage of the benefits of this campaign and get an instant cash gift from KD 400 to KD 500 or an interest-free loan for a period of up to 4 years and up to KD 70,000, Kuwaiti pensioner, along with expatriate customers who transfer their debt to the Bank will receive an instant cash gift of 2% from their transferred debt up to KD 1,000.

The Bank stated that Al Najma Account prizes are distinguished by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that the account offers weekly prize of KD 5,000/-, monthly prize of KD 20,000/- and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000. Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 500, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma account prizes.

## ABCK-AmCham Kuwait hosts webinar on Kuwait's future energy sector

KUWAIT: ABCK - AmCham Kuwait hosted a webinar on the topic of 'Kuwait's Future Energy Sector' presented by Sarah AlUsaimi, Industrial Engineering Specialist at Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP), and Fred Shuaibi - Energy Focus Group Chair (ABCK-AmCham Kuwait) and Partner in Charge at KNDR.

AlUsaimi spoke on the topic of 'PPP & Renewable Energy Projects in Kuwait', starting with Kuwait's demographics, as well as the structure of Foreign Investment in Kuwait, as she briefly explained the roles of three important bodies in Kuwait's business environment including KDIPA (Kuwait Direct Investment Promotional Authority), Council of Ministers General Secretariat, and KAPP. AlUsaimi further elaborated on the role of KAPP as the main body responsible for PPP projects implementation.

AlUsaimi explained 'Kuwait Vision 2035' and the Kuwait National Development Plan in which a unified direction is intended to transform Kuwait into a financial, cultural, and institutional leader in the region. She explained that the program is organized around seven pillars and 5 strategic directions, which are Kuwait's global position, human capital, healthcare, living environment, infrastructure, economy, and public administration.

The PPP framework in Kuwait was explained and its various components, such as the Department of Legal Advice and Legislation, State Audit Bureau, other public entities. AlUsaimi also spoke about the PPP Project cycle in Kuwait which starts with the preparation of the project proposal and then goes to the assignment of the Transaction Advisor, which then leads to the preparation of a feasibility study. The project and EOI are then announced and preparation and release of RFQ Documents are done, as it then moves to the evaluation of submitted SOQs and preparation and release of RFP Documents. Next, the selection of the preferred bidder and negotiations are done and finally, the signing of the PPP agreement and financial closure is done.

AlUsaimi explained the milestones for the Kuwaiti PPP program and highlighted that since its establishment in 2014, KAPP had tendered around (7) projects in multiple sectors (utilities, education, waste management, real estate, and services), worth 4.840 million USD in estimated Capital Expenditure (CapEx). Another important milestone was KAPP's latest project, Um Al Hayman WWTP, which achieved financial close on July 29th, 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic and received many regional awards and global recognition.

AlUsaimi also explained some advantages of



doing PPPs in Kuwait including high credit rating, political stability, and internationally recognized democracy, attractive incentives such as waivers on customs and taxes, and low usufruct fees. Other benefits include a legally binding and well-defined contractual framework, transparent competitive bidding procedures with external oversight and audit, governmental high need of infrastructure development/enhancement of services to meet demand, and urban development amongst others.

AlUsaimi then gave in-depth information on Energy Sector in Kuwait and briefly explained the various Renewable Energy Projects in Kuwait such as the Shagaya Renewable Energy Project whose first phase was completed under the supervision of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), which contracted by leading international companies in the field of solar and wind power plants. Al-Dibdibah Power & Shagaya Renewable Energy - Phase III Project is an extension to Kuwait's vision of producing up to 15% of the energy from renewable energy sources by the year 2030. She highlighted that Al-Dibdibah Power & Shagaya Renewable Energy - Phase III Project is intended to utilize a mix of different technologies that might include Solar Photovoltaic (PV) plant, Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) plant, Wind Power Plant.

Fred Shuaibi then followed the presentation with the topic of 'Kuwait's Oil & Gas Sector's Efforts in the Road to Recovery Post-Pandemic'. He started his presentation by speaking about the challenges and setbacks that Kuwait's Oil & Gas sector (OGS) has experienced due to the pandemic, as well as the global energy and its impact on the world's economy. Shuaibi said that Kuwait has recognized the urgent need to regroup its OGS sectors that suffered heavily in terms of day-to-day operations, loss of expert and skilled manpower in its various OGS due to Pandemic lockdowns, and limited access to workplaces.

He explained that the OGS authorities have worked on revamping the affected operations in the OGS and initiated various recovery plans starting with consolidating its companies' structure and regrouping all OGS companies under 3 major companies. Shuaibi further explained that the move aimed at reducing setbacks caused by the pandemic and to provide a strong recovery plan during the upcoming period through strong and well-coordinated management in its quest to save costs and reap reasonable profit. This will help boost the local economy and the country's visionary National Development Plan (NDP) vision of 2035.

## ABK congratulates winners of 'Push Notifications'

KUWAIT: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced the names of the November winners of the 'Push Notifications' campaign 'Want to win KD100?'. The final draw was held on 24th November 2021 under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the lucky winners were:

- Mahmoud Zaki Hannon

## Al-Tijari announces Al Najma winners

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait conducted the weekly draws on Al Najma Account and Salary Transfer Campaign yesterday. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Ahmed Al-Basman.

## The results of the draws were as follows:

- 1- Al Najma weekly account - the prize of KD 5,000/- went to the winner Minor / Al-Batoul Khaled Abdulrazzaq Modhaffar.
- 2- Salary account campaign - the prize of up to KD 1,000/- went to the winner Abdulaziz Wandan Al-Wandan.

The Bank stated that the salary campaign is aimed at customers who transfer their salaries of KD 500 or more to the Bank, especially Kuwaiti

# BRAZIL FOOTBALL TEAM'S CRASH SURVIVOR FINDS NEW LIFE IN MUSIC

Jakson Follmann remembers the moment the plane's engine died and everything went black. Then, an intense pain, and cold rain falling on his body. Drifting in and out of consciousness, he called out for help, until he saw the beam of a flashlight shining through the wreckage of the fuselage. It has been five years since the plane carrying Follmann and the rest of Brazilian football team Chapecoense Real ran out of fuel on the way to the final match of the South American Cup, slamming into the mountains outside Medellin, Colombia.

Seventy-one people were killed in the crash. Follmann, now 29 years old, is one of six who survived—though he lost his right leg below the knee. "We were all so happy, so excited to go play for the title. Then from one day to the next, I lost my friends, I lost the source of my livelihood," he said. "After that, my biggest dream became something so simple: just to be able to walk again." In the half-decade since, the one-time goalkeeper from the southern state of Santa Catarina has had to reinvent himself. His football career cut short by the crash, he has found new life as a motivational speaker and Brazilian country singer.

"As a kid, I had two big dreams. Becoming a footballer came first. Then fate brought what it did, and now I'm living my second dream thanks to music," he told AFP. Follmann, who has released four "sertanejo" (Brazilian country) singles, spent two months in the hospital after the crash undergoing treatment for 13 fractures, including two severe ones in his upper spinal column. He said he turned to music and his Christian faith to get him through. "I had two options after the accident: sit around



In this file photo former goalkeeper of the Brazilian football team Chapecoense, Jakson Follmann, a survivor of an airplane crash in Colombia in 2016 in which most of his teammates perished, walks during a rehabilitation session at a clinic in Sao Paulo, Brazil. —AFP

feeling sorry for myself, or lift my head up and face life," he said. He chose the latter.

He got a tattoo on his right arm—a picture of himself in his Chapecoense jersey climbing a staircase

with his prosthetic leg, a giant dove in the sky above. By 2019, he had recovered so well he was able to appear as a contestant on reality TV show "Popstar." He didn't just participate in the show: he

won, with sertanejo songs that pulled at the audience's heartstrings.

## Practice, practice

Follmann, who moved to Sao Paulo last March, played for Brazil's under-20 national team and several local clubs before joining Chapecoense. He had played just one official match for the underdog club, which was having the best season in its history before the crash. Just three players survived. One, Alan Ruschel, today plays for first-division side America Mineiro. Another, Neto, tried to return to football, but hung up his boots in 2019 after struggling to overcome the injuries left by the accident. Follmann, for his part, says in some ways his new job is not so different from his old one. "As a footballer, I practiced every day. Music is no different," he said. He has set himself a new goal. "I want to reach people," he said. "Music can transform lives, like it transformed mine."

## Message of hope

Follmann also gives motivational speeches at business events about overcoming adversity, delivering a message of hope. And he has a soon-to-be-published book, a mixture of memoir and self-help guide. "I had to take myself apart to put the pieces back together again. It took a lot of patience," he said of the lessons learned on his journey. Today, he usually wears his prosthetic leg unhidden, and jokes about it in posts on social media. Five years on, his mantra is a message that for him has ceased to be a cliché: "Live every day as intensely as if it were your last." —AFP

## SPANISH WRITER ALMUDENA GRANDES DEAD AT 61



In this picture Spanish writer Almudena Grandes poses during a photocall at "El Club de las 25" awards at the Palace Hotel in Madrid. —AFP

Novelist Almudena Grandes, who made her name with an erotic novel but later won plaudits for writing on Spain's recent history, died Saturday, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced. "We have lost one of the leading writers of our time," he wrote on Twitter. "Committed and brave, who chronicled our recent history from a progressive point of view. Your memory, your work, will always be with us, Almudena Grandes," he added.

Born in Madrid in 1960, Grandes was a writer and columnist who made her name with the erotic novel "Las edades de Lulu" (The Ages of Lulu) which caused a scandal but was also very successful, winning a her prize for erotic fiction. Moving on from the erotic genre, she wrote "Te llamare viernes" (1991), a love story between marginalized people in a hostile Madrid, and three years later "Malena es un nombre de tango" (Malena is the Name of a Tango) (1994), a highly acclaimed novel in which she tackled one of her recurring themes: an imperfect girl rebelling against social norms to find her place in the world.

In 2010, she embarked on an ambitious six-volume project called "Episodios de una guerra interminable" (Episodes of an endless war), which deals with the post-civil war years in Spain. She was also a regular columnist for El Pais newspaper, and in a column published in mid-October, she wrote about being diagnosed with the cancer which would go on to kill her. "I have had to write some very complicated articles in my life. None like this one," she wrote. "It all started a little over a year ago: a routine check-up, a malignant tumor, a good prognosis and off to fight."

Her death sparked an outpouring of tributes on Twitter. "It is with deep regret that we bid farewell to Almudena Grandes, a master narrator of Spanish literature, who has left us too soon," tweeted Spain's Instituto Cervantes. "Almudena Grandes masterfully portrayed our recent history and gave a voice to those who never had one. We were fortunate to have her with us. To her readers, she will always be with us." —AFP

# HONG KONG PROTEST FILM WINS TAIWAN'S GOLDEN HORSE AWARD



Taiwanese actor Chang Chen gestures after winning the Best Actor for the film "The Soul" at the 58th Golden Horse Film Awards in Taipei. —AFP photos



Taiwanese actress Alyssa Chia poses for a picture with her trophy after winning the Best Actress for the film "The Falls".

A film on Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement won best documentary at Taiwan's Golden Horse Awards on Saturday, at an event dubbed the Chinese-language "Oscars" that went ahead without the legion of mainland filmmakers and stars who once used to walk its red carpet. Hong Kong director Kiwi Chow's "Revolution of Our Times" takes

its name from a pro-democracy protest slogan and has never been shown commercially in Hong Kong. The Golden Horse awards have become a bulwark against Beijing's censorship and often bolster films that would be banned in China and Hong Kong. They ran afoul of Beijing when a Taiwanese director called for the island's independence in an acceptance

speech at their 2018 ceremony, prompting outrage in China, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory. No mainland films featured in the 2019 nomination list after Chinese authorities ordered directors and actors to boycott the event. Commercial mainland cinema and some advertisers have since then steered clear.

Accepting this year's award in a video speech aired at the ceremony in Taipei, Chow said he wishes to dedicate his film to "Hong Kongers who have conscience, justice and who have shed tears for Hong Kong." "I cried many times when making the film and many times I found comfort, vented my anger and hatred, and faced my fear and trauma through this film," he said.

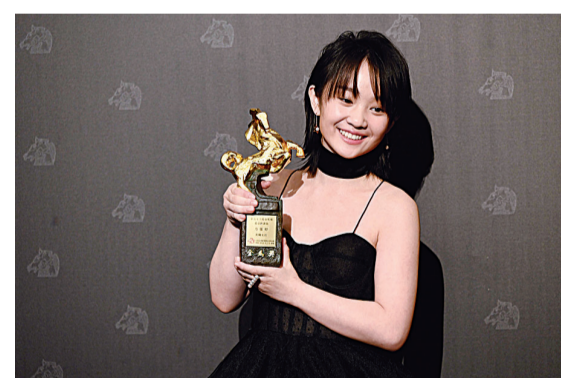
Chow has sold the rights to his work overseas, in an effort to avoid Hong Kong's sweeping new censorship of the film industry and a Beijing-imposed national security law aimed at crushing dissent in the city. He told AFP in a recent interview that the Golden Horse awards have "become a free outlet especially for Hong Kong movies that cannot be distributed in Hong Kong." Meanwhile on Saturday, Australia-based, Macau-born Clara Law claimed best director for her drama "Drifting Petals," which featured some scenes based on Hong Kong's 2014 pro-democracy protests.

A representative who collected the award for Law said that it was uncertain whether the movie could be shown in the city. The best film gong went to Taiwanese director Chung Mong-hong's family drama "The Falls," which also won in three other categories including best actress. Hong Kong director Jun Li's "Drifting," based on the real-life story of a group of homeless people taking authorities to court, only took the best adapted screenplay award despite having the most nominations at 12.

This year featured just two nominations from mainland China—a documentary and an animated short film. Both failed to win any prizes. Last year, two Hong Kong films that cast an uncomfortable spotlight on China won accolades, with one of the winners pledging support for pro-democracy activists in their acceptance speech. —AFP



Taiwanese film director Fiona Roan displays her trophy after winning the Best New Director.



Taiwanese actress Caitlin Fang displays her trophy after winning the Best Performer.



Taiwanese actor Liu Kuan-ting displays his trophy after winning the Best Supporting Actor.



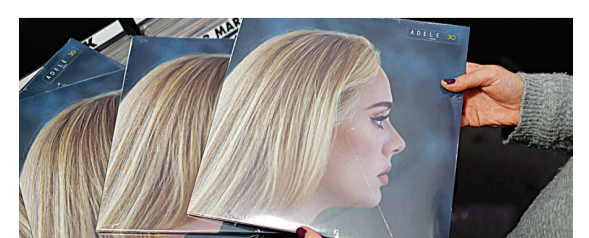
Taiwanese actress Wang Yu-xuan displays her trophy after winning best supporting actress.

## Adele tops UK album and singles chart

Adele on Friday clinched a rare double in the UK music charts, seizing both number one spots for singles and albums. The Official Charts Company said the British superstar's "30"—her first release in six years—had 261,000 chart sales and was the fastest-selling first-week album this year. It was also the biggest opener for a female solo artist since her last album, "25", released in 2015, and means all four of her studio albums have

now gone to number one. "25" is still in the charts at number 15, as is "21" and the debut that made her name, "19", at numbers 18 and 31 respectively.

The 33-year-old singer-songwriter also kept the number one single slot, with the first release from the album, "Easy On Me", for the sixth week running. A second track from "30", "Oh My God", was the highest new entry at number two, while another, "I Drink Wine", went in at four. —AFP



In this file photo a member of staff sorts copies of the new album from British singer-songwriter Adele, "30" in Sister Ray record store in the soho area of central London. —AFP



Macaque monkeys gather outside the Phra Prang Sam Yod temple during the annual Monkey Buffet Festival in Lopburi province, north of Bangkok. —AFP photos



Macaque monkeys climb onto a news photographer at the Phra Prang Sam Yod temple.



Macaque monkeys climb over a man as he serves them a Thai dessert.



Macaque monkeys eat food left on a table outside the Phra Prang Sam Yod temple.



Macaque monkeys gather across from the Phra Prang Sam Yod temple.

## Monkey business at Thai town fruit festival



A macaque monkey bites a woman's hair.



Macaque monkeys gather outside the Phra Prang Sam Yod temple.



A macaque monkey drinks from a water bottle outside the Phra Prang Sam Yod temple.

Their table manners were shocking, but the guests of honor at a special banquet in the Thai town of Lopburi yesterday loved monkeying around. Lopburi has been laying on an annual feast of fruit for its population of macaques since the late 1980s, part religious tradition and part tourist attraction. This year's Monkey Buffet Festival saw around 1,000 hungry simians descend on tables and wheelchairs piled high with fruit outside the town's 800-year-old Pra Prang Sam Yod temple. Organizer Yongyuth Kitwatananusont said the monkeys have a special taste for durian, the pungent love-it-or-hate-it tropical fruit popular across Southeast Asia.

COVID restrictions meant last year's party was missing its usual crowd of spectators, but this year the humans were back in force, with more than 100 turning out to see the furry fruit fanatics. And the cheeky monkeys were keen to renew their acquaintance with their distant cousins, clambering over onlookers, stealing hats, chewing long hair and giving the occasional bite. —AFP



Macaque monkeys climb outside the Phra Prang Sam Yod temple.



A macaque monkey eats a piece of watermelon.



Macaque monkeys eat fruit left on a table outside the Phra Prang Sam Yod temple.

## RARE HUNTING SCENE RAISES QUESTIONS OVER POLAR BEAR DIET



This handout photo shows a female polar bear chasing a reindeer in water off the Svalbard archipelago, Norway.

A polar bear chases a reindeer into the water, drags it ashore and devours it, in a striking scene caught on film for the first time. With sea ice melting, the king of the Arctic may be changing its diet. The dramatic spectacle played out in Norway's Svalbard archipelago on August 21, 2020 — in summer, the sea ice retreats and takes with it the seals that make up the polar bear's main source of food. A research team from a nearby Polish scientific station watched it happen and caught for the first time on camera a polar bear hunting a reindeer.

The video shows a young female chasing a male reindeer into the icy waters, catching and drowning it, then pulling it on shore and making a meal of it. "The whole situation was so amazing that it was like watching a documentary," said Izabela Kulaszewicz, a biologist at the University of Gdansk.

"You could almost hear the voice of a narrator in the background saying that you absolutely have to watch this event because we will most likely never see anything like it again," she told AFP.

### Down to 'modern media' ?

The scene was so unusual that she co-wrote an article in the scientific journal *Polar Biology* with two other researchers. In it, they argued that the incident was one of a series of observations that suggest polar bears are increasingly preying on terrestrial animals to make up for their limited access to seals. In Svalbard, just over 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from the North Pole and where signposts warn of the danger of polar bears, some 300 sedentary bears live alongside around 20,000 reindeer. According to the article's authors, there are indications that polar bears have been hunting reindeer more frequently in recent decades.

They say that two factors are at play: the retreating sea ice is stranding the bears on land for longer periods, and the number of reindeer has been steadily rising on Svalbard since a 1925 hunting ban. Eating reindeer is therefore a matter of both necessity and opportunity for the furry white beast, they suggest. However, other experts caution against reading too much into the incident. "If polar bears were killing reindeer back in the 1950s and 60s, it would have been very rare to have



This handout photo shows a female polar bear feeding on the carcass of a reindeer on the Svalbard archipelago, Norway.

been seen, as there were few people, few bears, and few reindeer" in Svalbard at the time, said Andrew Derocher, a professor at the University of Alberta. "Now, with modern media, everyone has a camera, social media and the 'news' spreads fast," he added.

### Opportunistic hunters

While high-fat, high-calorie ringed and bearded seals make up their main diet, polar bears are also known to feed on eggs, birds, rodents and even dolphins. Weighing between 70 and 90 kilos (155 and 200 pounds) as adults, reindeer would be a good complement for the bears during the lean summer period, which has grown longer due to global warming. Two days after the Polish researchers filmed their video, the same polar bear was observed devouring another reindeer carcass.

"Reindeer can be important, at least for some polar bears when they have to stay on land for extended periods," said Norwegian expert Jon Aars, co-author of the article. Experts note, however, that the new diet would not make a difference in bolstering the animal's popula-

tion size. "While an occasional successful predation attempt on reindeer may be good in the short-term for an individual bear or two (and the media), I think there is little significance at the population level for either polar bears or reindeer," said professor Ian Stirling, of the Canadian Wildlife Service.

Polar bears are strong swimmers—their Latin name is *Ursus maritimus*—but they can't keep up with reindeer on long distances on land. Elsewhere in the Arctic, caribou—as North American reindeer are known—are not as vulnerable as their Svalbard cousins, whose wariness seems to have dissipated since the hunting ban. Caribou "are also larger animals and have co-evolved with land predators, namely wolves, wolverines, and barren ground grizzlies, making them more challenging prey," said Geoff York, of conservation organization Polar Bears International. The future looks especially ominous for Svalbard's polar bears. "There's not enough ice to sustain a polar bear population," Derocher said. "I suspect that given the trend, the Barents Sea polar bear population—which includes Svalbard—is one that will disappear this century." —AFP

Sports

# Qadisiya beat titleholder Al-Arabi in early Kuwait Premier League showdown

## Mutawwa's goal enough for visitors to secure second win of season

**KUWAIT:** Titleholder Al-Arabi lost at home to archrivals Qadisiya 1-0 in an early heated match held during the second week of the Kuwait Premier League. Veteran forward Bader Al-Mutawwa scored the visitors' only goal of the match held at the Sabah Al-Salem Stadium on Saturday. The win gives Qadisiya six points from two matches as they have beaten Al-Shabab last week. Meanwhile, Al-Arabi suffered their first defeat of the season, and dropped to fifth in the standings with three points after they had won their first match of the season against Al-Tadhamon.



### Qadisiya, Kuwait clash on Saturday

Al-Arabi controlled the pace for most of the first half but failed to take advantage of their many chances in front of Qadisiya's goal. The pace of the game picked up during the second half and culminated at the 72nd minute when Mutawwa struck the ball in the back of Arabi's net, taking advantage of an error by the latter's

goalkeeper Suleiman Abdulghafoor. In Saturday's other match, Salmiya earned their first three points of the season after beating Al-Shabab 2-0.

Kuwait SC remains on top of the standings with two wins from two matches against Al-Yarmouk and Al-Tadhamon. Kazma has six points too and sits second ahead of Qadisiya on goal difference. Al-Nasr is fourth with four points after they were held to a 1-1 draw against Al-Fahaheel, following their 3-2 win against Salmiya in the first week.

Qadisiya looks to take the momentum of their big win against Al-Arabi when they visit Kuwait SC on Saturday in another early showdown between two giants of Kuwait's football. The third week also features a heated clash between Kazma and Al-Nasr on Thursday, while Al-Arabi looks to recover from their loss when they host Salmiya on Friday.



**KUWAIT:** Al-Arabi's Hassan Hamdan #44 heads the ball against Qadisiya during the two teams' Kuwait Premier League match on Saturday. —KUNA

## Late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Shooting Tournament concludes

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** The Late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Shooting Tournament concluded on Saturday at the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex. The tournament featured competitions in the 10m air pistol and rifle as well as Olympic archery.

The men's 10 m pistol competition saw Hamad Abdullah Al-Namshan winning first place followed by Ali Saad Al-Mutairi as Hassan Al-Failakamy took third place. Meanwhile Ali Farhan Al-Mutairi won first place in the 10 m rifle, while Abdallah Awadh Al-Harby came second and Majid Hayef Al-Dhafiri third.

In the women's 10 m pistol competition, Sundus Bader Al-Hamad won first place, while Israa Bahman came second and Mariam Al-Kandary third. Mariam Mohammad Irzouqi took first place in the 10 m rifle competition, followed by Fatima Awadh and Reem Al-Bughaili who finished second and third, respectively.

The men's Olympic archery competition saw Faisal Baraka Al-Rashidi winning first place, followed by Abdullah Taha and Abdullah Al-Harby who finished second and third, respectively. The men's compound archery contest saw Abdullah Yaqoub Malallah winning first place, Bader Al-Shilahi second and Ahmad Al-

Shatti third.

Following the conclusion of the ceremony, the championship's sponsor Sheikh Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah spoke to journalists and said the family of the Late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah is keen on organizing this tournament annually to commemorate his memory "as one of Kuwait's loyal men", and in support of the club. He said this championship is an important stage to prepare Kuwaiti shooters for upcoming international events. Sheikh Mubarak Al-Abdullah lauded the efforts of the Kuwait Shooting Sport Club's Board of Directors to develop the sport, which resulted in achievements in several important international events.

Meanwhile, President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Duaj Al-Otaibi said the tournament saw a large number of shooters participating, noting that shooters exhibited an "excellent technical level" as indicated by their scores. He valued the support of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah to organize this tournament annually. Furthermore, Otaibi reiterated that the championship serves as a good preparation for Kuwaiti shooters who prepare to take part in the third Gulf Games that Kuwait hosts in January 2022, and the HH the Amir International Grand Prix to be held in Kuwait in March 2022.



**KUWAIT:** The championship's sponsor Sheikh Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah poses for a group photo with winners in the men's contests.



The championship's sponsor Sheikh Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah poses for a group photo with winners in the women's contests.

## Kuwait keep lead in women's futsal league

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait SC's women's futsal team maintain their hold on the top spot of the standings after beating Salwa Al-Sabah Club 4-2 in their match held Saturday as part of the sixth week of the URC League.

The win puts Kuwait's total points at 21, while Salwa Al-Sabah's total remained at three only. Meanwhile, Al-Arabi drew with Al-Fatat Club 1-1 in an exciting match. Dina Al-Khawari scored first for Al-Fatat in the first half. Al-Arabi players were unlucky as most of their shots hit the uprights and cross bar, until Mariam Baroum's equalizer came in the second half. The result put Al-Arabi in third place with 13 points, while Al-Fatat remained in second place with 16 points.

Salmiya had the largest score this week by beating Fatayat Al-Oyoun 12-3, collecting their first three points. They are in sixth place, while Fatayat Al-Oyoun remained in fourth place with six points. Salmiya's Ukrainian professional player Anastasia Jacob scored a double hat-trick (six goals) during the match. Kuwait's Fajar Ahmad remains URC League's top scorer with 16 goals, followed by Riley Marquez 15, Ksenia Hurtinscoe 13. The league consists of 10 weeks. The top four teams will go for best-of-three playoffs, where the league's leader plays the team in fourth place, and team that finishes in second place plays the third team.



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait SC and Salwa Al-Sabah Club match in action.

## MS Dossary's Game On Kuwait concludes first tournament



**KUWAIT:** MS Dossary's Game On Kuwait tournament recently concluded to great fanfare. The esports association football tournament brought in large crowds of spectators to watch teams of two battle it out for the chance to be champions. The esports tournament took place this month at Marina Crescent.

MS Dossary's Game On Kuwait sees teams of two switch their primary roles as they tag each other in and out of play when certain conditions are met. One being that they must do so at half time.

While MS Dossary had initially planned on attending the event in person, he was unable to do so due to an unexpected scheduling conflict. Instead he was able to record an encouraging video to all the participants that was aired on the day of the tournament.

The opening round saw 16 ready teams go head to head in 8 matches. All tournament games adhered to a playoff format. The first match of the tournament was Uchiha versus D2WN. Here D2WN won by 2-1 to move forward in the tournament.

Team Force forfeited their opening match to Milan as they were a no show at the time of their game. By default, Milan advanced to the quarter-finals.

The remainder of the playoff brackets scores were as follows:

N.O.I.S. edge by Gunners 2-1, and M.O.H.D. beat Tornado 2-0.

Al-Hashemi won 2-1 over 4A. Team Kayedhoum won 4-1 over United.

R9 Team stumbled, losing 0-1 to Joker 23 in the playoffs.

The eighth and final playoff match had Gullit win 1-0 over Jawi.



The quarter-finals kicked off with D2WN victorious 3-1 over Milan. There might have been a slight disadvantage for Milan since it was their first proper match.

Next the crowd watched N.O.I.S. lose 1-3 to M.O.H.D.

In the third quarter-final game Al-Hashemi came up short 1-3 in their matchup against Team Kayedhoum.

Last but not least, Joker 23 won 3-0 against Gullit to conclude the quarter-finals brackets.

The semi-finals started with D2WN winning 2-1 over the high scoring M.O.H.D. team.

Closing out the semi-finals was another close match, but Team Kayedhoum outscored Joker 23, and the game ended 3-2.

The third place match was played just before the finals, and M.O.H.D. won

a solid game 3-2 against Joker 23 to take third in the tournament rankings. A superb match, all in all.

The teams with perfect records that qualified for the MS Dossary's Game On Kuwait finals were D2WN and Team Kayedhoum. The final match was a high-scoring affair, with five goals scored in total. In the end Team Kayedhoum finished ahead by a score of 3-2.

With a successful first tournament run of MS Dossary's Game On Kuwait, there is going to be considerable buzz for another edition next year.

To find out more about MS Dossary's Game On Kuwait and other events like it, follow @RedBullKuwait on Instagram and Twitter, and @RedBull on Facebook, or visit redbull.com.

## Kuwait grabs five medals at 2021 Asia Triathlon Cup Doha

**DOHA:** Racers of Kuwait Triathlon Club won three gold, one silver and one bronze medals at the conclusion of the 2021 Asia Triathlon Cup Doha on Saturday. Abdulaziz Al-Duajj of Kuwait won the gold medal of the men's race of the 20-29 age category, finishing in 1:02:14. He also got the gold medal in the regional race as the best male triathlete in the Arabian Gulf. His compatriot Hoda Al-Saleh came second in the women's race in the same age category and got the gold medal in the regional race as the best female triathlete in the Arabian Gulf. Abdullah Al-Refaei of Kuwait won the bronze medal of the Gulf race. The Kuwaiti mission to the championship was made up of 13 male and female triathletes. They were accompanied by President and Vice-President of Kuwait Triathlon Federation Rashed Al-Kandari and Mohammad Haider, respectively. The two-day event, organized by Qatari Triathlon Federation in Lusail City, gathered 250 elite triathletes from 18 countries. It consisted of 750 m swimming, 20 km biking and five km running races. —KUNA



## Sports

# Devin Booker shines as Suns extend win streak to 16

## Streak in jeopardy as Phoenix face red-hot Warriors next

LOS ANGELES: Devin Booker scored 30 points and the Phoenix Suns led wire-to-wire to easily beat the Brooklyn Nets 113-107 and extend their NBA winning streak to 16 games on Saturday. The Suns now have the second-longest winning streak in franchise history as they survived a late comeback by Brooklyn. They are trying to equal the 2006-07 team, which holds the record of 17 straight wins.

Booker did most of his damage in the first and third quarters, shooting nine of 18 from the floor overall and nailing four three-pointers in 32 minutes of playing time. Chris Paul finished with 22 points, eight assists and five rebounds and recorded his 5,000th career rebound in the second quarter in front of the crowd of 18,070 at Barclays Center. "Obviously, everybody knows the ultimate goal is to win a championship," Paul said. "But if you don't enjoy the small victories throughout the regular season, then what the hell are you doing?"

Phoenix, who are 17-3 on the season, will try to set the franchise win streak record when they face the red-hot Golden State Warriors tomorrow. "I'm looking forward to it, man," Booker said. "Obviously not a make-it or break-it game, not a playoff game, but we know it's going to be high-energy, two best records in the NBA. It's going to be a high-intensity, fun game."

Mikal Bridges added 13 while Deandre Ayton

and JaVale McGee contributed 10 apiece in the win. Kevin Durant scored a game-high 39 points for the Nets, who had their four-game winning streak snapped. James Harden shot just four of 15 from the floor but still managed to finish with a triple-double of 12 points, 14 assists and 13 rebounds.

Elsewhere, Taurean Prince made a clutch layup with four seconds remaining in double overtime to lift the Minnesota Timberwolves to a 121-120 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers. D'Angelo Russell led the Timberwolves with 35 points as they had to overcome a 42-point and 14-rebound performance by Joel Embiid, who returned after missing three weeks because of COVID-19.

Karl-Anthony Towns tallied 28 points and 10 rebounds before fouling out and Anthony Edwards scored 19 and Naz Reid chipped in 13 in the win. The 27-year-old Embiid had a chance to win it but his shot blocked as time expired in the second overtime.

Minnesota won their sixth-straight game as they were aggressive at both ends of the court. They reached the .500 mark this week for the first time since the opening stretch of the season. They began the season by winning three of their first four games before a six-game losing streak. The winning streak includes five victories by a double-digit margin.

Tobias Harris added 17 points, Tyrese Maxey had 15 and Seth Curry 14 for the Sixers. Centre Embiid



BROOKLYN: Devin Booker #1 of the Phoenix Suns handles the ball during the game against the Brooklyn Nets on Saturday at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York. — AFP

was back in the lineup after missing nine games. He tested positive for COVID-19 on November 8. Embiid was averaging 21.4 points and 9.6 rebounds in nine games before his positive test.

The Sixers struggled in his absence by losing seven of the nine games. Embiid was runner-up for

MVP honors last season when he averaged 28.5 points and 10.6 rebounds in 51 games. Denver Nuggets star Nikola Jokic won the award. Also, Alec Burks scored a team-high 23 points as the New York Knicks used a third-quarter run to beat the Atlanta Hawks 99-90. — AFP



### Russell leads T'Wolves past struggling Sixers

## India strike early after setting NZ 284 in first Test

KANPUR: India set New Zealand 284 runs to win after a lower order fightback from the Kiwi demolition of the hosts' top batters on the fourth day of the first Test yesterday. Ravichandran Ashwin then took the first Black Caps wicket in the day's penultimate over when Will Young fell leg-before for 2 in unfortunate circumstances.

Young, who scored 89 in the first innings at Kanpur, failed to review an umpire's call before the clock ran out — and the Ashwin delivery was missing his stumps. The final day will resume with Tom Latham on 2, and spinner William Somerville yet to score.

Shreyas Iyer — the first Indian to score a century and a fifty on their debut — bolstered his side's second innings with 65 after key partnerships with Ashwin and Wriddhiman Saha, who was unbeaten on 61 runs when the hosts declared at 234-7 after tea. India had started in a commanding position with a 63-run lead at 14-1, after Axar Patel's five-for wrapped up the Black Caps innings at 296 on Saturday. But New Zealand's Kyle Jamieson and Tim Southee turned the tables with crucial wickets to leave India reeling at 51-5.

Iyer, who scored his maiden Test century in the first innings, helped pull India out of trouble after a 52-run partnership with Ashwin, who left the pitch after chopping a rising Jamieson delivery. Jamieson had triggered the Indian top order collapse with Cheteshwar Pujara's wicket for 22 in the 12th over of the innings.

India then lost stand-in captain Ajinkya Rahane at 41 after he fell leg-before to left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel. Southee returned for an inspired bowling spell and took two wickets in his maiden over.

The veteran pacer first removed opener Mayank Agarwal for 17 after he edged to Tom Latham at second slip. One ball later, Southee took all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja leg-before for a duck to leave India 51-5.

#### 'Session by session'

A stubborn lower order performance on an uneven surface saved the hosts further embarrassment as they reached 167-7 at tea. "The idea was to play session by session," Iyer said. Coach Rahul Dravid "said that I need to stay out in the middle for as much as possible and build on the score," he added. Iyer built a 64-run partnership with Saha before falling to Southee, who took three wickets in his 22 overs for 75 runs. Saha then played a gritty innings with Axar Patel, unbeaten on 28, to stitch an unfinished 67-run partnership before the Indian declaration.

Iyer said the hosts had the "spin power" to keep the visitors under pressure for the final day. Jamieson, who took three wickets in the second innings, also became the fastest Kiwi to 50 wickets in his ninth Test, beating Shane Bond's record by three matches. Patel took another wicket but the other two New Zealand spinners — Rachin Ravindra and William Somerville — went wicketless. — AFP

## Frank Williams, F1 pioneer who fought adversity to build dominant team

PARIS: Frank Williams was a colossus of Formula One but lurking beneath all the success the British racing legend's life was touched by tragedy. Williams, who died yesterday aged 79, was left a tetraplegic and confined to a wheelchair after a road accident in France in 1986.

The courage, energy and determination with which he dealt with this cruel roll of fate's dice drew admiration from his family, friends, colleagues and the wider public. With technical guru Patrick Head he created, from scratch, one of the greatest Formula One teams of all time.

Williams captured seven drivers' titles, the last claimed by Canadian Jacques Villeneuve in 1997, while the team's nine constructors' crowns places Williams second only to mighty Ferrari. His noted dry wit and charm, indefatigable spirit and resilience served him well on his journey from being a trainee sales rep for Campbell's soup earning £10 a week, to the pinnacle of the high-octane world of F1.

Francis Owen Garbett Williams was born in South Shields in northeast England on April 16, 1942. In his early days in motor racing, he had to conduct business from his local red telephone box when cash wasn't flowing. He established Frank Williams Racing Cars in 1966, competing in F3 and F2, and F1 with a borrowed chassis from 1969.

The death of his first driver Piers Courage, driving for Williams at the Dutch GP at Zandvoort in 1970, was

said to have marked him for life. The first all-Williams built F1 car had an inauspicious start, when with Henri Pescarolo at the wheel, it was destroyed in a crash in 1972. With funding an ever-present problem and having lost control of his company he left, with Head, to set up the team that is still racing today, in 1977.

Clay Regazzoni drove a Cosworth-powered Williams to its first F1 success, fittingly at the British Grand Prix, in 1979. Australian Alan Jones won the team's first drivers' title the following season. Williams also collected the constructors' championship that year.

#### 'Life has to go on'

Keke Rosberg took the 1982 title, with five more captured in a golden period between 1987 and 1997, all after Williams' ill-fated 1986 dash to catch a flight in France that led to the car crash. "I was late for a plane I didn't need to be late for, I got the French time mixed up with the English time," he was to recall.

Williams lost control of the rental car, causing it to leave the highway and drop 2.4 meters into a field. Williams suffered a spinal fracture between the fourth and fifth vertebra after being pressed between his seat and the crushed roof. Williams was consigned to spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair. "But life has to go on," he said. "I was able to continue in the business I was already in, but generally speaking it's been a



SEPANG: In this file photo taken on March 16, 2001 Formula One BMW Williams team owner Frank Williams (center) poses with his team's two drivers Ralf Schumacher (left) and Juan Pablo Montoya (right) and his team, prior to the free practice session at the Malaysian Grand Prix, in Sepang. — AFP

handicap in the true sense of the word."

At the height of their powers, Ayrton Senna, who had won three titles with McLaren, came on board for the 1994 season, only to perish in a horrific high-speed crash at Imola. Williams had a deep connection with the Brazilian great and was never able fully to come to terms with his death.

"Frank had a love affair with Ayrton," his daughter Claire, who would later head the team, told The Sun newspaper in 2019. "He got into his heart, got into his mind, and he always wanted to put him in his race car. Dad's wish then came true, but it ended in the worst possible way."

Not for the first time personal anguish failed to diminish Williams' single-mindedness to succeed, with Damon Hill and Jacques Villeneuve capturing the 1996 and 1997 world champi-

onships. He was knighted in 1999 and became Sir Frank.

"It's been a great journey, one I'd love to do again if I was younger. I wouldn't try and do anything different except try and avoid the accidents," Williams told the BBC in 2010. His death comes after his family ended 43 years of involvement in the team in September 2020, following its sale to Dorilton Capital.

Former Formula One supremo Bernie Ecclestone told AFP shortly before the sale that the team had lost its raison d'être when Williams stepped down from the board in 2012. Both of them were among the co-founders of the Formula One Constructors' Association in 1974. "Dear old Frank had to work so hard to make sure the team competed and that happened," he said. "Frank was hands-on in the way he managed the team. He could get things done." — AFP

## Taijul, Ali shine in even Bangladesh, Pakistan contest

CHITTAGONG: Bangladesh's Taijul Islam claimed his ninth five-wicket haul while Pakistan's Abid Ali hit a century as the first Test remained delicately poised in Chittagong yesterday. The hosts bowled out Pakistan for 286 at the stroke of tea on the third day to take a 44-run lead into the second innings thanks to the mesmerizing bowling of Taijul, who finished with 7-116.

But Pakistan struck back in spectacular fashion with Shaheen Afridi dismissing Shadman Islam (one), Najmul Hossain (zero) and Saif Hasan (18) to finish the day 3-6 and reduce Bangladesh to 39-4 at stumps. Hasan Ali also scalped the wicket captain Mominul Haque for a duck to rob the hosts of their advantage. Mushfiqur Rahim remained unbeaten on 12 alongside debutant Yasir Ali, 8 not out.

Ali earlier made 133 off 282 balls, holding one end for Pakistan for a long stretch after Taijul's early strike of two wickets in two balls in the day's first over. "Some patches are forming in the wicket for both off-spinners and left-arm spinners," Ali said.

"But we will definitely try to achieve whatever target is set for us," he added. Faheem Ashraf added 38 late in the innings to keep Pakistan in contention before he was last man dismissed.

Pakistan, who resumed on 145-0 and looked poised for a big total, suffered an early setback when Taijul trapped debutant Abdullah Shafique leg-before on his fifth ball.

Shafique left without adding to his overnight 52, and Taijul took Azhar Ali for a duck in the very next ball when the delivery hit him on the foot. Azhar was initially given not out but the decision was reversed on review.

Babar Azam saw off the hat-trick ball in Taijul's next over but did not survive long. Mehidy uprooted his off-stump with a straight delivery after the Pakistan skipper made only 10 runs. Taijul grabbed his third wicket when he beat Fawad Alam with spin to remove the batsman for eight.

#### Extra responsibility

Taijul said he had to play with extra responsibility in the absence of injured Shakib Al Hasan. "Since he isn't playing, I had to assume his role," he said after stumps. "I have to manage the wicket-taker's role as well as maintaining economy."

Bangladesh sought a review after the umpire turned down a confident caught-behind appeal. The replay indicated the ball took a feather touch on Alam's glove, ending his brief stay at the crease. Ali, who struck 12 fours and two sixes, was also lucky to survive after he was dropped at slip by Najmul Hossain off Taijul at 113.

He was dropped again by Yasir Ali at forward short leg on 133 but it did not cost Bangladesh much, with Taijul taking him leg before two balls later. Pakistan had by then lost Mohammad Rizwan to Ebadot Hossain, who bowled 2-47. — AFP

## Saudi Arabian dunes to host Dakar Rally 2022

PARIS: The Dakar rally will be raced across the daunting deserts of Saudi Arabia again in 2022 with organizers on Sunday revealing the full route that exploits the depths of the Rub' al Khali (Empty Quarter).

The January 1-14 endurance test will be a third Dakar rally in Saudi Arabia. It will also be the 44th edition of the rally itself, with 1,065 participants aboard 578 vehicles racing across 8,375km of treacherous routes in the various categories. The landscape and backdrop of the course is similar to the last edition, and it begins and ends after 12 stages in the port city of Jeddah.

From canyons and cliffs in the Neom region to stretches of dunes surrounding Riyadh, the race also takes in the Red Sea coastline and the mysterious Empty Quarter. Hybrid vehicles make their debut with top contenders Stephane Peterhansel, a 14-time winner, and Carlos Sainz winner in 2010, 2018 and 2020 behind the wheel in the new category.

In the motorbike race previous champions Toby Price, Sam Sunderland, Matthias Wampner, Ricky Brabec and Kevin Benavides will all also be at the start line. Motorbike and quad racers will be kitted out with airbag vests, which can minimize the consequences of high-speed impact. — AFP

## Sports

# Lewandowski tipped for Ballon d'Or as Messi eyes seventh prize

## 'Lewy' scored Bundesliga record 41 goals in 29 games

PARIS: Robert Lewandowski threatens to deny Lionel Messi a record-extending seventh Ballon d'Or title as the prestigious awards ceremony returns today after it was cancelled last year because of the pandemic. The Bayern Munich and Poland striker pilfered a Bundesliga record 41 goals in just 29 games last season to eclipse the long-standing mark set by the late Gerd Mueller.

Lewandowski, 33, scooped FIFA's prize for best male player of 2020 and has the backing of both coach Julian Nagelsmann and Bayern team-mate Thomas Mueller after a prolific start to the new campaign. "Lewy' has to win the thing on Monday when you see the way he is playing at the moment," Mueller said of a player who has already scored 25 times in 20 appearances this season.

Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo have combined to win 11 of the past 12 editions of the Ballon d'Or, the lone exception in 2018 when Luka Modric helped Real Madrid to another Champions League triumph and inspired Croatia to the World Cup final. "Robert deserves to win it, because in my view he has been more unbelievably consistent than any other player," Nagelsmann said last month in an interview with Munich newspaper Abendzeitung.

While Messi has endured a stop-start beginning to life at Paris Saint-Germain, the Argentine bagged 30 league goals in his farewell season at Barcelona and also won the Copa del Rey. Further strengthen-

ing his case was a first major international trophy in July, as Argentina beat rivals Brazil to win the Copa America at the Maracana — ending the country's 28-year wait for the title.

### Seventh heaven?

"My biggest prize was what I was able to achieve with the national team," Messi told Catalan daily Sport recently. "After having fought and fought so much for that achievement, it was the best given all that it cost. If the Ballon d'Or were to arrive, it would be extraordinary for what it would mean to win one more. The seventh would be crazy."

Ronaldo last took home the trophy in 2017. The Champions League's all-time top scorer has struck in all five games in Europe during his second spell at Manchester United but appears an outside contender for a sixth Ballon d'Or.

Karim Benzema received support from Thierry Henry, Zinedine Zidane and tennis star Rafael Nadal following a tremendous year with Real Madrid. However the France star this week received a one-year suspended sentence for complicity in a bid to

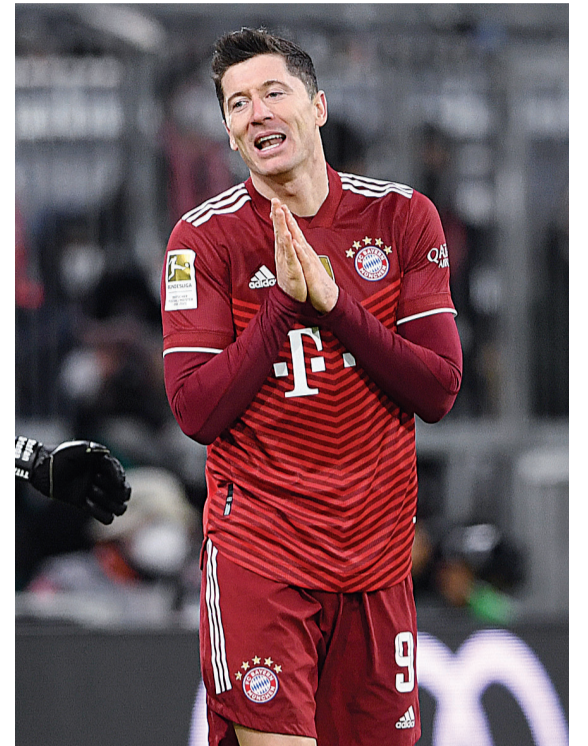
blackmail his former international team-mate Mathieu Valbuena with a sex tape. He was also given a 75,000-euro (\$84,000) fine.

Five members of Italy's Euro 2020-winning squad feature on the 30-man shortlist, including Chelsea midfielder and Champions League winner Jorginho, Kylian Mbappe, Erling Haaland — viewed as Ballon d'Or winners of the future — also feature alongside Neymar and Liverpool striker Mohamed Salah, the leading Premier League scorer this term.

Barcelona captain Alexia Putellas, the UEFA women's player of the year, is a leading candidate to succeed 2019 Ballon d'Or winner Megan Rapinoe. The American was not among the 20 nominees. Putellas is joined by Barca team-mates Jennifer Hermoso and Lieke Martens following their Champions League triumph, with Australia's Sam Kerr among five Chelsea representatives. Christine Sinclair, of Olympic gold medal-winning Canada, is also in the running. The Kopa trophy will be handed out to the best young men's player, while 10 goalkeepers are shortlisted for the Yashin trophy. —AFP



### Messi won first major int'l trophy in July



Robert Lewandowski

## Sane fires Bayern back to Bundesliga summit

BERLIN: A long-range Leroy Sane strike fired record-breaking Bayern Munich back to the top of the Bundesliga table on Saturday after the defending champions were briefly overtaken by Borussia Dortmund. Sane's goal sealed a 1-0 victory over strugglers Arminia Bielefeld, who kept Bayern at bay for the opening 70 minutes at the Allianz Arena.

It was another tricky domestic outing for Julian Nagelsmann's team after a shock defeat at Augsburg in their previous league game. But Sane netted for the ninth time this season as Bayern, chasing a 10th straight Bundesliga title, restored their one-point advantage over Dortmund, who they face away next Saturday.

"We were under a bit of pressure after Dortmund won earlier and we wanted to make sure we get on the bus there next weekend first in the table," Nagelsmann told Sky. Sane's strike was Bayern's 102nd league goal of 2021, breaking Cologne's 44-year-old record for the most Bundesliga goals scored in a calendar year. Bielefeld remain second-bottom in the table, four points from safety.

Dortmund had earlier gone top with a 3-1 win at Wolfsburg when Erling Haaland scored on his return from injury. The return of Haaland is a huge boost for Dortmund ahead of their showdown with Bayern.

Haaland netted his 50th Bundesliga goal in as many games, just eight minutes after coming off the bench in the second half following a five-week absence with a leg injury. He tapped home a Julian Brandt cross, adding to an Emre Can penalty and Donyell Malen goal for Dortmund after Wout Weghorst had given Wolfsburg an early lead.

"We missed him (Haaland) in the last few weeks. He's a weapon," Brandt told Sky. The win came three days after a 3-1 defeat at Sporting Lisbon ended Dortmund's hopes of reaching the



MUNICH: Bayern Munich's midfielder Leroy Sane prepares to score the goal during the German first division Bundesliga football match against Arminia Bielefeld in Munich, southern Germany, on Saturday. —AFP

Champions League last 16. "We needed to show a reaction after the game on Wednesday," said Can, who was sent off in Lisbon.

Third-placed Freiburg are now eight points adrift of second-placed Dortmund after their 2-1 defeat at Bochum handed the visitors a third straight league loss. Serbian striker Milos Pantovic scored the winner eight minutes from time to ruin Christian Streich's 300th Bundesliga game as Freiburg coach. "It would have been a cool day if we had won," admitted Streich.

### Nine-goal thriller

There was a nine-goal thriller at bottom side Greuther Fuerth as Togo striker Ihlas Bebou bagged a hat-trick in Hoffenheim's 6-3 victory. The result moves Hoffenheim up to fifth, while Fuerth claimed an unwanted Bundesliga record with an 11th straight defeat.

Augsburg backed up a shock win over

Bayern last time out with a last-gasp equalizer to seal a 1-1 draw at Hertha Berlin. Michael Gregoritsch levelled for Augsburg seven minutes into stoppage time. Hertha assistant coach Andreas Neundorff was shown a red card in the aftermath. The point was scant consolation for Hertha after last weekend's 2-0 defeat by Union Berlin in the derby.

Cologne hammered Borussia Muenchengladbach 4-1 in the Rhineland derby as Dejan Ljubicic, Mark Uth, Ondrej Duda and Sebastian Andersson scored for the hosts. Denis Zakaria and Alassane Plea hit the woodwork for Gladbach before Jonas Hofmann equalised midway through the second half to cancel out Ljubicic's goal. Cologne pulled away with two goals in 90 seconds as Uth capitalized on a Florian Neuhaus mistake before Duda also hit the net. Andersson scored their fourth in stoppage time. —AFP

## Barcelona register first La Liga away win

MADRID: Barcelona notched their first away win in La Liga this season in Xavi Hernandez's first away game in charge as late goals from Memphis Depay and Philippe Coutinho secured a 3-1 victory over Villarreal on Saturday.

Barca had gone five away matches in the league without a win but Xavi had the magic touch, with the 41-year-old overseeing his second victory out of two in La Liga, either side of a mid-week goalless draw at home to Benfica in the Champions League.

The score at La Ceramica flattered Barca, who could easily have lost a frantic game in which Villarreal spurned a number of excellent chances, only to commit a dreadful mistake at the back that allowed Depay to score in the 88th minute.

Coutinho added a third from the penalty spot in injury-time after Samuel Chukwueze had earlier cancelled out Frenkie de Jong's opener early in the second half. "It was the game we dominated the least, but we won," said Xavi. "On Tuesday we deserved to win and we drew, today it could have been a draw, and we got the win. It's a tremendous victory for us."

Barcelona cut the gap to Atletico Madrid in fourth to three points, before Atletico played at Cadiz yesterday. One blot on the evening was an injury to Jordi Alba, who had to be replaced in the second half, with his fitness now a concern less than two weeks before Barca's pivotal final Champions League group game at Bayern Munich.

### Woodwork struck twice

In a frantic opening nine minutes, Barcelona hit the post twice while Villarreal were gifted a golden opportunity as Abde Ezzalzouli's header was tipped onto the crossbar by Geronimo Rulli before Gavi's drive brushed the outside of the far post. In between, Eric Garcia's backpass was intercepted by Arnaut Danjuma but his shot was blocked by the sliding Gerard Pique, who was lucky not to concede a penalty after making the stop with his right hand.

The chances kept coming for both teams as Depay scuffed wide after being slid through by De Jong before Jeremy Pino and Pau Torres both headed over when left free in the box. Torres from five yards out. Villarreal were rampant down Barcelona's right-hand side and finished the first half the stronger.

But Barca survived and took the lead three minutes after the restart. Alba volleying Abde's cross back in for De Jong to tap home after Depay's ini-



VILLARREAL: Barcelona's players celebrate their third goal scored by Brazilian midfielder Philippe Coutinho during the Spanish league football match against Villarreal at La Ceramica stadium in Villarreal on Saturday. —AFP

tial finish was saved. Alba went off injured, replaced by Oscar Mingueza, and Villarreal continued to stretch Barcelona, who never looked in control of their lead. They could not even keep hold of a throw-in, Villarreal regaining possession and hooking the ball towards the penalty area, where Chukwueze nipped in ahead of Mingueza and poked into the corner.

Villarreal fancied a winner as Manu Trigueros twice went close and then Danjuma shot just wide of the post after a weaving run in from the left.

Instead, it was Barcelona who struck after capitalising on a Villarreal mix-up at the back.

Pervis Estupinan flicked Barca goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen's punt towards his own goal and Raul Albiol slipped as Depay darted through, rounded the goalkeeper and finished through the legs of Estupinan on the line. Disheartened, Villarreal conceded a third in added time as Juan Foyth hacked down Coutinho, who planted the penalty into the bottom corner. —AFP

## Inter on leaders' heels after Venezia win

MILAN: Inter Milan moved to within one point of the Serie A summit on Saturday thanks to a 2-0 win over Venezia, while Duvan Zapata piled on the misery for Juventus who are reeling from a probe into their accounts.

Hakan Calhanoglu continued his fine recent form in the 34th minute when he collected the ball and fizzed the opening goal through a crowd of players, and Lautaro Martinez added the second from the penalty spot deep in stoppage time. Inter have won seven of their last nine matches in all competitions — drawing the other two — and are on a high after ensuring passage to the Champions League last 16 after a decade away midweek.

"The only negative thing was that we should have scored the second goal earlier," said Inter coach Simone Inzaghi. "People said this was meant to be a transitional season, one focused on just saving the club, but I found a club that supports me totally and has an extraordinary bunch of lads in the squad."

It was another composed display from the champions which puts them right on the heels of league leaders Napoli and AC Milan. Inter only had one real scare when Samir Handanovic, who saved Inter with a miracle save in last weekend's win over Napoli, had to be at full stretch to tip over Mattia Aramu's long-range drive. Promoted Venezia meanwhile stay six points above the relegation zone in 15th.

### Zapata sinks Juve

Atalanta strengthened their hold on fourth place and Serie A's final Champions League spot thanks to Colombian Zapata's seventh goal in as many games in all competitions in the 28th minute in Turin. Atalanta were six points ahead of their closest rivals for fourth spot Roma, before the latter hosted Torino yesterday, while Juve sit a further point back in eighth after the latest uninspiring display which led to them being whistled off by furious fans who watched their team lose for the fifth time this league season.

Massimiliano Allegri's Juve have only scored 18 goals in their 14 league matches, the lowest total in Serie A's top 10, and rarely looked like pegging back Atalanta until Paulo Dybala clipped a free-kick off the crossbar in stoppage time.

"We need to be realistic. If we're in this position after 14 matches it means that for now that's how good we are," said Allegri. Juve's defeat comes after a difficult week in which they were humiliated by European champions Chelsea on Tuesday and then had police search their offices on Friday as part of a probe into suspicious player transfers.

Earlier Dusan Vlahovic firing his way to the top of the Serie A scoring charts was not enough for Fiorentina as Empoli came from behind late to snatch a 2-1 Tuscan derby win. Serbia striker Vlahovic slid in his 11th league goal of the season after 56 minutes to move above Italy forward Ciro Immobile but the Viola threw away the win in the final few minutes with Filippo Bandinelli and Andrea Pinamonti netting for the hosts. —AFP



LONDON: Chelsea's Brazilian defender Thiago Silva (bottom) lies injured after being fouled by Manchester United's English defender Aaron Wan-Bissaka resulting in a penalty during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Manchester United at Stamford Bridge in London yesterday. — AFP

## Chelsea rescue Man Utd draw

### Jorginho levels score after penalty blunder

LONDON: Chelsea midfielder Jorginho rescued a 1-1 draw against Manchester United as the Italian's penalty atoned for the blunder that allowed Jadon Sancho to put the visitors in front yesterday. Thomas Tuchel's side dominated for long periods at Stamford Bridge but fell behind when Jorginho's poor control presented Sancho with the chance to score early in the second half.

Jorginho made amends for that mistake as he stroked home a penalty after Aaron Wan-Bissaka fouled Thiago Silva. It was the least Chelsea deserved after they laid siege to United's goal and saw David de Gea make a series of fine saves.

Chelsea, unbeaten in their last 11 games in all competitions, remain top of the Premier League but are now just one point ahead of second-placed Manchester City, who defeated West Ham earlier on Sunday. United, in eighth place, are 12 points adrift of the leaders but this gritty display was something to build on after a traumatic period.

Michael Carrick was in charge of United for a second successive game after Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's sacking, with the appointment of Ralf Rangnick as interim manager until the end of this season expected

to be confirmed shortly.

United are in discussions with Rangnick, who is working as director of sports and development at Lokomotiv Moscow. But in the meantime Carrick had overseen a vital win at Villarreal in the Champions League on Tuesday and he used the same defensive blueprint to frustrate Chelsea.

Given Rangnick's preference for an intense pressing game-plan that may not suit Cristiano Ronaldo, it was intriguing to see the sometimes diffident Portugal striker left on the bench by Carrick until the 63rd minute.

With Bruno Fernandes as the false nine and Marcus Rashford and Sancho on the flanks, United set up for a point and got exactly that. Hakim Ziyech found space in the United area early on but his low shot was saved by De Gea, setting the tone for the rest of the afternoon.

#### Frenetic finale

Moments later, Marcos Alonso's header from Silva's long pass caught Victor Lindelof and Wan-Bissaka out of position. Callum Hudson-Odoi seemed certain to score when he pounced on the loose ball, only for De Gea to repel the forward's close-range effort with a superb save. Manchester United technical director Darren Fletcher was on the bench wearing an earpiece, sparking suggestions he was in contact with Rangnick.

Rangnick is regarded as the godfather of 'gegen-pressing', the tactics copied so successfully by Tuchel and Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp, and United had spells when they closed down Chelsea with more authority than they showed in the final weeks of Solskjaer's reign. But if Rangnick was offering advice to the United bench ahead of his impending appointment, he might have been concerned at how

deep they were sitting.

Antonio Rudiger was left in acres of space when his 25-yard drive was tipped onto the crossbar by De Gea. United had ventured into the Chelsea area only twice in the first half, but they broke out to snatch the lead five minutes after the interval with their first shot on target.

Fernandes' hoofed clearance should have been easy for Jorginho, but Chelsea's captain made a hash of dealing with the high ball and Sancho was rewarded for pressing hard as he stole possession, sprinted clear on goal and slotted past Edouard Mendy.

After going 14 games without a goal following his close-season move from Borussia Dortmund, Sancho was emphatic and their pressure was finally rewarded in the 69th minute after Wan-Bissaka's flailing challenge on Silva conceded a needless penalty.

Jorginho had missed a high-profile penalty for Italy against Switzerland recently, but the midfielder coolly sent De Gea the wrong way from the spot. In a frenetic finale, Rudiger could have won it in the final seconds when he volleyed over from Christian Pulisic's cross. — AFP



### Chelsea on top; City one point behind

## Messi sets up PSG comeback win marred by Neymar injury

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain overturned an early deficit to beat 10-man Saint-Etienne 3-1 away in Ligue 1 yesterday, with Lionel Messi setting up all three goals. The match also featured the long-awaited PSG debut of Spanish defender Sergio Ramos, while Neymar left the pitch sobbing in agony, stretched off with an ankle injury.

Still in November, the result leaves PSG on 40 points, 12 clear of second-placed Rennes, who beat Lorient 2-0 for their sixth win in seven matches. "I'm happy with the performance of the whole team and the effort from all the players, especially Lionel Messi who helped us win the match," said PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino. Saint-Etienne took a surprise lead when Denis Bouanga beat the offside trap to fire a shot past Gianluigi Donnarumma on 23 minutes, a flag went up but a VAR review awarded the goal.

The hosts, languishing in the bottom two but on the back of two straight league wins, held their own against PSG, who appeared more affected by the freezing cold and gusting snow. All that changed with a red card. There was no VAR to save the hosts on the stroke of half-time when back-tracking defender Timothee Kolodziejczak was sent off for a flailing challenge on Kylian Mbappe.

PSG then towering when Marquinhos scored with a towering header as Messi floated in the subsequent free-kick, sending in the sides level, but with the hosts hanging their heads. "At best that was too harsh," said Saint-Etienne coach Claude Puel. "It changed the match, we were leading and



SAINT-ETIENNE: Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian forward Neymar is evacuated on a stretcher after an injury during the French L1 football match between against Saint-Etienne at the Geoffroy-Guichard stadium in Saint-Etienne yesterday. — AFP

doing well." The second half was one-way traffic with further goals coming from Angel Di Maria on 79 and center-back Marquinhos with his second in time added on — Messi again providing inch-perfect passes. But there was bad news for PSG late on as Neymar fell in full flight after treading on a defender's leg and twisting his ankle in a way that made his teammates wince. "That's life," Neymar said on Instagram. "I'll be back better and stronger."

The result sees Saint-Etienne slip to the foot of the table, behind Metz on goal dif-

ference. Rennes replaced Nice in second as Gaetan Laborde and Jeremy Doku, making his first start since August after injury, struck late away to Lorient. Brest extended their winning run to four games courtesy of two goals from Jeremy Le Douaron in a 2-1 victory at Bordeaux. Monaco drew for the third match running as Ludovic Ajorque's penalty cancelled out Wissam Ben Yedder's spot-kick in a 1-1 stalemate with Strasbourg. Clermont slid to a fifth successive loss as Ghislain Konan's stoppage-time goal gave Reims a 1-0 win. — AFP

## Sassuolo gatecrash San Siro to deny Milan top spot

MILAN: AC Milan missed the chance to move top of Serie A yesterday after crashing to a shock 3-1 home loss to Sassuolo. Sassuolo emerged worthy winners at the San Siro after recovering from Alessio Romagnoli's 21st-minute header through a superb Gianluca Scamacca strike, Simon Kjær's own goal and a solo effort from Domenico Berardi.

"We carried on playing even though we went down a goal. We found faith in ourselves and that's a positive thing," said Sassuolo coach Alessio Dionisi to DAZN. "We came back against Milan at the San Siro and we held on to the result... Today there were a lot of positives."

Milan, who finished with 10 men after Romagnoli completed a miserable afternoon by being shown a straight red card for taking out Gregoire Defrel, were level on 32 points with league leaders Napoli before the latter hosted Lazio late last night.

Their first home league defeat of the season after last weekend's 4-3 loss at Fiorentina mean that city rivals Inter Milan are now only a point behind in third, with Atalanta a further three back after beating Juventus in Turin on Saturday.

"We were lacking lucidity because we made mistakes in far too many situations," said Milan coach Stefano Pioli. "We needed to manage our lead better... we made a mistake for which we paid handsomely, and it's clear if

you concede seven goals in two games something's not working."

Pioli, who on Friday signed an extension to his Milan contract until June 2023 with an option for another year, made a raft of changes to the side that earned a superb 1-0 Champions League win at Atletico Madrid on Wednesday.

#### Milan's San Siro slip

Injuries to Olivier Giroud and Ante Rebic led to Zlatan Ibrahimovic playing up front with a strong support line of Rafael Leao, Brahim Diaz and Alexis Saelemaekers, with Tiemoue Bakayoko making his first start of the season in midfield alongside Ismael Bennacer.

And Bakayoko was at fault for Sassuolo's leveller which came just three minutes after Milan had taken the lead, lazily giving the ball away to Giacomo Raspadori who then fed Scamacca the chance to smash a long-distance effort in off the bar.

Scamacca was also at the heart of the goal which put Sassuolo in front in the 33rd minute, belting a close-range effort which returning Milan goalkeeper Mike Maignan could only push off Kjær and into his own net. And Berardi put the icing on the cake 20 minutes into the second half by making a fool of Romagnoli, putting the Italy defender on his face with some nifty dribbling, before calmly finishing the third goal. — AFP