



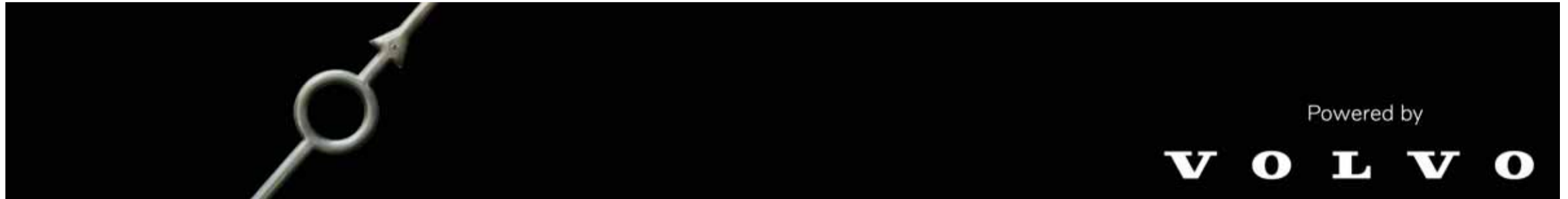
**5** Oman declares 2-day holiday over tropical storm Shaheen



**10** Take a 10-year holiday with ABK's Alfouz draw account



**16** Springboks stun All Blacks in classic as Wallabies shine



# Innovation, development at Kuwait's Expo 2020 pavilion

## Kuwait's creative participation in world fair in Dubai hailed



DUBAI: Performers are seen at Kuwait's pavilion at the Dubai Expo 2020 on Friday. — KUNA

DUBAI: Representative of HH the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, said on Friday that Kuwait's pavilion at the Dubai Expo 2020 aims at showing the country's strategic development projects and humanitarian efforts across the globe.

Kuwait's outstanding participation in the largest exhibition in the world is also meant to enhance its regional and international status and attract foreign investors, the minister told reporters after inaugurating Kuwait's pavilion at the Expo. The slogan "New Kuwait ... a new opportunity for sustainability" was chosen for Kuwait's pavilion because it will shed light on the country's endeavors to achieve sustainability and development. The pavilion offers several innovative ideas and showcases Kuwait's history, added Mutairi.

Kuwait Times Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain said Kuwait's participation in Dubai Expo 2020, which is the largest gathering to exchange cultures and display the latest in science, ideas and modern achievements, is considered an added value and a bright chapter in Kuwait's present and future record. Boftain said Kuwait's pavilion in the Expo is the fruit of efforts and cooperation between an elite group of innovators who worked on the pavilion's details to make it emerge magnifi-

cently before the world.

He said Dubai Expo 2020 is a fantastic idea for Kuwaiti creative youth to be present at the largest exposition in various fields, be they political, economic and cultural, and learn about the latest developments in the world. Editor-in-Chief of Kuwaitiya newspaper Dr Zuhair Al-Abbad said Kuwait's participation in this global event is a clear message that it is moving progressively towards a bright future. He said the pavilion attracted visitors and Arab and foreign media interest with its creative design and content.

Thousands of people toured Dubai's Expo 2020 on the opening day on Friday, as the COVID-delayed world fair finally opened its doors one year late. Visitors strolled or rode electric bikes around the huge showground, which has been built from scratch at a cost of about \$7 billion on Dubai's desert outskirts.

"It is really a source of pride that Dubai is hosting an Expo, which means a global event," said Aysha Hussein, a 20-year-old student and Emirati citizen. "We are all excited about the event," she added, as robot information systems buzzed down the shaded boulevards and formation jets plumed colored smoke overhead. Dubai is hoping to attract millions of visitors in a boost to its profile and standing during the six-month fair. — Agencies

SEE PAGES 3 & 8

### News in brief

#### Boy missing in Abdullah Al-Salem

KUWAIT: The interior ministry yesterday announced a boy from Abdullah Al-Salem area is missing, urging anyone who locates the child to call the emergency hotline number 112.



#### Cycling banned on causeway

KUWAIT: The interior ministry Friday urged the public to avoid recreational activities on Jaber Causeway for the sake of their safety. Ministry Undersecretary Gen Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Sabah ordered a ban on walking and cycling, as well as other recreational activities, on the causeway. The ban aims at preserving the safety of people using the causeway following a rise in accidents on the bridge, which is equipped with speed and monitoring cameras. — KUNA

#### COVID jab must for Calif students

LOS ANGELES: COVID vaccinations will be compulsory for all students in California, the state's governor announced Friday - a first in the US, where vaccine hesitancy has slowed efforts to end the pandemic. The plan will be phased in as Food and Drug Administration regulators grant full approval for use in younger age groups. — AFP

#### Man swallows kilo of nails

VILNIUS: Doctors in Lithuania said on Friday they had removed over a kilogram of nails and screws from the stomach of a man who started swallowing metallic objects after quitting alcohol. The man was admitted to hospital in the Baltic port city of Klaipeda with severe abdominal pain. An X-ray of his stomach showed up pieces of metal - some measuring up to 10 cm. — AFP

## Qataris vote in first legislative election

DOHA: Qatar wrapped up its first legislative election yesterday with reports of a solid turnout. The vote was for 30 members of the 45-strong Shura Council, a body with limited powers that was previously appointed by the amir as an advisory chamber. More than a third of the 101 candidates dropped out of the race by yesterday afternoon, state television reported, apparently to support rival candidates.

"Where candidates realized that they have no shot to win a seat, they decided to endorse other candidates," said King's College London associate professor Andreas Krieg. After the withdrawals, there were 183 candidates in contention for the 30 elected seats. The remaining 15 will be appointed by the amir, although it is not known when they will be announced, or when the council will meet.

Average turnout was 44.3 percent in the 29 constituencies that had more than one candidate, state television reported, significantly higher than at 2019's municipal elections at which fewer than one in 10 of those eligible turned out.

Continued on Page 2



DOHA: Qataris cast their ballots at a polling station yesterday, during the country's first ever legislative vote. — AFP

## Duterte to retire from politics

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said yesterday he will not run for vice president in 2022 and will retire from politics, potentially paving the way for his daughter to contest the country's highest office. Duterte, who polls show remains almost as popular as when he was swept to victory in 2016 on a promise to rid the country of drugs, is constitutionally barred from seeking a second term as leader.

"The overwhelming... sentiment of the Filipinos is that I am not qualified and it would be a violation of the constitution to circumvent the law, the spirit of the constitution" to run for the vice presidency, Duterte, 76, said. "Today I announce my retirement from politics."

The authoritarian firebrand declared in August he would contest the country's second-highest office in the May election - a move critics said was a smokescreen and motivated by fear that he could face criminal charges after leaving office. But a recent poll by PulseAsia Research showed Duterte well back in second place among preferred vice presidents.

Continued on Page 2



MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte speaks to the media in Pasay City yesterday. — AFP

## Venezuela bolivar sheds six zeroes

CARACAS: The official exchange rate of Venezuela's bolivar went from 4.18 million to the US dollar overnight to just 4.18 as the impoverished country slashed six zeroes off its inflation-battered currency Friday to simplify transactions. It is the third banknote reform in 13 years, with a staggering 14 zeroes shed since 2008 - giving Venezuela the dubious distinction of becoming the South American country to have lopped the most zeroes

off its currency.

"Everything expressed in national currency shall be divided by a million," the central bank announced. Housekeeper Josefina Galindo said that she "went shopping without problems this morning. The new prices were displayed above the old ones. And there was always the price in dollars." "The price (in dollars) has not changed," added the 52-year-old, who was shopping in the upscale Caracas district of Chacao but said she had still paid in old prices using the old bolivars when she took the bus from her working-class neighborhood of Coche.

The electronic platform of the public Banco de Venezuela, which has 14 million clients, was also down by mid-afternoon, with those trying to make

Internet transactions encountering a message apologizing for the inconvenience. Venezuela, the once-rich oil producer, is battling its eighth year of recession and hyperinflation that reached nearly 3,000 percent in 2020 and more than 9,500 percent the year before, according to central bank figures.

Economic consultancy Ecoanalitica expects the 2021 figure to come in at around 1,600. In May, the government tripled the minimum monthly wage but the new amount was not enough even to buy a kilogram of meat. Three in four Venezuelans today live in extreme poverty, according to a recent study, with the economic crisis made worse by US sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic.

Continued on Page 2

## Local

# Kuwait calls for holding occupation responsible for violations in Palestine

## Zionists must 'not have green light' for their crimes

GENEVA: The international community should always be reminded to hold Zionist occupation forces accountable for violating international law in occupied Palestinian territories so they know they "do not have green light" for their crimes, the State of Kuwait said. Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim, permanent representative to UN and International Organizations in Geneva, said the Zionist occupation must stop "its crimes against unarmed civilians."

Addressing UN Human Rights Council's session, due until October 8, Ghunaim said international law on human rights and international humanitarian law should be applied in occupied Palestinian territories including in East Jerusalem. Some Zionist violations are "considered war crimes and crimes against humanity, which necessitates continuation of deliberations over deterioration of human rights in occupied Arab territories within Article Seven of the UN HRC," he said. The occupation authorities "continue their discrimination policy and ethnic cleansing, especially against the right of Palestinian people to live and their right of self-determination, ending the occupation and establishing the independent and sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital in line with relevant UN resolution, Arab peace initiative and two-state solution," said Ghunaim.



### Kuwait condemns Judaization of occupied Jerusalem

"The State of Kuwait strongly condemns all violations against international law on human rights and international humanitarian law, which are committed by the Zionist entity, the occupying power, against the Palestinian people," he said. Kuwait, he said, also condemned the Zionist entity's Judaization of occupied Jerusalem by changing its religious and historic identities, as well as destroying private and public properties.

These are violations of the 4th Geneva Convention and will undermine international efforts to end the occupation and establish the independent Palestinian state, said Ghunaim. The Zionist occupation, he added, was also attacking Palestinians in Jerusalem, inside Al-Haram Al-Shareef and Al-Aqsa Mosque, and forcing eviction of tens of Palestinian families in Salwam and Sheikh Jarrah neighborhoods. "The State of Kuwait is warning the international community against continuation of the violent campaign which is sponsored by the occupying power and incited by the Zionist officials with the support of the extremists, who are protected by the Zionist police," he said. Ghunaim also condemned the Zionist entity's repeated aggression on the Palestinians in Gaza Strip despite the ceasefire, killing hundreds of people and displacing thousands others amidst spread of coronavirus. — KUNA



HEBRON: An elderly Palestinian demonstrator is pushed by Zionist soldiers during a demonstration against Zionist land confiscation and the cutting of water supply for Palestinians villages, in the southern area of the West bank town of Hebron yesterday. — AFP

## Kuwaiti women play important role in social development

NEW YORK: First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations said Kuwaiti women played a significant role in building a modern state and developing the society. Women have a pivotal role to play in development and offer invaluable contributions to the national efforts to combat coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Fahad Hejji said in an address to the UN Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Issues (Third Committee).

The committee meeting was convened on Friday evening as part of the 76th UN General Assembly session. "We meet at a time when the world is at a

crucial juncture of the modern history of humanity. After one and a half years of the health crisis have passed since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic which left more than four million people dead and over 200 million other patients," Hejji noted.

"We need to draw lessons from this crunch time, work together to rebuild our world and resume the march towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," he stressed, noting that collective global efforts are needed to reach "this noble target." Over the past year and a half, the youth worldwide contributed a lot to the combat against the pandemic. In the State of Kuwait youth have been in the frontline, offering the best example in voluntary action, he pointed out.

The State of Kuwait attaches great importance to the roles of youth and women in the development of the community away from any racial, gender, religious or linguistic discriminations, he said, citing Article 29 of Kuwait constitution. Therefore, Kuwait spared no effort to empower women, ensure their rights, ensure their effective participa-

tion in all aspects of daily life, and enable them to assume leading state posts. "We celebrated last year the 15 anniversary of women attaining their political rights for candidacy and voting. More gains are coming year after year in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the passing of legislations for women empowerment," the senior diplomat affirmed.

On the professional level, he said Kuwaiti women enjoy full access to state jobs on equal footing with man, assuming posts in all government institutions including the diplomatic corps, the judiciary, police, firefighting, oil and health sectors, and other vital posts. Entitled to various leading posts, including ministerial and parliamentary ones, Kuwaiti women took part in the political decision-making over long years, he went on. Hejji reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to protection of human rights and cultural diversity, based on the relevant international treaties and resolutions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Charter. Concluding, he said it



NEW YORK: First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations Fahad Hejji makes an address to the UN Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Issues (Third Committee). — KUNA

is inevitable for the world at such challenging times to work within a multi-party system with a view to addressing the most pressing issues. — KUNA

## Military service fuels national allegiance of youths: Minister

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah highlighted the role of the national military service, the military judiciary institution and the military engineering facilities. Sheikh Hamad Jaber conveyed the greetings and appreciation of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister to the personnel of the Ministry of Defense. He thanked them

comments in a statement from the Presidency of the General Staff yesterday following an inspection tour of the national military service, the military judiciary institution and the military engineering facilities. Sheikh Hamad Jaber conveyed the greetings and appreciation of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister to the personnel of the Ministry of Defense. He thanked them



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah is seen during an inspection tour of the national military service authority. — KUNA

for their continued dedication to serving the homeland and protecting its security and stability. — KUNA

## Slovak ambassador congratulates Amir on first anniversary

KUWAIT: Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the State of Kuwait Igor Hajdusek released the following statement on the occasion of the first anniversary of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's assumption of office:

"On the occasion of the first anniversary of His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait assuming power, I wish His Highness everlasting good health



Igor Hajdusek

and success in leading the country. I appreciate His Highness the Amir's sincere efforts to push forward the country's national development process and the achievements made so far in various fields. I pray to protect Kuwait's peace and security, and wish His Highness good health and wellbeing. I recall with great appreciation the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who contributed greatly to the country's prosperity."

## Qataris vote in first legislative...

Continued from Page 1

Across the Arabian desert peninsula nation, orderly queues of Qataris in national dress formed inside polling stations, mostly schools and sports halls. In the 17th district, a chauffeur-driven Mercedes-Benz and a pearl white Rolls Royce SUV dropped off female voters at a primary school. Women were a majority among the steady stream of those casting ballots there at lunchtime. "At the start of the day, I heard many people say they wouldn't vote because there will be no change, but we saw many people," said voter Sultan Abdullah Al-Kuwari. "This is a good omen that there will be change."

The Shura will be allowed to propose legislation, approve the budget and recall ministers. But the amir, all-powerful in the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas, will wield a veto. In the working-class Najma suburb, candidates and voters paused for afternoon prayers on mats that had been set up inside the 10th district polling station which, like all others, was segregated by gender.

All candidates had to be approved by the powerful interior ministry and just one in 10 of the originally confirmed candidates were women. Most of Qatar's 2.5 million residents are foreigners, ineligible to vote. Candidates have to stand in electoral divisions linked to where their family or tribe was based in the 1930s, using data compiled by the

then-British authorities.

In Al-Khor, a fishing town north of Doha, voters flocked to the polls in one district which has 13 candidates - making it one of the most competitive races in the country. "There are a large number of candidates... but for me the most important thing in the selection is competence," said voter Rashid Abdul Latif Al-Mohannadi, 37. A member of the election organizing committee told AFP they expected turnout in the polling stations under their supervision "will be large".

Diplomatic sources suggest families and tribes have already conducted internal ballots to determine who will be elected for their constituencies, which analysts say is a consequence of not having political parties. "This is a national duty to vote for the first elected Shura," said Abdullah Ahmed Saleh Al-Mahri Al-Mohannadi, a 52 year old legal consultant. "Voting must be for the right person... and not by the degree of kinship or family name."

Qataris number about 333,000, but only descendants of those who were citizens in 1930 are eligible to vote and stand, disqualifying members of families naturalized since then. Some members of the sizeable Al-Murrah tribe are among those excluded from the electoral process, sparking a fierce debate online and isolated protests.

Qatari women are also standing in the election, but in far lower numbers than men, prompting warnings that their influence on issues that affect women could be limited. "It's an extremely positive step that women are part of this process," said Elham Fakhro, senior Gulf analyst at the International Crisis Group. "However, I think we do have to limit our expectations (of their influence)... as there are only 28 women running for positions - it really shouldn't be surprising." — AFP

## Venezuela bolivar sheds six...

Continued from Page 1

Millions have left the country in recent years to try their luck elsewhere.

With the bolivar losing nearly all its value, seven one-million bolivar notes - very hard to come by - were needed to pay for one loaf of bread before Friday's currency update. The government issued

## Duterte to retire from...

Continued from Page 1

A survey by Social Weather Stations showed 60 percent of Filipinos did not think Duterte's run for the vice presidency was in the spirit of the constitution. Duterte made the surprise announcement at the venue where he was expected to register his candidacy. He did not specify when he would leave politics. His close aide, Senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go, registered for the vice presidency instead.

The tough-talking leader has not yet announced his preferred successor, but many expect it will be his daughter, Sara, who has been the frontrunner in recent polls. "He must have realized that if both

new banknotes in denominations of five, 10, 20, 50, and 100 bolivars, as well as a one-bolivar coin, but has said that it wants the economy to become entirely digital. Analysts read this as a way to avoid printing money that will just continue devaluing, eventually requiring another readjustment.

The biggest note in the retiring bolivar family, with a face value of a million, is worth barely \$0.25 — not enough to buy a piece of candy. It will remain in circulation in parallel with the new notes for a few months. "It (the bolivar) is not going to be worth more, it's not going to be worth less, it's just a monetary scale that we're applying by removing six zeros to facilitate transactions," — AFP

Dutertes are talked about as running in 2022 then they might stand to lose, given the last survey results," University of the Philippines political science professor Jean Franco told AFP.

Analysts say Sara would likely protect Duterte from criminal charges in the Philippines, and International Criminal Court prosecutors probing his deadly drug war, which rights groups estimate has killed tens of thousands of people. But the mayor of the southern city of Davao - a position held by her father before he became president - has said she would not run if Duterte sought the vice presidency.

Yesterday, Sara registered to run for her third term as mayor, state media reported. But Franco said she has until November 15 to make a late entry into the presidential race - as her father did in 2015. Sara did not immediately respond to AFP's request for comment. The election season kicked off Friday with candidates vying for thousands of posts from president to town councillor. — AFP

Local

# Kuwait's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai highlights strategic projects: Minister

'Impressive' participation reflects Kuwait's civilized image



DUBAI: Participants perform during the inauguration of Kuwait's pavilion at Expo 2020.



Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi (center) attends the inauguration of Kuwait's pavilion.

DUBAI: Representative of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi said that Kuwait's pavilion at the Expo 2020 Dubai aims at showing the country's strategic development projects and humanitarian efforts across the globe. Kuwait's outstanding participation in the largest exhibition in the world is also meant to enhancing its regional and international status, and alluring foreign investors, the minister told reporters on Friday after inaugurating Kuwait's pavilion at the expo. The slogan "New Kuwait ... a new opportunity for sustainability" was chosen for Kuwait's pavilion because it sheds light on the country's endeavors to achieve sustainability and development.

Kuwait at the expo offers several innovative ideas and showcases its history, he said, adding that Kuwait seeks a distinguished participation to contribute to the success of the global event. The minister said that 255 government and non-government organizations from across a diverse array of sectors are contributing to the booth over the coming six months. The Kuwaiti pavilion, which has been designed to resemble water tower structures commonly found in the country, is constructed on an area of over 5,500 square meters at a height of more than 24 meters.

UAE's hosting of this big event is a source of pride for Kuwait, GCC members states and Arab countries, he stated, referring to sincere efforts made by the UAE in organizing this historic event. This affirms that the Arab youths are capable of turning challenges into opportunities and stories of success, he said.

Civilized image

Another Kuwaiti official said on Friday that the Kuwaiti pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai "will be so impressive that it reflects the country's civilized image." Proper arrangements and preparations have already been made to open the pavilion in an amazing way this evening, with a number of UAE officials and Gulf diplomats in Dubai being invited, Kuwait's Commissioner-General Muneera Al-Huwaidi said. Kuwait's participation in Expo 2020 Dubai is mainly intended to manifest Kuwait's pioneering, civilized, cultural, literary and intellectual role, Huwaidi added.

The Kuwaiti pavilion, which is located at the



Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi is seen during a meeting with representative of Kuwait's media.



Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi in a group photo at Kuwait's pavilion.

Sustainability District of the Expo, features the eye-catching and striking products and notions of various Kuwaiti institutions. During this world event, the Kuwaiti pavilion will organize a host of media event and activities, mainly scientific, economic and cultural workshops, the Kuwaiti official pointed.

The pandemic-delayed Expo 2020 was opened Wednesday night, bringing together 192 countries



New opportunity for sustainability

to show off their cutting-edge products as well as peculiarities of their history, folklore and heritage. Themed "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future", the event, which takes place from October 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, highlights music, architecture, technology and culture from around the globe as



Kuwait's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai.

part of its packed events calendar. The event provides all attendees with the opportunity to celebrate the history and achievements of other countries. It will also bring together the world's bright-

est minds through its Program for People and Planet, which gives visitors of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to enjoy and make the most of this exceptional event. — KUNA



This picture shows the Emirati pavilion at the Expo 2020 yesterday.



Kuwait's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai.



This picture shows the Palestinian pavilion at the Expo 2020 yesterday.



A man visits the Expo 2020 Dubai yesterday.



People visit Kuwait's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai.



A woman takes a photograph of the interior of the Moroccan pavilion at the Expo 2020 yesterday.

## Local

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## In my view

## Life, culture and creativity

By Nermin Al-Houti

Pandora is a part of Greek civilization, and the myth can be summarized in this column by three words: Life, culture and creativity, which are also the bases of the British Council's mission. Despite the lifestyle changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, I personally benefited in many ways, the most important of which is reading, then improving my English through courses at the British Council. While I found something new during each course that looked at the future, yet it did not overlook the past and took from it to make it a foundation on which the future is built.

A recent discussion was about the future, where the instructor (Mohammad Hattab) put forth many questions and suggestions. The discussion began with imagination, creativity and innovation through the word "how". For example, the use of electric power in vehicles instead of gasoline. Several questions were posed by the instructor, such as "How?", "Do you agree?", "What are the benefits?", in addition to many other questions that develop the minds of the audience and interlocutor. The good thing is that the questions are part of the discussion and not in a Q&A format.

At the discussion session, if we apply the Pandora principle on it, we find many things, like when we say "life", we discuss our daily lives and many developments. When we have a discussion on present issues, we go along with developments and events in our lives. When we say "culture", we gain a lot from the answers of participants in the course. We concluded with creativity, which grows with reading, culture and love of life. When we have a discussion in this aspect or others, the answers provide us with inspirations resulting from the dialogue, and this is what we need in our educational institutions.

## Ooredoo Kuwait participates in 'Safe Education' campaign

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Telecom, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, announced its participation in the awareness campaign under the slogan 'Safe Education' launched at the beginning of October 2021. The comprehensive campaign came as a result of the unremitting efforts and collaboration of four ministries: the ministry of interior, ministry of education, ministry of health, and ministry of information. It aims to ensure a safe return of students to the in-class learning, in line with all the precautionary measures in place.

The campaign aims to raise awareness and encourage all members of society to support the governmental efforts and initiatives in the field of preparation for the return of students to school at the beginning of the academic year 2021-2022. Further, the state and participating ministries have declared the main objectives of the campaign, which focus on achieving a set of goals that ensure a safe start for the new school year, the most important of which is enhancing students' self-esteem and making the school the place to learn and build friendships among children safely.

Ooredoo Kuwait explained their participation in this campaign which is driven by the company's effective role in the local community as well as supporting government agencies, their initiatives and activities. Therefore, the company created a strategic communication plan aimed at conveying the main message and the ultimate goal of the campaign in all press, digital and radio stations, including displaying the logo and video of the campaign on the Ooredoo Tower, and sending awareness text messages to all Ooredoo customers.

The campaign includes working on designing video and various awareness tips and messages that embody the campaign's main objectives and simulate a safe return to schools, and communicating with various media outlets at the state level to implement interventions and interviews on the campaign topic.

In the same stream, the state announced its strict commitment to the preventive measures inside schools and classrooms, including the social distancing between tables and chairs at a distance of one meter, the provision of sterilization tools and masks inside the classrooms, and not exceeding the allowed total number of students in each class which is 20 only.

## Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Health invited bedoon (stateless) children yesterday to receive their COVID-19 vaccine doses ahead of the start of the school year in class today. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Kuwait schools welcome students in class today

**KUWAIT:** Public and Arabic private schools across Kuwait will resume welcoming their students in various stages of the 2021-2022 academic year today after 18-month hiatus, and one week after some non-Arabic private schools started the school year in class.

## Heart diseases Kuwait's top cause of death in last decade

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Heart diseases in Kuwait have been the top cause of deaths during the past 10 years, a physician said. Studies and statistics of the health ministry indicate 42 percent of deaths are due to heart problems, with heart attacks making up the highest percentage of all heart diseases. Deputy Chairman of Kuwait Heart Foundation Dr Mohammad Al-Jarallah said. The study was conducted in cooperation between the health ministry and WHO in 2006. A report on it was published in 2008, showing the incidence of heart diseases among the 2,280 Kuwaiti participants was 2.9 percent.

Kuwait Heart Foundation celebrated World Heart Day on Sept 29 in cooperation with Sabah Al-Ahmad Heart Center, American Heart Association and World Heart Federation. Chairman of Kuwait Heart Foundation Talal Al-Bahar said the foundation this year focused on awareness campaigns on social media due to its wide reach among all groups of the foundation, to make them aware of heart diseases and their dangers. He said the World Heart Federation was keen this year to have the logo of a

## Now is time to move forward into a new era of partnership

**KUWAIT:** Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Kuwait Chung Byung-ha released the following message on the National Foundation Day and Armed Forces Day of his country:

"On the occasion of 'the National Foundation Day and armed Forces Day of the Republic of Korea', I extend my best wishes for the continued peace, progress and prosperity to the State of Kuwait. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the first anniversary of his accession to the throne and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the first anniversary of his appointment as Crown Prince, wishing them everlasting health and success. I also convey my best wishes of good health and success to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and my sincere greetings to all the people of Kuwait.

"To begin with, I would like to express appreciation to the Kuwait government's effective quarantine measures and expansive vaccination policy that have led to a dramatic decrease in the number of daily COVID-19 confirmed cases in Kuwait. Being convinced that we are now approaching the beginning of the end of the pandemic, I am very pleased to see that our two countries have maintained relentless cooperation even during the pandemic.

"There are many reasons as to how this is possible. First, our two countries have continued to build up a comprehensive partnership. Ever since the establish-

The resumption follows putting in place the necessary health precautions to protect the students against the risks of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Education Dr Abdulmohsen Al-Howaila said yesterday.

"At the behest of Minister of Education Dr Ali Al-Mudhaf, the ministry made all arrangements to ensure the high quality and smoothness of the educational process in the new schooling year," Dr Howaila said. "The ministry spares no effort in providing a proper environment for an orderly educational process and worked out a strategy that covers the administrative, technical and operational

aspects of the process," he affirmed.

A statistical chart, recently posted on the ministry's website put the overall number of schools in Kuwait at 1,146, including 985 public schools and 161 private ones; or 85.95 and 14.05 percent, respectively. The number of school students hit 522,220 - males and females, including 439,365 - or 84.13 percent of the overall, at government schools, and 82,855 - or 15.87 percent, at Arabic private schools. The school day in public and Arabic private schools starts at 7:30 am for all stages, and ends at 12:20 pm for kindergarten, 1:00 pm for primary and 2:05 for intermediate and secondary stages. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** A group photo taken during an event organized by Kuwait Heart Foundation to mark the World Heart Day.

heart to be sent to as many people as possible to remind them of the importance of heart health and how to safeguard it.

Meanwhile, Dr Jarallah said this year's celebration is part of awareness campaigns to educate people on the dangers of heart diseases, with the slogan "use your heart to connect". He stressed smokers must refrain from this habit, adding this is the first step on the road to heart health, as within the first two years of quitting smoking, the risk of coronary artery disease is reduced significantly. After 15 years, the risk of heart and blood vessel diseases drops to the same level as nonsmokers. Dr Jarallah advised people to maintain the heart's health through exercise and healthy food.

Cardiologist at Sabah Al-Ahmad Heart Center said the main goal behind celebrating World Heart Day is spreading awareness about the risks of heart diseases, as 80 percent of early deaths can be avoid-

ed by preventive means. She said this year's slogan - "use your heart to connect" - came about because the coronavirus pandemic brought up the need for alternative means to communicate, so the world resorted to digital technology.

Dashti said statistics indicate that the pandemic caused the death of 4.5 million people around the world, but heart diseases and strokes remain the top cause of deaths around the world (of around 18.5 million individuals) every year, which is 32 percent of total deaths around the world. She said during the coronavirus pandemic, around 520 million individuals suffered from heart diseases. They were affected in various degrees due to losing communication, medical appointments or inability to contact their relatives out of fear of hospital visits, in addition of not being able to exercise, so modern technology will effectively participate in closing this gap, Dashti added.

## Burgan Bank offers discount for breast cancer awareness

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank announced the launch of a campaign regarding breast cancer awareness month in collaboration with Kuwait Hospital. Through this campaign, the bank offers its customers a 55 percent discount on a mammogram for an early breast cancer screening. Burgan Bank is determined to have an active role in bringing positive change to the lives of the local community.

Throughout the campaign period, from the first to the 31st of October, all Burgan Bank female cardholders can benefit from this special discount when booking a regular mammogram at Kuwait Hospital. Kuwait Hospital is a medical services provider that offers high quality health care and top-notch services. This campaign highlights both institutions' efforts towards the common objective of promoting the community's health and wellbeing.

This campaign falls under the bank's strategic focus on the key social issues through dynamic full-fledged programs and campaigns that shed light on important aspects affecting various segments of the society. During breast cancer awareness month, Burgan Bank seeks to promote the culture of prevention and to highlight the importance of regular screening to combat breast cancer. Burgan's initiative also aims at helping spread awareness about the seriousness of this major health risk for women that can be prevented or better managed with frequent checkups and early detection.



Chung Byung-ha

share our experiences and strategy. I assure you that Korea will continue to be a faithful partner in Kuwait's great journey toward realizing the Vision 2035.

"Last but not least, the members of the Korean community have always worked together with Kuwaiti friends through thick and thin. I am absolutely sure that they will continue to make significant contributions to the co-prosperity of our two nations. Therefore, I wish to reiterate on this occasion that everlasting friendship and solidarity among our peoples will further grow. Once again, I wish for peace, prosperity and progress of the State of Kuwait and its great people."



For residents of Syria camp, slow death or risky exit

## From slavery to police abuse, museum documents US racism



MUSCAT: High waves break on the Mutrah sea side promenade in the Omani capital Muscat yesterday as the Shaheen tropical storm hits the country. — AFP

# Tropical storm Shaheen hits Oman

## Authorities declare today, tomorrow holiday

MUSCAT: Omani authorities have decided that today and tomorrow (October 3 and 4) will be an official holiday nationwide due to bad weather conditions triggered by tropical storm (Shaheen). Oman's official news agency reported that the decision came due to the adverse

climate conditions in the Sultanate, and to ensure the safety of public and private employees. But, the Governorates of Dhofar and Al Wusta were exempted. However, the official agency said that private companies may ask their staff to work during the public holiday,

only if necessary. Oman's Civil Aviation Authority warned on Friday that tropical storm Shaheen was expected to develop into a category 1 tropical cyclone in the next 24 hours. The public was advised to take precautions and steer away from low lying areas. — KUNA

## Taiwan rebukes China over incursion

TAIPEI: Taiwan accused Beijing of bullying and damaging regional peace yesterday after Chinese fighter jets and bombers made their largest ever incursion into the island's air defense zone. Beijing marked its National Day on Friday with its biggest aerial show of force against Taiwan to date, buzzing the self-ruled democratic island with 38 warplanes, including nuclear-capable H-6 bombers. Democratic Taiwan's 23 million people live under the constant threat of invasion by China which views the island as its territory and has vowed to one day seize it, by force if necessary.

Under President Xi Jinping, Chinese warplanes are crossing into Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ) on a near daily basis. But Friday's incursion sparked a particularly sharp rebuke from Taipei. "China has been bellicose and damaging regional peace while engaging in many bullying acts," Premier Su Tseng-chang told reporters yesterday. "It's evident that the world, the international community, rejects such behaviors by China more and more."

Taiwan's defense ministry said it scrambled its aircraft to broadcast warnings after 22 fighters, two bombers and one anti-submarine aircraft entered the island's southwest ADIZ on Friday. A second batch of 13 jets then crossed into Taiwan's ADIZ lat-

er on Friday, in a rare night incursion, bringing the total to a record 38, according to the ministry. The ADIZ is not the same as Taiwan's territorial airspace but includes a far greater area that overlaps with part of China's own air defense identification zone and even includes some of mainland China.

### Rising tensions

Mass incursions used to be rare. But in the last two years Beijing has begun sending large sorties into Taiwan's ADIZ to signal dissatisfaction at key moments—and to keep Taipei's ageing fighter fleet regularly stressed. Last week 24 Chinese warplanes flew into the area after Taiwan applied to join a

Taipei since the 2016 election of President Tsai Ing-wen, who views the island as "already independent" and not part of a "one China".

Last year, Chinese military jets made a record 380 incursions into Taiwan's defense zone, and the number of breaches for the first nine months of this year has already exceeded 500. The previous single-day record was on June 15 when 28 jets breached Taiwan's ADIZ. Xi has described Taiwan becoming part of the mainland as "inevitable". US military officials have begun to talk openly about fears that China could consider the previously unthinkable and invade.

Protection of Taiwan has become a rare bipartisan issue in Washington and a growing number of Western nations have begun joining the United States in "freedom of navigation" exercises to push back on China's claims to the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait. Britain sent a warship through the Taiwan Strait on Monday for the first time since 2008. The Chinese People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theatre Command accused Britain of acting out of "evil intentions to sabotage peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait".

Alexander Huang, associate professor at Tamkang University in Taipei said he believed the latest aerial incursion was not just about sending a message to Taiwan. "There's three other carrier attack groups in the region, two American and one British," he said. "China is sending a political message to the US and UK on her national day: Don't mess around in my area." Canadian, French and Australian warships have all made voyages through the Taiwan Strait in recent years, sparking protests from China. — AFP

major trans-Pacific trade pact.

Friday's show of force came the same week Beijing accused Britain of "evil attentions" after it sent a frigate to sail through the Taiwan Strait. China claims the strait as its own waterway, along with most of the disputed South China Sea. Most other nations view them as international waters open to all. Beijing has ramped up pressure on



## Beijing accuses Britain of 'evil attentions'

Despite the damage to countless homes and businesses local people are coming together to show each other solidarity in a time of crisis. Down in the port, fisherman Jesus Guillermo Hernandez Rodriguez, 49, defiantly hoses away sticky blackened volcanic sand which has covered his vessel. "It is a daily job, maintaining the boats," sighs Rodriguez, rubbing his white beard in frustration with weatherbeaten hands. Even if he still tries to manage a minimum catch, most of what he does pick up "is not edible because of the sand," the dark gunk sticking to what he does land.

### What future?

Hernandez normally lands a catch worth around 3,000 euros a month which he shares with a colleague but this past fortnight is a virtual write-off and he expects more of the same for now as he worries about the cost. He explains he operates in what is "one of the best fishing zones in the west of the island". But now it is covered with molten rock. The area had already been reeling from the effects of the coronavirus, and Tazacorte was just keeping itself economically afloat when the eruption, the first on La Palma since 1971, hit. Everybody in the village knows somebody who has suffered material loss, from houses engulfed in lava, to their job in a fishing industry left all but paralysed, the same fate befalling those working in agriculture or tourism.

"My son comes back home at night and tells me, 'mum, yet another day I haven't worked as we didn't have a single table'" to serve, Nieves Acosta, 56, says of her son, a waiter in a restaurant. The Acosta brothers lost their home, the straw breaking the proverbial camel's back to leave her in floods of tears as she and the family battle a rising tide of other problems. "You talk about the future-but what future is there?," she sobs. "If there is no fishing then agriculture is hit, more than hit. What will become of our children?"

The eruption brought dozens of journalists and scientists to rake over the island but their excited curiosity is in stark contrast to the serious and lined faces of locals. "Here, people were happy but now they are hanging their heads," says Cristina Sanchez, who lives in the nearby commune of Los Llanos de Aridane. The "rain of ash" from the volcano "is driving me insane," says Nieves, who works at a retirement home and who is taking a break over a coffee with Jesus, a friend who has just lost his job at a banana export firm. Massive swaths of banana plantations dominate the scenery in Tazacorte—exports of the fruit are one of La Palma's main earners. Nieves, who refuses to give her surname, says she has little hope for the future after the volcano "destroyed everything." She says she just hopes that "when it's all over people will come, that's they will all come" and help put the shattered community back together again.— AFP

## US COVID death toll surpasses 700,000

WASHINGTON: US fatalities from COVID-19 surpassed 700,000 on Friday, according to figures from Johns Hopkins University, a toll roughly equivalent to the population of the nation's capital Washington. The grim threshold comes with an average of well over 1,000 dying each day, in a country where 55.7 percent of the population is now fully vaccinated, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

After a heavily criticized early response to the pandemic, the United States organized an effective vaccine roll-out-only to see a significant portion of Americans still refusing to get the shots. The United States finds itself having notched the most fatalities in the world, far exceeding other frontrunners such as Brazil and India, and facing a resurgence in cases due to the prominence of the highly contagious Delta variant. While the latest global coronavirus wave peaked in late August, the virus continues to spread rapidly, particularly in the United States.

The vaccination campaign launched by US authorities in December—which had reached a peak in April, with sometimes more than four million injections per day—has meanwhile slowed considerably. Coronavirus misinformation has been rampant in the country, and masking remains a political issue, dividing many Americans. Some Republican governors, such as those in Texas and Florida, have sought to ban mandatory masking in their states, citing individual freedoms. — AFP

## Volcano spews fire

TAZACORTE: Residents of the Canary Island village of Tazacorte had a ringside seat but were shocked and unwilling onlookers, contemplating a too-close-for-comfort spectacular eruption of La Palma's Cumbre Vieja volcano. "There's nothing beautiful about it," grumbled Jose Carlos Bautista Martin, a pensioner of 70 who looked on agog with fellow villagers as the volcano continued to spew waves of hot lava into the air. "All it leaves behind is black, dark lava and an intense blaze which looks as if it will go on for ever, growling as if it were the very devil himself," he adds of the aeroplane-like cacophony accompanying an eruption which has wrought havoc and forced thousands from their homes.

Tazacorte port offers a perfect vantage point for spying the mouth of the volcano which dominates the island, a popular holiday destination, as well as the heaps of ash and lava cascading down to the sea hundreds of meters below its peak. Even by Thursday experts estimated the debris had covered an area bigger than 25 football pitches, with concerns rising over worsening air quality in nearby residential areas since the eruption began on September 19, the volcano sending tongues of molten rock flowing out of its main cone.

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## International

# From slavery to police abuse, museum documents US racism

## Legacy Museum traces direct link racism and today's inequalities

WASHINGTON: Slavery, lynchings, segregation, mass incarceration and police abuse: A museum that opens Friday in the state of Alabama traces a direct link between the racist past of the United States and today's inequalities. The Legacy Museum in the state capital of Montgomery is located on a site where Black people were once forced to labor in bondage.

"It's a museum about the history of America, with a focus on the legacy of slavery," Bryan Stevenson, the head of Equal Justice Initiative, a civil rights organization in Alabama, told AFP. "I can't think of another institution in America that has more profoundly shaped our economy, our politics, our social structures. And our character." "Our understanding of slavery is very very incomplete," he said. It is this information void that the Legacy Museum aims to fill, while prompting Americans to campaign against the inequality that persists today, according to Stevenson.

"The only way we can make progress in this country is if we engage both our minds and our hearts in a serious commitment to truth and justice to eliminating racial injustice," he said. The museum, inspired by memorials to the Holocaust in Berlin or to apartheid in Johannesburg, offers an immersive experience, with videos and sculptures that capture the terror of enslavement after a perilous journey across the Atlantic. Another space is dedicated to the violence experienced by slaves, including sexual violence.

One wing is dedicated to the thousands of victims of lynchings of Black Americans, which occurred between 1877 and 1950. The National

Lynching Memorial, located near the museum, is devoted to the same topic. The museum also conveys the "humiliation of segregation" in the South after World War II, Stevenson said. Stevenson's organization provides legal representation to people who have been illegally convicted of crimes, unfairly sentenced, or abused in jail, a widespread problem for African Americans.

The group has succeeded in acquitting several



One wing is dedicated to victims of lynchings

people who had been sentenced to death. In the museum, visitors can listen to them tell their stories. The museum is part of a national reckoning on race and racism in America, which has grown more intense since the murder of African American George Floyd by a white police officer in May 2020. Stevenson lamented that the efforts are meeting resistance on the part of conservatives. Still, he was optimistic. "The good news is that we have the capacity to get past that fear, to get past that preference for silence," Stevenson said. "I believe we will make that choice." — AFP



ALABAMA: Photo shows an exhibit at the Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama. — AFP

### News in brief

#### North Korea fires missile

SEOUL: North Korea has successfully fired a new anti-aircraft missile, state media said Friday as the UN Security Council failed to issue a statement after an emergency meeting on the recent flurry of weapons tests by the nuclear-armed nation. The anti-aircraft missile had a "remarkable combat performance" and included twin rudder controls and other new technologies, the official Korean Central News Agency said. A picture in the official Rodong Sinmun newspaper showed the missile ascending at an angle into the sky from a launch vehicle on Thursday. It is the latest in a series of tension-raising steps by Pyongyang, which had until recently been biding its time since the change in US administrations in January. — AFP

#### 'Unprecedented' malnutrition in Tigray

ADDIS ABABA: The UN warned of "unprecedented" malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women in Ethiopia's war-hit Tigray region, in a report published hours after the government sparked outrage by expelling senior UN officials. The latest situation report from the UN's humanitarian coordination office, posted online late Thursday, also described "alarming" malnutrition among children as fears of mass starvation grow nearly 11 months after northern Ethiopia erupted in conflict. "Of the more than 15,000 pregnant and lactating women screened during the reporting period, more than 12,000 women, or about 79 per cent, were diagnosed with acute malnutrition," the report said. — AFP

#### Guinea coup leader sworn in

CONAKRY: Colonel Mamady Doumbouya, who led last month's coup in Guinea, promised to respect the country's international commitments while transitioning to civilian rule as he was sworn in as interim president on Friday. Doumbouya, who led the overthrow of president Alpha Conde on September 5, was sworn in by Supreme Court head Mamadou Sylla for a transition period of unspecified length. The new interim president spoke of his "commitment" that neither he nor any member of the junta would stand in any future elections that the military has promised to organize after the transition period. His administration's mission, he said, is to "re-found the state" by drafting a new constitution, fighting corruption, reforming the electoral system and then organizing "free, credible and transparent" elections. — AFP

#### Nigeria's Twitter ban

LAGOS: Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari on Friday said he had ordered the country's ban on Twitter to be lifted once the social media giant has met conditions set by his government. Nigeria banned Twitter in June, days after the platform deleted a remark from Buhari's account, provoking outcry over freedom of expression in Africa's most-populous country. Nigerian officials defended the ban saying Twitter was used to promote fake news and for destabilizing activities, especially by separatists in the southeast. Buhari's government and Twitter have been in talks over a list of conditions for ending the suspension, including discussions on taxes, content, and registering locally in Nigeria. — AFP

## Battle for abortion rights hits America's streets

WASHINGTON: The abortion rights battle was taken to the streets across America yesterday, with hundreds of demonstrations planned as part of a new "Women's March" aimed at countering an unprecedented conservative offensive to restrict the termination of pregnancies. The fight has become even more intense since Texas adopted a law on September 1 banning almost all abortions, unleashing a veritable legal guerrilla warfare and a counterattack in Congress, but with few public demonstrations until now.

Two days before the US Supreme Court, which will have the final say on the contentious issue, is due to reconvene, nearly 200 organizations have finally called on abortion rights defenders to make their voices heard from coast to coast. The flagship event will be held in the nation's capital Washington, where thousands are expected to march to the Supreme Court, which nearly 50 years ago recognized the right of women to have an abortion in its landmark Roe v. Wade ruling.

Now the court, stacked by former president Donald Trump with conservative justices, seems ready to head in the opposite direction. It has already refused to block the Texas law and has accepted reviewing a restrictive Mississippi law that could provide an

opportunity to overturn its precedent. Rallies are planned in these two conservative states' capitals, Austin and Jackson, as well as in more than 600 cities in all 50 states. According to the organizers, nearly a quarter million people are expected to turn out across the United States.

"Together, we are joining hands to advocate for a country where abortion isn't just legal - it's accessible, affordable and destigmatized," said the organizers of the Rally for Abortion Justice in a statement. The group called on Congress to enshrine the right to abortion in federal law, to protect it from any possible reversal by the Supreme Court. A bill to that effect was adopted a week ago in the House of Representatives, which is controlled by Democrats, but has no chance of passing the Senate where Republicans have enough votes to block it.

#### 'Patriarchal desire'

In 2017, a first "Women's March" was held the day after Trump's inauguration, rallying millions of opponents of the Republican billionaire who had been accused of sexism. Since then, other demonstrations have failed to turn out such huge numbers, in part due to internal divisions over accusations of anti-Semitism leveled at one of the organizers.



BOGOTA: Demonstrators kick a fence during a demonstration demanding the decriminalization of abortion during the Global Day of Action for Legal and Safe Abortion in Latin America and the Caribbean in Bogota. — AFP

But that page seems to have been turned. "This year, we are united with a coalition of nearly 200 organizations," the organizers said. Participants will include small feminist groups, community and local organizations as well as the giant of family planning, Planned Parenthood. "We're taking to the streets once again, for the first time in the (Joe) Biden era," the statement said. "Because a change in the Oval Office hasn't stopped the politicized, perverse, and patriarchal desire to regulate our bodies. If anything, it's only gotten even more intense."

That escalation has been spurred on

by Trump's appointment of three conservative justices to the Supreme Court, emboldening local conservative elected officials across the country to embark on an anti-abortion offensive. So far this year, 19 states have adopted 63 laws restricting access to abortions. If the high court were to overturn Roe v. Wade, every state would be free to ban or allow abortions. That would mean 36 million women in 26 states - nearly half of American women of reproductive age - would likely lose the legal right to an abortion, according to a Planned Parenthood report released Friday. — AFP

## Georgia holds vote after ex-president Saakashvili's arrest

TBILISI: Georgians were voting yesterday in closely watched municipal elections, a day after ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili's arrest on his return from exile deepened a protracted political crisis in the Caucasus nation. The detention of Georgia's foremost opposition figure raised the stakes in the elections seen as a key test for the increasingly unpopular ruling party.

Saakashvili founded Georgia's main opposition party, the United National Movement (UNM), and was president between 2003-2013. The 53-year-old said Friday he had returned from Ukraine, where he heads a Ukrainian government agency steering reforms. The flamboyant pro-Western reformer was detained shortly afterwards over a 2018 conviction in absentia on abuse of office charges. He denies wrongdoing and had denounced his sentence of six years in jail as politically motivated.

His jailing will almost certainly spark upheaval in the small ex-Soviet nation that has been plagued for years by political instability. "I want to ask you all to go to the elections so that not a single vote is lost," he wrote on Twitter yesterday, posting a picture of a letter to supporters from prison. "My freedom and, more importantly, the freedom of Georgia depends entirely on your actions and fighting ability." Prior to his arrest, he posted a video message on Facebook calling on supporters to take to the streets against the government.

#### Protracted crisis

The municipal elections are being watched inside and outside Georgia for signs of the ruling party Georgian Dream backsliding on democracy. Saakashvili - who commands a fiercely loyal follow-



TBILISI: This screengrab shows former Georgia's President Mikheil Saakashvili escorted by police officer as he was detained in Tbilisi on October 1, 2021. — AFP

ing - called in one video Friday for his supporters to gather on the main thoroughfare in the capital Tbilisi today.

Critics have accused Georgian Dream - in power since 2012 - of using criminal prosecutions to punish political opponents and journalists. Interpol turned down requests from Tbilisi to issue a red notice against Saakashvili. Opposition parties decried widespread fraud and refused to take their seats after parliamentary elections in October last year, which Georgian Dream won narrowly. The EU mediated an agreement in May, under which Georgian Dream pledged to hold a snap parliamentary vote if it wins less than 43 percent in yesterday's local elections.

Georgian Dream, which was founded by the country's richest man and a former prime minister, withdrew from the agreement in July, but Saakashvili insists it remains in place. Georgia's Western partners urged the EU-aspirant country's government to implement the agreement that envisaged sweeping political and judiciary reforms. With concerns mounting in the West over the ruling party's democratic credentials, the United States has hinted at possible sanctions against Georgian Dream officials. — AFP

## Bloodbath in Latin America's prisons

GUAYAQUIL: At least 118 inmates died in rioting in an Ecuador jail this week before police regained control Thursday. Following the latest carnage, here is a look at the deadliest clashes in recent years in Latin America's notoriously overcrowded prisons.

#### Deadliest

Over the past three decades, there have been several massive prison riots that left more than 100 inmates dead. In 2005, a fire ripped through an overcrowded prison in the Dominican Republic's eastern city of Higüey after a dawn riot, leaving at least 135 people dead. In 1994, 121 inmates were killed after prisoners set fire to three prison blocks during a riot at Sabaneta prison in Venezuela's northern city of Maracaibo. In 1992 in Brazil, 111 prisoners were killed when security forces put down a riot at the enormous Carandiru jail outside Sao Paulo. The massacre was later portrayed in an acclaimed 2003 film, "Carandiru."

#### Ecuador's 'war'

Tuesday's bloodshed in Guayaquil is believed to be linked to a "war" between Mexican drug gangs. It is the fifth major incident in the port city's prison in just over a year. In all, some 200 inmates have died in violence in Ecuador's jails so far this year as they have become a battleground for thousands of prisoners with ties to powerful Mexican cartels. More than 100 died in clashes last year - with many beheaded - with corruption allowing inmates to smuggle in arms and ammunition. Ecuador's prison system has 65 facilities designed for about 30,000 inmates but a population of 39,000, watched over by 1,500 guards - a shortfall of about 2,500, according to experts. — AFP

## International

# Abortion stigma: Possible death sentence for women in Kenya

## Every week, 23 women die from botched abortions

**NAIROBI:** Victoria Atieno was waiting at a Nairobi bus stop when she felt blood gush from her body, the result of a secret, self-induced abortion - a method used by thousands of Kenyan women, with potentially fatal consequences. Kenya's constitution eased access to abortions in 2010 but entrenched stigma about the procedure means that many women resort to traditional practices or backstreet clinics which put their life in jeopardy.

Even a reproductive health counselor like Atieno - her mind blanketed with fear - ended up gulping down a herbal concoction to induce an abortion in secret. Hours later, as she experienced a public and hugely traumatic termination, she faced a flood of abuse from onlookers, living out the very nightmare she had tried to avoid. "People will condemn you, criminalise you, try to chase you out of the communi-

Volunteers tasked with cleaning up the Nairobi River in 2019 retrieved 14 bodies from its trash-clogged waters, most of them babies. Cultural and religious beliefs in the deeply Christian country have contributed towards creating a stigma so strong that even women who procure safe abortions believe they have committed a sin by doing so. More than a year after Susan aborted a pregnancy resulting from a gang rape, the churchgoing mother-of-four still battles intense guilt. "People see you as a murderer... it makes me feel like I did something very bad," the 36-year-old said.

### De facto ban

Kenya's constitution says abortions are illegal unless "in the opinion of a trained health professional, there is need for emergency treatment, or the life or

The ministry was pulled up by the Nairobi high court in 2019 for violating women's and girls' right to physical and mental health by halting training for legal abortion providers. Yet little has changed on the ground since then, leaving the field open for unscrupulous backstreet clinics to exploit women's need for secrecy. Ken Ojili Mele's niece died at 26 after a botched abortion. Long opposed to abortion,



### Women resort to backstreet clinics

the 48-year-old carpenter told AFP he was filled with regret after her untimely death en route to a hospital. "Maybe she didn't want to tell me because she knew I would have been angry," he said. "I wish she had shared it with me. I could have maybe helped her find a safer hospital."

### Silence and tears

Abortions are extremely difficult to access at state hospitals. Some private health providers perform the procedure, for which the fee starts at around 3,000-4,000 Kenyan shillings (\$27/23.5 euros). Pills are used to curtail shorter-term pregnancies. For women who turn to these sources, fear of disapproval and shame can run deep. The silence lingers even in doctors' waiting rooms. "In Kenya, it's not easy to say you want an abortion," said Samson Otiago, a doctor specializing in reproductive health.

Dozens of women visit his Nairobi clinic every month and most have to be coaxed into telling him about their intention to terminate a pregnancy. Some start crying before they have even said a word, he said. Many can't afford to pay his fees, which start at 4,000 shillings (\$36), so occasionally he offers his services for free or on credit. "Once a woman has decided to do an abortion, she will do it whichever way she can. "So we would rather do it (for less money) than expose her to quacks and see her again with complications," he said.

In Dandora, as rape survivor Seline awaited the results of a pregnancy test, she had little doubt about what to do next. Barely surviving on a monthly wage of 5,000 shillings, the 38-year-old domestic worker told AFP she was determined to get an abortion if the test was positive. "If the hospital refuses, I will do it the traditional way, with herbs," she said, her voice barely rising above a whisper. "I am ready to do anything, as long as I don't have to have this baby." — AFP



**NYERI:** Teen-aged mothers share a dormitory with their infants during a break at the Serene Haven Girls Secondary School, an informal school that boards under-aged mothers with their infants. — AFP

ty," the 35-year-old mother-of-three said. Many women will do anything to avoid that fate, from drinking bleach to using knitting needles or clothes hangers to end their pregnancies. The results are horrific, ranging from ruptured uteruses, cervical tears and vaginal cuts to severe infections, bleeding and death. Every week, 23 women die from botched abortions, according to a study by Kenya's health ministry in 2012 - the most recent available government data.

Campaigners say the real number is even higher. A report released last year by the non-profit Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR) estimates that seven women and girls die every day in Kenya due to unsafe abortions. In the Dandora slum in the eastern suburbs of Nairobi, where Atieno works with the Coalition of Grassroots Women Initiative, sanitation workers sometimes find abandoned foetuses in the neighborhood's huge garbage dump.

health of the mother is in danger, or if permitted by any other written law". No other conditions or terms are spelt out. The vaguely-worded document puts decision-making power wholly in the hands of health providers. So when the health ministry stopped training abortion providers in 2013, access to such services took a hit, and women bore the brunt.

The ministry's move came a year after its own study warned that a "disproportionately high" number of women were dying in Kenya because of unsafe abortions. "The ministry's decision was not based on scientific evidence, it was made against that evidence, evidence which was gathered by the ministry itself," Martin Onyango, CRR's senior legal adviser for Africa said. Ministry officials declined interview requests, with a reproductive health expert in the ministry telling AFP: "We are not permitted to talk about abortion at all. That's the policy."

## 'It is a circus': Philippine election season kicks off

**MANILA:** The Philippines' election season kicked off Friday with TV celebrities, political scions and at least one inmate expected to be among thousands of candidates vying for posts from president to town councilor. A week-long registration process launches a typically noisy and deadly seven months of campaigning for more than 18,000 positions-but the raging pandemic and economic misery caused by COVID lockdowns could dampen the party atmosphere.

A successor to President Rodrigo Duterte, who is constitutionally barred from seeking a second six-year term, will be elected in the May ballot that is expected to draw more than 60 million voters. Duterte, who polls show remains almost as popular as when he swept to victory in 2016 on a promise to rid the country of drugs, has declared he will run for the vice-presidency.

Among the front runners to replace him are his daughter, Sara, and ally Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, son and namesake of the country's former dictator. Ex-actor and city mayor Francisco Domagoso-known by his screen name Isko Moreno-and newly retired boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao are planning to run. Pacquiao, a senator, was driven in a bus emblazoned with "Man of Destiny" to register for the race on Friday. A Facebook Live broadcast of the journey through Manila's morning traffic showed scores of supporters standing beside the road, waving the national flag. Pacquiao dismissed a recent poll showing him in fourth place for preferred president as "just a number". Election campaigns in the chaotic democracy are normally raucous and star-studded with contenders deploying celebrities to pull crowds to rallies. —AFP



**MANILA:** Philippine boxing icon and senator Manny Pacquiao, accompanied by his wife Jinksee, arrives to file his certificate of candidacy for the Philippine presidency in Manila. — AFP



**RUKBAN, Jordan:** Displaced people receive vaccinations at the Rukban desert camp for displaced Syrians along Syria's border with Jordan. — AFP

## For residents of Syria camp, slow death or risky exit

**BEIRUT:** A slow death if they stay or possible detention if they leave: the last residents of a Syria desert camp face an unenviable choice ahead of a new "voluntary departure" program. The nearly 10,000 displaced Syrians still living in the Rukban camp, established in 2014 on the berm between Jordan and Syria, are the last remnants of the nearly 50,000 people who lived there a few years ago.

A 55-kilometre radius security zone around a nearby garrison of US-led coalition troops shields camp residents from the Syrian army. But Jordan has largely sealed the border since 2016, leaving residents dependent on rare UN aid deliveries. Not a single humanitarian convoy has entered the area since September 2019. Driven out by hunger, disease and deplorable living conditions, tens of thousands have flocked to government-held areas, risking detention and enforced disappearance by government forces.

With the situation in Rukban rapidly deteriorating, rebels and Syrian army defectors still living in the settlement must decide whether to go along with a fresh round of UN-facilitated departures - a move human rights groups have strongly advised against. "We are caught between two fires. If we go to government-held Syria, we will perish, and if we stay in the camp, we will die a slow death," said an army defector who asked to remain anonymous for security reasons.

### 'Trapped'

"Since 2016, we have been trapped in the desert," said Mohammad Derbas al-Khalidi, head of the camp's organizing committee. Khalidi said there are no doctors or surgeons in the camp, only a small clinic and a team of first responders. Instead of schools, children attend classes under canvas or in mud-brick buildings that need repair, he said. "Many of the teachers sell vegeta-

bles or cigarettes in stalls at the market," instead of teaching, Khalidi told AFP.

Since 2019, more than 20,000 people have voluntarily left Rukban, according to the UN, which facilitated the voluntary departure of 329 people, with the help of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent in September that year. Others departed independently, or with assistance from the Syrian government, which has been calling on residents to leave Rukban for more than two years. Earlier this year, the camp committee received a UN plan to resume facilitated repatriations between September and November.

Those who chose to leave would be required to spend at least 14 days in transit shelters in the government-held province of Homs, according to the plan, a copy of which was obtained by AFP. They would only be allowed to leave the shelters if they were granted permission to do so by the Syrian authorities. "The security and safety of individuals" rests with the Syrian government, the document said. Bereft of security guarantees, the UN plan amounts to "collusion" with the Syrian government, Khalidi said. "The United Nations in Damascus is complicit, and it is nothing but a company shipping humans for the regime."

### 'Detained, tortured'

On September 11, the UN kicked off the latest round of departures by supporting a convoy of five trucks, alongside the Red Crescent. The convoy entered Rukban in response to a request by 88 individuals who had registered to leave, said Danielle Jenni Moylan of the UN humanitarian agency OCHA. "However, while inside Rukban, a small group of individuals obstructed the convoy and assaulted a driver," the spokesperson said. "As a result, the mission was cancelled and the convoy immediately departed Rukban."

When asked about potential risks facing returnees, Moylan said the UN was not in a position to offer security guarantees to Rukban residents wishing to leave. This effectively leaves them at the mercy of Syrian government forces, a concern that prompted Amnesty International to call on the UN to halt all plans for future departures. "The Syrian government considers that people in Rukban are 'terrorists'," said Amnesty's Marie Forestier. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Anti-Zionist protests

**MANAMA:** Anti-Zionist protests broke out in Bahrain on Friday, a day after Zionist Foreign Minister Yair Lapid's visit to open the Jewish state's first embassy in the country. Police fired tear gas during one rally as scattered, small-scale protests took place around the tiny Gulf state. Protesters marched waving Palestinian and Bahraini flags, chanting "Death to Zionist" and "No to Zionist embassy in Islamic Bahrain". No arrests were reported. Lapid's visit on Thursday came a year after Bahrain normalized ties with Zionist, breaking with decades of Arab consensus that there should be no relations without a resolution to the Palestinian question. The United Arab Emirates, Sudan and Morocco also established relations in a series of US-brokered agreements known as the Abraham Accords. — AFP



**SITRA, Bahrain:** Protesters lift placards which read in Arabic 'your visit is rejected', as they lift Bahraini flags during an anti-Zionist rally in Sitra island. — AFP

#### 'Mommy is sleeping'

**RENNES:** Two sisters aged 5 and 7 spent several days in an apartment with the body of their mother who had died suddenly in northwestern France, the regional prosecutor said yesterday. "Be quiet, Mommy is sleeping," the girls told police officers who came to their apartment on Wednesday in the city of Le Mans after being alerted by the girls' schools of their prolonged absence, the prosecutor's office said. The officers insisted on coming in and discovered the body of the mother, who was born in 1990 in Ivory Coast and who had died of natural causes, according to a subsequent autopsy. The girls were taken to a hospital and were then placed in foster care and were being given psychological counseling. It was not yet clear how long they had spent inside the apartment with their dead mother. — AFP

#### Panama police apologize

**PANAMA CITY:** Panama's police force apologized Friday for participating in a Zionist-run training course that showed officers shooting at targets that appeared to depict people dressed in traditional Arab clothing. The controversy arose after photos emerged from the training, one of which showed a man pointing a gun at an image of an armed person wearing what appeared to be an Arab headdress. The images were published on Twitter by the National Police and the local Zionist chamber of commerce, but were later deleted. "We are respectful of cultural, religious and ethnic differences," the police force said in a statement. "We regret that... a situation arose outside the nature of our mission and duty." The deleted Twitter posts had said the training was organized by the Zionist embassy in Panama. — AFP

#### Libya's 'anti-drug' operation

**TRIPOLI:** Libyan authorities have carried out an "anti-drug" operation in a rundown suburb of the capital Tripoli that resulted in arrests and the detention of hundreds of migrants. The attorney general, in a statement, said Friday's day-long sweep targeted "properties exploited in organizing illegal immigration" and in the trafficking of drugs, alcohol and firearms. "Many perpetrators of crimes" were arrested and "hundreds of illegal immigrants transferred to shelters", the statement reads. On Twitter, Libya's interim Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah hailed the "interior ministry heroes" who carried out the operation against drug traffickers targeting Libya's youth. The suburb was sealed off during the raid and residents barred from leaving their homes, a witness said. Pictures on social media appeared to show foreigners being driven away in the back of pick-up trucks. Excavators later knocked down their makeshift shelters. — AFP

# Business

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2021

## Zain launches 'eeZee Your Way' for prepaid customers

### Most unique and innovative prepaid solutions for biggest family of subscribers

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the launch of 'eeZee Your Way', a new promotional campaign for prepaid customers that offers the most unique and innovative prepaid solutions to the biggest family of subscribers in Kuwait. The campaign aims at opening up entire new horizons towards Zain customers' usage needs in line with today's ever-changing digital lifestyle, while offering them an added value and meeting their unique needs and aspirations.

By launching this new campaign, Zain gives eeZee customers the ease and flexibility of customizing their very own plan as per their unique needs via the Zain app or website. The campaign also gives customers the chance of getting up to triple benefits every month, carry over unused benefits to the next month, enjoy a wide range of digital entertainment services, and much more exclusive options.

Prepaid (eeZee) customers can now launch the Zain smartphone app or website and choose from a wide range of options to customize their very own plan from scratch that fits their priorities, needs, and budget. Customers can easily choose their preferred Internet caps, number of Zain-to-Zain minutes, number of local minutes, number of international minutes, as well as options for unlimited social media, WhatsApp, YouTube, and more.

Once a customer specifies the options that best suit their needs, the final plan price will be shown, where they may add or edit options as they see fit. Once a customer activates the plan they customized, it will be valid for 30 days starting from the activation date, and it will automatically renew

when the period is over. The minimum amount for a plan is KD 5.

When a customer commits with autorenewal on-time (meaning enough balance is available to renew after the 30-day period), they will receive double the benefits they have selected (such as minutes, Internet caps, etc.) in the next month for the same original price. If a customer continues to commit with autorenewal on-time in the following months, they will continue to receive triple the benefits they have selected during the following months for the same original price. Any unused minutes or Internet caps will be transferred to the upcoming month and added over the doubled/tripled benefits at no extra charge.

- Exclusive options, free gifts, and selection of great digital entertainment services.
- Zain only operator that allows customers to carry over unused benefits upon renewal.

Once a customer activates the plan they have customized, they have the ability to prepare a different plan with different benefits for the next month anytime during the current plan's period by simply tapping on "Set Next Plan". Zain offered this feature for customers who may have changing usage habits that change from time to time, offering them the ease and comfort of not having to auto renew the same benefits they might not need in the future.

New customers who wish to join the eeZee family can order a new prepaid line with a new SIM card through the

Zain Online Store (zos.kw.zain.com). The new card will be delivered to their doorstep, and they will enjoy 200 GBs of Internet, 60 local minutes, 60 International minutes, and unlimited calls within Zain's network (Zain to Zain calls) for KD 6 only. The same plan will auto renew every month at the same price.

Zain also offers existing eeZee customers the chance to enjoy many great free gifts when they download the Zain app for smartphones on iOS and Android. Gifts include free bonus credit, free Internet, or other amazing gifts at no charge.

With the recent boom in digital entertainment services, Zain is keen on offering its customers a range of entertainment options in partnership with major

content creators and service providers to give them the chance to enjoy their favorite programs wherever they are. eeZee customers can now subscribe to OSN for KD 3 monthly only to get 100 GBs of free Internet to stream OSN content. Customers can easily subscribe by activating the service via the Zain app or by sending OSN to 999 to receive their sign-in credentials and start enjoying their favorite movies and TV shows on the OSN app right away.

Zain prepaid customers can also enjoy Anghami by receiving a free subscription for two months, where they can enjoy



one month themselves and gift the other month to a friend or family member. To enjoy the offer, customers can easily send "SUB ANG3" to 94010.

The unique campaign was specifically designed to complement the needs and aspirations of Zain's prepaid customers. By launching this new innovative feature, the company aims at creating a new concept for the services it offers, as well as

offering convenience with flexible plans that meet the different personal and professional needs of its prepaid customers.

Zain is committed to offer the most flexible and innovative offerings in the market for both prepaid and postpaid customers, reinforcing its leadership position and its pledge in offering the best services and offers to the largest family of subscribers in Kuwait.

## Dubai Expo 'new city' will exist for decades, says chief

**DUBAI:** Dubai has created a "new city" for Expo 2020 that will exist for decades, the head of the event told AFP, promising most of the vast site will remain in use after the six-month world fair. The \$7 billion, purpose-built showground occupies a vast site on Dubai's outskirts, with hundreds of pavilions and exhibitions sprawling across an area twice the size of Monaco.

Expo 2020, which has sustainability as one of its main themes, wraps up in March. But director general Reem Al-Hashimy said the lavish, largely air-conditioned development would not go to waste. "It was never an investment to host an Expo, it was an investment to create a new city that is equal distance between Dubai and Abu Dhabi and really the city of the future," she said in an interview.

"That investment goes into a city to 2040, 2050 and beyond. In addition to that, we have also made a commitment not to dismantle all Expo-related facilities. "Everything that we're building, a very large

majority, over 90 percent or so, will actually remain for that future city."

The United Arab Emirates city has witnessed breakneck development in its growth from a small fishing settlement to a major center with the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa. The Expo project is connected to the Dubai metro and lies en route to the capital Abu Dhabi, the richest and most powerful of the UAE's seven emirates. "We're looking to attract industries" -

Expo is intended to draw millions of foreign visitors, but pandemic-related travel restrictions worldwide are likely to have a dampening effect. And whether the 5G-enabled site thrives or languishes after Expo depends on what businesses can be persuaded to base themselves there.

"Given the focus on technology and sustainability we're looking to attract industries, residents that are inclined to operate in those spaces," said Al-Hashimy, who is also the UAE's minister of state for international cooperation. "So in part we're



DUBAI: This picture shows the Tunisian pavilion at the Expo 2020, in Dubai yesterday.—AFP

looking at industries related to climate or green technology if you will, a lot around ag-tech. There's an interesting combination of new sectors that have emerged that we're going to be able hopefully to capitalize on by having this Expo."

Expo's sustainability measures include Terra, an enormous, satellite dish-shaped construction that is powered by nearly 5,000 solar panels and recycles its own water. There are also a number of activities on climate and biodiversity, an especially pressing

topic in the oil-rich Gulf, one of the world's hottest regions. "There was a real conscious decision when we laid out our people and planet program to look at how the Expo activities... could positively contribute," Al-Hashimy said.

"Large global events in general don't look at long-term sustainable measures," she added. "But given that this site will remain almost in its entirety, in legacy, then we are proud to be able to contribute to the larger sustainable agenda." —AFP

## Thousands brave heat as delayed Dubai Expo opens

**DUBAI:** Thousands of people toured Dubai's Expo 2020 on the opening day on Friday, braving hot temperatures as the COVID-delayed world fair finally opened its doors one year late. Visitors strolled or rode electric bikes around the huge showground, which has been built from scratch at a cost of about \$7 billion on Dubai's desert outskirts. As temperatures touched 38 degrees Celsius (100 Fahrenheit), robot information systems buzzed down the shaded boulevards and formation jets plumed colored smoke overhead.

Dubai, one of the UAE's seven emirates, is hoping to attract millions of visitors in a boost to its profile and standing during the six-month fair. Visitor numbers were not immediately available for day one, but crowds were light and attendance appeared respectable rather than busy.

"It is really a source of pride that Dubai is hosting

an Expo, which means a global event," said Aysha Hussein, a 20-year-old student and Emirati citizen. "We are all excited about the event."

One hundred and ninety-two countries have pavilions at the event, with rivals such as Zionist entity and Palestine present as well as Qatar, which was blockaded by its Gulf neighbors for three and a half years until January. "We were looking forward for today and the opening," said Sarah Cann, 34, a British podiatrist who lives in Dubai. "We're looking forward to seeing some of the shows perhaps, tasting food, different food from different countries and just exploring."

Some exhibitors are hoping Expo, set to be the most attended event since the pandemic, reflects a turning point in the global fight against the disease. But coronavirus measures are highly visible, with masks mandatory and social distancing on site. Visitors must be vaccinated or hold a negative PCR test. Reem Al-Hashimy, the Expo 2020 director general and the United Arab Emirates' minister of state for international cooperation, said officials were keeping a close eye on the situation.

"We're doing what is scientifically possible to mitigate COVID impacts but also what is necessary for things to also move on, so trying to thread that needle or create that balance is going to be something



DUBAI: A picture shows an image of Apple founder and late CEO Steve Jobs in the interior of the US pavilion at the Dubai Expo 2020, on Friday. —AFP

we will watch very carefully," she told AFP.

The UAE last month brushed off a European parliament resolution urging member states and businesses to boycott Expo over the country's human rights record. "Expo 2020 is yet another opportunity for the UAE to falsely present itself on the world stage as open, tolerant, and rights-respecting while shutting down the space for politics, public discourse, and activism." —AFP

## Tata emerges frontrunner to acquire Air India

**NEW DELHI:** India's conglomerate Tata Group has emerged as the frontrunner to acquire debt-stricken Air India as the government looks to close one of its most ambitious divestment projects, sources revealed. The India government is yet to formally approve Tata's winning bid, but people with direct knowledge of the matter said the Mumbai-based conglomerate has placed the highest bid - over \$1.029 billion (Indian rupee 5,000 crore)



more than SpiceJet promoter Ajay Singh, who participated in his individual capacity in the bidding process.

Tea-to-steel Tata Group confirmed two weeks ago that it had submitted a bid to buy debt-crippled national carrier Air India, which it owned decades ago before the airline was nationalized. The Indian government has sought to sell its entire stake in the ailing company, setting a deadline for bids for Wednesday after failing previously to secure any interest for a majority share.

A senior government official said that once the winner is announced, the share-purchase agreement will be signed with the winning entity within 15 days, and the transfer process will begin immediately afterward. Representatives of both bidders were called for meetings on two occasions earlier this week, during which the share-purchase agreement was discussed to help them take a long-term view of Air India's various liabilities, and plan the funding accordingly. The Civil Aviation Ministry issued a preliminary information memorandum in January 2020 seeking an expression of interest, kicking off the process of divestment. A key change from the government's earlier attempt to sell Air India in 2018 was that it said it would offload 100 percent of its stake, compared with 76 percent earlier. —Agencies



Business

# One minute to open a Gulf Bank account

The launch of new feature marks beginning of a new era of digital banking services

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank announced yesterday the launch of a revolutionary new feature, enabling customers to open bank accounts in just under a minute, via the Bank's website or mobile application. The launch of the new feature marks the beginning of a new era of digital banking services for Gulf Bank's customers, as opening an account with Gulf Bank is now the simplest and fastest account registration process in Kuwait. The feature is available for all types of

bank accounts at Gulf Bank, and is available to all customer segments, and both individuals and corporations. Gulf Bank is constantly striving to provide simpler, more convenient and more secure banking services compared to the traditional banking experience. The new initiative is only the beginning of Gulf Bank's digital and technological transformation and is part of the Bank's new strategy to give customers the option of conducting their banking transactions anytime, anywhere - be it from the comfort of home or the office. With its clients' evolving needs in mind, Gulf Bank has redesigned its services to enable customers to conveniently open new accounts on their phones, and in just one minute. Clients can now open Gulf Bank Salary, "red", Al-Danah, savings, and all other accounts via the mobile banking app, and receive their account numbers and IBAN numbers immediately through the Gulf Bank appli-

cation, making it possible for clients to conduct money transfers, shop online, and more. On the launch of Gulf Bank's newest account opening feature, Mohammed Al-Qattan, General Manager Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, said: "At Gulf Bank, we are constantly working to provide an unparalleled banking experience for our clients, all while ensuring the highest levels of service flexibility and digitization in order to facilitate our customers' lives and respond to their needs. Thanks to our newest self-service option, the process of opening a bank account is now easier than ever, with customers able to open an account in just under a minute, 24 hours a day, and seven days of the week, regardless of formal working hours and public holidays. Our newest service also allows customers to receive their account and IBAN numbers immediately upon opening an account, with Gulf Bank's latest automation-enabled technology providing clients with a quick and seamless alternative to the traditional banking experience. This service is one of many currently underway at Gulf Bank, and we are looking forward to launching even more services that aim to facilitate our customers' lives in an effort to provide them with the pioneering banking experience enjoyed at Gulf Bank." It is worth noting that the launch of this service falls directly in line with Gulf Bank's long-term strategy, mission and vision of providing the highest quality and most convenient banking experience to its customers. The innovative service will allow both new and existing customers to



## New feature provides the fastest and simplest account registration process in Kuwait via Gulf Bank's website or application for all accounts and all customers

bank accounts at Gulf Bank, and is available to all customer segments, and both individuals and corporations. Gulf Bank is constantly striving to provide simpler, more convenient and more secure banking services compared to the traditional banking experience. The new initiative is only the beginning of Gulf Bank's digital and technological transformation and is part of the Bank's new strategy to give customers the option of conducting their banking transactions anytime, anywhere - be it from the comfort of home or the office. With its clients' evolving needs in mind, Gulf Bank has redesigned its services to enable customers to conveniently open new accounts on their phones, and in just one minute. Clients can now open Gulf Bank Salary, "red", Al-Danah, savings, and all other accounts via the mobile banking app, and receive their account numbers and IBAN numbers immediately through the Gulf Bank appli-

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open any Gulf Bank account online without the need to visit any of the Bank's branches in person. Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.



NEW!

## It Only Takes a Minute to Move Forward Together

Now you can open your account within a minute through the Gulf Bank app.

Join the first service of its kind in Kuwait and enjoy our banking services today.

Fastest Account Opening in Kuwait

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## Business

# Take a 10-year holiday with ABK's Alfouz draw account

## Weekly cash prize of KD 10,000 is the highest single weekly prize on offer in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced the launch of its much-awaited draw account, Alfouz, that offers ABK customers the chance to win life-changing rewards. With Alfouz, ABK customers will get a chance to win KD 10,000 in Kuwait's highest single weekly draw and the ultimate grand prize of KD5,000 monthly additional income for 10 years. Both new and existing ABK customers can benefit from this opportunity, with a

minimum account balance of KD100 only. Speaking about the launch of Alfouz, Dr Haneen Al-Rumaihi, Assistant General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK said, "The global pandemic has made financial preparedness a priority for communities across the nation. As a leading retail bank, we are committed to inspiring a positive savings culture among Kuwaiti nationals and residents. Moreover, we are thrilled to be able to reward them for their

sensible financial behavior. Alfouz has a number of unique benefits, as the low minimum deposit of KD100 makes it easy to open the account, the weekly prize of KD 10,000 is the largest single weekly prize draw, and the grand prize of KD 5,000 monthly for 10 years offers a perfect safety net."

The Alfouz annual draw will reward one lucky winner an incredible additional income of KD 5,000 every month for the next 10 years. This life-changing opportunity is also open to those who were included in the weekly draws in the preceding months, ensuring that any ABK Alfouz customer could win.



Dr Haneen Al-Rumaihi

- Annual Grand Prize - KD5,000 monthly additional income for 10 years
- Minimum account balance of KD 100 only
- Every KD 100 average monthly balance gives you one entry into the weekly draw and to the annual grand draw. The more you save the higher your chances.

## KFH: Growth in local and foreign trade finance transactions

KUWAIT: The Executive Manager - Trade Finance at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Rashed Al-Melhem said that the bank's efforts to continue providing Letter of Credit services and appropriate finance channels and its experience in acting as the mediator between the supplier and the buyer, have resulted into a remarkable growth in the values of the LC related to the internal and foreign trade in 2020 and the first half of the current year.

Al-Melhem stated, in a press release, that KFH, out of keenness to support commercial activities, companies, and SMEs, has not stopped providing its services and innovative solutions during the exceptional circumstances last year. He reiterated KFH's keenness to implement the latest IT applications at the trade finance department concerning the opening of LCs and LGs to facilitate procedures and enable customers to reach any place worldwide by providing a vast correspondent banking network through highly sophisticated communication systems.

Al-Melhem mentioned that KFH has recently achieved remarkable success in launching the SWIFT Payment Controls service according to the



Rashed Al-Melhem

highest security and quality standards. This service enables the bank to conduct a real time track the financial transfer stream directly with the advantage of notice and the ability to stop transferred payments and provide the user with daily reports on the transaction status.

### Innovative solutions

On the other hand, Al-Melhem emphasized that KFH has come a long track record in offering innovative solutions and alternatives to finance foreign trade through LCs and sharia compliant finance solutions, thus overcoming several challenges encountered by the trade exchange process.

He added that "To ensure the achievement of an efficient performance, effective solutions, speed, and fulfillment of customer's trade requirements, safety of merchandise, speed of timely trade exchange, the trade finance department team at KFH comprises highly qualified and trained staff holding accredited certificates in all fields of trade finance operations".

KFH has continued to offer and develop finance channels to suite customers' requirements and provide parallel trade relations. Al-Melhem said that KFH has provided a variety of products to support the import/ export activity including on sight LC

which provides a security factor for the merchants when importing their goods from abroad or when they get the supply inside Kuwait and the LC (on acceptance) which is a type of deferred payment credit. Payment to the foreign supplier is postponed after sending the merchandise or receipt of the cargo documents at certain agreed intervals. Also, it includes Murabaha refinanced credits according to which the merchandise is imported at the customer's account. When the merchandise arrives, the customer will be able to purchase it from KFH against certain profit and settle the value on flexible installments according to the customer's cash inflows. Additionally, KFH provides the export credit product which contributes to the activation of the foreign export and supports local products. The export credit is given or endorsed in favor of the exporter in Kuwait upon instructions from the importer outside Kuwait and receipt of the value upon completion of the specifications of the exported merchandise.

Regarding the letters of guarantee, the bank issues different types of guarantees to suite the nature of each project, initial guarantees or performance guarantees, maintenance contracts, down payment, L/Gs regarding financial guarantee of corporate labor as well as telephone installations or traveling abroad for individuals. The bank provides the LC service (on collection) and act as a mediator who delivers to the customer documents relating to individuals or local Kuwaiti establishments as per the instructions of foreign parties.

## Al-Shammari wins KD 250,000 prize in AUB's Al-Hassad draw

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) announced the result of quarterly grand prize in Al-Hassad Islamic prize program and named the customer Hadeyah Dawoud Al-Shammari as the lucky winner of KD 250,000 during the draw was broadcasted live on FM 88.8 Kuwait Pulse 360 Mall on 29 September 2021.

On this occasion, Hanadi Khazal, Head of Retail Distribution at AUB congratulated the winner, wishing her all the best. Khazal expressed her happiness with the value trust of the customers in the Bank.

Khazal assured that AUB is keen since the beginning of launching Al-Hassad Islamic prizes program to offer a host of exclusive prizes to contribute in making the aspiration and dreams of its clients true, and to enhance the culture of savings, stressing that the Bank is committed to provide state-of-the-art banking solutions, which are in line with the client's changing requirements.

Al-Hassad Islamic account is the first Islamic prizes account in Kuwait which offers over 750 prizes over a 12 month period and provides numerous features. Such features include the simplest and easiest savings program, highest number of winners, largest prize value, loyalty multipliers, and unique account opening feature online with all ease with instant deposit option.

The draws of Al-Hassad include several cash prizes, such as KD 100,000 each Eid and the grand quarterly draw of KD 250,000 prize which continues to be a key aspiration for customers who are wishing to fulfill their dreams. Al-Hassad offers 20 weekly prizes of KD 1,000 for each winner. Furthermore, for the first time in Kuwait, the AUB Al-Hassad presents the "Privilege Draw", which is a quarterly draw of KD 25,000 exclusively for Al-Hassad customers who maintained their balances for more than one year and have not won a prize in the past five years. For all draws, the clients are eligible for one draw chance for each KD 50 deposited in their Al-Hassad account.

In addition to this attractive package of rewards, Al-Hassad Islamic account incorporates a Wakala contract for projected annual profits, making this account unique and attractive to all society segments that are aspiring to build their short and long-term savings through a unique savings account with many advantages.

has been rising vehicle prices, which can help offset some of the pain from lower sales. In the third quarter, GM's average vehicle prices was \$47,467, up almost 32 percent from the equivalent period in 2018. "While supply has been constraining sales in recent months, underlying demand conditions remain strong, thanks to ample job openings, growing pent-up vehicle demand and excess savings accumulated by many households during the pandemic," said GM Chief Economist Elaine Buckberg. "We expect to continue selling every vehicle we can produce with rapid turnover." Shares of GM fell 0.2 percent to \$52.63 in morning trading.—AFP

## Driving ambition: UK wheels out steps to find new truckers

LONDON: At the National Driving Centre school in a working-class suburb of south London, Alberto Almeida holds up a small certificate that says he has just passed his truck-driver test. Soon, he could be on the road, helping to address a shortage of truckers that has led to empty supermarket shelves and delivery delays, stoking fears for Christmas and beyond.

"Smile Alberto, no more money to pay," his instructor jokes as he takes a picture of the 49-year-old electrician, who signed up for a change in career during the coronavirus lockdown.

"No, they've got to pay me, now," Almeida quips back, with a broad grin. Britain is short of some 100,000 lorry drivers, according to the Road Haulage Association (RHA) industry body.

With shortages causing serious supply issues in Britain, truck drivers have become "real rock stars," said Laurence Bolton, director of the National Driving Centre in Croydon. His switchboard has been going off non-stop since truck drivers hit the headlines. The global shortage has been amplified in Britain by Brexit, which is preventing the return of eastern European drivers who were keeping the country supplied just a year ago. Empty shelves in supermarkets have become a regular sight. Fast-food chain McDonald's has reported a lack of milkshakes, and some pubs a shortage of some types of beer. At the same time, petrol stations last week ran dry as people panic bought over fears about the lack of tanker drivers.

### New recruits

Trucks from supermarket giants such as Tesco are adorned with invitations to join their teams and some companies are offering to pay for training. The government is also stepping up measures to solve the problem. Drivers can now drive longer hours, and license-holders who have left the industry have been sent letters urging them to return, and Britain will grant 10,500 temporary work visas to address labor shortages before Christmas. As a stop-gap, some 200 soldiers will deliver fuel to filling stations from today to try to ease long queues that have built up across the country. Some of the measures arouse skepticism at the testing center, particularly the



Thousands of vehicles are parked at the old Mantson airport near Dover. — AFP

relaxation of rules meaning drivers can immediately drive the heaviest vehicles, without first having to learn the trade in a smaller truck.

"You see yourself going from a car to a monster like that?" asked Bolton, pointing to a gigantic 10-tonne truck. One of his instructors, Andrew Hawes believes that road safety could suffer, but they both welcome the new interest in the industry, which is attracting new types of recruits. "There have been five or six airplane pilots this year, who are afraid of being laid off" with the drop in air traffic, explained Bolton. Hawes, a former truck driver himself, says he shares with his students his experiences of a "hard and solitary life" on the road.

### Controversial visas

When he was working as a driver "15 or 20 years ago, the wages weren't too bad, but they haven't followed other businesses or inflation," he explained. Meanwhile, prices for job essentials such as rooms in truck stops have sky-rocketed, he added. Almeida, license in his pocket, doesn't plan to hit the road just yet, as he can still earn more as an electrician. "If you make me a good offer, a good package, yes, but it's not there," he said. "Brexit showed something, no one wants to be on the road," he added. The emergency visas granted by the government in late September to bring back those drivers prepared to accept lower wages and tough conditions have received a mixed response. The Unite trade union slammed the government, which campaigned to end free movement from EU countries during Brexit, for "propping up a broken and exploitative system". —AFP

conductor supply, which has led to manufacturing outages and cuts throughout its plant network.

GM reported third-quarter sales of 446,997 in the United States, down almost a third from the year-ago period. In the most recent quarter, the chip shortage was exacerbated by a surge in COVID-19 cases in Malaysia, which is home to key semiconductor capacity. But Steve Carlisle, executive vice president of GM North America, said the issues with chips "are improving" and that it looks forward to a "more stable operating environment through the fall."

One upside of the supply crunch for automakers

## KIB garners another Int'l accolade for its T2 sukuk deal

KUWAIT: In recognition of its contributions to the growth of the Islamic finance sector and its active role within the regional capital market, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) continues to garner prestigious international awards and accolades for its success in facilitating high-level capital and sukuk issuances - both locally and regionally. Accordingly, the Bank announced that it has won the Asian Banking & Finance (ABF) 'Financing Deal of the Year 2021' award for its recent \$300 million Tier 2 Sukuk issuance; an award handed out as part of ABF's annual Corporate and Investment Banking Awards ceremony, which was recently held on a virtual platform, and attended by representatives of international banking and financial institutions.

The ABF Corporate and Investment Banking Awards honor banks who were successfully able to handle significant deals, or launch innovative initiatives to deliver exceptional services for their clients. Accordingly, KIB was selected for the award following its nomination within the Deal-Based categories, having met the judging criteria which were based on several key aspects that included: the deal's achievements and milestones; project effectiveness in meeting its objectives and targets, and the impact on the bank and its clients. It serves to note that KIB's Sukuk issuance was a major and notable success overall, given the attractive pricing achieved and the high demand by investors - as the instrument was priced at a profit rate of 2.375 percent per annum, with a total participation reaching approximately nine times at \$2.7 billion.

Speaking about this accolade, Jamal Al-Barrak, General Manager of the Investment Department at the Bank, said: "We are proud to have won ABF's Deal of the Year award this year, as this certainly adds another impressive milestone to our notable track record of prestigious awards and honors; reaffirming our commitment towards making a real impact on the banking and finance sector. It also under-



Jamal Al-Barrak



scores our determination towards continuing to develop the bank's investment portfolio and our efforts to contribute to the sustainable growth and development of the overall investment infrastructure in the region".

Al-Barrak also mentioned that the recent ABF award is one of several awards that KIB has won for this notable deal, having previously nabbed the "Kuwait Deal of the Year 2020" award from Islamic Finance News (IFN). "This simply affirms KIB's strategic and successful approach towards attracting new investment opportunities and actively participating in high-quality syndications both locally and region-wide," he added. It serves to note that Asian Banking & Finance (ABF) is an industry magazine and platform serving Asia's dynamic financial services industry, including the Middle East, with an annual awards event that is considered among the most prestigious celebrating Asia's banking leaders. The ABF Corporate and Investment Banking Awards ceremony was held virtually and the awards were handed via digital presentations, recognizing over 40 exceptional banks across the Asia Pacific region. Winning companies were also interviewed from 29 July to 31 August to share their thoughts on winning one of the most prestigious awards in Asia.

## GM posts big drop in 3Q sales on semiconductor woes

NEW YORK: General Motors reported a sharp drop in third-quarter US sales on Friday as the global semiconductor crunch depletes dealerships of auto supply amid still-strong consumer demand. The big US automaker described auto inventories as "historically low" after months of limited semi-

## Business

## NBK Economic Report

## Kuwait's external surplus falls in 1Q21 on lower investment income

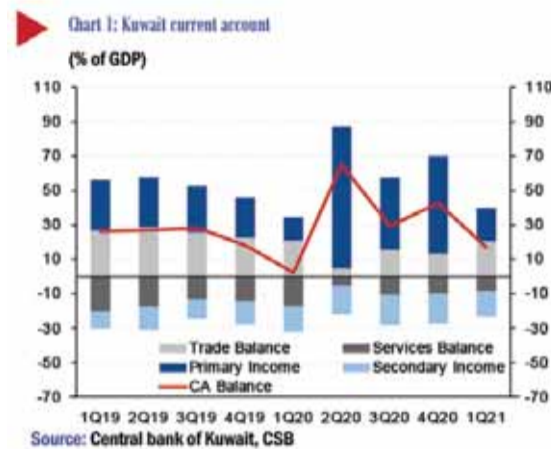
## Oil exports, imports growth, drop in worker remittances help offset decline

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's current account surplus remained large in 1Q21 but narrowed on a fall in investment income. An increase in oil exports, slower imports growth and the decline in workers' remittances helped offset part of this fall. Net outflows from the financial account declined due to lower portfolio investments in debt instruments. The recovery in oil prices in 2021 is expected to boost the current account surplus. A resurgence in COVID-19 could, however, weigh on economic growth and financial markets' performance.

Kuwait's current account surplus narrowed in 1Q21 to KD1.6 billion (16.9 percent of GDP) from KD3.7 billion (42.8 percent of GDP) in 4Q20. The quarterly decline in the surplus came mainly due to a sizeable fall in investment income, which more than offset the fourfold increase in the goods and services trade surplus due to higher oil exports. On the other hand, net outflows from the capital and financial account declined on lower portfolio investment outflows. Therefore, the surplus in the overall balance of payments (including the changes in general government and central bank foreign assets) increased to KD5.0 billion in 1Q21 compared with a surplus of KD1 billion in the previous quarter.

The goods trade surplus increased substantially in 1Q21 (+70.7 percent q/q), with oil exports (91.4 percent of total exports) rising by 34.4 percent q/q to KD 3.8 billion. The increase in oil exports mirrored the surge in the price of Kuwait Export Crude (KEC), which rose 36.4 percent q/q to an average of \$60.3/bbl. during 1Q21. Crude oil output also gained, albeit modestly (+1.5 percent q/q to 2.33 mb/d).

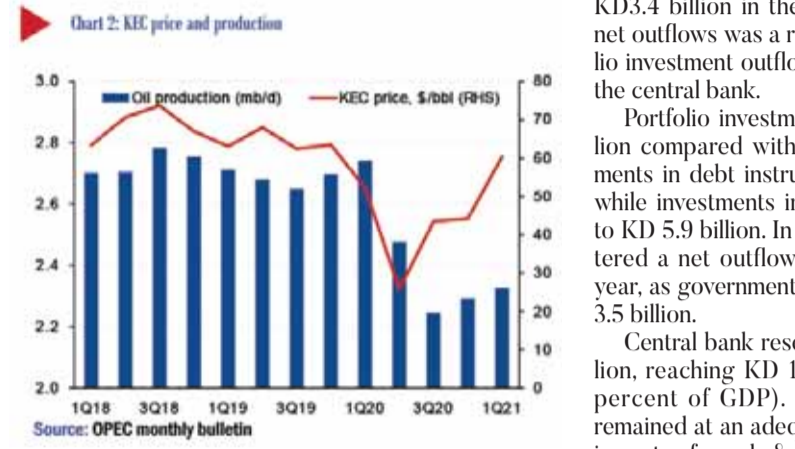
On the other hand, non-oil exports fell by 4.6 per-



cent q/q, reflecting a decline in foreign demand due to the impact of the pandemic and supply chain disruptions. Moreover, merchandise imports continued their slow post-pandemic recovery (+6.8 percent q/q versus 7.0 percent q/q in 4Q20).

The services deficit shrank slightly (-4.9 percent q/q to KD 0.8 billion), despite the increase in travel debits by 66 percent q/q with the relaxation of travel restrictions. Construction services payments showed a significant decline to KD0.1 billion that could be related to payment schedules.

The surplus in the primary income account, influenced by Kuwait's income from overseas investments, fell substantially to KD 1.8 billion (19.4 percent of GDP) in 1Q21 from KD 4.8 billion in the previous quarter. Direct and portfolio investment returns (credits)



declined by more than half to KD 0.6 billion and KD 1.2 billion, respectively, though the performance of international markets improved in 1Q21 with S&P500, Dow Jones industrials, and Stoxx Europe 600 each increasing by between 5-8 percent q/q. Moreover, on a year-on-year basis, investment income credits increased by 32.5 percent.

The secondary income deficit, which includes personal transfers between households, narrowed to KD1.4 billion as the largest component in this item, workers' remittances, declined by 7.3 percent q/q, partly due to a reduction in the expatriate population during the pandemic. On the other side of the balance of payments accounts, financial account net outflows - which measure the change in net financial claims on non-residents - fell to KD2.7 billion compared to

KD3.4 billion in the previous quarter. The decline in net outflows was a result of the notable drop in portfolio investment outflows as well as the reserve assets at the central bank.

Portfolio investment outflows eased to KD 3.0 billion compared with KD9.2 billion in 4Q20 as investments in debt instruments declined by KD 2.9 billion, while investments in equity securities declined mildly to KD 5.9 billion. In addition, 'other investments' registered a net outflow, for the first time in more than a year, as government deposits abroad increased by KD 3.5 billion.

Central bank reserve assets declined by KD 1.2 billion, reaching KD 13.4 billion at the end of 1Q21 (41 percent of GDP). However, international reserves remained at an adequate level, covering 12.7 months of imports of goods & services.

Overall, these numbers confirm that Kuwait's external position remains very strong, with a current account surplus maintained even last year when oil prices were at their pandemic lows. The surplus is also set to increase in the following quarters: the pickup in oil prices and higher crude production will increase oil export revenues, while income investment could also increase in line with the global economic recovery if this is reflected in international financial markets. Moreover, with official data showing the expatriate population declining, workers remittances in the medium term may continue to fall. The rebound in imports is likely to be gradual, as domestic demand slowly recovers. Low oil prices and the impact of the pandemic on financial markets could be the main downside risks to Kuwait's external position.



WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden gives a thumbs up as he walks with Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi upon departing the US Capitol after a caucus meeting in Washington, DC, on Friday. — AFP

## What happens if US defaults on its debt?

**WASHINGTON:** After narrowly avoiding a shutdown of the US government, President Joe Biden's Democratic lawmakers and the Republican opposition face an even more high-stakes task: Forging an agreement to raise the country's borrowing limit or risk a catastrophic default. Here's what you need to know about the debate over the US debt limit.

## What is the debt limit?

The debt limit is the legally established maximum on how much the United States can borrow to pay the government's bills for everything from social welfare programs to salaries for the military. According to the Treasury, it has been raised, suspended or otherwise delayed 78 times since 1960: 29 times under Democratic administrations and 49 times under Republicans. A 2019 budget measure passed under Republican former president Donald Trump suspended the limit for two years, and when it was reinstated on August 1, 2021, the United States had reached its ceiling, and the national debt now stands at \$28 trillion.

## How is the government preparing for a default?

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen announced the government would take "extraordinary measures" from August, but that those would no longer be sufficient to pay Washington's bills beyond October 18. Were a default to occur, "I think it would be catastrophic for the economy and for individual families," Yellen warned the House Financial Services Committee on Thursday. Social Security benefit payments would either stop or be delayed for almost 50 million elderly Americans and paychecks to soldiers would be disrupted, as would an anti-poverty program targeting families.

## What would a default mean for the economy?

The United States has never defaulted on its debt, which forms a backbone of the global economic system. The consensus among analysts is that a failure by Washington to make an interest payment on its debt would be a self-inflicted wound that would undercut

the economy's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and perhaps inflict permanent injury on the United States' international standing.

## What is the status of negotiations?

Democrats control both houses of Congress—but just barely. They need 10 Republican votes to overcome a filibuster in the Senate, and the opposition has made clear it will not help them raise the debt limit. The fight comes in the context of negotiations over two spending bills totaling trillions of dollars that Biden wants Congress to enact.

Republicans argue that they won't raise the limit to pay for those bills, but the limit needs to be increased anyway to pay for spending authorized under previous Republican and Democratic administrations. Republicans want Democrats to approve an increase unilaterally using the reconciliation process, but that is expected to take weeks and Democratic leaders continue to insist Republicans should join them in taking action to prevent a default.

## Could there be negative consequences even without a default?

Few Washington observers believe either party is willing to let the country default, and expect they'll somehow reach an agreement, potentially at the last minute. This has happened before, but it wasn't without costs. In 2011, the country came days away from a default after Republicans blocked an increase unless Democratic President Barack Obama agreed to concessions in his spending plans that they said would cut the country's debt and deficit over the long run, though it has soared ever higher since. Wall Street fell six percent as the deadline to raise the limit neared, according to financial services firm Morningstar.

Then, after markets had finished their last session of the week, S&P Global Ratings downgraded US credit to just below its top rating, where it had previously sat for decades. When markets reopened on Monday, the S&P 500 declined 6.6 percent, Morningstar said. The other ratings agencies didn't join in ding the United States over its politicians' inability to come to grips with its massive deficit and debt.

But as the latest standoff drags on, Shai Akabas, director of economic policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center, warned of consequences. "As we keep having these episodes where we get so narrowly close, it will increase the calls for a change to the world's reserve currency, which could favor China," he said. — AFP

tors including rising overseas demand as economies reopen, record coal prices, state electricity price controls and tough emissions targets.

More than a dozen provinces and regions have been forced to impose curbs on energy usage in recent months. Bloomberg News, citing people familiar with the matter who did not want to be named, reported that Vice Premier Han Zheng had told energy companies to make sure there is enough fuel to keep the country running and that Beijing would not tolerate blackouts.

Han, who supervises the nation's energy sector and industrial production, was speaking at an emergency meeting this week with officials from Beijing's state-owned assets regulator and economic planning agency, the people said. "It is probably a strong signal about how concerned China is regarding keeping industry going, and more importantly, the winter that is

## US factories again overcome supply snarls in September

**WASHINGTON:** Supply shortages and delays continued to complicate operations at US factories but manufacturing nonetheless grew in September, an industry survey said Friday. The Institute for Supply Management reported its manufacturing index was at 61.1 percent last month, higher than analysts had expected and for the 16th straight month above the 50-percent threshold indicating growth.

Employment climbed 1.2 percentage points to return to growth at 50.2 percent, however new orders were flat at 66.7 percent and production fell slightly to 59.4 percent, while supplier deliveries slowed. "Manufacturing performed well for the 16th straight month, with demand, consumption and inputs registering month-over-month growth, in spite of continuing unprecedented obstacles and ever-increasing demand," the survey's chair Timothy Fiore said.

Those obstacles include "record-long raw materials lead times, continued shortages of critical materials, rising commodities prices and difficulties in transporting products," though he noted the survey received three positive comments for each cautious one, indicating optimism. "Customer demand continues to swell as we prepare for the fourth quarter, and overall growth has been extremely good for the year. Supply chain concerns are growing beyond electronics and chips into most other commodities," an electrical equipment, appliances and components firm told the survey. All manufacturing sectors reported growth last month, with the exception of wood products, which saw activity decrease. Oren Klachkin of Oxford Economics warned in an analysis that the "the expansion's best days are in the rear-view mirror" and "sup-

ply chain headwinds look set to drag on growth well into next year." "A monumental backlog of orders-driven by robust demand and inventory restocking and stronger overseas demand—will keep manufacturing humming into 2022," he added. Prices jumped nearly two percentage points to 81.2 percent amid shortages of components.

## Prices rise

Inflation continued to rise in the United States in August, while spending and incomes also climbed, according to government data released Friday. The Commerce Department's personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index was up 4.3 percent from August 2020 as the world's largest economy struggles with supply chain delays and shortages amid its bounceback from the pandemic's business closures. Income rose 0.2 percent that month, in line with analysts' forecasts, and spending climbed slightly above expectations at 0.8 percent.

The rise in income was attributable both to increases in wages but also to government policies such as advance tax credit payment to families, though those were offset by a decrease in pandemic unemployment benefits that month, the Commerce Department said. Consumers split the \$130.5 billion increase in spending almost evenly between goods and services. Among the former, more was spent on food and beverages and on recreational goods, but less on motor vehicles and parts as they grapple with a shortage of semiconductors that's harmed production. The increase in services was "widespread," according to the report.

The rise in the price index comes amid concerns about inflation in the United States as Congress mulls President Joe Biden's massive spending proposals and the Federal Reserve signals it may soon start cutting its pandemic stimulus policies. The year-on-year rate was 0.1 percent higher than the month prior, and if the volatile food and energy sectors are excluded, inflation was up 3.6 percent from August 2020, the same rate as the two months prior. Compared to July, prices rose at an unchanged 0.4 percent. — AFP



VANCE: In this file photo, an employee works on the doors for a Mercedes-Benz C-Class at the Mercedes-Benz US International factory in Vance, Alabama. — AFP

## China orders energy firms to win supplies amid power crisis

**BEIJING:** China's top state-owned energy companies have been ordered to ensure there are adequate fuel supplies for the approaching winter at all costs, a report said Friday, as the country battles a power crisis that threatens to hit growth in the world's number two economy. The country has been hit by widespread power cuts that have closed or partially closed factories, hitting production and global supply chains.

The crisis has been caused by a confluence of fac-

tor. The order "to me implies that we are in no way on the verge of a cool-off. Rather it looks like it is going to get even more crazy", Bjarne Schieldrop, an analyst at SEB said.

"They will bid whatever it takes to win a bidding war for a cargo of coal" or liquefied natural gas. The power crunch prompted banks Nomura and Goldman Sachs to cut their growth forecasts for China this year, expecting more disruptions to production. Factories that supply multinationals such as Apple and carmaker Tesla are among those told to temporarily halt production. "If Chinese steel and aluminum smelters are going to be shutting down for extended periods, you can be sure that will reverberate through global supply chains," added Halley. One factory worker in the industrial hub of Dongguan told AFP this week they were working overnight after being forced to cease daytime production.—AFP

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## Lifestyle | Features



This file photo shows an aerial view of the Big Buddha and Kata Beach, a day before the 'Phuket Sandbox' tourism scheme that allows visits by people vaccinated against the COVID-19 coronavirus is set to launch. — AFP

## Phuket opens to all vaccinated travellers

Fully vaccinated travellers from any country can now book holidays to tourism haven Phuket, the Thai government has announced, under tweaks to a struggling quarantine-free travel scheme. Thailand's tourism industry has been on its knees, with the coronavirus pandemic and related restrictions slashing visitor numbers from 40 million in 2019 to a mere trickle over the last two years. Pre-virus, the sector made up a fifth of Thailand's national income, and the travel curbs have fed into the country's worst economic performance in more than two decades.

The kingdom launched a "sandbox" scheme in July, which allowed fully vaccinated travellers from countries considered low-to-medium risk to roam free on the popular beach island for a fortnight, and then afterwards travel to the mainland without quarantine. Last week, authorities cut the required stay to a week, in line with

national changes to quarantine rules. The Tourism Authority of Thailand announced late Friday that the scheme had been broadened from the around 80 countries already eligible. "This means Thailand is now welcoming travellers from any country in the world to the sandbox program," it said in a statement.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Tane Sangrat said unvaccinated children would be able to travel with their vaccinated parents. The sandbox program has already lured more than 38,000 visitors to the white sands of Phuket, and generated \$66.67 million. But tourism operators are lukewarm on the revival of the island's economy, where 90 percent of hotels have been shuttered. They have been pleading for the government to simplify entry requirements to increase visitor numbers. The changes will allow previously excluded Indonesians and Malaysians to travel to Phuket.

Before the pandemic, Malaysia was Thailand's second biggest source of tourists, with more than four million travellers visiting in 2019. Thai authorities hope to reopen five other destinations, including capital Bangkok, using the sandbox model from the start of November, followed by 20 more locations in December once vaccination rates increase. However, travel advice from other countries discouraging would-be tourists could hamper Thailand's plans to reboot the industry. Britain and the US have issued travel warnings as the country grapples with a deadly third wave of the virus and low vaccination rates. Daily new case numbers are hovering at around 11,000, following a peak of 23,000 in August-but testing levels have also declined. — AFP



Royal Ballet dancers Fumi Kaneko and William Bracewell rehearse a scene from Kenneth MacMillan's adaptation of Romeo and Juliet, during a media showcase at the Royal Opera House. — AFP

## UK's top ballet stars leap back into spotlight

After a year of playing to empty houses, Britain's Royal Ballet dancers William Bracewell and Fumi Kaneko are eager to "celebrate what we do best" when they return to the public stage as Romeo and Juliet. "I haven't done this, a three-act ballet for ages," Japanese prima ballerina Kaneko told AFP after a rehearsal of the famous balcony scene. "To be able to dance with a whole company of ballet dancers is so special."

"Romeo and Juliet is my dream role, I'm enjoying every minute of the rehearsal right now," she said of the Kenneth MacMillan choreographed work, ahead of World Ballet Day on October 19. In one aerial scene, Kaneko is embraced by her Romeo, Bracewell, who twirls her around and draws her closer into an embrace, crowned by a kiss. Bracewell said the return of in-person audiences after more than a year of rolling lockdowns was "what we needed to do, to come back together and celebrate what we do best, which is tell those amazing stories".

Kaneko revealed other problems thrown up by the pandemic, saying "even when we came back to studio we had to wear masks." "I think we did struggle a lot, this breathing with a mask", even if it meant they "could do what we want to do". Britain began lifting its coronavirus lockdown restrictions in July, as a mass vaccination campaign reduced hospital admissions for severe COVID and deaths. Bracewell said now was the time for everyone who has made some sacrifices "to start hopefully getting back to some sort of normality and getting the joyful parts of life as well". — AFP

## Gloria Estefan reveals she was sexually abused at age nine

Grammy-winning pop star Gloria Estefan revealed Thursday that she was sexually abused by a relative when she was nine years old. The Cuban-American singer shared the childhood trauma during an episode of her Facebook Watch series "Red Table Talk: The Estefans," alongside her adult daughter and niece. "Ninety-three percent of abused children know and trust their abusers. And I know this, because I was one of them," said Estefan, now 64. The assault was committed while Estefan was at a music school, by a distant male relative who was "in a position of power" and exploited Estefan's mother's trust in order to molest the young singer, she said. "You've waited for this moment a long time," Estefan's niece Lili told her, taking her aunt's hand. "I have," she replied.

Estefan, who sang the 1985 mega-hit "Conga" with Miami Sound Machine, described how her mother had "felt lucky"

that the music teacher said her child was talented and gave her special attention. "I knew that this was a very dangerous situation," Estefan said. "And when I revolted and I told him this cannot happen, you cannot do this, he goes 'Your father's in Vietnam, your mother's alone, and I will kill her if you tell her.'" Estefan said she lost some of her hair due to anxiety over the abuse. She eventually told her mother, and police were summoned. But they advised Estefan's mother not to press charges



Gloria Estefan

because she would "go through worse trauma" if she took the stand to testify. Another television personality, Clare Crawley, appeared on the episode to discuss how she too was abused as a child. "I also did not want to sit here quietly while you share and are brave," Estefan told Crawley. — AFP

## Dre, Snoop Dogg lead jam-packed Super Bowl halftime lineup

California icons Dr Dre, Snoop Dogg and Kendrick Lamar along with Mary J Blige and Eminem will perform at the Super Bowl halftime show in February 2022, the National Football League announced Thursday. The celebration of West Coast hip-hop in one of music's most visible gigs is fitting for Super Bowl LVI, which will be held in Los Angeles for the first time in nearly three decades. In 2019, the NFL tapped Jay-Z to steer its musical

performances-the halftime show is among pop's most coveted slots-which the league hailed as a move to promote social justice. Music mogul Dr Dre has produced albums for each performer in the lineup, with Eminem and Lamar both signed to the producer's Aftermath Entertainment label.

"The opportunity to perform at the Super Bowl halftime show, and to do it in my own backyard, will be one of the biggest thrills of my career," Dre said in a

## Scarlett Johansson, Disney settle 'Black Widow' pay suit

Actress Scarlett Johansson and Disney announced Thursday they reached a settlement in her lawsuit over her compensation for "Black Widow," which she said was slashed when the studio released the movie on streaming at the same time as in theaters. Johansson, one of Hollywood's biggest and top-paid stars, was entitled to a percentage of box office receipts from the much-anticipated Marvel film, according to the suit filed in Los Angeles in July. The superhero saga was originally due for a big-screen release last year, but was delayed multiple times due to the COVID-19 pandemic and was eventually released in July-simultaneously in theaters and on Disney+.

Johansson argued that the strategy constituted a breach of contract, costing her millions of dollars. Disney countered that her complaint was without merit and derided her "callous disregard for the horrific and prolonged global effects of the COVID-19 pandemic." But on Thursday, the two sides said they had settled their differences. Terms of the agreement were not disclosed. "I am happy to have resolved our differences with Disney," Johansson, 36, said in a statement sent to AFP. "I'm incredibly proud of the work we've done together over the years and have greatly



enjoyed my creative relationship with the team. I look forward to continuing our collaboration in years to come."

Alan Bergman, the chairman of Disney Studios Content, said he was "pleased" with the "mutual agreement," and added that the company looked forward to working with Johansson on "a number of upcoming projects." Entertainment news outlet Deadline put the settlement's value at "more than \$40 million," citing unnamed sources. Rival studio Warner Bros was slammed last year for a similar decision to release all of its 2021 movies simultaneously in theaters and on its HBO Max platform. Warner renegotiated many of its deals with stars and filmmakers, reportedly paying out \$200 million to compensate for the loss of box office earnings. — AFP



A gallery employee poses with an artwork entitled 'Girl and Balloon' (Diptych) by Banksy, during a photocall at Christie's auction house in central London. — AFP

## UK street artist Banksy's famous balloon girl work to go on sale

A version of British graffiti artist Banksy's famous "Girl and Balloon" artwork was unveiled by Christie's on Friday, as the highlight of the London auction house's upcoming sale. The two-part or diptych canvas depicts a small child letting go of a heart-shaped red balloon and was painted by the elusive wall dauber in 2005. It is expected to fetch up to £3.5 million (4 million euros, \$4.7 million) when it goes on sale on October 15. "Of course, Banksy is the king of the streets, he's almost a bit like the Robin Hood of the art world," Katharine Arnold, head of Post-War

and Contemporary Art in Europe for Christie's, told AFP.

"Banksy used this image... outside a printing shop, it appeared on a wall, then a couple of years later, it appeared on the Southbank, another little girl with another balloon, and then in 2005, he created this diptych addition of works," she explained. The girl with balloon has "become something of a leitmotif for Banksy and it's very celebrated," added Arnold. "I think after 18 months of long pandemic, really this sense of hope and aspiration that you have with this little girl letting go of the love into the world as she lets go of the balloon is what we absolutely need at this moment in time."

A Banksy canvas that was partially shredded moments after it sold at auction in 2018 is going back under the hammer on October 14. Originally called "Girl with Balloon" but now entitled "Love is in the Bin", it is being offered for sale by Sotheby's, with a guide price of £4-6 million. — AFP



In this file photo DJ Snoopadelic (aka Snoop Dogg) performs on stage during a 'Concerts in Your Car' performance at the Ventura County Fairgrounds in Ventura, California.



In this file photo US rapper Eminem performs onstage during the 92nd Oscars at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California.



In this file photo Kendrick Lamar performs during the 60th Annual Grammy Awards show in New York. — AFP photos



This picture shows Meenakshi Amma practitioner and teacher of 'Kalaripayattu', a traditional martial art originated in Kerala, posing for pictures at her family-run Kadathanadan Kalar Sangam school in Vatakara in the Kozhikode district of the state of Kerala. — AFP photos



This picture shows Sajeev Kumar (top center) training students at his family-run Kadathanadan Kalar Sangam school in Vatakara in the Kozhikode district of the state of Kerala.

# GREAT-GRANDMOTHER KEEPS INDIAN MARTIAL ART ALIVE

**D**eftly parrying her son with a bamboo cane, Meenakshi Amma belies her 78 years with her prowess at kalar, thought to be India's oldest martial art. The great-grandmother in Kerala, southern India, has been a driving force in the revival of kalaripayattu, as the ancient practice is also known, and in encouraging girls to take it up. "I started kalar when I was seven years old. I am 78 now. I am still practicing, learning and teaching," the matriarch of the Kadathanad Kalar Sangham school, founded by her late husband in 1949, told AFP. "When you open the newspapers, you only see news of violence against women," she said.

"When women learn this martial art, they feel physically and mentally strong and it makes them confident to work and travel alone." Kalar, which contains ele-

ments of dance and yoga, can involve weapons such as swords, shields and staffs. Reputedly 3,000 years old, and mentioned in ancient Hindu scriptures, it remains infused with religion in the present day. India's British colonial rulers banned the practice in 1804 but it survived underground before a revival in the early 20th century and after independence in 1947. In recent decades it has come on in leaps and bounds, thanks in no small measure to Meenakshi, who won a national award in 2017. Now it is recognized as a sport and practiced all over India.

Inside Meenakshi's kalar hall, her bare-chested son Sanjeev Kumar, a lungi tied around his waist, puts barefoot pupils-boys and girls alike through their paces on the ochre-red earth floor. "There are two divisions in kalaripayattu-one is that kalaripay-

attu is peace and the other is kalaripayattu in war," said the "gurukkal" (master). "It's an art that purifies mind, body and soul, improves concentration, speed and patience, regenerates physical and mental energy." When totally connected mentally and physically to kalar, then the opponent disappears, the body becomes eyes. "It's a form of poetry," said civil engineer Alaka S. Kumar, 29, daughter of Kumar and the mother to some of Meenakshi's many great-grandchildren. "I am going to teach kalar, with my brother. We have to take over. Otherwise it is gone." — AFP

Meenakshi Amma (top center) along with her son Sajeev Kumar (top left), training students.



This picture shows Meenakshi Amma (right) along with her son Sajeev Kumar, sparring at their family-run Kadathanadan Kalar Sangam school.



This picture shows Sajeev Kumar (top second left) training students.



Meenakshi Amma (right) standing next to a practitioner giving an Ayurvedic massage to another.

## Superfans lie low as China cracks down on 'false idols'

**B**eijing high schooler Chen Zhichu used to spend 30 minutes a day boosting actor Xiao Zhan online as one of a legion of superfans, before the practice fell foul of the government for promoting "unhealthy values". State regulations last month banned "irrational star-chasing"-online celebrity rankings, fundraising and other tools used by China's fandoms to get their idols trending on social media-in the latest of a series of

crackdowns across Chinese society. Known for his androgynous good looks, Xiao earned legions of devoted, mostly female fans through his role in the 2019 fantasy drama *The Untamed*, and has over 29 million followers on Weibo alone.

"I used to upvote posts in his Weibo fan forum and buy products he promoted," Chen, 16, told AFP in a busy downtown shopping district. "It was pretty exhausting trying to keep him trending at number one every day." Fans power China's lucrative idol economy, previously forecast by state media to be worth 140 billion yuan (\$21.6 billion) by 2022. In a country where young people have few other means of influencing public life, full-time fan content creators-dubbed "zhanjie" or "station sisters"-can propel a star's rise from obscurity by creating viral images of them.

Critics say fan culture is an exploitative industry aimed at profiting from minors, built on artificially inflated social media engagement-something the government wants to eliminate through the new regulations. Authorities say the new rules are needed to curb excessive aspects of fan

culture, including cyberbullying, stalking, doxxing and bitter online wars between fandoms. But many fans say they derive pleasure from seeing their idols flourish and have found a sense of community from the shared online space.

### Morality crackdown

Communist authorities are also worried about idols for another reason: their ability to mobilize fan armies at a moment's notice, often dominating social media for days. "It's the beginnings of a mass movement and that is what the government doesn't want," said a social studies professor at a Chinese university who did not wish to be named.

Multiple crackdowns have swept the tech, education and showbiz sectors in recent months, as authorities increasingly target the rich and powerful in a push for greater socioeconomic equality. But it is also partly to instill "healthy", government-sanctioned societal values in young people, so they are less influenced by wayward celebrities. "Chinese youth lack other types of idols," said Fang Kecheng,

communications professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. "It's very hard for them to have other means of civic participation (such as activism)."

China's broadcast regulator last month banned performers with "lapsed morals" and "incorrect political views", as well as what it termed "sissy men"-an androgynous aesthetic popularized by Korean boybands, and imitated by male Chinese idols like Xiao. Experts read the latter as a sign of Beijing's increasing discomfort with alternative forms of masculinity at a time of falling birth rates and rising nationalism, as films with macho, military heroes are promoted by the state.

### 'Necessary growth stage'

For one idol-in-waiting in Shanghai, the crackdown on celebrity culture is a chance for an industry reset. Regulation "is a growth stage that the industry needs to go through" 26-year-old Li Chengxi told AFP during rehearsals for a reality dance competition filming in Nantong, east China. Li has been an avid dancer and actress since childhood. After graduating

from the elite Peking University, she tried to make it as an entertainer, starring in a few films and idol talent shows-a genre now banned by broadcast regulators.

Still, she remains unfazed by the potential for state rules to cramp her progress. "When huge waves break ashore, the gold left behind will shine even brighter," she said. Chinese entertainers wanting mainstream success have little choice but to agree with the state, whose disapproval can ultimately sink their careers. While Li has over 200,000 followers on social media, it's far from viral superstardom. And for now, Chinese superfans are keeping a low profile both on and offline. "After this round of clean-ups, there will still be fan activities, but maybe fewer than before," said one Beijing-based fan in her twenties surnamed Geng. "Everyone's watching and waiting." — AFP



Chinese actress and singer Li Chengxi posing during a dance routine at an interview with AFP. — AFP photos



This photo shows Chinese actress and singer Li Chengxi putting on make-up next to the studio where the television show 'Born to Dance' is filmed in Nantong, in China's southeastern Jiangsu province.

# Guardiola says Klopp has made him a better manager

## Manchester City still 'best team in Europe' for Klopp

LONDON: Pep Guardiola on Friday credited Jurgen Klopp with making him a better manager before tonight's top-of-the-table Premier League clash between Liverpool and Manchester City at Anfield. The two head coaches have won the last four Premier League trophies, with City claiming three, and a fierce rivalry has developed between the clubs.

Manchester City fended off Liverpool's 2018/19 title challenge despite the Reds amassing 97 points — a title-winning total in all but one previous Premier League season. Guardiola and Klopp were also dugout rivals in Germany's Bundesliga between 2013 and 2015 as the Spaniard's Bayern Munich dominated at the expense of Klopp's Borussia Dortmund. The rivalry is set to continue tonight as table-topping Liverpool host second-placed City, who are only one point behind.

"His (Klopp's) teams helped me to become a better manager. He put me at another level, to think about it and to prove myself to be a better manager, to try to beat them," Guardiola said. "That is the reason why I am still in this business. Some managers — and Jurgen is one of them — challenge you to make a step forward."

Klopp's Liverpool have been tough to beat at Anfield, with the Reds going 68 league games without defeat at home between April 2017 and January 2021. Manchester City's 4-1 win at Anfield last sea-

son was their first victory on Liverpool turf in 18 years and has been attributed to the game being played behind closed doors due to the coronavirus pandemic.

But Guardiola insisted his team was relishing a vibrant Anfield and that any hostile atmosphere would not prevent his team from playing their game. "I am very pleased Anfield is full again. We can enjoy a fantastic atmosphere and hopefully we can handle it," he added. "I am sure the players enjoy (more) to play with fans in Anfield than without. Everything is more alive, more difficult." Left-back Oleksandr Zinchenko and midfielder Ilkay Gundogan will be missing from Guardiola's squad and will not be available until after October's international break.

**Europe's 'best team'**  
Manchester City remain the benchmark for Liverpool to catch, according to Klopp. While Chelsea and Manchester

United have been talked up as title contenders this season after spending big in the transfer market, Klopp believes City remain the team to beat as they showed in a 1-0 win at Chelsea last weekend which was more convincing than the scoreline suggests.

"They are still really, for me, probably the best team in Europe in the moment and it's a tough one," said Klopp on Friday. "Last weekend, they played Chelsea and everybody was talking about Chelsea, how good they are — and they are good, oh my



Pep Guardiola



Jurgen Klopp

God, they are really good — but City was clear, clear better that day."

In 21 meetings between Klopp and Guardiola, both have won nine with three draws. Liverpool went into the weekend a point clear of City, Chelsea and United at the top of the table. But Klopp knows his side will have to be at their best to stay there.

"This is a really special game of the season, every year — always the same. It has to be high

intense because if it's not high intense, I would say then City is really difficult to play against," he added. "You have to be brave, you have to be front-footed, you have to be cheeky in moments, you have to be really your best version and then, but only then, you have a chance." Trent Alexander-Arnold and Thiago Alcantara will both be missing for the Reds due to injury, but Klopp is hopeful both will be fit to return after the international break. — AFP

## Rangers report Kamara abuse as row sparks diplomatic spat

GLASGOW: Rangers manager Steven Gerrard said the Scottish champions have contacted UEFA after midfielder Glen Kamara was abused by school age Sparta Prague fans in a Europa League clash with the incident threatening to become a diplomatic spat. Kamara was sent off for two bookable offences in Rangers' 1-0 defeat in the Czech capital on Thursday. Czech Foreign Minister Jakub Kulhanek on Friday said he would summon the British ambassador to Prague.

The match was initially meant to be played behind closed doors following a separate racist incident when Monaco's Aurelien Tchouameni was subjected to abuse from the stands during a Champions League qualifier in August. However, UEFA relented to allow around 10,000 fans, mainly school children with some accompanying adults, to attend. The incidents came just months after Kamara was racially abused by Slavia Prague defender Ondrej Kudela in a Champions League game. Czech international Kudela was banned for 10 matches.

In the immediate aftermath of Thursday's match, Gerrard said he was unaware of Kamara being booed every time he touched the ball. But on Friday, the former Liverpool captain added he was now aware of it having reviewed television footage.

"I am fully aware now having watched the game back with audio on and I am actually surprised that I wasn't aware of it during the game," said Gerrard. "Yes, I have spoken to Glen Kamara and that conversation will remain private. Glen is OK."

Gerrard called on UEFA and other governing bodies to take far tougher action against racist abuse. "There are hundreds of thousands and maybe more people disappointed and frustrated because these things keep raising their head far too often and unfortunately the punishments are not enough.

"I said last night there needs to be more done and that is the only way it is going to be eradicated because the punishments are nowhere near severe enough. I have been told that Rangers are going to take it up with UEFA, I think that has already happened and the wheels are already in motion and I certainly will be pushing from my direction to make sure that's the case."

### 'Desperate'

Kamara's lawyer Aamer Anwar issued a statement saying: "Prague has a serious problem with racism and as usual UEFA is nowhere to be seen." Sparta labelled Anwar's statements as "desperate". Foreign Minister Kulhanek tweeted: "Enough! Deliberately spread disgusting insults of Czech children in media and on the internet have no place in football, let alone good relations between two countries. "I will summon the British ambassador on Monday to discuss the whole matter with him." Sparta said on its website that Anwar's "activism and online bullying should be dealt with by the relevant institution in Scotland." — AFP

## Sampaoli says Marseille match should have been halted after violence

MARSEILLE: Marseille coach Jorge Sampaoli said on Friday that the Europa League match against Galatasaray should have "been stopped" after the incidents in the stands interrupted play. "I think the game should have been stopped. If we continue like this, we show that this violence is part of the game, that we get used to it. We have to make sure that families can come to the stadium in peace," said Sampaoli in a press conference.

The match was delayed by five minutes late in the first half on Thursday as projectiles, including fireworks and smokebombs, were lobbed from the end of the Stade Velodrome where fans of the Turkish club were grouped, officials said. There were also clashes between rival sets of fans before calm was restored.

Further incidents broke out after the final whistle. Four police officers were injured, according to a spokeswoman for the police headquarters.

Five fans, three Turkish and two for the home team, were arrested for possession and use of pyrotechnic devices, she said. "It's very strange. You wonder why people come from so far away to provoke or throw firecrackers. They prefer to create this spectacle rather than watch the pitch," said Sampaoli.

"The fairest thing would be to make decisions that leave the violence outside. Otherwise it will become something normal and the field will become secondary. We have seen very violent things, firecrackers, insults. It's a shame what happened," concluded the Argentine coach.

In France, there has been a rise in



MARSEILLE: Players stand on the pitch as the match was interrupted due to clashes in grandstand during the UEFA Europa League group E football match between Olympique de Marseille and Galatasaray AS at the Velodrome Stadium in Marseille, southern France on Thursday. — AFP

violent incidents in Ligue 1 this season and Marseille has been involved more than once. Their match in Nice in was abandoned after Marseille refused to continue following a pitch invasion. The game will be replayed on October 27 in Troyes.

Fighting between fans and fireworks also marred Marseille's visit to Angers on September 22. The same evening a bus carrying Bordeaux fans was attacked in Montpellier. On September 18, Lens fans invaded the pitch during their local derby with Lille. — AFP

## Wheelchair tennis to launch in Kuwait

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: President of Kuwait and Arab Tennis Federations Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah received honorary President of Kuwait Disabled Sports Club Sheikh Sheikh Al-Abdullah Al-Khalifa Al-Sabah, Chairman of Kuwait Paralympic Committee Nasser Al-Ajmi, Secretary General of the Paralympic Committee Sharifa Al-Ghanem and Chairman of Al-Irada Disabled Club Duaij Al-Hajiri. Both sides discussed cooperation and preparations to launch wheelchair tennis in Kuwait at Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Tennis complex in cooperation with Rafa Nadal Academy Kuwait.

This move comes out of KTF board's belief in the importance of allowing Paralympic athletes to practice wheelchair tennis, as they have special capabilities and a distinguished sports history, making continental and international achievements in the name of Kuwait. Wheelchair tennis is one of the fastest spreading



KUWAIT: President of Kuwait and Arab Tennis Federations Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah meets officials from Kuwait Disabled Sports Club, Kuwait Paralympic Committee, and Al-Irada Disabled Club.

game around the world, and it was introduced in the Paralympics in 1992, and in the Grand Slams in 2007. It also has a series of international championships that include more than 160 tournaments held in 40 countries. Kuwait is set to become the first Arab country to practice the wheelchair tennis.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber discussed coordina-

tion between the two sides in order to prepare and remove all obstacles that face launching the game as soon as possible. Further details will be announced during a press conference to be held at a later date with the participation of KTF, Rafa Nadal Academy Kuwait and Kuwait Paralympic Committee.

worked closely with football authorities to achieve an outcome that balances the interests of both club and country while maintaining the highest levels of public health and safety.

"Our best defense against the virus is vaccination and these new measures will allow fully vaccinated players to fulfill their international duties in the safest, most practical way possible, while allowing them to train and play with their clubs as early as possible upon their return."

Players not fully vaccinated will still be subject to 10 days quarantine in a government-allocated hotel should they travel to a country on the red list. According to reports this week only seven of the 20 Premier League clubs have squads that are more than 50 percent fully vaccinated.

### 'Stay here'

Premier League and English Football League clubs collectively refused to release players for international duty in red-list countries last month. It initially appeared that stance would lead to players being barred from representing their clubs in the five days after the end of the international break.

However, the request from a number of football associations was dropped after what FIFA described as "positive signals and constructive dialogue" with the British Government. Brazil has already issued call-ups to eight Premier League players, including Liverpool trio Alisson Becker, Roberto Firmino and Fabinho.

But Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp criticized the plans which could see players separated from their families for up to three weeks. "That would mean the players go for 10-12 days with their national teams. Then another 10 days away from their families into quarantine. That's 22 days and two weeks later there is another international break," said Klopp. "It is not okay we just move responsibility to the players. If you are ready to do that then ok, if not then stay here."

Klopp added that Senegalese forward Sadio Mane and Greek defender Kostas Tsimikas, who is due to travel to Georgia, would also be affected. Aston Villa manager Dean Smith said that Argentina's Emiliano Martinez and Marvelous Nakamba of Zimbabwe were set to travel for international duty. — AFP

Sports

# As Greece fetes ex-migrant NBA star, others like him suffer

## Grueling paperwork complicates road to nationality

**ATHENS:** The sun was barely out in Greece in July when Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis jumped on Twitter to congratulate newly-crowned Greek-Nigerian NBA champion Giannis Antetokounmpo of the Milwaukee Bucks. "Incredible Yannis! Greeks everywhere celebrate!" the avid basketball fan tweeted minutes after the final buzzer sounded across the Atlantic, using a lesser used version of the star's first name. Nicknamed the "Greek Freak" and one of the country's top global ambassadors, Antetokounmpo has reached the pinnacle of sporting success after overcoming a poverty-stricken childhood familiar to tens of thousands of migrant children growing up in Greece.

The son of Nigerian immigrants who arrived in Athens in 1991 seeking a better future, he was born and raised in working-class suburbs of the Greek capital, selling trinkets with his family to make a living. But whereas the two-time NBA Most Valuable Player catapulted out of obscurity, few migrant children in Greece are as fortunate. Onerous paperwork and tough laws make it difficult for many migrants to get nationality and become full members of society.

"Under normal circumstances, Giannis would not have received Greek citizenship," says Vassilis Papastergiou, an advocacy officer for the Greek Council for Refugees, one of the country's main rights groups. "He received honorary citizenship when he was drafted" into the NBA by the Bucks, he said.

Greece has for decades run a tight ship on naturalization and attitudes towards foreigners hardened after the European migrant crisis of 2015, when more than

800,000 asylum seekers — mainly Afghans, Iraqis and Syrians — landed on Greek islands. Mitsotakis' conservative government, which came to power in 2019, has further tightened laws and bolstered border patrols in a bid to deter fresh arrivals. In 2020, more than 9,000 children received citizenship, down from more than 21,000 in 2018, according to the interior ministry.

Only children born in Greece to at least one parent legally in the country for the previous five years are entitled to citizenship at birth. Otherwise, they have to complete six years of secondary school, or nine years of primary and secondary school, or obtain a Greek university degree.

As Antetokounmpo's parents were in Greece illegally during his childhood, he could only apply after completing school and then wait several years for his application to be examined. "A child arriving from Nigeria today, the next Antetokounmpo, would probably have been stopped at the border, or have its application rejected," says Papastergiou.

### 'Still a migrant'

Nikos-Deji Odubitan was born in Greece to Nigerian parents. Despite growing up here, the 40-year-old founder and manager of Generation 2.0, a non-profit providing legal and career counselling to migrants and refugees, says he is "still considered a migrant".

Odubitan said he was "theoretically fortunate" to have secured successive one-year residence permits to complete his medical engineering degree. In contrast, his father completed a law degree in



**ATHENS:** A file photo taken on February 19, 2017 shows an artwork by street artist Same84 depicting Milwaukee Bucks' Greek basketball player Giannis Antetokounmpo on a basketball court in Athens. — AFP

Thessaloniki but was never allowed to practice, because he could not get citizenship. "When you reach adulthood you have two options (towards legalization): study or work. Some have been unable to find either," said Odubitan, who has been waiting nearly four years for his citizenship application to be processed.

### 'Hypocrisy'

In September, Mitsotakis was accused by the leftist opposition Syriza party of "hypocrisy" when he invited Antetokounmpo's mother and younger

brother Alex to his office to receive Greek citizenship. Two days earlier, a lawmaker in the prime minister's party sparked uproar by re-tweeting a post claiming that the number of children with apparently non-Greek surnames at an Athens nursery was "shockingly" high.

Syriza pointed out that Antetokounmpo "could have been among" those names. Mitsotakis was also heavily criticized in August after he appointed as health minister a former far-right lawyer who called for "hellish" deterrents for migrants in Greece. The government now has three former far-

right politicians in leading cabinet posts, including the interior minister who oversees naturalization procedures.

### 'They don't really care'

Jonathan, who agreed to speak to AFP under a pseudonym, has been waiting for two years for his Greek citizenship application to be approved. The 23-year-old from Benin was attacked and stabbed by three men in Athens in July. He has now left the capital and found work at a bar on an island. "I don't think they really care, it's just for the sake of appearances," he says of the government's invitation to the Antetokounmpo family. Antetokounmpo makes no secret of his Nigerian heritage — but doesn't usually mention it when speaking to media in Greece. "We have always felt Greek," Antetokounmpo said after last month's naturalization ceremony. In 2020, when he told Bleacher Report about how difficult it was to grow up in "a land of whites," it sparked immediate backlash in Greece, with a refugee education coordinator calling him a "monkey".

Antetokounmpo has donated food in his childhood neighborhood, runs an academy to support vulnerable youths, and recently offered funds to Greek wildfire victims. But Odubitan says the NBA star could do more to shed light on the plight of second-generation migrants in Greece. "Personally, what saddens me is that he is not aware of his influence," says Odubitan. "If Giannis thinks that talking less about his origins and his Blackness will improve his image in Greece, he is wrong... nothing he says will make him less Greek." — AFP

## Afghan women footballers train in Ronaldo's land

**LISBON:** Forced to flee Afghanistan by the Taliban takeover, members of the Afghan women's youth football team and their families have sought refuge in Portugal and are back training in the

tells AFP after their first training session in six months. "In Afghanistan it was so bad. I'm happy in Portugal because Cristiano Ronaldo is from here," she adds with a broad smile as her father looks on proudly.

Ramzi, sporting a red shirt topped off with a black bandana round her head, added that she would love to meet the five-time Ballon D'Or winning, Manchester United superstar. She and her team-mates are being housed temporarily in hotels in the Lisbon suburbs after finally fleeing Afghanistan following several failed attempts since mid-August. Their salvation came thanks to "a joint operation between

August 15, they have said that women can play football but only under strict conditions — namely barred from playing in public.

### 'Lot of work to do'

Nevertheless, members of the senior squad — many of whom flew to Australia in late August — were threatened by hardline Islamists and others beaten by the Taliban. The Islamists banned women from sporting activity or even going to a match when they last ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to the 2001 US-led invasion that followed the September 11, 2001 Al-Qaeda attacks on the United States.

Since the first women's Afghan teams started emerging about 15 years ago, football has grown rapidly in the country. Khalida Popal, Denmark-based former national captain and now manager of the national squad, told AFP in August that there were "around 3,000 to 4,000 women and girls who were registered in the football federation at different levels." But it all disappeared overnight when Kabul fell to the Taliban.

Ramzi and her team-mates and families left Afghanistan with little in the way of personal items but their lack of kit has been resolved due to captain Farkhunda Muhtaj. The 23-year-old travelled from Canada with the essential items and delivered them on the eve of their training session on Thursday. She stayed on and prepared for their friendly match with Benfica's women's team that was scheduled for yesterday.

"There is still a lot of work to do," Muhtaj told AFP. She is due to leave Portugal and return to Canada but hopes that the team will be able to continue to train on a regular basis — and of course Ramzi hopes her dream of meeting Ronaldo will be fulfilled. — AFP

## Commissioner resigns, US women's soccer league calls off matches

**LOS ANGELES:** Lisa Baird, who was under fire for her handling of sexual misconduct allegations against a head coach, resigned Friday night as commissioner of the top US professional women's soccer league. Baird's decision was announced in a statement posted on the National Women's Soccer League's Twitter account and comes just hours after she said the NWSL was calling off this weekend's matches around the United States. "The National Women's Soccer League on Friday has received and accepted Lisa Baird's resignation as its commissioner," the league said.

The decision to remove Baird was made by the league's board of directors, American sports broadcaster ESPN reported. No replacement has been announced. Baird's resignation comes a day after the North Carolina Courage fired head coach Paul Riley for what the team called "very serious allegations of misconduct." "This week, and much of this season, has been incredibly traumatic for our players and staff, and I take full responsibility for the role I have played," Baird said earlier Friday before she resigned. "I am so sorry for the pain so many are feeling," she added in a statement. "Recognizing that trauma, we have decided not to take the field this weekend to give everyone some space to reflect."

Baird was named NWSL commissioner in February 2020, succeeding Amanda Duffy. Riley's dismissal came after The Athletic website detailed wide-ranging sexual misconduct by the 58-year-old Englishman spanning multiple teams and leagues since 2010. Riley was the second NWSL coach to be dismissed this week after the league terminated Washington Spirit coach Richie

Burke's contract following an investigation into allegations of verbal and emotional abuse. US internationals Alex Morgan and Megan Rapinoe were among the players who have criticized the league's handling of the Riley allegations.

"Bottom line: Protect your players. Do the right thing NWSL," Morgan tweeted. "Men, protecting men, who are abusing women. I'll say it again, men, protecting men, who are ABUSING WOMEN," Rapinoe tweeted. "Burn it all down. Let all their heads roll." According to The Athletic, players Sinead Farrelly and Meleana "Mana" Shim had made allegations of inappropriate behavior against Riley. Farrelly, who played for Riley at three different teams in different leagues, accused him of "sexual coercion" while he was her coach at the Philadelphia Independence.

She said she had been coerced into having sex with Riley after going to his hotel room following a defeat in the Women's Professional Soccer League final in 2011. Riley allegedly told her "we're taking this to our graves." In another incident during his reign at the Portland Thorns, Farrelly and Shim said Riley had forced them to kiss each other while at his apartment. "This guy has a pattern," Shim told The Athletic.

Morgan, who played under Riley at the same time, confirmed the players' allegations and said she had tried to help them file a report with the league. "The league was informed of these allegations multiple times and refused multiple times to investigate," Morgan said. "The league must accept responsibility for a process that failed to protect its own players from this abuse." In a statement to The Athletic, Riley denied wrongdoing, describing the allegations as "completely untrue." — AFP



**ODIVELAS:** Players of Afghanistan national women football team attend to a training session at Odivelas, outskirts of Lisbon on Thursday. — AFP

Lisbon suburbs. The relief at having found a safe haven after arriving on September 19 shows in their faces as well as joy at being in a country whose most famous son these days is a footballer.

"I can't believe it. I'm so happy I can play football again," Omul Banin Ramzi

the American and Portuguese authorities," the Portuguese government said.

Ramzi and her team-mates were determined to leave because the Taliban oppose women playing a prominent role in public life. Since their return to power on

# Classifieds

## Hospitals & Clinics

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

## Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075

## CHANGE OF NAME

**I, Kasturi Myneeswaara**, Indian Passport No. K46526841 have decided to change the name as KASTURI MUNISWARA.

**I, DAVID KINGSTON BRITTO HAGGAI**, Indian Passport No. T5328063 have changed name to KINGSTON BRITTO HAGGAI. (C 0956) 3-10-2021

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## Chelsea top Premier League



LONDON: Southampton's English defender Kyle Walker-Peters (left) vies with Chelsea's Spanish defender Cesar Azpilicueta during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Southampton at Stamford Bridge yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: Manchester United were held at home by Everton yesterday after Cristiano Ronaldo was dropped to the subs bench as Chelsea scored two late goals against Southampton to top the Premier League table. Elsewhere, Leeds beat Watford for their first league win of the season while Norwich avoided defeat for the first time during the campaign. United's 1-1 draw at Old Trafford continues an unimpressive run of home results including a League Cup defeat by West Ham and last week's shock Premier League loss at the hands of Aston Villa.

Ronaldo has scored five times in six games in all competitions since rejoining the club in late August but Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said he did not regret resting the 36-year-old - who scored a dramatic stoppage-time winner against Villarreal in midweek. "You make decisions throughout the season, you've got to manage the players' workload," said the Norwegian manager. "The decision was, for me, the correct one today." "We have started better than last season, but it is still not what we wanted."

Everton created plenty of chances in the opening period but fell behind shortly before half-time when

surprise pick Anthony Martial curled home his first Premier League goal since February from a Bruno Fernandes pass. Solskjaer called on Ronaldo and Jadon Sancho 12 minutes after half-time as he looked to put the game beyond Rafael Benitez's men but Everton ruthlessly exposed United's frailty on the counter-attack.

Demarai Gray won the ball back on the left and freed Abdoulaye Doucoure into acres of space in midfield. Doucoure played in Andros Townsend to fire home his fifth goal in nine appearances. Townsend then performed a Ronaldo-style "Siuuu" goal celebration and said it was done in tribute to the Portuguese superstar, whom he said was his "idol". Everton thought they had won it late on but Yerry Mina's close-range finish from a Tom Davies pass was ruled out for offside following a VAR review.



### Manchester United stumble again

Chelsea ended a miserable week on a high, with Timo Werner and Ben Chilwell striking late in a 3-1 win against Southampton, who are still without a league victory this season. The three points lifted the Stamford Bridge club to the top of the Premier League on 16 points, two clear of Liverpool, Manchester United and Everton.

Thomas Tuchel's side, tipped by many to win the Premier League in the early weeks of the season, were well beaten by Manchester City last week and lost to Juventus in the Champions League in midweek. But they returned to winning ways in London yesterday, helped by a second-half red card for Southampton midfielder James Ward-Prowse. Trevoh Chalobah nodded Chelsea into an early lead but Ward-Prowse leveled from the penal-

ty spot just after the hour mark before he was sent off in the 77th minute for a dangerous tackle on Jorginho after a VAR check.

Werner provided the decisive moment, sliding in from Cesar Azpilicueta's cross before Chilwell volleyed in from close range on 89 minutes to secure the victory. "After two defeats we had to be careful that we didn't start being too sad or too worried because there was a chance to be on 16 points," Tuchel told the BBC. "It was important to have a better performance than the last two games, that we sharpened our mindset so that we are not afraid to lose. It was nice to play the way we did and get a deserved win."

Leeds beat Watford 1-0 thanks to a first-half strike by Diego Lorente while Hwang Hee-chan struck twice as Wolves beat struggling Newcastle 2-1. Norwich stopped the rot against Burnley after six straight league defeats but they remain rock-bottom of the Premier League table with just a single point after seven games. Mikel Arteta's Arsenal, who have won three consecutive league games, travel to Brighton for the evening kick-off. — AFP

### Springboks stun All Blacks in classic as Wallabies shine

GOLD COAST: A gutsy South Africa upset old rivals New Zealand yesterday to bounce back from "a tough few weeks" in the Rugby Championship while Australia burnished their credentials with a fourth consecutive win. The world champions headed into the sixth and final round of the southern hemisphere tournament on the back of three defeats and had to dig deep to snap the streak-and end New Zealand's 10-match win run.

In a nail-biter on Australia's Gold Coast, the match went to the wire with Elton Jantjies slotting a penalty after the final hooter to earn a tense 31-29 win. In the early game at Cbus Super Stadium, the Wallabies ground down a ragged Argentina 32-17 with Andrew Kellaway bagging a hat-trick, building on beating Los Pumas last week which followed two wins against South Africa. It ensured Dave Rennie's men finished the Rugby Championship in second place on 18 points, seven behind the All Blacks and three clear of the Springboks.

Argentina, who played yesterday without the experienced Pablo Matera and Santiago Medrano after they were banned for breaching COVID rules, lost all six matches to prop up the table. South Africa coach Jacques Nienaber said: "It's been a tough few weeks for us, we lost momentum in not securing victory in the last three games. "But in fairness, that's the margins when the one, two, three in the world play against each other. "This weekend we got the opportunity at the end of the game to win it, last week New Zealand had that opportunity. "That's why it's good for us to play these



GOLD COAST: New Zealand's captain Ardie Savea (center) and teammates celebrate with the Rugby Championship trophy after their match against South Africa at Cbus Super Stadium in Gold Coast yesterday. — AFP

games, for our guys it's good exposure," he added. The All Blacks went to the break with a 20-14 lead after tries from Sevu Reece, Ardie Savea and Brad Weber. But Nienaber's pep-talk at half-time fired up his team. Makazole Mapimpi barged over for a try soon after the restart to add to Damian de Allende's first-half effort before a thrilling final five minutes that saw the lead change four times.

The All Blacks had already sealed the Rugby Championship with their 19-17 victory over South Africa last week, but coach Ian Foster was nevertheless "bitterly disappointed". "Losing a game at the end when you've got control of it was frustrating, but it was a massive arm-wrestle," he said. "I thought South Africa played superb, they came with a lot of attitude, they moved us

around and really challenged us."

A resurgent Australia came into their clash against Argentina bubbling with confidence and dictated a game in which Kellaway crossed three times and 38-year-old prop Greg Holmes became the oldest Wallaby since World War II. It was the first time they have won four in a row since 2017 and the first time ever at the Rugby Championship, boding well for their upcoming European tour.

"I'm really stoked," said skipper Michael Hooper, whose team head to Japan to play the Cherry Blossoms on October 23 en route to face England, Scotland and Wales. "We had a tough three games on the trot against the Kiwis (All Blacks) so to turn things around, be able to play in our backyard here and get four wins, it's showing some really nice stuff for us." — AFP

### Brandt lifts Dortmund as Freiburg beat Hertha

BERLIN: Borussia Dortmund proved yesterday they can win in the Bundesliga without injured star striker Erling Braut Haaland by grabbing a 2-1 victory at home to Augsburg. With Haaland again in the stands at Signal Iduna Park having also missed Tuesday's Champions League win over Sporting Lisbon with a persistent leg injury, Dortmund bounced back from last week's shock league defeat at Moenchengladbach. Raphael Guerreiro converted a penalty after ten minutes only for Augsburg to draw level through Swiss striker Andi Zeqiri just before the break.

Germany winger Julian Brandt hit Dortmund's winner when he smashed Marco Reus' clever pass into the net six minutes into the second half. The victory lifts Dortmund to second in Germany's top flight, a point behind leaders Bayern Munich who host Eintracht Frankfurt today. Bayer Leverkusen can leapfrog Dortmund into second place today night if they win at Bielefeld. Freiburg, the only Bundesliga club along with Bayern who remain unbeaten, are third and level on points with Dortmund after their 2-1 win at Hertha Berlin.

Veteran striker Nils Petersen, 32, who specializes in goals off the bench, grabbed the second-half winner just two minutes after coming on at Berlin's Olympic Stadium. Petersen's perfectly-timed bicycle kick means he has now scored 30 Bundesliga goals as a substi-

tute during his career. Wolfsburg, league leaders until a fortnight ago, suffered a second consecutive league defeat to drop to fifth after losing 3-1 at home to resurgent Moenchengladbach, whose American teenager Joe Scally scored his first Bundesliga goal when the 18-year-old fired in the visitors' third goal deep in added time. Gladbach built on last weekend's shock home win over Dortmund by going 2-0 up after just seven minutes in Wolfsburg. Swiss striker Breel Embolo proved his fitness after a leg injury with a spectacular goal, then set up the second less than two minutes later. After his deft pass, Jonas Hofmann knocked the ball around advancing Wolfsburg goalkeeper Koen Casteels and tapped into the empty net.

Wolfsburg pulled a goal back when Ridle Baku, left out of the Germany World Cup qualifiers squad announced Friday, whipped in a cross which ricocheted off three players before Luca Waldschmidt fired home to make it 2-1 at the break. Wolfsburg had defender Maxence Lacroix sent off for a second yellow card after bringing Embolo down with 14 minutes left, then Gladbach captain Lars Stindl had a weak penalty attempt saved. Wolfsburg defender Jerome Roussillon was also shown a red card, but the referee reversed the decision following a VAR intervention after replays showed he made contact with the ball before bringing Hofmann down. — AFP