



3 Kuwait pavilion at Dubai Expo 2020 gives picture of its history, culture



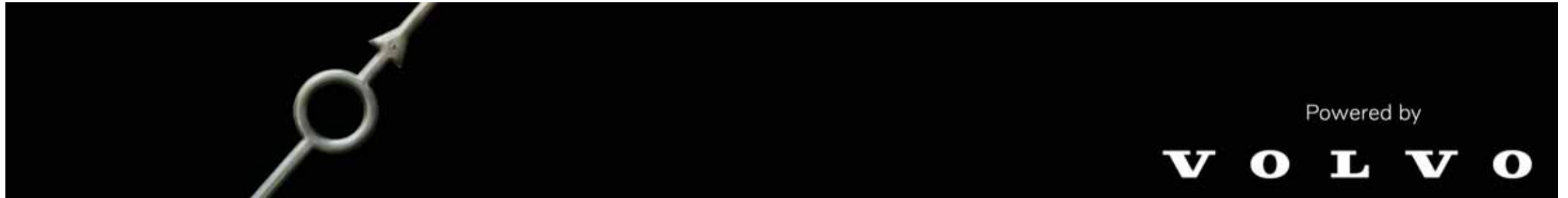
6 Whistleblower says Facebook chooses 'profit over safety'



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OPEC+ sticks to output increase as prices soar

Kuwait: Policies continue to bear fruit • Oil prices hit multi-year highs



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Oil Minister Mohammad Al-Fares attends a virtual OPEC+ meeting yesterday. — KUNA

LONDON: The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its key allies decided at a meeting yesterday to stick to planned moderate increases in output for November despite soaring crude prices. A statement released after the brief videoconference meeting of the OPEC+ alliance said that participants had agreed to stick to the schedule agreed in July, namely to "adjust upward the monthly overall production by 0.4 million bpd (barrels per day) for the month of November 2021".

Kuwait's oil minister yesterday praised the effective policies of OPEC and its allies amid the COVID-19 pandemic, saying such measures helped balance the global oil market. There is prevailing sense of "optimism" in the global oil market given the OPEC+ alliance's commitment to a deal on hiking output to 400,000 bpd on a monthly basis until November, Mohammad Al-Fares said in an oil ministry statement.

As per the deal, Kuwait will contribute a share of 27,000 bpd, added the minister, saying that as vaccination campaigns pick up speed across the world, an economic rebound is likely to occur, helping restore stability and balance to the oil market. On the gradual hike in oil production, OPEC and its ally Russia will continue to tread cautiously given the challenges facing the market, Fares highlighted.

Markets have been sent surging further by yesterday's decision, with prices for the benchmark WTI contract reaching \$78.38 and Brent contracts trading at \$82, the highest levels since November 2014 and October 2018 respectively. The 23 countries in the group took under an hour to reach the decision after the meeting started shortly after 1300 GMT. Their statement issued after the meeting said the decision had been taken in light of "current oil market fundamentals".

While higher prices benefit producers in the form of increased exports and revenues, there are medium-term drawbacks if rising prices stifle the fragile post-pandemic economic recovery. The trend could also entice new competitors into the market, making the exploration of new fields more profitable or even encouraging a trend towards renewables.

US President Joe Biden's administration urged increased output in August, when National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said the cartel was not doing "enough" to boost oil production. Analyst Bjarne Schieldrop of Seb said yesterday that, given current conditions, "OPEC+ can thus no longer claim that they are working to stabilize the global oil market". "The current chaos in the global coal and natural gas markets cannot be ignored, either. Holding back oil supply now is adding pain to injury to global consumers," he said.

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News in brief

Cyclone kills 11 in Oman

MUSCAT: At least 11 people died after a powerful cyclone struck Oman causing widespread flooding and landslides, emergency authorities said yesterday. Seven of the victims died in the Batinah region, while more people are missing. Yesterday, Oman's air force used helicopters to winch stranded survivors to safety on the country's northern coast. A prisoner was rescued from a rooftop in Suwayq. — AFP

Blasphemous cartoonist killed

STOCKHOLM: Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks, who lived under police protection after his 2007 depiction of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) prompted death threats, died Sunday in a car accident. The 75-year-old and two police officers were killed in a collision with an oncoming truck. The accident occurred near the small town Markaryd when the car Vilks was travelling in crashed into an oncoming truck. — AFP

Russia fires missile from sub

MOSCOW: Russia said yesterday it had completed two launches of hypersonic cruise missiles, including one from a submerged submarine, the latest tests of emerging weapons President Vladimir Putin has dubbed "invincible". The military said yesterday it had fired a Zircon missile from the Severodvinsk nuclear submarine and hit a test target in the Barents Sea in Russia's Arctic. — AFP

NZ drops 'COVID zero' goal

AUCKLAND: Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern admitted yesterday that New Zealand's widely praised "COVID zero" strategy had failed to halt a stubborn outbreak in Auckland and said a new approach was needed. Ardern said the highly transmissible Delta variant had proved a "game-changer" that could not be eliminated. "Even with the long-term restrictions we've had, we patently haven't reached zero," she added. — AFP

MP asks ministry over water security during crises

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Osama Al-Munawer yesterday sent a series of questions to Electricity and Water Minister Mishan Al-Otaibi over the ministry's plans

to deal with water security in times of crises and the quantity of water reserves. Kuwait gets the overwhelming majority of its water needs from desalination of seawater through giant plants. It mixes desalinated water with brackish water it obtains from underground sources.

In his questions, the lawmaker asked the minister if the ministry has prepared plans to deal with any emergency, and if these plans have been coordinated with concerned military and security agencies. He asked the minister about Kuwait's daily water production and consumption, the size of the strategic water reserve and how long it will last in case of

emergency. He also inquired about the number of water storage tanks in the country and if the ministry plans to build more.

Munawer asked the minister about plans to deal with any disruption in the production of desalinated water as a result of an act of sabotage or as a result of a technical problem that is very difficult to repair. He also asked about disruptions resulting from sea pollution, radiation or due to a spike in the salinity of seawater.

The lawmaker asked the minister that in case of sea pollution, what is the ministry's plan to provide

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Facebook apps hit by outage

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook and its Instagram and WhatsApp platforms were hit by a massive outage yesterday, impacting potentially tens of millions of users as the social media giant faces fallout over its effect on teens and misinformation. Tracker Downtextor was showing outages around the world, including Kuwait, with problems being reported from around 1545 GMT.

"We're aware that some people are having trouble accessing our apps and products,"

Facebook spokesman Andy Stone said on Twitter. Users trying to access Facebook in affected areas were greeted with the message: "Something went wrong. We're working on it and we'll get it fixed as soon as we can."

The outage comes a day after a whistleblower went on US television to reveal her identity after she leaked a trove of documents to authorities alleging the company knew its products were fueling hate and harming children's mental health. Frances Haugen, a 37-year-old data scientist from Iowa, has worked for companies including Google and Pinterest - but said in an interview with CBS news show "60 Minutes" that Facebook was "substantially worse" than anything she had seen before.

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This photo illustration shows apps of Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and other social networks on a smartphone in Chennai. — AFP

US duo wins Nobel for work on touch and temperature

STOCKHOLM: US scientists David Julius and Ardem Patapoutian yesterday won the Nobel Medicine Prize for discoveries on receptors for temperature and touch. The duo's research, conducted independently of each other in the late 1990s and 2000s, is being used to develop treatments for a wide range of diseases and conditions, including chronic pain.

Julius, who in 2019 won the \$3-million Breakthrough Prize in life sciences, said he was stunned to receive the call from the Nobel committee early yesterday. "One never really expects that to happen... I thought it was a prank," he told

Swedish Radio. Our ability to sense heat, cold and touch is essential for survival, the Nobel Committee explained, and underpins our interaction with the world around us.

"The groundbreaking discoveries... by this year's Nobel Prize laureates have allowed us to understand how heat, cold and mechanical force can initiate the nerve impulses that allow us to perceive and adapt to the world," the Nobel jury said. "In our daily lives we take these sensations for granted, but how are nerve impulses initiated so that temperature and pressure can be perceived? This question has been solved by this year's Nobel Prize laureates."

Julius, 65, was recognized for his research using capsaicin - a compound from chili peppers that induces a burning sensation - to identify which nerve sensors in the skin respond to heat. The human body generates heat in response to inflammation, so we can protect the affected area and allow it to heal.

Julius told Scientific American in 2019 that he got the idea to study chili peppers after a visit to the



Ardem Patapoutian



David Julius

grocery store. "I was looking at these shelves and shelves of basically chili peppers and extracts (hot sauce) and thinking, 'This is such an important and such a fun problem to look at. I've really got to get serious about this,'" he said.

Patapoutian's pioneering discovery was identifying the class of nerve sensors that respond to touch.

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Local

Deputy Amir, Crown Prince meets visiting Saudi official

Sheikh Mishal offers help in phone call with Oman Sultan

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Saudi State Minister and Cabinet member Prince Turki bin Mohammad Al-Saud, who is on an official visit to Kuwait. Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and other state officials attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received the visiting Saudi minister at yesterday Bayan Palace as well. Head of the Prime Minister's Diwan Abdulaziz Al-Dekhil, Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud and other officials attended the meeting.

In other news, His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince phoned on Sunday Sultan Haitham bin Tarik of Oman over Shaheen hurricane which hit some areas in the Sultanate. In the call, His Highness the Deputy Amir conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Sultan Haitham, wishing him everlasting health. His Highness Sheikh Mishal also carried the Amir's instructions to the Sultan on Kuwait and Kuwaitis' support, and sympathy with, to Oman and its people.

His Highness Sheikh Mishal said Kuwait puts all possible potentials to help Oman face the hurricane and overcome its effects. In addition, His Highness the Deputy Amir extended condolences of His Highness the Amir to Sultan Haitham and Omani people as well as the victims' families of this devastating hurricane. He



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Saudi State Minister and Cabinet member Prince Turki bin Mohammad Al-Saud. — KUNA photos

prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon the victims' souls, wishing a rapid

Haitham.

Meanwhile, Sultan Haitham expressed appreciation to His Highness the Amir, and to His Highness the Deputy Amir and the Crown Prince for this good initiative and support to Oman. Sultan Haitham said this embodies the deep-rooted ties and bonds between Kuwait and Oman, wishing permanent well-being to His Highness the Amir, and His Highness Deputy Amir and the Crown Prince. He also wished Kuwait further progress and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir.



Defense Minister calls Omani counterpart

recovery to those wounded, and further progress and protection to the Sultanate under the wise leadership of Sultan

Crown Prince. He also wished Kuwait further progress and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets Saudi State Minister and Cabinet member Prince Turki bin Mohammad Al-Saud.

Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah also had a phone call yesterday with Oman's Deputy Prime Minister of Defense Affairs Shehab Al-Saeed, expressing his condolences on the victims of the hurricane. During the phone call, Sheikh Hamad conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Deputy Amir the Crown Prince and His Highness Prime Minister to the Sultanate, affirming their instructions to devote Kuwait Armed Forces efforts to help the Sultanate in every way possible, a statement by the army chief of staff command said. Sheikh Hamad also affirmed the historical ties between the two countries and

wishing a speedy recovery to those wounded.

In the meantime, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent cables of condolences to Chairman of Oman's State Council Sheikh Abdulmalik Al-Khalili and Chairman of Shura Council Khalid bin Hilal Al-Maawali. In the two cables, Ghanem expressed his sincere sympathy on the victims of the Shaheen hurricane. He hoped that Omani people would overcome the repercussions and effects of this natural disaster as much as possible. He prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon the victims' souls, wishing a speedy recovery to those wounded. — KUNA

Adan Hospital unit celebrates Int'l Week of Nuclear Medicine

KUWAIT: The staff of the Nuclear Medicine Unit at Al-Adan Hospital are taking part in activities marking the International Week of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging, which is held in October every year. These activities are held to help people gain more experience by presenting the latest research findings in this field in order to enable the development of methods for diagnosing diseases.

On this occasion, the unit has listed its most important achievements, which include:

- More than 3,700 nuclear medical examinations conducted by the unit during the COVID-19 pandemic 2020-2021.
- Significant increase in the number of nuclear medicine examinations during the past five years.
- The latest medical devices were brought in the unit to serve patients.
- Examination of more than 800 cases by accurate positron emission tomography.
- A distinguished medical staff in the unit is equipped with the latest medical expertise worldwide.



Aisha Al-Qattan, Chief of Nuclear Medicine Specialist and Technologist at Al-Adan Hospital.



Dr Iman Al-Shemmeri, Head of Nuclear Medicine Unit at Al-Adan Hospital.

- A maximum waiting list of 48 hours for all nuclear medicine examinations.
- The unit is in the process of completing paperless work in line with Kuwait's strategy calling for 'digital health services'.

The Nuclear Medicine Unit at Al-Adan Hospital has been undergoing tangible changes and continuous upgrades since joining the Ministry of Health in 2015. The unit currently accommodates five of the latest gamma-camera devices for tomography and coupled tomography, as well as the positron emission tomography device for molecular imaging and a radiopharmacy with integrated equipment, in addition to a thyroid clinic, a thyroid activity measuring device, and a carbon 14 test device for examining stomach germs.

"The unit includes a distinguished and special-



KUWAIT: Staff of the Nuclear Medicine Unit at Al-Adan Hospital pose for a group picture during a function marking the International Week of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging.

ized medical staff that works with high efficiency around the clock," the hospital said in a statement. "This staff is provided with the training and spe-

cialized courses required to equip them with the latest international medical expertise in the field of specialization."

OPEC+ sticks to output increase...

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In a study published last week, Morgan Stanley analysts noted the possibility of "demand destruction" if oil prices creep over \$80 a barrel. Iraq's oil minister has told the country's state news agency the group is working towards keeping prices at around \$70. However, in the current market, Goldman Sachs sees Brent crude oil soaring towards \$90 within months.

There had been questions over the willingness -

not to mention ability - of some OPEC+ members to increase output in any case. Nigeria, Angola and Libya "continue to face their perennial infrastructure, investment, and security challenges", according to Croft. Tamas Varga, an analyst at PVM Oil Associates, said: "Delayed maintenance works and lack of investment, partly due to the health crisis and partly because of the transition from fossil fuel to renewable energy, are to blame for these failures".

Contrary to the normal OPEC trend of countries exceeding their production quotas, in recent months most member states have stuck to them or in some cases even fallen short. This suggests that the group may not be able to rapidly increase production in the short term despite it having a current theoretical reserve of five million bpd in the ground. The OPEC+ alliance said that their next meeting would be on Nov 4. — Agencies

Tuesday on Capitol Hill over Facebook and Instagram's impact on young people.

Senators put the social media giant's Antigone Davis through the wringer last week over damning reports that Facebook's own research warned of potential harm. Davis told lawmakers that a survey of teens on 12 serious issues like anxiety, sadness and eating disorders showed that Instagram was generally helpful to them. Yet, Senator Richard Blumenthal read aloud excerpts from company documents he said were leaked to lawmakers by a Facebook whistleblower that directly contradicted her.

"Substantial evidence suggests that experiences on Instagram and Facebook make body dissatisfaction worse," he said, adding the finding was not a disgruntled worker's complaint but company research. The enterprise has been under relentless pressure to guard against being a platform where misinformation, hate and child-harming content can spread. Legislators have struggled to pass new rules that would update online protections in decades-old laws crafted long before social media even existed. — AFP

US duo wins Nobel for work on touch...

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"In science many times it's things we take for granted that are of high interest," Patapoutian told the Nobel Foundation website. Touch receptors were "the big elephant in the room: we knew they existed, we knew they did something very different than how most other cells communicate with each other, which is through chemicals."

Julius, a professor at the University of California in San Francisco and the 12-year-younger Patapoutian, a professor at Scripps Research in California, will share the Nobel Prize cheque for 10 million Swedish kronor (\$1.1 million).

The pair were not among the frontrunners mentioned in the speculation ahead of the announcement. Pioneers of messenger RNA (mRNA) technology, which paved the way for mRNA Covid vaccines, and immune system researchers had been widely tipped as favorites. While the 2020 award was handed out during the pandemic, this is the first



Patrik Ernfors explains the research field of the winners of the 2021 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. — AFP

time the entire selection process has taken place under the shadow of COVID-19. Last year, the award went to three virologists for the discovery of the Hepatitis C virus.

The Nobel season continues today with the award for physics and tomorrow with chemistry, followed by the much-anticipated gongs for literature on Thursday and peace on Friday before the economics prize winds things up on Monday, Oct 11. Speculation on potential Peace Prize winners has ranged from the Belarusian opposition to climate campaigners such as Sweden's Greta Thunberg. — AFP

Facebook apps hit by...

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The world's largest social media platform has been embroiled in a firestorm brought about by Haugen, with US lawmakers and The Wall Street Journal raising sharp criticism of the network. "I think that finally now policymakers, maybe the White House, other leaders can look at someone like Frances Haugen and say... 'It's now incumbent upon us, Facebook will not fix itself,'" said Nora Benavidez, a Facebook accountability expert.

Facebook's vice president of policy and global affairs Nick Clegg vehemently pushed back at the assertion its platforms are "toxic" for teens, days after a tense, hours-long congressional hearing in which US lawmakers grilled the company over its impact on the mental health of young users. Haugen, the whistleblower, is herself set to testify

MP asks ministry over water...

Continued from Page 1

drinking water before the strategic reserve is consumed. Munawer asked if international companies have submitted offers to develop water resources in the country and if the ministry has set up companies for the purpose of developing such resources.

Meanwhile, prominent opposition MP

Mohammad Al-Mutair said yesterday that a proposed pardon of ex-opposition MPs, activists and political prisoners should be issued before the end of a national dialogue called by HH the Amir. Mutair said in a statement that the prime minister should also withdraw his demand to protect him against grillings by MPs.

The lawmaker said that if these two demands are not met, opposition MPs who will take part in the dialogue should not act as representatives of the bloc of 31 opposition MPs. HH the Amir last week called for the national dialogue to resolve political crises that have rocked the country since the Dec 5 election, which have prevented the National Assembly from holding regular sessions.

Local

Opportunity Pavilion, place for people to interconnect and create positive change

Designed by Kuwait, Madrid based AGi Architects



An aerial view of the Opportunity Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai.



AGi Architects co-founders Nasser Abulhasan (left) and Joaquin Perez-Goicoechea.

DUBAI: Expo 2020 Dubai's Opportunity Pavilion is one of the main exhibitions featured at the mega global event. Dubbed 'Mission Possible', the structure was designed by AGi Architects; an international design firm with head offices in Kuwait and Madrid. It resembles a large public plaza with a universal architectural identity since the feature has transcended generations, cultures and eras.

Opportunity is one of the three main themes of this year's expo, alongside Sustainability and



Unlock potential of individuals and communities

Mobility, which explore how people can "unlock the potential of individuals and communities, highlighting that each of us has a role to play in creating positive change".

The Opportunity Pavilion project revolves around the people, says Nasser Abulhasan, AGi Architects co-founder. "The whole idea is to provide a great platform for the people to begin to interconnect," he told Kuwait Times.

A ceramic layer covers the ground and facades



A view from the interior of the Opportunity Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai.

of the pavilion, making it seem as though the structure is wrapped with a terracotta carpet. "The main public plaza is designed in a way that allows people to be brought up from the main entrance through the light as they walk on the 'carpet', or the floor that has a brownish, earthy color," Abulhasan explained. The design helps emphasize on the pavilion's public spaces and how humans circulate and interact within it.

The pavilion also includes a canopy which floats 32 meters above the ground, symbolizing dreams that

people aspire to achieve. The cloud-like element is composed of six textile layers of fabric on metal structures, shielding the plaza from direct sun exposure. The canopy plays with transparency, light, shadows, and color, constantly transforming with respect to the time of day, light, and people's movements. AGi Architects was handpicked to design the Opportunity Pavilion, which is a public space that allows every visitor from every corner of the planet and every walk of life to connect across age, language and culture, working together to achieve meaningful, positive

change for our planet and its people.

Established in 2015 by Nasser Abulhasan and Joaquin Perez-Goicoechea, AGi Architects has a large team of more than 50 architects in its Kuwait and Madrid offices. With a noticeable international character and a multidisciplinary focus, AGi Architects offers a professional service emphasizing quality, creativity and exclusive design. AGi Architects has a vision to create environments that create a lasting value for clients through distinctive and imaginative solutions.

Gulf pavilions mirror cultural heritage: UAE VP

DUBAI: Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum visited the pavilions of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Russia at Expo 2020 Dubai on Sunday. He commended the strong Gulf presence at the Expo, saying it provides a significant opportunity for the global community to learn more about the region's culture, heritage and civilization as well as its aspirations to achieve world-leading excellence in a range of sectors, according to the UAE news agency (WAM). "We have a rich civilization and cultural heritage that give us a strong base to realize our modern ambitions and aspirations. The groundbreaking projects launched across the Gulf region seek to advance the goal of enhancing human happiness and contribute to creating a glorious future for the world."

"Expo 2020 provides a unique platform for building bridges of understanding and engagement between diverse cultures and markets across the globe," WAM quoted Sheikh Mohammad as saying. He was accompanied during the visits by Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai; Sheikh Ahmad bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman of the Expo 2020 Dubai Higher Committee; Sheikh Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairman of the Dubai Media Council; and Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum. Upon their arrival at Kuwait pavilion, Sheikh Mohammad and his entourage warmly welcomed by Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information Munirah Al-Howaidi, Assistant Undersecretary Faisal Al-Motalakem and Director of the pavilion Bader Al-Enzi. They watched a panoramic screen displaying a whole gamut of milestones from the traditional to contemporary across 5,600 square meters of area offering



DUBAI: UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum visits Kuwait's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai. — KUNA

a cross-section view of the country's sustainability focus, history, tradition and contemporary growth and prosperity.

Themed 'New Kuwait, New Opportunities for Sustainability' and located at the Sustainable District, the pavilion showcases Kuwait's rich past and its future sustainable development objectives, as well as economic diversity that promotes business innovation. The pavilion's roster of events features exhibitions, acts and speakers - all of which showcase the past, present and future of Kuwait in line with the Kuwait Vision 2035 (also known as 'New Kuwait'). The pavilion offers visitors a spectacularly choreographed theatrical performance, depicting Kuwaiti culture and tradition. Along with its thematic cultural programs, the pavilion showcases how Kuwait has taken great strides in technology, innovation, environmental sustainability, and development in the past decades. The design of the pavilion evokes a sand dune and the country's famed water towers, which represent Kuwait's vast deserts and seaports.

Under the theme of 'Density Weaves Opportunities', the Bahrain pavilion aims to create images of weaving needles and the density of a traditionally woven fabric. In its structure, 126 rods become weaving needles that represent Bahrain's history of traditional crafts, simultaneously stitching multiculturalism into the social fabric through food.

Physical and interactive displays give visitors a first-hand look at innovative technologies used in the manufacture of carbon fiber and fiber-glass - woven composite materials used in several industries including automotive and construction. Bahrain's rich pearling heritage will be on display at the pavilion in the months of October and November. The pavilion's main area is an underground open plan space of experience and innovation. The unique architecture and multiple live weaving stations enjoy constant activity, akin to a laboratory of innovation and multiple experiences.

Also located in the Opportunity District, the Qatar pavilion pays tribute to the country's coat of arms, which is rooted in its rich history and cultural heritage. The sweeping shape of Qatar's pavilion echoes the essence of this insignia, through a design that exudes movement, mobility, strength and tradition. The pavilion's design offers a modern interpretation of Qatar's progressive outlook, according to WAM report. Organized under the theme: 'Qatar: The Future is Now', the pavilion aims to reflect the country's pioneering position in leading change. The pavilion also shines a spotlight on the pioneering mega projects that have been completed to host the FIFA World Cup 2022, in addition to the incentives and investment opportunities provided by Qatar as part of its economic diversification plans. — KUNA

Kuwait pavilion gives picture of its history

DUBAI: Kuwait pavilion at Dubai Expo 2020 gives a comprehensive idea of Kuwait's history, heritage and culture, a number of visitors said yesterday. In remarks to the press, the visitors noted that the Kuwaiti pavilion gives a valuable opportunity to get to know the State of Kuwait closely through its contents or the national youth cadres who receive and accompany guests through its corridors. After his visit to the Kuwaiti pavilion, UAE's Suleiman Al-Shehhi affirmed his keenness to visit the pavilion in order to see the latest development projects in Kuwait, adding that the Emirates and Kuwait have a common history, culture and religion. Shehhi also said that he was attracted by Kuwait's pavilion slogan 'New Kuwait... New Opportunities for

Sustainability', so he visited to know more about the promising opportunities that Kuwait enjoys to advance the system of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

Ali Al-Jaafary, a visitor from Oman, noted meanwhile that he had witnessed very useful details about Kuwait through his tour in the pavilion. On Friday, 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 inaugurated Kuwait's pavilion at the Expo, aiming at showing the country's strategic development projects and humanitarian efforts across the globe. The event will provide all attendees with the opportunity to celebrate the history and achievements of other countries. It will also bring together the world's brightest 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



DUBAI: People taken in a tour during their visit to Kuwait's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai. — KUNA

PO boxes changed without notice to previous subscribers

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: There are no shortages of complaints about Kuwait's troubled postal service. It is well known that the system is slow, outdated, often misplaces or loses mail and packages, does not run efficiently and is not customer friendly.

In the latest challenge to postal service customers, those who rent postal boxes are now losing their boxes without notification and without warning. Postal service managements at locations around Kuwait are closing boxes with expired subscriptions and renting them to new subscribers due to the growing demand - but without first informing the previous subscribers.

There are 68 post offices around Kuwait. One of the oldest post offices in Kuwait is the Salmiya Post Office, which has 3,000 PO boxes. The number of boxes in other post offices may differ.

The failure to renew subscriptions or even warn current patrons is based on a decision by the ministry of communication to change the keys of all boxes with expired subscriptions, whether rented to new customers or even the same customer with a new contract.

Subscriptions for PO boxes are typically paid annually. But as often happens, a subscriber may forget exactly when the subscription expires. In this case, a note would be placed in the box to warn the subscriber that the rental is up for renewal or about to expire. But this is not happening. Instead, no notice or warnings are given. All post office box subscriptions that expire are canceled and the box is rented to someone else, even if the person who has used the address for years tries to renew and pay the fee.

This reporter recently discovered that her postal box rental had been terminated - without warning or notice - immediately after the subscription expired. When she tried to pay and renew the subscription for her PO box, which had been rented by her parents for over 50 years, she was told that the subscription was terminated and she can't renew it unless she gets a new key, although her key is still functional.

The employee also told her that keys are not available and that they have no clue when they will receive them from the ministry. "Keys for the boxes are not available now. We ordered them from the ministry almost two months ago, but haven't received them yet," the post office employee said. So someone who has lost their box and wants to subscribe to a new box can't even do that. Letters arriving to the box to the canceled boxes will be returned to senders.

Another subscriber lost her box after using it for over 30 years and was told it was given to a new subscriber. This happened last month when the post office received 20 new keys for boxes, which were immediately rented to new subscribers. While it is fair to rent boxes that go unpaid to new subscribers, at the least current subscribers should receive a warning notice in advance that they need to renew, or risk losing the box.

Municipal Council prepares sites for camping season

KUWAIT: The Municipal Council said yesterday that it had prepared sites for the upcoming camping season, allocating in the process several locations to allow caravans owners to park their vehicles. In a press release, Deputy Director General of the Municipality and Hawally governorates at the Municipal Council Fahad Al-Shtaili stated that a committee - tasked with preparing for the camping season - held a meeting to discuss safety regulations for those seeking leisure in the desert or elsewhere during the season. The committee also touched on measures connected with countering the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) especially for campers this year. Shtaili. The meeting reviewed the conditions set to issue permits for camping sites and ways for campers to book specific locations through an electronic system. Field teams were also formed to remove any campsites outside the approved areas, he indicated, adding that warnings would be issued to cattle owners encroaching on campgrounds. Shtaili revealed that the committee had discussed setting points for groceries, medical centers and fire stations to offer their services to the campers. — KUNA

Kuwait mulls increase in work permit fees

To fight human trafficking and prevent entry of unskilled labor

KUWAIT: The Cabinet's General Secretariat has assigned the Public Authority for Manpower to upgrade the current work permit system for foreign residents in order to increase fees for all services it provides, a local daily reported yesterday quoting sources.

The authority was told to put up a plan to increase fees for work visas issued to foreign workers by the second or third quarters of 2022, Al-Qabas reported quoting sources familiar with the discussions. The main goal of amending the work permits' system is to fight human trafficking and prevent the entry of unskilled labor who do not bring added value to the local economy, said the sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity. Kuwait has ramped up its efforts to fight trafficking in persons; the least of which is an announcement made by the Interior Ministry yesterday of launching a hotline to report human and labor trafficking cases at 1888688.

Furthermore, the authority was also instructed to set a percentage for replacing foreign labor in the private sector with national manpower, starting with five percent in 2022 and up to 20 percent by 2025, said the sources, noting that the plan also includes introducing programs to "lure skilled foreign labor" into the country. The report does not provide details about the mechanism by which the plan is to be executed, and whether the proposed fee increase will cover services other than issuing new work visas, such as visa renewal. It says that the plan is necessitated by the need to "address flaws in

the private sector's labor market" and to create non-oil revenues to the state's budget.

Power tariffs

In the meantime, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Mishan Al-Otaibi said there is a plan to raise tariffs for all sectors except the residential sector within two years, based on studies prepared by the concerned committee at the



Plans to raise energy tariffs in 2 years

ministry, in a way that does not affect the local economy. Otaibi said it is important to carry out productive projects on time in coordination and cooperation with the authorities, and warned that in case projects are not completed on time, "we will face crises in 2025 as some projects are four to five years late". Speaking as he presented the ministry's 2020-2030 strategy, Otaibi said the increase in tariffs is linked to the economic reform plan as part of an integrated program at the state level to direct subsidies to those who deserve them, Al-Rai daily



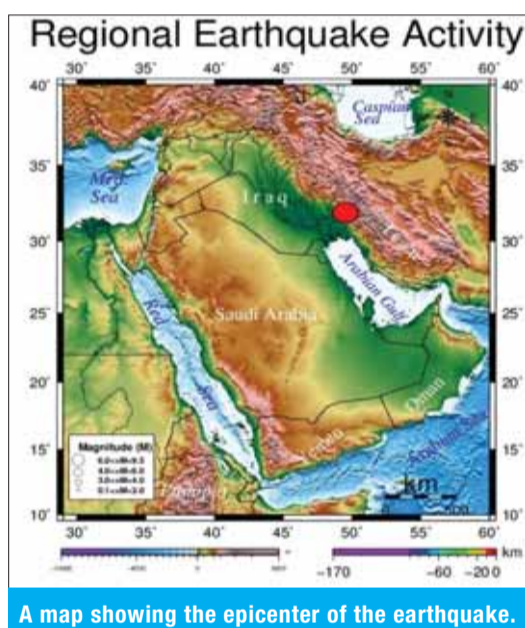
reported yesterday.

Otaibi explained during the press conference held Sunday that his ministry has updated the strategic objectives of its plan for digital transformation and renewable energy in keeping with Kuwait Vision 2035. "The recently introduced changes cover a great part of the future energy projects in order to ensure the needs of consumers in a sustainable way," he said. "The digitalization aims to ensure provision of high-quality service to consumers, institutional excellence and development of human resources," he revealed.

On top of the ministry's plan for 2030 are the electricity generating projects which envisage securing up to 5,000 megawatts over this period, which constitute an increase by 45 percent, Otaibi pointed out. The seawater desalination projects aim to increase the production capacity by 350 million imperial gallons per day, the minister added.

Tremors felt in Kuwait after Iran earthquake

KUWAIT: Tremors were felt in several areas around Kuwait yesterday morning after an earthquake hit west Iran at 5:39 am. A 5.7-magnitude earthquake hit Iran's eastern Khuzestan Province without causing any casualties, Tehran University earthquake monitoring center said yesterday. In a statement, the center said that the earthquake occurred at a depth of 10 kilometers from the earth's surface. The public relations official in the emergency department, Mohsin Ibrahim affirmed that the earthquake resulted in some minor injuries, without any deaths recorded so far.



62% in Kuwait don't perform required physical activity

KUWAIT: The health ministry's health promotion department launched an awareness campaign on the importance of physical activity in the presence of department director Dr Abeer Al-Bahouh and other officials. "We are hoping to become a more active and healthier society by reducing lethargy by 10 percent during the next five years," Bahouh said in statement published by Al-Jarida Arabic daily yesterday. She added that 62.5 percent of people in Kuwait do not perform the required physical activity.

Bahouh said lack of physical activity has resulted in a rise in chronic diseases in Kuwait and the world. "Physical activity is not only walking; rather it is the activity of muscles that are close to bones, provided that they release energy, which must be at least 150-300 minutes per week for adults according to international recommendations," she added. Bahouh said there should be moderate to hard exercise three times a week, while children should exercise 60 minutes daily.



KUWAIT: UK Ambassador Belinda Lewis with Waleed Al-Khashti and Zain's team at the exhibition.



UK Ambassador Belinda Lewis views one of the vehicles showcased at the exhibition.

Zain sponsors exhibition at No Time to Die premiere

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, sponsored the exhibition held during the premiere of the hugely anticipated James Bond movie, No Time to Die. The special event, held at Grand Cinemas Al-Hamra, witnessed the presence of Belinda Lewis, the United Kingdom's Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Waleed Al-Khashti, Corporate Communications and Relations

Officer of Zain Kuwait, as well as many fans of the James Bond franchise.

Zain's support to this event came in line with its keenness to support and encourage the various efforts and initiatives that offer a unique entertainment and social experience for the public, especially for the youth who are society's most vibrant segment. This is especially true during this period of time where entertainment venues are gradually reopening, and normal life is recommencing after the pandemic.

The exclusive premiere of the long awaited and hugely anticipated James Bond movie, No Time to Die, featured a special exhibition that showcased many of the beloved character's belongings and most famous vehicles. Many hardcore James Bond

fans enjoyed touring the exhibition before watching the movie that finally premiered after a long wait due to the COVID pandemic.

Zain is always keen on being present in the most unique events to add its own touch and reflect the values of its brand. The company believes that the Kuwaiti private sector has an essential role in further pushing national economy and the country's entertainment scene, and so it was keen on being a main supporter of this event.

Zain is aware of the important role private sector companies play in encouraging such initiatives that enrich the country's entertainment scene and offer a fun environment for the youth, especially that it is one of the private sector's biggest national companies.

Gulf Bank celebrates return to school with educational song

KUWAIT: In conjunction with the start of the new school year which kicked off this week in attendance after a hiatus of nearly two years, Gulf Bank launched a song that includes the Arabic alphabet, to make it easier for everyone to learn. This song comes as an encouragement to students, teachers, and parents, and to welcome them into the new normal. Each word of the song begins with a letter of the Arabic alphabet, to make it easy to memorize.



Najla Aleisa

Speaking about this marketing program, Gulf Bank's Deputy General Manager of Consumer Banking (Marketing), Najla Aleisa, said: "With the beginning of the school year, we wish the students, their parents, and faculty members an academic year full of knowledge, work, and successes. In preparing for this lyrical work, we wanted to present a positive and useful work that reflects everyone's joy in this good return to schools, and helps students learn the alphabets of the Arabic language. We conducted a quick test on several people of different age groups and found that most of those we asked do not know the Arabic alphabet properly. That is why we decided to release this educational song about the alphabet

and welcoming students, teachers, and parents through a work that reflects their true happiness with the end of distance education, and the gradual return to the life they were accustomed to before the outbreak of the epidemic. At Gulf Bank, we are keen on the participation of the people of Kuwait in all the occasions that the country is going through, and it was necessary for us to share with them the joy of this safe return to school, as we have always done with them."

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 gives its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.



Tensions run high after farmers clash in India

North Korea and South Korea restore cross-border hotline

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ADDIS ABABA: Horse riders are on a street as Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is sworn in for a new five-year term in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia yesterday. —AFP

Ethiopia's PM sworn in for new term

Thousands die as war rages in northern Tigray region

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was sworn in for a new five-year term yesterday, but the milestone risked being undermined by growing alarm over the war in the north. Abiy's Prosperity Party scored a landslide win in June elections that federal officials touted as the high-water mark of democratic reforms he initiated upon taking office in 2018.

Yet by the time voters cast their ballots, tens of thousands had been killed in the conflict in the northern Tigray region and hundreds of thousands faced famine-like conditions, according to the UN, tarnishing the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize winner's once-glowing reputation. Since then, fighting has spread to neighboring Afar and Amhara regions while Tigray has fallen under what the UN describes as a de facto humanitarian blockade, spurring fears of the mass starvation that turned Ethiopia into a byword for famine in the 1980s.

It is unclear whether Abiy's swearing-in will alter the course of the war pitting government troops against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) rebel group, which dominated national politics before he took power. Abiy's office, which blames the rebels for starting the war last November with attacks on federal army camps, has said certain conciliatory measures such as declassifying the TPLF as a terrorist group can only happen after a new government is formed.

International partners like the United States "will be looking at this closely to see if there is any shift in position", William Davison, senior Ethiopia analyst for the International Crisis Group, told AFP. Abiy's government has come under withering criticism for its

conduct of the war, notably from Washington, a long-time ally. US President Joe Biden in September signed an executive order allowing for sanctions against the warring parties if they fail to commit to a negotiated settlement.

'Let down'

Relations between Ethiopia and the international community soured further last week when the foreign ministry announced the expulsion of seven senior UN staff, including the local heads of the UN children's agency UNICEF and its humanitarian coordination office. Those officials had left the country by Sunday, UN sources told AFP. A joint statement issued yesterday on behalf of more than 40 countries and read out by Simon Manley, the UK's ambassador to the UN in Geneva, expressed shock and dismay over the expulsions and urged a reversal.

"Their work is vital in responding to the multiple humanitarian crises that Ethiopia is facing, and to the continuing reports of human rights violations and abuses," the statement said, referring to the expelled officials. Western powers feel "let down" by Abiy, a dynamic that will shape foreign relations during his second term, said Cameron Hudson, senior fellow at the

Atlantic Council's Africa Center. "The West will likely now revert to a playbook it knows... apply pressure where it can, engage where it must, and keep on the lookout for better alternatives," Hudson told AFP.

Ethiopian officials accuse the international community of ignoring abuses committed by the TPLF. Yesterday, President Sahle-Work Zewde, who holds a largely ceremonial role, took a combative tone in a speech to lawmakers after Abiy's swearing-in. "There has been an effort to destabilize our sovereignty, unity and societal co-existence," she said. "However, those Ethiopians who won't negotiate on their country's pride and existence have managed to foil the conspiracy devised to destroy Ethiopia by external enemies and domestic traitors."

'New beginnings'?

Ahead of the ceremony, signs bearing a flower and the words "New Beginnings" were posted around the capital. Abiy was appointed after several years of anti-government protests against the ruling TPLF-led coalition and promised to break with Ethiopia's authoritarian past, in part by holding the most democratic polls the country had ever seen. Once his new government is in place, he will have to confront what Awet Weldemichael, a Horn of Africa security expert at Queen's University in



ADDIS ABABA: Abiy Ahmed (2nd left), Prime Minister of Ethiopia, swears in front of the parliament as reelected Prime Minister during a swearing-in ceremony for recently elected members yesterday. —AFP

Canada, called "a trifecta of crises": the war itself and its humanitarian and economic fallout.

Many analysts expect fighting to pick up now that the rainy season is ending, Awet noted. "The upcoming wave of fighting and worsening humanitarian conditions are a further hit on his international standing and a test to his new government from day one." Abiy was expected to speak at a mass rally in Addis Ababa's Meskel Square, to be attended by dignitaries including the presidents of Nigeria, Somalia, Senegal and Djibouti. —AFP

Transformation to conflict: Ethiopia under Abiy Ahmed

ADDIS ABABA: Abiy Ahmed promised a clean break from years of iron-fisted rule in Ethiopia, where he became prime minister in 2018 after several years of anti-government street protests. Africa's second-most populous nation has witnessed rapid and historic change since Abiy's appointment and in 2019 he won the Nobel Peace Prize. But war broke out the following year in the northern Tigray region where famine now looms large and ethnic violence has increased under his rule. Abiy's ruling party won a landslide victory in national elections in June. But ahead of his swearing-in, he faces international condemnation and growing isolation over the Tigray conflict.

New hope

Abiy was appointed in April 2018 by Ethiopia's authoritarian ruling coalition after years of agitation by the country's two largest ethnic groups—the Oromos and Amharas—forced his predecessor to resign. Ethiopia's first ever Oromo prime minister, Abiy sparked early hopes of a democratic resurgence. Dissidents were freed from prison, exiles welcomed home and a formal apology issued for state brutality. He also announced economic reforms, including liberalizing parts of Ethiopia's tightly controlled markets, the creation of a stock exchange, and opening state industries to foreign investors. But he was not universally popular. A grenade attack targeted one of his rallies just two months after he took office.

Peacemaker

In a surprise move, Abiy made peace with neighboring Eritrea after a 20-year cold war. Eritrea voted for independence from Ethiopia in 1993. A border dispute then ignited a 1998-2000 war that left 80,000 dead before sliding into a stalemate. Shortly after taking office, Abiy extended an olive branch by accepting the demarcation of the border as drawn by the UN in 2002. He then paid a historic visit to Eritrea, where both sides declared the war over. Abiy won his Nobel in large part for instigating the thaw.

State of unrest

The opening of political space under Abiy spurred ethno-nationalism that had long been kept at bay by the repressive former regime. The Sidama people in the south voted overwhelmingly in 2019 to create their own region, Ethiopia's 10th, and another referendum was held in September 2021 on whether to form a South West region. Other groups also challenged Abiy for greater ethnic self-rule, sometimes drawing a forceful response. Abiy has struggled to keep a lid on ethnic violence, including in his native Oromia. In June 2020, the shooting of an Oromo pop singer sparked protests that saw 160 people killed in inter-ethnic violence and clashes with security forces. Opposition leaders were rounded up and jailed. Oromia has also witnessed massacres blamed on local rebel groups. Meanwhile, hundreds of civilians have been killed in ethnically motivated clashes in Amhara, the second-most populous region.

War in the north

In late 2019, Abiy disbanded Ethiopia's long-ruling coalition and formed the Prosperity Party. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which dominated national politics before Abiy took power, refused to join. The TPLF complained of being sidelined and openly defied his rule. In September 2020, it held elections in Tigray, ignoring a federal order. Two months later, Abiy accused the TPLF of orchestrating attacks on federal army camps in Tigray and sent troops into the region, aided by Eritrean forces. Although he promised swift victory, TPLF rebels retook the Tigray capital Mekele in June and Abiy's government declared a unilateral ceasefire. Fighting has since spread to neighboring regions. Ethiopia has faced censure on the world stage over a dire humanitarian crisis in Tigray, and its troops have been accused of mass rape and ethnic cleansing.

Election woes

Abiy vowed to hold the most credible elections Ethiopia had ever seen to secure a mandate for his reform agenda. The poll was initially delayed from August 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic and then again until June 21 this year because of logistical setbacks. The Tigray war, and ethnic unrest elsewhere, made voting impossible in many parts of the country of 115 million people. Delayed polls were held in some areas on September 30, but the outcome will not have a significant impact on the balance of power. —AFP

Western powers feel 'let down' by Abiy



Ethiopia's Abiy: From Nobel peace laureate to wartime ruler

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power vowing sweeping reforms that earned him a Nobel Peace Prize, before becoming mired in a brutal internal conflict that threatens to destabilize the entire Horn of Africa region. As the 45-year-old prepares for a new term following his Prosperity Party's landslide election win in June, his image as a modern peacemaker lies in tatters and the surge of hope that accompanied his initial appointment three years ago has faded, at least for his critics.

When the deeply ambitious Abiy picked up his Nobel in 2019 for Ethiopia's rapprochement with neighboring Eritrea, he declared: "War is the epitome of hell for all involved". But he remains defiant despite mounting international alarm over the conflict in Tigray that has killed tens of thousands of people and pushed hundreds of thousands to the brink of starvation. "It's hard to imagine a greater fall from grace than Abiy Ahmed's. From the celebrated heights of a Nobel Peace Prize to a pariah in just two years," said Cameron Hudson, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Africa Center.

"This is certainly not the first time the West has been seduced by the promise of a next-generation leader. And it's not the first time we have been let down by that leader." Abiy blames Tigray's former ruling party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), for starting the war, and there is considerable domestic support for what his government long termed a "law enforcement operation". While visiting soldiers at the front during Ethiopian New Year celebrations last month, he declared that Tigrayan rebels were doomed to certain defeat.

"The current bandits are target practice for us... By practicing on them, we will build a strong military," he said. Before the June polls he told supporters, in his trademark folksy language, that while Ethiopia might seem riven by crises, the real problem was one of perception. He compared the country's experience to that of a village child disoriented by riding in a car for the first time. "When the car moves forward, the buildings and trees go backward and we become confused," said Abiy, once a village boy himself.

Seizing the moment

Born in the western town of Beshasha to a Muslim father and Christian mother, Abiy has described sleeping on the floor in a house with no electricity or running water. Fascinated with technology, he joined the military as a radio operator while still

a teenager. In his Nobel speech, he recalled his time during the 1998-2000 war with Eritrea, saying his entire unit was wiped out in an artillery attack that he survived only because he'd left a foxhole to get better antenna reception.

He rose to lieutenant-colonel before becoming the first head of Ethiopia's cyber-espionage Information Network Security Agency. Then came stints as a lawmaker and minister of science and technology. The circumstances that lifted Abiy to high office can be traced to late 2015. A government plan to expand Addis Ababa's administrative boundaries into the surrounding Oromia region was seen as a land grab, sparking protests led by the Oromos, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, and the Amharas, the second-largest.

The TPLF-dominated ruling coalition imposed states of emergency and carried out mass arrests, but the protests continued. When then-Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn abruptly resigned, coalition members chose Abiy to become the first Oromo prime minister in 2018. He released dissidents from jail, apologized for state brutality and welcomed home exiled groups - part of a democratic rebirth meant to culminate in the most competitive elections in Ethiopia's history.

Road to war

But Abiy encountered a host of obstacles, notably persistent ethnic violence including in his native Oromia. All the while, Tigray was seething. The TPLF did not take kindly to his perceived attempts to sideline them. When Abiy dissolved the ruling coalition and formed the Prosperity Party in 2019, the TPLF refused to go along and defied him by holding "illegal" regional elections last year. In November, Abiy ordered troops into Tigray, a move he said came in response to TPLF attacks on federal army camps. He promised a swift victory, but fighting has spread into neighboring regions and there have been many reports of atrocities including massacres and mass rape.

'Lost child'

Abiy has been accused of focusing his attention on beautifying the capital and mediating conflicts abroad rather than the situation at home. Critics also say he has embraced the same authoritarianism many hoped he would end, overseeing mass arrests and abuses by security forces. Gone are the heady early days of "Abiymania" - now his opponents openly disrespect him. "He started to behave as a lost child at a crossroads. Such a child cannot go back because he doesn't know from where he came, and he cannot proceed because he does not know where he's going," Merera Gudina, an opposition leader from Oromia, told AFP earlier this year. But his supporters remain true believers. Early on in the Tigray war, one official even suggested that, given Abiy's efforts to resolve the conflict, he might be deserving of "a second Nobel Prize". —AFP

International

US apex court returns, with explosive cases to decide on

Blockbuster cases on US Supreme Court's docket

WASHINGTON: Abortion, gun rights, religious freedoms and potentially race: the US Supreme Court began a new term yesterday with blockbuster cases on its docket that could spotlight the influence of conservative justices chosen by Donald Trump. For the first time in 18 months, the court's justices will be back on the bench in person - although one member, Justice Brett Kavanaugh, recently tested positive for COVID-19 and will participate remotely. Kavanaugh is one of the three justices confirmed to the court during Republican Trump's four-year presidency, which shifted the court to a solidly conservative 6-3 majority.

Last year, this reorganized court asserted its independence, however, notably rejecting Trump's crusade to invalidate the 2020 election results that saw him defeated by Joe Biden. But in such "shadow" cases - the nickname for expedited rulings that are not debated in public - the court has begun a rightward tilt, highlighted by its September 1 decision to not block a Texas law that bans almost all abortions in the state. The ruling enraged Democrats, including President Biden, and renewed calls for Supreme Court reforms that are being considered by a presidential commission studying options including adding seats to the bench.

More broadly, public frustration with the court has grown: only 40 percent of Americans now say they appreciate its work, compared to 49 percent in July, while 37 percent of respondents consider it "too conservative," according to a Gallup poll. In a sign of the tumult, abortion rights defenders protested outside Kavanaugh's home, and on Saturday thousands of people converged on the Supreme Court - and in cities across America -

proclaiming abortion as a personal choice and not a legal debate.

'Partisan hacks'

To calm the waters, the justices have gone to great lengths recently to convince the public of their impartiality. "This court is not comprised of a bunch of partisan hacks," Amy Coney Barrett, the justice who succeeded the late liberal icon Ruth Bader Ginsburg, said in a speech to students in Kentucky. Critics were quick to note that her remarks were made in the presence of top Republican Senator Mitch McConnell, who presided over Barrett's hasty confirmation near the end of the 2020 presidential campaign. Beyond the speeches, the 2021-2022 session "will prove to be a real test whether or not the Supreme Court can rise above the partisan divide," said David Cole, national legal director for civil liberties defender ACLU.

On the courts agenda? Essentially the key social issues that most divide Americans, starting with the sensitive subject of abortion. Beginning December 1, the justices will consider a Mississippi law that bans abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy. The law's supporters see the case as an opportunity to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 decision which established the constitutional guarantee of abortion rights.

During his 2016 campaign, "Donald Trump promised to appoint justices who would overrule *Roe versus Wade*," Amy Howe, editor of the court-focused website SCOTUSblog, recalled recently. With his appointment of justices Neil Gorsuch, Kavanaugh and Barrett, "now is the time to see whether or not that promise will come true," she



WASHINGTON: United States Capitol Police in riot gear stand between women rights activists and anti-abortion activist, as they gather in front of the supreme court after a rally at freedom plaza for the annual Women's March. —AFP

said during a talk at Washington think tank the Cato Institute.

'Juicy cases'

Another explosive issue on tap is the carrying of firearms. Until now, the court has held that Americans have a constitutional right to bear arms at home for self-defense, but it has said nothing about how much protection the Second Amendment affords people who carry a concealed firearm in public. That may change when the court reviews a New York law that strictly limits concealed carry licensing.

It will also consider the limits imposed on funding of faith-based schools. The current court "is very, very sympathetic and sensitive to religious freedom," Cole said. Several death row cases are also up for consideration. And it remains possible the court will address the perennially sensitive issue of race, by taking up a challenge to universities' affirmative action policies, which are roundly criticized by conservatives. With all these "juicy cases," said Howe, "the real question is not whether or not the court is going to continue to shift to the right, but how far it will shift to the right." —AFP



Public frustration with court grows

During his 2016 campaign, "Donald Trump promised to appoint justices who would overrule *Roe versus Wade*," Amy Howe, editor of the court-focused website SCOTUSblog, recalled recently. With his appointment of justices Neil Gorsuch, Kavanaugh and Barrett, "now is the time to see whether or not that promise will come true," she

Facebook chooses 'profit over safety' says whistleblower

WASHINGTON: The whistleblower who shared a trove of Facebook documents alleging the social media giant knew its products were fueling hate and harming children's mental health revealed her identity Sunday in a televised interview, and accused the company of choosing "profit over safety." Frances Haugen, a 37-year-old data scientist from Iowa, has worked for companies including Google and Pinterest - but said in an interview with CBS news show "60 Minutes" that Facebook was "substantially worse" than anything she had seen before.

She called for the company to be regulated. "Facebook over and over again has shown it chooses profit over safety. It is subsidizing, it is paying for its profits with our safety," Haugen said. "The version of Facebook that exists today is tearing our societies apart and causing ethnic violence around the world," she said.

The world's largest social media platform has been embroiled in a firestorm brought about by Haugen, who as an unnamed whistleblower shared documents with US lawmakers and The Wall Street Journal that detailed how Facebook knew its products, including Instagram, were harming young girls, especially around body image. US Senator Richard Blumenthal responded to the interview ahead of Haugen's appearance to testify in Congress next week, saying in a statement: "Facebook's actions make clear that we cannot trust it to police itself. We must consider stronger oversight."

In the "60 Minutes" interview Haugen explained how the company's News Feed algorithm is optimized for content that gets a reaction. The company's own research shows that it is "easier to inspire people to anger than it is to other emotions," Haugen said. "Facebook has realized that if they change the algorithm to be safer, people will spend less time on the site, they'll click on less ads, they'll make less money."

During the 2020 US presidential election, she said, the company realized the danger that such content presented and turned on safety systems to reduce it. But "as soon as the election was over they turn them back off, or they change the settings back to what they were before, to prioritize growth over safety, and that really feels like a betrayal of democracy to me," she said. "No one at Facebook is malevolent," she said, adding that co-founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg did not set out to make a "hateful" platform. But, Haugen said, the incentives are "misaligned."

Facebook's vice president of policy and global affairs Nick Clegg vehemently pushed back at the assertion its platforms are "toxic" for teens, days after a tense congressional hearing in which US lawmakers grilled the company over its impact on the mental health of young users. While Haugen did not draw a straight line between the decision to roll back safety systems and the US Capitol riot on January 6, "60 Minutes" noted that the social network was used by some of the organizers of that violence. During an appearance on CNN, Clegg dismissed the link. "I think the assertion (that) January 6th can be explained because of social media, I just think that's ludicrous," Clegg told the broadcaster, saying it was "false comfort" to believe technology was driving America's deepening political polarization. —AFP

Half a degree 'makes a big difference' in a warming world

PARIS: Half a degree Celsius may not seem like much, but climate experts say a world that has warmed 1.5 degrees Celsius above 19th-century levels compared to 2C could be the difference between life and death. A 2C Earth would see the number of people facing extreme heat waves more than double. A quarter of a billion more people would face water shortages. The Arctic Ocean will be ice-free not once in a century but once every 10 years.

Countries that signed the Paris Agreement vowed to cap the rise in global temperatures-already 1.1C above the pre-industrial benchmark-at well below 2C, and preferably at 1.5C. Humanity is still far off the mark: Even if fulfilled, current pledges to reduce emissions would still set the planet on course to warm by a "catastrophic" 2.7C, according to the UN. Here's what the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says we can expect in a world that warms by 1.5C, 2C and beyond.

Heat waves

Maximum temperatures in some areas will increase by three degrees if the climate warms 1.5C, four if global heating reaches the 2C mark. Heat waves that occur once-a-decade today will become four times more likely at 1.5C, and nearly six times more likely at 2C. The odds of extreme hot spells currently seen once every 50 year increase by near-

ly nine fold at 1.5C, and 40 fold in a 4C world. More people will be affected as well: The percentage of humanity exposed to extreme heatwaves at least once every five years jumps from 14 percent at 1.5C to 37 percent with an extra half-a-degree.

Storms

Global warming will cause more rain at higher latitudes, north and south of the equator, as well as in the tropics and some monsoon zones. Precipitation in sub-tropical zones will likely become rarer, raising the spectre of drought. Extreme precipitation events today are 1.3 times more likely and seven percent more intense than before global warming kicked in.

At 1.5 degrees of warming, extreme rain, snowfall or other precipitation events will be 10 percent heavier and 1.5 times more likely.

Drought

In drought-prone regions dry spells are twice as likely in a 1.5C world, and four times more likely if temperatures climb 4C. Capping the rise in average global temperatures to 1.5C rather than 2C would prevent an additional 200-250 million people from facing severe water shortages. Limiting drought would also reduce the risk of related disasters such as wildfires.

Food

In a world that is two degrees warmer than pre-industrial levels, seven-10 percent of agricultural land will no longer be farmable. Yields are also predicted to decrease, with corn harvests in tropical zones estimated to drop by three percent in a 1.5C warmer world and seven percent with a rise of 2C.

Tensions run high after farmers clash in India

NEW DELHI: Demonstrators torched a police vehicle in India yesterday as tensions boiled over after clashes involving protesting farmers killed at least nine people. The incident on Sunday in Uttar Pradesh state was the deadliest in more than a year of protests by farmers in northern India against new agricultural reforms. Farmers said that a convoy belonging to a government minister, his son and the state's deputy chief minister ran over and killed four people at a demonstration. The minister said later that a driver lost control of his vehicle after being pelted by demonstrators.

Angry protesters set fire to several cars and at least five more people, four of them supporters of the ruling

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), were killed. Yesterday, the protesters kept the bodies of the four dead farmers in glass cases for display around the protest site. Police banned gatherings, cut off mobile internet services, sent extra forces and detained several opposition figures on their way to the scene including Priyanka Gandhi from the Congress party. In state capital Lucknow, dozens of police detained local Congress chief Akhilesh Yadav outside his home.

Dozens of opposition supporters staged a protest in the city and set fire to at least one police vehicle, television pictures showed. Protests organized by opposition parties also took place in New Delhi and Bangalore. Agriculture has long been a political minefield and employs some two-thirds of India's 1.3 billion population. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government says the reforms will infuse much-needed energy and capital in the sector. Farmers, many of whom have camped outside New Delhi for over a year, fear the changes will leave them at the mercy of big corporations. —AFP



NEW YORK: A group of students take part in a protest in support of the climate and against fossil fuel and other contributors to global warming in front of the United Nations (UN) in Manhattan. —AFP

Sea levels

If global warming is capped at 2C, the ocean watermark will go up about half a meter over the 21st century. It will continue rising to nearly two meters by 2300 - twice the amount predicted by the IPCC in 2019. Because of uncertainty over ice sheets, scientists cannot rule out a total rise of two meters by 2100 in a worst-case emissions scenario. Limiting warming to 1.5C would reduce rising sea levels by 10 about centimeters.

Species in peril

All these impacts affect the survival of plants and animals across the planet. Global warming capped at 1.5C negatively affects seven percent of ecosystems. At 2C, that figure nearly doubles. An increase of 4C would endanger half of the species on Earth. —AFP



NEW DELHI: Activists of India's Youth Congress shout slogans from behind police barricades during a demonstration yesterday, a day after clashes involving farmers who were protesting against the agricultural reforms at Lakhimpur in India's Uttar Pradesh state. —AFP

Climate-fuelled disasters

PARIS: From a summer of fire and record floods, to freak frosts and locusts invasions, experts say man-made climate change is wreaking havoc on the world's weather. Here are some of the most devastating climate-fuelled disasters from the past two years:

Mediterranean on fire

Greece's worst heatwave in decades fuelled deadly wildfires that burned nearly 100,000 hectares

(250,000 acres) this year in what the prime minister called the country's "greatest ecological disaster in decades". The summer blazes killed 80 people in Algeria and Turkey, with Italy and Spain also ravaged by uncontrolled fire. Scientists say the Mediterranean rim is a climate change "hot spot" with worse to come.

Canada 'heat dome'

In late June, a hot air "heat dome" caused sustained, scorching temperatures across much of western Canada and the northwestern US. Residents in the British Columbia city of Lytton saw the thermometer rise on June 30 to 49.6 degrees Celsius (121 degrees Fahrenheit), a national record. Days later, the town was largely destroyed by a wildfire. The extreme heat was

"virtually impossible" without human-caused climate change, the World Weather Attribution (WWA) science consortium said.

European towns washed away

Germany's worst flooding in living memory killed 165 people in July after heavy rainfall battered the country along with Switzerland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria and Belgium, where another 31 people died. The WWA said a warming climate increased the likelihood of the extreme two-day rainfall behind the floods by about 20 percent. For every degree that Earth warms, the atmosphere can hold about seven percent more moisture, scientist say. —AFP

International

North Korea and South Korea restore cross-border hotline

Pyongyang sparks global concern with a string of missile tests

SEOUL: North and South Korea restored their cross-border hotline yesterday - a step that Seoul said could help improve relations after Pyongyang sparked global concern with a string of missile tests in recent weeks. The two sides resumed communications with officials exchanging their first phone call since August, days after the UN Security Council held an emergency meeting over the North Korean missile tests.

The two Koreas had signaled a surprise thaw in relations in late July by announcing the resumption of cross-border communications - severed more than a year earlier - but the detente was short-lived, as Pyongyang stopped answering calls just two weeks later. Seoul's unification ministry confirmed the phone call yesterday morning between officials from the two rivals.

"It's been a while and I'm very happy that the communication line has been restored," a South Korean official told his northern counterpart in footage provided to reporters by the ministry. The South's defense ministry also confirmed that cross-border military communications have resumed. "With the restoration of the South-North communication line, the government evaluates that a foundation for recovering inter-Korean relations has been provided," the unification ministry said in a statement. "The government hopes... to swiftly resume dialogue and begin practical discussions for recovering

inter-Korean relations."

Earlier yesterday, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had "expressed the intention of restoring the cut-off north-south communication lines", North Korea's official news agency KCNA said. It reported that the move was an attempt to establish "lasting peace" on the Korean peninsula. But an analyst played down yesterday's restoration as a "symbolic" gesture, noting the North's recent missile launches. "Even if this leads to talks, we may enter a new phase where North Korea engages in dialogue but continues to carry out provocations simultaneously," said Park Wogon, a professor of North Korean Studies at Ewha Womans University.

A surprise thaw in ties

Ignoring calls

North Korea had unilaterally cut off all official military and political communication links in June last year over activists sending anti-

Pyongyang leaflets across the border. The two sides said on July 27 this year that all lines were restored. Their joint announcement, which coincided with the anniversary of the end of the Korean War, was the first positive development since a series of summits between Kim and the South's President Moon Jae-in in 2018 failed to achieve any significant breakthrough.

They also revealed at the time that Kim and Moon had exchanged a series of letters since April in which they agreed that re-establishing hotlines



SEOUL: This handout photo taken and provided by South Korea's Defense Ministry in Seoul shows a South Korean military officer speaking over a phone call with a North Korean official at an undisclosed location near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) dividing the two Koreas after North and South Korea restored their cross-border communications. —AFP

would be a productive first step in rebooting relations between the two rivals which, despite the end of their 1950-53 conflict, remain technically at war. But the cross-border communication lasted for just two weeks, with the North dropping them in protest at joint US-South Korea military drills.

In the period since, Pyongyang has held a series of tension-raising missile tests. In September, it launched what it said was a long-

range cruise missile, and earlier this week it tested what it described as a hypersonic gliding vehicle, which South Korea's military said appeared to be in the early stages of development. On Friday, it said it had successfully fired a new anti-aircraft missile. Pyongyang slammed the UN Security Council Sunday for holding an emergency meeting over the missile tests, accusing member states of toying with a "time-bomb". —AFP

Six killed as Thailand army battles rebels

NARATHIWAT: Six days of gun battles between soldiers and militants in Thailand's restive south have left six people dead, the military said yesterday, as troops hunt insurgents hiding in a swampy forest. Thailand's three southernmost provinces have been in the grip of a 17-year conflict that has killed more than 7,000 people, the majority civilians, as militants in the Muslim-majority region fight for more autonomy from the Thai state.

The pandemic had brought a lull to the clashes - often characterised as tit-for-tat attacks - but fighting has renewed in recent weeks. Thailand's 4th Army Region, which oversees the southern provinces, said yesterday that the military has been locked in gun battles with separatists in Narathiwat province since September 28. Authorities surrounded a swampy forest in Bachao district on Tuesday after receiving a tip that a group of sus-

pected armed rebels were hiding there, said Colonel Keattisak Neewong, a spokesman for the southern military unit in charge of security.

"We lost our first officer in the gunfight last Tuesday," he said. "We continued to negotiate with them since day one with the help of local religious leaders but they have rejected the talks and kept firing." By Sunday morning, the group tried to escape, sparking a gunfight that left four suspected rebels and one soldier dead. The colonel added that there were still some people hiding in the forest. On Sunday, relatives of the two officers killed sobbed as pallbearers carried their coffins into a helicopter. The police and military have long been accused by residents of Thailand's so-called "Deep South" of heavy-handed tactics.

The region - heavily controlled by Thai security forces - is culturally distinct from Buddhist-majority Thailand, which colonized the area bordering Malaysia over a century ago. Relations between the Thai state and key rebel group Barisan Revolusi Nasional, which has insurgents on the ground, appeared to be warming in early 2020 when they met for the first time in Kuala Lumpur. But the military continued to attack the rebels, said Don Pathan, a Thailand-based security analyst. "The



NARATHIWAT: Officials prepare a body bag holding the corpse of one of the four suspected Muslim separatists killed in an assault by Thai soldiers following a six-day siege in Yi Ngo District in Thailand's southern Narathiwat province. —AFP

military on the ground are still stuck in a zero-sum game approach," he said. By July 2021, the insurgents "decided it was enough and they wanted to go on the offensive," he said, adding there will likely be more retaliatory attacks to come from both sides. —AFP

Taliban destroy IS cell after mosque attack

KABUL: The Taliban said yesterday they had destroyed an Islamic State cell in the Afghan capital, hours after a suspected IS attack on a mosque killed five people. After overrunning Kabul seven weeks ago the hardliners have set up an interim Afghan government, but still face attacks from the regional branch of the Islamic State. The Taliban's chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said fighters carried out the operation in the north of Kabul on Sunday evening.

"As a result of the operation, which was very decisive and successful, the IS centre was completely destroyed and all the IS members in it were killed," Mujahid said on Twitter. Witnesses and AFP journalists heard blasts and gunfire in the capital at the time of the raid, and images posted to social media showed a large explosion and a fire at the scene. Kabul resident and government employee Abdul Rahaman told AFP that a "large number" of Taliban special forces attacked at least three houses in his neighborhood.

"The fighting continued for several hours," he

said, adding the sound of weapons kept him awake all night. "They said they were after Daesh (IS) fighters in the area," Rahman said. "I don't know how many were killed or arrested but the fighting was intense." At the scene yesterday, AFP saw several Taliban gunmen standing guard, denying people access down the road to the property. Police pick-up trucks could be seen driving towards the site, one of which came back laden with household items including furniture, a carpet and kitchen appliances.

The operation took place within hours of a deadly attack targeting a prayer ceremony at the Eid Gah mosque in memory of Taliban spokesman Mujahid's mother, who died last week. A government cultural commission official, who asked not to be named, told AFP that five people died and 11 were wounded, adding the casualties included both civilians and Taliban members. "We have also arrested three people in connection with the blast," he said.

Blood trails

According to the official, the device was placed at the entrance to the mosque and detonated as mourners were leaving after offering condolences to Mujahid and his family. A witness at the mosque, who asked not to be identified, told AFP that Sunday's attack at the entrance was carried out by a single suicide bomber. Just outside the eastern gate, a dark patch was visible on

schools. "All parties to the conflicts, including third states, foreign fighters and mercenaries, have violated international humanitarian law, in particular the principles of proportionality and distinction, and some have also committed war crimes," said Mohamed Auajjar, who chaired the three-person mission.

The mission said it had identified individuals and groups - both Libyan and foreign - who may bear responsibility for the violations, abuses and crimes. However, it said the list would remain confidential until it could be shared with appropriate accountability mechanisms. Though the Libyan judicial authorities are investigating most of the cases documented in the report, the process "faces significant challenges", the experts said. In June 2020, the Human Rights Council - the UN's top rights body - adopted a resolution calling for a fact-finding mission to be sent to Libya. The move had Tripoli's support.

The experts, appointed in August last year, were charged with investigating alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed in Libya since 2016.



KABUL: People take pictures at the entrance of the Eid Gah mosque where a blast struck a day before, in Kabul yesterday. —AFP

the ground where the explosion took place and bullet holes could be seen in a wall.

The witness said a group of Taliban members - including senior figures - inside the mosque grounds came under fire after the blast, taking two casualties. He added that two Taliban units mistakenly opened fire on each other in the confusion following the explosion, but interior ministry spokesman Qari Sayed Khosti denied there had been any gunfire. "A suicide bomber detonated his explosives among the crowd killing three people and wounding a dozen," he said. —AFP

Auajjar was joined by and fellow human rights experts Chaloka Beyani and Tracy Robinson. They gathered and reviewed hundreds of documents, interviewed more than 150 individuals and conducted investigations in Libya, Tunisia and Italy. Their report documents the recruitment and direct participation of children in hostilities, plus the enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killings of prominent women.

Oil-rich Libya has been torn by conflict since the 2011 toppling and killing of dictator Muammar Gaddafi in a NATO-backed uprising, with rival administrations vying for power. The experts said anti-personnel mines left by mercenaries in residential areas have killed and maimed civilians. Meanwhile migrants seeking passage across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe are subjected to a litany of abuses in detention centers and at the hands of traffickers, said Beyani. Violations are committed "on a widespread scale" by state and non-state actors, "with a high level of organization and with the encouragement of the state - all of which is suggestive of crimes against humanity," the Zambian expert said. —AFP

'We lack everything': Afghan health system at breaking point

KABUL: At an overcrowded hospital in Afghanistan, the few remaining doctors and nurses try urgently to treat skeletal babies and malnourished children packed side by side on beds. The country's healthcare system is on the verge of collapse following the Taliban takeover in August when international funding was frozen, leaving the aid-reliant economy in crisis. "We lack everything. We need double the equipment, medicine and staff," said Mohammad Sidiq, head of the paediatric department at the Mirwais hospital in the southern city of Kandahar, where there are twice as many patients as beds.

Many staff have quit after not being paid for months, while others have fled abroad fearing Taliban rule, with many women too afraid to return to work under the hardline Islamists. Sidiq said there had been an influx of patients as access to the hospital improved following the end of Afghanistan's 20-year conflict, straining resources further. At just 5.5 kilograms (12 pounds), one 11-month-old baby at the hospital weighed just half what the infant should.

A severely malnourished five-year-old with diarrhoea and pneumonia lay motionless and was being fed through a tube. He weighed just 5.3 kilograms. "I could not bring him to hospital before because there was fighting," the boy's mother said. At another hospital in the northern town of Balkh, a medic said the number of patients had also shot up. "In the past, the roads were closed due to the war and people could not come to the hospital, but now their number is much higher than before," Muzhgan Saiczada said. "Of course, it has become more difficult to handle," the doctor at the Abo Ali Sina Balkhi Regional Hospital said.

'Imminent collapse'

After the Taliban swept to power the World Bank suspended aid to Afghanistan, while Washington denied the Islamist group access to the country's gold and cash reserves, most of which are held overseas. The International Monetary Fund also said Afghanistan would no longer be able to access the global lender's resources, blocking hundreds of millions of dollars. Other major donors such as USAID and the European Union have paused funding with no emergency support in place. Leading aid agencies now say the health sector, which was primarily run by NGOs with international funding, faces "imminent collapse".

HealthNet TPO, a Dutch aid agency which runs the Afghan Japan Hospital in the capital Kabul, said its 2,700 healthcare workers in Afghanistan would go unpaid and services would stop unless emergency money is provided. At least 2.6 million people rely on the group for medical services at its 100 health centers and hospitals across the country. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said more than 2,000 health facilities had already been shuttered across the nation. At least 20,000 health workers are not working, or are doing so without pay, it said, including over 7,000 women.

Meanwhile, COVID-19 continues to spread across the country, with few resources to bring it under control. "Maybe in a month, we will not be able to provide for our COVID-19 patients," said Freba Azizi, a doctor for Kabul's only dedicated coronavirus treatment centre at the Afghan Japan Hospital. "The death rate of COVID-19 patients will increase," she said. "We will see dead bodies on a daily basis." One patient, a 32-year-old man, died during AFP's visit to the hospital. He was suffering from severe pneumonia and went into cardiac arrest. —AFP

Crimes against humanity committed in Libya: UN

GENEVA: War crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed in Libya since 2016, a United Nations investigation revealed yesterday. The Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya, commissioned by the UN Human Rights Council, said migrants and detainees were particularly exposed to violations. "There are reasonable grounds to believe that war crimes have been committed in Libya, while violence perpetrated in prisons and against migrants there may amount to crimes against humanity," the mission said in a statement.

The unrest in the north African country has had a dramatic impact on Libyans' economic, social and cultural rights, as borne by attacks on hospitals and

Business

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2021

World airlines to lose \$51.8bn in 2021, stay in red in 2022: IATA

Airlines commit to 'net zero' CO2 emissions by 2050

BOSTON: Global airlines will lose an estimated \$51.8 billion in 2021 and another \$11.6 billion in 2022 in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to an industry forecast released yesterday. The projections by trade group the International Air Transport Association (IATA) show a deeper fall than the prior forecast in April for losses of \$47.7 billion this year. IATA also increased the estimate for 2020 losses to \$137.7 billion from \$126.4 billion.

While the shortfall for airlines is "enormous," IATA Director General Willie Walsh said "we are well past the deepest part of the crisis." Walsh said airlines had cut costs and taken advantage of increased demand for air freight. "While serious issues remain, the path to recovery is coming into view," Walsh said. "Aviation is demonstrating its resilience yet again."

The recovery varies by region. North America is the only region projected to generate positive profits in 2022. Europe is forecast to remain in the red, with losses of \$9.2 billion in 2022, compared with a loss of \$20.9 billion expected in 2021. The region's carriers will see a recovery in intra-European travel, but long-haul travel will remain limited, IATA said.

Carriers in the Asia-Pacific region, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa are all expected to see smaller losses in 2022 compared with this

year. IATA projected that total passenger numbers of 3.4 billion in 2022, similar to 2014 levels, but below the 4.5 billion in 2019.

"People have not lost their desire to travel, as we see in solid domestic market resilience. But they are being held back from international travel by restrictions, uncertainty and complexity," said Walsh, adding that more governments see vaccinations "as a way out of this crisis." IATA said "reestablishing global connectivity" should be a priority for governments. "We fully agree that vaccinated people should not have their freedom of movement limited in any way," he said.

"In fact, the freedom to travel is a good incentive for more people to be vaccinated. Governments must work together and do everything in their power to ensure that vaccines are available to anybody who wants them." The world's airlines made a joint pledge yesterday to reach "net zero" carbon emissions by 2050, as the aviation industry ramps up efforts to curb its contribution to global warming. "For aviation, net zero is a bold, audacious commitment. But it is also a necessity," Willie Walsh, director general of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), told top airline executives meeting in Boston. "The important decision that we must make today will secure the freedom to fly for future generations." —AFP



Global airlines are projected to lose money in 2021 and 2022, even as the business recovers from the worst of the pandemic. — AFP

UK military begins deliveries to ease fuel supply crisis

LONDON: The British military started delivering fuel to petrol stations yesterday, after a tanker driver shortage sparked two weeks of panic-buying by motorists and emptied pumps. Troops in camouflaged fatigues were seen at Buncefield Oil Depot in Hemel Hempstead 20 miles (32 kilometers) north of London after the military was put on standby last week. Some 200 military personnel, half of them drivers, are taking part in Operation Escalin to alleviate fuel shortages in London and southeast England worst affected by the run on the pumps.

The Petrol Retailers Association (PRA), which represents 65 percent of Britain's 8,380 total independent forecourts, welcomed the intervention of the military. But it warned that soldiers were still likely to have only a limited effect. One in five filling stations in London and southeast England were out of fuel, while the crisis in the rest of the country was "virtually over", PRA chairman Brian Madderson said.

Britain's finance minister meanwhile said that ending a pandemic furlough scheme that kept millions employed would mean job losses as the government was set to announce new sup-

port for workers. Rishi Sunak, the chancellor of the exchequer, will announce a £500 million (\$680 million, 580 million euro) package of retraining aimed at older workers coming off furlough and at younger Britons, the ruling Conservative party said.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government has spent almost £70 billion on paying the bulk of wages for staff stuck at home, helping to keep the official unemployment rate relatively low. But Sunak ended the furlough scheme on Thursday, and is also scrapping a weekly boost to benefits for the lowest-paid workers. He insists that it is time to transition to longer-term support, against objections by opposition parties and campaigners that the changes will plunge many people deeper into poverty. "I said right at the beginning of this crisis, it wasn't going to be possible for me or quite frankly any chancellor to save every single person's job," Sunak told Sky News.

"We have a lower unemployment rate here in the UK than America, Canada, France, Spain, Italy, amongst others, and there are record numbers of job vacancies," he added. The first



MANCHESTER, UK: Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak speaks on the second day of the annual Conservative Party Conference being held at the Manchester Central convention centre in Manchester, northwest England, yesterday. —AFP

phase of his plan had protected 11 million jobs through the furlough scheme, he said, and Britain was now "experiencing one of the strongest and fastest recoveries of any major economy in the world". "But the job is not done yet and I want to make sure our economy is fit for the future, and that means providing the support and skills people need to get into work and get on in life," he was to say in a speech to the Conservatives' annual conference.

However, protesters at the conference in Manchester, northwest

England, accused the Conservatives of abandoning the poor. "Children are hungry. How can that be in this century? We're here because we have to do something to register our disgust," retired teacher Lorraine Thompson told AFP on Sunday. Official data last week showed Britain's economy rebounded more strongly than expected in the second quarter. But separate indicators point to a growth slowdown, as the country struggles with a supply chain bottleneck and global inflationary pressures that have sent fuel prices rocketing. —AFP

UK oil firm Petrofac fined for corruption

LONDON: British oil company Petrofac pleaded guilty yesterday to seven counts of failing to prevent bribery between October 2011 and May 2017, and was fined £77 million (\$105 million, 90 million euros). Petrofac's former global head of sales, who admitted offering \$81 million in bribes to secure lucrative Middle East contracts, was spared jail after cooperating with investigators.

A judge at Southwark Crown Court in south London handed the former executive, David Lufkin, 53, a two-year jail term, suspended for 18 months. He had earlier pleaded guilty to 14 counts of bribery relating to the corrupt payments for contracts worth about \$8.4 billion over a six-year period.

Judge Deborah Taylor said Lufkin had shown a "considerable degree of moral courage" to work with the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) to provide a "treasure trove" of material about Petrofac. "It is undoubtable that Petrofac would not have pleaded guilty had you not provided the cooperation you did," she said. Judge Taylor fined the company £47.2 million, made a £22.8-million confiscation order and said it should pay £7 million in court costs. "The corruption in this case is systematic, serious and grave," the judge said.

The court was told that Lufkin, who was based in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, was responsible for negotiating and paying bribes to corrupt agents. Contracts secured through bribery included a \$341-million deal with Russian energy firm



Gazprom in Iraq, and another in which false invoices for a non-existent fleet of Toyota Land Cruiser vehicles were produced to pay the bribes.

Judge Taylor said Lufkin was "at the center of the corruption", which in some cases involved "local or national government officials". But she said he was working "on the instructions of others", criticizing anti-corruption measures at Petrofac at the time to be "wholly inadequate". "Serious attempts" had been made since then to change procedures, and none of the employees involved in bribery were still at the company, she noted.

Petrofac, which was previously endorsed by former prime ministers David Cameron and Theresa May, is one of the world's largest service providers to oil and gas producers. Chairman Rene Medori said the ruling "draws a line under a regrettable period of our history".

"We have taken responsibility, reformed and learned from these past mistakes... The past behavior uncovered by the SFO would not be possible today." —AFP

Tourism surges in July, but falls short of pre-COVID levels

MADRID: World tourism surged in July, thanks to vaccination rollouts and fewer travel restrictions, but traveller numbers still fell far short of pre-pandemic levels, the UN's tourism body said yesterday.

Some 54 million tourists crossed international borders in July, the highest figure since April 2020, in the early months of the coronavirus crisis, the World Tourism Organization said in a statement. That represented an increase of 58 percent compared with the level recorded in July 2020, but was still a drop of 67 percent from the 164 million recorded in July 2019.

"This improvement was underpinned by the reopening of many destinations to international travel, mostly in Europe and the Americas... coupled with progress made in the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines" which contributed to "gradually restoring safe mobility in Europe and other parts of the world," it said.

"Nevertheless, 2021 continues to be a challenging year for global tourism, with international arrivals down 80 percent in January-July compared to 2019," said the Madrid-based organization. In the first seven months of the year, Asia and the Pacific continued to see the steepest declines, with a drop of 95 percent in international arrivals, followed by the Middle East where numbers were down 82 percent, Europe and Africa, which registered a fall of 77 percent, and the Americas which sustained a drop 68 percent. —AFP

US to have 'frank conversations' with China on trade

WASHINGTON: The United States will in the coming days have "frank conversations" with China on trade as the Biden administration believes the Asian giant has not honored its commitments under an agreement signed in January 2020. "China made commitments intended to benefit certain American industries, including agriculture, that we must enforce," US Trade Representative Katherine Tai said in a speech to US think tank the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Tai announced the launch of "a targeted tariff exclusion process" for exemptions from customs tariffs imposed on \$370 billion worth of Chinese goods a year by the previous Trump administration.

The punitive tariffs, imposed in retaliation for Chinese trade practices deemed "unfair", are criticized by many companies. In early August, some of the most influential US business groups urged the Biden administration to reduce these surcharges, pointing out that US industries faced "increased costs" as the tariffs are paid by importers.

A senior US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the tariffs "will remain in place" for the duration of the exemption procedure. President Joe Biden had asked Tai to conduct a comprehensive review of US trade strategy towards China and the tariffs initiated by his Republican predecessor Donald Trump. "We continue to have serious concerns with China's state-centered and non-market trade practices" that were not addressed in the "Phase One" agreement reached in 2019 to calm a trade war between the two economic superpowers, Tai will say.

"As we work to enforce the terms of Phase One, we will raise these broader policy concerns with Beijing." The deal signed by Trump and Tai's opposite number, Vice Premier Liu He, committed Beijing to adding an extra \$200 billion in purchases of US exports, including energy, agricultural and manufactured products through 2021. That is far from happening, trade analysts say.

The Biden administration official did not specify the extent of the shortfall, while indicating that Washington is unsatisfied. "There are some commitments that have not been met and we think the results overall of the agreement have been mixed," the official said, while stressing the US objective "is not to escalate trade tension."

Tai's speech will highlight the Biden administration's strategy of teaming up with allied democracies in its competition with China. Trump, who rejected traditional US alliances, sparked market anxiety around the world with his trade war. However, he ended up producing limited concrete results, let alone progress on the deep-seated problems that the United States and its allies say plague their China trade relationship. These include massive state subsidies for national companies, intellectual property theft and other factors creating a heavily uneven playing field. —AFP

Business

Boubyan Bank launches Boubyan Digital Academy

Al-Tuwaijri: The program is aligned with the bank's focus on creativity and digital innovation

KUWAIT: Boubyan Bank announced the launch of Boubyan Digital Academy, the second academy under the umbrella of the Boubyan Business School project. The academy was launched in collaboration with Pega, the international software company, to offer an opportunity for recent university graduates with computer science majors among young Kuwaiti cadres for training and recruitment in order to prepare them for kick-starting their professional careers and to make them ready to work in the field of digital banking.



Under the umbrella of Boubyan Business School

Boubyan Bank's CEO - Private, Consumer & Digital Banking, Abdulla Al-Tuwaijri, stated: "In light of the rapid and accelerating developments in the field of digital banking, Boubyan Bank managed to score many successes and achievements by offering various services and products, which were introduced for the first time in Kuwait."

Speaking of Boubyan Digital Academy, Al-Tuwaijri added: "This is one of the ideas that revolve around creativity and innovation which are considered core pillars of the bank's management. We are targeting a group of excellent national cadres of recent graduates with computer science background or similar majors to offer them proper training and give them the chance to join a work environment aligned with the bank's strategy to be the leader in digital banking."

On his part, Adel Al-Hammad, General Manager of the bank's Human Resources Group, stated: "Previously, the bank announced the launch of Boubyan Business



School, the first training initiative of its kind across Kuwait, which came as a part of establishing the continued learning culture fostered by the bank in order to achieve excellence, promote the concept of continuous development, and to develop national cadres within the bank in addition to having plans in place for learning and development in collaboration with international partners that contribute to the development of our talents and human resources."

"Boubyan Bank keeps pace with the rapid and accelerating developments in the domain of digital services as a part of its focus on digital transformation, and integrating modern technology into all its daily transactions. Moreover, Boubyan Bank is known as one of the first supporters of investment in people across all domains of creativity and digital innovation", he added.

Speaking of Boubyan Digital Academy, Al-Hammad

elaborated: "It is a program tailored especially for Kuwaiti university graduates with majors in Computer Sciences/Computer Engineering or similar majors to kick-start their careers and be prepared for work in the field of digital banking. A comprehensive training program is now in place to develop technical skills of outstanding graduates from these majors and to prepare them for their future roles."

"The trainees' learning journey will be complemented with different technical training modules created by ISACA, IIBA, PMI, Microsoft and other international organizations over a period of 3 months, followed by exams, presentations and projects, which they will need to submit. This will help sharpen their skills to make them ready to join a creative and innovation-driven work environment such as Boubyan's", Al-Hammad added.

Al-Hammad went on to add: "Boubyan Bank is currently one of the top career choices of ambitious Kuwaiti youth due to the work environment at the bank that fosters innovation, creativity and unleashes youth's energy in addition to increasing their experience, thus adding value to them and reflecting positively on customer service."

Boubyan Business School is the first innovative initiative of its kind across Kuwait and the region. It serves as an umbrella for several other specialized academies focusing on each segment of employees. There are five main academies; the first is focused on technology, the second focuses on technical aspects of the banking business, the third focuses on consumer banking services, the fourth focuses on wealth-management, while the last academy focuses on leadership and management.

Evergrande halts share trading in Hong Kong

HONG KONG: Embattled property giant China Evergrande suspended trading in its shares in Hong Kong yesterday pending an announcement on a "major transaction", as the firm struggles in a sea of debt and faces a default. The halt came as reports said Hong Kong real estate firm Hopson Development Holdings planned to buy a 51 percent stake in Evergrande's property services arm as the troubled giant tries to offload assets to meet its obligations.

"At the request of the Company, trading in the shares of the Company was halted at 9:00 a.m. on 4 October 2021 pending the release by the Company of an announcement containing inside information about a major transaction," Evergrande said in a statement to the Hong Kong stock exchange.

Trading in Hopson was also suspended "pending the release of announcement(s) in relation to a major transaction", according to a company statement to the exchange. Bloomberg Intelligence analyst Patrick Wong said the suspension may be related to a major asset disposal or capital restructuring.

Evergrande Property Services Group was also suspended but the firm's electric vehicle company, which last week scrapped a proposed Shanghai listing, continued to trade and rose nearly 30 percent. Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index lost more than two percent. Officials at the firm have been struggling to deal with a crisis that has left it more than \$300 billion in debt, fueling fears of a contagion for the wider Chinese economy that some warn could spread globally.

Last week it said it would sell a \$1.5 billion stake in a regional Chinese bank to raise much-needed capital, as



it struggles to make interest payments to bondholders.

Beijing has stayed silent on the travails of the property empire, but state media has trailed various responses in a nod to the mood towards a private company that grew on a debt binge in the boom years of Chinese real estate. And on Wednesday the People's Bank of China said the country's financial sector must meet the goals of "stabilizing land and housing prices" and "insist on not using real estate as a short-term economic stimulus".

It also stressed that "houses are used for living, not speculation".

Company officials have hired experts including financial services firm Houltham Lokey—which advised on the restructuring of Lehman Brothers when it went under during the global financial crisis—as they try to avoid a collapse. State regulators have also sent a team of financial advisers to assess the company, according to reports.

"There still remains very little visibility from the Chinese Government over Evergrande's fate, although a slow and steady dismantling of the company appears to

Addressing around 50 ministers on Thursday at the start of a pre-COP gathering in Milan, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres laid out the choice facing delegates in Glasgow: "We can either save our world or condemn humanity to a hellish future."

COP26 host Britain says the summit's main aim is to keep in play the 1.5 degree Celsius temperature goal enshrined in the 2015 Paris Agreement. In August, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change dropped a bombshell report warning that the 1.5C threshold—by far the most ambitious target of the Paris deal—would be reached as soon as 2030.

By 2050, Earth will be 1.5C hotter than pre-industrial times, no matter what is done about planet-warming carbon emissions in the meantime, it said. With a little over 1C of warming so far, the two years since the last UN climate summit have seen record-shattering wildfires in Australia and the US, tarmac-melting heatwaves in North America and Siberia, and massive flooding in Southeast Asia, Africa and Northern Europe.

Road to COP26 climate summit faces uncertainty

PARIS: One month out from the COP26 climate summit, world leaders are under unprecedented pressure to decarbonize their economies and chart humanity's path away from catastrophic global warming.

But in the midst of a pandemic still raging in parts of the globe, and with countries already battered by climate-driven calamities pleading for help—and money—the negotiations in Glasgow are likely to be fraught. The summit, already delayed a year by COVID-19, comes as the gap between what science says is needed to avert disaster and what governments are doing is larger than ever.



PARIS: World leaders are under unprecedented pressure to decarbonize their economies and chart humanity's path away from catastrophic global warming.

Burgan Bank concludes 'Millionaire Challenge Campaign'

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank has concluded the 'Millionaire Challenge Campaign' that was organized to reward customers and enhance their banking experience through Burgan Rewards Program. The names of the three lucky winners of the three million reward points were announced following the draw organized by Cards Department in the presence of Abdulaziz Ashkanani as a representative of the Ministry of Commerce.

Launched in July, the Millionaire Challenge gave Burgan's credit card holders the chance to enter a draw to win three million Reward Program points. During the campaign's period, customers earned, with every purchase made using their credit cards inside or outside Kuwait, the loyalty program points that increased their chances to win the challenge. Burgan Rewards Program was designed to take credit cards holders' banking experience to a whole new level through a great variety of exclusive travel, shopping and lifestyle benefits. Credit card holders are automatically enrolled in the Program and they can earn points with every Kuwaiti dinar spent using their card. Burgan Rewards offers multiple redemption options to suit the various customers' needs and lifestyles, including cash back and the redemption of points for flight tickets, hotel reservations, electronic coupons or Qatar Airways miles. Commenting on the Millionaire Challenge Campaign, Saket Jajoo, Head of the Cards Department, said "First, we would like to warmly congratulate the three lucky winners of the campaign, Anwar Abdullah Abdulredha, Arifahar Toukhmainan, and Jaber Osamah Al-Kazemi. The Millionaire Challenge highlights Burgan's ongoing efforts to elevate our customers' experience and enhance the range of our cards benefits through unique rewards that add exceptional value to both complement and enhance to our customers' lifestyles."

Abdullah Hussain Maqseed, Unit Head - Cards Products—also commented saying "Burgan's credit card holders have access to a variety of convenient functionalities including local and global acceptance, top level security, in addition to flexibility and ease of financial transactions for cash withdrawals as well as in-store and online shopping. In line with our customer-centric approach, we continue to develop our banking products and diversify our offerings to deliver the world-class solutions, convenience and safety that meet our customers' needs and give them access to the unique life experiences they deserve."

The Millionaire Challenge affirms the success of Burgan Rewards Program that testifies to the Bank's commitment to deliver its promise of excellence in banking experience through innovative products and services, cutting-edge digital services and payment solutions, as well as diverse and rewarding campaigns, promotions and offers.

Burgan Bank announces winner of Al-Thuraya Account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, announced yesterday Pulaparambil Sudhakaran as the lucky winner of the draw prize of Al-Thuraya Salary Account monthly draw. The draw rewards new and existing customers who transfer their salary to Burgan Bank by offering them a chance to win KD 10,000 every month. Each account holder has one chance to enter the draw.

The Al-Thuraya account holders have the option to hold money in Kuwaiti Dinar and other major currencies and can access account-related services such as standing orders, loans and credit cards, and benefit from the discounts and offers throughout the year. Customers wishing to open the Al-Thuraya account can do so by simply visiting the nearest Burgan Bank branch and obtain all the necessary details, or simply call the bank's call center on 1804080.

'Trust deficit'

The Paris deal requires nations to renew their plans to cut domestic emissions-known as national determined contributions, or NDCs—every five years. Far from limiting warming to 1.5C, the UN says countries' latest submissions over the last year put Earth on course to heat a "catastrophic" 2.7C this century. Britain's Boris Johnson summed up his hopes for Glasgow as: "coal, cars, cash and trees"—meaning deals for global phaseouts of coal power and internal combustion engines, funding for climate-vulnerable nations, and mass tree planting.

But the actual to-do list for delegates at COP26 is not quite so concise.

For starters, six years after the Paris agreement was struck, countries still have not finalized the deal's "rulebook" that specifies how its goals are reached and progress measured. Long-festering disputes include those over how carbon markets are governed, and a common timeframe for an interim "stock take" to see how each country's action stacks up.

Poorer nations, meanwhile, are demanding that richer ones finally make good during COP26 on a decade-old promise to provide \$100 billion each year to help them decarbonize their grids and adapt to climate change. Tasneem Essop, head of the Climate Action Network representing some 1,500 environmental groups, said that Glasgow was taking place after a harrowing few years for vulnerable populations. "This COP is happening, unlike other COPs, at a time where all this burdens and suffering is sharply felt by the developing countries and in this context we have experienced rich nations who were unwilling to stand in solidarity with poor nations to supply the vaccine," she told AFP.

Essop said there was a huge "trust deficit" between nations already battling climate change and the historic emitters that helped to cause it. The specter of vaccine inequity is likely to loom large in Glasgow, with many representatives of poorer nations unable to afford a trip that would include expensive hotel quarantines. Sonam Wangi, chair of the Least Developed Countries negotiating bloc, said as much this week, tweeting that he was "still concerned about the possibility of getting our delegates to #COP26".—AFP

Business

NBK announces winner of KD 250,000 cash prize in Al-Jawhara quarterly draw

Draw held at The Avenues Mall with remarkable attendance and interaction



KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues to hold special events for Al-Jawhara Account quarterly draw, as part of its endeavors to ensure providing its customers with an exclusive array of draws and prizes that meet their needs and expectations.

In the third quarterly draw this year, NBK held an event that included a number of interactive activities with customers and attendees and was concluded by conducting the draw at the Avenues, during which the bank announced Abdulrahman Hamad Ghanim Al-Ali as the winner of KD 250,000, in the presence of Abdulaziz Ashkanani as a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from NBK and Deloitte.

The event started by launching a competition on the bank's Twitter account to answer the question: "Mention the person you would take to dinner if you win Al-Jawhara Account draw worth KD 250,000", and giving cash prizes of KD 250 for the winners in a random draw of the answers.

The winner of the draw, which was held at the Avenues Mall, was a special event that witnessed remarkable interaction from the audience, as the



Mohamed Al-Othman

Al-Othman: Al-Jawhara Account is a key pillar in rewarding our customers in line with our strategy to offer them a richer banking experience

The quarterly prize winner: I have been a member of "Zeina Friends Club", and an NBK customer since 1995

visitors of the Avenues were surprised when the journalist Bibi Al-Khodari communicated with them through a screen not bearing NBK logo asking them some questions to enter a competition and win various prizes.

On the other hand, NBK announced the following winners of September's weekly prizes of KD 5,000 each: Ahmad Ghassan Mulla Ali, Rehab Sayed Abo-Ghariba and Minor Khaled Hassan Al-Kandary.

On this occasion, Mohamed Al-Othman, GM - Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait said: "Al-Jawhara Account is a key pillar in our customer rewards program, which comes in line with our strategy to offer them a richer banking experience including top-notch banking services, advanced digital solutions and exceptional rewards."

"We are committed that all our services and rewards meet our customers' needs and expectations. To this end, we are always keen to communi-

cate with them to accurately identify these needs and expectations," he added. Al-Othman noted that the special events held by NBK reflect its keenness to maintain its leading position as the bank closer to its customers, expressing his pleasure with the return of special events and direct communication with customers.

"Our events for Al-Jawhara Account quarterly draw are in line with our strategy to achieve financial inclusion and promote the saving culture," Al-Othman concluded.

From his side, the winner expressed his pleasure with receiving the prize, extending thanks to NBK, and wishing it continued success and progress. He also noted that he has been an NBK Customer since 1995, when he was a member of "Zeina Friends Club". Al-Jawhara Account gives customers the opportunity to enter draws and win prizes of KD 5,000 weekly, KD 125,000 monthly as well as the grand prize of KD 250,000 quarterly. Every KD 50 deposited into Al-Jawhara



Account gives the customer a chance to be one of the next lucky winners. Al-Jawhara Account can be opened very easily through NBK Mobile Banking or NBK Online Banking or by visiting the nearest NBK branch.

The minimum opening balance for Al-Jawhara Account is KD 400, and the maximum limit to be held by customer is KD 500,000. If no withdrawals or transfers are made on the account during the holding period, the customers will receive an additional chance to enter the draw for every KD 50 held in the account, doubling their chance to win. It is worth mentioning that since 2012, National Bank of Kuwait has rewarded loyal customers with a total worth of prizes amounting KD 2,200,000 in Al Jawhara weekly, monthly and quarterly draws.

Johnson: UK energy production to go 100% green by 2035

LONDON: Britain will aim to shift all of its energy production to renewable sources by the middle of the next decade, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said yesterday. "Looking at what we can do with other renewable sources, carbon capture and storage, with hydrogen, potentially we think we can get to complete clean energy production by 2035," the UK leader told broadcasters.

The aspiration comes as he prepares to host world leaders next month at a crucial UN climate summit when they will be under unprecedented pressure to decarbonize economies and chart humanity's path away from catastrophic global warming. Britain has already committed to phasing out the sale of all polluting road vehicles by 2040 as part of plans to decarbonize its transport systems, while the country has become a leading offshore wind energy producer in recent years.

Johnson's comments also coincide with rising wholesale gas prices globally, which in Britain have contributed to rocketing bills for consumers and fears of a cost-of-living crisis this winter.

The British leader, who is currently facing a slew of issues related to the challenges of the pandemic and Brexit, highlighted the potential for a shift to green technology to lessen dependence on natural gas. "It will mean that for the first time the UK is not dependent on hydrocarbons coming from overseas, with all the vagaries in hydrocarbon prices and the risks that poses for people's pockets," Johnson said. —AFP

ABK partners with Porsche Centre Kuwait on 2021 Cayenne models

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK), in partnership with Porsche Centre Kuwait, Behbehani Motors Company, is presenting its customers with exclusive financial benefits on a limited quantity of 2021 Porsche Cayenne vehicles. Johair Marafi, ABK's Acting General Manager - Retail Banking said: "We are excited to be in this partnership with Porsche Center Kuwait. At ABK, we continuously strive to provide exciting offers to enhance our clients overall banking experience, and moreover, we can also provide clients with the best finance solutions, should they decide to purchase their dream car." This offer will be available until quantity lasts and is applicable for current and new clients with both salary and non-salary transfers at ABK.



Johair Marafi

KFH Capital arranges issuance of sustainability sukuk for KFH-Turkey

KUWAIT: Chief Executive Officer at KFH Capital, the investment arm of Kuwait Finance House Group, Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq, said that the company has succeeded in arranging a Tier2 sustainability sukuk issuance transaction of for KFH-Turkey amounting \$350 million. The sustainability sukuk issuance is considered the first of its kind to be issued by an Islamic financial institution and the first Tier 2 sustainability sukuk issuance transaction globally. Proceeds will be used to finance sustainability projects of green / social projects according to sustainable finance framework.



Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq

Al-Marzouq emphasized, in a press release, that KFH Capital has played the role of the global coordinator, a bookrunner, and one of the lead managers of the issuance transaction which has witnessed great demand by more than 180 regional and international investors. The issuance was oversubscribed by 12 times with an order book of \$4 billion. Sukuk were issued at a profit rate of 6.125 percent per annum and listed on the Irish Stock Exchange.

He noted that the issuance term is 10 years and three months from the date of issuance with an option to retrieve the sukuk after the lapse of 5 years from the date of issuance. The issuance achieved a landmark coverage in a record time, thus attracting regional and global investors and highlighting the significance of the sharia compliant product which provides finance to support growth and expansion projects of companies, governments, and mega development projects. He indicated that KFH Capital was keen on achieving a parallel, diversified, and comprehensive issuance of the sukuk to enhance trust and cooperation among investors and ensure the maximum and largest demand on the sukuk product.

The transaction is considered as a new addition

to the record of KFH Turkey in the sukuk market and a continuation of its former successful issuances which have contributed largely to the bank growth and reflected its ability to attract funds from global markets. Also, it has signified trust in the bank's strong position and its expansion plans.

KFH Turkey takes the credit for issuing the first international sukuk for a Turkish institution in 2010 and opening the door for Turkish banks and institutions to issue sukuk. This issuance was followed by several US\$ issuances e.g., issuance of Tier 1 & Tier 2 capital in addition to the issuance in RM in 2015 represented in the establishment of a RM 2 Million Sukuk program. These issuances have contributed to the strengthening of KFH Turkey position in the global sukuk market and attracting the attention of major investors worldwide.

Also, the issuance has enhanced the major leading role which KFH Capital plays in capital and sukuk markets and reiterated the trust which issuers have placed in the company and its expertise, efficiencies, and capabilities. KFH Capital has achieved positive results for its corporate and government customers worldwide and enhanced KFH Group leading role in the management and arrangement of sukuk issuances.

NBK Economic Report

Oil prices surge on demand outlook, supply tightness

KUWAIT: Oil prices are currently on a tear, with international benchmark Brent topping \$80/bbl on last Tuesday in intraday trading for the first time in almost three years, before settling lower at \$79.1/bbl (+8.4 percent mtd; +52.7 percent ytd.) US marker West Texas Intermediate (WTI) is up almost 13 percent mtd at \$75.3/bbl.

A month is a long time in the oil markets. Sentiment has turned bullish in recent weeks, with August's narrative of Delta-variant-linked oil demand weakness amid potential oversupply giving way to increasing optimism about a global economic and oil demand recovery. Demand growth is now seen outpacing oil supply growth, partly due to OPEC+ market management and partly due to supply outages, the largest of which was caused by Hurricane Ida in late August. This knocked out more than 13 percent (1.5 mb/d) of US crude output initially.

The drawdown in global oil stockpiles has provided the most visible evidence of the recovery in oil consumption. OECD total commercial oil stocks have trended down below their pre-pandemic five-year averages, a key OPEC and International Energy Agency (IEA) metric. OPEC estimates end-July industry stocks at 2.9 billion barrels (57 mb below the 5-year average and providing 63.7 days of oil demand forward cover), while the IEA puts them at 2.85 billion barrels (120 mb below the 5-year average). In the US, meanwhile, commercial and Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) crude levels have declined to three and 18-year lows, respec-

tively. The extra SPR barrels, released by the US Department of Energy on several occasions this year to finance federal spending, are helping to offset crude shortages. In a first, China also tapped its strategic reserves to supply local refineries and temper rising prices. Imports of crude also increased, to a 5-month high (10.5 mb) in August—a bullish sign.

Global balances have tightened considerably. September's IEA report predicts for 3Q21 a third consecutive quarterly stock draw (-0.8 mb/d), on the back of rising oil demand and underperforming OPEC and non-OPEC supply. While OPEC+ commenced tapering its supply cuts in August (at a rate of 400 kb/d per month), several producers, such as Angola and Nigeria, have been unable to bring on the required volumes due to outages.

Coupled with Ida-related supply losses in the US, the market is short of barrels. While demand and supply could equilibrate in Q4, the evolving natural gas crunch that has seen gas prices treble may boost winter oil demand (by encouraging gas to oil liquids switching). The IEA (and others) will in its next release likely raise its Q4 and 2021 oil demand growth estimates above 4 mb/d and 3.26 mb/d.

The picture for next year looks markedly different. In contrast to this year's story of lagging supply and stock draws, 2022 could be one of oversupply and stock builds. The IEA's current oil demand and non-OPEC supply projections imply a stock gain of 3.4 mb/d, assuming robust US output gains materialize and OPEC+ sticks to its roadmap of supply increases to the full. In this scenario, OPEC+ would be producing above the "call" on its crude, and more so if Iran's oil is unshackled by sanctions under a new JCPOA agreement. The implications for oil prices are therefore negative. For a supply glut to be averted, either oil demand will need to be stronger than the IEA and others anticipate or

Chart 1: Benchmark crude oil futures prices (\$/bbl)

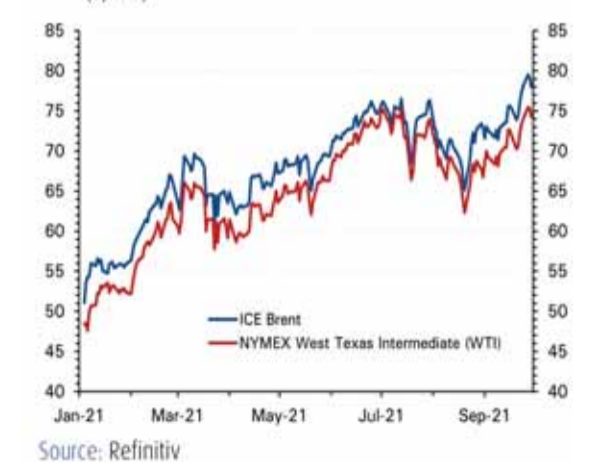
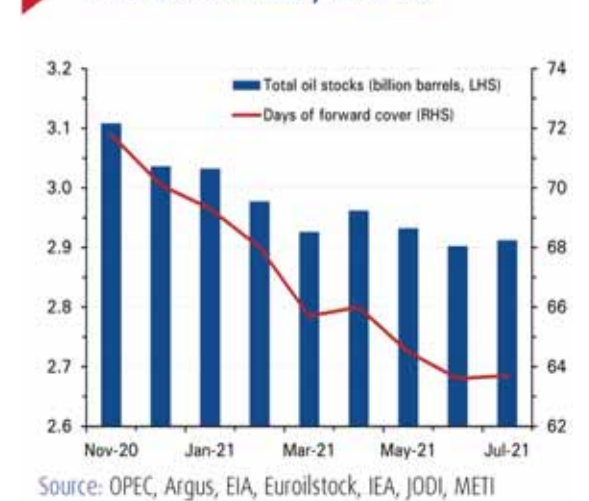


Chart 2: OECD industry oil stocks





Indonesia to partially reopen resort island

Indonesia will reopen the resort island of Bali to select international travelers next week, a senior minister said, after the pandemic starved the holiday hotspot of one of its primary sources of income. The island's Ngurah Rai International Airport will be open to international travelers from South Korea, China, Japan, the United Arab Emirates, Dubai, and New Zealand as of October 14, maritime and investment minister Luhut Panjaitan told a press conference.

The partial reopening, however, does not include Australia—a key source of tourists before the pandemic. "Ngurah Rai Airport in Bali will open internationally on 14th October 2021, as long as it meets the provisions and requirements regarding quarantine, COVID-19 tests, and the readiness of the Task Force," Panjaitan said.

He did not elaborate if tourists will be eligible to visit the island or if only those with a residence permit could come. All international travelers will be required to have proof of hotel booked for a quarantine of at least eight days at their own

expense, but it remains unclear what other restrictions may apply beyond that. Indonesia was devastated by the highly contagious Delta variant of the virus and in mid July it recorded over 56,000 new COVID cases in just one day. The government announced emergency restrictions in the hardest hit area, shutting down non-essential businesses and limiting people's movement.

Bali's tourism-dependent economy was also hit hard by the pandemic as millions of visitors disappeared from the palm-fringed island. But case numbers are now falling as the government ramps up vaccinations, with the country reporting 922 new COVID-19 cases and 88 deaths yesterday. Authorities have begun a steady easing of restrictions as the country sees a decrease in daily confirmed COVID cases and deaths, including in Bali. Malls, movie theatres and offices in most cities have begun to reopen at reduced capacity and some schools have begun partial offline learning.— AFP



A fisherman hangs a shark on the side of his boat at Serangan island near Denpasar on the Indonesian resort island of Bali.— AFP photos

Art sales rebound to a record \$2.7 billion

Contemporary art auctions rebounded to an all-time high of \$2.7 billion over the last year, boosted by online sales and the arrival of digital art in the form of "NFTs", according to the annual report by Artprice released yesterday. Having seen sales collapse by a third in the previous year because of the initial crisis caused by the pandemic, sales soared between June 2020 and June 2021 as auctioneers quickly adopted a more online approach.

"Photography and prints have been particularly successful in this new online environment and in 2021, we have seen the sensational arrival of completely dematerialized artworks, the famous NFTs," said Artprice CEO Thierry Ehrmann in a foreword to the report. NFTs, or "non-fungible tokens", allow people to buy the rights to online art, including images, animation or even tweets. In March, US artist Beeple sold an NFT of his digital artwork "Everydays: The First 5,000 Days" for \$69.3 million to an Indian blockchain entrepreneur—the third-highest price ever achieved by a living artist.

Christie's said 22 million people, nearly 60 percent under the age of 40, logged in to the sale, the first public auction of an NFT. NFTs accounted for a third of online sales, and 2 percent of the overall art market. Street artist Banksy got in on the game shortly after, selling an NFT of his work "Morons", which featured an auctioneer selling a painting with the inscription: "I can't believe you morons actually buy this shit". It sold for around \$380,000.

But Artprice said another key driver of growth was the emergence of the Asian market, with Hong Kong establishing itself as the contemporary art world's second city after New York. China actually beat the United States for auction turnover, taking 40 percent of sales to America's 32 percent. Britain was in third place with 16 percent. "In effect, Hong Kong is now playing an accelerator role for the most prominent young Western artists and it is establishing itself as New York's primary competitor," said Ehrmann. The highest-selling contemporary artist remains Jean-Michel Basquiat, who died in 1988 but generated \$93.1 million in sales over the past year.—AFP



A view shows creations during the exhibition 'CineMode par Jean-Paul' by French fashion designer Jean-Paul Gaultier at the French Cinematheque in Paris.— AFP photos

'I've always been a feminist': Gaultier becomes curator

Having achieved pretty much everything there was to achieve in the fashion world, Jean Paul Gaultier is opening himself up to new horizons since retiring from the business last year. The former "enfant terrible" of French fashion has curated an exhibition in Paris on the power of women, taking in screen icons from Marilyn Monroe to this year's shocking Palme d'Or winner "Titane".

"I've always been a feminist," the 69-year-old told AFP on a tour of the exhibition. "I wanted to show the evolution of women and men in cinema and fashion. Men becoming more feminine and women taking on more and more power and freedom."



Canadian model Coco Rocha poses during a photocall at the opening of the exhibition 'CineMode par Jean-Paul' by French fashion designer Jean-Paul Gaultier at the French Cinematheque in Paris.

"Cinemode", which opens at the Cinematheque Francaise this Wednesday, brings together hand-picked film clips, photos and costumes. Gaultier has himself straddled the worlds of film and fashion, having designed costumes for Spanish auteur Pedro Almodovar, and most famously for the 1990s sci-fi hit "The Fifth Element".

He has a particular taste for icons of the 1950s and 1960s, Marilyn Monroe and Brigitte Bardot. "In the same era, Brigitte Bardot was extremely modern and free, while Marilyn was the female-object par excellence," he said. He stops to observe Bardot dancing wildly in a scene from "And God Created Woman". "This was demented for the 1950s!" he exclaims gleefully. He also loves Bardot's pink chequered wedding dress that is on display: "She had an incredible fashion sense."

'A new stage'

Gaultier surprised everyone in January 2020 when he announced his retirement after half a century at the top of the fashion world. He now invites a young designer to create an haute couture collection for his house each season, but wants new challenges for himself. "It's a new stage. I don't want to do simply fashion anymore," he said.

"This feels like I'm creating a new collection. It's a new adventure, mixing fashion with cinema. The theme is the mix of styles—the poor with the rich, the working class with the aristocracy, the extremes meeting each other and creating new babies." Still with a finger on the pulse of popular culture, the collection runs right up to the present moment, with images from "Titane", the Palme-winning body horror movie about a woman exacting violent revenge on men.—AFP

Silent disco helps South Africans beat virus blues

Watching the sun go down on a warm spring day while listening to soundtracks playing on headphones, dozens of people on Sunday danced in a mountain top park in South Africa's economic capital of Johannesburg. It's a budding urban craze spawned by the coronavirus pandemic lockdown which shuttered night clubs in the continent. President Cyril Ramaphosa last week eased national COVID-19 restrictions to the lowest level ever, allowing larger gatherings.

"People are (still) very hesitant about going into clubs and indoor spaces, even though it's allowed now," said organiser Franck Leya, 27. "Being an open place like this, it's not a club... everybody is out, and there is a certain level of social distance automatically without obviously having to tell people," he said. One Sunday a month, revellers dance away the day in the open air while enjoying a 360-degree panoramic view of the city from Northcliff Ridge Ecopark, one of highest points in Johannesburg.

Dancing with three friends, Jacqueline Jennings breathed a sigh of relief that finally she could enjoy a fun day out after nearly 18 months of lockdown. "It feels like we haven't partied before, it feels so good to be out," said the 42-year-old



A DJ plays music as people listen with headphones during a silent disco event at sunset in a park of Johannesburg.

guest lodge owner. "It feels like being on top of God's garden." "The silent disco is divine, it's the most beautiful house music," she said, adding, it's "a big jol" using South African slang for clubbing or partying.

Gordon Sekome, 25, who works for an audit firm was strolling in the quiet park with his partner when they saw people dancing, but no music speakers around. "I was wondering 'why do they all have the same brand of earphones and there is no music around?'," Sekome said.

"This is an experience anyone can enjoy. This is super cool!" he said after sampling the music. Vaccinated revelers enjoy a discounted rate, said Leya. With more than 2.9 million infections and 87,780 deaths, South Africa accounts for around 35 percent of the continental cases. The government is working to vaccinate as many as possible to achieve population immunity.—AFP



People dance and listen to music with headphones during a silent disco event at sunset in a park of Johannesburg.— AFP photos



Vendors sell flags during the celebration of 'Irreechaa', the Oromo people thanksgiving holiday, on the shore of a lake near the city of Bishoftu, Ethiopia, on October 3, 2021.



People show their fists during the celebration of 'Irreechaa' - the Oromo people thanksgiving holiday, on the shore of a lake near the city of Bishoftu, Ethiopia. — AFP photos

'BACK TO SQUARE ZERO': ETHIOPIA'S OROMOS REBUKE ABIY AT FESTIVAL

At the first sound of gunfire, Lelise Abdissa leapt into a ditch for cover, only to be crushed by other panicked revelers as Ethiopian troops clashed with protesters during a religious festival five years ago. She awoke hours later in a hospital with a broken arm, but she was lucky: Scores of people died in the October 2016 stampede that marred the celebration of Irreecha, a thanksgiving festival for Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, the Oromos.

The carnage, triggered by soldiers using tear gas and live rounds to control anti-government protesters, was a major flashpoint in the years-long movement that swept Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Ethiopia's first Oromo ruler, to power. But with Abiy now set to be sworn in for a new five-year term, the enthusiasm surrounding his appointment has long faded for some Oromos.

This weekend they made their frustrations known during two days of Irreecha festivities: on Saturday in Addis Ababa and on Sunday in the town of Bishoftu, traditionally home to the largest Irreecha gatherings. Chanting "Down, down Abiy",

they complained about the same issues that drove them into the streets in 2016: killings of Oromo civilians, mass arrests of Oromo youths and the incarceration of Oromo opposition politicians.

"Unfortunately we are back to square zero," Eyasped Tesfaye, a prominent Oromo activist and government critic, told AFP. Lelise voiced a similar view, donning a cotton dress in traditional Oromo colours of red, white and black. "I don't think there has been any change," she said.

Calls for justice

Irreecha marks the end of the rains and the start of the harvest season. For more than a century, hundreds of thousands of Oromos have descended on Bishoftu, southeast of Addis Ababa, for the holiday. In 2019, one year after he took office, Abiy allowed a separate Irreecha celebration to take place for the first time in Addis Ababa - a move that risked exacerbating ethnic tensions since prominent Oromo nationalists claim the capital rightfully belongs to their people.

Yet holding two events has now

become the norm. This year in Addis Ababa, Oromo traditional leaders led crowds towards pools of water in the city centre, where they dipped flowers and sprayed themselves in a gesture symbolizing gratitude and renewal. But some young men opted for an overtly political message, crossing their arms above their heads to signal defiance and calling for the fall of Abiy's ruling Prosperity Party.

Others demanded justice for Hachalu Hundessa, an Oromo pop singer gunned down in 2020, whose death sparked protests and clashes that left 160 dead. The killing remains unsolved. Still more urged the release of Oromo opposition leaders Jawar Mohammed and Bekele Gerba, who were detained during the mayhem that followed Hachalu's death.

Defying 'suppression'

On Sunday, authorities took several measures to contain the crowds in Bishoftu, blocking most traffic from Addis Ababa and temporarily cutting electricity, phone and internet services. But despite a heavy military presence, they were only somewhat successful. Amid the throngs

gathered on the shore of Lake Hora Arsadi, young men wearing T-shirts emblazoned with Hachalu's face led chants blasting Abiy and praising the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), a rebel group bent on toppling the government.

Some even waved the OLA's flag. Festival-goer Lemi Solomon told AFP the protests would have been bigger if many young people had not already run off to join "the armed struggle" with the OLA. "The people you see here are celebrating even though there is suppression," he said.

'Strongman' rule?

The tensions surrounding Irreecha come at a sensitive time for Abiy, who is set to be sworn in yesterday for a new five-year term. The Prosperity Party scored a landslide win in June elections, an outcome federal officials have framed as an endorsement of Abiy's political and economic reform agenda. But in Oromia, opposition parties including the OLF boycotted the polls, complaining their candidates had been arrested and their offices vandalised.

More than 20 percent of constituencies nationwide - many of them in Oromia - were contested only by the Prosperity Party. "Even though I have a full right to participate in the election and vote, I don't believe that right was respected because the election did not happen by democratic means," student Gutu Sori, who attended Irreecha in Bishoftu, told AFP.

"I do not have hope from this government because it is led by a strongman." Abiy, for his part, tried to use this year's Irreecha to mobilize public sentiment against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), once the main target of Oromos' ire, and now locked in a brutal war against government forces in Ethiopia's north. "This clique shouldn't be allowed to live with us," Abiy said. "If this traitorous force which wants to extinguish us and leave us with nothing... isn't removed, then this won't be a bright year for Ethiopia." — AFP



French President Emmanuel Macron holds a baguette as he poses for a group picture during his visit to the International Catering, Hotel and Food Trade Fair (SIRHA - salon international de la restauration, de l'hôtellerie et de l'alimentation) at the Eurexpo hall in Lyon. — AFP

Paris baguette winner bakes up controversy

The Tunisia-born baker who won the coveted annual award for the best baguette in Paris last week is at the centre of a fermenting controversy after claims he shared extremist posts on social media. Makram Akrouf, whose achievement in beating off 173 rivals for the award was hailed as an immigrant success story in France, did not take part in a ceremony at the weekend to receive his prize.

By tradition, the winner of the prestigious award is given a contract to supply the presidential Elysee Palace with baguettes for a year. Screen grabs published by an anonymous Twitter user claimed to show that Akrouf had shared, on a now deleted Facebook account, posts expressing Islamist ideas. Akrouf "understood that it was not necessarily ideal to come" and receive the prize, the first deputy mayor of Paris, Emmanuel Gregoire, told AFP during the ceremony Saturday on the esplanade of Notre-Dame Cathedral.

Mayor Anne Hidalgo, a Socialist who is running for president, had been scheduled to present the award but had a "personal constraint" and could not attend, Gregoire said. Akrouf was instead represented by his flour supplier, who evoked a "staffing problem" to explain the baker's absence. The controversy has erupted as immigration is expected to be a major

theme in France's 2022 presidential elections, where far-right leader Marine Le Pen is still seen as the top challenger to President Emmanuel Macron.

'Very good professional'

Akrouf, a 42-year-old who has worked for 19 years as a baker in France since arriving from Tunisia, has seen new customers flock to his Boulangers de Reuilly bakery since winning the award. Bakers of Tunisian origin are widely present in the sector in Paris and have in the past also won the best Paris baguette award.

But the allegations prompted Akrouf to be targeted by abuse on social media, and it is unclear if the Elysee will continue with the baguette supply contract. It has yet to comment. "This poses an issue for the delivery to the Elysee if it turns out that unfortunate things were said in the past," Gregoire said. City Hall has asked police to investigate the social media posts further. Akrouf's lawyer did not confirm or deny he had shared the posts. "Like many Internet users, he in the past posted content on social media without grasping its significance," the lawyer, Sylvia Lasfargeas, said.

She said her client has since been hit by a "surge of hate messages" on social media. Akrouf, who acquired French nationality in 2019, emphasizes "his attachment to France and adherence to the fundamental principles of freedom, equality and fraternity", Lasfargeas added. The shared posts on the screen grabs posted by the anonymous Twitter user are dated 2019 and 2020. The president of the bakers' union of Paris, Franck Thomasse, described his past social media activity as an "error" that this "very good professional regrets". — AFP

Jordan hospital perform rare operation to separate conjoined twins

A Jordanian hospital has successfully performed the country's first operation to separate conjoined twins, seven-month-old babies from Yemen, the chief surgeon announced Sunday. It was "a rare and delicate" procedure which is "a medical success for the whole kingdom", said the doctor, Fawzi al-Hammouri. The nearly eight-hour operation which required 25 surgeons and technical advisers was performed in July.

But Amman's Specialized Hospital delayed any announcement because "after the operation they (the babies) needed intensive care, artificial respiration and intravenous feeding for a long time", he said. "We wanted to wait until we were sure 100 percent that things

went smoothly." Now the twins, Ahmed and Mohammed, are in "excellent health", Hammouri told AFP. "The chances of their survival are very great. They have become like any normal child. The danger has disappeared," he said. A United Nations medical flight had brought the babies and their parents to Jordan in February.

Born in mid-December in Yemen's rebel-held capital Sanaa, they were in critical condition. "When they arrived, they both weighed three kilograms and 700 grams (eight pounds). We waited until they weighed nine kilograms together" before separating them, Hammouri said. The babies are still in Jordan with their parents but expected to return home in two or three weeks, he added. Seven

years of war between the Houthi rebels and pro-government forces have devastated health services in Yemen.

About 80 percent of the country's 30 million people, long the Arabian Peninsula's poorest country, are dependent on aid. In February 2019, conjoined twins died in Sanaa two weeks after their birth. Conjoined twins develop when an early embryo only partially separates, to form two individuals who will remain physically connected, the Mayo Clinic says on its website. Many conjoined twins are stillborn or die shortly after birth, but advances in surgery and technology have improved survival rates. — AFP



Members of a Jordanian medical team announce having performed a rare eight-hour operation to separate two Yemeni conjoined twins during a press conference in the Jordanian capital Amman, on October 3, 2021. — AFP photos



Members of a Jordanian medical team announce having performed a rare eight-hour operation to separate two Yemeni conjoined twins.

Secret masterpiece by Lalanne sold in Paris

A monumental sculpture by the late French artist Claude Lalanne that sat on the grounds of a school for decades unknown to art lovers has fetched 1.24 million euros (\$1.44 million) at auction, blowing past estimates. The sale of "The Rape of Europa" on Sunday was the latest to underscore growing demand for the whimsical yet

meticulous works by the French artist who died in 2019, after decades of creations with her artistic partner and husband Francois-Xavier.

A two-metre tall work cast in bronze, it depicts the Greek mythology legend of Zeus transformed into a bull to carry off the princess Europa to the island of Crete. Lalanne designed it for the garden at the European Centre for Executive Development (CEDEP), a management school in Fontainebleau south of Paris, not far from her studio in the village of Ury.

"It is a rare and major work by Claude Lalanne, of which another cast, owned by the family, is currently shown in the Trianon Parc of the Chateau de Versailles," the couple's longtime gallerist, Jean-Gabriel Mitterrand, wrote in the sale catalogue. The Osenat auction

house called it a "secret masterpiece" from the artist and had forecast a final bid of 600,000 to 800,000 euros. It is now headed to Miami after being bought by an American collector, a spokeswoman said.

The sale comes just weeks after a new auction record was set for Lalanne, when a delicate bronze and copper chandelier titled "Structure Vegetale" was sold by Christie's in Paris for 3.7 million euros. And dozens of her and her husband's works are slated to be sold by Sotheby's in a series of auctions starting this month. But a pair of cast concrete sculptures by Francois-Xavier, "Science" and "Law," estimated at 500,000 to 700,000 euros, were not sold at the Sunday auction, though Osenat said it had been approached by potential institutional buyers after the sale. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



A woman carries a bucket along the beach as a new sea wall is constructed in Saint Louis. — AFP Photos



People gather along the partially destroyed seaside fishing neighborhood of Guet N'Dar in Saint Louis.

In the northern Senegalese city of Saint-Louis, excavators are ripping up the beach to lay giant blocks of basalt, in an eleventh-hour effort to keep the sea at bay. When work is finished, a black sea wall will stretch for kilometers along the coastline of the West African country's former capital, famed for its colonial-era architecture. Dire warnings about the risk of rising sea levels due to climate change are already a grim reality in Saint-Louis, where seafront residents are abandoning their homes to the encroaching Atlantic Ocean.

But the sea wall is a stopgap. And some are sceptical that the historic city of 237,000 people can be saved at all. Saint-Louis has "already been wiped off the map," said Boubou Aldiouma Sy, a geography professor at the city's Gaston Berger University. Its unique position—near the mouth of the Senegal River, with both the swollen waterway and the ocean on its shorelines — means that its long term existence has always been in doubt, he said. "The role of man is to accelerate the process," Sy added.

Founded by the French on an island in the mid-17th century, Saint-Louis became a hub for European traders, playing an important economic and cultural role in the region. It served as the capital of the French colony of Senegal until the capital moved to Dakar shortly before Senegal's independence in 1960. From the original island, the city spread on both sides, onto a long, thin sandy strip of land known as the Langue de Barbarie to the west and eastwards onto the mainland.

Its colorful, historic balconied houses and double-storied villas have helped make the island a UNESCO world heritage site and the city hosts a renowned annual jazz festival. But Saint-Louis stands only a few meters above sea level. Long a problem, floods have become more severe in neighborhoods such as Guet Ndar, a packed fishing district where brightly painted wooden canoes line the shore.

Coastal erosion is also eating away at the shoreline. Many locals have had little choice but to move to a displacement camp inland as their homes have been swallowed up by the raging sea, the erosion and the crumbling ground beneath them. The sea barrier is Senegal's attempt to manage the compounding problems. But experts point out that while it can protect against freak surges, it cannot stop the rising sea.

Night terrors

Mareme Gueye, a Guet Ndar resident, told AFP that all the suffering she'd experienced since childhood "has been caused by the sea". Six of the seven rooms in her house are gone, washed away by the ocean. In her one remaining room, she removed the door to ensure that no one gets trapped inside during floods. Destructive flooding has increased since 2010, according to the 43-year-old, who said that she can no longer sleep at night for fear of the interperate waters. In one harrowing instance, floodwaters swept her parents from her house and dragged them out to sea. They miraculously survived. Free-for-all



Senegal's old capital on the frontline against rising sea

Fishing boats line the water way between Saint Louis Island and the popular fishing neighborhood of Guet N'Dar in Saint Louis.

construction in Saint-Louis—known as Ndar in the local Wolof language—has worsened coastal erosion.

The city is a particularly acute example of problems common across several coastal metropolises in West Africa, Sy said, pointing to Ivory Coast's main city and economic hub Abidjan, or Guinea's capital Conakry. Erosion is causing the coastline to recede by some 1.8 meters a year across the region, according to a 2019 World Meteorological Organization report. Likewise, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said this year that sea levels on the West African coast are rising by between 3.5 and four millimeters annually.

With its unique layout surrounded by water, Saint-Louis is on the front line. Nearly two decades ago, an ill-fated attempt at flood control after heavy rainfall saw authorities widen a water channel on the Langue de Barbarie between the river and sea.

But from its initial four metres, the canal unexpectedly grew to several kilometers wide as the salt water of the Atlantic gushed into the river, causing further disruption to the natural order of things and transforming the landscape.

Displacement camps

The encroaching sea has already caused severe damage. Flooding in 2017 and 2018 left more than 3,200 people

homeless—about 1,500 of them now live in a displacement camp in Djougop, further inland. The disaster prompted Senegal to begin building the sea wall in 2019, partly financed by France. The project is worth some 100 million euros (\$117 million) and also includes a rehousing program.



A man walks across the water way between Saint Louis Island and the popular fishing neighborhood of Guet N'Dar in Saint Louis.

Building is due to finish by the end of this year, when the colossal barrier will run 3.6 kilometers along the coast. However, the project also requires home demolitions in a 20-metre-wide strip behind the barrier. Between 10,000-15,000 people in total are set to be

uprooted, said Mandaw Gueye, an official working on the project. Some will end up in Djougop and nearby neighborhoods where the World Bank is co-funding the construction of 600 homes, he said. Other project officials stressed that the displaced would be compensated.

those already displaced have circulated. Fishermen in Djougop, whose livelihoods already are physically demanding, must rise even earlier in the morning to reach the distant sea. Those fishermen who stayed on Guet Ndar often leave without them. "They are very tired," says 65-year-old local resident Thiame Fall.

'Human ingenuity'

The sea barrier is a short-term emergency measure and not even designed to be impermeable. The government says it is studying more durable solutions. Sy, the geographer, suggested structures called groins, built perpendicular to the shoreline, which force sediment to settle in such a way as to reverse coastal erosion. Ensuring coastal areas are lush with plant life can also slow the trend.

Alioune Badara Diop, one of Saint-Louis' deputy mayors, said these options remain viable. But the government did not pursue them initially because of their "relatively high cost," he said. He isn't convinced that his city has met its end, however, highlighting Senegal's nascent oil and gas sector and all its potential. "We will have the means, and human ingenuity will make it possible to build structures that will protect the coast," Diop said. — AFP

But residents appear decidedly unenthusiastic about the prospect of Djougop—a bland expanse of blue-roofed bungalows built in the desert, far from the sea. Their seaside fishing district is poor, and one of the most densely populated urban areas in Africa, but tales of the fate of



Drying clothes are pictured in the Diougop relocation camp outside of Saint Louis.



A young boy runs through a Fish Market destroyed by the rising seas in the seaside fishing neighborhood of Guet N'Dar in Saint Louis.

Sports

Euro kings Italy welcome big hitters to Nations League semis

Italy to face Spain; France square off against Belgium

MILAN: Italy face their first true test since winning Euro 2020 this week when Roberto Mancini's side host the Final Four of the Nations League with three of Europe's best ready to pounce. The Azzurri face Spain in the first semi-final tomorrow, with the San Siro awaiting a repeat of the Euro last-four clash with Luis Enrique's side which ended with a penalty shoot-out victory for Italy. The other semi-final, on Thursday, features world champions France and Belgium, ranked the planet's best side despite also being eliminated from the summer's European Championship by the Italians.

Italy have been on a high after beginning a memorable summer of sport for the Mediterranean nation by beating England in the Wembley final of the Euro. Mancini has largely stuck with the heroes of that tournament for the Final Four, initially picking 22 of the Euro squad and adding in-form Roma midfielder Lorenzo Pellegrini.

He has since been forced to drop starting striker Ciro Immobile who has picked up a thigh injury and has drafted in Juventus striker Moise Kean, who shone in Italy's last match, a 5-0 hammering of Lithuania during last month's 2022 World Cup qualifiers. Rafael Toloi of Atalanta is also out injured with AC Milan's Davide Calabria called up.

France go into the tournament still smarting from their last-16 exit at the hands of Switzerland in the Euro and underwhelming performances in last month's World Cup qualifiers. Their 2-0 World Cup qualifying win over Finland last month was their first victory after a run of five draws, not what is expected of a team packed with some of the world's best players. Coach Didier Deschamps will be without midfield lynchpin N'Golo Kante who contracted COVID-19 in the run up to Chelsea's 1-0 defeat at Juventus last week.

No excuses for France

Also out for the Les Bleus is Olivier Giroud, who was dumped from the squad after Deschamps ended Karim Benzema's long international exile ahead of the Euro. Veteran forward Giroud, who sits just five goals away from equaling Thierry Henry's all-time France record tally of 51, was also left out of AC Milan's trip to Atalanta on Sunday with a back problem which along with a bout of COVID has hampered his start to life in Italy. "This can't erase what happened at the Euro, that is behind us now," said Deschamps after announcing his squad on Thursday.



Kean, Calabria replace injured Immobile, Toloi

Hoping to spoil Italy's party will be Luis Enrique's Spain, who defied expectations to reach the Euro semis and had Italy on the back foot for large periods before being knocked out. They will be without teen sensation Pedri, who was excellent at the Euro but is injured for the second time in less than a month and misses another youthful squad which also features his 17-year-old Barcelona teammate Gavi.

As of Sunday morning 31,000 tickets had been sold for the first match in Milan, with 13,000 bought for Sunday's final at the same ground. Both the San Siro and the Allianz Stadium will be at most



TURIN: In this file photo taken on March 10, 2020 A general view shows a boy cycling across a deserted area by the Juventus stadium in Turin. — AFP

half-full for the Final Four as Italy's current COVID-19 legislation allows football stadia to open up to only 50 percent capacity to help guard against the spread of the virus.

There had been hopes that limit would be moved up to 75 percent ahead of this week's matches as case numbers have remained largely under control since the spring and nearly 80 percent of Italy's population over 12 have been fully vaccinated.

But on Thursday Italian Football Federation president Gabriele Gravina said that would have been impossible even if the rules had been changed from the start of October. "We're not ready, regardless of any decisions (from the government)," Gravina told reporters. "I wish we had known this a month ago, so our communications could have been clearer... I have already said we cannot go beyond 50 percent capacity in the Nations League." — AFP

News in brief

Mueller rues Bayern's defeat

BERLIN: Thomas Mueller has admitted Bayern Munich's first home Bundesliga defeat for two years was a wake-up call after the Bavarian giants had won their nine previous games this season. "We are of course disappointed. Or angry, annoyed, I don't know which best describes it," said Mueller in the wake of Sunday's 2-1 shock home loss to Eintracht Frankfurt. "This is a game that we definitely didn't have to lose." Bayern and new coach Julian Nagelsmann suffered their first defeat in any competition this season as Filip Kostic hit a low shot past Manuel Neuer from a tight angle seven minutes from time. It was the Bavarians' first home league defeat since November 2019 and Frankfurt's first win at Bayern for 20 years. — AFP

Haaland to miss qualifiers

OSLO: Erling Braut Haaland said yesterday he will miss Norway's upcoming World Cup qualifiers with a leg injury suffered while with his club Borussia Dortmund. The 21-year-old striker has missed the German side's past three games with the issue and will also be sidelined for international fixtures at Turkey on Friday and in Montenegro on Monday. Norway's team doctor Ola Sand said Haaland's withdrawal was a precautionary measure. "The injury seems to have decreased but its evolution was too slow unfortunately," he said in a Norwegian football federation statement. Norway, who are second behind the Netherlands on goal difference in their qualifying group for the 2022 World Cup, will also be without forwards Alexander Sorloth and Joshua King. — AFP

Iran allows women fans

TEHRAN: Iranian women will be allowed to enter a stadium in Tehran for the first time in two years to support the national team in a World Cup 2022 qualifier against South Korea. "The presence of women has been authorized for the match between the national football teams of Iran and South Korea" at the capital's Azadi stadium on October 12, the state television-linked Young Journalists Club said. A year-long ban has been in force on all fans entering stadiums in Iran because of the coronavirus pandemic. But the last time women were able to watch a game at the 80,000-seat Azadi stadium was in October 2019, when Iran thrashed Cambodia 14-0. — AFP

Osaka out of top 10

PARIS: Naomi Osaka dropped out of the world's top 10 yesterday for the first time since winning the 2018 US Open title as she continues to take a break from tennis. The Japanese star, a former world number one, has not played since exiting the US Open in the third round last month. Osaka has fallen to 12th in the WTA rankings, her lowest mark since before her first of four Grand Slam titles at Flushing Meadows three years ago, when she beat Serena Williams in an infamous final. Two-time Grand Slam champion Garbine Muguruza jumped to sixth in the rankings after winning the title in Chicago last week. Tunisian Ons Jabeur, who lost to Muguruza in the final, climbed to a career-high ranking of 14th. — AFP

Italy's Serie A three-way title chase continues

MILAN: Sandro Tonali said Sunday that the Serie A title is AC Milan's only goal for the season after he helped the Rossoneri stay in touch with leaders Napoli in a 3-2 win at Atalanta which underlines their Scudetto credentials.

Milan came out on top in a frenetic encounter to stay two points behind Napoli, whose 2-1 win at Fiorentina was their seventh in as many games so far this season, after a nervy ending in Bergamo which saw Atalanta pull back two late goals after going three down with 12 minutes remaining.

And asked by DAZN if he remembered Milan winning the league in 2003-04, the last time they had 19 points from their first seven games, the 21-year-old said: "No, I really was young back then". But then he added: "We don't talk about these things but it (the league title) is the only aim Milan have this season."

Having heard Tonali speak while waiting for his own interview, Milan coach Stefano Pioli praised the midfielder for his positive attitude as he delighted in his team's victory. "We played really well with intensity, energy and quality. It's a brilliant end to a difficult set of fixtures and the team is improving both in Serie A and the Champions League," said Pioli. There are signs that a three-way title race is taking shape with Inter Milan a further two points back in third, while Roma are also lurking in fourth on 15 points following their 2-0 win over Empoli earlier on Sunday.

Tonali was one of Milan's best performers at the Gewiss Stadium and, after captain Davide Calabria had put the away side ahead with just 28 seconds on the clock, he made the most of goalkeeper Mike Maignan holding Atalanta at bay when he doubled Milan's lead two minutes from half-time with his second goal of the season. Milan kept a lid on Atalanta and should have added to their lead through Alexis Saelemackers before Rafael Leao did curl home the third in the 78th minute.

Barca launch defense of new-look Women's Champions League

PARIS: Two decades on from its debut, the UEFA Women's Champions League will feature a 16-team group stage for the first time this season as Barcelona begin their title defense in a new-look tournament.

Crowned champions after thrashing Chelsea in a clash of first-time finalists last May, Barcelona are heavy favorites to advance from a section including 2007 winners Arsenal and two newcomers, Hoffenheim and Danish club Koge.

The holders can count on Alexia Putellas, the reigning UEFA women's player of the year who recently signed an extension with Barcelona until 2024, Dutch star Lieke Martens and the prolific Jenni Hermoso.

Barcelona powered to a second successive Spanish title last season, winning 33 of 34 matches and scoring a whopping 167 goals. They have begun the new campaign in the same vein with five wins from five, scoring 35 times and conceding just once. Arsenal return to Europe's elite competition for just the second time in eight seasons, boosted by the recruitment of four-time Olympian and two-time World Cup winner Tobin Heath.



BERGAMO: Teammates congratulate AC Milan's Italian midfielder Sandro Tonali after scoring the team's second goal during their Italian Serie A football match against Atalanta at the Gewiss Stadium in the northern city of Bergamo on Sunday. — AFP

Duvan Zapata's 86th-minute penalty and a Mario Pasalic tap-in deep in stoppage time kept the game alive until the final whistle but Milan ran out deserved winners. "I saw a really strong Milan team, they have qualities which very few teams in Italy have... they really impressed me," said Atalanta boss Gian Piero Gasperini.

100 percent Napoli

Luciano Spalletti's Napoli have a perfect 21 points thanks to their come-from-behind victory at the Stadio Artemio Franchi in Florence, which came through strikes from Hirving Lozano and Amir Rrahmani either side of half-time. It was a tough defeat for Fiorentina, who lost in a similar fashion to how they fell at home to Inter a few weeks back after deservedly taking the lead through Lucas Martinez Quarta. Vincenzo Italiano's side stay fifth on 12 points, nine behind Napoli and three away from Roma in fourth. "We suffered a bit after we went ahead, but we also had situations where we could have put ourselves 3-1 ahead which we didn't

manage to exploit," said Spalletti to DAZN.

Lorenzo Pellegrini, who was named in the Italy squad for the upcoming Nations League Final Four, sent Roma on their way against Empoli with his sixth goal in all competitions this term three minutes before half-time. It came the day after the 25-year-old extended his contract with the club until 2026.

Henrikh Mkhitaryan made sure of the points for Jose Mourinho's side two minutes after the restart with his second of the campaign, guiding the ball home after Guglielmo Vicario had just managed to tip Tammy Abraham's fierce drive onto the bar.

Bologna eased pressure on coach Sinisa Mihajlovic with a comfortable 3-0 win over Lazio which ended a worrying run of results and moved them up to ninth on 11 points. Sampdoria sit 15th on six points, two fewer than 13th-placed Udinese after the pair drew 3-3 in one of two mid-afternoon matches. Verona are also on eight points in 12th after stretching their unbeaten run under new coach Igor Tudor to four matches with a 4-0 crushing of Spezia. — AFP

Hoffenheim give Germany three representatives — alongside perennial contenders Wolfsburg and Bayern Munich — while Koge broke the Brondby-Fortuna Hjørring duopoly in their first season in the Danish top flight.

French giants Lyon saw their five-year European reign ended by Paris Saint-Germain in the quarter-finals last season, but they have since brought in goalkeeper Christiane Endler and forward Signe Bruun from their domestic rivals as well as Danielle van de Donk.

Yet the most important news for Lyon is the recovery of Ada Hegerberg, the 2018 Ballon d'Or winner. The Norwegian could make her comeback tonight against Swedish club Hacken after 20 months out. The 26-year-old attacker has been sidelined since January 2020 after rupturing a cruciate ligament in her right knee and then suffering a left tibia stress fracture, which was initially undetected.

Hegerberg, a five-time Champions League winner with Lyon, is the all-time record scorer in the competition with 53 goals. Lyon will also face Bayern, semi-finalists last term and one of four teams to qualify directly, and Benfica, who only started a women's team in 2018. They are the first Portuguese club to reach the last 16.

Real Madrid make European bow

English champions Chelsea host two-time champions Wolfsburg in their opening group fixture.

Emma Hayes' side defeated the Germans 5-1 on aggregate in last season's quarter-finals. Juventus, Italian champions each of the past four years, have made it beyond the last 32 in Europe for the first time. They have an added incentive to do well with the final at the Allianz Stadium in Turin. Swiss outfit Servette are also in uncharted territory after winning their maiden Super League title.

Real Madrid, in their second season in existence after taking over CD Tacon, caught the eye by dumping out Manchester City in qualifying. The reward for the Spaniards on their Champions League debut is a group with PSG, WFC Kharkiv of Ukraine and Breidablik — the first Icelandic team to make the group stage of a men's or women's UEFA club competition.

Formerly played over home-and-away knockout ties from the last 32, clubs in the group stage will receive a minimum of 400,000 euros (\$465,000) — five times more than before in the round of 16, according to UEFA. The winner stands to pocket up to 1.4 million euros, with UEFA projecting a total payout of 24 million euros to participating clubs or as 'solidarity payments' to non-competing clubs.

In contrast, the clubs that qualified for the group stage of the men's Champions League will earn a minimum of 15.64 million euros. If a club wins every group match and lifts the trophy in Saint Petersburg, it will net 85.1 million euros in prize money, not including TV income payments and those based on its UEFA ranking. — AFP

Sports

Marquez wins seventh MotoGP of the Americas, Quartararo eyes title

Bagnaia finishes third; Quartararo still leads standings

AUSTIN: Marc Marquez reasserted his mastery of the Circuit of the Americas on Sunday, winning MotoGP's Grand Prix of the Americas for the seventh time. Marquez, starting third on the grid, seized the lead at the start and relentlessly powered to victory over championship leader Fabio Quartararo of France.

Marquez never allowed Quartararo a look-in, but the Yamaha rider pushed his lead in the standings to 52 points over Italian Ducati rider Francesco Bagnaia, who finished third. With just three races left this season — and with 25 points on offer to the winner of each one — Quartararo is within touching distance of a first MotoGP world title.

"The plan exactly was like I did the race," said a beaming Marquez, the six-time world champion who won the first six races held at the Austin, Texas, circuit but fell off while leading in 2019. The event was cancelled last season when he was recuperating after breaking his right arm in a crash, and his front-row start was his first since his return to the sport. "Start well, be first in the first corner, be slow the first two laps and then when the tires drop a little bit start to push," the Honda rider said of the pre-race plan. "That's exactly what I did."

By the halfway stage he was more than two seconds up on Quartararo, who started from the middle of the front row and finished 4.679sec behind. Bagnaia, starting from pole for the third straight race, was running fourth with a few laps remaining, when his pressure on Jorge Martin finally caused the

rookie to cut two corners and draw a long-lap penalty that secured Bagnaia's place on the podium.

Quartararo will have the chance to become France's first MotoGP world champion at the next race at Misano in Italy on October 24. "It's so good!" said 22-year-old Quartararo. "Physically it was very hard but it's great to see our result and to be in front of 'Pecco' (Bagnaia). I'm so happy to have increased my advantage."

Sweltering 33-degree C weather and a bumpy track surface that sparked complaints early in the week made for a demanding day. The red flag came out twice during a crash-marred Moto 3 event, and while there were no serious incidents during the MotoGP race it was a punishing affair.



Honda with 450th top-class podium

'Everyone happy'

Bagnaia, who had slipped back to sixth at the halfway point, was delighted to find himself among the top three. "This podium is the best possible result," he said. "I gave everything. It was even harder than Malaysia! That was also hot but this track is more demanding. I have nothing left."

Marquez, however, made it look easy as he gave Honda their 450th top-class podium, and took another step in his return from injury. The Spaniard had notched his first victory in 19 months when he won the German Grand Prix in June, saying at the time that since a third surgery everything was "more normal" but that he continued to have limitations.



AUSTIN: (From left) Fabio Quartararo of France and Monster Energy Yamaha MotoGP Team, Marc Marquez of Spain and Repsol Honda Team and Francesco Bagnaia of Italy and Ducati Lenovo Team celebrate on the podium during the MotoGP race during the MotoGP of the Americas - Race on Sunday in Austin, Texas. —AFP

A victory on a track where he has been a force was a positive note in a season of uncertainty, Marquez said. "Sometimes I crash and I don't understand (why), sometimes I am slow and I don't understand, sometimes I am fast and I don't understand," he said. "That special feeling still is not

there with the bike." Nevertheless, victory was an achievement worth celebrating. "Today, everyone on the podium is happy," Marquez said. "Me for the victory, Fabio for second place. Maybe not 'Pecco', but I'm sure he'll be strong again in Misano." —AFP

Judge rules as Yankees clinch last gasp playoff berth

LOS ANGELES: New York slugger Aaron Judge smacked a walk-off single to send the Yankees into the Major League Baseball playoffs on Sunday, facing a blockbuster wild card game against the Boston Red Sox. It came down to the wire, but the Yankees clinched their fifth straight playoff berth and their 23rd trip to the post-season in the past 27 years with a nerve-jangling 1-0 home victory over Tampa Bay in their season finale.

Facing left-hander Josh Fleming, Yankees second baseman Rougned Odor started the ninth-inning rally with a single to center field. Pinch-runner Tyler Wade tagged up on a deep flyout, Anthony Rizzo singled and Judge delivered a run-scoring single that deflected off Rays right-handed hurler Andrew Kittredge.

"Excited," Judge said after his first career walk-off hit. "Especially after today's game. It was a tough one. But everybody came to play. "Our bullpen, our starting pitcher, what (Jameson Taillon) was able to do for us to start off the game and hold this (Rays) offense to nothing was big-time for us," Judge said. "We've got a spot in the playoffs," he added. "All you've got to do is just get in."

The Yankees travel to Boston on Tuesday for a winner-take-all wild card game against a Red Sox team that secured their spot with a dramatic 7-5 victory over the Washington Nationals. Boston's Rafael Devers belted two home runs, including a 447-foot blast to center field with one out in the top of the ninth inning that broke a tie and saw the Red Sox secure the top wild card spot in the American League.

Both the Yankees and Red Sox finished the regular-season with 92-70 records, but



NEW YORK: Aaron Judge of the New York Yankees hits a walk-off single in the bottom of the ninth inning to beat the Tampa Bay Rays 1-0 at Yankee Stadium on Sunday in New York City. —AFP

Boston edged the Yankees 10-9 in regular-season meetings to earn home field advantage. The winner of the showdown will advance to a division series clash with the AL East division champion Rays, while the Chicago White Sox and Houston Astros meet in the other AL division series. The wins for the Yankees and the Red Sox extinguished the final flickering playoff hopes of the Toronto Blue Jays and Seattle Mariners.

In the National League the final day of the season came down to positioning, and it was the San Francisco Giants who emerged with the NL West division title, ending the Los Angeles Dodgers' eight-year reign with an 11-4 rout of the San Diego Padres.

Logan Webb struck out eight in seven strong innings, belted his first career home run and reached base three times as the Giants grabbed the win they needed to deny

the Dodgers, who capped the regular season with a 10-3 victory over the Milwaukee Brewers. Buster Posey drove in three runs and the Padres clinched the best record in baseball at 107-55, their top overall seed guaranteeing home-field advantage throughout the post-season.

The reigning World Series champion Dodgers became just the 11th team to win 106 games and not finish in first place. They'll host the St Louis Cardinals tomorrow in the wild card game, with the Cardinals expected to start 40-year-old pitcher Adam Wainwright and the Dodgers to give the ball to three-time NL Cy Young Award winner Max Scherzer. The winner of the clash will go on to face the Giants in the NL division series. The Brewers will face the Atlanta Braves in the other NL division series. —AFP

Vaccinated Wiggins can play in Warriors NBA home games

SAN FRANCISCO: Golden State Warriors swingman Andrew Wiggins has been vaccinated against COVID-19 and will be able to play in NBA home games this season, coach Steve Kerr said on Sunday. Wiggins' status was in doubt after the San Francisco Department of Public Health announced anyone age 12 or older had to be fully vaccinated to attend indoor events in the city.

"Andrew got vaccinated," Kerr said after a team practice. "He just told me today that he was fine with us acknowledging it and that will be the end of it so I'm not going to answer any questions beyond that."

Wiggins said last week the issue was his to deal with, given he would potentially lose paychecks for any missed games. The NBA denied Wiggins a religious exemption to getting vaccinated, according to ESPN. The NBA announced on Wednesday that players who miss games due to local COVID-19 mandates will not be paid, a move that could have impacted Wiggins.

A New York regulation also means players on the Knicks and Brooklyn Nets will be required to get vaccinated to play in their home arenas, and that could be an issue for Nets guard Kyrie Irving, who has not commented on his vaccination status. He would not be able to play in Nets' home games unless he gets vaccinated. About 90 percent of NBA players have been vaccinated but some have refused or declined to divulge their vaccination status.



SAN FRANCISCO: Andrew Wiggins of the Golden State Warriors poses for a portrait during the Golden State Warriors Media Day at Chase Center on September 27, 2021 in San Francisco, California. —AFP

It was not certain what type of vaccination Wiggins received but if it was the one-dose Johnson & Johnson variety, Wiggins would be available for the Warriors and not miss any practice or pre-season games prior to Golden State's home opener on October 21 against the Los Angeles Clippers. Kerr said the Warriors were 100 percent vaccinated or on the verge. —AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

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

Clinics

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Rawda	22517733
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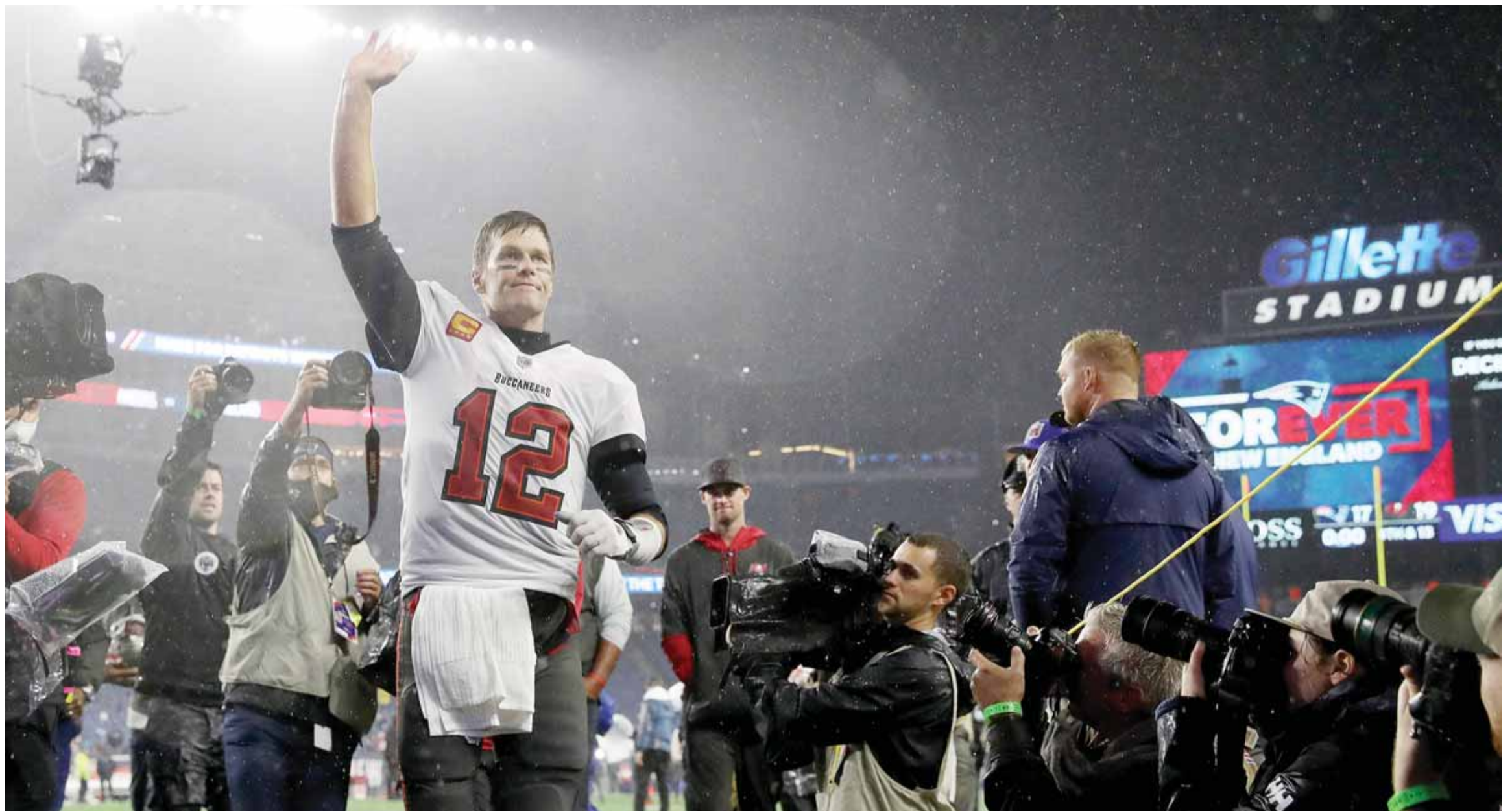
I, **FARUK SULAIMAN** Sulaiman DOB: 01.06.1980 residing at 161A 1102, Pallivasal Street 1 Kalamarudur, Villupuram, Tamilnadu - 606102, declare that I have changed my name and hereafter I shall be known and called as **MUBARAK SULAINAN** only. (C 0957) 5-10-2021

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

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Tom Brady makes NFL history

Buccaneers emerge victorious in Brady's return to New England



FOXBOROUGH: Tom Brady of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers waves to the crowd as he runs off the field after defeating the New England Patriots in the game at Gillette Stadium on Sunday in Foxborough, Massachusetts. — AFP

LOS ANGELES: Tom Brady became the NFL's all-time leading passer and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers squeezed past the Patriots 19-17 as New England's favorite son made an emotional return to Foxborough on Sunday night.

Brady was facing his former team for the first time after two decades of dominance in New England which resulted in six Super Bowl championships. "I am not tearing up," the 44-year-old quarterback said. "I already went through all that. It was my home for 20 years. I have the best memories."

Playing in a steady rain, Brady became the NFL's all-time leader in passing yards after completing a 28-yard throw to teammate Mike Evans in the first quarter to pass Drew Brees by one yard. Brady entered the contest needing 68 yards to pass the recently retired Brees. He now has 80,560 total yards compared to Brees' 80,358.

"I can throw a little bit and I am glad I have had some great guys to catch it," Brady said. "It's is pretty cool. Nothing in this sports can be accomplished without incredible teammates. Guys did a great job catching the ball for 22 years."

Brady completed 22 of 43 passes for 269 yards against the Patriots and threw no interceptions in

the see-saw contest. He got a lot of help from his supporting cast, including running back Leonard Fournette, who rushed for 91 yards, and kicker Ryan Succop, who booted four field goals.

Brady said earlier in the week that he was in no mood for a stroll down memory lane, but after the game he admitted it has been an emotional ride. "I was just trying to keep my poise," said Brady. "We did get a win on the road. It is a good win here in Foxborough."

Patriots fans clamored for tickets to Sunday's game, splurging up to \$13,000 for the chance to pay tribute to Brady, who never had the chance to say his goodbyes. The Patriots honored Brady with a one-minute video of his highlights before the game. He took the field in the warmup to chants of "Brady! Brady! Brady!" that filled the stadium.

There was a mixture of cheers and jeers from the rain-soaked crowd of 65,800 when he came on for the Buccaneers' first offensive drive of the opening quarter. The response was more low key when he

set the all-time passing record with six minutes to go in the first quarter. The Patriots chose to not stop the game and honor Brady as play continued as if it was a normal 28-yard pass and run.

Succop kicked a 48-yard field goal with just under two minutes remaining in the fourth quarter to make it 19-17. Nick Folk had a chance to give the Patriots the lead but his 56-yard field goal attempt clanked off the left upright with 55 seconds remaining and sailed harmlessly away. That allowed Brady to just run the clock down to the final buzzer.

Reid earns 100th victory in Chiefs win

'You want me to cry?'

Elsewhere, Patrick Mahomes tossed five touchdown passes and Kansas City defeated the Philadelphia Eagles 42-30 to give Andy Reid his 100th victory as head coach of the Chiefs. Mahomes completed 24 of 30 passes for 278 yards as the Chiefs improved to 2-2 on the season. Clyde Edwards-Helaire caught a touchdown pass and ran for 102 yards while

Tyreek Hill had 11 catches for 186 yards and three touchdowns at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia.

Reid, who guided the Chiefs to a Super Bowl appearance last season, is the first coach in NFL history to win at least 100 games for two different teams and Sunday was a record-setting homecoming for him. Reid won 140 games, counting playoffs, for the Eagles as their coach from 1999 through 2012. He then shifted to Kansas City, where his record is 100-45 in just over eight seasons.

Reid was hospitalized after last week's game against the Los Angeles Chargers after becoming ill following the loss. He was treated and released after spending one night in hospital and there was some question whether he had recovered enough to coach against his former team.

Asked if coming back to Philadelphia made him emotional, the normally unflappable Reid said: "I'm pretty good. You want me to cry up here?" Dak Prescott threw four touchdowns and the Dallas Cowboys pulled away in a productive third quarter for a 36-28 victory over the Carolina Panthers. Ezekiel Elliott rushed for 143 yards on 20 carries with a touchdown as the Cowboys improved to 3-1 on the season. — AFP



Mbappe says told PSG in July he wanted to leave

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe yesterday confirmed that he told Paris Saint-Germain in July he wanted to leave the club. "I said at the end of July that I wanted to leave," Mbappe said in an interview with RMC radio. "My position has been clear. I said I wanted to leave and I told them (PSG management) quite early on."

The French World Cup winner has not extended his contract at PSG, fueling speculation he will seek a move to Real Madrid at the end of the season. The Spanish giants bid 180 million euros (\$209 million) for Mbappe in August but PSG, who had just signed Lionel Messi from Barcelona, turned down the offer.

At the time, PSG's sporting director Leonardo said Mbappe could "leave or stay on our conditions". Mbappe said he eventually told PSG "if you don't want me to leave, I will stay". "People said I had refused six or seven offers to extend and that I never talk to Leonardo, which is absolutely not true," he added.



Kylian Mbappe

Mbappe, who joined PSG from Monaco for a deal worth a total of 180 million euros in 2017, said he had offered to leave the club in July to allow PSG to find "a quality replacement". "I wanted everyone to be in a win-win situation," he said. "Paris is a club that has given me a lot, where I've always been happy for the four years I have spent here and I am still happy." — AFP

Salah shows Man City what they're missing

LIVERPOOL: Two moments of magic from Mohamed Salah ensured Liverpool remain the only unbeaten side left in the Premier League this season after an enthralling 2-2 draw with Manchester City on Sunday. For 45 minutes City's collective brilliance threatened to blow the Reds away and inflict a first league defeat at Anfield in front of supporters since 2017. However, for all the beautiful football put together by Pep Guardiola's array of creative midfielders, the English champions cannot call on a clinical finisher in the same league as Salah.

The Egyptian showed the other side to his game in creating Liverpool's opening goal for Sadio Mane with a perfectly-weighted pass after skipping beyond Joao Cancelo. But it was his finish for his side's second that will live long in the memory. Cancelo was this time one of four City defenders left trailing as Salah shrugged off the attentions of Phil Foden and Bernardo Silva before turning Aymeric Laporte and firing high past Ederson on his weaker right foot.

"Only the best players in the world score goals like this," said Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp. "Absolutely exceptional.

Because this club never forgets anything, people will still talk about this goal in 50-60 years when they remember this game."

Salah has now scored in seven consecutive games and has nine in as many matches this season, evoking memories of his sensational 44-goal debut season at Anfield in 2017/18. "Right now he is as sharp and as good as I've seen him," former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher told Sky Sports. "I don't see anyone playing better in the world at this moment in time. His record and his start to this season has been absolutely outstanding."

Liverpool will need their main man to maintain those standards if they are to take the title back from City. Eight days on from schooling Chelsea on their own patch, Guardiola's men also had Liverpool chasing shadows for the first-half.

However, not for the first time this season, City did not make their dominance show on the scoreboard without a natural striker as chances came and went for Foden and De Bruyne. Both midfielders made amends to equalize in the second-half and keep the early running for the title race tantalizingly poised.

Chelsea top the table by a point from Liverpool with City and Manchester United just one point further back after seven games. Liverpool were the only one of the four realistic title contenders who did not spend over £100 million (\$135 million) in the transfer window.

Ibrahima Konate's arrival for £36 million was the Reds' only summer signing and they



Mohamed Salah

may lack the depth of squad over the long haul, particularly with Salah and Mane set to depart for up to a month for the Africa Cup of Nations early next year.

Instead, Liverpool have invested heavily over the past two years in tying down their key players to long-term contracts with one notable exception. Jordan Henderson, Trent Alexander-Arnold, Andy Robertson, Alisson Becker, Virgil van Dijk and Fabinho are among those to commit their future to the club.

Salah's current deal is set to expire in 2023 and the 29-year-old knows his worth to Klopp's men as negotiations over a new deal have dragged on. Liverpool will have to splash out to get Salah to extend his stay, but on this form he is worth it as the man who could win them the league. — AFP