



**7** Chinese astronauts arrive for longest space mission



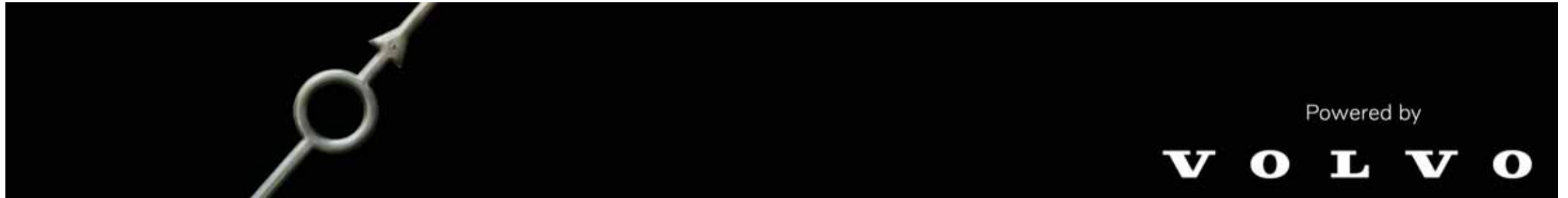
**9** Italy's ITA takes to skies from ashes of Alitalia



**13** Vietnam artist finds success with creations from cloth



**16** Man Utd lose at Leicester; five-star Liverpool go top



# Security review after British MP killed in 'terror' attack

Suspect arrested after fatal stabbing • Politicians stunned by highly public attack

## Amir returns after private visit



**KUWAIT:** HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is received by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah after he returned home yesterday after a private visit abroad. National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and other senior officials were also present to welcome HH the Amir. — Amiri Diwan

**LEIGH-ON-SEA, United Kingdom:** The fatal stabbing of British lawmaker David Amess was a terrorist incident with possible links to Islamist extremism, police said yesterday, as the government ordered a review of safety measures to protect MPs. Veteran Conservative MP David Amess, 69, was talking with voters at a church in the small town of Leigh-on-Sea east of London when he was stabbed to death on Friday.

Police said they arrested a 25-year-old suspect and were investigating "a potential motivation linked to Islamist extremism". The fatal stabbing has "been declared as a terrorist incident, with the investigation being led by Counter Terrorism Policing", the police said in a statement, adding that the investigation is in the "very early stages".

Multiple UK media outlets, citing sources, reported that the suspect was believed to be a British national with Somali heritage. The Sun tabloid reported that the attacker stabbed Amess multiple times in the presence of two women staff, before sitting down and waiting for police to arrive. Police said they believed the attacker acted alone and they carried out searches at two addresses in the London area.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson visited the crime scene to pay his respects yesterday, laying floral wreaths outside the church with the leader of the opposition, Labour leader Keir Starmer in a rare show of unity. Johnson tweeted a photo of the note he left calling Amess, MP for Southend West since 1997, a "fine parliamentarian and a much loved colleague and friend".

Local residents including members of the Muslim community also came, heaping bouquets next to the police tape. Britain's politicians were stunned by the highly public attack, which recalled the murder of a



**LEIGH-ON-SEA:** A photograph of Conservative British lawmaker David Amess is seen yesterday among floral tributes left at the scene of his killing at Belfairs Methodist Church. — AFP

pro-EU lawmaker ahead of the Brexit referendum. In June 2016, Labour MP Jo Cox was killed by a far-right extremist, prompting demands for action against what lawmakers said was "a rising tide" of public abuse and threats against elected representatives.

Home Secretary Priti Patel on Friday ordered police across the country to review security arrangements for all 650 MPs. "We will carry on... We live in an open society, a democracy. We cannot be cowed by any individual," she told journalists after laying a wreath for her fellow Essex MP.

Continued on Page 2

## Fully vaccinated travelers can visit US from Nov 8

**WASHINGTON:** The United States will reopen its land and air borders on November 8 to foreign visitors fully vaccinated against COVID-19, ending a more than 18-month ban on travel from much of the globe that separated families, hobbled tourism and strained diplomatic ties. The decision to ease restrictions was "guided by public health, stringent and consistent", said White House assistant press secretary Kevin Munoz in a tweet on Friday announcing the new policy. He said the "announcement and date applies to both international air travel and land travel".

The new policy was quickly hailed by the European Union's ambassador in the US, Stavros Lambrinidis, who called it "important and very welcome news" and said in a Twitter post that more details were expected to follow. In an effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus, US borders were closed after March 2020 to travelers from large parts of the world, including the European Union, Britain and China, India and Brazil. Overland visitors from Mexico and Canada were also banned.

The months of restrictions affecting hundreds of millions of people helped fuel both personal and economic suffering brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Airlines for America said its members were "eager to begin safely reuniting the countless families, friends and colleagues," adding "reopening of borders is essential for our nation's economic recovery". International Air Transport Association (IATA) chief Willie Walsh said that "for the millions who have been locked out of the US for up to 18 months it is great news that the US will welcome fully vaccinated foreign travelers."

Continued on Page 2

## Russia tops 1,000 daily virus deaths

**MOSCOW:** Russia yesterday recorded 1,000 deaths over 24 hours for the first time since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, with the country's jab drive at a standstill and few restrictions in place. An official government tally showed 1,002 deaths and 33,208 new infections, setting a high for both fatalities and cases for

the third day in a row. The surge comes with just 32 percent of Russians fully inoculated, according to official statistics published for the first time yesterday.

A lack of tough restrictions has allowed the virus to spread unchecked, though a number of regions have re-introduced QR codes for access to public places. The Kremlin has avoided re-introducing major measures despite calling the vaccination rate "unacceptably" low, and saying authorities have to ensure "the economy continues working". It also said Russia's medical system was

Continued on Page 2



**MOSCOW:** Medical staff carry a person on a stretcher at the COVID-19 section of Kommunarka Hospital on Friday. — AFP

## IS claims attack on mosque in Kandahar

**KANDAHAR:** Afghanistan's Shiite minority buried their dead for the second Saturday in a row after another suicide bomb attack on a mosque claimed by the Islamic State group. Religious authorities in the southern city of Kandahar told AFP the toll from Friday's assault had reached 60,

as hundreds of diggers opened row after row of graves in the dusty soil. The latest massacre came just a week after another IS-claimed attack on Shiite worshippers at a mosque in the northern city of Kunduz that killed more than 60 people.

In a statement released on its Telegram channels, the jihadist group said two Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) suicide bombers carried out separate attacks on different parts of the mosque in Kandahar - the spiritual heartland of the Taliban - while worshippers prayed inside.

Continued on Page 2



**KANDAHAR:** Victims of a suicide bomb attack at a Shiite mosque are buried at a graveyard yesterday. — AFP

## NASA launches probe to explore Jupiter asteroids

**WASHINGTON:** NASA launched a spacecraft called Lucy on a 12-year mission to explore Jupiter's Trojan asteroids for the first time yesterday, gathering new insights into the solar system's for-

mation. The Atlas V rocket responsible for propelling the probe took off at 5:34 am local time (0934 GMT) from Cape Canaveral. Named after an ancient fossil of a pre-human ancestor, Lucy will become the first solar-powered spacecraft to venture so far from the Sun, and will observe more asteroids than any probe before it - eight in all.

Lucy will also make three Earth flybys for gravity assists, making it the first spacecraft to return to our planet's vicinity from the outer solar system. "Each one of those asteroids, each one of those pristine samples, provide a part of the story of the solar

system, the story of us," Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator of NASA's Science Mission, told reporters on a call.

Lucy's first encounter will be in 2025 with asteroid Donaldjohanson in the Main Belt, between Mars and Jupiter. The asteroid is named after the discoverer of the Lucy fossil. Between 2027 and 2033, it will encounter seven Trojan asteroids - five in the swarm that leads Jupiter, and two in the swarm that trails the gas giant. The largest of them is about 95 km in diameter. Lucy will fly by its target objects

Continued on Page 2



## Local

# Sudanese actors, intelligentsia lament demise of renowned Kuwaiti film director

## Khaled Al-Siddiq's 'The Wedding of Zein' won seven int'l awards

**KHARTOUM:** Sudanese actors and intellectuals yesterday mourned the passing away of Kuwaiti film director Khaled Al-Siddiq who introduced Sudanese cinema to the world via the movie "The Wedding of Zein" in 1976, adapted from the novel by Tayeb Salih. Sudanese actor Ali Mahdi, who had the starring role in "The Wedding of Zein" reminisced the late director's cinema feats, praising him as a "friendly, even-tempered and patient person who had a wide general culture and greatly contributed to cinema".

Mahdi said Siddiq had left behind an impressive cinema mark in the history of TV directing, chiefly "Bas Ya Bahr" (The Cruel Sea), which was selected as one of the best 100 Arabic movies. Not only did Siddiq deal with his cast in a highly civilized mode, but he also respected his audience so much, which showed that he was a genuinely unique man, he said. The Sudanese actor also highly commended him as having greatly contributed to unifying the Arab conscience and promoting cultural communication thanks to his amazing cinema works. Sudanese cinema producer Talal Afifi said he was so sad to hear about the passing away of the Kuwaiti cinema icon, voicing heartfelt and sincere condolences over his demise. He believed that the movie "The Wedding of Zein" had highlighted the possibility of film industry suc-

cess in Sudan, whether in view of theme, location or human capabilities.

Ahmad Al-Sadeq, a Sudanese writer and academician, highly acclaimed the "very bald" initiative of the late Kuwaiti cinema icon to produce and direct the Sudanese film "The Wedding of Zein" in mid-1970s.

"This was very clear as he picked a deep script like the novel 'The Wedding of Zein' by Sudanese novelist Tayeb Salih, and then turn it into a visual work," he boasted. He praised the movie as a "watershed" in the development of Sudanese film industry and an gateway for Sudanese actors to the world.

The prominent Kuwaiti film and TV director passed away on Thursday at the age of 76, after a rich career in the domain of film and television directing. Siddiq is a pioneer of the Kuwaiti film scene who directed iconic movies such as the 1972 Oscar-nominated film "Bas Ya Bahr" or "The Cruel Sea" in English, which was released in 1972 and nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 45th Academy Awards. Siddiq's major cinema works also include other key films such as "The Last Journey" and "Faces of the Night". The late

“He contributed to unifying the Arab conscience”



**KHARTOUM:** An archive photo showing Kuwaiti film director Khaled Al-Siddiq with "The Wedding of Zein" film star actor Ali Mahdi. — KUNA

director received many international awards and honors, especially for his movie "Bas Ya Bahr". His movie "The Wedding of Zein" won seven international awards. — KUNA

## Manpower authority praises KFH's role in recruiting national labor

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) honored Kuwait Finance House (KFH) for its pioneering role in providing field training opportunities during summer holidays to a group of Kuwaiti students, thus affirming KFH's continuous endeavor to enhance all activities related to the growth and development of the national factor and the caliber of the Kuwaiti youth in various ages and turn them into an effective working youth who can serve their country and society.

The honoring which was received by KFH Chief Human Resources Officer Zeyad Abdullah Al-Omar, from the Deputy Director-General at the Public Authority for Manpower for National Labor Affairs Sultan Al-Shalabi, has affirmed and reiterated the significant and continuous cooperation between the two sides. The honoring came on

the back of KFH participation in the training of a group of students as part of a comprehensive and condensed program aiming to qualify them for working in the private sector or solely through business pioneering initiatives. Also, it aimed to train them on the market mechanisms and encourage them to head towards self-employment according to their capabilities. The training period which the students spent at KFH has developed and guided their skills, instigated their powers and deepened several administrative rules, models and applications that would help them to achieve success in their practical life.

On this occasion, Omar reiterated KFH's tendency to enhance and support government plans and policies, thus aiming to rebalance the distribution of national manpower to non-government business sectors. He indicated

that the national factor has contributed and still contributes to the success of KFH through an integrated work team comprising highly distinguished employees who are working relentlessly to develop skills, powers, and abilities in various aspects of business and in different activities to achieve the aspirations and ambitions of KFH and its customers.

Omar added that even though KFH has become the destination of most graduates who look forward to work therein and share its remarkable success in various fields, yet youth and students training has acquired the same level of interest and appreciation from KFH management i.e., the recruitment process. KFH is fully convinced that the human factor is the main pivot of success for any organization.

KFH's practices in the field of national human resources employment and training are considered as a significant and strategic addition to the private sector efforts in enhancing the state development project of the state by opening the field for the youth, refurbishing their experience, developing their practical skills and scientific abilities as per a high-level training and



**KUWAIT:** KFH Chief Human Resources Officer Zeyad Al-Omar is honored.

development program.

The prizes and appreciations achieved by KFH's affirm the success of its policies and efforts in the field of training and development. Also, they reiterate KFH's keenness to attract Kuwaiti fresh graduates and recruit them after undergoing highly devel-

oped training sessions and programs e.g., Forsa Program for distinguished Kuwaiti graduates. The program is prepared in accordance with the highest levels of global standards in the field of the development and growth of human capabilities to instigate youth energy and innovation.

## Security review after British...

Continued from Page 1

House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle promised no "knee-jerk reactions" but told Sky News: "We will take further measures if we need to". Tobias Ellwood, a Conservative MP who tried to save a stabbed police officer during a 2017 terror attack near the Houses of Parliament, on Twitter urged "a temporary pause in face-to-face meetings" until the security review is complete.

Labour MP Harriet Harman also urged greater protection for MPs, telling the BBC: "We cannot have the death of an MP being a price worth paying for our democracy." Conservative MP David Davis, however,

told Sky News that pausing meetings with constituents "would be the wrong thing to do", calling them "critical to the operation of British democracy".

MPs and their staff have been attacked before, although it is rare. But their safety was thrown into sharp focus by Brexit, which stoked deep political divisions and has led to often angry, partisan rhetoric. Cox's killer repeatedly shouted "Britain first" before shooting and stabbing the 41-year-old MP outside her constituency meeting near Leeds, northern England.

Amess was at the other end of the political spectrum and backed Brexit. A specialist police unit set up to investigate threats against MPs in the aftermath said 678 crimes against lawmakers were reported between 2016 and 2020. Most (582) were for malicious communications, although other crimes included harassment (46), terrorism (nine), threats (seven), and common assault (three). — AFP

## Russia tops 1,000 daily...

Continued from Page 1

not "overwhelmed" and prepared to take in the rising number of patients.

Authorities have blamed Russians for the growing outbreak. Health Minister Mikhail Murashko this week pointed to their "behavior", while Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said everything had been done to give the public the chance to "save their lives by getting vaccinated". While several Russian-

developed jabs have been available for months, many people remain vaccine-sceptic. Independent polls show more than half of Russians do not plan to get a shot.

"The main preventive measure that helps protect a person and helps to avoid a fatal outcome is vaccination," Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova said on national television yesterday. In Moscow, residents in interviews yesterday questioned the efficacy of getting vaccinated. "How many people die per day from the flu or heart attacks or strokes?" said Alexei Kuznetsov, a 48-year-old entrepreneur, who added that he had not been vaccinated. "I do not really understand why this particular figure is causing such a serious stir."

Anna Nazarova, a 25-year-old anesthesiologist,

Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. Scientists believe they hold vital clues about the composition and physical conditions in the protoplanetary disk from which all the Sun's planets, including Earth, formed.

They are broadly grouped into two swarms - the leading swarm is one-sixth a lap ahead of Jupiter while the trailing swarm is one-sixth behind. "One of the really surprising things about the Trojans, when we started to study them from the ground, is how different they are from one another, particularly with their colors," said Hal Levison, the mission's key scientist. Some are gray, while others are red - with the differences indicating how far away from the Sun they might have formed before assuming their present trajectory. — AFP

## NASA launches probe to explore...

Continued from Page 1

within 400 km of their surfaces, and use its onboard instruments and large antenna to investigate their geology, including composition, mass, density and volume. The Jupiter Trojan asteroids, thought to number well over 7,000, are leftover raw materials from the formation of our solar system's giant planets - Jupiter,

## Fully vaccinated travelers can visit...

Continued from Page 1

Not all the technical and logistical details of the new policy have been announced. But officials had previously outlined it, saying that vaccinated air passengers will need to be tested within three days before travel, and airlines will be required to put in place a contact tracing system. US health authorities have said that all vaccines approved by the Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization would be accepted for entry by air.

At the moment, this includes the AstraZeneca,

Johnson & Johnson, Moderna, Pfizer/BioNTech, Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines. Earlier this week, a White House source said the land border opening would happen in two phases. Initially, vaccines will be required for "non-essential" trips - such as visiting family or tourism - although unvaccinated travelers will still be allowed into the country for "essential" trips, as they have been for the last year and a half.

A second phase beginning in early Jan 2022 will require all visitors to be fully vaccinated to enter the United States by land, no matter the reason for their trip. The new schedule means the land border restrictions, which had been set to expire on Oct 21, will have to be extended one more time before the new rules enter into force, the White House official indicated. Despite the strict border closures, the United States has not mandated vaccines for domestic air travel. — AFP

## IS claims attack on mosque...

Continued from Page 1

The group, bitter rivals of fellow Sunni Islamist movement the Taliban, who swept back to power in Afghanistan in August as the United States and its allies withdrew, regards Shiite Muslims as heretics.

UK-based conflict analysis firm ExTrac said Friday's assault was the first by IS-K in Kandahar, and the fourth mass casualty massacre since the Taliban took Kabul. Researcher Abdul Sayed told AFP the attack "challenged the Taliban claims of holding control on the country. If the Taliban can't protect Kandahar from an IS-K attack, how could it protect the rest of the country?"

The killings triggered international condemnation. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres condemned the "despicable attack" and demanded those using violence to restrict Afghans' religious freedom be brought to justice. At the gravesides, mourner Gul Ahmad told AFP of his grief over his brother's slaying: "He had two little children. He had a home to live in. He had everything. The pain of the loss cannot be described with words."

The all-male crowd brought body after body, shrouded in white sheets, as a dust storm was whipped up by the constant digging. "The world will remember

this. The Islamic world will remember this barbarism, specifically the dignified people of Afghanistan," warned another mourner, Muhammad Agha. Inside the mosque, after the blast, the walls were pockmarked by shrapnel and volunteers swept up debris in the ornately painted prayer hall. Rubble lay in an entrance corridor.

In the wake of the explosions, Kandahar police chief Maulvi Mehmood said security for the mosque had been provided by guards from the Shiite community but that following the "brutal attack" the Taliban would take charge of its protection. Witnesses spoke of gunfire alongside the explosions, and a security guard assigned to protect the mosque said three of his comrades had been shot as the bombers fought their way in.

Sayed Rohullah told AFP: "It was the Friday prayer time, and when we were preparing I heard shots. Two people had entered the mosque. They had opened fire on the guards and in response the guards had also opened fire on them. One of them committed a suicide blast inside the mosque." Other bombs were detonated in crowded areas outside the main building, he and other witnesses said.

US State Department spokesman Ned Price said Washington condemned the attack and reiterated a call for the "Taliban to live up to the commitment it has made to counterterrorism, and specifically to taking on the shared threat we face from ISIS-K". "We are determined to see to it that no group... can ever again use Afghan soil as a launching pad for attacks on the United States or other countries." — AFP



Local

# One dead, three injured in King Fahad Road crash

## Senior citizen hospitalized after Ardhiya home blaze



KUWAIT: A handout photo released by Kuwait Fire Force yesterday shows firemen at the site of a fatal accident on King Fahad Road.



A handout photo released by Kuwait Fire Force shows a vehicle that was involved in a fatal crash on Sixth Ring Road.



A fireman evacuates a child from a building in Riggae where a fire was reported.

KUWAIT: A man died and three others were injured in an accident reported yesterday at King Fahad Road. Firemen and paramedics rushed to the scene in response to an emergency call reporting a horrific crash on the road in front of Bayan Palace. One person was pronounced dead on the scene, while three others were rushed to hospital for treatment, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) said in a press statement. An investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the accident. KFF had also reported a fatal accident on Sixth Ring Road which left one motorist dead. Firemen used special equipment to cut the wrecked car open and retrieve the victim's body from the vehicle, KFF noted.

that an investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire. Furthermore, firemen extinguished a fire reported in a Salmiya hotel on Friday. Two civilians suffered from smoke inhalation as one was treated onsite while the other was taken to hospital, KFF noted.

### Alcohol and drugs

Separately, the Interior Ministry announced yesterday that police arrested three people in possession of a large number of alcoholic drinks with the intention to distribute. Detectives had first arrested a person suspected in trading with liquor, and further investigations led to the arrest of his two other accomplices, the ministry explained in a press statement. The three were taken to the proper authorities to face charges.



### Police arrest three bootleggers

In a separate case, police arrested two persons in possession of captagon pills with the intention to sell. The two were caught in an ambush while a third suspect managed to escape. A total of 375 drug pills were found with the suspects, in addition to



Damage left by a fire reported in a Riggae building.

possession of captagon pills with the intention to sell. The two were caught in an ambush while a third suspect managed to escape. A total of 375 drug pills were found with the suspects, in addition to

cash which they said was collected from drug sale, the ministry noted in a press release. The suspects were taken to the proper authorities while search is ongoing for their accomplice.

## Arab Parliament honors Kuwaiti girl

CAIRO: The Arab Parliament, headed by Adel Al-Asoumi, yesterday honored Kuwaiti young girl Ghala Al-Mutairi who has recently taken over as Second Deputy Speaker of the Arab Parliament for Children. Mutairi said she was proud of having been awarded during the opening session of the second session of the Arab Parliament's third legislative term, and of having been invited to attend its sittings.

She boasted that Kuwait has always been a "birthplace for creative people", citing the recent win by three Kuwaiti children of senior posts of the Arab Parliament for Children as a relevant clear-cut paradigm. "Now that the State of Kuwait takes much care of its children, efforts in this regard would ultimately contribute to an aware and leading generation, given that today's child is unquestionably tomorrow's future," she said.

The Arab Parliament for Children, based in Sharjah in the UAE, is an opportunity for children to express their opinions, issues and needs. It also includes many meetings and various entertainment and enrichment activities. Recommendations of children arising from it are submitted to the Cairo-based League of Arab States for the purpose of discussing them and shedding light on the reality of children's life in the Arab world.

### Support for Palestine

Separately, Asoumi affirmed the Arab



CAIRO: A scene from the honoring ceremony.

Parliament's firm support for the Palestinian cause, and that during a speech before the opening session of the third legislative term of the Arab Parliament. He noted that he addressed letters to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the heads of regional parliaments and the Director-General of (UNESCO) regarding the crimes and systematic violations of the occupying forces in Al-Aqsa Mosque.

On the situation in Yemen, Asoumi called on the international community to take immediate and

urgent action and assume its legal and moral responsibility to stop the crimes committed by the "terrorist" Houthi militia and end the "tragic" situation there.

On Lebanon, he expressed concern over the tragic clashes that took place in the Lebanese capital two days ago and resulted in several deaths, calling all Lebanese parties to self-restraint and calm. Furthermore, he affirmed the Parliament's firm position on supporting Egypt and Sudan in protecting their water security and refusing to prejudice their legal and historical rights in the waters of the Nile River. — KUNA



Kuwait's Paralympic table tennis player Yaqoub Al-Khalifa poses with his medal.

## Kuwait's Khalifa third in Spanish Para table tennis open

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Paralympic table tennis player Yaqoub Al-Khalifa won third place in the men's singles competition of the Costa Brava Spanish Para Open 2021. Khalifa's win came following fierce competition with the participants from professional European teams, including Spain, France, UK and Russia.

Chairman of Kuwait's Paralympic Committee of Table Tennis, head of the Kuwaiti delegation to the tournament Duaij Al-Hajiri lauded Khalifa's achievement in the single's competition. He said the win came following very strong competition in the preliminaries and finals "against the best players from around the world." He noted that the draw had placed Khalifa in a difficult group "but he was able to advance all the way to the semifinals."

Meanwhile, Hajiri said that juniors Mohammad Al-Rashidi and Fahad Al-Otaibi had a positive participation, noting that they gave "an outstanding performance". The two will participate in the under 23 West Asia Tournament in Bahrain in November, he noted, expressing confidence in the team's ability to make the best achievements "under the unlimited support of the Paralympic Committee and its Chairman Nasser Al-Jandal, as well as the Public Authority for Sports and its Director General Dr Humoud Fulaith and his deputy Dr Saqer Al-Mulla."



KUWAIT: Interior Ministry personnel recently visited the Saleh Al-Shehab High School for Boys as part of its campaign to spread health awareness among students following the return of in campus learning.





## Local

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## Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** A picture taken by photographer Devajeet Datta (Instagram: @dattadevajeet) on January 24, 2021 shows sunrise over the beach at Messilah. (To have your picture featured in the Kuwait Times' 'Photo of the Day' section, please send your horizontal, high resolution and unedited photos to local@kuwaittimes.com, along with the full name and Instagram account, in addition to a description showing the picture's location and date taken)

## News in brief

## Kuwait oil price up to \$84.30 pb

**KUWAIT:** The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 77 cents to \$84.30 per barrel Friday as opposed to \$83.53 pb the day before, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. As for the Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate, the global prices of both closed upward with the first gaining 86 cents to reach \$84.86 per barrel and the latter going up 97 cents to reach \$82.28 pb.

## Kuwait condemns Houthi attacks

**KUWAIT:** The State of Kuwait strongly condemned the continued Houthi attempts to threaten the security of Saudi Arabia, most recently the attacks on the city of Jazan by a booby-trapped drone and Bab Al-Mandab strait with explosive boats, said Kuwait's Foreign Ministry Friday. The foreign ministry deplored the attacks as violating international laws and reflecting Houthi militia's systematic and deliberate determination to threaten maritime traffic and undermine regional security and stability. The ministry affirmed Kuwait's support for all measures being taken by the Kingdom to maintain its security and stability as well as the safety of citizens and residents on its territories.

## Kuwait mourns blast victims

**KUWAIT:** The State of Kuwait strongly condemned the attack that took place in Afghanistan's Kandahar mosque, causing a number of casualties, said the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry in a statement Friday. The statement also affirmed Kuwait's firm position against all forms of violence and manifestations of terrorism. Kuwait expresses sincere condolences to the victims' families, wishing speedy recovery for the wounded.

## Sheikh Mubarak discusses economic relations with German envoy

**KUWAIT:** Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah received at the White Palace the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Kuwait Stephen Mobs. The meeting was cordial, during which many common issues between the two countries were discussed. Sheikh Mubarak said that they discussed opportunities for developing the German-Kuwaiti economic and investment partnership in all sectors, including energy, construction, health, education, and technical training.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Mobs affirmed his country's keenness to develop its relations with the State of Kuwait, especially in the economy field. "Kuwait's stability, geographical location and its balanced policy encourages German companies to invest more in Kuwait because we consider Kuwait an important basis in the region's growth," he said, adding that Kuwait is "a pioneer in investing in the stable and sustainable German market."

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah said that Kuwait's economic position and its government's policy based on balance make the establishment and development of economic and investment relations distinct between the two friendly countries. At the end of the meeting, souvenirs were exchanged.



## NCM Investment honors Pakistan envoy, medics

**KUWAIT:** Vice-Chairman of NCM Investment, Nasser Abdulmohsen Al-Marri, welcomed the Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Syed Sajjad Haider at a dinner ceremony in honor of Pakistani nationals including the batch of medical and health cadres who arrived from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

This initiative brought together Pakistani dignitaries who have established a solid reputation in the business, medical and other fields. Recognizing the importance of the Pakistani community in contributing to Kuwait's economy, the invitation comes associating relations and enhancing cooperation between professional cadres of the two countries.

During the occasion, Marri stated, "I would like to thank all Pakistani citizens in the State of Kuwait for their talent, professional services and dedication to work, as Pakistanis have always been known for their love, sincerity, and faithfulness towards the work they do. I, being always present in the labor market, saw a lot of promising talents, bright minds and ideas from Pakistani individuals whom I have worked with."

Marri added, "During the period of my cooperation and participation in many investments and mutual fund projects between Pakistan and Kuwait, many organizations were formed. One of them is the Islamic Meezan Bank, which now has more than 800 branches. At that time, more than 18,000 job opportunities were created in Pakistan, which was an achievement. We found that Pakistan is ideal for investment and workforce there has potential to achieve tremendous goals."



Marri further indicated, "I would also like to commend the efforts of the Pakistani embassy and community members for the noble humanitarian role in organizing regular blood donation campaigns throughout the year. NCM Company always supports such events and sponsors these noble efforts. It is essential to mention that the newly arrived Pakistani medics have assisted in efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the country during the spike of infection."

Meanwhile, Pakistani Ambassador Haider expressed his views on the effectiveness of the bilateral relations between the two countries, saying, "We are pleased with the great love that the Pakistani people have for the Kuwaiti people. The State of Kuwait embraces about 100,000 Pakistani residents, and Pakistanis residing in the State of Kuwait have considered it like a second home for them."

The Pakistani Ambassador continued, "I encourage Pakistani residents in Kuwait to continue developing their skills and constantly increase their knowledge and participate in online training programs." Marri and Sajjad concluded the dinner with joint statements, wishing God would perpetuate security, safety, and stability for the two countries.

their Kuwaiti counterparts during the visit of the DARP delegation, she noted.

Kuwait's ambassador to the EU, NATO and Belgium, Jaseem Al-Budaiwi, said meanwhile that the National Assembly of Kuwait is looking forward to hosting the EP delegation, which will visit Kuwait from 2 till 5 November. "Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem is expected to chair the Kuwaiti side during the inter-parliamentary meeting with the EP delegation", he stated. The visit will include meetings with high ranking officials, with organization dealing with women empowerment and visit to a renewable energy plant and cultural sites, Budaiwi noted. The EP delegation will also meet NGO's and human rights organizations like they did when they last visited Kuwait in December 2018, he added.

On the other hand, Head of the Middle East, North Africa, Arabian Peninsula and Iraq division in the European External Action Service, the EU's foreign service Gabriel Vinals said, "Kuwait has been playing a very important role as a bridge-building and goodwill facilitator in the region and beyond." "Kuwait is a natural partner of the European Union when it comes to many regional and international endeavors", stressed Vinals. He expressed the EU's desire to continue working with Kuwait to implement many programs with the countries that offer plenty of opportunities for close cooperation. — KUNA

## EU Parliamentarians optimistic about visit to Kuwait

**BRUSSELS:** Participants in a webinar hosted by the European Parliament in Brussels recently have described Kuwait as a "natural partner of the European Union, the upcoming visit of an European Parliament Delegation to Kuwait will strengthen bilateral relations". The Chair of the European Parliament's delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula (DARP) Hannah Neuman, who hosted the webinar, praised the relations with Kuwait on both the parliamentary and diplomatic side. This was demonstrated by the "recent successful" visit of the speaker of Kuwait's National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem to the European Parliament, she noted.

"Our mission to Kuwait is supposed to further enhance our bilateral ties with Kuwait parliament as well to explore ways to re-enforce bilateral relations between the EP and the Gulf Cooperation Council", stressed the German MEP. Geo-political issues, social issues, women empowerment and climate change will be topics for discussions during the meetings with

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Chinese astronauts arrive at the station

Russia 'chased out' US navy ship from its waters

Page 6

Page 7

## India fears Taliban fallout in Kashmir

Troops stage raids and battle Kashmir militants



SRINAGAR: Indian security personnel stand guard in this file photo, near the site where a man was shot dead by unknown gunmen in the Karanagar area of downtown Srinagar. — AFP

SRINAGAR: As Prime Minister Narendra Modi set out his Taliban worries to world leaders this week, Indian forces staged raids and battled Kashmir militants who he fears could be emboldened by the Islamists' victory in Afghanistan. Kashmir rebel shootings of civilians and police, raids by the security forces on militant hideouts, and insurgent infiltrations across the India-Pakistan ceasefire line have all increased in the Muslim-majority region since the Taliban overran Kabul on August 15.

About 40 people have been killed in shootings and clashes in the two months since then in the Himalayan region, which has been divided since India and Pakistan became independent in 1947. Militants have targeted minority Hindu and Sikh civilians, while gun battles near the ceasefire line have also left soldiers and rebels dead.

India has not openly blamed the Taliban takeover for the uptick in violence, but it has intensified patrols near Pakistani Kashmir and fortified some army camps, according to residents and security officials who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity. Modi told a G20 summit in Rome earlier this week that international efforts were needed to make sure Afghanistan does not become a safe haven for "radicalisation and terrorism". He has also raised India's concerns with US President Joe Biden.

In September, he told the UN General Assembly that no country must be allowed to use Afghanistan "as a tool for its own selfish interests" - a comment widely seen as a reference to neighboring Pakistan, the chief backer of the Taliban's 1996-2001 regime.

This time, Islamabad has stopped short of recognizing the new Taliban government. Still, New Delhi accuses its arch-rival in Islamabad of fuelling Pakistan-based militant groups Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, which are blamed for many attacks in Kashmir. Pakistan denies the claim.



### Taliban takeover blamed for uptick in violence

#### Weapons and fighters

India was a backer of the Soviet-puppet government in Kabul that was overthrown by mujahideen forces in 1992. In 2001 it helped the US-led forces that toppled the Taliban. And it was a major donor to the government that the hardline Islamists crushed in August. Afghan militants fought alongside Kashmir fighters in the 1980s and 1990s.

About 20 Afghan "guest mujahideen" were killed and 10 were captured, according to a former Kashmiri fighter.

India worries that weapons and fighters could again reach the region, over which it has fought two wars against Pakistan. "What we can say and learn from the past is that when the previous Taliban regime was in power, that time definitely we had foreign terrorists of Afghan origin in Jammu and Kashmir," said India's military chief of staff General MM Naravane. "So there are reasons to believe that the same thing might happen once again."

#### 'Oxygen to our movement'

Protests are virtually impossible in Kashmir because of restrictions imposed by Delhi since the region's semi-autonomous status was revoked in 2019. But some in Kashmir have quietly welcomed the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan as a victory against the odds that they too can aspire to one day. "If they can defeat the world's largest military power, we see a possibility that we too can win our

freedom," one businessman in the main Kashmir city of Srinagar told AFP, declining to be named. A former Kashmir militant who trained in Afghanistan in the 1990s and fought alongside Afghan mujahideen in Kashmir added: "The Taliban victory has already supplied oxygen to our movement."

Given India's security clampdown on Kashmir, Naravane and other military chiefs are confident that Delhi can cope with any surge. But speaking on condition of anonymity, a senior security official in Kashmir said "there is some panic" inside the security establishment. Michael Kugelman, a South Asia specialist at the Wilson Centre in Washington, said Afghanistan's new rulers could inspire "stepped up unrest" in Kashmir.

Taliban officials have said they want to maintain trade and other ties with India, meaning that some kind of contact will have to be maintained. "The Taliban itself won't agitate for unrest in Kashmir, but those it is aligned with likely will do so," he said. Mosharraf Zaidi, a columnist and security analyst in Pakistan, said he saw no reason the Taliban would want to "deliberately agitate the Indian authorities". Their victory, he believes, is more important for the signal it sends to "young Kashmiri boys and girls watching the images from Afghanistan" — AFP

## Former US president Clinton hospitalized

IRVINE: Former US president Bill Clinton will spend another night in hospital, a spokesman said Friday, as he undergoes treatment for a reported case of sepsis. "All health indicators are trending in the right direction, including his white blood count which has decreased significantly. In order to receive further IV antibiotics he will remain in hospital overnight," said Clinton spokesman Angel Urena. Clinton, who led the United States from 1993 to 2001, was admitted Tuesday evening to the UCI Medical Center in Irvine, south of Los Angeles.

Urena said that Clinton, 75, was responding well to treatment for a non-Covid-related blood infection. The New York Times, quoting an aide, said the former president had been hospitalized after a urological infection developed into sepsis. Sepsis is an extreme bodily reaction to infection that affects 1.7 million people in America every year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It kills 270,000 of those infected every year.

"Infections that lead to sepsis most often start in the lung, urinary tract, skin, or gastrointestinal tract," the CDC says on its website. "Without timely treatment, sepsis can rapidly lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death." Photographs in US media showed his wife, former secretary of state and presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, visiting the hospital. President Joe Biden said he had spoken to Clinton. "He seems to be, God willing, doing well," Biden told

reporters. At the hospital on Friday there was a small visible police presence, and a large group of reporters.

#### Quadruple bypass

It was the latest health scare for America's 42nd president. In 2004, at age 58, he underwent a quadruple bypass operation after doctors found signs of extensive heart disease. Six years later he had stents implanted in his coronary artery. Known for a generous appetite that embraced fried foods, notably french fries, Clinton went clean and adopted a low-fat vegan diet. Since then he has lost substantial weight.

The former governor of Arkansas was elected president at age 46, the third-youngest president in US history. Garrulous, charming and well-read, he was a star for the Democratic Party and well-liked among fellow world leaders. He remained popular even after his second term in the White House was marred by an affair with the young intern Monica Lewinsky that snowballed into his impeachment for lying in relation to an investigation.

But he stepped away from the limelight as his wife Hillary plunged into her own political career, winning election as a senator from New York and training her own sights on the presidency. Despite his help, she lost the 2008 Democratic nomination to Barack Obama. In 2016 she won the Democratic nomination for president but lost the election to Republican Donald Trump.

#### Criticism of Trump

Bill Clinton meanwhile gave speeches, led his nonprofit, the Clinton Foundation, and helped raise money for the Democrats. In 2004 he published an autobiography, and in 2011 another volume on how to revive the economy. And since 2018 he has written two thrillers



Former US President Bill Clinton

together with best-selling novelist James Patterson. He has made brief returns to the political stage, helping his wife and others during election campaigns, and traveling to North Korea in 2009 to negotiate the freedom of two Americans held by the North Korean regime.

In January he and former presidents Obama, Jimmy Carter, and George W. Bush, came together to condemn the January 6 attack on the US Capitol, directly accusing then-president Trump of inciting it and of spreading baseless lies. But Clinton has also fought to avoid being pulled into the type of scandal that dogged his presidency. His name surfaced in the sex trafficking scandal around late financier Jeffrey Epstein, with a former aide and a victim both saying Clinton had visited the Caribbean island where Epstein took underage women for sex parties. Clinton knew Epstein but denied ever having visited the island. — AFP

## Cyprus to revoke 45 'golden passports'

NICOSIA: Nicosia said Friday it would revoke the citizenship of 45 foreign investors and relatives who obtained a Cypriot passport through its disgraced citizenship-by-investment scheme, which collapsed last year under corruption allegations. The cabinet based its decision on an independent inquiry into the program that recommended looking into rescinding citizenships and other actions in 102 cases, government spokesperson Marios Pelekanos said. "The cabinet decided to launch the revocation process for 39 investors and six members of their families," he said in a statement.

Cabinet would be examining a further six cases and monitoring another 47, he added. Former supreme court judge Myron Nikolatos headed an independent committee that conducted the inquiry into the issuing of so-called "golden passports" between 2007 and last year. The probe found there was "criminal and political" responsibility. "It is obvious the Cyprus Investment Program was operating between 2007 and 2020 with gaps and deficiencies, an inadequate legislative framework and almost no regulatory framework," Nikolatos had told reporters in June.

A damning report said that 53 percent of the 6,779 passports issued under the scheme were granted illegally, and pointed to a due diligence vacuum and insufficient background checks. The Mediterranean island scrapped the passport scheme

last November after the Al Jazeera broadcaster aired a documentary showing reporters posing as fixers for a fictitious Chinese businessman seeking a Cypriot passport despite having a criminal record.

Parliament speaker Demetris Syllouris and an opposition MP were secretly filmed allegedly trying to facilitate the process. They later resigned, although both insisted they were innocent of any wrongdoing. Al Jazeera reported that dozens of those who applied for passports through the program were under criminal investigation, international sanctions or even serving prison sentences. The scheme attracted wealthy foreign investors seeking a passport from EU member Cyprus that would allow free travel and residence within the 27-member bloc.

Nicosia had long faced pressure from Brussels to reform the scheme over concerns it may have helped organized crime gangs infiltrate the European Union. Cyprus argued it had attracted necessary investment following the island's 2013 economic meltdown. Nicosia issued thousands of passports under the scheme, allowing investors to acquire one in exchange for an investment of 2.5 million euros (\$3 million), netting a total of over seven billion euros for the state over the years. The European Commission had warned Nicosia over the passport scheme, launching a legal procedure against Cyprus that is still ongoing. — AFP



## International

# \$590 million in ransomware payments reported in 2021

## Cyber-extortion booms amid attacks

WASHINGTON: New data out Friday showed \$590 million in ransomware-related payments were reported to US authorities in the first half of 2021 alone, setting a pace to beat totals for the whole previous decade as cyber-extortion booms. The figure is also 42 percent higher than the amount divulged by financial institutions for all of 2020, the US Treasury report said, and there are strong indicators the true cost could be in the billions.

"If current trends continue, (reports) filed in 2021 are projected to have a higher ransomware-related transaction value than... filed in the previous 10 years combined," said Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network. The heists involve breaking into a company or institution's network to encrypt its data, then demanding a ransom, typically paid via cryptocurrency in exchange for the digital key to unlock it.

Washington has sought to crack down on a sharp rise in attacks, including issuing its first sanctions against an online exchange where illicit operators have allegedly swapped cryptocurrency for cash. Recent assaults on a major US oil pipeline, a meat-packing company and the Microsoft Exchange email system drew attention to the vulnerability of US infrastructure to digital pirates who are extorting staggering sums.

Treasury said investigators found over 150 online wallets for cryptocurrency and by analyzing them uncovered roughly \$5.2 billion in transactions potentially tied to ransomware payments. Companies and institutions face intense pressure to pay up in order to get their data unlocked, but also

to keep the attack from potentially angry clients and authorities who issue stern warnings not to give cash to criminals.

### Threat to critical infrastructure

The report, based on the suspicious activity alerts that financial firms have to file, noted it was unclear if the jump represented increased awareness of the cybercrime. "This trend potentially reflects the increasing overall prevalence of ransomware-related incidents as well as improved detection and reporting," Treasury said. The victims



## US tries to crack down on sharp rise in attacks

of the attacks were not identified in the report, which noted some of the apparent ransoms were paid before January 2021. The new data on the scale of payments related to hacks came after more than two dozen nations resolved to collectively fight ransomware during a Washington-led summit.

The United States gathered the countries-with the notable exception of Russia-to unify and boost



ARLINGTON: A screen displays the Darkside Onionsite address with a notice saying it could not be found. Servers for Darkside were taken down by unknown actors after the cyber extortionist forced the shutdown of a large US oil pipeline in a ransomware scam. — AFP

efforts to fight a cybercrime that is transnational, on the rise and potentially devastating. Stronger digital security and offline backups as well as collectively targeting the laundering of the attacks' proceeds were identified as crucial steps in the fight. "We will consider all national tools available in taking action against those responsible for ransomware operations threatening critical infrastructure and public safety," the nations said in a joint statement.

Great Britain, Australia, India, Japan, France, Germany, South Korea, the European Union, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, and others were among those that joined in the virtual gathering on Wednesday and Thursday. During the summit, nations recounted their agonizing experiences with cyber-extortion, including a digital "disaster" declaration in Germany and Israel even announcing a blitz was underway against a major hospital. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Thief flees in tractor

SYDNEY: A thief in a tractor has led police on a destructive chase through suburban streets and onto train lines in Australia, after allegedly stealing motorbikes from a shopfront. Queensland Police released dramatic footage of the moment a farm vehicle ploughed into a motorbike store's window early Friday morning in Ipswich, west of Brisbane. According to police, the driver then got out of the cabin and attached two motorbikes to a boom on the front of the vehicle before driving off. But as the tractor attempted to flee police vehicles, the boom and the two bikes were dropped onto the road. The tractor then hurtled along roads and damaged fences before crashing through a gate onto a rail line while police followed. Trains were stopped as the vehicle fled along the railway, cut through bushland and backyards before eventually sliding into a tree.—AFP

#### Bali earthquake kills 3

JAKARTA: Three people were killed yesterday when an earthquake struck the Indonesian tourist island Bali, the disaster agency said. The 4.8 magnitude quake struck at a relatively shallow depth of 10 kilometers northeast of the town of Banjar Wanasari. Shallow quakes tend to do more damage than deep tremors. Two people died when the quake triggered a landslide that buried their house in Bangli regency while another person was killed in the port town of Karangasem, officials said. The death toll was not expected to rise, they added. "The quake was felt strongly for five seconds," said disaster agency spokesman Abdul Muhari. "People were panicking and ran from their houses when the quake hit." — AFP

#### ASEAN shuns Myanmar junta

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN: Myanmar's junta chief will be excluded from an upcoming ASEAN summit, the group said yesterday, a rare rebuke as concerns rise over the military government's commitment to defusing a bloody crisis. Foreign ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations agreed at an emergency meeting late Friday that a "non-political representative" for Myanmar be invited to the October 26-28 summit, current ASEAN chair Brunei said in a statement. The decision effectively excluded junta leader Min Aung Hlaing. The bloc, widely criticized as a toothless organization, took a strong stand after the junta rebuffed requests for a special envoy to meet with all parties concerned—a phrase seen to include ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi. — AFP

#### 5 DR Congo colonels jailed

BUNIA: Five army and police colonels received ten-year jail terms Friday in DR Congo for embezzlement in the country's northeast. A military court in the northeastern Ituri region handed down the sentences to four army colonels and a policeman of the same rank. Two other army colonels received 12-month terms and the tribunal acquitted a further two following a trial which began on September 17 after their arrest in late July. Those convicted were found to have siphoned off funds allocated to purchase rations for troops on active duty in Ituri. The provinces of Ituri and North-Kivu have been under a state of siege since May 6, with troops fighting armed groups which have been terrorizing local communities. — AFP

## Russia 'chased out' US navy ship from its waters

WASHINGTON: Moscow said Friday that one of its warships chased away a US Navy destroyer after it attempted to violate Russia's territorial waters in the Sea of Japan, but Washington denied this. The incident took place as Russia and China were conducting naval exercises in the area. The Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement that at around 5 pm local time, the destroyer USS Chafee, which had been operating in the Sea of Japan for several days, "approached the territorial waters of the Russian Federation and attempted to cross the border."

Russia's Admiral Tributs destroyer issued a warning to the US ship "about the inadmissibility of such actions." However, the USS Chafee ignored the warning and "took action to violate the national border of the Russian Federation," according to the Russian

Defense Ministry. "Acting within the framework of the international rules of navigation, the Admiral Tributs set a course for ousting the intruder from the Russian territorial waters."

After that, the USS Chafee turned around and set off "on the opposite course" when it was less than 60 meters away from the Russian ship. The US Navy dismissed the Russian account as "false." It said in a statement that its ship "was conducting routine operations in international water in the Sea of Japan" when a Russian destroyer came within approximately 65 yards of the USS Chafee "while the ship was preparing for flight operations." "The interaction was safe and professional," the US navy said.

The US Navy acknowledged that Russia had notified it that it was conducting maneuvers in the area, but the



DANANG: The guided missile destroyer USS Chafee is seen anchored as a group of Vietnamese navy's officers attend a disaster control training with US sailors at Tien Sa port in the central city of Danang. A Russian and US warship came close to an incident on October 15, 2021 in the Sea of Japan. — AFP

notice "was not in effect at the time of the interaction." The US ship "conducted operations in accordance with international law and custom," the statement read. "The United States will continue to fly, sail, and operate where international law allows."

Incidents involving the Russian Navy are rare in the Pacific. The region is dominated by China, which takes a dim view of the United States and its allies patrolling the region's international waters to assert their right to freedom of navigation. — AFP

## Lausanne tackles toxic soil after a shock discovery

LAUSANNE: Lausanne, the capital of Olympic sport overlooking Lake Geneva, is reeling after discovering that much of its soil is polluted with toxic compounds belched out by an old incinerator. The situation, which has troubling implications for children and eating home-grown food, is unprecedented in wealthy Switzerland, which prides itself on its pristine mountains, lakes and pastures.

A domestic waste incineration plant in the Alpine nation's fourth-biggest city - closed since in 2005 - is being blamed for the dioxin fall-out. Dioxins, which belong to the so-called 'dirty dozen' dangerous chemicals known as persistent organic pollutants, have the potential to be highly toxic. They have been shown to affect several organs and systems. The problem was discovered by sheer chance between January and May this year at a planned new ecological allotment in the city.

For years, pollution monitoring had focused on air and water. "As we did not look for dioxins, we never found them," Natacha Litzistorf, the city councilor for the environment, told AFP. The discovery triggered soil analysis measurements at 126 sites across the city. Experts also looked at the risks associated with exposure to polluted soils.

## I Coast's Gbagbo takes new step to presidency

ABIDJAN: Laurent Gbagbo, with a decade-long exile behind him, this weekend embarks on a path he hopes will return him to Ivory Coast's presidency at the helm of a new party. "This is the grand return of Laurent Gbagbo to the political scene," his spokesman Justin Kone Katinan told AFP ahead of the launch.

Gbagbo will oversee the new party's congress on Saturday and Sunday as he seeks to "reunite the left" and use the occasion as a springboard to the 2025 presidential election. The 76-year-old, whose 2000-2011 rule was marked by turbulence and division in the world's biggest cocoa producer, has



LAUSANNE: An aerial picture shows the place of a now dismantled domestic waste incineration plant blamed for dioxin pollution in Lausanne. — AFP

### Pollution map

This week Lausanne announced that those studies found the dioxin levels, and the expanse of the affected area, were much worse than previously thought. The city has issued a map showing four concentric rings, with zones containing concentrations in the soil of 20-50 nanograms (ng) per kilogram, 50-100, 100-200 and then above 200 in the middle. A peak of 640 was recorded in the city centre. The affected zone stretches 5.25 kilometers inland and measures around 3.6 kilometers across.

People are instructed to wash fruit and vegetables grown in gardens and allotments and wash their hands after touching soil. In zones with more than 100 ng toxic equivalent per kg, root vegetables

grown in the area must be washed and peeled. Courgettes, cucumbers, gherkins, squashes, marrows and melons grown in the soil should not be eaten.

In all the affected zones, people should not eat chickens raised on the soil, offer or sell eggs from such chickens, while only those in the 20-50 zone can eat their eggs - though just one per week. Parents must also stop infants aged under four from ingesting soil, for example by touching their mouths after playing on the ground. Warning signs have been installed around the city's parks and playgrounds.

### 'Tempt the devil'

The concentric circles appear to lead to only one source. "We quickly suspected the cause was linked to a former incinerator," Litzistorf said. The Vallon plant opened in 1958 and was initially welcomed as a way of dealing with the city's garbage. "At the time, it was thought much better to site waste incinerators in the city centre to protect agriculture in the countryside," Litzistorf explained. The dioxin pollution dates from 1958 to 1982, when the Vallon filters were upgraded to environmental norms.

Didier Burgi, who owns a vegetable garden plot, said the discovery had sparked questions among veteran home growers. "We are not going to eat the squashes. We don't have a lot of them, but there was specific information about them and we're not going to tempt the devil," he told AFP. The major Chatelard allotment, by the new football stadium on the edge of the city, heard Thursday that it had readings under 20 ng. — AFP

Pan-African dimension. Indeed one of the major congress themes will be African sovereignty in the face of the abiding influence of Western powers. The new party hopes to reshape domestic debate in a country where the opposition has become increasingly hollowed out over the past decade.

"We want to constitute a normal opposition party which brings a critique" to the table to enable "debate to leave violence behind and become essentially political," says Kone Katinan. "We are waiting to see if this will be a real opposition or a party seeking power. We shall see how they go about things, what will be their alternative program," notes political analyst Sylvain N'Guessan. Crimping Gbagbo's ambitions could be a bill designed to limit the age of presidential candidates to 75. He will turn 80 in 2025. It remains unclear just who else will serve at the apex of the new party, though numerous former FPI big names are expected to pin their colors to Gbagbo's mast. — AFP



## International

# Chinese astronauts arrive at the space station for longest mission

## The latest landmark in drive to become a major space power

BEIJING: Three astronauts successfully docked with China's new space station yesterday on what is set to be Beijing's longest crewed mission to date and the latest landmark in its drive to become a major space power. The three blasted off shortly after midnight from the Jiuquan launch centre in northwestern China's Gobi desert, the China Manned Space Agency said, with the team expected to spend six months at the Tiangong

Pictures released by the space agency showed the three astronauts waving to wellwishers who held up slogans of encouragement at a send-off ceremony before the launch.

A previous record-breaking crew-making the first mission to Tiangong-returned to Earth in September after spending three months on the space station. China's heavily promoted space program has already seen the nation land a rover on Mars and send probes to the moon. Tiangong, meaning "heavenly palace", is expected to operate for at least 10 years. Its core module entered orbit earlier this year, with the station expected to be operational by 2022.

The completed station will be similar to the Soviet Mir station that orbited Earth from the 1980s until 2001. The latest mission is set to "expand China's technological boundary" and verify the space station system's capacity for a longer duration of human occupation. Chen Lan, an independent space analyst at GoTaikonauts said. "I don't think it is very challenging, as China's technologies (are) quite mature, though anything in space is always challenging," Chen said.



JIUQUAN: A Long March-2F carrier rocket, carrying the Shenzhou-13 spacecraft with the second crew of three astronauts to China's new space station, lifts off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in the Gobi desert in northwest China yesterday. — AFP

potentially remain functional beyond 2028. Chinese space authorities have said they are open to foreign collaboration on the space station, although the scope of that cooperation is as yet unclear.

The country has come a long way since launching its first satellite in 1970. It put the first Chinese "taikonaut" in space in 2003 and landed the Chang'e-4 robot on the far side of the Moon in 2019 - a historic first. China in

May became the second nation to land and operate a rover on Mars. Astronauts on the Tiangong space station will have separate living spaces, exercise equipment and a communication centre for emails and video calls with ground control. State broadcaster CCTV said astronauts had also packed special food and supplies to celebrate the Lunar New Year during their long mission, including dumplings. — AFP



### Tiangong to operate for at least 10 years

space station.

The space agency declared the launch a success and said the crew "were in good shape". The Shenzhou-13 vessel carrying the three completed its docking with the radial port of the space station less than seven hours after the launch. The mission, which is expected to last twice as long as a previous 90-day visit, will involve the crew setting up equipment and testing technology for future construction on the Tiangong station.

Mission commander Zhai Zhigang, 55, a former fighter pilot who performed the country's first spacewalk in 2008, said the team would undertake "more complex" spacewalks than during previous missions. The crew include military pilot Wang Yaping, 41, who is the first woman to visit the space station after becoming China's second woman in space in 2013. The other team member is People's Liberation Army pilot Ye Guangfu, 41.

### Space race

Yesterday's blast-off came shortly after China launched its first solar exploration satellite into space, equipped with a telescope to observe changes in the Sun. The Chinese space agency is planning a total of 11 missions to Tiangong through to the end of next year, including at least two more crewed launches that will deliver two lab modules to expand the 70-tonne station.

China's space ambitions have been fuelled in part by a US ban on its astronauts on the International Space Station, a collaboration among the United States, Russia, Canada, Europe and Japan. The ISS is due for retirement after 2024, although NASA has said it could

## China's 'space dream': A long march to the Moon and beyond

BEIJING: The arrival of three astronauts at China's new space station yesterday marks a landmark step in its space ambitions, its longest crewed mission to date. The world's second-largest economy has put billions into its military-run space program, with hopes of having a permanently crewed space station by 2022 and eventually sending humans to the Moon. The country has come a long way in catching up with the United States and Russia, whose astronauts and cosmonauts have decades of experience in space exploration. Here is a look at China's space program, and where it is headed:

### Mao's vow

Soon after the Soviet Union launched Sputnik in 1957, Chairman Mao Zedong pronounced: "We too will make satellites." It took more than a decade, but in 1970, China launched its first satellite on a Long March rocket. Human spaceflight took decades longer, with Yang Liwei becoming the first Chinese "taikonaut" in 2003. As the launch approached, concerns over the viability of the mission caused Beijing to cancel a live television broadcast at the last minute. But it went smoothly, with Yang orbiting the Earth 14 times during a 21-hour flight aboard the Shenzhou 5. China has launched seven crewed missions since.

### Space station and 'Jade Rabbit'

Following in the footsteps of the United States and Russia, China has planned to build its own space station circling the planet. The Tiangong-1 lab was launched in 2011. In 2013, the second Chinese woman in space, Wang Yaping, gave a video class from inside the space module to children across the world's most populous country.

The craft was also used for medical experiments and, most importantly, tests intended to prepare for the construction of a space station. That was followed by the "Jade Rabbit" lunar rover in 2013, which initially appeared a dud when it turned dormant and stopped sending signals back to Earth. It made a dramatic recovery, however, ultimately surveying the Moon's surface for 31 months—well beyond its expected lifespan. In 2016, China launched its second orbital lab, the Tiangong-2. Astronauts who visited the station have run experiments on growing rice and other plants.

## Lebanon on edge after sectarian flare-up

BEIRUT: Lebanon buried the victims Friday of its deadliest sectarian unrest in years after gunfire gripped central Beirut for hours and revived the ghosts of the civil war. Seven people died and dozens were wounded when violence erupted Thursday following a rally by Shiite Muslim protesters demanding the dismissal of the judge investigating last year's devastating Beirut port blast. The Shiite movements Amal and Hezbollah that organized the protest in front of the Justice Palace accused the Lebanese Forces (LF) Christian party of engineering the chaos by aiming sniper fire at the demonstrators.

"This massacre was committed by the LF movement," senior Hezbollah official Hashem Safieddine said during a Beirut funeral on Friday, accusing the party of seeking to "start a civil war". "We will not be dragged into sectarian strife... but at the same time we cannot allow the blood of our martyrs to go to waste," he added. In Beirut's southern suburbs, Hezbollah held burials for two of its members as well as a woman who was shot in the head by a stray bullet while she was standing on her balcony. Hundreds of mourners chanting in support of the Iran-backed group carried caskets wrapped in the party's yellow flag as prayers rang out

### 'Space dream'

Under President Xi Jinping, plans for China's "space dream" have been put into overdrive. China is looking to finally catch up with the United States and Russia after years of belatedly matching their milestones. Besides a space station, China is also planning to build a base on the Moon, and the country's National Space Administration said it aims to launch a crewed lunar mission by 2029.

But lunar work was dealt a setback in 2017 when the Long March-5 Y2, a powerful heavy-lift rocket, failed to launch on a mission to send communication satellites into orbit. That forced the postponement of the Chang'e-5 launch, originally scheduled to collect Moon samples in the second half of 2017. Another robot, the Chang'e-4, landed on the far side of the Moon in January 2019 - a historic first.

This was followed by one that landed on the near side of the Moon last year, raising a Chinese flag on the lunar surface. The unmanned spacecraft returned to Earth in December with rocks and soil—the first lunar samples collected in four decades. And in February 2021, the first images of Mars were sent back by the five-tonne Tianwen-1, which then landed a rover on the Martian surface in May that has since started to explore the surface of the Red Planet.

### Palace in the sky

A trio of astronauts docked successfully yesterday with the core Tianhe module of the Chinese space station, which was placed in orbit on April 29. The astronauts are set to stay at the station for six months, China's longest crewed mission to date and double the duration of the first crewed mission to Tiangong completed earlier this year. The Chinese space station Tiangong—meaning "heavenly palace"—will need a total of around 11 missions to bring more parts and assemble them in orbit. Once completed, it is expected to remain in low Earth orbit at between 400 and 450 kilometers above our planet for at least 10 years—realizing an ambition to maintain a long-term human presence in space. While China does not plan to use its space station for global cooperation on the scale of the International Space Station, Beijing said it is open to foreign collaboration. It is not yet clear how extensive that cooperation will be.—AFP

## Over 180 Houthi rebels killed south of Marib

RIYADH: The Saudi-led coalition supporting Yemen's government said Friday it had killed more than 180 Houthi rebels in strikes south of the strategic city of Marib. An operation "destroyed 10 military vehicles and killed more than 180 terrorist elements" in Abdiya and surrounding areas, south of Marib, the coalition said, cited by the official Saudi Press Agency. The coalition has said hundreds of Iran-backed rebels have been killed in the battle for Marib in recent days. The rebels rarely comment on losses and the toll could not be independently verified by AFP. The Yemeni civil war began in 2014 when the Houthis seized the capital Sanaa, 120 kilometers west of Marib, prompting Saudi-led forces to intervene to prop up the government the following year. Tens of thousands of people have died and millions have been displaced in what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis. The Houthis began a major push to seize Marib in February and, after a lull, they have renewed their offensive in recent weeks.

Tens of thousands of people have been displaced in the province this year, nearly 10,000 of them in September alone, according to the UN migration agency. The UN called on Thursday for a halt to the fighting in Abdiya district, the focus of the latest Saudi-led strikes. Marib, Shabwa and Al-Bayda provinces have all seen an escalation in fighting in recent weeks, resulting in "a devastating impact on civilians", the UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen, David Gressly, said. The security situation has been particularly difficult in Abdiya, where the UN says the movement of aid and some 35,000 people has been "extremely restricted", including for 17,000 "extremely vulnerable" people displaced from other areas of the country.—AFP



FARAH, Afghanistan: Former female radio presenter Marya Sultani watches during an interview with AFP at radio station Urooj in Farah province. — AFP

## Vibrant Afghan radio reduced to religious relic

FARAH: Radio station Urooj once teemed with journalists producing news bulletins, but since the Taliban came to town, Ebrahim Parhar sits alone, broadcasting hours of religious sermons. Parhar launched Urooj, which means "The Rising" in Pashto, in the western city of Farah six years ago, carefully selecting a diverse range of programs for an audience long deprived of media. "We had religious, political, social, and music programs," he told AFP, adding that up until two months ago, the station broadcast different programs for 19 hours a day. But when the hardline Islamist Taliban swept to power mid-August, vowing to restore sharia law, everything changed. "Unfortunately, of all the programs, only one is left, which is religious," said the clean-shaven 35-year-old with short, dark hair and piercing blue eyes, pouring tea at his desk loaded with broadcasting equipment. "We prepare a playlist in the morning and replay it during the day because there is no live programming."

He has had to sack all of his 18 employees, eight of them women. "We have dismissed them all," he said, pointing out that "all the contracts and advertisements we had are cancelled now". "If the current situation persists, it is very likely that we will need to close this radio station." Marya Sultani, a former news anchor at the station, said the Taliban's arrival had dashed her dream of becoming a famous journalist in Farah province. "That wish came true, and I became a journalist, but now with the return of (the Taliban), everything has come to an end," the 25-year-old, wearing a black shawl over her head, told AFP. She sat in front of a large microphone in the sound-proofed studio where she used to work, during a visit to see her former colleague. After working for five years as a journalist, she is now "unemployed and sitting at home", terrified that she might face reprisal attacks for having worked as a journalist. "I am afraid that someone may harm me," she said.

### 'Don't feel safe'

The Taliban, notorious for their brutal and repressive rule of the 1990s, had said they would respect women's rights in line with sharia law, but nearly two months in, women have been largely prevented from working. Press freedom and rights groups have said the Taliban have imposed numerous new rules on journalists, including banning any reports that "are contrary to Islam", "insult public figures" or concern "matters that have not been confirmed by officials". The Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC) says more than 70 percent of media outlets in the country have closed. At the same time, large numbers of journalists have either fled the country or gone into hiding, leaving the media landscape in the country at its lowest level in 20 years, according to the AJSC. Some of those that have continued to work have been detained and beaten when attempting to cover anti-Taliban protests. Parhar said he was "very worried" for his safety and that of his former colleagues.—AFP



BEIRUT: A member of Lebanon's Hezbollah movement fires his gun during the funeral of some of their members who were killed during clashes in the Tayouneh neighborhood of the capital Beirut's southern suburbs. — AFP

from loudspeakers. Gunshots were fired in the air and flowers laid on caskets at funerals in southern and eastern Lebanon for three Amal Movement supporters who died in the flare-up. The LF has strenuously denied any involvement in Thursday's violence and said Hezbollah was "invading" off-limits neighborhoods when the violence broke out. A heavy army presence was visible on the streets Friday amid fears of an escalation.

### 'Hysteria'

On Thursday, hundreds of Amal and Hezbollah militiamen filled the streets around Tayouneh, a notorious flashpoint of the 1975-90 civil war. As bullets riddled residential facades, and fighters wearing ammunition

vests took over the streets and emptied their magazines haphazardly, civilians crouched in terror inside their own homes. When bursts of gunfire rang out near her Adlieh home, Jumanah Zabaneh, 45, braved stray bullets to pick up her two daughters from school, where she said scenes of "hysteria" played out.

The journey home was packed with danger. "The gunfire was so close, we had to duck every two meters," she said. "We hid behind cars, at the entrances to buildings, behind utility poles." France, the US and the UN appealed for de-escalation but also insisted on allowing the port explosion investigation to continue unhindered. Saudi Arabia urged Lebanese leaders to make "a real choice to lift Lebanon out of the morass it is in now".—AFP



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2021

# Business

## Zain showcased its 5G success story at Huawei's MBBF in Dubai

**Nawaf Al Gharabally: Zain at the forefront offering the latest telecom technologies to its customers**

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, showcased its 5G deployment success story and the company's leadership as the first operator to commercially launch this revolutionary technology in the Kuwaiti market, as well as launching the region's largest 5G network in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The company participated in a keynote as part of the 12th edition of the Global Mobile Broadband Forum (MBBF), hosted by Huawei in Dubai UAE, featuring the presence of many of the world's biggest names in the global ICT sector.

extend our strategic partnerships with the world's biggest tech leaders to continue our vision of pushing the digital transformation wheel within ICT sectors, and offering the best world-class solutions and digital platforms to our customers, not only in Kuwait, but the entire region".



**Zain considers 5G network's quality the fundamental building block for sustained growth**

Al Gharabally added: "We are very proud that our 5G deployment story was one of the most efficient operations in the company's history, especially when it comes to a new major technology like 5G on a nationwide level and in a comparatively short period of time. This is of course while making sure we offer the service at its top quality and in line with its global launch in international markets".

Al Gharabally continued: "When we deployed 5G, we set a strategic vision that centered around a very crucial concept, which is that the network's quality will ultimately be the fundamental building block for sustained growth. For this, our investment in our network's infrastructure, making use of our global partners' expertise, utilizing our own leading experience in the local market, and our team's dedication, were all major factors that led to the success of this project the network's top quality".

Al Gharabally further explained: "After the successful commercial launch of the service, we diversified the 5G device ecosystem by offering a wide range of the best smartphones and Internet devices, while also introducing a variety of bundles and plans to cater to the needs of all customer segments. We also focused on unlocking more value by partnering with the biggest service providers in the region, and were keen on offering plans that centered around our customers' various interests, such as entertainment, home security, smart devices, gaming, and more".



Al Gharabally showcasing Zain's 5G deployment success story at MBBF.

Zain shared its 5G journey via a special screen at the forum's exhibition, where Zain Group Chief Technical Officer, Nawaf Al Gharabally delivered a keynote titled "Exploring the Road of 5G Success - The Story of Zain". The Global Mobile Broadband Forum (MBBF), hosted by Huawei in Dubai UAE, is a collision of ideas of the industry's top leaders, and has witnessed the acceleration of the industry throughout 11 years.

The 12th edition offers an opportunity for the mobile and adjacent vertical ecosystems to reconnect, rebuild, and reimagine a fully connected, intelligent world. With the strongest speaker line-up and innovative product launches, the mobile ecosystems are back together to explore how mobile broadband technology is shaping the future and continuing to transform people's lives and industries.

During the keynote, Al Gharabally said: "We always



Al Gharabally added: "During the pandemic, we faced some obstacles to maintain the quality of our network and service, given the huge surge in data usage during the first days of the crisis and throughout lockdowns. However, our infrastructure's readiness and our anticipation for such cases from a technical point of view enabled us to maintain our leadership position which Zain always enjoyed in the market.

This was also recognized by official regulatory bodies, including Kuwait's Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA), and global entities like Ookla Speedtest that recognized Zain as 'Kuwait's Fastest Fixed Broadband

Network' for Q1-Q2 2020. Moreover, Ookla announced that Zain KSA won the Speedtest Award as Fastest Fixed Internet in Saudi Arabia for the first half of 2021, retaining the title for the third time in a row."

Al Gharabally concluded: "Zain is at the forefront of companies that continue to offer the latest generations of telecom technologies and digital services to its customers. Today, the entire world from governments to private institutions is shifting towards digital transformation with great pace. Obviously, traditional telecom networks will not be able to satisfy future needs of that transformation, and we believe 5G is only the beginning of the new digital era".



ISTANBUL: This illustration photograph shows a physical banknote and coin imitations of the Bitcoin crypto-currency. — AFP

## Bitcoin tops \$60,000 on US fund approval hopes

NEW YORK: Bitcoin breached the \$60,000 mark for the first time since April on growing optimism that American regulators will greenlight the first US futures exchange-traded fund for the cryptocurrency. The digital currency was up more than 40 percent from a month ago, reaching \$62,253 at 2050 GMT, according to Bloomberg News data, which reported that the US Securities and Exchange Commission could allow the ETF to trade next week.

The SEC has rejected attempts to create a Bitcoin ETF since 2013. "An SEC Bitcoin ETF approval is a watershed moment for the crypto industry as this could be the key driver for getting the next wave of crypto investors," said Edward Moya, senior market analyst at OANDA. An ETF is a financial instrument that can include different assets and be traded on an exchange like other securities. A futures ETF means the product will be bought or sold at set price at a later date.

The SEC fuelled speculation of the imminent approval after writing the following advice on one of its accounts on Twitter: "Before investing in a fund that holds Bitcoin futures contracts, make sure you carefully weigh the potential risks and benefits." The ETF would add to an eventful year for the world's leading cryptocurrency, which hit a record high at \$64,870 in April and became a legal tender in El Salvador, the first

country to adopt it officially. China, meanwhile, has cracked down on trading and mining cryptocurrencies, which are created through solving complex equations - an endeavour that consumes enormous amounts of energy.

### SEC U-turn

Bloomberg, which cited unidentified people familiar with the matter, reported that unlike past Bitcoin ETF applications that the SEC rejected before, the proposals made by financial firms ProShares and Invesco are based on futures contracts. The proposals were filed under mutual fund rules that SEC Chairman Gary Gensler has said provide "significant investor protections", the news agency reported.

"This is a key development for the crypto space as it would allow many investors who were on the fence to enter the market in more traditional ways," said Walid Koudmani, analyst at XTB online trading. An ETF would reassure investors "about previously associated risks such as lack of regulations and the possibility of having their wallet hacked", Koudmani said. There are ETFs that include Bitcoin in other countries but getting one in the United States would take the cryptocurrency to another level.

"In America's case, it's the largest, most important market. To date, they (traditional investors) haven't had a simple vehicle in which to invest in Bitcoin," Charlie Erith, CEO of ByteTree Asset Management, which specializes in cryptocurrencies, told AFP Erith cautioned that "the impact on the market might be overblown. You might see a short selloff but it won't be meaningful". But, he added, "long term, it's an important development. It signals that authorities are getting more comfortable with people owning cryptoassets". — AFP

## Firm sees 'exciting' moment as space tourism booms

MOSCOW: As competition in space tourism heats up, one of the first companies to offer space travel to fee-paying customers is launching a comeback by blasting into orbit with a Japanese billionaire. The US-based company Space Adventures and Russia are counting down to December when they are set to send Japanese online retail tycoon Yusaku Maezawa to the International Space Station (ISS) amid a flurry of non-professional launches.

"It's a very exciting time for us," Space Adventures President Tom Shelley told AFP in Moscow on Friday, describing this moment with the space tourism sector as "very interesting". "There is a much more heightened awareness in the marketplace," Shelley, 48, said. It's the company's first launch in over a decade after halting trips to the ISS when US space agency NASA bought up seats on Russia-operated flights and there were no other vehicles capable of making the journey.

The return of Shelley's company to the industry with Russia's space agency was made possible after the successful flight of Elon Musk's SpaceX last year that delivered astronauts to the ISS, making NASA less dependant on Russian spacecraft. Its launch with Maezawa comes after a spate of other civilian trips. SpaceX earlier this year sent the first all-civilian crew on a trip around the Earth's orbit, while Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin and Virgin Galactic billionaire Richard Branson conducted their maiden suborbital missions. Russia's agency Roscosmos earlier this month sent an actress and film crew to the ISS to film the first film in space.

Private spaceflight is "not just something that has been talked as something for the future, but it is happening now", Shelley said. But with the emerging competition, he said the company was now "trying to innovate and find new offerings". One of these offers comes by way of a spacewalk. The next Space Adventures flight to the ISS - scheduled for late 2023 or early 2024 - will give a passenger the opportunity to complete a spacewalk. Shelley said the company was in "advanced discussions" with potential clients. Since its founding in 1998, Space Adventures has brought seven tourists to the ISS aboard the Soyuz spacecraft of Roscosmos. The first was US entrepreneur Dennis Tito, who spent eight days on the ISS in 2001, and the last was Canadian Cirque du Soleil co-founder Guy Laliberte in 2009. —AFP

## Muted protests; Italy toughens workplace COVID-19 rules

ROME: Thousands of people protested at Italian ports and across towns and cities Friday against the introduction of one of the world's toughest COVID pass regimes, but fears of widespread disruption failed to materialize. More than 6,500 people demonstrated at the northeastern port of Trieste, according to local officials, although regional president Massimiliano Fedriga stressed "the port is working".

Delays were reported at the northwestern port of Genoa, where about 300 people blocked an entrance, while small protests were held across the country against the extension of the coronavirus pass to all workplaces. But the crowd numbers were limited and threats of blockades, economic chaos and even violence - after clashes between far-right activists and police in Rome last Saturday - failed to materialize.

From Friday, all workers must show a so-called Green Pass offering proof of vaccination, recent recovery from COVID-19 or a negative test - or face being declared absent without pay. More than 85 percent of Italians over the age of 12 have received at least one jab, thus qualifying for the pass, but up to three million workers are estimated to be unvaccinated.

Some are against vaccines, some are afraid, while others - undocumented workers and foreigners notably - have reported difficulties accessing the nationwide vaccine program. They are now only able to work if they pay for their own tests either every 48 or 72 hours, depending on the type. "It's absurd, unconstitutional," said Andrea, a 46-year-old pharmacist protesting along with several hundred others at Rome's Circus Maximus. "I'm on furlough and at the moment I don't intend to get vaccinated for scientific, not political reasons," he said.

### Off sick

There had been particular concerns about disruption in the freight industry, where a large minority of workers are unvaccinated. Ivano Russo, director general of trade group Confetra, told AFP that out of a total of 900,000 truck drivers, couriers and warehouse staff employed by members of his lobby, "25 to 30 percent" do not have COVID certificates. Dock workers in Trieste have threatened to go on strike indefinitely, despite being offered free COVID tests, and the protest there was one of the largest, with banners saying "Citizens not puppets" and "No Green Pass, No Discrimination". In Genoa, the small blockade caused some delays, but Ugo Patroni Griffi, head of the port authority in the southern city of Bari, said: "We can breathe a sigh of relief, everything is going well." There were however signs of other disruption. At midday, Italy's welfare agency recorded an increase in sickness reports in public and private firms of 23 percent on last



## Business

## Italy's ITA takes to skies from the ashes of Alitalia

## New debt-free venture takes over half of Alitalia's planes

MILAN: Italy's new national carrier ITA Airways took its debut flight Friday, closing a turbulent chapter that witnessed the decline of the country's storied but ill-fated Alitalia after 74 eventful years. ITA has been formed out of the ashes of the loss-making Alitalia, which was placed under state administration in 2017 but deteriorated further during the coronavirus pandemic. Under a deal agreed with the European Union, the new debt-free venture has taken over half of Alitalia's planes and landing slots - but thousands of staff are out of a job.



## Thousands of staff are out of job

ITA's first flight from Milan to the southern city of Bari arrived at 7:39 am, just hours after Alitalia's last landing Thursday night in Rome - itself an emotional affair. "This is considered the last flight of Alitalia," pilot Captain Andrea Gioia solemnly told passengers, before the crew were met by a toast by fellow employees on their arrival at Rome's Fiumicino Airport. Alitalia's iconic green, white and red logo will not disappear from European skies, however, as ITA successfully bid to buy the brand late Thursday for 90 million euros (\$105 million).

## Desperate staff

Launched on May 5, 1947, Alitalia symbolized the economic success of post-WWII Italy, and it became the airline of choice of the popes after Paul VI used the carrier in 1964. By the 1970s it was the world's seventh-largest airline. But decades of subsequent decline only worsened in recent years.

"It is with deep sadness that we witness the end of Alitalia, it was our national flagship, a symbol of the history of this country," said Laura Facchini, 47, an Alitalia flight attendant for 20 years. Like many others, she applied in vain to be taken over by ITA, part of the 2,800 people recruited this year. ITA said Friday it would reach 5,750 employees within its aviation sector by 2025 after hiring 1,000 next year, still short of Alitalia's total 10,500 employees.

Facchini, a national delegate of the UGL Trasporto Aereo union, said Alitalia employees were desperate.



FIUMICINO: An Airbus A320 passenger airplane of new Italian airline company ITA, bearing the Alitalia livery after ITA retained Alitalia brand for 90 million euros, takes off from Rome's Fiumicino airport on October 15, 2021. — AFP

"We don't have jobs anymore. We were very attached to this company, very motivated, we always had a smile on our faces," she told AFP. Alitalia unions have held frequent demonstrations, protesting against what they call ITA's proposed "discount contracts", with wage cuts of up to 20 percent and even 40 percent for pilots.

## Mission impossible?

On the verge of bankruptcy, Alitalia was placed under public administration in 2017, but Italy struggled to find an investor to take it over. The situation was made worse by the pandemic, which grounded airlines worldwide. In 2020, Alitalia was losing two million euros a day, carrying only 6.3 million passengers, compared to 52.1 million at Ryanair and 34 million at Air France-KLM. In September, the European Commission gave the green light to the new venture and authorized the injection of 1.35 billion euros (\$1.6 billion) of public

funds - while exempting ITA from having to pay back the state aid received by its predecessor.

Over the years, the Italian state has spent more than 13 billion euros to revive the company, between recapitalizations and bridging loans. Notwithstanding, accumulated losses reached 11.4 billion euros between 2000 and 2020. Competition has intensified since low-cost airlines Ryanair and Easyjet cut prices on short-haul routes and the high-speed train from Rome to Milan reduced travel time by half to three hours.

"The big mistake was not to invest in the lucrative long-haul market," Andrea Giuricin, a transport economist at the University of Bicocca in Milan said. He said ITA is hardly guaranteed success, having taken over half of Alitalia's fleet, 52 planes, including seven wide-body aircraft. "Resisting competition from the giants Air France-KLM and Lufthansa on international routes and from low-cost airlines on the domestic market is a mission impossible," he said. — AFP

## Huawei introduces unique and safest kids tablet

KUWAIT: Huawei has announced the HUAWEI MatePad T Kids Edition, designed with children's education and healthy development in mind. Available in 8-inch and 9.7-inch variants, this latest addition to the HUAWEI MatePad T Series comprises beautiful tablets that are specifically designed for children aged 3-8.

They offer everything a child loves, including a minimal and sleek design, adorable Kids Case, stylus pen, Kids Corner that comes preloaded with rich and child-friendly content, eye-comfort and parental assistant features as well as charging protection. Priced at KWD 49,900 for 9.7-inch & KWD 37,900 for 8-inch, the new HUAWEI MatePad T Kids Edition will arrive in Kuwait on Thursday, 21st October 2021.



## Child-friendly design

The HUAWEI MatePad T Kids Edition comes with a beautiful Kids Case made from environmentally safe silicone, offering all-around protection for both the device and your child. Consisting of a blue shell and cute green grips, it is comfortable and enjoyable to hold for small hands. The tablets also feature curved backs, giving them a delicate and rounded grip.

Ultra-slim bezels result in an immersive visual experience, with a bright blue stylus pen to match your child's inquisitive mind. The stylus pen offers a more interactive experience for kids by enabling them to draw finer pictures on the tablet, as well as to enjoy themselves to the fullest when playing touchscreen games. Both the KidsCase and the stylus pen meet the European Standards on the Safety of Toys and pass the Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment (RoHS), so parents can confidently allow their children to enjoy the accessories.

## Rich educational content

The HUAWEI MatePad T Kids Edition comes pre-installed with a wealth of rich educational content. Kids Corner was specifically created to reassure parents that their kids will be safe while using the tablet. It is like a treasure chest that allows children to record funny and interesting moments, draw their imagination on a canvas and record the stories and jokes they tell. Kids Corner supports Kids Painting, Recorder, Camera, and other features, offering a reliable and secure platform for kids to learn and play.

Huawei has partnered with Azoomee and BabyBus, two of the leading educational developers creating apps for children. The HUAWEI MatePad T Kids Edition therefore comes with a free three-month membership to Baby Panda World, and a free one-year membership to Azoomee. With a constant stream of updated content, these apps allow children to keep learning, and have fun while doing it.

BabyBus is an internet company providing children with creative and educational content. The company has served 500 million families worldwide, and released over 200 apps and 2,500 episodes of animations, as well as over 5,000 audio stories. Their products are available in 12 languages in 160 countries and regions worldwide.

On the collaboration with Huawei, Lu Xueming, co-founder of BabyBus commented: "We are delighted to have collaborated with Huawei for the release of the HUAWEI MatePad T Kids Edition by providing users with a free three-month membership to Baby Panda World which is BabyBus' flagship product. In addition, users can also enjoy exclusive benefits for ten licensed modules from the popular BabyBus apps. Moving forward, BabyBus will continue to work closely with Huawei to offer high-quality content to a broader range of families around the world".

## Multi-layered eye protection

The HUAWEI MatePad T Kids Edition leverages the power of technology to protect children's eyesight. A built-in color adjustment module intelligently adjusts the content on the display, offering a discrete eye protection mode that has passed the TÜV Rheinland low blue light certification. With help from an ambient light sensor, the tablet also enables multi-layered eye protection for your child's eyes.

Huawei tablets are equipped with a built-in gravity sensor that can determine whether the user is lying flat, with prompts to encourage them to adjust their posture accordingly. There is even an algorithm that detects when the tablet is shaking (such as when the user is using the tablet while walking or in a car), which can remind your child to use it in a stable state, therefore developing better eye habits.

Furthermore, when eBook mode is enabled, the tablet automatically adjusts the contrast, brightness, sharpness, saturation, color temperature, grayscale and other parameters on the display to offer a quality reading experience that closely resembles that of reading a physical book. The Bumpy Road Alerts, Posture Alerts, eBook mode and more can all be toggled on and off in Kids Corner.

## Safety Features

The HUAWEI MatePad T Kids Edition boasts numerous safety features, giving parents the ultimate peace of mind. Parents can manage time spent, apps used, and other viewable content on Kids Corner, allowing them to set multiple designated time limit intervals throughout the day. For example, parents can set it so that their child can use the tablet for a maximum of 20 minutes after school between 5pm to 6pm, or after dinner between 7pm and 9pm.

They can also apply different settings for the weekday versus the weekend, so that the tablet brings the perfect balance between study and play. In Kid's Profile, parents can also gain access to their children's usage records, allowing them to log their children's usage time and see the apps used over any given period.

## 40 Uber couriers win damages, boss jailed

ROME: More than 40 Uber food delivery couriers won damages worth 10,000 euros (\$11,600) each in Italy on Friday after their former boss was convicted and sentenced to jail. The CGIL trade union said the Milan court ruling marked "the first conviction" in Italy for crimes related to workers' exploitation and labor outsourcing among Uber Eats' subcontractors. Giuseppe Moltini, who used to run a company that hired riders on behalf of the delivery service giant, was sentenced to three years and eight months. He is unlikely to face prison, however, as in Italy jail terms of under four years usually do not lead to jail time and are not executed if they can still be appealed.

The Milan judge also decided that most of the 500,000 (\$580,000) euros that had been previously seized from Moltini should be handed over to 44 couriers, who stand to receive 10,000 euros each. Another 20,000 euros was awarded to CGIL, also a plaintiff in the case. The ruling followed investigations into Uber Italy's business practices which last year led Milan judges to put it under temporary administration.

The measure was revoked in March after they recognized the company had improved its record. Prosecutors had found that couriers, typically migrants, used to be paid three euros per delivery, regardless of how long their journey took, the weather conditions, what time they were working and whether or not it was a public holiday. Prosecutors also said workers were "stripped of the tips that customers spontaneously left", and punished with "arbitrary suspension of payments due for alleged lack of work". Gloria Bresciani, an Uber Eats manager who has been suspended, is facing separate exploitation charges and is due to appear before a Milanese judge on Monday. —AFP



## Oman has many unique elements that make it an attractive environment for investment

KUWAIT: At the invitation of the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Kuwait, Dr Saleh Al Kharousi the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman, in cooperation with Reconnaissance Research, held the second discussion session in a series of special sessions to assess the reality of commercial relations between Oman and Kuwait, and to discuss ways to develop them.

Regarding the meeting, Ambassador Al Kharousi said: "I was pleased with the high level and caliber of the attendees, as my second meeting with a group of businessmen and financial experts in Kuwait from different sectors was a good opportunity to exchange views, in order to improve the current rates of trade exchange. I am happy with the high level of transparency that was characteristic of this discussion which enabled a clearer understanding."



Ambassador Al Kharousi added: "This meeting comes as part of a series of ongoing meetings, in coordination with Reconnaissance Research, from which we aim to: (1)- Discuss the advantages and investment opportunities in Oman. (2)- Listen to the challenges facing Kuwaiti investors from all aspects. And discuss the appropriate solutions to overcome these challenges and avoid them in the future. (3) - Achieve a better understanding of their perception and suggestions on ways to enhance economic relations between the two countries.

Ambassador Al Kharousi added: "Oman has many unique elements that make it an attractive environment for investment in several sectors, perhaps the most prominent of which are the tourism sector, food industries, in addition to logistics services, as well as the energy and mining sector, medium and light industries and

crafts. We also seek to form a joint working team. An Omani-Kuwaiti group that includes a group of experts in the public and private sectors to create sustainable support for Kuwaiti investments."

On the role of the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), the Acting Managing Director and executive director of the General Reserve at the KIA, Bader Al-Ajeel said: "Kuwait has a great interest in exploring the new investment opportunities in the Sultanate of Oman, and search for opportunities that contribute to the Authority's interest in attractive returns."

Al-Ajeel added: "We appreciate the serious efforts made by HE the Ambassador to discuss ways to attract Kuwaiti capital, and we thank him for this kind invitation, and encourage him to continue this important step by reaching out to know the ways to create an attractive environment for Kuwaitis in Oman. We are also keen to cooperate with HE the Ambassador to provide him with the required expertise and professional advice to help stimulate and revitalize new Kuwaiti investments in Oman in terms of quantity and quality."

We attach great importance to our GCC partnerships, with the aim of creating a system of strategic security cooperation in important and vital sectors such as logistics and food security." Regarding the role of Reconnaissance Research, the founder and CEO of the center, Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri, said: "Our role as a think-tank is to provide an effective platform for dialogue and build more bridges of communication with diplomatic missions. His Excellency the Omani ambassador has a keenness and sincere interest in maximizing commercial cooperation between the two countries, and the meeting today comes within the framework of activating the tools of in-depth and honest discussions with experts and seasoned businessmen, to help HE the Ambassador achieve the set goals, which are mostly common goals for the two brotherly countries. The meeting was attended by: Bader Al-Ajeel; Adnan Al-Bahar; Muhammad Al Naqi; Abdulla Al-Mulla; Hossam Marafi; Hisham Al-Oumi; Ali Al-Zalzalah; Abdul Rahman Al-Yassin; Abdullah bin Nasser; Youssef Al-Ghusain and Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri.





## Business

# WTO chief urges resolution on distortive agriculture subsidies

## WTO again fails to agree on COVID vaccine patent waiver

WASHINGTON: Massive agricultural subsidies, especially those used in rich countries, continue to distort global trade and create unfair competition for farmers in poor countries, WTO chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said Friday. "We have a very big problem," she said, urging nations to find a solution as domestic agricultural subsidies "are growing in leaps and bounds." The comments, made during a discussion with World Bank President David Malpass, come as the global trade body works to reach a deal on the issue at the upcoming ministerial meeting in Geneva in late November.

United Nations agencies in a recent report estimated that global support to farm producers totals \$540 billion (457 billion euros) a year, and is expected to triple to nearly \$1.8 trillion by 2030. And 87 percent of that aid - \$470 billion - is "price distorting and environmentally and socially harmful," the agencies said. Ngozi said most WTO members want to "solve the problem." The subsidies have long been a point of friction since the birth of the organization, which finally managed an agreement to ban

export subsidies in 2015.

The WTO chief worried about the impact on poor countries. "We have to worry about how distortive these subsidies are, and whether they result in a barrier to competition," Ngozi said. "If we don't do something to take care of this there will be many poor countries who cannot compete because of large subsidies from rich countries." Malpass noted that the issue also impacts the environment since subsidies for fertilizer can "distort ... what crops are grown." "It's

also expensive and the chemical runoff is a big part of ocean pollution," he said at the event held during the annual meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

### Vaccine patent waiver

In another development, the World Trade Organization said its member nations had again failed to agree to suspend intellectual property rights for COVID-19 vaccines, with some countries doubting a deal could be reached unless certain delegations make "real compromises". South Africa and India have called for intellectual property rights to be temporarily lifted for coronavirus vaccines during the pandemic in order to boost production and address the gaping inequality in access between rich and poor nations.

However the idea has met with fierce opposition from pharmaceutical giants and their host countries, which insist patents are not the main roadblocks to scaling up production and warn the move could hamper innovation. Pressure is mounting for an accord with just weeks left before the WTO's 12th ministerial

conference, which runs from November 30 to December 3 in Geneva. The council of the WTO agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) met on Wednesday and Thursday to try to make progress on the issue.

The WTO works by consensus - all 164 member states must agree to any deal. In a statement on Friday, the WTO said the council had not reached a deal. The statement said that some members had "flagged the risk of not achieving an outcome unless delegations are able to make some real compromises." "A positive and meaningful outcome... would not only send a powerful message of global solidarity, but would also be proof that the WTO has the ability to respond to a major global crisis," those members added.

The TRIPS council chair and Norway's WTO ambassador, Dagfinn Sorli, admitted the body "is not yet in a position to agree on a concrete and positive conclusion". He said the council will continue to consult member states on how to reach consensus before the ministerial conference in Geneva. Further talks are also scheduled for October 26. — AFP

“ We have a very big problem ”

## NBK launches 'Data Analytics Academy' program

KUWAIT: As part of its continuous efforts to invest in human resources and qualify them with the best training programs that are on par with international standards, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced the launch of "Data Analytics Academy" program, in partnership with SAS, with the aim of imparting its employees with the required skills in Data Analytics. "Data Analytics Academy" program will be held virtually over 6 months through March 2022. It will be attended by 22 trainees from different departments, and will cover 9 modules ranging from beginner to advanced levels.

The program launch was attended by Sulaiman Al-Marzouq, Deputy CEO of National Bank of Kuwait - Kuwait, Emad Al-Ablani, GM - Head of Group Human Resources, and Mohamed Al-Othman, GM - Consumer Banking Group, Sudhakar Nibhanupudi - Chief Data Officer, in addition to other executive leaders and a group of officials from Training and Development Department at the bank. This program aims to enable participants to learn SAS programming for data science, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, whilst training them on how to access, explore, prepare, and analyze data, through data manipulation techniques.

The in-depth 9-module program will cover basic



statistical concepts that are critical in understanding and using statistical methods, and predictive modeling within the SAS/STAT software, as well as enhancing the skills required to assemble analysis flow diagrams, and how to process SAS data by using Structured Query Language (SQL). The program will focus on improving the understanding of patterns within the data, and the discovery of values using algorithms, techniques and systems to extract knowledge and insights, thus enabling more innovative decisions and solutions, which contributes to improve and develop the performance of all the bank's units.

On this occasion, Emad Al-Ablani, GM - Head of Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait Group said: "Through the professional

training courses provided to employees, NBK Group Human Resources plays a vital role in driving the bank's journey towards shaping its digital future." "Our training and development strategy at NBK Group Human Resources is focused on contributing to qualify its human cadres to be both capable of and committed to embracing innovation, which has become a key constituent of the bank's digital culture," he added.

Al-Ablani noted that the program comes in line with NBK's consistent efforts over the past years to invest heavily in data analytics and processing to understand customers' needs and behaviors. In this regard, the bank established a state-of-the-art Data Center in Kuwait back in 2019, for the purpose of analyzing huge amounts of data to study customers' trends and needs to enable it to make quick and well-informed decisions that constantly meet customers' expectations. It is worth mentioning that SAS is one of the international companies specialized in Data Analytics and Management and Information Technology.

by stc set a competitive pricing strategy for the bundled services similar to those offered in the market, but will be inclusive of free setup consultations and a dedicated support team.

In agreement with Redington, solutions by stc will be offering its B2B customers competitive bundled services, access to a dedicated customer support team, as well as other services that are managed in collaboration with Redington. These include Microsoft products such as Windows 10 Enterprises, Windows Server Datacenter and Remote Desktop Services, Project Professional, SQL Server and other standalone applications or services.

Office 365 applications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, and Microsoft Teams will also be offered through the bundled services to empower the transformation journey for customers. solutions by stc added that it will continue to explore alternative methods that elevate the digital journey and experience for its valued customers. Possessing a deep understanding of customer needs has aided the Company in offering solutions that enhance operational efficiency, as well as the day-to-day activities for businesses of all sizes.

## solutions by stc partners with Redington to offer a variety of solutions

KUWAIT: solutions by stc, the specialized business arm of Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, announced its partnership with Redington, a leading Microsoft partner in the region offering a variety of solutions, while delivering advanced support to assist companies in initiating their digital transformation journeys seamlessly through Microsoft. This partnership falls in line with solutions by stc's commitment to continue building strong partnerships with market leaders to provide B2B customers with the latest solutions available in the digital world.

solutions by stc released a statement indicating that the Company currently offers a wide range of Microsoft solutions but aims to enhance the experi-

## KFH implements state-of-the-art technologies to adopt digitalization

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has participated in the virtual discussion of US-Kuwait Business Council titled "Digital Acceleration and Cybersecurity in the Financial Sector" organized by the US Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait with attendance and participation of representatives of the local banking sector and technology industry. During the discussion, Group Chief Information at KFH, Haytham Al Terkait said that the pressures of digital transformation imposed on traditional banking model in Kuwait and all over the world have increased, so adapting an agile approach is no longer an option, but a must.

He added that "this development requires concerted efforts along with practical and operational process, given that the world of banking is being transformed through technology. We are living through disruptive times where innovation is very strategic to competitive industries such as banking. Therefore, banks will need to adopt practices, organize and participate in relevant workshops, employ new resources and collaborate with Fintech companies to accelerate the



process of digital transformation.

Legacy systems should be replaced by using advanced systems that can match the increasing need for enhancement." Al Terkait confirmed that adopting agile systems can match the increased needs of digitization and facilitate this digital transformation.

He said "In KFH, we were able to implement these practices, while several services were built upon these agile methods."

### Cybersecurity

Al Terkait said that "Banks should opt to utilize latest technology, machine learning, automation, artificial intelligence to enhance cybersecurity. More importantly, customer awareness is essential to fostering the knowledge of customers and users, thus pushing the digital transformation progress." He explained that the change of mindset is pivotal in this fast-changing environment. This can be achieved through hiring specialized personnel who promptly adapt to change in an effort to avoid being left behind.

Meanwhile, Al Terkait said that at KFH we see cybersecurity from a different perspective and consider it as one of the enablers for the banks journey towards digital transformation. He added: "Our institution ensures continuous compliance with local and international regulatory standards related to cybersecurity.

## AUB congratulates Al-Hassad winners

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) held the weekly draw of 13 October, 2021 of Al-Hassad Islamic account, the first Islamic prizes account in Kuwait which offers over 750 prizes over a 12 month period and provides numerous features. Such features include the simplest and easiest savings program, highest number of winners, largest prize value, loyalty multipliers, and unique account opening feature online with all ease with instant deposit option.

The Bank announced 20 winners of KD 1,000 as follows: Jalal Al-Sahli, Faisal Bader Al-Rasheed Al-Bader, Tareq Mohammed Al-Soror, May Mohamed Al-Hamad, Khadeejah Fadhel Al-Fahad, Orwin Fernandes, Ahmad Abdullah Al-Failakawi, Christopher Francis Britto, Mohammad Khaled Al-Rubaiaan, Abdullah Ismael Al-Enezi, Bader Saleh Ali Al-Enezi, Ahmed Hussain Johar, Abdulaziz Khaled Al-Holy, Farah Hussain Al-Jutaili, Aref Abd Al-Rahman Mahmoud, Jadaan Abdullah Al-Mutairi, Mohammad Nawwaf Al-Najdi.

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

## Gulf Bank announces Haidar as 3rd Quarterly Al Danah winner

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank conducted its third quarterly Al Danah account draw of the year on Thursday, October 14, 2021 to announce the lucky winner of the KD 100,000 prize. This quarter, the grand prize went to Moussa Ali Haidar, as part of a draw that was held in the presence of representatives from both the Ministry of Commerce and from Ernst & Young.

Gulf Bank's General Manager of Consumer Banking, Mohammed Al-Qattan, commented: "We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Moussa Ali Haidar on receiving the Al Danah account's third quarterly prize of the year, the KD 100,000 prize. Although this is our third quarterly draw of the year, customers have a chance to win with an Al Danah account year-round, with draws on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis! I would like to remind and encourage all Gulf Bank customers to save using an Al Danah account, which they can open and deposit into online through the Gulf Bank app, or by visiting one of our branches. We are wishing everyone the best of luck in all our upcoming draws!"

The Al Danah account is one of the most rewarding savings accounts in Kuwait, with its periodic draws that award valuable prizes and its many advantages for account holders. Gulf Bank's Al Danah account offers monthly opportunities to win KD 1,000 to ten lucky winners, in addition to two quarterly draws with KD 100,000 prizes each, a semiannual draw prize of KD 1,000,000 and a grand draw prize of KD 1,500,000.

### Numerous benefits

The AlDanah account is the only account that rewards customers for their loyalty by providing loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances gained in the previous year, which are then transferred to the current year to reward customers for their loyalty to the Bank. Accordingly, all chances gained by existing Al Danah customers in 2020 have been transferred to the 2021 draws, and this will be repeated in 2022 onwards. Terms and conditions apply.

It is also worth noting that all account draws are attended by a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, with the quarterly and annual draws also reviewed by Ernst & Young. Customers can deposit to win AlDanah cash prizes throughout the year.

To increase their chances of winning, account holders must either maintain the minimum deposit amount of KD 200, or increase their Al Danah savings - the higher the balances in an account, the more chances accumulated over time. Gulf Bank's Al Danah account holders also have the opportunity to enter and win cash prizes all year long through monthly, quarterly and annual draws.

### Opening an Al Danah Account

To enter the upcoming draws, Gulf Bank customers can open an Al Danah account today with only KD 200. To open an Al Danah account, existing Gulf Bank customers can apply through Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services, or book an appointment at their nearest branch by using the new "Visit Gulf Bank" app for a faster and more convenient branch visit. New customers can also open an Al Danah account by visiting their nearest Gulf Bank branch or by scheduling an appointment through the app.







# Ooredoo launches iPhone 13 at its largest annual event with over 3,000 customers

The company announced its strategic partnership with NBK and the exclusive offers for the bank's customers only

**KUWAIT:** For the eighth year in a row, Ooredoo Telecom, the first to introduce innovative digital services in Kuwait, achieves another milestone that adds to the company's records in the world of communications and modern up-to-date devices by launching the biggest launch event to give customers the opportunity to obtain exclusive plans at competitive prices with the latest all-new iPhone 13 series consisting of: iPhone 13, iPhone 13 Mini, iPhone 13 Pro and iPhone 13 Pro Max.

that achieved the highest standards and exceeded the customers' expectations, and thus ensured their ultimate satisfaction. Last but not least, all customers were treated with outstanding experiences that included an exclusive set of raffles and valuable prizes, as well as the participation of many prestigious companies in the country including; the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), Oula Gas Station, Falcon company, owned by New Market and the leader in Kuwait and the region in providing the latest services and technology

that suit their changing needs and demands, Ooredoo offers them an elevated digital experience using eligible NBK Debit Cards.

According to the offers, NBK customers from the holders of eligible cards can purchase the desired iPhone 13 at exclusive prices starting from KD25 with launch freebies including; complimentary 500GB Data SIM (free for 24 or 36 month contract), complimentary cover or MagSafe Wallet, 4 cameras (1 Arlo Pro 2 + 2 Add-ons) and airpods 2. Eligible NBK cards include: Thahabi, Privilege Banking Visa Platinum Debit Card, and Private Banking Visa Platinum Debit Card. Ooredoo has also been keen to offer special and exclusive offers to Al Nokhba customers on the all-new iPhone 13, starting from KD50 per month, including valuable gifts and unique benefits.

ry mystery-bag giveaway through V-Thru application, and the application directed them to drive to the event location. At the event location, customers went through a fun drive-thru experience greeted by the V-Thru team; getting giveaways from Ooredoo Kuwait.

It is worth noting that V-Thru proved its efficient capability at the launch event, as a number of its restaurants participated in the event throughout the three days. This step was the first of its kind for V-Thru and achieved great success, enabling users of the V-Thru application to enjoy an exclusive iPhone 13 offer without the need to leave their car, with the aim of improving the customer experience and reducing the potential harm caused by the COVID-19 virus - in order to ensure the health and safety of everyone.

### Outstanding efforts and success

Abdulaziz Yaqoub Al-Babtain, CEO of Ooredoo Kuwait, expressed his happiness at the success of the event and said: "I would like to extend my gratitude, thanks and huge appreciation for the tireless efforts of everyone including Ooredoo family members and also all the unknown foot-soldiers who labored behind the scenes, on the success of this year's iPhone 13 event. We take pride of offering our customers with the best plans in the market at competitive prices, in addition to treating them with exclusive benefits and complimentary valuable gifts with Shamel Pro plans for the first time."

Al-Babtain added: "This year's event is distinct and different from previous years, as it witnesses a strategic partnership with the leading bank in Kuwait and the region - the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), of which we are proud. Hence, we gave the bank's customers the priority in obtaining special and exclusive offers, and allocated a special hall to welcome the bank's VIP customers as well as our Al Nokhba customers."

According to the offers, NBK customers from the holders of eligible cards have the priority to purchase the desired iPhone 13 at exclusive prices, in addition to enjoying the privilege of entering the company's VIP and Al Nokhba hall, which was exclusively designed for them with a high level of service, luxury and sophistication.

Ooredoo has also been keen to announce its iPhone 13 special and exclusive offers to its Al Nokhba customers, including valuable gifts and unique benefits. However, the bank's customers will get exclusive Shamel Pro plans starting from KD25 per month including gifts and AirPods 2."

### Mercedes CLA raffle draw

In this context, the event included the distribution of prizes to the "Answer and Win" competition organized by Ooredoo, with the aim of rewarding the guests on the first day of the event, as well as the opportunity to enter a raffle for the grand prize - the Mercedes CLA, upon the completion of the purchasing order. It also launched a competition in which guests had to answer the question "How many iPhone 13 boxes are there inside the Mercedes CLA?" correctly for a chance to win. The winner was announced on Thursday and during the event, and thus received several valuable prizes.

### Complimentary gift vouchers

During the event, Ooredoo thanked all the participating companies that generously offered complimentary vouchers to the company's customers and the winners, such as: FN by FN, Pottery Barn, Pottery Barn Kids, West Elm, Al-Kout Beach Hotel, The PalmsBeach Hotel and Spa, Kunooz Al Khair General Trading and Contracting Co, and Doctor Smile Dental Center. The entertaining program and competitions presented by Ali Chokr witnessed a high turnout and participation of the attendees, who expressed their happi-



Fathima Dashti and Fahad Al-Kandari holding iPhone 13 sets

These four new iPhone 13 models were launched this year with an upgraded A15 Bionic Chip which enables all customers to enjoy the most powerful performance not available in any other smartphone. From the first day of the event inauguration last Thursday, October 14th 2021, until its extension throughout the weekend at the Ooredoo Tower in the heart of Kuwait City, the event witnessed a large crowd of customers and iPhone junkies, whose numbers exceeded 3000 customers.

### The biggest iPhone 13 launch event

As Ooredoo Kuwait is committed to pioneering innovation and creativity, and providing revolutionary products and services to its customers, here it is standing once again to overcome its rivals demonstrating its ability to meet the changing needs and demands of the market and customers as well as enriching the customer's digital experience. At the heart of Kuwait City, Ooredoo Tower welcomed hundreds of customers and technology and iPhone junkies, who were keen to be the first to attend this biggest event from 6pm until midnight to take advantage of the exclusive and strongest offer in the country at competitive prices, unique benefits and free valuable gifts. During the launch event, Ooredoo Kuwait announced its special offer on the iPhone 13, iPhone 13 Mini, iPhone 13 Pro and iPhone 13 Pro Max. Hence, these limited offers.

### Social Media

More and above, a number of local media representatives and social networking celebrities attended the event on Thursday night including; Fouz Al-Fahd, Mahmoud Bushehri, Muhammad Mirza, Noura Al-Amiri, Abdulmohsen Al-Kout, Esraa Al-Hajri and Saleh Al-Sanad; who have shared with their followers Ooredoo Kuwait's exclusive iPhone 13 offers.

### Participation of leading companies

The annual event also featured a wide range of distinctive entertainment activities

related to drones, Cavaraty, a store that sells high quality mobile products and accessories, V-Thru, Soor Fuel Marketing (Alfa) and Maidan clinic.

Further, a number of well-known restaurants and cafes that offer the best tastes participated where customers enjoyed the true meaning of authentic hospitality and tasted the most delicious cuisines, coffee and beverages. The event was crowned by a series of competitions to interact with the crowd and award the attendees including: "Answer & Win" games organized by Ooredoo Kuwait on the first day of the event, along with the opportunity to enter a raffle for the grand prize, the Mercedes CLA, in which customers have to send "YES" to 1010 to enter the draw and get a chance to win.

Ooredoo has also launched its competition in which the attendees were requested to "Guess the number of iPhone 13 boxes inside the Mercedes CLA for a chance to win", the winner was announced on the same day and was rewarded with a valuable prize. Hence, Ooredoo's social media team broadcasted the event live on Ooredoo Kuwait's official Instagram page, posting the updates throughout the day.

### Strategic partnerships (NBK)

Ooredoo Kuwait and the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), the leading bank in Kuwait and the region, celebrated a new strategic partnership agreement, under which Ooredoo offered NBK Private Banking customers a set of privileges for getting the new iPhone 13 at Ooredoo's launch event of the all-new iPhone 13 range.

According to the agreement, Ooredoo Kuwait treated NBK Thahabi and Privilege Banking customers with exclusive offers including the priority in getting the new Apple iPhone 13 when presenting NBK ATM Card, in addition to the privilege access to the company's VIP lounge during the event. Seeking to provide the customers of the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) with exclusive offers and rewards

Abdulaziz Yaqoub Al-Babtain - Chief Executive Officer; Mijbil Alayoub - Senior Director, Corporate Communications; Thamer Althahous - Government and VIP Relations; Essa Al Moosa - Senior Director, Customer Care; Fadi Kawar - Chief Finance Officer; Tapan Tripathi - Acting Chief Commercial Officer; Sundos Al-Shatti - Director Digital Services and New Businesses; and Fatima Dashti - Senior Manager, Public Relations, Internal Communications and Social Responsibility, Ooredoo Kuwait, all greeted and welcomed Mohammed Al-Othman - General Manager - Head of Consumer Banking Group NBK Kuwait.

### V-Thru

On Friday, October 8th 2021, Ooredoo Kuwait proudly announced its partnership with V-Thru for the iPhone 13 launch event. V-Thru is an application whose number of users exceeded 250,000 users - whom can order and receive their order without leaving their cars - making the driving and ordering experience smoother and more enjoyable. During the first day of



(From left) Fatima Dashti, Thamer Al-Tahous, Essa Al-Mousa, Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, Sudus Al-Shatti, Taban Trapathi and Sima Shaath pose for a group photo.

the launch event, all users of the V-Thru application were able to order and collect their iPhone 13 without the need leave their cars. Hence, 10 V-Thru restaurants and cafes that participated in the launch event and for three consecutive days these are: Toby's Estate, Doh, Thinnies, Urbn grill, Froyo, Chocolatness, Moo, Napoli Napolita, Botata and Voyage.

On its part, Ooredoo rewarded V-Thru users with 500 mystery bags and 3 "Golden Tickets" that can then be redeemed at the Ooredoo Tower for a brand new iPhone 13 on October 15th and 16th 2021. Thus, V-Thru organized a competition broadcasted via social media channels, Instagram in specific, in which customers had to order the complementa-

"We are also proud to collaborate for the first time with the creative Kuwaiti minds and owners of the V-Thru application - the first application of its kind in the country allows users to order and receive their orders from hundreds of restaurants using the Drive-thru system. During the iPhone 13 event, Ooredoo assigned the V-Thru customers a special entrance and area in the parking lot and customers were able to receive their iPhone 13 orders without leaving their cars. This step ensured a smooth and easy purchasing process and an exceptional customer experience that happens for the first time in Kuwait," Al-Babtain concluded.

### Exclusive offers

On his part, Mijbil Alayoub, Senior Director, Corporate Communications, at Ooredoo Kuwait said: "Ooredoo Kuwait has been committed for years to provide its customers with unique iPhone offers and to exceptionally reward them through continuously holding special events and campaigns, as part of its endeavors in providing its customers with an exclusive array of draws and prizes that meet their needs and expectations. Hence, rewarding customers is an essential pillar of the company's strategy to enrich the customer experience."

"Ooredoo offers customers of the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) an elevated digital experience using eligible NBK Debit Cards which are: Thahabi, Privilege Banking Visa Platinum Debit Card, and Private Banking Visa Platinum Debit Card.

ness with all the exceptional events organized by the company, which always reflect the excellence of Ooredoo's raffles, prizes, offers and services that confirm its leadership and superiority.

### Thank you Ministry of Interior

The presence of the Ministry of Interior members throughout the iPhone 13 launch event and for a period of three days is highly appreciated, in which they contributed to organizing the influx of attendees and maintain security and safety of everyone. Ooredoo also extends its thanks to the MoI Assistant Undersecretary of the Operations Affairs Maj Gen Jamal Al-Sayegh, for his continuous efforts and support, along with Lieutenant-Colonel Basel Al-Turki, Major Nasser Bu Abbas, First Deputy Mohammed Al-Qattan, Sergeant Shahnaz Al-Enezi, Sergeant Saif Al-Mishaal, Corporal Abdulwahab Al-Qallaf, First Sergeant Ali Shweikro, Deputy Sergeant Hassan Al-Qallaf, Muhammad Mayouf Al-Anzi and Lieutenant The first is Abdullah Ghaleb Al-Enezi and a policeman Turki Al-Enezi.

### Kuwait Pulse FM 88.8

Ooredoo hosted the team of Kuwait Pulse Radio Team 88.8 FM's Diwanat Al-Yaqout and Al-Ansari with Talal Al-Yaqout and Khaled Al-Ansari, where the activities of the event were broadcasted live and interviews were held with representatives of Ooredoo and the National Bank of Kuwait.



Group picture with NBK seniors



## Lifestyle | Features

## Michelin star chef brothers reinvent Russia cuisine

When French gastronomic bible the Michelin Guide judged Ivan and Sergei Berezutskiy to be Russia's best chefs, their restaurant's website crashed, while patrons gave the twin brothers a standing ovation. "As always, the restaurant was full," Ivan Berezutskiy said after their Moscow restaurant, Twins Garden, received two Michelin stars from the French culinary guide on Thursday evening. "Guests stood up, applauded and shouted their congratulations," the 35-year-old told AFP in an interview. The announcement of the award has led to a torrent of phone calls and messages, and the restaurant currently cannot take any reservations.

On Thursday, representatives of the Michelin guide released the first Moscow edition of their iconic red book. Seven restaurants were given one star, and just two—including Twins Garden—received two stars. Twins Garden also pocketed a Michelin Green Star for its sustainable practices, and a prize for best service. Established in 2017, the centrally located restaurant has been one of Moscow's top culinary destinations from the start and previously featured on the World's 50 Best Restaurants list. With the Michelin award, the brothers entered the ranks of restaurant industry royalty. Twins Garden promotes what it describes as "a symbiosis of



Ivan (left) and Sergei Berezutskiy of Twins Garden pose in the hall of their restaurant in Moscow. — AFP photos

science and nature" and features a traditional Russian oven and a high-tech laboratory equipped with a mushroom wall and a 3D food printer.

#### Childhood memories

The brothers hail from the city of Armavir in the Krasnodar region known for its warm climate and abundance of vegetables. They say they have been inspired by southern cuisine and their childhood memories of baking cookies and making adjika, a tomato-based spicy dip. "When we were young we helped our mom cook. We loved

it so much," said Ivan. Today most of the vegetables for the Berezutskiy family come from their own farm outside Moscow, and they have also developed vegetable wines. Ivan was supposed to become an engineer like his mother and grandfather, while Sergei had a passion for cooking.

Ivan, however, joined Sergei at culinary school after realizing that spending a summer internship at a factory in the company of male students did not appeal to him. "Sergei said he studied with girls," Ivan said. "I did not think long," he added, smiling. After culinary school the pair parted ways. Ivan went to Spain where he trained at El Bulli, while Sergei worked at Alinea in Chicago. Both establishments received a three-star rating from the Michelin Guide and are considered pioneers of molecular gastronomy. The brothers said they did not go abroad to learn new recipes. Instead they wanted to understand what it takes to create the world's best restaurant. "We wanted to understand how great chefs think," Ivan said. "Recipes are not the most important thing."

Asked to name international chefs who influenced them, both answer in unison: Ferran Adria, the Catalan chef who ran the El Bulli restaurant. "There are chefs who change the world," said Sergei. "Ferran Adria has changed this world." Once derided as a gastronomic wasteland, Russia's



A team of chefs are seen preparing food in the kitchen of the Twins Garden restaurant run by Ivan and Sergei Berezutskiy in Moscow.

restaurant scene has emerged in recent years from a post-Soviet reputation for blandness. In the past many chefs relied on meat, cheese and fish imported from the West but restaurants have increasingly turned to local ingredients including Arctic fish and king crab from the Far East after the West slapped sanctions on Russia following the annexation of Crimea in 2014. The brothers say they are passionate

about vegetables—including traditional Russian foods such as cabbage and beets—and want their guests to appreciate the taste of fresh-from-the garden produce. At home the Berezutskiy brothers let their women rule in the kitchen, however. "What we love to eat is what our wives cook for us," said Ivan. — AFP



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

## Version of Banksy 'Girl with Balloon' sells for £3.1 million

A version of Banksy's celebrated "Girl with Balloon", set on two canvasses, sold at auction on Friday for £3.1 million (\$4.3 million, 3.7 million euros), a day after another of the artist's works fetched a record price. The 2005 diptych, which shows a small girl reaching for red heart-shaped balloon on a white background, was expected to sell for between £2.5 million and £3.5 million, London auctioneer Christie's said.

The sale of the Banksy work, which first appeared in stencil on a wall in east

London, follows a record-breaking auction for a part-shredded version of the same image on Thursday. The artwork—now called "Love is in the Bin"—sold for £18.58 million (\$25.38 million), the highest ever fee paid for a work by the British artist. In 2018, it passed through a shredder hidden in its large Victorian-style frame moments after it was first sold for nearly £1.1 million at Sotheby's auction house also in London. "Girl with Balloon" has been reproduced endlessly in prints and online, and appropriated by some of the world's best-known brands.

It has been called one of the most significant artworks of the early 21st century in the British press. The previous record for a painting by the guerrilla artist was set in March this year with the sale of the "Game Changer", sold to an unnamed buyer for £16.75 million. — AFP

## Funny old world: The week's offbeat news

From selfie stupidity to a politician who has gone to pot... Your weekly roundup of offbeat stories from around the world.

#### Pain in the neck

An elk that spent at least two years wandering the Colorado wilderness with a tyre around its neck is finally free of the encumbrance. The buck had to be sedated for wildlife officers to cut the tyre from its antlers. It is far from unusual. "Wildlife officers have seen deer, elk, moose and bears entangled in swing sets, hammocks, clothing lines, decorative lighting, laundry baskets, soccer goals and volleyball nets," Colorado Parks and Wildlife said in a statement.

#### Grin and bear it

Selfie culture strikes again. An American woman who got too close and personal with a grizzly bear and her cubs for a photo has been jailed for four days. Samantha Dehring, 25, got within a few feet of the enormous animal in Yellowstone



National Park, the mythical home of cartoon character Yogi bear. But unlike other victims of an Instagramable moment on the top of cliffs, Dehring lived to tell the tale. "Approaching a sow grizzly with cubs is absolutely foolish," said Wyoming prosecutor Bob Murray. It was "pure luck... Dehring is a criminal defendant and not a mauled tourist."

#### Politician goes to pot

Who says politicians are remote and irrelevant these days? Not so in France where police arrested a man whose drug-filled car included a statue of Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti made from cannabis. Wags have interpreted this as a homage to the lawyer, a fierce opponent of legalizing the drug—just like the country's drug dealers.

#### Candy-ocracy

The big beasts of the US Senate often have recourse to stimulants for debates that go on long into the night. And indeed they get them for free in the form of sweets straight from the chamber's official "candy desk". Senators can of course never be bought but they can and do accept sweet-

eners in the form of chocolates and the like if they share them out.

#### The king of smells

Australian firefighters closed down a part of the capital Canberra for an hour looking for a gas leak only to find the smell was coming from a durian fruit. The "King of Fruits" is loved by many in Southeast Asia for its bittersweet flavors and creamy texture but is often banned from public transport because of its penetrating aroma that has been compared to "raw sewage, rotting flesh and smelly gym socks", or a mix of all three.

#### Half sweet home

A thought for the inhabitants of the French village of Saint-Quentin-la-Motte-Croix-au-Bailly, who no longer feel themselves after a brush with French bureaucracy. They can't get new identity cards because the name of their village is too long... A rather brutal temporary solution has been found, cutting Saint-Quentin-la-Motte-Croix-au-Bailly back by 15 letters. — AFP

## Young pianists vie for glory in Poland's Chopin competition

For South Korean pianist Su Yeon Kim, the music of Frederic Chopin is a way of life and competing in the world's most prestigious event bearing the French-Polish composer's name is a dream come true. She says the first piece by the 19th-century composer and piano virtuoso—who was born in 1810 and died in 1849 — that she learned to play as a child was his Minute Waltz. "Coming here was my dream because Chopin is my favorite composer. I never tire" of his music, the 27-year-old told AFP in Warsaw where she is hoping to secure a spot in the finals of the 18th Frederic Chopin International Piano Competition later this month.

Held every five years since 1927, the Chopin competition would normally have been held last year, but was postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic—a first since World War II. "It was challenging to get all the competitors into Poland," says Artur Szklener, director of the National Institute of Frederic Chopin. Running from October 2 to 23, the event has drawn 87 pianists from across the globe, including 22 from China, 16 from Poland and 14 from Japan. Competitors must be aged between 16 and 30. "It's the most prestigious competition that can open the doors to a great career,"

says fellow competitor Eva Gevorgyan, a 17-year-old Russian-Armenian. Previous winners include some of the greatest names in classical music, such as Maurizio Pollini, Martha Argerich and Krystian Zimerman.

#### 'Not loud enough'

Unlike Kim, Gevorgyan hails from a family of musicians. "I used to take Eva to all my rehearsals and that made her want to play," says her mother, Ksenia Cherenkova, who studied viola at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow. "When she was three years old, she was given a violin. She broke it because the sound wasn't loud enough for her. That's when we thought of the piano,"

Cherenkova chuckles. But she admits to having had misgivings about her daughter becoming a musician: "I know how difficult it can be." The two young pianists have trodden similar paths: music school with four to eight hours of practice every day that left little time for sports or reading.

Kim now studies at the Mozarteum University Salzburg in Austria, while Gevorgyan is finishing high school and hopes to enter the Moscow Conservatory. Both are already making their mark in the music world. Kim won first prize at this year's Montreal International Music Competition. Gevorgyan has already won prizes in more than 40 international competitions.

This week, both qualified for the third stage of the Chopin competition alongside 21 other candidates. Ten of them will go on to perform in the October 18-20 final.

One of the 17 jury members, Argentinian concert pianist Nelson Goerner, believes that pandemic-related lockdowns have helped raise the level of this year's competition. Faced with an unusually rich pool of talent, the jury bent the rules to admit seven more competitors than the 80 normally allowed. "I was on the jury for the previous edition, but the level this year is remarkable," Goerner told AFP. "The pianists have had more time to prepare and I think the pandemic has awakened in all of us a desire

to go further, to surpass ourselves," he said. "You can hear it in how these young pianists are playing." Broadcast live on YouTube and via the Chopin Competition mobile app, the contest has attracted record online interest, the organizers say. Some 45,000 people logged on the internet to listen to the second stage held this week at the Warsaw Philharmonic. The jury will announce a winner on October 20 and finalists will perform in gala concerts until October 23. "When I'm on stage, I don't think about winning. I want to perform and connect with the audience. That's my greatest pleasure," says Kim. — AFP



27-year-old Su Yeon Kim from South Korea, one of the finalists of the 18th International Chopin Piano Competition, performs during a rehearsal at the Warsaw Music University in Warsaw, Poland.



17-year-old Eva Gevorgyan from Russia, one of the finalists of the 18th International Chopin Piano Competition, performs during a rehearsal at the Russian Culture Center in Warsaw. — AFP photos



Lifestyle | Features



Gabriel Garcia Marquez

## Gabriel Garcia Marquez's clothes to go on sale in Mexico

Lovers of literature and fashion, take note: 400 articles of clothing and accessories from Gabriel Garcia Marquez's wardrobe will go on sale in Mexico next week, the family of the Nobel Prize-winning writer said Friday. Titled "The Wardrobe of Garcia Marquez," the event will mark the opening of a cultural center in Marquez's residence in southern Mexico where the author of "One Hundred Years

of Solitude" lived and wrote for many years. The items that will go on sale were selected by Marquez's granddaughter Emilia Garcia Elizondo, who will head the future cultural center. "Gabo" - Marquez' nickname - "had favorite tailors and favorite designers," Garcia Elizondo said in a statement. She added that some of the clothes have "small vestiges of his life as a writer:

a jacket with a marker in a pocket, which he used to autograph his books, or even an ink stain." The writer's trademark tweed jackets are also part of the collection. Items that belonged to his wife, Mercedes Barcha, will also be offered but the outfit she wore when her husband received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982 will be on display but not for sale. The sale will kick off on October 20,

with the proceeds to be donated to a foundation that helps children from indigenous communities in southern Mexico. The titan of magical realism, Marquez died on April 17, 2014 at the age of 87 in Mexico City where the Colombian lived part of his life. His wife died at the same age on August 15, 2020. — AFP



This photograph shows artist Tran Thanh Thuc posing amidst her artworks made from fabrics in her home studio in Hanoi. — AFP photos

Artist Tran Thanh Thuc selecting a scarf with designs of the Eiffel Tower for an artwork in her home studio in Hanoi.

## 'Just me and the fabric': Vietnam artist finds success with cloth creations

In a hot and stuffy room in Hanoi, Tran Thanh Thuc holds up a delicate silk scarf and begins snipping it into tiny pieces, ready to paste onto her works of art. For four decades, Thuc has been recreating Vietnamese landscapes using vibrant shades of fabric cut from scarves, traditional ao dai (a long split



Artist Tran Thanh Thuc working on an artwork made from fabrics.



Artist Tran Thanh Thuc cutting a piece of fabric for an artwork.

tunic) — or whatever material she could find during years of poverty in the 1980s. "At that time, I tried to look for woollen string, velvet cloth or other very simple pieces to make my first pictures," she says. "Now sometimes I cut them from the very beautiful silk scarves sent from my friends abroad." Often using hundreds of thousands of pieces of cloth to shape

trees, rivers and patches of sky, the 61-year-old artist doesn't dare to cool her home studio with fans or air conditioning, even in the boiling summers of the Vietnamese capital. "If the fan is on, the details will get blown away," she says. "So when I work, the environment is tough... it's just me and the fabric." For most of the years that Thuc has worked with cloth, she has also kept a

day job as a civil servant and only had time "to do what she loved" during the night. But her fortune began to change when an American collector bought a work in 2000 and around a decade ago she started to be invited to exhibitions and her work began to sell. Now her creations sell for between \$1,000 and \$5,000 and she has taken part in shows around Vietnam. "I am happy because

they help me to have a quite comfortable life and I'm free to do what I want," she says. "My works are a summary of the passion and the beauty that I experienced after travelling across this land." — AFP



Artist Tran Thanh Thuc cutting a piece of fabric for an artwork.



Artist Tran Thanh Thuc (left) talking to a visitor about her artworks.

## Bill Cosby sued in New Jersey over alleged rape

An actress has sued Bill Cosby alleging that the disgraced comedian drugged and raped her in New Jersey 31 years ago, US court documents show. Lili Bernard said Cosby lured her to the Trump Taj Mahal casino resort in Atlantic City around August 1990 on the pretext of meeting a producer he said could help advance her career. Once in a suite at the hotel, Cosby made her a supposedly non-alcoholic drink and after consuming the beverage, Bernard said she vomited and lost consciousness. She later woke to find Cosby raping her, according to the lawsuit filed Thursday. Bernard said she lost consciousness again and found herself "naked and alone in an empty bathtub or jacuzzi in the bathroom." The next morning Cosby handed Bernard money and walked her to a waiting car which drove her back to New York, the suit says. Cosby also "sexually assaulted, battered and drugged" Bernard "on

additional occasions," and threatened to sue her for defamation if she went to the police, according to the court filing. Bernard said she suffered psychological, mental and physical trauma and is seeking \$125 million in damages. She sued under a New Jersey law that gives sexual abuse victims a two-year window ending next month to bring civil claims against their alleged abusers, irrespective



In this file photo US actor Bill Cosby arrives at court in Norristown, Pennsylvania to face sentencing for sexual assault. — AFP

of when the abuse occurred. A spokesman for Cosby said in a statement that New Jersey prosecutors had closed an investigation into Bernard's allegations in 2015 without charging Cosby. "This is just another attempt to abuse the legal process, by opening up the flood gates for people, who

never presented an ounce of evidence, proof, truth and/or facts, in order to substantiate their alleged allegations," Andrew Wyatt said. "Mr Cosby continues to maintain steadfast in his innocence and will vigorously fight any alleged allegations waged against him and is willing and able to take this fight to the highest court in these United States of America." Bernard is a long-time Cosby accuser, one of several women to say he sexually assaulted them. Only one case was tried criminally, however, due to expiring statutes of limitations. A US court in June overturned his conviction for drugging and sexually assaulting Andrea Constand at his Philadelphia mansion in 2004. Pennsylvania's state's supreme court ruled that he had been denied a fair trial and released him after he had served more than two years of his three-to-ten year sentence. The court did not exonerate him. Rather, it overturned the conviction on a technicality. His release angered advocates of the #MeToo movement. In August, a Los Angeles judge ruled that a nearly seven-year-old civil lawsuit alleging that Cosby sexually assaulted Judy Huth in 1974 when she was 15 years old could proceed. — AFP

## Golden Globes to go ahead despite TV blackout over diversity row

The Golden Globes will go ahead despite NBC's decision not to broadcast the Hollywood award ceremony over concerns about its record on diversity and transparency, organizers said Friday. The Hollywood Foreign Press Association - which votes on the Globes and has been under fire due to allegations of racism, sexism, bullying and corruption-said winners of the annual film and television awards will be announced on January 9. No details were given of how the awards will be announced, or if any physical ceremony will take place. The prestigious Globes ceremony usually kicks off Hollywood's glitzy award season, and draws a who's who of Tinseltown A-listers to a lavish and champagne-soaked ceremony. But NBC pulled the plug on the party in May, after major Hollywood studios suspended their involvements with the HFFPA, and stars such as Tom Cruise and Scarlett Johansson slammed the group. At the time, Netflix and Amazon Studios said

they would not work with the HFFPA until more "meaningful" and "significant" reforms were made to its ranks. — AFP





## Sports

# Retired boxing champ works to inspire Niger street kids

## Ten-time champion volunteers to coach young talent

**NIAMEY:** From the ringside, Niger's ex-heavyweight boxing champion Abdoul Aziz Ousseini, aka "Aziz", gives guidance to his young trainees at the boxing club in the capital Niamey. Some 10 youths drawn from the city streets pull on their gloves and warm up. Close by, other amateur pugilists hammer a huge tire suspended with rope.

Almost 50 years old and impressively weighing in at more than 100 kilograms (220 pounds), the ten times heavyweight champion of Niger has turned to coaching future talent and giving purpose to disadvantaged youngsters.

The man who "discovered" boxing in 1998, when it was embryonic in the poor Sahel country, took US superstar Mike Tyson for his role model and today coaches youngsters on a voluntary basis. "These are children who are neglected and who were using drugs from left to right, so on Saturdays and Sundays, I sacrifice my time for them," says Aziz, who wears a tracksuit in the national colors.

"The coach teaches us boxing (...) It is better to learn to box than to take up banditry in the street. Later we will teach others," smiles Moussa Issa, a committed trainee. "A champion will emerge from the group," Aziz predicts with conviction. In 2012, he already piloted a government program supported by the United States and Spain, which benefitted about 40 such young people from two working-class neighborhoods of Niamey.

While the former champion can count on a few local sponsors, he also provides private boxing lessons for Western expatriates to support his activities. "Instead of giving me money, I sometimes ask them to bring me high-quality boxing equipment from their vacations in Europe," says Aziz, who works in a United Nations agency in Niamey.

### Olympian dreams

The first professional boxer to hail from Niger, where traditional wrestling is the main combat sport, Aziz has known a degree of international success. Under the leadership of Jean-Marc Perono, former coach of two world champions, the French Hacine Cherifi and Fabrice Tiozzo, he won a record of five victories in five fights.

"Like my idol Tyson, I dominate in the ring!" he boasts from his imposing 1.88 meters (six foot two

“Better to learn to box than to take up banditry”

inches), showing off his gold medals. "Aziz's success has breathed new life into boxing, which was struggling to shine," comments a connoisseur of the sport in Niger. Retired since 2019 "because of the weight of age" and "lack of supervision" after the death of his mentor, Aziz today devotes his energy to the emergence of "young talents".

Beyond his investment on behalf of street kids, he also coaches six aspiring professionals who dream of making boxing a career. "Sometimes it's them who come to pick me up at home" for training, he says, glad of such enthusiasm.

Success has already come. Moussa Sahabi, 22,



**NIAMEY:** Coach Aziz Ousseini Doka (left) is seen while he's training one of his students during a training session in the municipal stadium of Niamey on September 25, 2021. — AFP

has lifted three West African championship titles in the super flyweight (50-52 kg) and super bantamweight (53-55 kg) categories from the Heritage Boxing Entertainment (HBE) organization, which aims to reach all nations in Africa and beyond. "Before meeting Abdoul Aziz, I was so discouraged from boxing but he woke me up!" Sahabi says. "For my first bout, he mortgaged his car so that I could take part in the competition."

Sahabi would love to follow in the footsteps of boxer Issaka Dabore, the first Olympic medalist in the history of Nigerien sport, who won a bronze at Munich in 1972. The young champion wanted to compete in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, but was unable to participate in qualifying bouts due to travel restrictions imposed because of COVID-19. "Sahabi can go further than where my dreams left off," Aziz predicts. — AFP

## Du Plessis stars as Chennai down Kolkata to win fourth IPL title

**DUBAI:** Faf du Plessis smashed an attacking half-century to help Chennai Super Kings thrash Kolkata Knight Riders by 27 runs and clinch their fourth Indian Premier League title on Friday. Du Plessis' 86 off 59 balls guided Chennai to 192-3, a total their bowlers defended by restricting Kolkata to 165-9 in the final in Dubai. Opener Venkatesh Iyer hit a 32-ball 50 but the knock was not enough to stop Chennai's M.S. Dhoni from a landmark win in his 300th match as T20 skipper.

"We had match winners coming game after game and doing really well," said Dhoni who also praised Kolkata for reviving their fortunes in the tournament's second leg. "Every final is special, if you look at the stats, we may say we're the most consistent team to lose the final too. I feel it's important to come back strong, especially in the knockouts."

Chennai, winners in 2010, 2011 and 2018, remain one of the most successful IPL franchises after five-time champions Mumbai Indians who failed to defend their title this season. Shardul Thakur took three wickets including twin strikes in one over to hurt two-time champions Kolkata who came into the final on the back of four successive wins.

Spinner Ravindra Jadeja and pace bowler Josh Hazlewood took two wickets each. Eoin Morgan's Kolkata won the toss and elected to field but their bowlers failed to get a wicket until the ninth over and took a hammering in Dubai.

### Emerging Gaikwad

Ruturaj Gaikwad fell for 32 off spinner Sunil Narine but Du Plessis kept up the charge to raise his fifty with a six amid raucous support for Chennai at a nearly packed stadium. The South African veteran smashed seven fours and three sixes and put on key partnerships with Robin Uthappa, who made 31, and Moeen Ali, who hit an unbeaten 37 off 20 balls.

"That was a great day. It was also my 100th game in the IPL," said man of the match Du Plessis who scored 600 runs this season. "I have loved my time here. I have done almost ten years here - two seasons were a bit of a break. Number four in the trophy cabinet is really good."

Du Plessis was all praise for his opening partner Gaikwad who topped the season's batting chart with 635 runs and named emerging player of the tournament. Du Plessis was out on the final ball off pace bowler Shivam Mavi. Narine was Kolkata's best bowler with figures of 2-26. Kolkata started strongly with Iyer and Shubman Gill, who made 51, putting on a quickfire opening stand of 91. But Chennai hit back with Thakur's twin strikes in one over including Iyer's key wicket as wheels came off the Kolkata chase.

"We are extremely proud of the fight we have shown. The character and fight is trademark," Morgan said of his side that bounced back from a seventh place in the first leg to storm into the playoffs and then the final. The tournament was halted midway due to a surging pandemic in India in May and resumed in the United Arab Emirates last month. — AFP

## Nature Strip wins turf's biggest prize 'The Everest'

**SYDNEY:** Star sprinter Nature Strip, ridden by James McDonald, lived up to his billing as favorite to win the world's richest turf race, The Everest, in front of thousands of cheering punters in Sydney yesterday. The seven-year-old gelding, trained by Chris Waller, led all the way to hold off a fast-finishing Masked Crusader and collect a whopping Aus\$6.2 million (US\$4.6 million) for barely a one-minute dash.

On a blustery day, Eduardo came third at Royal Randwick in the first major event in Sydney with crowds — capped at 10,000 — since a months-long Covid-19 lockdown was eased. Normally, 40,000 fans would pack the venue, but those there provided some much-needed atmosphere to a sport which, like most others, has suffered under pandemic restrictions. Raced over 1,200 meters (3/4 mile or six furlongs), the race brought together 12 of the world's best sprinters under weight-for-age conditions.

Nature Strip flew out of the blocks on a soft track and led at the halfway

mark ahead of Home Affairs, with his sustained speed enough to withstand the late-charging Masked Crusader to win by a head. Defending champion Classique Legend finished fifth.

"I've never woken up in a morning and been so confident with a runner," said an emotional McDonald, after Nature Strip won at his third attempt — having finished seventh in 2020, and leading for much of the way in 2019 before finishing fourth. "The man who trains it (Waller) is just an absolute master at what he does and the horse is a star, he just gives his all... he's been a consistent performer all the way through."

Waller, choking back tears, said it was a special moment, especially with a raucous crowd back at the track. "It was a great, great race," he said. "What better way to get out of Covid with such a great race day. You can really feel it today, with the crowd back."

### Payday

While they celebrated, the racing community was also mourning after reigning Cox Plate champion Sir Dragonet was euthanized yesterday after breaking down in a track gallop at Moonee Valley in Victoria state. The Irish import was having his final serious workout heading into a defense of his crown next week where jockey Glen Boss — who rode ninth-placed Home Affairs in The Everest —

## The rise and rise of Twenty20 cricket

**LONDON:** In just under 20 years, Twenty20 cricket has gone from being a light-hearted sideshow to a money-spinning, central plank of the sport's global calendar. With the seventh T20 World Cup about to get underway in Oman and the UAE today, AFP Sport looks at the rise and rise of the game's big-hitting, crowd-pleasing format.

### The beginning

The end of the Benson and Hedges Cup one-day competition, due to a ban on tobacco advertising, in 2002 left a gap in English cricket's domestic calendar. Stuart Robertson, the marketing manager of the England and Wales Cricket Board, proposed a 20-overs-per-side event, a format already known in amateur and junior cricket. The aim was to attract a younger audience who might not have the time to engage with longer formats.

The first official Twenty20 county matches took place in 2003 and proved an instant success in terms of attracting crowds. More than 27,000 turned up to see Middlesex play Surrey at Lord's — the largest attendance for any county game at the "home of cricket" outside of a one-day final since 1953.

That success was noted elsewhere, with the frenetic pace and in particular, the dynamic hitting of batsmen, proving popular with spectators worldwide. Yet there was still a sense this was not 'proper cricket'.

### The international game

The first international T20 match between New Zealand and Australia at Eden Park, Auckland, in 2005 saw both teams clad in retro 1980s kits, with New Zealand decked out in an exact replica of

their 'Beige Brigade' colors of that era. Some players even wore fake beards and moustaches in honor of styles of that time.

"I think it's difficult to play seriously," said Australia's Ricky Ponting, the man of the match. But the format's growing popularity was noted by the International Cricket Council and led to the inaugural 2007 men's T20 World Cup in South Africa that saw India beat arch-rivals Pakistan in a thrilling final.

### The IPL

Just as India's victory in the 1983 men's one-day World Cup had changed the attitude of cricket's most populous nation towards the limited overs game, so was this success equally transformative in the sport's economic powerhouse nation. The Board of Control for Cricket in India, looking to capitalize on that success and concerned by the Indian Cricket League, a private T20 event, launched the Indian Premier League in 2008.

Not only did that move effectively end the ICL, the new six-week tournament changed cricket's global environment, particularly the power relations between national boards and players. The city-based IPL, where teams were bankrolled by wealthy private owners, with squads based on player auctions, meant leading cricketers could earn vast sums of money in a short space of time.

Traditionally, the way to having a lucrative career was to become an established international in multi-day Test cricket and benefit from the sponsorship deals that followed. Now, however, there was another route, with the creation of other leagues such as Australia's Big Bash and the Caribbean Premier League creating a global T20 circuit.

When the IPL started, it clashed with international fixtures and then England captain Kevin Pietersen found himself involved in rows with then team management over his desire to play in the new event. As the gifted batsman recalled in a



**SYDNEY:** Nature Strip (left), ridden by jockey James McDonald, takes a lead to win the Everest 2021 horse race at the Royal Randwick race course in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

was due to be in the saddle.

While the Everest is the richest turf race in the world, with a total of Aus\$15 million at stake, it lags the Saudi Cup dirt race in the money stakes. But it is still a massive payday, with the established Melbourne Cup, Kentucky Derby and Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe palling in comparison.

Since its inception in 2017, it has progressively boosted prize money from its initial Aus\$10 million with even the horse that came last, Wild Ruler, walking away with Aus\$450,000. Under an innovative

concept, buyers are required to purchase a Aus\$600,000 slot in the race and commit for three years, then do a deal with owners and jockeys to secure the top horses.

The idea was modelled on the Pegasus World Cup in the United States, run over 1800m. But it has been controversial, with Racing NSW and the Australian Turf Club scheduling it in Sydney to clash with the Caulfield Cup in Melbourne, which was won Saturday by the Peter Moody-trained Incentivize, ridden by Brett Prebble. — AFP



**MUSCAT:** Oman's captain Aqib Ilyas attends a press conference at the al-Amerat Cricket Stadium in Muscat yesterday, on the eve of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup match between Oman and Papua New Guinea. — AFP

tweet in May: "When I went up against ENG, I was alone. This time, it's all their best branded players!"

### The future

The IPL has so changed the game the ICC has effectively barred international men's matches during the usual April-May timeframe for the tournament in a bid to ensure top-class cricketers remain available. Now there is an uneasy co-existence between the formats, with the ICC creating the World Test Championship — New Zealand won this year's inaugural edition — in a bid to bolster the five-day game and Virat Kohli, captain of beaten finalists India, proclaiming in August: "For me this is the absolute pinnacle of the game. I will give everything to Test cricket for the time I play, I can assure you of that." But how long Kohli's attitude lasts across cricket remains to be seen. — AFP



Sports

# China misses out on record 23-race F1 calendar in 2022

## Shanghai race to be replaced by Emilia Romagna Grand Prix

PARIS: China was dropped from the Formula One calendar for a third successive year on Friday as a record 23-race schedule for 2022 was released. "Due to ongoing pandemic conditions, China will not be included on the 2022 calendar. China will be restored to the calendar as soon as conditions allow," said a statement from governing body, the FIA. The Chinese GP at Shanghai will be replaced by the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix at Imola on April 24.

The 2022 season will start in Bahrain on March 20 and finish back in the Gulf at Abu Dhabi on November 20. Next year's schedule also continues a steady growth in the number of events as international sport emerges from the pandemic. In 2020,



SHANGHAI: A boy looks at a Ferrari Formula 1 car displayed at a Ferrari store in Shanghai on October 14, 2021. — AFP

### The 2022 Formula One calendar

- March 20: Bahrain, Sakhir
  - March 27: Saudi Arabia, Jeddah
  - April 10: Australia, Melbourne
  - April 24: Emilia Romagna, Imola\*
  - May 8: Miami, Miami\*\*
  - May 22: Spain, Barcelona\*
  - May 29: Monaco, Monaco
  - June 12: Azerbaijan, Baku
  - June 19: Canada, Montreal
  - July 3: Great Britain, Silverstone
  - July 10: Austria, Spielberg
  - July 24: France, Le Castellet
  - July 31: Hungary, Budapest
  - August 28: Belgium, Spa-Francorchamps
  - September 4: Netherlands, Zandvoort
  - September 11: Italy, Monza
  - September 25: Russia, Sochi
  - October 2: Singapore, Singapore\*
  - October 9: Japan, Suzuka
  - October 23: United States, Austin\*
  - October 30: Mexico, Mexico City
  - November 13: Brazil, Sao Paulo
  - November 20: Abu Dhabi, Yas Marina
- \* subject to contract  
\*\* subject to FIA circuit approval



Season starts  
March 20 in  
Bahrain

there were 17 F1 races, which rose to 22 for this year's world championship.

Next season, Australia, Canada, Singapore and Japan are all set to return after being axed in 2020 and 2021 because of COVID-19 and subsequent health restrictions. A new race in Miami has also been confirmed for May 8 as the United States hosts two events with Austin penciled in on October 23.

"We are excited to announce the 2022 calendar as we prepare to enter a new era for the sport with brand new regulations and cars for next year that are designed to create closer racing," said Stefano

Domenicali, the president of F1.

"This season has been incredible so far with great battles on the track, large audiences tuning in and fans returning to the races after the impact of the pandemic. We look forward to welcoming more fans back next season and hope 2022 feels more normal than the life we have all experienced in the past two years."

The 2022 season will finish three weeks earlier than the 2021 edition to avoid a clash with the football World Cup in Qatar which kicks off the day after the Abu Dhabi F1 finale. There will be two triple-headers and seven back-to-back races next

year, a tightly-packed schedule which could lead to criticism from teams over stress levels for staff.

It also remains to be seen whether or not the experiment with qualifying sprint races, introduced this year, returns in 2022. A decision will be made after the third and final sprint race at the Brazilian GP from November 12 to 14, said the F1 Commission.

The 2022 season will also see the introduction of new cars with redesigned aerodynamics to allow drivers the chance to follow and overtake with greater ease in a sport criticized for its often processional nature. — AFP

## Altuve, Correa propel Astros to opening win

LOS ANGELES: Jose Altuve and Carlos Correa homered in back-to-back innings and the Houston Astros rallied to beat the Boston Red Sox 5-4 on Friday in game one of their American League Championship Series.

Boston had seized a two-run lead with a three-run third-inning led off by a home run from Enrique Hernandez. The Red Sox's 3-1 advantage held up until Altuve crushed a game-tying two-run home run off Red Sox relief pitcher Tanner Houck with two outs in the bottom of the sixth.

It was a 20th career post-season

homer for Altuve, who atoned for a third-inning fielding error that allowed the Red Sox to put up a run. "The key is to stay in the game," Altuve said of shaking off the tough play.

Correa put the Astros ahead for the first time since their one-run lead in the first inning with a solo shot off Boston reliever Hansel Robles in the seventh. Correa knew the instant the ball left his bat that it was out of the park, pausing to watch for a moment before rounding the bases. "I knew he was going to try to pound me with the fastball up," Correa said. "And he left the changeup right there and I just happened to catch it up front."

The Astros added an insurance run in the eighth inning when Altuve's sacrifice fly scored Yuli Gurriel to make it 5-3. Gurriel was walked to open the inning by Red Sox relief pitcher Hirokazu Sawamura, who then gave up a single to

Chas McCormick and hit Martin Maldonado with a pitch to load the bases. He escaped the inning without further damage, and the Red Sox pulled a run back when Hernandez belted his second home run of the night off Astros closing pitcher Ryan Pressly.

But Pressly regrouped to record the final three outs of the tense duel that lasted four hours and seven minutes and saw the teams combine to use 16 pitchers. Neither Red Sox starting pitcher Chris Sale nor Astros starter Framber Valdez completed three innings.

Hernandez did everything he could for the Red Sox. Along with his two homers — the first a towering 448-foot blast off Valdez — he had a single and a double. With the bases loaded and two outs in the bottom of the second inning, he came up with a spectacular diving catch to end the frame. — AFP



HOUSTON: Jose Altuve #27 of the Houston Astros reacts to Carlos Correa #1's home run during the seventh inning against the Boston Red Sox during Game One of the American League Championship Series at Minute Maid Park on Friday in Houston, Texas. — AFP

## Neuville dominates Spanish Rally as Ogier loses ground

SALOU: Thierry Neuville continued to control the Spanish Rally yesterday as Elfyn Evans kept alive his chances of catching Toyota team-mate Sebastien Ogier in the title race. Neuville, who won the last three stages on Friday, reeled off all three on Saturday morning but said after the final stage that he could have gone faster. "I had a good stage," he said. "I was a little more careful in this one there were a lot of cuts and I don't want to risk the punctures. Still struggling with understeer. Without that we could have been faster."

Ogier, who entered the rally leading Evans by 24 points in the standings, was fourth in every stage. Evans finished ahead of the Frenchman twice. "Not too bad in here to be honest," said Evans explaining he was also having problems cornering. "Still struggling a bit with the car rotation. I just can't get on the power early enough and hold my line, so we need to work on that."

The Welshman stayed second and, while he lost ground to Neuville, dropping to 9sec back, he increased his advantage on Ogier, who is third, to 23sec. Ogier had

another problem. With the Hyundais seemingly growing stronger on the sweeping asphalt roads, their Spanish driver Dani Sordo, in fourth, closed to 0.2sec behind Ogier with second place and a 6.1sec gain on the final stage of the morning.

For Jari-Matti Latvala, the Toyota team boss, the title battle between his two drivers meant his glass was at least half full. "It's always for the championship best when the fight is decided in the final rally," he said after the morning stages, before switching his attention to the team title, where only Hyundai could catch Toyota.

"Looking like Neuville is running away, which means the championship fight will continue. Let's hope we can get two cars on the podium. That's the most important thing for the manufacturers' championship," said the Finn. — AFP



SALOU: Hyundai Shell Mobis World Rally's driver Thierry Neuville of Belgium steers his Hyundai i20 Coupe Wrc assisted by Martijn Wydaeghe of Belgium during the second day of the Catalonia 2021 FIA World Rally Championship in La Juncosa del Montmel, near Salou, on Saturday. — 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		22531908
			22518752
			22459381
			22451082
			22456536
			22465401
			25746401

### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075

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## Five-star Liverpool go top

Man Utd lose at Leicester • Man City too strong for Burnley



LEICESTER: Leicester City's English midfielder James Maddison (right) fires a free kick into the defensive wall during the English Premier League football match between Leicester City and Manchester United at King Power Stadium yesterday. — AFP

**MANCHESTER:** Manchester United succumbed to a first away league defeat for 30 games by losing 4-2 at Leicester as Liverpool stormed to the top of the Premier League with a 5-0 demolition of Watford yesterday. Manchester City moved into second with a 2-0 win over Burnley, while Chelsea can move back to the top of the table when they travel to Brentford later in the day.

But the focus will fall on United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer after his side failed to win for the third consecutive Premier League game. United led at the King Power thanks to Mason Greenwood's spectacular strike, but were quickly pegged back by Yuri Tielemans' dinked finish beyond David de Gea. A flurry of four goals in the final 12 minutes then condemned Solskjaer's men to a first defeat on the road since January 2020.

Caglar Soyuncu put Leicester in front before Marcus Rashford equalized on his first appear-

ance of the season after shoulder surgery. Straight from kick-off, United's leaky defense was breached once more as Jamie Vardy smashed home and Patson Daka's first Leicester goal in stoppage time sealed a much-needed win for Brendan Rodgers' men.

### 'No one better' than Salah

Roberto Firmino scored his first hat-trick since 2018 as Liverpool ran riot at Vicarage Road in Claudio Ranieri's first match as Watford boss. But it was Mohamed Salah who again took most of the plaudits for another stunning solo goal to take his tally for the season to 10 in as many games. "In this moment it is clear



### Salah scores stunner, Firmino hits treble, 100th goal for Mane

that there is no one better than him," said Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp of the Egyptian.

Salah helped open the floodgates with a defense-splitting pass that teed up Sadio Mane to score his 100th Premier League goal. Firmino would have been unavailable due to a late return from international duty but for an injury that forced him to withdraw from the Brazil squad. He tapped home his first goal from James Milner's cross before half-time and took advantage of another open goal after Ben Foster parried Craig Cathcart's attempted clearance.

Salah left four Manchester City defenders

trailing to score in a thrilling 2-2 draw before the international break and pulled off a similar feat before curling into the far corner. Firmino then completed the rout in stoppage time. City did not need to hit top gear to see off Burnley at the Etihad and remain one point behind Liverpool at the top of the table.

Bernardo Silva and Kevin De Bruyne were on target either side of half-time for Pep Guardiola's men. Wolves produced a miraculous comeback from 2-0 down with 10 minutes remaining to win 3-2 at Aston Villa. Danny Ings and John McGinn had put the hosts in a commanding position at Villa Park. But Romain Saiss, Conor Coady and Ruben Neves handed Bruno Lage's men a dramatic three points. Southampton got their first league win of the season thanks to Armando Broja's goal to beat Leeds 1-0. Norwich remain winless and bottom of the table after a 0-0 draw with Brighton. — AFP

## Newcastle in bid to become 'superpower'

**NEWCASTLE:** A new era beckons for Newcastle today when a packed St James' Park will witness the Magpies' first match since a takeover led by the Saudi sovereign wealth fund took control of the club. Amanda Staveley, one of Newcastle's new directors, says the consortium's ambition is to turn the struggling club into Premier League champions within the next decade.

But there is a stark contrast between where Newcastle are ahead of Tottenham's visit to Tyneside this weekend and where the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) wants to take them. Newcastle sit second bottom of the table, without a win in their opening seven league games this season.

Steve Bruce will take charge of the 1,000th match of his managerial career against Tottenham after he was given a reprieve on Friday amid speculation he was set to be sacked. However, a statement issued by Staveley suggested it remains a matter of when, not if, Bruce is dismissed.

"Change does not always happen overnight — it demands time and that we follow a carefully considered plan and strategy," she said. "Steve has been very professional in our dealings with him and he and his coaching team will take the team on Sunday. If we make any changes going forward, Steve will be the first to know."

Most Newcastle fans will shed no tears



NEWCASTLE: A pedestrian passes a Newcastle United football club-themed mural in Newcastle upon Tyne in northeast England on October 8, 2021. — AFP

when Bruce's time in charge comes to an end. A recent poll from the Newcastle United Supporters Trust found that 94 percent of fans wanted him to resign. Bruce's continued presence is unlikely to sour a jubilant atmosphere among the fans.

Thousands descended on St James' Park when the takeover was finalized just over a week ago, celebrating the end of Mike Ashley's miserable 14-year reign as owner, as well as the potential of becoming one of the most powerful clubs in Europe.

"The most important thing for the fans is to see their team win a game and I know they'll be right behind the players in an atmosphere which I doubt we'll have witnessed at St James' Park in a long time,"

Bruce said on Friday.

Abu-Dhabi backed Manchester City and Qatari-owned Paris Saint-Germain have shown how huge investment from the Middle East can propel unheralded clubs into Europe's elite. "If we only talk about football then in the long term, of course, we have to say that they are going to be a superpower," conceded Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp.

Liverpool are one of a number of Premier League clubs reportedly angered by the decision to give the takeover the green light. That may be borne solely out of self-interest, with the already fierce competition for the Premier League title and places in the Champions League set to become even tougher. — AFP

## Fully fit Barca can still win La Liga, says Koeman

**MADRID:** Ronald Koeman said yesterday Barcelona will have a team to win La Liga once their injured players have recovered. Barca sit ninth in the table ahead of a crunch week that includes league games against Valencia today and Real Madrid next weekend, with a Champions League match at home to Dynamo Kiev in between.

Koeman suggested Sergio Aguero could be included in the squad to face Valencia, with the former Manchester City striker yet to make his debut for Barca due to a calf injury. Ousmane Dembele, Pedri, Martin Braithwaite and Ronald Araujo are also out while Ansu Fati has only just returned from a long-term knee problem. "Little by little we are getting the squad we want," said Koeman in a press conference. "We have had bad luck with injuries but when they recover we will have a team to fight for the league title."

Aguero played around 25 minutes and scored in a friendly against Cornellana on Wednesday after returning to full training earlier in the week. The 33-year-old joined Barcelona on a free transfer in June with the inten-

tion of playing with his Argentinian teammate Lionel Messi, only for Messi to move to Paris Saint-Germain. "He has improved quite a lot recently," said Koeman. "He lacks some match rhythm and physical sharpness but he will get this back by playing. It's possible he will be in the squad tomorrow."

Fati also played in the friendly as he builds up his fitness after 11 months on the sidelines. "We will decide tomorrow," Koeman said on the chances of Fati playing against Valencia. "Every day he is better but he was out for a long time and it will take longer than weeks to recover that sharpness. We will play three games in the next few (eight) days. He will not be able to play all of them, that's for sure."

Dembele is also training again but is further behind after three months out following knee surgery. The Frenchman is not expected to feature this weekend. Koeman's future looked bleak after just one win in six matches but club president Joan Laporta said before the international break the Dutchman would continue in charge. — AFP