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MPs hail Amiri pardon of opposition figures

Lawmakers say amnesty order heralds new era for Kuwait



KUWAIT: Opposition MP Obaid Al-Wasmi and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem walk hand-in-hand yesterday amid reports of an Amiri pardon of opposition figures.

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Although no official announcement was made yesterday, several lawmakers said an Amiri order has been "officially approved" to pardon dozens of opposition figures, including former MPs who have been sentenced to final jail terms. "It has been officially agreed to issue a special pardon and details will be announced within hours," opposition MP Muhammad Al-Sayer tweeted. He provided no further details.

MP Mohammad Al-Huwaila said "an approval for pardon has been granted". "Thanks to the Amir for the pardon," wrote former MP Salem Al-Namlan, who is among the group of opposition ex-MPs living in exile in Turkey for over three years to avoid jail sentences. Several other lawmakers from the opposition and government camps confirmed the news and thanked HH the Amir, but provided no details on the numbers and identities of those to be pardoned.

The official announcement of the pardon was expected to be made late yesterday, but reports said that it could be announced today. National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, who played a key role in reconciliation talks, declined to say if an Amiri pardon has been signed, only saying

that the issue remains in the hands of HH the Amir and that it was not proper for him to make any announcement. But he said that he hoped that the Kuwaiti people will always be happy and that "we have great confidence in the Amir", adding that good news is in the pipeline.

The reports came after a majority of lawmakers signed an appeal to HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, urging him "to agree to start the first step of comprehensive national reconciliation by approving to pardon Kuwaitis convicted for expressing a political opinion or stance". The appeal, read by prominent opposition MP Obaid Al-Wasmi in the presence of Ghanem and several MPs, said a pardon will lead to permanent political stability, new political rules and constructive cooperation between all sides in parliament and outside "to open a new page for a new Kuwait".

As many as 38 MPs signed the appeal, which also secured the backing of the speaker. All 16 pro-government MPs, in addition to 22 opposition lawmakers, signed the appeal. But nine opposition MPs did not sign it, although many of them declared their support for the move.

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News in brief

41 dead as rains batter India

DEHRADUN, India: At least 41 people died and more than a dozen were missing after landslides and flash floods triggered by several days of heavy rain hit northern India, officials said yesterday. Officials in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand said 35 people were killed in fresh landslides yesterday after six died in similar incidents a day earlier. At least 30 of them were killed in seven separate incidents in the worst-affected Nainital region early yesterday, after cloudbursts - an ultra-intense deluge of rain - triggered a series of landslides and destroyed several structures. — AFP

Breathing spreads TB bacteria

PARIS: Breathing is enough to spread the bacteria that causes tuberculosis, research presented at a major conference yesterday shows, potentially forcing the medical community to rethink decades of containment strategy focusing on coughing alone. Using state-of-the-art equipment, at team at the University of Cape Town in South Africa measured the disease-causing Mycobacterium tuberculosis (Mtb) in 39 people with TB. While coughing produced three times more Mtb than breathing, the research notes that because people breathe all day long, simply exhaling may contribute more than 90 percent of airborne Mtb. — AFP

Trump attacks Powell

WASHINGTON: As much of the world remembered Colin Powell with respect and affection, Donald Trump yesterday attacked the late US statesman, calling him a disloyal Republican who made the case for war in Iraq. "Wonderful to see Colin Powell, who made big mistakes on Iraq and famously, so-called weapons of mass destruction, be treated in death so beautifully by the Fake News Media. Hope that happens to me someday," Trump said sarcastically in a statement. Trump branded Powell a "classic RINO" - Republican In Name Only - and added "he made plenty of mistakes, but anyway, may he rest in peace!" — AFP

Lebanon elite united against blast probe

BEIRUT: They may often squabble but Lebanon's political parties seem united in rejecting an investigation into Beirut's massive port explosion that they fear could threaten their survival, analysts say. The explosion of a huge stockpile of poorly stored fertilizer on the dockside on Aug 4, 2020 killed more than 210 people, wounded thousands and ravaged half the capital.

In the aftermath of mass protests in late 2019 demanding the ouster of the traditional ruling class, many said the

disaster was just the latest example of official incompetence and corruption. But months into a domestic investigation, no one has been held accountable. Politicians have repeatedly obstructed the work of judge Tarek Bitar by refusing to show up for questioning, filing legal complaints against him or calling for his dismissal, which last week sparked deadly violence in the heart of Beirut.

Analyst Lina Khatib said hopes were fading of holding those responsible for the port blast accountable. "The ruling class in Lebanon is in agreement about wanting the port probe to be abandoned and they will use all available means to derail it," said Khatib, director of the Middle East and North Africa program at the Chatham House think tank.

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10 years after Gaddafi, stability still eludes Libya

TRIPOLI: Ten years since dictator Muammar Gaddafi was slain by Libyan rebels, the North African country is still struggling to emerge from

the violence sparked by his overthrow. A year-long ceasefire and a UN-led peace process have barely papered over deep divisions, and upcoming elections are unlikely to resolve the crisis, analysts say.

Gaddafi ruled Libya with an iron fist for 42 years after a 1969 coup against the monarchy, portraying himself as a revolutionary, Arab and African hero while mercilessly crushing all opposition. In 2011, he was toppled in a revolt inspired by the Arab Spring uprisings and backed by NATO. On Oct 20 of that year, rebels tracked him down to his hometown

Sirte, tortured him and killed him in the street, displaying his body in a market.

His death has failed to bring democracy or stability. Instead, Libya has fractured along regional and ideological lines, with an assortment of mafia-like militias and their foreign backers vying for control of the oil-rich country. Last October's ceasefire was followed in March by the appointment of a unity government with a mandate to lead Libya to elections. So with a presidential poll set for Dec 24 and

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Gaza woman basketball ref hits the court

GAZA: At a recent basketball match in the Gaza Strip the spectators were transfixed, less so by the action on the court than the fact the referee was a young woman. Amira Ismail, 23, who officiated the Gaza City-Nuseirat match, has been making history in the Zionist-blockaded Palestinian enclave ruled by the

Islamist group Hamas since 2007.

"Everyone looks at me in amazement on the basketball court, wondering, 'who is she? Is she a foreigner or an Arab? What is she doing here?'" Ismail told AFP. Her passion for basketball motivated Ismail to seek a refereeing license from the International Basketball Federation (FIBA), which she earned three years ago after passing online exams. But due to social pressures, and then a long pause forced by the COVID-19 pandemic, Ismail had yet to officiate a match - until this year.

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BEIRUT: Protesters gather in front of the 'Revolution fist' symbol of Lebanon's Oct 2019 uprising, during a rally in Martyrs Square on Oct 17, 2021. The placard reads in Arabic: "All of them means all of them", referring to the country's political leaders. — AFP



GAZA: Palestinian referee Amira Ismail trains young basketball players at Champions Academy in Gaza City on Oct 4, 2021. — AFP

Local

Kuwait Amir receives Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad, Audit Bureau Chief



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a copy of the State Audit Bureau's report from the bureau's Chairman Fahad Al-Shaya.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday in Dar Al-Yamama His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. His Highness the

Amir also received Chairman of the State Audit Bureau Fahad Al-Shaya, who presented to him the report of the Audit Bureau regarding budgets and final accounts' reviews under the bureau's supervi-

sion for the fiscal year 2020/2021. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad in Dar Al-

Yamama yesterday. Furthermore, His Highness the Crown Prince received the Chairman of the State Audit Bureau, who also presented to him a copy of the same report. — KUNA



DUBAI: Kuwait's Sadu Craft Society official Sahar Al-Maqsidi is seen at the Kuwaiti pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai. — KUNA photos



Kuwait's Sadu Craft Society at Expo Dubai

DUBAI: Kuwait's Sadu Craft Society displayed yesterday a group of heritage artworks for the visitors of the country's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai, providing them with an opportunity to learn and enjoy Kuwait's artistic heritage and cultural identity. In a statement to the press, official at Kuwait's Sadu Craft Society Sahar Al-Maqsidi said that their mission was to protect the Sadu industry and teach the secrets of the artwork to future generations. Kuwaiti artists displayed their work for visitors, conveying a message highlighting the importance of preserving the country's heritage and showing the depth of Kuwaiti cultural history to the world, she added. The Kuwaiti collection evoked the values of the beautiful past and present, establishing Kuwait's mark on the cultural map globally. — KUNA



Society honors long-serving housekeeper

KUWAIT: Kuwait Humanitarian and Friendship Society continues to help people through its projects, which include covering medical bills, helping with treatment, helping families in need in various ways and providing tickets for deportees. Also, one of the society's projects is to recognize and honor residents for their long and devoted service to Kuwait. Lourdes Laconsay is one such resident. Chairman Ahmad Al-Sarraf honored and presented Laconsay with a token of appreciation for her 33 years of honest and hardworking service as a housekeeper.



Chairman Ahmad Al-Sarraf honored and presented Laconsay with a token of appreciation for her 33 years of honest and hardworking service as a housekeeper.

MPs hail Amiri pardon of...

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Following the reading of the appeal, Wasmi and Ghanem were seen walking hand-in-hand with a number of other lawmakers with big smiles on their faces, something unthinkable just a couple of months ago when the opposition demanded the resignation of Ghanem as a precondition to cooperate with the government. Later, Wasmi and a number of opposition MPs sat with Ghanem in the latter's office. HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf later yesterday received at Dar Al-Yamama Speaker Ghanem and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Pardoning opposition activists jailed for expressing their political opinion critical of the government has been one of the main demands of the opposition, which controls a majority of the 50-member Assembly. The government, speaker and three leading opposition MPs launched the national dialogue called by HH the Amir to resolve political disputes

that have obstructed the performance of the Assembly and the government since December's polls. The Assembly has hardly held any complete session as opposition MPs boycotted sessions, especially after the Assembly decided to delay the grilling of the prime minister until the end of next year.

The pardon is expected to facilitate the return of six former opposition MPs and several activists, including ex-MPs Musallam Al-Barrak, Faisal Al-Mislem and Jamaan Al-Harbash, who left Kuwait for Turkey in the summer of 2018 to escape serving jail terms passed over the storming of the National Assembly building following an anti-corruption protest in 2011.

The pardon is also expected to include dozens of activists who are in jail or facing jail terms for criticizing HH the Amir, which is prohibited under Kuwaiti law. Lawmakers and activists hailed the reported pardon and thanked HH the Amir, calling him the "Amir of Pardon". Islamist MP Abdulaziz Al-Saqabi said the pardon gives hope for a new era in Kuwait, while MP Sayer said it will be key to all other reforms. Opposition MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari said "it is a gracious pardon from an honorable Amir". MP Hamad Al-Matar said it will strengthen national unity and lead to a new phase for Kuwait based on tolerance and brotherhood.

towards a political solution."

Libyan academic Mahoud Khalfallah also voiced doubts that elections alone would lead to "a definitive solution" to the crisis. That would require "an end to negative foreign involvement in Libya's internal affairs, maturity of Libyan voters in choosing who represents them, disregarding tribalism and regionalism, and all sides accepting the outcome of elections," he said.

None of those is a given. The road to the ballot box has been paved with bitter debates over electoral laws, notably a bill on presidential polls that appeared tailor-made for a bid by military strongman Khalifa Haftar and was passed in a move many of his opponents say bypassed due process. Haftar is despised by many in western Libya, particularly after the year-long offensive by his self-styled Libyan National Army to seize Tripoli, which killed thousands of people before he was pushed back by Turkish-backed armed groups in June 2020. — AFP

Lebanon elite united against...

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The country's powerful Shiite movement Hezbollah has spearheaded a campaign to remove Bitar, accusing him of political bias. The debate over his future, which comes after the previous investigator was removed in February, has already triggered the postponement of one cabinet meeting despite the urgency of addressing Lebanon's acute economic crisis.

Nadim Houry, executive director at the Arab Reform Initiative, said that the whole ruling class felt under threat in what he described as "an essential battle in Lebanon for rule of law". "A section of society has decided that they want to go all the way and ask for truth," but they face "a political class that is willing to use threats, use violence, use even launching into another civil war to prevent that quest for truth from leading to a result," he said.

It emerged after the port blast that officials had known that hundreds of tons of ammonium nitrate had for years been left to linger in a warehouse near residential neighborhoods. Families of the victims see in Bitar

the only hope for justice in a country where impunity has long been the norm. After the 1975 to 1990 civil war, Lebanon issued a broad amnesty that benefited the country's warlords, allowing many of them to become political leaders.

"Regardless of what Bitar finds, it's the idea itself that any of them can somehow be held accountable that they are resisting," Houry said. Any success in the blast probe would set a precedent and unravel a "impunity regime" under which each party agrees not to pursue the other for its crimes, as long as it is not targeted itself. Tensions came to a boil last week after a rally against Bitar organized by Hezbollah and its Shiite ally Amal descended into violence that killed seven of their supporters.

The sound of gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades trapped residents indoors for hours, reviving memories of the civil war. Hezbollah accused snipers of the Lebanese Forces, a Christian party, of causing the bloodshed, but the latter has denied this. The army, meanwhile, is investigating a video circulated on social media that appears to show a soldier shooting at protesters.

"Hezbollah is increasingly acting as the praetorian guard of the regime that has come into place since the 1990s," Houry said. The Iran-backed movement, the only one not to have disarmed after the civil war, is at least partly blacklisted by most Western governments but holds seats in parliament. — AFP

10 years after Gaddafi, stability...

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legislative elections in January, is Libya finally turning the page on a decade of chaos?

"Relative to the past 10 years, Libya is in a much-improved situation," said Hamish Kinnear, an analyst with the research institute Verisk Maplecroft. "The ceasefire agreed to in October 2020 continues to hold and the Government of National Unity is hanging on as Libya's sole government. But Libya's political stability is increasingly precarious," Kinnear told AFP. "The next six months will tell us whether the quiet period that followed the October 2020 ceasefire was merely an opportunity for armed factions to lick their wounds or actual progress

Gaza woman basketball ref...

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"This time around, I was determined to get out there and use my international license on the field, because I deserve it," she said, clad in azure-colored sportswear that matched her eyes. So far this year, Ismail, who works day shifts in a hospital after completing her bachelor's degree in pharmacology, has refereed five men's matches, each time attracting curious glances. Crowd sizes are still limited due to pandemic-linked restrictions. But Ismail said she is bracing for the post-coronavirus world, when more people will attend games and more eyes will be on her.

Reactions have so far been positive. Gaza City

player Ramzi Saba, wiping sweat off his face with a towel at the end of the match, said he was excited to see a female referee. "I know it's a normal thing outside Gaza, but I've never seen it before," he said. In the stands, Ibrahim Mahmoud, 43, followed the match, like the rest of the spectators, occasionally glancing at the table where Ismail was counting points and fouls. "I was surprised that there was a girl on the court," he said. "It's something new, but I hope that this culture will develop, and that young boys will learn to accept more women referees."

There are 15 FIBA-certified referees in Gaza, Ismail and 14 men, and they officiate the matches of the four women's teams and 12 men's teams, said Ramzi Al-Borai, an official at the Palestinian basketball federation. Ismail said she hopes to encourage broader women's participation in sports in Gaza. "I hope that the mere idea of seeing girls do sport becomes a normal thing here, so that girls are no longer afraid of the eyes of the rest of society." — AFP

Local

Kuwait's COVID cases, deaths in unprecedented decline: Minister

Kuwait Fire Force shifted to be under Ministry of Interior

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah said on Monday COVID-19 infection and death rates are at an "unprecedented decline," with intensive care unit occupancy levels at their "lowest" amid an increase in two-dose vaccination rates amongst nationals and residents. This came as the minister briefed a Cabinet session on the "ongoing improvements" regarding the COVID-19 pandemic situation nationwide, according to a Cabinet statement. In turn, ministers expressed "great satisfaction and reassurance" at the revelation, labelling the public vaccination campaign a "success", thanks to its contribution to raising societal immunity levels. They went on to reiterate the need for both nationals and residents, who have not yet been inoculated, to receive one of the four approved vaccines to preserve public safety and ensure the defeat and full control over this pandemic.

Separately, ministers welcomed the return home of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah after a private trip abroad, congratulating him on the advent of the Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) birthday and praying that the event would bring growth and prosperity to the Muslim world. On the international scale, Foreign Minister and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Naser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah highlighted the details of his recent attendance of Non-Aligned Movement talks in Belgrade. His speech at the meeting underlined Kuwait's commitment to the 10 Bandung principles, namely respect of fundamental human rights under the United Nations Charter, respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity, recognition of equality amongst all races, creeds and sects, non-intervention in the affairs of other countries, respect of a nation's right to defend itself in conformity with the UN Charter. Also, the non-use of collective defense pacts to benefit the interests of great powers, refraining from acts of aggression on another country, the settlement of global disputes through peaceful means, the promotion of cooperation and mutual interest and respect for international justice.

The minister went on to outline the results of recent meetings with visiting officials, namely Kosovo's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Donika Gervilla-Schwarz and Venezuela's Foreign Minister Felix Plasencia, both of which discussed bilateral trade ties alongside issues of mutual significance. Another visit by UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini, saw the official expressing gratitude and appreciation for Kuwait's support of the UN agency's endeavors, most recently a healthcare pro-

gram dedicated to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, alongside the UNRWA budget, the statement said.

Kuwait Fire Force

The Cabinet members debated the proposal of the committee to shift the supervisory authority over the Kuwait Fire Force from the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs to the Minister of Interior in light of the completion of the KFF military organization as a regular force. They approved the blueprint of the proposal to shift the supervisory authority over the KFF to the Minister of Interior and asked the Fatwa and Legislation Department to work out a final draft decree in this regard. The Cabinet reviewed a recommendation from the committee to add a second paragraph to Article 4 of Act 419 for 2010 on authorization of setting up the Canadian John Queen University in Kuwait.

It also reviewed a draft decree to endorse a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in Islamic affairs and 'waqf' (religious endowments) between Kuwait and Qatar. It debated draft decree

ICU occupancy at 'lowest level'

to endorse a MoU on cooperation in direct investment promotion between Kuwait and Qatar. It debated draft decree to endorse a MoU on cooperation in social affairs between Kuwait and Turkey. It debated draft decree to endorse a MoU on cooperation in domestic workers' affairs between Kuwait and India. It debated draft decree to endorse a draft pact on aviation services between Kuwait and the Duchy of Luxembourg. The Cabinet approved the draft decrees and referred them to His Highness the Amir for final endorsement. The Cabinet debated the recommendation of the committee on education, health and youth affairs on the upgrading of school management of the various stages of public education. It tasked the minister of education to press ahead with the legal, technical and procedural measures necessary for materializing the content of the report of the committee, and report back to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis on progress of the implementation of the vision for ensuring quality education.

doctors and nurses) to bring in their husbands and children on tourist visas only.

- Allowing medical cadres to transfer from visit to family visa according to rules and conditions. Transactions will be received as per the residence address.

Private medical sector

- Allowing female doctors and nurses working in private hospitals only (not clinics and private medical centers) to bring in their children under 16 years of age on family visas according to conditions. In case the father is also a resident, they will be given tourist visit visas, then transferred to the father's sponsorship.

- Allowing medical cadres in private hospitals only to get family visas for their families (wives and children).

- As for sectors working in providing food security - farms, fisheries, livestock, poultry, dairy producers, bakeries, food marketing, restaurants and catering - they are allowed to obtain business and work permits as per their address, provided they meet the percentage set by the department director based on company activities, labor numbers and need estimation.

Private education sector:

- Allowing heads of families working in private schools who meet conditions to bring in their wives and children on family visas.

- In case the applicant has a private sector work visa at private schools but hasn't received a residency permit yet and wishes to bring his wife or



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

As for the National Assembly affairs, the Cabinet reviewed the letter of the Assembly Speaker regarding a grilling request from MP Hisham Abdulsamad Al-Saleh to minister of health, dated on October 12, 2021. The grilling request is to be on the agenda of the first parliament session pursuant to Article 135 of the executive statutes of the Assembly. The Cabinet, while renewing confidence in the minister of health, reaffirmed that interpellation is one of the constitutional rights of MPs. The Cabinet appreciated the efforts and dedication of the Ministry of Health in the battle against the coronavirus pandemic, taking pride in the outstanding achievements in this regard.

The Minister of Oil and Minister of Higher Education Dr Mohammad Abdullatif Al-Fares briefed the Cabinet on the circumstances surrounding the fire incident at Mina Al-Ahmedi Refinery Monday morning. The fire, which broke out from a sulfur melting unit at the facility belonging to Kuwait National Petroleum Company, resulted in minor injuries and suffocations among several workers, Dr Fares told the Cabinet. Some of the injured workers received proper first aid on the spot and others were rushed to Al-Adan Hospital in a stable health condition, he said, adding that the fire was subdued timely and the oil facility continued operating normally. The Cabinet spoke highly of the efforts of the oil workers and firefighters which helped contain the fire and minimize its impacts in a record time.

Political issues

The Cabinet reviewed a host of political issues related to the regional and international affairs. It

condemned in the strongest terms the persistent attempts of the Houthis militias to undermine the security of sisterly Saudi Arabia and threaten the shipping routes in the southern Red Sea.

The persistence of such hostilities and escalation of attacks on civilian targets in Jazan city, south Saudi Arabia, constitutes a blatant violation of the rules of the international and humanitarian laws, which requires a prompt and decisive response from the international community, the Cabinet stressed. The Cabinet renewed full support to the sisterly Saudi Arabia in whatever measures it might take to protect its security, stability and sovereignty.

On the deadly clashes in Lebanon last Thursday, the Cabinet urged the Lebanese government to exercise self-restraint, end the sedition, and abide by the constitution and law in order to bring the country out of the current crisis. The Cabinet expressed Kuwait's solidarity with sisterly Lebanon and support to its efforts to restore security, stability and sovereignty, and realize the aspiration of its people.

The Cabinet expressed sincere congratulations to new Tunisian Prime Minister Najla Bouden on the formation of her government and wished her success in realizing the aspirations of the brotherly people of Tunisia. The Cabinet congratulated Iraqi President Barham Saleh on the successful parliamentary elections, expressing best wishes for sisterly Iraq. The Cabinet denounced the deadly bomb attack on a mosque in Kandahar, Afghanistan, on last Friday, renewing Kuwait's principle stand against all forms and manifestations of violence and terrorism. — KUNA

Recommendation to issue visit visas for certain groups

KUWAIT: A security source said the Directorate General of Residency Affairs made several recommendations to allow the issuance of family, business and tourist visas for some groups, Al-Anbaa Arabic daily reported yesterday, quoting sources. The recommendations will first be submitted to Assistant Undersecretary for Residency Affairs Maj Gen Anwar Al-Barjas for review, then it will be decided by Interior Minister Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali and Undersecretary Lt Gen Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf after consideration by the Cabinet, the sources added.

The recommendations with regards to entry visas include the following:

Government medical sector:

- Allowing all medical cadres working at the health ministry, defense, national guard and KNPC, who meet the conditions required for family visas, to bring their wives and children on family visas.

- Allowing female doctors and nurses to bring in their husbands and children below 16 years of age on family visas as per family visa conditions. In case the father is also a resident, the children will be granted visit visas, then transferred to the father's sponsorship if he meets the conditions.

- Allowing female medical cadres (other than

ACK signs deal with Kuwait Business Council

KUWAIT: The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) represented by the President, Prof Isam Zabalawi, and the Kuwait Business Council in Dubai and Northern Emirates (KBC) represented by the Acting Chairman, Engineer Feras Al-Salem, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to broaden and further cooperation between both parties. The signing ceremony took place at ACK's campus last week.

On this occasion, ACK has officially joined KBC as an active corporate member in hopes of strengthening cohesion and collaboration between the two institutions. This agreement will benefit ACK at expanding its scope of services for the benefit of its current students and alumni.

With this significant decision, both parties will receive the opportunity to participate in mutually coordinated educational and service activities where the utmost support, coordination and expertise will be exchanged between the two. The agreement with KBC will bolster ACK's Innovation and

Entrepreneurship Center to provide greater opportunities for the coming generations in the fields of innovation and entrepreneurship

KBC was established in May 2016 under the umbrella of the Dubai Chamber as an independent non-profit organization. Operating in Dubai and the North Emirates, the Council aims to enhance the expertise, opportunities and relationships between Kuwaiti businesspersons and companies. Kuwait Business Council is the first of its kind for business communities outside the State of Kuwait.

On the other hand, ACK is one of the first private

children, business visas will be issued to them in the name of the education entity which issued his work permit, with an undertaking to submit the wife's criminal record clearance certificate to transfer the visit visa to family residency permit.

- Allowing female teachers working in private schools to bring their husbands on tourist visit visas, with an undertaking not to transfer.

- Allowing managers, assistant managers, teachers and social advisors at private school to bring their children aged below 16 on family visas as per the conditions. In case the father is a resident, they will be issued tourist visit visas, then transferred under the father's sponsorship if he meets the conditions.

- Allowing entry visas to Kuwait (business visa transferable to work residency) for new workers in private schools in administrative and educational faculties who have recent contracts for the 2021/2022 academic year under the following categories:

- Arabic model schools
- Private Arabic schools
- British
- American
- Canadian
- French
- Pakistani
- Indian
- Filipino
- Iranian
- Bilingual

Approval of visas is up to the discretion of the directorate's director only.



universities in Kuwait, established in 2004 with the goal of offering world-class higher education on home ground. ACK has signed numerous MOUs with various higher education institutions, research bodies, and international organizations in a variety of fields in order to forward the development process undertaken by Kuwait. The college considers these types of collaborations essential in growing its local and international network to better serve its students and graduates. Furthermore, ACK and KBC have begun preparing a schedule of joint activities for the 2021-2022 academic year.

News in brief

Defense Minister expresses condolences

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of condolences to his US counterpart Lloyd J Austin for the demise of former Secretary of State and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell. In his cable, the minister recalled Powell's honorary stands and efforts in supporting legitimacy of Kuwait during his participation in Operation Desert Storm in 1991.

Social care workers protest

KUWAIT: A group of social affairs ministry employees working at social care homes staged a protest for the third time yesterday against a new decision whereby they are required to work on weekends in order to receive overtime shift allowances. The protestors argue that the new regulation effectively deprives them of the allowance unless they work for seven days a week without breaks.

Kuwait oil at \$85 pb

KUWAIT: Kuwait's crude oil price broke the \$85 per barrel benchmark for the first time in three years, signaling another sign of the global market's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic repercussions. The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 86 cents to \$85.16 per barrel on Monday compared to \$84.30 pb last Friday, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. As for the Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate, the prices varied for both with the first going down by 53 cents to \$84.33 per barrel, while the latter went up by 16 cents to \$82.44 pb.

KJA holds general assembly

KUWAIT: Kuwait Journalists Association released a statement yesterday in which it extended an invitation to members who paid their subscription fees by the end of March 31, 2021 to attend the general assembly, to be held on Monday, October 25, 2021 at 3:00 pm at KJA's temporary premise. In case quorum is not met, the meeting will be postponed for half an hour, then it will be held with any number of attendees according to item 29 of KJA's Charter, it said in the statement.

Fatal car crash

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Force said a horrific accident resulted in the death of a person and injured five others. The accident took place on Road 285 in the Khairan chalets area, when an SUV hit a lamppost and caught fire. Kuwait had reported 86 deaths in traffic accidents between July 1, 2021 and September 30, 2021, the interior ministry's general traffic department revealed yesterday.

Local

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Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Kuwait Food Bank launches campaign for families in need

KUWAIT: Kuwait Food Bank launched yesterday a food distribution campaign with Kuwait Awqaf (Endowment) Public Foundation to help support families in need. Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Food Bank Mishaal Al-Ansari said that the campaign aimed to distribute coupons and foodstuffs to 20,000 individuals from families in need. Kuwait Food Bank offered help to support those in need through regularly updating their databases to include more families. Ansari added. He affirmed the bank's keenness on cooperating with a government sector to produce an inclusive plan ensuring various ways to distribute the food to the families, adding that this charity project is considered the largest in the country. Ansari also stated that the bank uses "the world without hunger from the country of humanity" as a slogan to show Kuwait's continuous international humanitarian achievements. — KUNA

Gulf Bank contributes to 'Safe Education' national campaign

KUWAIT: This month, Gulf Bank participated in the national awareness campaign 'Safe Education', in which several ministries cooperated with the private sector, to facilitate the return of students to school after more than a year and a half of hiatus. The campaign was launched in conjunction with the beginning of the school year at the beginning of the month, with the participation of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Interior Affairs and the Ministry of Information, with the aim of educating and encouraging all members of society and inviting them to support government efforts and initiatives related to preparing for the return of students. Among the initiatives in which the private sector institutions participated was the sponsorship of the safety kits that were distributed in schools to students, which contained a set of sterilizers, masks and gloves to protect students while they were at school.

As part of Gulf Bank's social responsibility, and on the sidelines of the "Safe Education" campaign, employees of the bank were present at Qais Ibn Abi Al-Aas School to distribute school supplies to students. On this, Reem Hasan, Manager at Gulf Bank's Corporate Communications Department, said: "We congratulate the students, their parents and teachers on this good return of students to school at the beginning of the new academic year. We, at Gulf Bank, were pleased to contribute to the 'Safe Education' campaign in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior Affairs, and the Ministry of Information. These efforts coincide with the great campaign that we are launching at Gulf Bank on this occasion. At Gulf Bank, we are always keen to participate in government community campaigns, and to always interact with the people of Kuwait on all occasions."

It is worth noting that Gulf Bank ran a large campaign on the occasion of the return to school, in cooperation with several parties, which included surprising the students' families with vouchers for cash purchases in a group of bookstores, in addition to offering discounts to Gulf Bank customers in several stores to purchase school sup-

Dawoodi Bohra community distributes food to workers

KUWAIT: World Food Day is celebrated every year around the world on October 16th. World Food Day aims to promote healthy diets and eradicate hunger issues by 2030. The theme for World Food Day 2021 is 'Safe food now for a healthy tomorrow'. The theme of this year is based on appreciating the individuals who have contributed to creating sustainable surroundings where no one is left hungry. One of the best ways to celebrate World Food Day is by giving food to people who need it the most. The Dawoodi Bohra community in Kuwait, under the blessing and guidance of our spiritual leader Dr Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin TUS, distributed 650 packets of healthy and hygiene cooked food packets in various labor camps. The main objective of the event was to heighten public awareness on the problem of hunger, malnutrition, and poverty.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A picture showing a view of the Liberation Tower in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat
(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)



KUWAIT: A group photo featuring the GBK team, students and the school administration staff.



The GBK team with the Interior Ministry's representatives.

plies and bags. The campaign also included a set of video clips that were published on social media, on preparing the best suitable meals for students in schools. On the first day of school, Gulf Bank launched a song that includes all the letters of the Arabic alphabet, to make it easier for young children to learn it.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large.

With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience. Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust sustainability program at the community, economic, and environmental levels through sustainability initiatives that are strategically selected to benefit both the country and the bank. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 'New Kuwait' and works with various parties and stakeholders in service of the vision.



PAAAFR's General
Director Sheikh
Mohammed Al-Yousef
Al-Sabah



Executive Chairman of
Alghanim Industries
Kutayba Y Alghanim

Alghanim Industries wants a 'Green Kuwait' with PAAAFR

KUWAIT: In an effort to combat Kuwait's harsh climate and introduce sustainable plant life, the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fisheries (PAAAFR) is taking the fight directly to the soil alongside Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately owned companies in the region. The 2021/2022 Green Kuwait campaign aims to promote creating an environmentally sustainable Kuwait with direct volunteerism in planting more trees suitable for Kuwait's climate across the country.

On a weekly basis, volunteers partake in the planting process, which is open to the public. Alghanim Industries provides PAAAFR with logistical support through its businesses Washingtonia and Costa Coffee for the duration of the campaign.

A staunch supporter of this environmentally conscious initiative, Washingtonia, an agriculture company established by Alghanim Industries, was founded on the same principles empowering PAAAFR's campaign: Ensuring Kuwait enjoys sustainable life, for both people and their environment. Washingtonia, which has extensive experience providing green landscaping to large scale projects, including Kuwait's famed Al-Shaheed Park, makes for a strong ally in PAAAFR's campaign.

"This campaign serves as a stepping-stone of encouragement to the public as we move on to our ultimate goal of covering Kuwait with greenery," said PAAAFR's General Director Sheikh Mohammed Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, adding that "the use of Kuwait's indigenous and beloved Sidra trees - a durable tree that withstands the summer heat - is essential to the country's environmental future."

Sheikh Mohammed Al-Yousef also expressed his gratitude to Washingtonia and Alghanim Industries for their commitment to support the campaign. Motivating the public is another shared objective between PAAAFR and Alghanim Industries all the while ensuring that the private sector also takes notice of adhering to environmental responsibilities.

"We are proud to support PAAAFR in a much needed nationwide initiative to take care of our country's environment," said Executive Chairman of Alghanim Industries Kutayba Y Alghanim. "We hope to see more companies encourage these initiatives and participate in our nation's environmental wellbeing. It is heartening to see many of our youth volunteering and planting Sidra trees across the nation. The environment, not only in Kuwait, requires our attention and care more than ever before. We are proud to be part of this initiative, and to live up to the responsibility we have towards our home."



Removing CO2 from the air no longer optional

Missionaries seen as asset, but sometimes headache, by US

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SEONGNAM: South Korea's Air Force T-50 jets of the 'Black Eagles' 53rd Air Demonstration Group perform at the Seoul International Aerospace and Defense Exhibition (ADEX) in Seongnam, south of Seoul, on October 18, 2021. — AFP

N Korea fires 'submarine-launched missile'

Both Koreas building up their weapons capabilities

SEOUL: North Korea fired a suspected submarine-launched ballistic missile into the sea yesterday, the South's military said, the nuclear-armed country's latest advance in weapons technology and one that could give it a second-strike capability. The test came with both Koreas building up their weapons capabilities in what could become an arms race on the peninsula, and with the Washington-Pyongyang dialogue at a standstill.

The "short-range ballistic missile suspected to be an SLBM" was fired from Sinpo into the sea east of the peninsula, Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. Sinpo is a major naval shipyard with satellite photographs previously showing submarines at the facility, and the statement added: "South Korean and US intelligence are closely analyzing for additional detail."

The key question will be whether it was fired from a working submarine, or an underwater platform or barge. A proven submarine-based missile capability would take the North's arsenal to a new level, allowing deployment far beyond the Korean peninsula and a second-strike capability in the event of an attack on its military bases. Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo all condemned the launch, with all three describing it as a ballistic missile.

Under sanctions

North Korea is banned from developing nuclear

weapons and ballistic missiles under UN Security Council resolutions, and is subject to multiple sets of sanctions as a result. Pyongyang is known to be developing an SLBM and has carried out two previous underwater launches in 2016 and 2019, although the Pentagon and analysts say those were likely to have been from a submerged platform with the system in its early stages. "The Kim (Jong Un) regime is developing submarine-launched ballistic missiles because it wants a more survivable nuclear deterrent able to blackmail its neighbors and the United States," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

"North Korea's SLBM is probably far from being operationally deployed with a nuclear warhead," he said, "but Kim cannot politically afford appearing to fall behind in a regional arms race." The missile travelled around 590 kilometers at a maximum altitude of about 60 kilometers, an informed source told AFP. For its part South Korea last month tested its first SLBM, putting it among the elite group of nations that have demonstrated proven technology, and also unveiled a supersonic cruise missile.



Arms race on the peninsula

Yesterday's launch comes after North Korea—which invaded its neighbor in 1950 - in recent weeks tested a long-range cruise missile, a train-launched weapon and what it said was a hypersonic warhead, sparking global concern. It also mounted a rare weapons exhibition, showcasing the gigantic international ballistic missile (ICBM) revealed at a night-time military parade last year.

Pyongyang says it needs its arsenal to defend itself against a possible US invasion. Opening the weapons exhibition, leader Kim Jong Un—who has overseen rapid progress in the North's military technology - b l a m e d Washington for tensions, dismissing US assertions that it does not have hostile intentions. "The fundamental reason for the North's provocation is because the US is not changing its position on talks," Shin Beom-chul, a researcher at the Korea Research Institute for National Strategy, told AFP. "Pyongyang is trying to demonstrate that it can carry out a bigger provocation." South Korea's National Security Council convened an emergency meeting over yesterday's launch, expressing "deep

regret" and urging Pyongyang to return to dialogue. In a statement, US Indo-Pacific Command said: "The United States condemns these actions and calls on the DPRK to refrain from any further destabilizing acts." And Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said two ballistic missiles had been fired, also calling the launch "very regrettable".

Talks at standstill

Pyongyang's latest move came with Avril Haines, the US director of national intelligence, visiting Seoul for a three-way meeting with her South Korean and Japanese counterparts on North Korea, according to reports. It also followed US envoy Sung Kim renewing his appeal for talks. South Korean President Moon Jae-in is pressing for a formal declaration that the Korean War is over-hostilities ceased in 1953 with an armistice rather than a peace treaty-before his term ends next year. Kim met three times with former US president Donald Trump, who boasted of stopping a war but failed to reach a comprehensive agreement on ending North Korea's nuclear program. The talks process has been largely at a standstill since a second meeting in Hanoi the following year collapsed over sanctions relief and what Pyongyang would be willing to give up in return. In 2017, the North tested missiles that can reach the whole of the continental United States and carried out its most powerful nuclear explosion to date. — AFP

Libya town clings to memory of Gaddafi

BANI WALID: A huge portrait of Muammar Gaddafi marks the entrance of Bani Walid: 10 chaotic years since the Libyan dictator's death, residents of the desert town still hanker for his rule. "Muammar Gaddafi is a symbol," said resident Mohamed Dairi, in his fifties. "We will always support him." Unfinished concrete buildings litter the town of some 100,000 people on the edge of the Sahara desert, many of them scarred by bullets and mortar rounds fired during over a decade of conflict. Rebels killed Gaddafi in his hometown of Sirte on October 20, 2011, months into the NATO-backed rebellion that ended his four-decade rule.

Residents of Bani Walid, a stronghold of the Warfala tribe-the country's biggest and a key pillar of Gaddafi's rule-had backed him to the bitter end. Many fighters from the town were killed, with more dying in further battles when rival militia groups attacked. Today, dusty wind whips through the town centre, where a decommissioned tank over-looks a dried-up fountain and a board bearing pictures of "martyrs" hangs above a pile of mortar shells. "Muammar will stay in our hearts forever," one resident told AFP.

'10 years of injustice'

Bani Walid lies in an oasis some 170 kilometers southeast of Libya's capital Tripoli. An imposing government building has been reduced to a battle-scarred shell, but the green flags of Gaddafi's era still flutter in the desert wind. The red, black and green flag of the pre-Gaddafi years, adopted again by



BANI WALID: A picture shows a view of a highway leading to the Libyan city of Bani Walid, about 180 Km southeast of the capital. — AFP

rebels in 2011, is nowhere to be seen. Residents are open about their nostalgia for his rule. "Before 2011, Libyans were the masters of their destiny. Since then we've seen 10 years of injustice, bombing, killing and kidnapping," said Mohammad Abi Hamra, who wore a wristwatch bearing Gaddafi's face. "Revolution is meant to bring change for the better. But what has happened since 2011 hasn't been a real revolution, it has been a conspiracy against Libya," he said. The 10th anniversary of Gaddafi's death comes as the country prepares for December elections, part of a United Nations-led peace process that some hope will help start a new, more peaceful chapter in Libya's history.

'We had security'

But many in Bani Walid are skeptical, seeing more hope in the old regime than in the country's current political forces. "The reason this town is so attached to the former

regime is that the 2011 revolution brought nothing but wars, catastrophe, division of the country and violations of its sovereignty," said engineer Fethi Al-Ahmar. "We still cling to the past because back then we had security, which is the main thing that's missing in Libya today." Journalist Ahmed Abouhriba agreed. "Gaddafi wasn't a dictator, but the guardian of the citizenry," he said.

For Abouhriba, the state of the country's economy-wracked by inflation and conflict-is more stark evidence that life was better under Gaddafi. He said Bani Walid's attachment to the former leader stretches to his son Seif al-Islam, whose face appears on posters on the walls of town. In July, Seif Al-Islam gave a rare interview to the New York Times in which he suggested he may run for president. "How can we support new political parties that have built nothing since 2011?" Abouhriba asked. "We remain loyal to Gaddafi and to his son Seif al-Islam." — AFP

Turkey summons 10 ambassadors

ANKARA: Turkey yesterday summoned the envoys of 10 countries, including Germany and the United States, after they called for the release of a civil society leader whose jailing has upset Ankara's relations with the West. Parisian-born philanthropist and activist Osman Kavala, 64, has been in jail without a conviction since 2017, becoming a symbol of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's growing intolerance of dissent.

The Turkish activist faces a string of charges linked to 2013 anti-government protests and a failed military putsch in 2016. Kavala denies the accusations. In a statement Monday, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the US called for a "just and speedy resolution to his case".

"The continuing delays in his trial... cast a shadow over respect for democracy, the rule of law and transparency in the Turkish judiciary system," they said. The embassies called on Turkey to follow the rulings of the Council of Europe, a human rights body it joined in 1950. The Council of Europe has warned that it would launch disciplinary proceedings against Turkey "in the event that (Kavala) is not released before" the human rights body's next meeting on November 30-December 2.

Kavala's next court hearing is set for November 26. The ambassadors and charge d'affaires arrived at the foreign

ministry in Ankara on Tuesday morning, the Turkish foreign ministry said in a statement. The diplomats were notified their statement "overstepped boundaries" and "attempted to politicize the legal process and pressure the judiciary", the ministry said. "They were told that the focus on only Turkey-related court cases, especially Kavala's, insisting on keeping it on the agenda, was an insincere approach filled with double standards."

Multiple issues have weighed on Turkey's relations with the West, especially Europe, including Ankara's crackdown on opponents after a failed coup in 2016. Tensions were also heightened by Turkey's energy exploration in disputed eastern Mediterranean waters last year. Turkish Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu hit out at the embassies' statement late Monday.

"It is not acceptable for ambassadors to make a recommendation or suggestion to the judiciary for an ongoing case," Soylu said on Twitter. "Your recommendation and suggestion throws a shadow over your understanding of law and democracy." Turkish Justice Minister Abdulhamit Gul late Monday said that "no ambassador had the right to make a recommendation or suggestion to our courts" on Twitter. "It is this ignorance of limits and boundaries that throws a shadow over the rule of law," Gul said. — AFP

International

Climate change threatens over 100 million in Africa

Millions will be exposed to drought, floods, extreme heat

GENEVA: More than 100 million extremely poor people in Africa are threatened by accelerating climate change that could also melt away the continent's few glaciers within two decades, a UN report warned yesterday. In a report ahead of the COP 26 climate summit in Glasgow, the UN highlighted Africa's "disproportionate vulnerability" last year from food insecurity, poverty and population displacement.

"By 2030, it is estimated that up to 118 million extremely poor people will be exposed to drought, floods and extreme heat in Africa, if adequate response measures are not put in place," said Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, commissioner for rural economy and agriculture at the African Union Commission. The extremely poor are those who live on less than US \$1.90 per day, according to the report coordinated by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

"In sub-Saharan Africa, climate change could further lower gross domestic product by up to 3%

by 2050," Sacko said. "Not only are physical conditions getting worse, but also the number of people being affected is increasing," she said in the foreword. WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said that last year Africa saw temperatures continue to increase, "accelerating sea-level rise" as well as extreme weather events like floods, landslides and droughts, all indicators of climate change.

Disappearing glaciers

"The rapid shrinking of the last remaining glaciers in eastern Africa, which are expected to melt entirely in the near future, signals the threat of imminent and irreversible change to the Earth system," Taalas said. Last year Africa's land mass and waters warmed more rapidly than the

world average, the report said. The 30-year warming trend from 1991-2020 was above that of the 1961-1990 period in all of Africa's regions. The rate in sea level rise along the tropical coasts and the south Atlantic as well as along the Indian Ocean was higher than the world average.

Though too small to serve as significant water reserves, Africa's glaciers have high tourism and scientific value and yet are retreating at a rate higher than the global average. "If this continues, it will lead to total deglaciation by the 2040s," the report said. "Mount Kenya is expected to be deglaciated a decade sooner, which will make it one of the first entire mountain ranges to lose glaciers due to human-

induced climate change."

The other glaciers in Africa are on the Rwenzori Mountains in Uganda and Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. To avoid even higher costs of disaster relief, the WMO urged African countries to invest in "hydrometeorological infrastructure and early warning systems to prepare for escalating high-impact hazardous events." It backed broadening access to early warning systems and to information on food prices and weather, including with simple text or voice messages informing farmers when to plant, irrigate or fertilize.

"Rapid implementation of African adaptation strategies will spur economic development and generate more jobs in support of economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic," the report said. The report involved the WMO, the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) through the Africa Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), international and regional scientific organizations and United Nations agencies. — AFP



Continent's few glaciers could melt away: UN

News in brief

Khalilzad, US envoy quits

WASHINGTON: Zalmay Khalilzad, the veteran US envoy whose months of patient hotel-ballroom diplomacy helped end the US war in Afghanistan but failed to prevent a Taliban takeover, resigned on Monday. In a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Khalilzad defended his record but acknowledged that he came up short and said he wanted to step aside during the "new phase of our Afghanistan policy." "The political arrangement between the Afghan government and the Taliban did not go forward as envisaged," he wrote. "The reasons for this are too complex and I will share my thoughts in the coming days and weeks." Born in Afghanistan, the dapper 70-year-old academic turned US diplomat took senior positions as part of the inner circle of former president George W. Bush, becoming the US ambassador to Kabul and then Baghdad and the United Nations. — AFP

'Deadly' strikes hit Tigray

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia's military launched air strikes on the capital of the war-battered Tigray region on Monday, a dramatic escalation in the year-long conflict. The government initially dismissed reports about the bombardments on Mekele as an "absolute lie" but state media later confirmed the air force had struck Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) targets. A senior official at Tigray's largest hospital said three people had been killed, including two children. They were the first air raids on Mekele since the early stages of the war in northern Ethiopia that has killed untold numbers of people and triggered a deep humanitarian crisis. The bombardments—reported by residents, humanitarian officials and diplomats—came as Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government appeared to be pressing a new offensive against the TPLF, which dominated national politics for almost three decades before he took power in 2018. — AFP

Couple sail to wedding

NEW DELHI: An Indian couple sailed across submerged streets in a massive cooking pot to reach their wedding venue on Monday, as heavy rains flooded the southern state of Kerala. The couple borrowed the pot from a local temple and enlisted two men to push the makeshift boat, images that have gone viral on social media showed. "It has turned into a wedding which we never imagined," the bride told local media channel Asianet soon after the wedding. Flooding and landslides caused by heavy rains have killed at least 27 people across the state. While their wedding venue was also partially flooded, the pair were determined to tie the knot in a small ceremony. "Should have booked a boat instead of a car..." a man can be heard saying in the background of one video. According to media reports, both husband and wife are healthcare workers. — AFP

10,000 kids killed, maimed

GENEVA: Seven years of conflict in Yemen has killed or injured at least 10,000 children, UNICEF said yesterday after a mission to the country. "The Yemen conflict has just hit another shameful milestone: 10,000 children have been killed or maimed since fighting started in March 2015. That's the equivalent of four children every day," spokesman James Elder told a UN briefing in Geneva where he urged an end to the fighting. The figure only included child victims whose fates were known to the organization and there were countless others, he said. "UNICEF urgently needs more than \$235 million to continue its life-saving work in Yemen till mid-2022," Elder said. "Otherwise the agency will be forced to scale down or stop its vital assistance for vulnerable children. Funding is critical. We can draw a clear line between donor support and lives saved. But even with increased support, the war must come to an end." — AFP

S Africa rejects Russia Sputnik over HIV fears

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's health products regulator on Monday said it would not approve Russia's Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine due to concerns it could increase the risk of HIV infection among men. The decision was based on earlier studies testing the safety of a modified form of adenovirus—a type of virus that causes respiratory infections—known as the Ad5 and contained in the Russian jab.

"Use of the Sputnik V vaccine in South Africa, a setting of a high HIV prevalence and incidence, may increase the risk of vaccinated males acquiring HIV," the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) said in a statement. It noted that the company behind the application for the use of Sputnik V in South Africa had no proof the formula

would be safe "in settings of high HIV prevalence".

"The rolling review of the Sputnik V vaccine will, however, remain open for submission of relevant safety data in support of the application," it added. Russia's Gamaleya Centre, which developed Sputnik V, said it would produce information to show that SAHPRA's concerns were "completely unfounded". "Speculation regarding the association between adenovirus type-5 vectored vaccines and HIV transmission in high risk groups has been based on small-scale studies," it said in a statement.

The institute pointed to several clinical studies on over 7,000 participants that showed "there was no statistically significant increase of HIV-1 infection among adenovirus type-5 vectored vaccine recipients when all study participants and follow-up time were considered." South Africa, the country worst-hit by the pandemic in Africa, also has the world's highest number of people living with HIV. It has been struggling with vaccine hesitancy. Just over a quarter of 40 million

Turkey's Erdogan promises 'win-win' pacts with Africa

JOHANNESBURG: Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday wound up a visit to Angola, the first leg of a three-nation African tour, where he accused the West of ignoring calls for change on the continent. Since taking office nearly two decades ago, first as prime minister, Erdogan has been fostering ties with Africa, presenting Turkey as a fairer player than the continent's former colonial powers and China.

"We as Turkey attach great importance and value to our close cooperation with the continent of Africa," he told business leaders in Luanda on Monday evening, according to a statement from his AK party. "We desire to advance our relations on the basis of win-win and equal partnership while observing mutual respect".

In an earlier address to the Angolan parliament posted on the Turkish presidency website, he said "the fate of the humanity cannot and should not be left to the mercy of a handful of countries that were the victors of the Second World War". "Ignoring the demands for change is an injustice to Africa," he



LUANDA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President of Angola, Joao Manuel Goncalves Lourenco leading their delegation meeting at presidential palace in Luanda. — AFP

added, noting that Turkey bore "no stain" of imperialism or colonialism and rejected "Western-centric Orientalist approaches" to the continent.

In talks with his Angolan counterpart Joao Lourenco, he touted Turkey's natural gas reserves and distribution network, which he said "would be pleased to share our experiences". Erdogan's next stop is

Togo, followed by Africa's economic powerhouse Nigeria. Before travelling to Angola, Erdogan boasted 38 visits to 28 countries since he became prime minister in 2003. Turkey has 43 embassies on the continent and its national airline is now serving more than 60 African cities, including a direct link between Istanbul and Luanda launched last week. — AFP

Removing CO2 from the air no longer optional

PARIS: The burning question going into the Glasgow climate summit is whether major economies can, by 2050, reduce emissions enough to deliver a carbon neutral world in which humanity no longer adds planet-warming gases to the atmosphere. Less talked about but rising quickly on the climate agenda are tools and techniques to pull CO2 straight out of the air.

Even scientists sceptical about its feasibility agree that without carbon dioxide removal (CDR) — aka "negative emission"—it will be extremely difficult to meet the Paris Agreement goal of capping global warming below two degrees Celsius. "We need drastic, radical emissions reductions, and on top of that we need some CDR," said Glen Peters, research director at the Centre for International Climate Research.

What is CO2 removal?

There are basically two ways to extract CO2 from thin air. One is to boost nature's capacity to absorb and

stockpile carbon. Healing degraded forests, restoring mangroves, industrial-scale tree planNice, Franceting, boosting carbon uptake in rocks or the ocean—all fall under the hotly debated category of "nature-based solutions". The second way—called direct air capture—uses chemical processes to strip out CO2, then recycles it for industrial use or locks it away in porous rock formations, unused coal beds or saline aquifers.

A variation known as bioenergy with carbon capture and storage, or BECCS, combines elements from both approaches. Wood pellets or other biomass is converted into biofuels or burned to drive turbines that generate electricity. The CO2 emitted is roughly cancelled out by the CO2 absorbed during plant growth. But when carbon dioxide in the power plant's exhaust is syphoned off and stored underground, the process becomes a net-negative technology.

Do we really need it?

Yes, for a couple of reasons. Even if the world begins drawing down carbon pollution by three, four or five percent each year—and that is a very big "if"—some sectors like cement and steel production, long-haul aviation and agriculture are expected to maintain emission levels for decades. "We



JOHANNESBURG: Supporters of the Bafana, the South African national soccer team, disinfects their hands as they arrive at the FNB Stadium in Johannesburg. — AFP

targeted for vaccination by early 2022 are fully jabbed to date. South Africa is this week set to begin vaccinating children as young as 12 and offering booster shots to certain immunocompromised citizens. It is currently offering the single-dose Johnson & Johnson—which also contains an aden-

ovirus but of a different type—and the mRNA Pfizer/BioNTech jab. The Chinese-made Sinovac has also been approved. The World Health Organization has not yet given Sputnik V the green light for emergency use, although it is being administered in at least 45 countries. — AFP



DHANBAD: Workers prepare to load coal onto a truck at the Jharia coalfield in Dhanbad in India's Jharkhand state. Asia-Pacific accounts for about three-quarters of global coal consumption—even as the region struggles with the environmental and public health impacts of global warming, from deadly levels of air pollution in India to extreme heatwaves and wildfires in Australia. — AFP

have modelling, but no one is sure what we might need in 2050," said Oliver Geden, a senior fellow at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs and an expert on CDR. "There will be residual emissions and the numbers might be high."

And there is another reason. The August report from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change (IPCC) makes it alarmingly clear that the 1.5C threshold will be breached in the coming decades no matter how aggressively greenhouse gases are drawn down. CO2 lingers in the atmosphere for centuries, which means that the only way to bring Earth's average surface temperature back under the wire by 2100 is to suck some of it out of the air. — AFP

International

Bill Gates warned over 'inappropriate emails'

Editor of Germany's Bild sacked over affair at work

WASHINGTON: Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, whose departure from the tech giant in 2020 followed revelations of an affair with an employee 20 years before, had already been warned in 2008 over emails to a female staff member that were deemed inappropriate. According to reporting by the Wall Street Journal that

not do it again, according to the Wall Street Journal.

The board, which was informed of these contacts, did not take any action. "Microsoft has nothing to share beyond confirming the accuracy of the WSJ report," a spokesman for the IT company told AFP on Monday. Gates stepped down as president in 2008 and remained on Microsoft's board of directors until March 2020. The former Microsoft boss, one of the richest men in the world, and his wife Melinda announced their divorce in May, after 27 years of marriage.

Editor sacked

In another development, German press group Axel Springer said Monday it had removed the chief editor at tabloid-style daily Bild, Julian Reichelt, over a relationship with a colleague at the country's top-selling newspaper. Reichelt "did not clearly separate his private and work lives and did not tell the board the truth about it," Axel Springer said in a statement, citing information gained "as a result of press investigations in recent days".

An internal investigation in spring looked into allegations the 41-year-old had promoted interns with whom



LONDON: Microsoft founder-turned-philanthropist Bill Gates speaks during the Global Investment Summit at the Science Museum in London yesterday. - AFP

he had had affairs and then sidelined or fired them. Although Reichelt stepped aside during the inquiry, he was reinstated in March alongside a female editor. "Julian Reichelt admitted to mixing professional and pri-

ivate relationships but denied the aforementioned accusations and swore to this under oath," Springer said at the time.

It was not immediately clear which new allegations prompted the company to sack Reichelt, one of Germany's most controversial media figures who tacked Bild hard to the right on some issues. But a New York Times story published Sunday appears to have pushed Springer into action. In recent years, parent company Springer has expanded internationally, first with news site Business Insider and this summer buying all of US-based Politico. The NYT reported that Reichelt had promoted a young woman journalist into a senior position following a relationship between them. - AFP

Reichelt said in 2016: "If they find out that I'm having an affair with a trainee, I'll lose my job," the NYT reported, citing testimony the woman gave Springer's internal inquiry. The editor's chair at Bild will now go to Johannes Boie, until now editor-in-chief of Springer's conservative weekly broadsheet Welt Am Sonntag. Founded in 1952, Bild bet on a mixture of human-interest stories, sports and celebrity news to become Germany's top-selling paper, and still prints two million copies per day. — AFP



Revelations of an affair with an employee

was confirmed to AFP by a Microsoft spokesperson, in 2007, Gates, then a full-time employee and president of Microsoft, flirted with a female staffer by email and invited her to meet him outside of work. The following year, the company became aware of the emails and executives of the group told Gates that they were inappropriate and had to stop. Gates admitted the facts and said he would



ERMUA: In this file photo, demonstrators show their hands painted white, during a protest in Ermua against Popular Party (PP) councillor Miguel Angel Blanco's death, at the hands of armed Basque separatist group ETA. — AFP

Wounds persist in Spain decade after ETA ends armed struggle

MADRID: A decade after Basque separatist group ETA renounced the use of arms, the northern Spanish region is still trying to turn the page on decades of bloodshed. In a video released on October 20, 2011, three masked ETA leaders announced that the group classified as a terrorist organization by the European Union "has decided the definitive cessation of its armed activity".

"It is time to look at the future with hope. It is also time to act with responsibility and courage," they added, raising their fists in the air at the end of the video. The announcement put an end to western Europe's last armed insurgency. "After ten years, we have advanced...but there are still wounds that have not healed," regional leader Inigo Urkullu of the moderate Basque nationalist PNV party wrote in an opinion column published Sunday.

Created in 1959 at the height of Francisco Franco's dictatorship which repressed Basque culture and language, ETA is accused of killing more than 850 people in its fight for an independent Basque homeland in northern Spain and southwest France. Its decision to lay down its arms was a "major turning point" for the Basque separatist movement, said political scientist Rafael Leonisio Calvo, the author of a book about ETA. "It was a surprise, particularly since it was a unilateral announcement without any trade-offs...but in reality it was the result of a long process," he told AFP.

Weakened by arrests

Several weeks before the announcement, secret negotiations were held between ETA leaders and the Spanish government via intermediaries. The framework for the talks was agreed with the Socialist prime minister of Spain at the time, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, one of ETA's historic leaders, Josu Urrutikoetxea, told AFP in a recent interview. The talks resulted in an international peace conference held in October 2011 in the seaside Basque city of San Sebastian where ETA was

urged to end its armed struggle to "promote reconciliation". At the time ETA was severely weakened by arrests of its top leaders and seizures of its weapons.

The group was also being pushed by its political wing—under pressure from Basque public opinion—to "change its strategy" and drop violence, said Eguzki Urteaga, a sociologist with the University of the Basque Country. "During the Franco era, ETA benefited from a sort of aura among part of the population that was opposed to the regime," he told AFP. "But then rejection of the armed struggle did not stop growing, especially after 1995 when ETA decided to expand its targets to include members of civil society."

'Dead end'

This view is shared by Calvo, who said ETA was at a "dead end" at the time. "Polls showed that even among separatist voters, support for ETA had dropped considerably and become a minority," he added. ETA continued its pacification after it announced it had dropped violence. In April 2017 the group handed in its weapons and the following year it apologized to its victims, just days before it formally declared its dissolution.

Still, resentments persist. Victims' groups denounce jubilant ceremonies held for ETA members on their release from prison and complain that some 300 ETA killings have not been resolved. Meanwhile, family members of ETA prisoners complain that many are still being held in jails far from the Basque Country. A protest planned for September to demand the release from jail of ETA member Henri Parot, who is serving a lengthy sentence for his role in 39 killings was called off after it sparked counter demonstrations. Arnaldo Otegi, leader of far-left Basque pro-independence party EH Bildu which is seen the heir of ETA's former political wing, on Monday apologized for the "suffering endured" by ETA victims. "It never should have happened," he added in what was seen as an attempt to foster further rapprochement in the region. — AFP

the government, you do it with an NGO," said Melani McAlister, a professor of American studies at George Washington University. "And American religious groups are absolutely a major, important part of that network of NGOs," she said.

Todd Johnson, co-director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, said that long-term missionaries generally develop the language skills and cultural knowledge—as well as proper paperwork—to operate effectively. "It's to the US government's advantage that they succeed," he said. He said there should be no difference in the government's response if the abducted people are missionaries or,

'Unprecedented' crackdown on free speech: Amnesty

LONDON: Oppressive regimes around the world have used the coronavirus pandemic to crack down on critics, Amnesty International said yesterday. The rights monitor said there have been "unprecedented" curbs on freedom of expression since last year, and lives may even have been lost due to a lack of proper information.

"Communication channels have been targeted, social media has been censored, and media outlets have been closed down," said Rajat Khosla, Amnesty's senior director for research advocacy and policy. "In the midst of a pandemic, journalists and health professionals have been silenced and imprisoned. As a result, people have been unable to access information about COVID-19, including how to protect themselves and their communities. Approximately five million people have lost their lives to COVID-19, and lack of information will have likely been a contributory factor."

Amnesty said that by February 2020 in China, where the virus first emerged just months before, 5,511 criminal investigations had been opened into individuals for "fabricating and deliberately disseminating false and harmful information" about the nature and extent of the outbreak. Tanzania's government under former president John Magufuli used laws prohibiting and criminalizing "false news" and other measures to restrict media coverage.

Magufuli, who shunned facemasks, died suddenly in March this year but had denied the virus was circulating in the country, maintaining it had been driven out by prayer. The Nicaraguan authorities used emergency legislation against cybercrimes to punish anyone critical of the government's response to the virus, Amnesty said. President Daniel Ortega's government has rejected claims of a shortage of hospital beds and surging numbers of cases and deaths.

In Russia, the introduction of anti-"fake news" laws and criminal penalties in relation to COVID-19 were likely to stay in force once the pandemic is over, Amnesty warned. The London-based group said such measures were part of an "onslaught on human rights" across the world in recent years, and called for them to be lifted immediately. It also took aim at the role of social media platforms for not doing enough to stop the spread of false and misleading information about the virus.

That made it "increasingly difficult for individuals to have a fully informed opinion and make educated choices about their health", the group said in a new report, "Silenced and Misinformed: Freedom of Expression in Danger During COVID-19". "States and social media companies must also ensure the public has unfettered access to accurate, evidence-based and timely information," said Khosla. "This is a crucial step to minimize vaccine hesitancy driven by misinformation." — AFP

for example, businesspeople held for money.

The State Department says it treats missionaries no differently than it would other US citizens who need help overseas. But missionaries have frequently triggered major diplomatic incidents. Knox Thames, a former State Department official focused on international religious freedom, said that US diplomats were often unaware of missionaries, who have no obligation to share their beliefs or whereabouts. "However, American embassies often view missionaries as a problem," he said. "They might offend local sensibilities, run afoul of anti-proselytizing laws or find themselves kidnapped like in Haiti." — AFP



PORT-AU-PRINCE: A man films himself in front of tires on fire during a general strike launched by several professional associations and companies to denounce insecurity in Port-au-Prince on October 18, 2021. — AFP

Missionaries seen as asset, but sometimes headache, by US

WASHINGTON: The kidnapping of 17 missionaries in Haiti reinforces a predicament for Washington-religious groups are often seen as an asset, going where many don't dare, but they can also find themselves in deep trouble. Gangs that brazenly rule much of the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation over the weekend abducted 17 US and Canadian missionaries including children, the latest attack that appeared aimed at raising ransom money.

The United States had already issued its highest-level warning against travel to Haiti. But religious groups, who believe they are doing God's work, are also frontline partners when the United States needs a presence in the world's most dangerous places. Since the presidency of George W Bush, the United States has channeled a growing amount of foreign aid to faith-based groups, a once controversial practice that has become largely accepted across administrations.

Religious charities have long roots in Haiti, where the abducted missionaries came from Christian Aid Ministries, an Ohio-based organization of Mennonites and Amish. "If you want to help set up clinics in South Sudan or Haiti, you don't do it with

News in brief

NZ COVID cases hit record

WELLINGTON: New Zealand (NZ) recorded its highest number of daily coronavirus cases since the start of the pandemic yesterday as a Delta-variant outbreak that dashed the nation's "COVID Zero" hopes showed no signs of easing. Health authorities announced 94 new virus cases, exceeding the previous daily record of 89 set in April last year during the first wave of COVID-19 infections. While case numbers remain low by most international standards, they have been steadily growing since the highly transmissible Delta variant was first found in New Zealand in mid-August. The outbreak, centered on Auckland, has forced Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern to drop her core policy goal of eliminating the virus in favor of ramping up vaccination efforts. The centre-left leader is set to unveil a new strategy on Friday that will allow for greater freedoms once vaccination targets have been reached. — AFP

Gunmen kill 43 in Nigeria

ABUJA: Gunmen from a suspected criminal gang attacked a village market in northwest Nigeria's Sokoto state, killing 43 people, the state government said Monday. Heavily armed gangs known locally as bandits have terrorized northwest and central Nigeria for years, raiding and looting villages, but attacks have become even more violent in recent months. "Forty-three people have been confirmed dead following the attack by bandits in Goronyo village" on Sunday, Sokoto government spokesman Muhammad Bello said in a statement. "It was a market day and there were many traders," Bello told AFP by phone. Police spokesman Sanusi Abubakar also confirmed that bandits attacked Goronyo late on Sunday. "Our security operatives are there to conduct investigations," Abubakar added, without giving details. Phone networks in the area have been suspended for weeks to disrupt the gangs' operations, making information-gathering difficult. — AFP

Booster 'mix and match'

WASHINGTON: The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is preparing to allow "mix and match" coronavirus vaccine boosting, in which people get a different additional shot to the dose they initially received, US media reported. Citing sources familiar with the situation, the New York Times said the FDA might make the announcement on Wednesday when it is also expected to authorize boosters for the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. A preliminary study released in the United States last week showed that people who have received the J&J vaccine may benefit from a booster dose of a different, messenger-RNA vaccine such as Pfizer or Moderna. But multiple reports quoted people familiar with the discussions as saying one shot may not be recommended over another, and the FDA could say using the same vaccine is preferable when possible. "People should generally get the same vaccine as their initial series," a federal official told the Washington Post. — AFP

Canadian PM visits graves

KAMLOOPS: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made a visit Monday to the indigenous community of Kamloops where the remains of 215 children were found in May at a former residential school, apologizing for not coming sooner. The visit followed strong criticisms directed at Trudeau for ignoring an earlier invitation to the community on the first national day of truth and reconciliation on September 30, and instead going on a family vacation. "Instead of talking about truth and reconciliation, (everyone has) talked about me and that's on me. I take responsibility for that," he told a news conference. "I am here today to say I wish I had been here a few weeks ago, and I deeply regret it," he said. Seated next to him, Tk'emlups te Secwepemc chief Rosanne Casimir said: "It was a long-awaited moment to receive a personal hand of recognition and sympathy regarding this horrific confirmation of unmarked graves from the Canadian head of state." — AFP

Business

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2021

Zain celebrates launch of iPhone 13 lineup during biggest virtual event

Followers tune in live on Marina platforms; company gives away valuable prizes



During the virtual launch event of the all-new iPhone 13 lineup



KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, celebrated the launch of the all-new iPhone 13 lineup during the biggest virtual event of its kind, broadcasted live over the hugely popular Marina Media Group platforms with thousands of followers tuning in.

The event, presented live by a group of Marina FM stars, witnessed the launch of Zain's newest plans for Apple's latest smartphones. The plans feature the best competitive offerings for Zain customers on the company's biggest and most powerful 5G network.

With the presence of Zain's executive management, the company hosted Marina's stars at its main headquarters in Shuwaikh, including Muhannad Abdulrahman (Mic Mbalta3), Fahad Kameel, Rawan Al-Marzouq, and Humoud Adel. The event was broadcasted via the biggest

- Zain offers latest generation of iPhone over the biggest 5G network with flexible plans and amazing benefits.
- Event's hashtag placed first among social media trends.
- Thousands of followers joined the event along with Marina's stars.

media platforms, including Marina FM 90.4, Marina TV, OSN, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and Marina's app. Zain also hosted Kuwaiti photographer Abdulaziz Al-Suraiya, who Apple selected as an ambassador to promote the new iPhone 13 lineup's cameras, to showcase the new devices and their best features.

The company celebrated the occasion with its customers by giving away many valuable prizes,

including the all-new iPhone 13 as a mega prize. The event's hashtag also placed first among social media trends after the huge interaction it witnessed from followers.

Zain unveiled its new iPhone 13 plans for smartphones, which offer more benefits and more value, including a wide range of the latest smartphones, 5G Internet, and other exclusive benefits.

Last year, Zain received 'Kuwait's Fastest Fixed Broadband Network' award for Q1-Q2 2020 from Ookla, the company behind the renowned Speedtest Internet testing platform, and the global leader in transparent Internet testing applications, data, and analysis.

The announcement comes to reinforce Zain's leadership in the Kuwaiti market by offering the largest and most powerful 5G network in Kuwait. Since commercially launching fifth generation wireless technology (5G) back in June 2019, Zain was the first operator to offer 5G technology in the GCC region via the Kuwaiti market with nationwide coverage of all areas. The company succeeded in designing the first integrated network for 5G services built on a world-class infrastructure, ultimately transforming the telecom sector across the country and region.

IMF: Social unrest threatens Mideast economic recovery

DUBAI: The Middle East and North Africa is on track for a recovery, but rising social unrest is threatening the "fragile" progress of low-income economies, the International Monetary Fund said yesterday. The MENA region, which includes Arab countries and Iran, saw real GDP growth shrink by 3.2 percent in 2020 due to weak oil prices and sweeping lockdowns to halt the spread of the coronavirus.

But with rapid vaccination campaigns, especially in oil-rich Gulf nations, the IMF predicted GDP growth would rise to 4.1 percent this year, up 0.1 of a percentage point from its last projection in April.

"The region is going through recovery in 2021. Since the beginning of the year, we see progress in the economic performance," said Jihad Azour, director for the Middle East and Central Asia at the IMF. But "this recovery is not the same in all countries. It is uncertain and uneven because of the divergence in vaccination... and geopolitical developments", he told AFP.

The IMF said in a report that while the prospects for oil-exporting economies improved with higher oil prices, low-income and crisis-hit countries were witnessing "fragile" recoveries. It warned of "a rise in social unrest" in 2021 that "could pick up further due to repeated infection waves, dire economic conditions, high unemployment and food prices".

Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Sudan other countries have been witnessing protests in recent months by thousands of angry citizens demanding better jobs and services. Unemployment increased in MENA last year by 1.4 percent to reach 11.6 percent, a rise exceeding



that seen during the global financial crisis and the 2014-15 oil price shock, the IMF said.

Increasing inequities

The IMF warned of the longer-term risk of an uneven recovery, which could lead to a "permanent widening of existing wealth, income, and social gaps and, ultimately, weaker growth and less inclusive societies". About seven million more people in the region are estimated to have entered extreme poverty during 2020-21 compared with pre-crisis projections, according to the IMF.

Meanwhile, inflation in the region is projected to increase to 12.9 percent in 2021 from 10.4 last year, with higher food and energy prices in some countries, before subsiding to 8.8 percent in 2022.

"Inequities are increasing. The low-skilled, the young, women, and migrant workers have been affect-

ed the most by the pandemic, as have smaller firms, particularly those in contact-sensitive sectors," said the report. According to the international lender, the corporate sector has recovered to pre-pandemic levels, but smaller firms and those in "contact-sensitive sectors" are lagging behind.

"Fifteen to 25 percent of firms may need to be restructured or liquidated," it added. In Lebanon, the continuing drop in the value of the currency has dashed hopes that the government formed last month can stem an economic crisis that the World Bank brands as one of the worst since the mid-19th century.

Nearly 80 percent of Lebanon's population lives below the poverty line. "The Fund has already started technical discussions with the authorities... to develop what would be in fact that the framework within which the fund can help Lebanon," said Azour, a former Lebanese finance minister. —AFP

UK investment summit draws ire from activists

LONDON: Prime Minister Boris Johnson urged foreign investors yesterday to buy into post-Brexit Britain as he seeks to power future prosperity on renewable energy and green technology, but faced pushback from campaigners. The UK leader kicked off a Global Investment Summit in London by announcing a £400 million (\$552 million, 473 million euros) partnership with the Bill Gates Foundation to invest in "the next generation of ground-breaking clean energy technologies".

The tie-up, which will see both sides stump up £200 million, follows Spanish renewable energy giant Iberdrola announcing plans to invest £6 billion to create Britain's biggest offshore wind development.

Johnson, who has outlined plans for the UK to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, is hoping to burnish his green credentials before hosting world leaders at the UN's COP26 climate summit in



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson leaves the stage after delivering a speech during the Global Investment Summit at the Science Museum yesterday. —AFP

Glasgow next month. He also wants to boost investment to grow Britain's economy as it grapples with the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic and Brexit, which have combined to strain the logistics sector, labor market and other areas.

In his sales pitch, Johnson promised government

backing for private investment in sustainable projects, saying Britain was now "moving in an exciting new direction with a green, industrial revolution, with new regulatory freedoms".

However, the investment summit was attacked for "corporate greenwashing". Social activism group Global Justice Now noted four banks invited have invested a combined \$173 billion in fossil fuels in recent years. It also condemned the involvement of British energy giant Drax Group, which the NGO said released more emissions than the West African nation of Ghana in 2019.

"Our government is once again running cover for some of the biggest corporate climate villains in the world," Daniel Willis, of Global Justice Now, said. Meanwhile, the government's "net zero strategy" to reach carbon neutrality by mid-century, also unveiled yesterday, came under fire for lacking ambition and adequate funding. It includes boosting the production of electric vehicles and offering homeowners in England and Wales subsidies of £5,000 from next year as part of a £450 million scheme to help them replace old gas boilers with low-carbon heat pumps. Writing in The Sun newspaper, Johnson sought to reassure homeowners they would not be compelled to rip out their existing boilers. —AFP

Tunisia in bailout talks with Gulf powerhouses

TUNIS: Tunisia is in talks with Gulf powerhouses Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for funding to avert a looming financial crisis, a central banker told local media. The birthplace of the Arab Spring uprisings, Tunisia has faced years of economic woes exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, with 18 percent unemployment and debt verging on 100 percent of gross domestic product.

The country had been in talks with the International Monetary Fund for a fourth bailout package in 10 years, but a July power grab by President Kais Saied put those negotiations on hold. In comments carried by two radio stations and confirmed to AFP on Monday by a central bank official on condition of anonymity, senior central banker Abdelkarim Lassoued said the institution was in "very advanced discussions with Saudi Arabia and the Emirates to fill state coffers".

The radio stations, Mosaïque FM and Shems FM, did not report how much financing was proposed or in what form it would be issued. Years of political deadlock following Tunisia's 2011 revolution have left it with less than one percent growth and six percent inflation. The vital tourism sector, which normally provides livelihoods to around two million Tunisians, has been brought to its knees by the COVID-19 crisis. On July 25, Saied sacked the government and suspended a parliament dominated by the Islamist-inspired party Ennahdha.

The opposition and civil society groups have condemned what they see as moves towards autocracy, but Saied has been backed by Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, which have strongly opposed political Islam across the Arab world. Tunisia's central bank in early October warned against "the acute drying-up of the country's external financial resources" and a "significant" budget deficit.

Later in the month, Moody's ratings agency downgraded Tunisia's sovereign debt from B3 to Caa1, with a negative outlook. "There is a risk that, if significant funding is not secured, high liquidity pressure may lead to default," it said. —AFP

Business

CBK governor honors Kuwait banks for efforts to support 'Diraya' campaign

Campaign enhanced financial awareness across a wider segment of society: Al-Hashel

KUWAIT: The Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) Dr Mohammad Y Al-Hashel honored distinguished Kuwaiti banks for their efforts in supporting the banking awareness campaign "Be Aware", "Diraya" in Arabic. The banks participated by communicating with customers through their digital platforms and social networks' accounts, as well as organizing activities and disseminating content to increase public awareness on a range of topics related to financial and banking.

On this occasion, the governor praised the efforts made by the National Bank of Kuwait, Kuwait Finance House, Gulf Bank and Warba Bank. He also commended the engagement of all Kuwaiti banks participating in this campaign, adding that the efforts made by all units of the banking system contributed to the success of the campaign and the delivery of its messages to Kuwaiti banking sector's customers. The governor pointed out that the banking awareness campaign "Diraya" was launched at the beginning of the year under the supervision of the CBK and the management of the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) with the participation of all Kuwaiti banks. It aims to enhance



KUWAIT: Central Bank of Kuwait Governor Dr Mohammad Y Al-Hashel with the top management of Kuwaiti banks during the honoring ceremony.

public financial awareness across a wider segment of society, and to increase public awareness of the banking sector's role and how customers' can use its services advantageously.

Dr Al-Hashel concluded the statement by stressing the CBK's keenness to spread financial and banking awareness and protect banks' customers' rights in light of the rapid developments in the banking service-

es and the accompanying risks, most notably, cyber fraud, which calls for sustained efforts. Additionally, this campaign supplements the Kuwaiti banking sector's social responsibility efforts.



SAINT HELIER, Jersey: This file photograph shows French fishing boats protesting, in front of the port of Saint Helier off the British island of Jersey, to draw attention to what they see as unfair restrictions on their ability to fish in UK waters after Brexit. — AFP

Brexit feud puts French scallop fishers in troubled waters

ABOARD THE CHANT DES SIRENES, France: Taking advantage of calm midnight seas, Pascal Delacour steered his ship toward prized scallop beds within sight of the Channel island of Jersey, kicking off a French fishing season that's being roiled by a fresh post-Brexit access dispute.

"The English are jealous of our scallops because the resource is getting scarce at home," Delacour said aboard the Chant des Sirenes (The Mermaids' Song), referring to the Jersey authorities.

Delacour was the first French fisherman to secure a licence to ply Jersey's waters after the British crown dependency set a list of new rules for French boats in the wake of Britain's exit from the EU last January. They require captains to prove they had been fishing off Jersey previously, something dozens are struggling to do. Delacour was successful but this night he stayed closer to home, setting nets first for a catch of sole and other flatfish lurking on the sandy seafloor like skate and flounder.

His two helpers, Sylvain and Johnny, threw back the ones too small along with plenty of spider crabs, catching quick naps or coffee and cigarettes in between the hauls.

France has set a November 1 deadline for Jersey officials to give their responses to outstanding access requests and apply the terms of the post-Brexit accord hammered out last year. It has threatened to curb electricity supplies to the island if no progress is made, but so far Brussels does not appear eager to inflame tensions with retaliatory measures against British boats.

For Delacour, "the British are going too far," but the main target of his ire is the French government.

"They told us that Brexit wouldn't change anything for us, but in fact our licenses are no longer guaranteed," he said. "And for those like me lucky enough to get one, we don't know how things will work in the future-which fish, for how many days, and until when?"

'Reshuffles the cards'

The deck cleared of fish, Delacour's crew turned its attention to the chain-mail dredges that are lowered to the seabed to prise up scallops nestled in the sand. The captain, who started out on his father's boat, said fishermen in his bay outside Granville are reaping the success of their joint stock management-something Jersey has resisted. "They don't want to hear about area closures for reproduction for any product, nor of quotas," he said as his dog Opale waited at his feet for her ration of fresh scallops.

"For years we've imposed quotas and seasons," which for scallops runs from October to mid-May- outside the reproductive season that produces the coral-red roe, which many chefs consider to be too bitter. They also sow beds with larvae that are harvested only when the scallops are big enough.

"Yields have exploded, and stocks have increased threefold," Delacour said. "Ten years ago, I would be out four times longer and still only catch half as much."

It's around 6.30 am when the deck groaned under the first pile of scallops, and the haul continued for almost four more hours. By eye he estimated the catch at 1.3 tons- the scales at Granville, France's biggest port for shellfish, later confirmed his team raked in 1.29 tons, at a wholesale price of 2 to 2.5 euros a kilo. Delacour beamed at the bounty, but he was wary of what lies ahead. "For me, Brexit reshuffles the cards," he said. "If I can't transfer my license, then I won't be able to retire. Sending my boat to the salvage yard is out of the question." — AFP

KAICO — Al Shaya & Al Sager holds Royal Enfield One Ride 2021

KUWAIT: Kuwait Automotive Imports Co (Al Shaya & Al Sager), the official dealers for Royal Enfield organized the annual One Ride event for the proud Royal Enfield owners in Kuwait. In April 2011, ten years ago, the first One Ride kickstarted what has now become one of the largest, calendared, annual celebratory rides of Royal Enfield enthusiasts. With a specific route and destination in mind, some on their own, others with friends - ride freely - purely for the pleasure of motorcycling on their Royal Enfield's 2021, a world greatly changed, a world that needs each one of us to be more mindful, we are shifting gears from a ride of just pure pleasure to riding for awareness around responsible travel. A step change that will enable us to continue to discover the spaces we find energy, beauty, solace and ourselves in.

This One Ride the community of Royal Enfield riders can mobilize their strength to lead this change - towards "Responsible Travel" by doing their little bit to #LeaveEveryPlaceBetter.

Ashish Tandon, General Manager KAICO, in order to encourage the riders community, during the event launched the new special offer of two years' free service package & special coupons on RE official accessories and apparels available to all new owners. Muneer Mohammed (parts manager) was present in the event along with Mohammed Abou El Aun (senior executive manager - aftersales) and Ahmed Zaki to socialize and

Stay productive with 2K sleek laptop Huawei MateBook 14

KUWAIT: Laptops have become an essential daily tool for users especially with the advent of the work-from-home scenario. However, more than that, a laptop should not just provide an all-in-one solution in completing daily tasks, but it should also bring intelligent collaboration features beneficial to the user.

Enter the Huawei MateBook 13 | 14. The Huawei MateBook 14, is a 2K all-rounded sleek laptop that goes more than just design and performance. From the 2K eye-comfort FullView display with multi-touch support, 11th Generation Intel(r) Core(tm) processor, Super Device features, massive battery with SuperCharge in addition to the large RAM and internal storage, the Huawei MateBook 14 lets users work in a smarter, more efficient and powerful way.

2K eye-comfort

Part of being productive is having a large screen, but there are limitations when portability is considered. With the Huawei MateBook 14, it set out to not only offer an expansive 14-inch display, but brings about the best display technologies to be included in a laptop. The 2K eye-comfort FullView display comes with a high screen-to-body ratio of 90 percent a 2160x1440 resolution that also supports 100 percent sRGB colour gamut. The screen supports an incredibly high brightness of 300 nits along with a 1500:1 contrast ratio and 185 ppi (pixels per inch).

More than the premium quality screen, the screen on the Huawei MateBook 14 features a DC dimming display that has achieved TÜV Rheinland Low Blue Light certifications³ to alleviate eye fatigue and protect the user's eyesight.

Super device

The new Huawei MateBook 14 Leverages the distributed capabilities of the Super Device to boost productivity and creativity. You can wirelessly project the 12.6-inch Huawei MatePad pro to the Huawei MateBook 14 to enjoy the new features of the Tablet-PC Multi-screen Collaboration that come with three modes: Mirror, Extend and Collaborate. In Mirror Mode, as the name implies, users can mirror their Huawei MateBook 14 screen to their tablet display, allowing them to directly work on files and annotate documents, or draw/sketch on their laptop with the stylus of the tablet. There is also Extend Mode that transforms the tablet into a second screen, providing extra screen space to display more content. Lastly, the innovative Collaborate Mode enables cross-platform interactions, allowing users to transfer content such as text, images and docu-

ments between connected devices with a simple drag and drop!

Based on Huawei's distributed technologies, Multi-screen Collaboration features help bridge the gap between Windows and Android operating systems at the ground level, enabling seamless cross-device collaboration, file sharing and multi-screen control. Under Multi-screen Collaboration, the recently launched Huawei nova 8 can be connected with the Huawei MateBook 14 to form a powerful Super Device. Once connected, the laptop can access mobile files, and open up to three folders while the smartphone can function as the PC's thumb device, making cross-device file management easier than ever.

Moreover, users can connect the laptop with the Huawei MateView via cable to have an extra screen providing users with an immersive viewing space while also wirelessly projecting the screen of the 12.6-inch Huawei MatePad Pro onto the Huawei MateBook 14. The benefits of having this trio set-up is the easy swapping of wireless and wired connections which lets you easily switch between work mode, and personal mode.



Longer 11 hours battery life

Battery is another important factor when considering a laptop. Users often complain about the fact that despite the laptop that they have comes with the best specifications, the battery often lasts for just a few hours. The Huawei MateBook 14 is fitted with a 56Wh⁴ battery that gives the user up to 11 hours⁵ of continuous 1080p local video playback.

Weighing only 160g⁶, the Huawei MateBook 14's portable 65W USB Type-C AC adaptor supports fast charging and comes with detachable cables. A quick 15-minute charge can already handle productivity tasks for 2.5 hours. The multi-purpose adaptor is also compatible with charging Huawei SuperCharge-enabled smartphones⁷ as well as other devices that charge using a USB Type-C port.

The Huawei MateBook 14 can also act as a portable power bank thanks to the reverse charging support. Users can simply detach the USB-C cable from the laptop adaptor and then plug it on the smartphone and laptop to initiate charging⁸. If you are on the lookout for a complete mid-range laptop that sets the benchmark high in this market segment with its 2K eye-comfort FullView Display and powerful 11th Generation Intel Core processor in addition to the futuristic Super Device features then you would be hard-pressed to find a better option than the Huawei MateBook 14.

AUB offers services to its customers during holidays

KUWAIT: On the occasion of the anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) for Hijri year 1443, Ahli United Bank (AUB) congratulates and extends its warm wishes to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the government, the citizens of Kuwait and all residents across the country. May Allah the Almighty bless the nation with prosperity and joy.

During this occasion, all AUB branches in Kuwait will be closed from Thursday (21 October 2021) and will resume work on Sunday (24 October 2021).

AUB has reconfirmed that during this period customers will be able to conduct their banking services through the bank's electronic channels, including mobile and internet banking (www.ahliunited.com.kw), and through the 24/7 telebanking 'Hayakom' service through 1812000. Furthermore, customers can also conduct their financial transactions through the Bank's ATMs which are conveniently located across Kuwait.

engaged themselves in communicating with the riders, addressed their issues and challenges and welcoming them for a checkup of their motorcycles at the dealership. They led the ride acting as the pilots for the ride along the Gulf Road. Issa Abdallah, marketing manager, a passionate biker himself documented the event and captured the footage while riding the Royal Enfield Continental GT Cafe Racer.

KAICO also indicated the availability the all-new Royal Enfield Meteor 350 - Class-leading, thoroughbred cruiser | Supreme on open highways and sublime for city rides | All new, from the ground-up engine and chassis that inspires confidence and brings in new levels of refinement. Comes with the all-new Royal Enfield Tripper - turn-by-turn navigation device for real time directions, built with Google Maps Platform. Available in 7 colorways under 3 distinct editions - Fireball, Stellar and Supernova - with an additional 8 customizable colorways using the Royal Enfield Make It Yours tool

The launch of the 650 Twins marked a new chapter for Royal Enfield and for the mid-sized motorcycle segment. The global success of these motorcycles over the last couple of years has been phenomenal with the Interceptor growing the 500cc+ category by more than 4-times in India, and also becoming the bestselling naked motorcycle in the mid-sized category in the UK in 2020. The introduction of Make-It-Yours on the 650 Twin motorcycles in October last year further enhanced the personalization possibilities and overall appeal of these motorcycles. MiY application unlocks thousands of personalization options and is becoming a game changer for Royal Enfield. We believe that the newly introduced colorways on the Interceptor 650 and the Continental GT 650, along with unique personalization options via MiY will go a long way in bringing more

enthusiasts into the brand fold."

The Cafe Racer Continental GT 535cc which was the star of the event is available at a special price. The fun motorcycle with exhilarating acceleration comes in three exciting colors comprising of British Green with Brown Leather Seats, GT Red & Mark Three Black. The classic retro styled single seater is a perfect ride to make your spare time fun time for a quick ride. Go get a test drive of the Cafe Racer which is available for a test drive as well at the dealership. This motorcycle exaggerates the feel of riding with the natural two stroke vibration and proves the tag line of "Royal Enfield - Made like a Gun." Inspired by the newly launched motorcycle, Royal Enfield has also bought in a new range of apparel. The collection also has a lifestyle apparel range, consisting of a lightweight jersey with armor pockets on shoulders and elbows and a curated range of t-shirts, sweatshirts and headgears. These will be available across the Royal Enfield dealerships in Kuwait.



Global sovereign yields rise on expectations of tighter policy

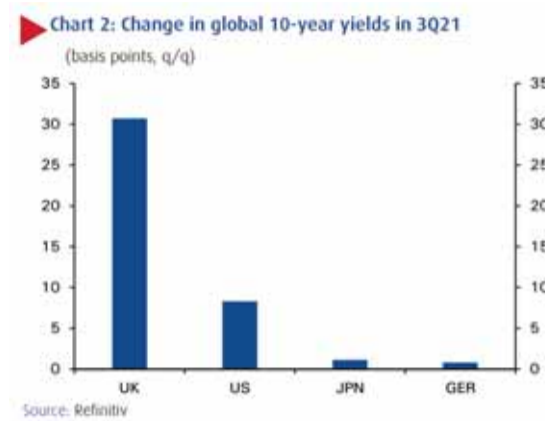
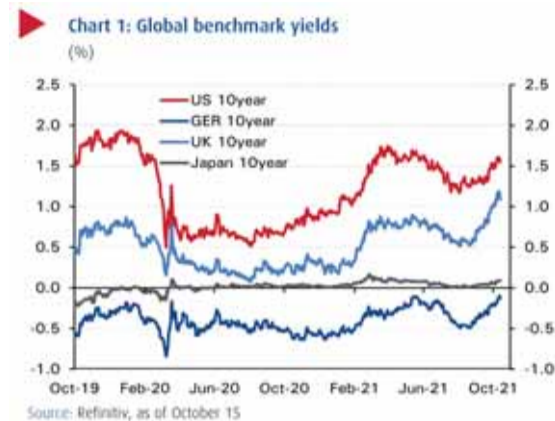
GCC issuance remains strong despite higher oil prices

KUWAIT: Global medium-term sovereign bond yields broadly trended higher in 3Q21 as investors priced in higher inflation expectations and signals by the Fed that it would start tapering its bond purchasing in the near future, possibly by the end of the year. GCC bond yields tracked US treasury yields higher, despite higher oil prices and better fiscal positions, maintaining a favorable spread against a higher US risk-free rate.

Meanwhile, GCC debt issuance was strong in 3Q21, at around \$27 billion, with a large part coming from quasi-sovereign Qatar Petroleum, which made the largest emerging market debt offering so far this year at \$12.5 billion. Total GCC issuance in the first three quarters of 2021 remained elevated at \$81 billion, though down slightly (4.3 percent) from the same period last year. The strong debt issuance came despite lower borrowing needs amid higher oil prices and improving fiscal positions, likely encouraged by still relatively low borrowing costs and refinancing needs.

UK gilts and US treasuries

Global medium-term sovereign bond yield increases were led by the UK 10-year gilt, which reached 1.1 percent (+31 bps q/q) in early October for the first time since March 2020 amid expectations of tighter policy amid rising price pressures (partly due to economic recovery reflation and supply chain bottlenecks, along with higher energy and commodity prices). The yield surge came despite an ongoing bond-purchase program, which normally applies downward pressure on yields due to stronger demand. Meanwhile the US 10-year treasury yield gained 8 bps q/q, reaching 1.5 percent in late September, the highest since June. Similarly, the higher yield was driven by expectations of tighter policy and higher inflation. The German bund and Japanese



bonds were little changed over the quarter. Growth prospects, Fed policy, inflation expectations and COVID uncertainty, will continue to dictate bond yield movements going forward. The US 10-year treasury yield has further upside potential once the Fed's asset purchase tapering actually starts possibly later this year, thereby reversing the impetus that brought yields to historical lows in 2020. The case for higher yields is stronger should inflation remain persistently above the Fed's target range, and should economic growth prove resilient, ushering in a sooner-than-expected rate hike. On the other hand, we could see the yield uptrend reverse course in response to a softer economic outlook due to ongoing supply constraints, virus-related risks, volatility in riskier assets (such as equities) or should inflation prove to be more transitory.

GCC yields

GCC medium-term sovereign bonds saw higher yields in 3Q21, tracking the yield increases in global

markets. Yields for GCC sovereigns typically depend on two main factors: 1) the inherent risk of lending to these sovereigns, which varies with the overall macro-economic and geopolitical climate; 2) the yield movements of their global counterparts. In 3Q21, the uptrend in GCC yields was centered on the latter reason. Higher "risk-free" global rates have led to investors expecting a higher return from riskier GCC debt, leading to reduced demand and a subsequent drop in bond pricing, i.e. higher yields. Meanwhile, regional-specific risk factors have generally played a more limited role, with the economic backdrop improving amid higher oil prices, better public finances, good vaccine progress and restored business activity.

GCC yield increases were led by Bahrain, likely affected (in addition to the global factors) by previous credit rating outlook downgrades by Moody's and S&P (B2 negative and B+ negative, respectively). Yield gains among other GCC members were more modest (6-14 bps), while Kuwait's yield rose a mar-

ginal 2 bps. Looking ahead, GCC yield prospects will continue to depend on the regional/global economic recovery, direction of global yields, virus containment developments, in addition to oil price movements.

GCC issuance

GCC debt issuance was strong in 3Q21, amounting to \$27.2 billion, bringing the total debt issued so far this year (as of end 3Q21) to \$81 billion, a slight decrease from the same period last year (\$86 billion). Issuance in 3Q21 was dominated by Qatari and UAE sovereigns and quasi-sovereigns, with Qatar Petroleum making the largest EM debt offering this year to finance its gas expansion plans: in July, it issued \$12.5 billion in Eurobonds in 4-tranches with maturities of 5,10,20, and 30 years. The issue was met with strong demand, with around \$40 billion in orders, as the pricing was attractive to investors, with the 10-year yielding around 90 bps over US treasuries and about 25 bps over similar-maturity secondary market yields. More recently, the UAE made its first debt offering at the federal level, with \$4 billion issued, partly earmarked for capital spending on infrastructure, and was met with strong demand.

GCC issuance could remain reasonable in the remainder of 2021 given deficit financing needs and as sovereigns take advantage of still-low borrowing costs - although current higher oil prices will have reduced borrowing requirements somewhat. Looking ahead to 2022, issuance will be affected by the path of oil prices and also progress on fiscal consolidation, which is still a key area of focus in many countries. In addition, the possibility of higher yields due to tighter expected central bank policy could push GCC yields higher over the medium term, increasing the borrowing costs and leading to a softer pace of GCC debt issuance.

KFHOnline transactions over 113m in 9 months

KUWAIT: The total transactions completed by Kuwait Finance House's (KFH) customers through KFHOnline on the website or the mobile app was more than 113 million transactions in 9 months, from January until September of this year 2021, with a growth rate of 26 percent compared to same period last year.

The e-banking transactions included: opening bank account for new customers and request personal financing using e-signature through MYID App, instant debit card issuance using QR code, local and international transfers, opening deposits, adding beneficiaries, balance inquiry, cheque book request and cheque deposit, opening KFH gold account, conducting gold transactions (purchase, sell and trade), create saving plan, requesting finance, opening accounts, applying for Prepaid cards, paying finance installments, KFH Pay service and other digital services.

Acting Group Chief Retail and private Banking officer at KFH, Khaled Yousif Alshamlan, said that



Khaled Alshamlan

these figures of online usage and growth rate reflect the efficiency of KFH digital solutions and the KFHOnline services.

"This also reiterates the bank's leadership in providing high-end mobile banking services that enable customers to complete their banking transactions anywhere 24/7," he added, stressing the importance of keeping pace with technological advancement to meet the requirements of different customer segments, especially the millennials, who were born during a period of fast-paced digital growth, and are known to be tech-savvy customers.

Alshamlan demonstrated a wide range of services provided by KFH, including: the service of applying for personal finance and onboarding new customers by using e-signature through MYID App, the instant transfer service to "KFH Turkey" using the RippleNet network, and the "digital wallets" service via mobile phones and smart watches that provide the latest smart digital payment methods with the highest advanced security standards in collaboration with Garmin, Fitbit and Samsung.

He referred to KFH's efforts to enhance the technological partnership with fintech companies

to introduce innovative digital services.

KFH Go branches

Alshamlan stressed the importance of interactive software and self-service platforms such as: XTM machines, and KFH Go branches, which are 10 Digital branches located in different places in Kuwait, including Kuwait International Airport, allow customers to conduct a variety of interactive banking services, including: Creating "Murabaha" commercial transactions, ordering credit and prepaid cards, updating data and phone number, activating bank cards, opening deposits and accounts, instant checkbook printing, instant printing of bank cards without pre-ordering, receiving gold biscuits (10 grams) and opening an account (gold, savings, Al-Rabeh, automated service), buying and selling gold, withdrawing cash without a card via the mobile through QR code, civil ID or phone number, and many other financial and banking services.

Alshamlan said that KFH is keen to continue investing heavily in technology and offering innovative financial solutions, stressing the importance of moving forward with process automation efforts by employing artificial intelligence and collaborating with fintech companies, to stay ahead of competitors and meet the aspirations of all customer segments while enhancing their banking experience.



Burgan Bank expands Haiba card benefits to include GIG services

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank has expanded the package of Haiba card benefits by introducing new premium insurance services in collaboration with Gulf Insurance Group - Kuwait (GIG-Kuwait). This enhancement highlights the bank's commitment to further develop and diversify its cards offers and benefits to upgrade the overall customer experience with a suite of added value services that fit their lifestyle needs.

Haiba cardholders can now enjoy through this collaboration with GIG-Kuwait the premium insurance services that include an all-risks pleasure yacht and motor insurance, in addition to a fire and risk insurance covering housing and personal belongings under the home insurance package.

The new benefits bundle also includes access to first-class health insurance through FAY program, which caters to all medical needs and covers treatment across an extensive network of accredited private clinics and hospitals in Kuwait and abroad. With coverage plans ranging from KD 100,000 to KD 500,000, depending on the selected policy, the health insurance packages are designed to relieve customers of the financial burden of expensive medical care.

Naser Al-Qaisi, Chief Retail Banking Officer at Burgan Bank, commented the new addition to Haiba card benefits saying "Since its introduction to the market, Haiba card has gained popularity and was acclaimed for its distinguished and unique offering and benefits tailored to meet the aspirations of our elite customer base. The collaboration with GIG-Kuwait was motivated by our keenness to further upgrade the existing card services with a more diversified palette of benefits, and we are confident that GIG-Kuwait services will add great value to our Haiba customers."

Commenting about this collaboration with Burgan, Tareq Abdulwahab Al-Sahhaf, Chief Executive Officer at GIG-Kuwait, said "Burgan Bank is one of our trusted financial partners and a major player within Kuwait Projects Company (KIPCO). Our collaboration is aligned with both the Bank's and GIG's objectives to offer the best insurance services and the most innovative products to Haiba cardholders. We are delighted to be chosen to contribute to delivering the promise of a unique experience to the cardholders."

Burgan's Haiba card stands out with a unique personalized design, and a vast selection of exclusive travel, insurance, healthcare, entertainment, restaurants and shopping privileges and benefits. Haiba cardholders are automatically enrolled in Burgan Rewards Program, which offers 7 points for every KD 1 spent locally and 14 points for every KD 1 spent abroad. The cardholders can also enjoy a range of exclusive personal services including a 24/7 global concierge service, free access to an unlimited number of airport lounges worldwide, airport concierge services, Global Blue VIP services and visa services.

NBK mobile app allows transferring student allowance without need to visit branch

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is keen to provide the most advanced technologies and digital banking services, as part of its endeavors to meet all its customers' needs. To this end, the bank focuses on updating NBK Mobile Banking App continuously, by adding more services enabling customers to make all their transactions anytime, anywhere.

In this context, NBK recently added a number of outstanding services to the App, the latest of which is allowing transferring student allowance, without the need to visit the branch, using NBK Mobile Banking and NBK Online Banking.

In line with its strategy to digitize key banking transactions, NBK enabled customers to apply for a loan or credit card, open bank accounts and deposits, update their contact information electronically - all using NBK Mobile Banking App.

Also, to allow customers manage their accounts in a secure and convenient manner, NBK introduced NBK Push Notifications, enabling them to receive instant alerts 24/7, whether inside or outside Kuwait, once the service is activated by selecting "Notification Subscription" in the App menu.

Furthermore, in line with its commitment to provide the most advanced digital payment solutions to its customers, NBK added many mobile payment services, mainly including Samsung Pay, which was introduced for the first in Kuwait, allowing customers to link their cards with Samsung smartphones. NBK Mobile Banking App also provides various digital payment solutions for paying bills and monthly obligations, in addition to money transfers through the App, and NBK Quick Pay, whose limit was increased to KD 3,000 daily, and KD 10,000 monthly.

In addition to Bill Split where you can split the



Hala Al-Shoabi

bill up to 20 people in easy and simple steps.

Commenting on the continuous updates introduced on NBK Mobile Banking App, Hala Al-Shoabi, Head of Digital Service Quality Management, National Bank of Kuwait said: "We are committed to update NBK Mobile Banking App continuously, to help us provide a full-spectrum of digital banking services that meet the needs of our customers from all ages and segments, and allow them make their transactions quickly and easily, anytime, anywhere."

"We promise our customers more services and updates that contribute to enrich their banking experience, capitalizing on our huge technological infrastructure that supports our provision of top-notch digital services, especially through NBK Mobile Banking App, whose services we always strive to update," Al-Shoabi added.

Al-Shoabi stressed that NBK is keen to encourage customers to opt for and rely on digital channels for all their transactions and payments.

Through NBK Mobile Banking App, NBK aims to provide customers with a secure way to manage their money easily at any time, as it allows them to make different banking transactions including opening a new account, viewing transactions made on account and credit cards, viewing NBK Miles Points and NBK Rewards Points balance, paying credit card dues and different e-bills, locating NBK Branches and NBK ATMs/CDMs all over Kuwait, as well as requesting account statement, checkbook and other services.

The App also includes a variety of advanced services including managing cards while traveling, increasing the monthly transfer limit, and updating contact details; making it the ideal travel companion.

NBK Mobile Banking App is available in both Arabic and English for iPhone(r), iPad(r), iPod Touch(r), Huawei and Android(r) devices, as well as for Apple Watch and Android Wear smart-watches.

Joyalukkas announces Festive Cashback Offer to reward customers

KUWAIT: Festive seasons and exciting promotions have been the trend at Joyalukkas for decades. This festive season, Joyalukkas has announced the Festive Cashback Offer, which will reward customers with exciting gift vouchers on every purchase. Joyalukkas will also showcase a limited-edition special festive collection across all its showrooms in Kuwait. The collections are exclusively designed by top designers and craftsmen to blend with the festive attire and traditions.

Announcing the grand promotion, John Paul Alukkas, Managing Director, International Operations, quoted "Festive seasons give us an opportunity to reward our customers. This year, we are rewarding them with exciting cashback gift vouchers on every purchase, which they can redeem to buy more jewelry of their choice from Joyalukkas. The Festive Cashback Offer will reward customers with a KD 5 gift voucher on every purchase of gold jewelry worth KD 250. The offer is valid from 29th October to 2nd November 2021. Diamond and pearl jewelry lovers will be rewarded with a KD 20 gift voucher on every purchase of diamond, polki and pearl jewelry worth KD 250.

The offer is valid from 20th October to 6th November 2021. Joyalukkas has also announced advance booking plan where customers can book their gold in advance by paying as little as 10 percent and secure their gold prices during the booking period. The offers are valid across all Joyalukkas showrooms in Kuwait.



Lifestyle | Gossip



Jennifer Gates found wedding planning 'challenging'

Jennifer Gates found it "challenging" planning her wedding amid her parents' divorce. The Stanford University graduate married equestrian Nayel Nasser over the weekend and she is thankful their relationship has offered some brightness during a difficult period which saw her dad, Microsoft founder Bill Gates, and mom Melinda Gates separate after 27 years of marriage, as well as her full-on schedule as a medical student and her new spouse's training regime. She told Vogue magazine: "It's been a challenging year, both collectively with the pandemic and for our families going through

transitions. But our love for one another has been a constant. Being able to celebrate our wedding with our closest friends and family was a dream come true." "Planning a wedding while I was in medical school rotations and Nayel was preparing for the Olympics was no small feat." The 25-year-old beauty detailed how strict their nuptials were in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. She continued: "We made the decision that all guests must be fully vaccinated and receive a negative test result prior to the wedding." "We feel incredibly fortunate to be able to gather with our loved ones safely. We know others aren't as lucky,

especially as the pandemic continues to devastate communities in the United States and around the world." Ahead of the wedding, Jennifer and Nayel were advised to keep the day focused on themselves and they were grateful for the tip. She said: "One piece of advice we were given [throughout the planning process] was to remember that this day is about us and our love. "I think we really kept that at the center of our minds while planning, and we also tried to ensure that our families and friends were able to enjoy themselves."

Sheeran expresses concern for daughter's mental health



Ed Sheeran would "hate" for his daughter to suffer from depression. The 'Shape of You' singer admitted he is concerned that 14-month-old Lyra - who he has with wife Cherry - will grow up to experience "real lows" for no fathomable reason because mental health issues run in his family. Speaking on a Swedish TV show, Ed said: "I don't want her to have the ability to have real lows. "I would hate for her to have that. I know she will, as it runs in my family. But I would hate for her to feel sad and not know why." Ed has said that he experienced a relapse of his mental health problems during the COVID-19 lockdown and said that he stopped working but ultimately realized making music was the most helpful thing he could do. He said: "I just got sad. Any major thing that happens in my

life, the most positive thing I can do for that is write a song." The 30-year-old star previously admitted he has a "very addictive personality" and "sees no point" in having just one drink so could relate to moments in Sir Elton John's autobiography, 'Me', when he talks about his days of bingeing on food and alcohol because his own behaviour has been very similar. He said: "I have a very addictive personality. Very, very addictive personality. "I'm reading Elton John's book at the moment and there are so many things that he did that I do. "He would be like, 'I would just go on an ice cream binge and eat four desserts until I throw it up', and I was like, 'I've done that before'."

David Beckham must make space for bats

David Beckham has been ordered to create a safe space for bats within the grounds of his home. The 46-year-old former footballer and his wife Victoria Beckham had applied for planning permission to knock down

with constructing the garage. Documents obtained by the Daily Mail newspaper's Eden Confidential column stated: "Before the erection of any external walls, details of the provision of at least one integrated bat box within the walls of the new building shall be submitted for approval." And the couple also have to consider the bats when it comes to lighting as they are prohibited from installing any outdoor fixtures which "would directly illuminate the bat box or the hedge-row without prior approval to protect roosting, foraging or community bats." Meanwhile "We have a lot of fun. We support each other with everything that we do, but it's about have fun and enjoying that person's company. I genuinely love being with him." It was recently revealed the couple had installed a £7,000 state-of-the-art ice cream machine at their Oxfordshire estate, which recreates frozen treats from the American fast food chain Wendy's. A source said recently: "Posh hasn't eaten ice cream in about two decades because she's so health-conscious. "But she agreed to get the Wendy's machine packed over from the US because their daughter Harper loves a sweet treat. They had their team negotiate with the chain to get one of the machines especially for them to bring a bit of US culture over. "It's now been properly installed in their home and is an unlikely addition, to say the least. It cost thousands and had to be professionally fitted. "But to them it's a price worth paying, even though Victoria has barely been near it."



an old outbuilding on their Cotswolds estate and replace it with a new garage to house their tractors and lawnmowers. Although council planners have approved the scheme, the pair - who have sons Brooklyn, 22, Romeo, 19, Cruz, 16 and daughter Harper, 10, together - must show proof the new building will offer shelter for the nocturnal mammals before they can go ahead

Kim pays Kanye 3 million for house contents

Kim Kardashian West has given Kanye West \$3 million for the contents of their home. The 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star has agreed to buy the Los Angeles abode from her estranged husband, with \$20 million - the same as the original outlay on the property - going to the 'Stronger' hitmaker for the building and the additional sum for "all furnishings, furniture, fixtures, appliances' collectibles, silver and art currently located in said Residence." According to documents filed to the Los Angeles Superior Court last week and obtained by People magazine, the house was appraised by an independent expert in June 2020. Kim and Kanye - who have children North, eight, Saint, five, Chicago, three, and two-year-old Psalm together - bought the house in 2014 and worked extensively with architect Axel Verwoodt to create their dream, all-white, family home. After living with the 40-year-old beauty's mom, Kris Jenner, during the

renovations, the family finally moved into the property in December 2017. Four months later, Kris revealed the value of the abode had skyrocketed from the \$20 million the pair had paid for it to a staggering \$60 million. Despite the purchase, Kanye - who has legally changed his name to Ye - won't be left homeless as last month, it was claimed he'd splashed out almost \$60 million on a beachfront property in Malibu. A source said: "With views of the Pacific Ocean, the house has straight angles ... with an emphasis on light. It clearly takes a very specific buyer to appreciate this home. It was on the market ... for over a year before Kanye bought it. It's perfect for Kanye ... He is very happy to be the new owner of this incredible house." The 44-year-old rapper has also put his ranch in Cody, Wyoming, up for sale for \$11 million.



David Gandy gets trolled over his looks

David Gandy gets trolled over his looks on Instagram. The 41-year-old model has revealed he has to deal with cruel comments from people on social media when he shares snaps with his followers. As quoted by the Daily Mail newspaper's Eden Confidential column, he said: "On Instagram, there's this thing about age now - age is used as a weapon. I get, 'You're so old now, look at all your wrinkles.'" However, David tries not to take offence to the comments, and he's able to laugh off the online digs. He added: "It doesn't bother me, as I've always been an old man in a young man's body



anyway." Meanwhile, David - who welcomed daughter Matilda into the world with his partner Stephanie Mendores in November 2018 - admitted his life "revolves around" his baby girl. He previously said: "Mornings revolve around Matilda. She's a good sleeper, but she wakes up between five and six, so I'll go into her room to be with her for an hour or so. My partner, Steph, calls it a teddy bears' picnic because I end up with bears all around me. Then Steph will take over and give her breakfast, while I'll go back to bed for a nap." David isn't used to having a routine as he spent so much time on the road whilst modeling, but now strives to stay at home as often as possible in order to be with his daughter. He added: "It's strange having a routine as I didn't really have one for 17 years [while I was modeling]. You always had a bag packed ready to go, but I don't think it's fair to travel so much now I'm a dad."

Mel Brooks, 95, to write sequel to 'History of the World'

Mel Brooks, the 95-year-old US comedy icon, is to help write a sequel for his 1981 classic film "A History of The World Part I" as an eight-part series for Hulu, the streaming service said Monday. "I can't wait to once more tell the real truth about all the phony baloney stories the world has been conned into believing are History!"



Adele loved variety in Vogue cover shoots

Adele loved the contrast in snaps for her Vogue magazine photo-shoot. The 33-year-old singer "had such a great time" working with the publication on her cover shoots for the November issue, and she was delighted with the range of pictures capturing different moods. Appearing on Kiis FM's 'The Kyle and Jackie O Show' this week, she said: "I didn't see the final covers till everyone else did. "I had such a great time on those shoots, that I sort of knew I would glow in the photos. I was really happy and had so much fun... "I love that there was such a juxtaposition on those as well, one with my t*** out and one with me looking like Emily Blunt [in a green ensemble]." Elsewhere in the interview, things got awkward when Australian host Kyle Sandilands compared her to 'Little

Britain' character Vicky Pollard, who was played by Matt Lucas in the BBC sketch show. He said: "You're just like us.... You're Vicky Pollard but with an amazing voice. Vicky Pollard is a bad example. But I love Vicky Pollard." Adele was able to laugh at the comparison, adding: "I've had that comparison before, all good. I am glad you think I'm normal, because I am." Meanwhile, Adele has admitted a lot of people think she looks like 'American Horror Story' actress Sarah Paulson. She told Vogue: "But I do, it's actually quite intense." The star suggested her celebrity twin is actually Emily Blunt, as she added: "Only the forehead."

Snoop Dogg is being sued over an Instagram post

The 49-year-old rapper is the subject of legal action from Freedom News TV (FNTV), who are seeking \$150,000 from him in federal court after accusing him of posting one of their videos - a clip of a protestor scaling a building in New York City - on his social media page without permission. The company make their money by licensing the rights to photos and videos but admitted they saw the video on Snoops Instagram on 3 April and didn't register the clip for a copyright until 9 April. The video in question can still be seen on the 'Drop It Like It's Hot' hitmaker's page, along with the caption: "Dummy of the week." The post has been shared with Snoop's 65 million followers and has attracted more than 4.5 million views. The post on Snoop's page has over 4.5 million views and was posted to the rapper's 65 million followers. FNTV said: "Without permission or authorization from Plaintiff, Defendant volitionally selected, copied, stored and/or displayed Plaintiff's copyright protected Video." Snoop has yet to respond to the case, RadarOnline.com reports. Meanwhile, the hip hop legend recently reflected on his "beautiful" friendship with celebrity lifestyle guru Martha Stewart. He said: "Me and her together, it's always beautiful, we



always enjoy each other's company. It just shows the world that love is love! "If you get a chance to sit around somebody, talk to them, understand them, you can become friends with them no matter what color they are, where they come from, how old they are, race, background, religion. "And that's what we doing, we break all the stereotypes when we're together. We make the world feel like it's OK." Although the pair's friendship started with them seeing a "great business opportunity", their relationship blossomed. He added: "It's more personal now. I think in the beginning, it was business. I think we seen a great business opportunity, and shooting on set, we loved it each other. "And then it was opportunities that came up. I would do a commercial and I'm like, 'Yeah, you wanna do one?' 'Yeah!' 'OK, let's do this!' "And she would bring me opportunities, I would bring her opportunities. And then it became, 'I don't wanna do it unless Martha in', and then she would say, 'I don't wanna do it unless Snoop in!' " - Bang Showbiz

the veteran movie-maker and actor said in a statement. Brooks, one of the few artists to have received awards from across the full spectrum of Emmys, Grammys, Oscars and Tonys, made the original "History of the World Part I" 40 years ago.

According to Hulu, Brooks will be supported in the production and writing of the show by Nick Kroll, Wanda Sykes, Ike Barinholtz, David Stassen and Kevin Salter. Writing for the series should begin "this month" and filming start in the spring of 2022, said the platform, whose majority shareholder is Disney. A worldwide success after its release in 1981, "History of the World Part I" is a slapstick

comedy that parodied history from the Stone Age to the French Revolution. Brooks played the parts of Moses and King Louis XVI, among others.

The film ended with the announcement of a sequel featuring a segment called "Hitler on Ice," along with a teaser of an ice-skating German dictator. Born on June 26, 1926 into a Jewish family in Brooklyn, Brooks always wanted to ridicule Hitler-as in one of his first musicals, "The Producers", which became one of his greatest hits. The filmmaker's memoir is expected to come out at the end of November. — AFP



Opening event of DWC Cultural Exchange Season 2020-2021 at Sadu House

The Diplomatic Women's Committee started its Cultural Exchange Season 2020-2021 by welcoming new women ambassadors, spouses of ambassadors and women diplomats at Sadu House in the presence of the honorary chairperson of DWC Sheikha Halah Bader Muhammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and a group of ambassadors. Among the attendees were the representative of the committee, the ambassadors of Sierra Leone, US, UK, France, Tanzania and Kenya, and spouses of ambassadors accredited to Kuwait.

The program began with a welcome from Sheikha Halah, who reviewed the history of the Sharq region and the ancient artwork of Sadu House. She introduced a few Kuwaiti traditions and described the origin of Arabian coffee and the unmissable aspect of Kuwaiti lifestyle. She also extended her thanks and gratitude to the Chairperson of Sadu House Council Sheikha Altaf Al-Sabah for providing DWC this opportunity for



the meetup and for introducing Kuwaiti culture to the international community, with Kuwait returning to normal life after the pandemic. Sheikha Halah also thanked newspapers and TV channels for the coverage of this event.

The representative of the committee, ambassador of Sierra Leone, president of DWC, and the spouse of the ambas-

sador of Togo welcomed the guests and praised the distinguished cultural events and activities of DWC throughout its cultural season, providing a platform for community meetup for diplomats accredited to Kuwait and serving as a bridge to rejuvenate social and cultural relations between Kuwait and the international community.



The vice president of Sadu House summarized the international heritage value of the house and briefed attendees about the activities of Sadu House throughout the year, as members were honored by Sheikha Halah and souvenirs were distributed. In the closing remarks, the advisor of the committee Narjis Al-Shatti thanked the guests for

attending the opening event of DWC's cultural exchange season. It was a wonderful social and cultural evening that everyone enjoyed with the essence of Arabian coffee and the fragrance of bakhour.

Fasting, not calorie count, boosts lifespan in mice

Eating less often does more to improve the health and lifespan of rodents than simply eating less, a study said Monday. Researchers looking at mice on different diets found those who were fed fewer calories in a single daily feeding lived longer than mice eating the same number of calories distributed throughout the day. The study, published in Nature Metabolism, showed mice who ate only once a day also demonstrated improved metabolism. Study author Dudley Lamming of the University of Wisconsin told AFP that scientists have known for about a century that restricting calories extends the lifespan of rodents.

But previous studies on mice and calorie restriction had included unintentional fasting with mice typically fed just once a day. Lamming's team decided to find out whether the timing between feedings might play a role and discovered it was not the quantity of food alone that mattered. "Instead, calorie restricted diets ensure that mice are fasted for much of the day - and that imposed fasting-period (when we eat) is critical for the benefits of calorie restriction to life and health." Lamming's team put mice on different diets, with a control group getting unlimited access to regular food. Two other groups had calories restricted by 30 percent, one with access to low-calorie food all day and the



other receiving a 30 percent smaller amount of regular food in a single feeding with a 21-hour fast.

The study shows that mice on a calorie restricted diet with 21 hours between meals lived about half a year longer than mice who ate as much as they wanted at any time of day. Mice with constant access to a low-calorie diet, on the other hand, lived lightly shorter lives than the control group, even though they consumed fewer calories. "The imposed fasting period is essential for the benefits of a calorie restricted diet," Lamming said. A final group of mice was trained to eat a similar amount of food as the control but in a three-hour period followed by a long daily fast.

Humans? Not so fast

Though their longevity was not measured, the mice in the last group-which fasted without reducing calorie intake-showed just as many health benefits as the group that ate fewer calories and fasted. "Both groups are better able to regulate their blood sugar and to better adapt their metabolism to different demands during

the course of the day," Lamming said. Mice on a low-calorie diet who ate throughout the day meanwhile did not show benefits such as better blood sugar control, improved strength in old age and longer life.

Diets that include intermittent fasting are popular among celebrities from Hugh Jackman to Kourtney Kardashian. But Lamming points out that while short-term studies on humans seem to confirm that restricting food intake to a four- to eight-hour window in the day "seems to have some benefits", the long-term consequences remain unknown. "We still don't know the best time of day to fast, if different people might respond to fasting or time-restricted feeding differently," he added.

Reacting to the findings, Stephen O'Rahilly, Director of the MRC Metabolic Diseases Unit at the University of Cambridge, said they would be hard to apply to humans given the huge differences in the speeds at which the two species process foods.

"A comparable human experiment would need to have humans eat all the calories they need for a week in a single day and then starve for the next 6 days," he said. "As mice live about 2 years and we now live to around 80, we might have to do the study for more than 50 years to test whether such a massive change to our eating habits actually benefited human longevity," he added. Lamming noted one possible takeaway for our species: people already cutting their daily calorie count by 20 or 30 percent may want to consider limiting the time frame for eating those meals. "If our findings apply to people, they may be losing some of the benefits of calorie restriction by spreading out their meals throughout the day," he said. —AFP

M Night Shyamalan to lead Berlin film fest jury

US director M Night Shyamalan will head up the jury at the 72nd Berlin film festival in February, set to be held as an in-person event after this year's hybrid edition due to the pandemic. The Indian-born American filmmaker shot to fame in 1999 with the psychological thriller "The Sixth Sense" starring Bruce Willis which garnered six Oscar nominations. The 51-year-old has since made supernatural-tinged, suspense-driven features such as "The Visit" and last year's "Old" as well as the television series "Wayward Pines".

The festival's artistic director Carlo Chatrian said in a statement that he was "pleased and honoured" Shyamalan had accepted the invitation to serve as jury president. "Within the US movie business



In this file photo filmmaker M Night Shyamalan attends the premiere of Universal Pictures' "Glass" at SVA Theatre in New York City. — AFP

Shyamalan is a unique figure, a filmmaker that has remained faithful to his vision," he said. "This truthfulness to one's ideal is also what we are looking for in our selection." Shyamalan said he was looking forward to judging the international line-up at the Berlinale, the first major European cinema showcase of the year which ranks along with Cannes and Venice among the continent's top film festivals. "Being able to support and celebrate the world's very best talent in storytelling is a gift I happily accepted," he said. The Berlinale, as the event is known, will be held February 10-20. —AFP

Meghan's father pleads to see grandchildren

Meghan Markle's estranged father yesterday pleaded with his daughter to let him see his grandchildren. Thomas Markle told ITV's Good Morning Britain program that "we're at a point where I think both of us, we should grow up, talk, make up for the sake of the children." "This is ridiculous, almost four years, it's crazy," he said. He is yet to meet grandson Archie, born in 2019, or granddaughter Lilibet, who was born in June. "My message for the kids is that they have two loving families," he said.

"Their great grandmother is the Queen of England, and I think it's important for them to know that they have two families and eventually they're going to grow up and they're going to want to know more about them." The 77-year-old Emmy-winning former lighting director was interviewed from his home in Mexico. He



Disney delays Marvel, Indiana Jones films

Disney pushed back multiple Marvel superhero films and delayed an Indiana Jones sequel by almost a year in the latest reshuffle of its release calendar Monday. Movies such as "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever," "Thor: Love and Thunder" and "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness" all take place within the same interconnected Marvel cinematic universe. That means a delay to one title often causes a domino effect across the wildly popular, multibillion-dollar-grossing series.

Many of the films were previously postponed by film set shutdowns early in the

pandemic, with insiders telling Variety the latest changes were also due to production delays. The eagerly awaited new "Black Panther" film will now arrive in November 2022. Producers have said that the late Chadwick Boseman's lead role will not be recast for the sequel. Additional Marvel superhero films including "The Marvels" and "Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania" were also delayed by a few months, going into 2023.

Meanwhile, the fifth installment of the "Indiana Jones" action franchise was shunted from July 2022 to June 2023. Returning star Harrison Ford will be 81 years old when the title hits theaters, if the new release date holds. Ford first took on the role of archaeologist Indiana Jones in 1981's "Raiders of the Lost Ark"-just a few years after achieving global fame as Han Solo in the original "Star Wars" film. Production on the latest film was delayed this summer when Ford suffered a shoulder injury on set. — AFP



In this file photo Britain's Prince Harry and Meghan Markle speak during the 2021 Global Citizen Live festival at the Great Lawn, Central Park in New York City. — AFP

Queen Elizabeth II. Thomas Markle declined to attend the wedding after he took part in staged paparazzi photos. He also cited forthcoming heart surgery. Meghan dropped contact with him soon after the wedding. Harry and Meghan stunned the royal family last year when they announced they were stepping back from frontline royal duties. — AFP

Thomas separated from Meghan's mother Doria Ragland when the duchess was young. Ragland was at her wedding at Windsor Castle and has had tea with

Lifestyle | Features



Brazilian artist Mundano sieves ashes collected from wildfires for with his 780m mural, which reinterprets the work 'O lavrador de cafe' (The coffee farmer) by Brazilian painter Candido Portinari, in Sao Paulo, Brazil.



Brazilian artist Mundano shows ashes collected from wildfires for with his 780m mural.



Brazilian artist Mundano poses with his 780m mural. — AFP photos

Ashes from Amazon transformed into city mural to raise climate awareness

Tired of seeing the lush Amazon destroyed over many years, Brazilian street artist Mundano decided to let nature speak for itself: He painted a giant mural in Sao Paulo using ashes he collected from the scorched rainforest to raise awareness of climate change. The giant 1,000-square meter fresco titled "The Forest Firefighter" featuring a heroic figure who is helpless in the face of a raging fire was inaugurated yesterday. "The idea came from impotence. We've been seeing for decades how the jungle has been burnt, and in the last few years that has reached record levels," Mundano, who goes by one name and calls himself an 'artist,' told AFP.

Mundano, 36, collected 200 kilograms of ashes from different areas affected by fires to create the mural on a building close to Avenida Paulista, the main avenue running through Brazil's largest city. The ashes came from the Amazon jungle, the Pantanal wetlands, the Atlantic Forest and the Cerrado savannah.

Bringing 'ashes to the people'

Mundano hopes his mural will raise awareness among Sao Paulo residents



Aerial view of a 780m mural by Brazilian artist Mundano.

about the vast fires that ravage Brazil's precious ecosystem every year. "No one sees the fires, they're very far away in the Amazon. The idea is to bring the ashes here to the people to create greater empathy," said Mundano. In June and July, Mundano felt the heat of the fires

firsthand when he went to collect the ashes. But what also caught his attention was the distress of the firefighters trying to extinguish the flames that do so much damage to Brazil's flora and fauna.

Symbolizing the fauna in the mural is a crocodile skeleton painted next to the

heroic firefighter. The entire fresco is made in various shades of black and grey depending on how much water Mundano mixed in with the ashes. The black and white artwork contrasts sharply with the colorful graffiti that adorns many buildings in Sao Paulo. "We live in a city that is grey, or asphalt and grey. The pavement is grey, there's pollution ... and we're becoming grey too."

'Negligent'

A graffiti artist during his teenage years, Mundano made a name for himself in 2012 by decorating the carts of the city's recyclable materials collectors with bright colors and signs that read "My vehicle doesn't pollute." In 2020, Mundano painted another giant mural using toxic mud from the Brumadinho dam that collapsed in 2019 leaving 270 people dead.

His current mural is a statement denouncing Brazil's successive governments that Mundano calls "negligent" and incapable of protecting the environment. Things only got worse under far-right President Jair Bolsonaro. Since he took office in 2019, an average of 10,000 square kilometers of Amazon for-

est has been destroyed per year, compared to 6,500 km2 over the previous decade. The fires that follow deforestation to prepare the land for agriculture and livestock farming, have also reached alarming levels.

"The current government is promoting the dismantling of the environment and trampling on the basic rights of vulnerable populations" such as indigenous people, said Mundano. His mural is based on a famous painting by Brazilian artist Candido Portinari titled "The Coffee Farmer." Like the 1934 painting, Mundano's fresco shows a Black man with his face turned to the side and vegetation in the background. Mundano used a real person to model for his painting, a volunteer fire fighter named Vinicius Curva de Vento, whom the artist saw battle the flames. But while Portinari's farmer wields a spade to dig the ground, the forest firefighter uses his shovel to smother the flames. And the luxurious vegetation in Portinari's painting contrasts with the mural's scorched landscape that includes trucks piled high with felled tree trunks. — AFP

World's longest race? 3,100 miles around a New York block

It's the world's longest certified foot race: A 3,100-mile run that takes participants around the same New York block 5,649 times. Thousands of people have climbed Everest-but, organizers say, just 49 have completed the Sri Chinmoy Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race. Runners finish more than two marathons a day for almost two months, on less than five hours sleep a night. They can't rely on changing scenery to keep them motivated as the route is a half-mile loop on a concrete sidewalk around a high school in Jamaica, Queens.

To mix things up a bit, they alternate daily between running clockwise one day and anti-clockwise the next. "Definitely monotony," said this year's winner, Andrea Marcato, describing the biggest test of the race. "The first week is quite challenging, especially for the mind. But after a while you get used to it. You have to accept that every day is going to be the same," he told AFP. Participants have 52 days to run 3,100 miles (4,989 km), meaning they must average 59.6 miles every day.

They run, walk and hobble between 6:00 am and midnight, eating as they go to make up for the estimated 10,000 calories they burn during every session. For the day's other six hours they sleep, wash and care for their blistered feet in nearby accommodation. Only ultra-marathon veterans who have completed six-day races are allowed to enter.

Meditation

"It's a test of stamina, strength, inner determination, and talent," said race director Sahishnu Szczesniul. Harita Davies, the sole woman of this year's seven competi-

tors, said the race takes a physical toll but "the kind of unbelievable thing is that as the days and weeks go by your body actually does adapt, you do get stronger." Indian spiritual leader Sri Chinmoy, who lived in New York before his death in 2007, founded the run in 1997. He advocated "self-transcendence," using spirituality to go beyond the limits of what an individual thinks they can achieve.

Runners in the 25th edition, which began on September 5, said achieving a meditative state was key to completing the race. "If the mind is focused, you don't have other thoughts or fears or worries or doubts," said Marcato, 39. Meditating while navigating the 883-metre loop around Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School isn't easy though. Runners go past a busy highway and basketball and handball courts. The route isn't cordoned off from everyday life and twice a day 2,000 school children flood the sidewalk.

Forty-seven-year-old New Zealander Davies listens to music, audiobooks and recordings of inspiring quotes. "When you first come here you think oh my god it's a concrete jungle. But you can find beauty everywhere. You can look at the sky, the trees, the birds, the people," she told AFP. The runners, who are also from Japan, Taiwan, Slovakia, Ukraine and Russia, have a small aid station at their disposal where a doctor is on hand to tend to blisters and shin splints.

Volunteers hand participants copious helpings of food-from healthy vegan meals and juices to donut holes, ice-cream and sometimes Chinese takeout. An RV with a bed provides for quick power naps while a

ricketty scoreboard displays the number of miles completed by each runner.

'My dream'

Supporters come by to clap while residents shout words of encouragement, although not everyone is sure what is going on. "I grew up here and had no idea that it was a race. I just figured they were really into jogging," said 34-year-old Julio Quezada. The race returned to New York after occurring in Austria last year due to the pandemic. Marcato, from Italy, clocked his 3,100th mile late Sunday, completing the race in less than 43 days with an average of more than 72 miles per day.

He tore through some 16 pairs of shoes in the process and will receive a trophy but no prize money. "This is the ultimate. It was my dream and here I am," said the passionate ultra-marathoner who works for a plant-based food company. "The last two laps I was completely disconnected from my body. I didn't feel any pain. It was a really special sensation." For New Zealander Harris, on track to complete the distance before the October 26 deadline, the race is an opportunity to "explore the frontiers of my capacity and potential" and "to make myself a better person." When it ends, the healing process begins, which means lots of rest, sleep, food and patience. But one element of the recovery is perhaps the hardest. "Getting used to being back to regular life," said Davies. "This race really simplifies your life because you don't have to think about anything else except running." — AFP



Andrea Marcato of Italy rests after winning the 'Self-Transcendence 3100 Mile Race', the world's longest certified foot race, in the Queens borough of New York.



Andrea Marcato of Italy crosses the line to win the 'Self-Transcendence 3100 Mile Race', the world's longest certified foot race, in the Queens borough of New York. — AFP photos



In this file photo Kim Kardashian's husband rapper Kanye West performs during his concert in central Yerevan. — AFP

Goodbye Kanye West, hello Ye: Judge approves name change request

Los Angeles judge granted the 44-year-old's name change request, a communications officer at the Los Angeles Superior Court told AFP on Monday. The mercurial performer had filed the request in August, citing "personal reasons." The name change now means the Grammy-winning rapper and producer no longer has a last or middle name. His previous full name was Kanye Omari West. In 2018 Ye released an album by the same name, a moniker he's long used as a nickname.

"I believe 'ye' is the most commonly used word in the Bible, and in the Bible it means you. So it's I'm you, I'm us, it's us," he said that year in a radio interview. "It went from being Kanye, which means the only one, to just Ye being a reflection of our good, our bad, our confused, our everything." Also in August, Ye released a two-hour, 27-track album "Donda," which dropped after weeks of delay and several stadium-filled public listening sessions. The spotlight recently has shone on Ye more for his personal life than his art, after his partner of nearly a decade, Kim Kardashian, filed for divorce earlier this year. Before the news broke, their union had been dogged for months by reports of marital difficulties. Last year Ye launched an improbable and ultimately failed presidential bid. — AFP

Opera legend Edita Gruberova dies aged 74

Edita Gruberova, the legendary Slovak-born coloratura soprano, has died in Zurich at the age of 74, her management said in a statement seen by AFP yesterday. The opera star, whose career spanned more than 50 years, died on Monday, Munich-based Hilbert Artists Management said. Born in Bratislava, Gruberova studied in the Slovak capital before making her stage debut as Rosina in Rossini's "The Barber of Seville" in 1968. But her real breakthrough came two years later as the Queen of the Night in Mozart's "The Magic Flute" at the Vienna State Opera, a role she would go on to sing 148 times during her career.

"Grubi", as her fans affectionately called her, appeared regularly at all of the world's major opera houses, specializing in the "bel canto" repertoire, particularly the works of Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini. She worked with many of the world's greatest conductors, such as Wolfgang Sawallisch and Herbert von Karajan. She was feted for her astonishing vocal technique and was especially well-loved in Germany and Austria. The Vienna State Opera, where Gruberova performed more than 700 times and gave a farewell gala concert in 2018, said it was "mourning the loss of a legend of the opera world". — AFP



Sports

Around 96% of NBA players vaccinated against COVID-19

Commissioner Silver hopes Irving would change his mind over vaccine

NEW YORK: NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said Monday that around 96 percent of players in the league have now been vaccinated against COVID-19 despite union opposition to a league-wide mandate. Speaking to reporters on the eve of the new NBA season, which tipped off last night, Silver said the number of vaccinated players had increased and was expected to go higher after the season starts. "Roughly 96 percent of our players are vaccinated, and that number will likely tick up a bit when the season starts," Silver told reporters.

Issues around vaccine hesitancy have loomed over the build-up to the 2021-2022 season, most notably with Brooklyn Nets star Kyrie Irving effectively being sidelined over his refusal to get vaccinated. A city regulation in New York requires individuals in public indoor spaces to be vaccinated, meaning that Irving is unable to play home games for the Nets. The Nets subsequently said Irving would not play in either home or away games as long as he remains unvaccinated.

Silver said Monday he hoped Irving would eventually change his mind over the vaccine — but backed the New York regulations that have left his career in limbo. "I hope that Kyrie, despite how strongly he feels about the vaccination, ultimately decides to get vaccinated because I'd love to see him play basketball this season, and I'd love to see the

Brooklyn Nets have their full complement of players on the floor," Silver said.

Asked if he felt Irving's situation was fair, Silver replied: "I'm not sure if fair is the right way to approach it because there's nothing fair about this virus. It's indiscriminate in terms of who it impacts, and I think it's perfectly appropriate that New York and other cities have passed laws that require people who both work and visit arenas to be vaccinated. That



Number expected to increase after season's start

seems to be a responsible public health decision made by those locales, and those are the circumstances in which the Nets find themselves operating."

'Best for everyone'

Silver said he had favored a league-wide vaccination mandate, something that had been opposed by the NBA Players Association but agreed to by the NBA Referees Association. "I would have preferred ultimately that the players association agreed on mandatory

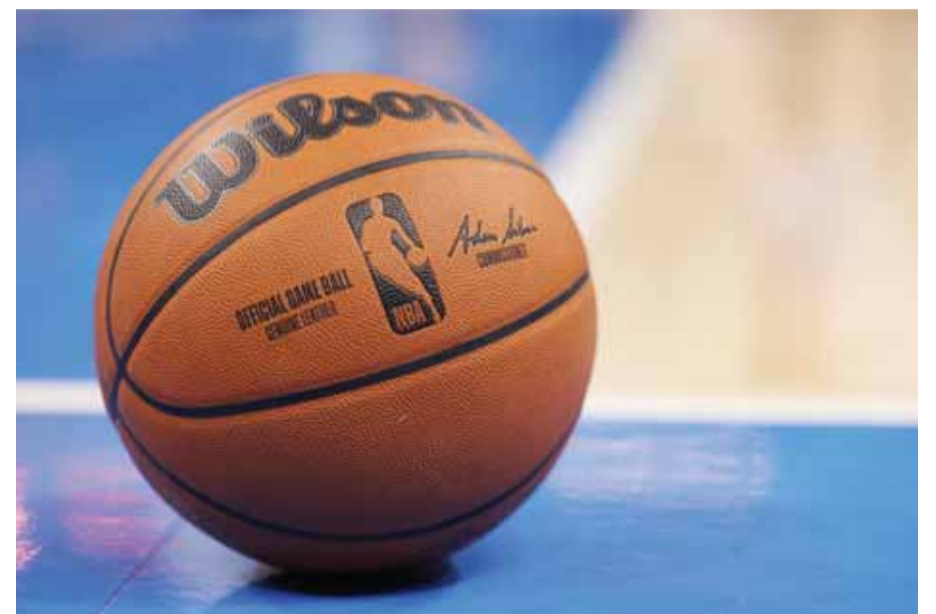
vaccinations," Silver said.

"Our officials union agreed to mandatory vaccinations despite some opposition from members. But I think ultimately we could have avoided a lot of the adversarial nature of these issues for our players (with a mandate). It would have been best for everyone if every player had been vaccinated."

Silver would not comment when asked whether he had discussed Irving's vaccination status directly with the player, noting only that in general the league had conducted educational outreach to all players since vaccines became widely available.

"I would like to see all our players vaccinated because it's a public service of sorts, particularly to young people who might not see the value of getting vaccinated," Silver said. "That outreach will continue. We think that at the end of the day players being fully informed is helpful. The science very much supports getting vaccinated, not just for themselves but for their families and their communities."

However Silver warned that players could not expect to be treated differently from the general population over vaccine rules. "Having an opinion about whether or not to get vaccinated, is different than your right to play NBA basketball," Silver said. "And we're seeing that in the New York market right now, where there's a conflict between the player's point of view and the local law,



OKLAHOMA CITY: A generic view of the Wilson NBA basketball used during a preseason game between the Denver Nuggets and the Oklahoma City Thunder on October 13, 2021 at Paycom Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. —AFP

the local law is going to trump that player's point of view."

Silver meanwhile said the league has projected revenues for the new season to be around \$10 billion as fans return to arenas. League revenues dropped to \$8.3 billion in the 2019-2020 season, and were initially expected to decline by as much as 40 percent in 2021-2022. Silver said Monday revenue had declined by

around 35 percent.

"We lost significant amounts of money," Silver said. "The good news I think is that we're able to take a long-term view of this business and continue to grow in it, continue to invest in it. So we'll try to look at it as an ongoing investment in the business over a long period of time as opposed to a loss of an individual season." —AFP

King Henry treble as Titans hold off Bills in thriller

MIAMI: Derrick Henry rushed for three touchdowns and the Tennessee Titans staged a nail-biting late defensive stand to score a 34-31 victory over the Buffalo Bills on Monday. Titans running back Henry produced a trademark barnstorming performance to help the Titans improve to 4-2 in the AFC South after a thrilling shootout that saw the lead change hands no fewer than seven times.

Henry's third touchdown late in the fourth quarter had put Tennessee into a 34-31 lead. The Bills though looked to be on course for a game-tying field goal with only seconds remaining as they advanced to the Titans three-yard line. But instead of kicking for overtime, Bills quarterback Josh Allen went for a risky fourth and one conversion with just 22 seconds left, and the Titans defense held firm to ice the game. "We've got some dogs over there on defense and

they fight to the end, and they showed it right there" Henry said after the Titans' game-winning defensive stop.

"We knew it was going to be a four-quarter battle and we just had to stay with it," added Henry, who finished with 143 yards from 20 carries. Bills quarterback Allen was left reflecting on his team's failure to punch through the Titans defense for the winning score. "It happens," Allen said. "It's a game of inches. It didn't turn out in our favor today."

The Bills had started slowly with only a pair of early Tyler Bass field goals to show for their opening possessions. The Titans hit with Henry's first touchdown of the night, a spectacular 76-yard burst through the Bills defense. The Bills got their first touchdown soon afterward when Allen hit Stefon Diggs for a 14-yard score to make it 13-7.

Tennessee narrowed the deficit to three points with Randy Bullock's 43-yard field goal with 5:08 remaining for 13-10. The Titans were back on the offensive soon afterward when safety Kevin Byard intercepted Allen to reach the Buffalo 11-yard line. Two plays later, quarterback Ryan Tannehill scrambled over from four yards out to give the Titans a 17-13 lead after Bullock's extra point.

Buffalo regained the lead on the



NASHVILLE: Running back Derrick Henry #22 of the Tennessee Titans rushes past defensive end Greg Rousseau #50 of the Buffalo Bills during the second half at Nissan Stadium on Monday in Nashville, Tennessee. — AFP

stroke of half-time when Allen found an unmarked Cole Beasley at the back of the end zone. The Bills moved into a 23-17 lead early in the second half with a 52-yard field goal from Bass. The Titans regained the lead though with Henry's second touchdown, crashing over from three yards for a 24-23 lead. But again Buffalo hit back, with Tommy Sweeney

snaffling Allen's pass at the back of the end zone. A clever two-point conversion put the Bills 31-24 ahead heading into the fourth. Bullock's 38-yard field goal reduced the Titans deficit to four points and then after the Bills were forced to punt, Henry rumbled over from 13 yards for his third touchdown to complete the scoring. — AFP



Saudi Arabia's Prince Mohammad bin Sultan Al-Saud

Women's competition at Kuwait Open bowling tourney ends today

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The women's competition of the Kuwait Open bowling tournament concludes today at Kuwait Bowling Club in Salmiya with large participation from all GCC countries. Saudi Arabia's Prince Mohammad bin Sultan Al-Saud lauded the high standard of the Kuwait Open, with the participation of the best players in the Gulf region as well as the best organization of such an event despite the large number of participants and tough competition.

"We are pleased to participate in the tournament, which comes ahead of important international events following a lengthy break. This event will benefit us due to the strong competition at a high standard," he said. Prince Mohammad said that several Gulf players are showing good potential during the Kuwait Open and all are looking for a successful bowling future at the regional and world level.

"This sport is enjoying good attention in the Gulf region, and this will result in achievements if the athletes maintain their technical and physical levels," he remarked. As for Saudi Arabia, Prince Mohammad said the country witnessed a change on the game's board of directors lately, adding that "we support all that helps to advance the game, not only in Saudi Arabia, but in all the Gulf Cooperation Council countries".

Prince Mohammad concluded his statement by lauding the distinguished role of the President of International and Asian Bowling Federations Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and his keenness on developing the game in the region and removing all obstacles facing it.

Theekshana, Hasaranga help Sri Lanka hammer Namibia in T20 W Cup

ABU DHABI: Spinners Maheesh Theekshana and Wanindu Hasaranga set up a comprehensive seven-wicket win for Sri Lanka against debutants Namibia in round one of the Twenty20 World Cup on Monday. Theekshana returned figures of 3-25 and Hasaranga took two wickets to help dismiss Namibia for 96 in the second Group A encounter of the day in Abu Dhabi.

Namibia hurt Sri Lanka with three wickets in the chase but Avishka Fernando (30) and Bhanuka Rajapaksa (42) put on an unbeaten stand of 74 to steer the team home in 13.3 overs. "We want to get through this qualifying stage. All well went for us," skipper Dasun Shanaka said after the win.

Shanaka praised man of the match Theekshana and said, "He has been outstanding. He has been training with Ajantha Mendis back home and has a

lot more to offer in the future." The 21-year-old Theekshana's off spin and his carrom ball troubled the opposition batsmen as he sent back both the openers and later bowled Jan Frylinck for two.

Sri Lanka were in trouble at 26-3 while batting but the left-handed Rajapaksa, who survived a dropped catch on 18, smashed four fours and two sixes in his 27-ball blitz to ease the pressure. Rajapaksa admitted their top-order inconsistency will be looked into before the remaining games.

"We have a bit of a concern when it comes to top order batsman. We have been struggling to get runs and not lose wickets at the same time," Rajapaksa told reporters. "It has not been in favour of us but going forward we are looking to correct the mistakes that we have done in past games." Bowlers remained key to victory with quick Lahiru Kumara also chipping in with two wickets to bowl out Namibia in 19.3 overs after Sri Lanka chose to field first. Craig Williams with his 29, skipper Gerhard Erasmus, 20, and JJ Smit, unbeaten on 12, were the only three batsmen to manage double figures.

Sri Lanka, champions in the 2014 edition, top the group table ahead of Ireland, who thrashed Netherlands by seven wickets in the first match that witnessed Curtis Campher taking four wickets in four balls. — AFP

Schwarber slam as Boston rout Astros

NEW YORK: Kyle Schwarber blasted a record-breaking third grand slam as the Boston Red Sox routed the Houston Astros 12-3 to open up a 2-1 lead in baseball's American League Championship Series on Monday.

Schwarber's 430-foot blast in the bottom of the second inning at Fenway Park made the Red Sox the first team in baseball history to hit three grand slams in a single postseason series. It was a case of deja vu for the Astros, who saw J.D. Martinez and Rafael Devers bludgeon grand slams for Boston in game two in Houston on Saturday in a 9-5 victory.

"Offensively this is the best we've been all season — they're locked in right now," Boston manager Alex Cora said after the win. "Today was the closest we've been to a perfect game to be honest with you. We pitched well, played great defense, ran the bases. Now we turn the page and get ready for tomorrow." After a scoreless first inning, the Red Sox roared into the lead in a devastating second inning burst after loading the bases. Christian Vazquez's single allowed Alex Verdugo to score and then Christian Arroyo reached after a fielding blunder by Astros star Jose Altuve sent J.D. Martinez over home plate for a 2-0 lead.

Altuve's fumble was especially costly, potentially squandering a double-play to keep the innings alive and leave Boston with the bases loaded. That proved too good an opportunity for Schwarber to pass up, and the 28-year-old outfielder duly pounced on the



ABU DHABI: Sri Lanka's Maheesh Theekshana (right) celebrates after taking the wicket of Namibia's Jan Frylinck during the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup cricket match between Namibia and Sri Lanka at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Monday. — AFP

opportunity, electrifying Fenway with a mammoth shot deep into right field to leave the Sox 6-0 up.

Yimi Garcia replaced Jose Urquidy on the mound but was unable to stop the bleeding in the third inning. Vazquez driving in another single to score Hunter Renfroe for 7-0. Arroyo then let rip with a two-run homer over Fenway's famous "Green Monster", high into left center field to put Boston 9-0 ahead.

Kyle Tucker finally got Houston on the board in the fourth inning with a three-run homer, jumping on Boston pitcher Eduardo Rodriguez's 79 mph slider to score Michael Brantley and Yordan Alvarez. Rodriguez finished with seven strikeouts through six innings.

The Red Sox onslaught resumed in the sixth as Martinez smashed a two-run homer into left field to stretch Boston's lead to 11-3. Devers added insult to injury with Boston's fourth homer of the night in the eighth inning to complete the scoring. — AFP

Sports

Sancho victim of Solskjaer's struggle to strike right balance

Manchester United in must-win mode vs Atalanta tonight

MANCHESTER: Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was left with no excuses in his quest to end the club's four-year trophy drought when Cristiano Ronaldo headlined a starry transfer window. But the Norwegian has failed to match expectations and Saturday's 4-2 loss at Leicester left United five points adrift in the Premier League title race and already out of the League Cup.

No return on investment

United spent £73 million to sign Jadon Sancho from Borussia Dortmund in July and followed that with the impressive capture of four-time Champions League winner Raphael Varane from Real Madrid. But Ronaldo's return relegated Sancho's signing to the shadows. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner has scored five times in eight games since returning to the club where he made his name. However, United have won only three of those eight games.

"The performances have been so shoddy all season in terms of team performances," said former Manchester United captain Gary Neville. "There's been some good results and some great individual goals, but the overall performances and the unit in and out of possession have been shoddy."

Sancho has embodied those struggles more than most. He was a prolific scorer and creator during four seasons in Germany, where he blossomed into one of Europe's most promising attacking talents, but United are yet to see any return on their investment with no goals or assists in his first 10 appearances for the club.

The 21-year-old has not been helped by persistent tinkering with his role. Initially signed to fill United's need for a right winger, he has found himself more often playing from the left with Mason Greenwood forced onto the right by Ronaldo's presence through the middle. Now Marcus Rashford and Edinson Cavani are coming back to fitness.

Solskjaer has so far tried to accommodate as many of his arsenal of attacking players as possible with a front three backed up by Bruno Fernandes and Paul Pogba in midfield. Pogba and Fernandes have already spoken out at the need for a clearer tactical plan. Solskjaer hinted after Saturday's loss that he has tough



LEICESTER: Manchester United's English striker Mason Greenwood (left) celebrates scoring the opening goal with Manchester United's English striker Jadon Sancho (right) during their team's English Premier League football match against Leicester City at King Power Stadium in Leicester, central England on Saturday. — AFP

choices to make.

"We need to look at the whole set-up and balance of the team and maybe something has to give. Lately, we have not been in great form, we've lost too many points and that is something we have to look at," said Solskjaer. "We might have to change. Do we need more legs in there?"

Sancho may well be the fall guy, making way for an extra body in midfield, but that would again highlight the muddled thinking that has epitomized United's years of decline since Alex Ferguson's departure as manager in 2013. After the club spent nearly two years pursuing his signature, it has taken barely two months for Sancho's role in the team to be questioned. — AFP

Defensive Sane turns whistles into ovations from Bayern fans

BERLIN: After he was mercilessly whistled by Bayern Munich fans in August, Leroy Sane has beefed up his defense to silence disgruntled supporters and justify his 45 million euros (\$52 million) transfer from Manchester City. Sane is set to start away to Benfica in Lisbon tonight with visitors Bayern chasing a third straight Champions League victory to stay top of Group E after wins last month over Barcelona and Dynamo Kiev.

Neither club managed to score past Bayern, who have scored eight goals without reply so far in Europe, and Sane deserves some of the credit after improving his pressing in the opposition's half. As Bayern head coach Julian Nagelsmann points out, Sane has been "throwing himself into the defensive work full force. He has made incredible steps in counter-pressing".

It's not always been the case. Sane joined Bayern from City in 2020, but struggled to make an impact last season as questions lingered over his defending. His attacking skills are beyond question, as he again showed on Sunday at the heart of Bayern's 5-1 demolition of Leverkusen to top the Bundesliga table.

As a 19-year-old, Sane marked his Champions League debut in 2015 against Real Madrid for ex-club Schalke with a dream goal from the edge of the area. He moved in 2016 from Gelsenkirchen to Manchester and rates his free-kick for the Citizens against his former club Schalke in 2019 as the "best goal I've ever scored". However, on top of his four goals and seven assists for Bayern this season, he has shown a newfound resolve to win the ball back.

'Unrecognizable'

He presses opponents in their own half and also tracks back, as he did to snuff out a Dynamo Kiev attack early in Bayern's 5-0 win. That was typical of his new determination not to neglect his defensive duties. In that regard, Sane is "unrecognizable", according to former Liverpool and Germany midfielder Didi Hamann, now a Sky pundit.

It's a far cry from the whistles Sane endured in a league game against Cologne in August when disgrun-

ted Bayern fans made their feelings known after too many of his passes went astray and he did little to win the ball back. "I didn't want to experience that again," Sane later admitted. "I knew I needed time, but it's not like I sat back. I always work hard on myself and knew it would be tough (at Bayern) because there is a lot of pressure on you here."



MUNICH: Bayern Munich's midfielder Leroy Sane looks on during a training session in Munich, southern Germany yesterday on the eve of the team's UEFA Champions League Group E football match against SL Benfica. — AFP

The proof that he has won over Bayern fans came when Sane received a standing ovation when substituted after a strong display - with and without the ball - in a 7-0 thrashing of Bochum in September when he scored with a stunning free-kick.

"It is important for every player to have a clear head so that he can perform at his best," said Nagelsmann. "We haven't given Leroy any special treatment, not even after the whistles against Cologne. It's not advisable to always discuss everything repeatedly. You just have to let him play." Sane's work ethic has also been noted on the international stage. He scored against Liechtenstein and Iceland in September before sitting on the bench as Germany wrapped up qualification for next year's World Cup in last Monday's 4-0 win over North Macedonia. "He floats across the pitch with an ease. Leroy has outstanding skills, but his self-confidence has returned," Germany coach Hansi Flick said. "Now he also has the impulse to want to retrieve lost balls". — AFP

“ We have not been in great form ”

The scrutiny on Solskjaer is increasing ahead of Atalanta's visit to Old Trafford in the Champions League tonight with progress to the last 16 of Europe's premier club competition far from certain. Ronaldo's last-gasp strike to snatch a 2-1 win over Villarreal three weeks ago was badly needed after United lost their opening game in Group F to Swiss champions Young Boys.

Solskjaer already has one early group stage exit on his CV. Last season the Red Devils blew a perfect start to be knocked out by Paris Saint-Germain and RB Leipzig. Failure to reach the knockout stages again could be the final blow to Solskjaer's credibility among a fanbase beginning to turn on the man who famously won them the Champions League with a stoppage time goal against Bayern Munich in 1999.



BARCELONA: Barcelona's coach Ronald Koeman addresses a press conference in Barcelona yesterday, on the eve of their UEFA Champions League first round Group E football match against Dynamo Kiev. — AFP

Time is now for Barca as bid for Champions League recovery begins

MADRID: Barcelona want to build for the future with the tantalizing prospect of another group of teenage talents emerging together, but for now reality still bites. After successive 3-0 losses to Bayern Munich and Benfica in Group E, another loss at home to Dynamo Kiev tonight would leave them on the brink of Champions League elimination. It would bring closer the possibility of failing to reach the knock-out stage for the first time since 2003, when Barca had not qualified for the competition. The last time the club played in the group stage and crashed out was 2001, when they dropped into the UEFA Cup where a team featuring Pep Guardiola and Patrick Kluivert lost to eventual winners Liverpool in the semi-finals.

Many of Europe's most prestigious clubs have recently endured outings in Europe's secondary competition. Manchester United, Chelsea, Arsenal, Liverpool, Atletico Madrid and Juventus have all featured in the Europa League over the last decade. But for Barcelona, relegation would be particularly deflating, especially coming after the departure of Lionel Messi to Paris Saint-Germain.

Unlike the Premier League, where six teams have for the best part of 10 years traded blows in the race for Champions League places, La Liga's leading duo

have hardly ever looked like missing out on the top four. In financial terms, the gaps have been bigger in La Liga, with first to fifth separated by 600 million euros of revenue in the last figures recorded before the pandemic, while in the Premier League the difference was more like 150 million.

It means Barcelona's place in the Champions League has been more assured, even if they have still shown impressive consistency during the Messi era to advance to the last 16. Ending that run this year would be a blow to their sense of status, stretching the distance even further between them and Europe's elite.

There would be more tangible costs too. Atletico Madrid threw away 15 million euros when they dropped into the Europa League in 2017, a figure that would have been far more dramatic if they had not gone on to win the competition.

With total debts of 1.35 billion euros, Barcelona can ill-afford to have a key source of revenue slashed, just as the club's president Joan Laporta is hoping to begin the recovery with the return of fans to Camp Nou.

At Sunday's club AGM, Laporta ran out of time to hold votes on key strategic decisions like a 1.5-billion-euro revamp of stadium facilities and relaxing a rule that says the board must resign if club debts are more than double the earnings for two years in a row.

The vote will now be held on Sunday, before Barcelona's home game against Real Madrid and Laporta's request for more borrowing might not go down well should the team's European prospects worsen in midweek. A 3-1 victory over Valencia in La Liga on Sunday offered a positive start to a crunch week that could prove regenerative if two big games now go Barcelona's way.—AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

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

Clinics

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| Kaizen center | 25716707 |
| Rawda | 22517733 |
| Adaliya | 22517144 |
| Khalidiya | 24848075 |

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Striving for sustainability in sport

Eyes on sports administrators to consider new ideas to cut waste



NAILSWORTH: In this file photo taken on August 08, 2017 Forest Green Rovers' Christian Doidge reacts during the English Football League Cup football match between Forest Green Rovers and MK Dons at The New Lawn stadium in Nailsworth, western England. — AFP

PARIS: It is a sign of the times that last week's declaration by the Williams Formula One team of its aim to become a climate-positive organization by 2030, was greeted in muted terms. It is, of course, a welcome ambition within a sport that guzzles gas and runs up massive bills in flying teams around the world for over 20 races a year but it seems to be very much in line with the way sport is going in 2021.

As world leaders prepare to gather in Glasgow for the United Nations' Climate Change Conference, also known as COP26, so sports administrators are having to consider new ideas to cut waste and save the planet. They know by now that it means doing more than simply planting trees by the thousands, manufacturing seats for spectators from recycled plastic or minting medals from used materials. They know it needs more radical change to recreate a genuinely green playing field.

Credit should be given to some like Forest Green Rovers whose sustainability measures include solar panels, electric car charging points, water recycling, an electric lawnmower, an organic pitch, and an entirely vegan menu for players and fans, prompted FIFA to describe them as "the world's greenest football club". They are the exception. Until now, administrators have largely preferred words to action. Next year's big sporting events, the Winter Olympics in Beijing and the World Cup in Qatar, are among the biggest culprits.

Since 1995, the environment has been included in the Olympic charter and in 2016 the International Olympic Committee established a working group to

seek ways to make Winter Games "more sustainable and less impactful in financial, operational and environmental terms". That will not prevent questions being asked about the artificial snow on the ski slopes at the Winter Olympics in February.

Meanwhile, the World Cup is to be played in the heat of Qatar which, despite moving the tournament to November and December, has necessitated the installation of air conditioning, which emits harmful gases into the atmosphere, in eight stadiums.



Williams F1 looks to turn green by 2030

Green pressure

If the most commercial end of the sporting world is still largely environmentally unsustainable — the 2018 Ryder Cup in France evaluated its water footprint to be equivalent to 197 Olympic swimming pools — there has at least been some movement.

The Williams announcement is the first from an F1 team to align with the UN's Sports for Climate Action Framework and also fits with Formula 1's goal, established in 2019, of carbon neutrality by 2030. "Today, there is more and more pressure on the organizers," says Didier Lehenaff, who launched the "Eco-Games" in 2004.

An ex-president of the European Triathlon Union, Lehenaff says he "switched to the green side" in the 2000s and committed to "making the sport more eco-compatible". He also notes that the Tour de France "has set up areas to throw away waste" and is now punishing recalcitrant teams. In 2019, the race was dubbed the 'Tour de Plastique' because an estimated 15 million items of single-use plastic were dispensed to crowds by sponsors.

Supporters

And therein lies another problem. It is not just the cars whizzing around the circuit or the transport of athletes that is the problem, it is the spectators. In non-COVID days, thousands travel across countries for events each week and others board planes to major international events.

Jerome Lachaze, who looks after social and environmental responsibility at the Le Mans 24 Hours car race, estimates 250,000 people head to the town in northwest France each year and is working to encourage greater use of trains. He also points out that Le Mans cars will have "100 percent renewable fuel" in 2022 which, according to manufacturers Total Energies, should allow their CO2 emissions to be cut by at least 65 percent.

Appropriately the fuel will be made from French wine residues and ETBE (ethyl tertbutyl

ether). "The pressure is now coming from the sponsors," Lachaze told AFP. "They say 'what is your CSR (corporate social responsibility) strategy?' And if you do not have this strategy, I will no longer finance you."

'Assess, reduce, compensate'

Marie Sallois, sustainable development director of the IOC, told AFP the environment has become "a strategic subject" for the organization since 2015 — 20 years after it was adopted in the charter. Sallois says the IOC is "attentive to all air transport initiatives on the development of low-carbon solutions" and rejects the idea that the Olympic infrastructures are left to rot once the circus leaves town. She says "more than 75 percent of existing sites are still in use" of 900 sites from 21st century Games.

For Lehenaff, it is all about "assess, reduce and compensate". The ideal is to "reduce the number of infrastructures, their size, increase the compactness of the sites," he says, adding there is also a need to "reduce the number of competitions". He believes the 2024 Paris Olympics organizers are on the right path by promising to halve the CO2 the event produces to 1.5 million tons.

Perhaps the organizers will simply attempt to assuage their inability to meet their goal by following in UEFA's footsteps. It promised to plant 50,000 trees to compensate for spreading this year's European Championship across 12 countries. "Awareness is not the same in all countries, in all federations, in all sports," Lachaze acknowledged. — AFP

Erasing racism in football has to come from top: Les Ferdinand

HAYES: Racism could be eradicated from football if the authorities cared enough, Les Ferdinand, the former Newcastle and England forward and now director of football at London club QPR, has told AFP. The 54-year-old affectionately known as "Sir Les" was one of the most feared marksmen in his days at Queens Park Rangers, Newcastle and Tottenham — and endured years of racial abuse from supporters.

Racism in football has reared its ugly head this year when black England players Bukayo Saka, Jadon Sancho and Marcus Rashford were abused on social media following their penalty misses in the Euro 2020 final shootout with Italy. England players too have been abused in Budapest while playing Hungary in a 2022 World Cup qualifier.

"Football has been an arena in the past where people could come and voice their opinions on your color and throw bananas onto the pitch and walk away without any consequences," Ferdinand told AFP at second-tier QPR's training facilities in west London.

"OK that's changed, and people are now being held accountable for their actions when they do things like that. (Racism) is a societal problem and you'll never eradicate it from society, but we can eradicate it from football if we want to. But the people in the higher positions and the position to do something about it, don't care about it enough

because if they did they would do something about it."

'Find the solution'

Ferdinand says he got so fed up he stopped addressing the issue for a long time simply because "that's all we seem to do, talk about it," with nothing being done. He is astonished how often he is asked what his solution would be. "One of the examples I use is when someone's house gets burgled, the police come around and they do their investigations," he said.

"They don't then ask the person who's been victimized, 'What do we do next, how do we move it forward?', they do something about it. But I keep getting asked, 'What should we do about it? How do we move it forward?', and we're the ones that are being victimized. So I don't quite get that. We're supposed to find a solution to the problem."

The lack of diversity in football management also riles Ferdinand — only seven of the 92 league clubs in England and Wales have black managers. "I know Sol Campbell still wants to be a manager," said Ferdinand, of the former England, Arsenal and Tottenham defender.

"He had to go to Macclesfield and no disrespect to Macclesfield, but (look) where they were in the league at the time. To get an opportunity Paul Ince had to go to the same club. You sometimes look at other managers who get on the merry-go-round and they get off it, get on it, get off it, get on it. These guys got on it, got off it and it seems like it's moving too fast for them to get back on it again."

'Wild, Wild West'

Just as when he was a player, the thoughtful Ferdinand is not one to shirk challenges and he has managed to right what was a listing ship at QPR when he arrived in 2015. He describes it jokingly as



LONDON: Queens Park Rangers' Director of Football Les Ferdinand poses at Imperial College Sports Ground, the club's training ground in Harlington, Hayes, west of London, on October 15, 2021. — AFP

like "the Wild, Wild West" where everyone "did what they wanted to do and when they wanted". Money had been thrown around during two brief stays in the Premier League so he and his team have had to cut the cloth accordingly.

The club is bringing all the teams together at the one training facility — which it has bought outright for £20 million — to end a system where they are in different locations. "Sometimes when you can see the first-team players train and see the goal you are trying to attain, even if you cannot touch them, that can be the best inspiration for any youngster," Ferdinand said.

He believes the five-year bond recently offered to

supporters as a way of investing in the training facility — which will open during the 2022/23 season — reflects the ties between the club and the fans. They have until November 12 to invest a minimum of £500 (\$685) with a potential 25 percent dividend should QPR be promoted to the Premier League in the next five years. They are currently in the top half of the Championship.

"This has always been a community club and this is just another way of giving back to the guys who supported this club for years and years," Ferdinand said. "Having gone to the dinner a few weeks ago when it was launched to see the appetite for it and enthusiasm tells you all you need to know." — AFP