



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN KUWAIT
you can now activate your profile
using Kuwait Mobile ID

Verify your profile on our app
with Kuwait Mobile ID
and send money in minutes.

Kuwait Mobile ID
هويتي



Western
Union



westernunion.com

أمان
aman

صيرفة
Exchange



NOTICE

Due to a public holiday on the occasion of the Prophet's (PBUH) birthday, Kuwait Times will not publish its print edition (Friday Times) on October 22. Readers can stay informed with breaking news, events and information via KuwaitTimes.net and our digital media channels on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook: @KuwaitTimes

7 Sudan's key Red Sea ports coveted by regional powers



9 KFH achieves KD 168.1 million net profit until end of Q3 2021



14 Back to the future as Salah spearheads Liverpool revival



Kuwait returns to normal life

Airport to operate at full capacity
All types of visas to be issued

No social distancing in mosques
Weddings, conferences allowed

Masks not needed in open spaces
Country in final phase of reopening

Amir asks high-level panel to set rules for pardon; Ghanem hails initiative

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday asked the heads of the National Assembly, Cabinet and the judiciary to propose regulations and conditions for pardoning some Kuwaiti convicts, the Amiri Diwan announced. The proposals will pave the way for issuing an Amiri decree to pardon a number of opposition figures and activists who have been sentenced to jail terms for expressing political views deemed to be in violation of the law.

The panel which will propose the pardon rules comprises of National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah and head of the judicial authority Ahmad Al-Ajeel. The Amiri order gave no timeline for the panel to complete its work. The Amiri Diwan said in a statement that the decision was taken after HH the Amir was briefed on the outcome of the national dialogue by the



HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Assembly speaker and the prime minister, and after around 40 MPs signed an appeal to HH the Amir calling on him to pardon the former MPs and activists.

"The Amir has decided to use his constitutional right based on article 75 of the constitution," which states that the Amir has the right to pardon someone of their penalty or reduce it.

Ghanem thanked HH the Amir for his initiatives of calling for national dialogue, backing its outcome and then asking the top panel to set the conditions for the pardon. Former speaker and prominent opposition leader Ahmad Al-Saadoun also thanked HH the Amir for intending to issue the pardon decree.

Continued on Page 2

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The government yesterday announced a "cautious" return to pre-pandemic life, ending 20 months of closures. From Oct 24, the airport will resume operations at full capacity and all types of visas will be issued. "Today, we announce the cautious return to normal life and the start of the fifth and final phase" of returning to pre-pandemic life, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah said in a brief speech following an extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet.

He also announced the cancellation of all restrictions which the government began to impose in late February last year to contain the spread of the coronavirus, which has claimed more than 2,400 lives in the country. Sheikh Sabah expressed thanks to frontline workers, whom he called the "white army", and all volunteers who participated in the extraordinary efforts to combat COVID-19. He admitted that some mistakes had been committed, "but successes have overtaken mistakes", and authorities are now dealing with a post-pandemic Kuwait.

Government Spokesman Tareq Al-Mazrem said the Cabinet approved proposals by the coronavirus emergency committee that led to reopening the country, but urged the public to comply with health conditions. He said that the Cabinet asked the ministry of Islamic affairs to end social distancing in mosques from Friday, Oct 22, provided that worshippers are vaccinated, bring their own prayer mats and continue to wear facemasks.

The Cabinet also allowed the return of conferences and wedding parties, provided only vaccinated people are allowed to attend and participants should wear masks. The decision is effective from October 24. Mazrem said the Cabinet also decided to lift the requirement to wear masks in open areas from Oct 24, but masks remain compulsory in closed areas.

The Cabinet asked the interior ministry and the

manpower authority to start issuing all types of visas to people vaccinated with approved vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Oxford-AstraZeneca, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson) from Oct 24, he said. The Cabinet also directed the Civil Aviation Department to operate Kuwait airport at its full capacity of around 30,000 passengers per day from Oct 24, Mazrem said.

Kuwait's Union of Tourism and Travel Offices said in a statement yesterday that the main reason for skyrocketing prices of air tickets, which have risen by 500 percent, was due to the limited capacity of the airport, saying airfares will drop sharply after the airport resumes full operations.

Continued on Page 2



HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah

News in brief

Bitcoin hits record above \$66,000

LONDON: Bitcoin surged yesterday to a record above \$66,000 after taking another step towards mainstream status as the world's most popular cryptocurrency forayed onto Wall Street. A bitcoin futures exchange-traded fund (ETF), a type of financial instrument, launched on the New York Stock Exchange on Tuesday. The news electrified demand for the cryptocurrency, which scaled an all-time pinnacle of \$66,976 in London yesterday. — AFP

19 dead in Cairo accident

CAIRO: Nineteen people died in Egypt yesterday when a minibus was hit by an oncoming lorry travelling the wrong way on a Cairo bypass, medical and security sources said. The accident happened in the October 6 suburb on the western edge of the capital, killing the driver of the minibus and 18 passengers, the sources said. Travel accidents are frequent in Egypt, where many roads are badly maintained and traffic rules often neglected by drivers and authorities. — AFP

Lebanon hikes fuel prices

BEIRUT: Lebanon raised fuel prices yesterday in a de facto end to state subsidies, pushing the cost of filling a vehicle's tank to more than the monthly minimum wage in the poverty-stricken nation. A revised price list published by the energy ministry set the cost of 20 liters of 95-octane petrol at 302,700 Lebanese pounds, or around \$15 at the black market rate. — AFP (See Page 8)

Attacks kill 27 in Damascus, Idlib town

DAMASCUS: A rare bombing of an army bus in Damascus and shelling shortly after of a town in rebel-held northwest Syria killed at least 27 people yesterday, in the deadliest flare-up in months. Two bombs planted on an army bus in central Damascus were detonated early in the morning, killing 14 people, in the worst such attack in the capital in four years, state news agency SANA reported.

There was no immediate claim for

the bombing, but government shelling shortly after killed 13 people in Idlib province, parts of which are controlled by groups that have claimed such attacks in the past. "A terrorist bombing using two explosive devices targeted a passing bus" at a key bridge in Damascus, the state news agency said, reporting that at least three people were wounded.

Images released by SANA showed first responders searching the charred carcass of the bus and what it said was a bomb squad defusing a third device in the same area. SANA quoted a military source as saying the bombs were detonated as the bus passed near the Hafez Al-Assad bridge, close to the national museum in the heart of the capital.

Continued on Page 2



DAMASCUS: A firefighter puts out a blaze on a Syrian army bus that was targeted with explosive devices yesterday. — AFP

Floods, landslides kill 116 in India and Nepal

DEHRADUN, India: The death toll from days of flooding and landslides in India and Nepal crossed 100 yesterday, including several families swept away or crushed in their homes by avalanches of mud and rocks. Experts say that they were victims of ever-more unpredictable and extreme weather across South Asia in recent years caused by climate change and exacerbated by deforestation, damming and excessive development.

In Uttarakhand in northern India, officials said 46 people had died in recent days with 11 missing. At least

30 were killed in seven separate incidents in Uttarakhand's Nainital region early Tuesday, after cloudbursts - an ultra-intense deluge of rain - triggered landslides and destroyed several structures. Five of the dead were from a single family whose house was buried by a massive landslide, local official Pradeep Jain told AFP.

Authorities ordered the closure of schools and banned all religious and tourist activities in the state. Television footage and social media videos showed residents wading

Continued on Page 2



RAMPUR, India: Commuters stand on a flyover on a flooded national highway after the river Kosi overflowed following heavy rains in Uttar Pradesh state yesterday. — AFP

Local

Kuwait, Saudi, UAE discuss fiscal balance program with Bahrain

Kuwait affirms importance of GCC sustained development

MANAMA: Finance Ministers of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the UAE discussed yesterday along with their Bahraini counterpart latest updates on Bahraini fiscal balance program initiatives that the Arab Monetary Fund is monitoring as a consulting agency. Bahraini News Agency (BNA) mentioned that this came during a meeting in which the ministers displayed latest updates regarding the initiatives, in light of the effects of the pandemic on the executive process. The initiatives are implemented in order to achieve financial balance between government expenditures and revenues for the year 2024. The agency also stated that the three ministers commended Bahraini efforts in executing the program and achieving development irrespective

of the challenges proposed by coronavirus pandemic. The ministers affirmed their support for Bahraini efforts in furthering reforms, boosting financial stability and supporting sustained economic growth. The three countries have provided the kingdom of Bahrain with financial support for its program, according to an agreement signed in 2018 between them and Bahrain as well as the Arab Monetary Fund.

Separately, Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry Dr Abdullah Al-Salman affirmed yesterday the importance of achieving sustained development within the Gulf region, in what serves a combined vision of positive change for all GCC states. This came by the minister in a statement to the press on the sidelines of the GCC standardization organization meeting with the commercial collaboration committee between member states' ministers in Bahrain. Salman said that achieving this requires collaboration between several partners from both public and private sectors in Gulf countries, as well as utilizing available instruments to implement standard national regional and international specifications to accomplish sustained development objec-

tives. He also stated that member states of the Gulf council comprise a homogenous mixture in which committees can work to alleviate obstacles ensuring economic and commercial integration. The minister also stressed the importance of such meetings and communication to boost joint collaboration in what serves economic unity.

Salman mentioned that observing committee meetings' outputs and recommendations contributes to solidifying Gulf relations and facilitating trade exchange, as well as easing commodity transport and encouraging trade between member states. He also indicated that achieving such objectives guarantees positive change in all Gulf countries and improves life standards for Gulf citizens.



Cooperation between GCC private, public sectors

Continued consultation

The consultative meeting of GCC commerce ministers and heads of chambers of commerce and industry had kicked off Tuesday in Bahrain. Bahrain's commerce and industry minister Zayed Al-Zayani said the meeting comes out of faith in the importance of continued consultation and cooperation between the GCC private and public sectors in all fields. He pointed to the key role played by the private sector in pushing ahead economy in a way that has a positive impact on the GCC commercial and economic status. He noted this fruitful meeting discusses the GCC leaders' recommendations to reach their desired goals and ambitions so as to rapidly implement what has been agreed upon regarding a road map to reach the economic unity among the GCC countries by 2025.

Meanwhile, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Nayef Al-Hajraf said that the GCC Secretary is looking forward to further efforts to enhance cooperation amongst ministries of commerce and industry, and contribute to



MANAMA: Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry Dr Abdullah Al-Salman attends the GCC standardization organization meeting with the commercial collaboration committee between GCC ministers. — KUNA

removing obstacles and challenges facing the private sector in the Gulf States. He stated that the GCC leaders' efforts, implementing health measures as well as providing financial incentives reduced the negative effects during the peak of the pandemic. "We see a tangible success in the economic stability in the GCC countries and the rapid return to growth," he said. The GCC countries are still making more efforts to recover and return to normal eco-

nomical growth, he went on to say.

Hajraf pointed out that the General Secretariat submitted the recommendations of the previous consultative meetings to the position of the supreme council to issue its directives. The GCC leaders expressed their satisfaction about continuous cooperation between the public and private sectors, calling for continuing and strengthening this approach, he said. — AFP

Kuwait Premier receives chief auditor



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets State Audit Bureau Chairman Faisal Fahad Al-Shaya. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received State Audit Bureau (SAB) Chairman Faisal Fahad Al-Shaya at Seif Palace yesterday. Shaya presented to His

Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled a copy of the SAB report on the outcomes of check and review of state bodies' budgets and final statements of accounts for the FY 2020/2021. — KUNA

Kuwaiti envoy attends Gulf War event in France

PARIS: France's President Emmanuel Macron hosted a celebration on Tuesday to mark his country's involvement in the 1990 Gulf War on the grounds of the military monument, Hotel des Invalides, attended by Kuwaiti Ambassador Sami Al-Sulaiman. Also in attendance, were senior French army, navy and air force commanders and chiefs-of-staff, past and present. Under the military codename, Operation Daguet, some 12,000 French troops, alongside allied nations, took part in the liberation of Kuwait from Iraq's occupation. Iraq, at the time, was led by the late former president Saddam Hussein. In a speech on the occasion, Ambassador Sulaiman said Kuwait is grateful for "France's principled and courageous stance" during that time, and its "protection of the independence and sovereignty of Kuwait." He went on to describe



PARIS: Kuwaiti Ambassador to France Sami Al-Sulaiman (center) attends the event. — KUNA

the historic events leading to Kuwait's 1991 liberation as a "timeless national epic." The ambassador appreciated Paris' continued commitment to the security and stability of the Gulf Arab region, including Kuwait. In a

separate statement, the Elysee Palace said France was a "major contributor" to the war, through its commitment by air, naval and land resources amid a United Nations-mandated coalition. — KUNA

Amir asks high-level panel to set rules...

Continued from Page 1

The Islamic Constitutional Movement welcomed

the outcome of the national dialogue that was launched between the government and MPs - including opposition lawmakers - to find solutions for ongoing political disputes.

MPs said on Tuesday that it had been agreed to pardon a number of convicted Kuwaiti activists, including former opposition MPs, who have been living in exile in Turkey since the summer of 2018 to escape jail terms for storming the National Assembly building in 2011.

to make the reopening a success. He said restrictions could be re-imposed if the number of cases rises sharply or new variants are detected.

The minister said PCR tests will remain in place for travelers arriving to Kuwait, and unvaccinated arrivals will be quarantined. To enter the country, foreigners must be fully vaccinated with authorized vaccines in Kuwait, while those who have taken other vaccines must take a third booster dose of a vaccine authorized by Kuwait. Sheikh Basal also insisted that the "pandemic has not ended. It is still there". The minister said health authorities have begun giving the booster dose to certain sections of the society in a bid to boost their immunity.

that went viral, the animal managed to battle the strong currents and swim to safety.

Uttarakhand reported 178.4 mm rain in the first 18 days of October - almost 500 percent more than the average, the Hindustan Times reported citing Indian Meteorological Department data. And the state's Mukteshwar area reported 340.8 mm rainfall in the 24 hours until Tuesday morning, the most since the weather station was set up there in 1897, the newspaper said. The Indian Meteorological Department forecast a "significant reduction" in rainfall in the state from yesterday. — AFP

Attacks kill 27 in Damascus...

Continued from Page 1

"We hadn't seen violence of that type in a long time," a fruit vendor who gave his name as Salman told AFP at the scene. "We thought we were done with such attacks. I hope this will be the last bombing."

Damascus had been largely spared such violence in recent years, especially since troops and allied militias retook the last significant rebel bastion near the capital in 2018. The attack is the deadliest in Damascus since a bombing claimed by the Islamic State jihadist group targeted the Justice Palace in March 2017, killing at least 30 people.

Around an hour after yesterday's attack, Syrian army shelling struck the rebel-held town of Ariha in Idlib province. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said rockets struck a busy area as students were heading to school. Four children were among 13 people killed, the Britain-based war monitor said. It was the highest civilian toll since a March 2020 truce deal brokered by Turkey and Russia effectively put fighting in Idlib on standby, the Observatory said.

"At 8 am (0500 GMT) we woke up to the bombardment. The children were terrified and were screaming," said Bilal Trissi, a father of two who lives nearby. "They bombed us in our neighborhood and in the market. There are children who died and people who lost their limbs... We don't know why, what are we guilty of?" The UN children's agency condemned the shelling, calling it a "reminder that

the war in Syria has not come to an end".

The Damascus bombing too will challenge the government's assertion that the decade-old war is over and stability guaranteed for reconstruction efforts and investment projects to begin in earnest. President Bashar Al-Assad's regime has been striving to claw itself out of international isolation and had been making inroads in recent months. Iran's foreign ministry condemned the "cowardly" Damascus attack, saying it "will not undermine the determination of the Syrian government and people in their fight against terrorism".

The conflict that erupted with the brutal repression of unarmed protests demanding regime change in 2011 has left around half a million people dead. Assad's position once hung by a thread, but Russia's military intervention in 2015 marked the start of a long and bloody fightback. Government forces, also backed by Iran and its proxy militias, have recaptured nearly all key cities in the country, with US-backed Kurdish forces still running the northeast.

The IS group's "caliphate" that once straddled swathes of Syria and Iraq shrank to its death in eastern Syria in early 2019. Since then, the government's main focus has been the Idlib region, now home to many rebels who were forced to surrender elsewhere. It is dominated by the jihadist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which includes leaders of Al-Qaeda's former Syria franchise and over which Turkey has some sway. HTS has not claimed attacks in Damascus in years.

Also yesterday, six members of a pro-government militia were killed in an arms depot blast in the central province of Hama, the Observatory said. The pro-government Al-Watan daily reported the same death toll and said a "technical error" caused the explosion, without elaborating. — AFP

Kuwait returns to normal life...

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait's land border and sea terminals will also operate at full capacity.

Health Minister Sheikh Basal Al-Sabah said figures show that the health situation is improving and the pandemic is on the decline. He however warned against failing to comply with the necessary health conditions, especially wearing masks,

Floods, landslides kill 116 in India...

Continued from Page 1

through knee-deep water near Nainital lake, a tourist hotspot, and the Ganges bursting its banks in Rishikesh. The floods almost swept away an elephant near the Corbett Tiger Reserve - home to 164 of the big cats and 600 elephants - but in a video

Local

Hold Zionists accountable for systematic violations of Palestinians' rights: Kuwait

'Zionists exploit world's preoccupation with pandemic to commit crimes'

NEW YORK: The Zionist occupation policies required counter political and legal measures to hold it accountable for its systematic violations of the Palestinian people's rights, Kuwait Permanent representative to the UN has said. Mansour Al-Otaibi, in a statement to UN Security Council's open debate about Palestine Tuesday night, called for cessation of Zionist occupation's arbitrary arrests, demolishing and confiscating of Palestinian buildings and properties, forced deportation of civilians, Jewish settlers' crimes against Palestinians, the siege on Gaza Strip in addition to repeated attacks on sacred Islamic and Christian sites. He said the UNSC session was held amidst critical challenges, foremost coronavirus pandemic which claimed more than 4.7 million people, as well as growing food security crisis and economic recession.

Otaibi said the Zionist entity, the occupying force, "is exploiting the international community's preoccupation with "this critical battle" against the pandemic to continue with its hostile policies against Palestinian people in a clear reminder that it would keep on annexing more Palestinian territories in the

West Bank and East Jerusalem. The Zionist occupation, he added, sought to continue its illegal policies by building thousands of Jewish housing units and annexation of territories in a clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions, namely resolution



Kuwait worried of Zionist settler violence

2334. He noted that the Zionist occupation has recently announced resumption of construction of 10,000 housing units in the occupied northern Jerusalem as well as demolishing of Palestinian houses in Selwan. "What worries us the most is continuation of violent acts committed by the Zionist settlers



Mansour Al-Otaibi

and Zionist security forces against the unarmed Palestinian people, as the Zionist security forces opened fire at at least 60 Palestinians in the West Bank and killed them," he said.

Otaibi said more than 260 Palestinians, including 66 children and 41 women, were killed in Gaza Strip so far this year. These actions, he went on,

were "new war crimes added to the Zionist record which is full of vicious crimes against the Palestinian people, human rights violations, UN Charter and resolutions, and international law." The Zionist occupation wants to abort any Palestinian hope to establish an independent, viable and sovereignty state, he said.

Otaibi said the region would remain unstable unless the Palestinian people get all their political rights and Zionist occupation ended its violations of international humanitarian law, like ending construction of settlements, confiscation of lands, lifting siege on Gaza and desecration of holy sites. He underlined importance of relaunching peace negotiations within a specific time frame to reach just and comprehensive peace in line with relevant UN resolutions and Arab peace initiative in order to establish the independent Palestinian state in the June 4, 1967, borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital and return of refugees. Otaibi commended the historic role of UNRWA to which Kuwait recently donated \$21.5 million to provide educational, health and social services for Palestinian refugees. — KUNA

High air ticket prices disrupt travel plans, vacations of Filipino helpers

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Filipino domestic helpers are delaying their vacations to return to their families due to a steep rise in airfare to the Philippines. The cheapest tickets to Manila these days are around KD 670, reaching up to KD 3,435. Many domestic helpers are complaining their annual vacations are already long overdue, but their employers do not want to buy the pricey tickets.

Travel agencies told Kuwait Times that prices of airline tickets to Manila from Kuwait will only fall to pre-pandemic levels once the Philippine government allows airline companies to add more capacity or removes the travel quota. Currently, the Philippines allows only 2,500 passengers daily, up from 1,500 in April and 2,000 passengers in May.

Speaking to Kuwait Times, Dadabhai Travel Agency Brand Manager Paulita Lundang said the spike in airfares to Manila is due to the quota implemented by the Philippine government, adding thousands of Kuwaiti employers are complaining about the incredible amounts they have to spend to send their domestic helpers to the Philippines.

"We cannot do anything about the price of airline tickets. I think the airlines also want to reduce their fares, but they cannot do so easily, as they also have to pay their pilots and crews," Lundang said. "Prices will go down soon, especially when the Philippines removes restrictions from airlines. Before we could only carry up to 35 passengers, which later increased to 50, to 90 passengers now. If these restrictions are removed, airlines will cut



prices," she said.

According to Lundang, for some countries that did not restrict their airports, airfares are almost back to normal. "Look at India and Bangladesh - airfares are still high compared to pre-pandemic levels, but they are somehow reasonable," she said. Lundang said the Philippine government is assisting its citizens by sending chartered flights to Kuwait to get distressed workers out free of charge, but the quarterly chartered flights are not enough.

"Besides chartered flights, the Philippine government also arranges special monthly flights to Manila. Filipinos are given a 50 percent discount on these special flights, so the regular ticket price of KD 670 is reduced to KD 295 only. The special flights are arranged by the Philippine Labor Office, while the chartered flights are arranged by the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs," she explained.

Not allowed

Some Filipino domestic helpers are not being allowed by their sponsors to go on vacation to the Philippines due to the sky-high ticket prices. "I was planning to go on vacation, but my sponsor said I have to wait for some time because tickets are

insanely expensive," said Mary Grace Montacir, a domestic helper from Iloilo.

"I was supposed to take leave to be with my family last year, but it was delayed due to COVID-19. My boss told me to go this February, but cases of the Delta variant increased from that month, so my plan was put on hold again. They then said I could maybe go home by November, but when I asked them again, they said it's not the best time because tickets are too expensive, so my leave was put on hold again," she said.

Her problem is similar to Gina Morales', who hails from Surala South Cotabato. She was supposed to go on vacation two years back. "I normally go back every two years as promised by my boss. In 2019, when I was supposed to go home, I decided to travel in March 2020, but the pandemic began and I was not able to leave. My family was understanding, but now it's 2021 and soon 2022. How can I go home when airfares are too high? My employers said prices of tickets are very high, and told me to wait," she said. Besides exorbitant airfares, all arriving overseas Filipino workers are subjected to 14 days of hotel quarantine arranged free of charge by the Philippine government (eight days only for vaccinated passengers).

stc launches breast cancer prevention awareness campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the launch of its breast cancer awareness campaign, in line with the internationally recognized awareness month, with several events held throughout the month of October. The campaign consists of both internal and external activities organized by stc in collaboration with various entities and participants aimed at practicing early detection methods and ways to possibly prevent breast cancer.

The initiative launched by stc titled 'stay informed, stay healthy' falls under the umbrella of "Because We Care", and coincides with the international breast cancer awareness month, which aims at raising awareness on the various dangers of cancer, especially breast cancer. The campaign also falls in line with one of the key pillars under stc's extensive corporate social responsibility framework, health, while providing the Kuwaiti society with valuable information on ways to reduce the likelihood of contracting the disease.

The activities organized by stc's Corporate Communications team, led by specialist Hadeel Al-Abdullah, included an awareness campaign launched across the Company's social media channels. As part of the campaign, stc collaborated with Tabeey App to produce and post several awareness videos, in addition to organizing a screening test at the Company's headquarters in Olympia, and arranging fitness activities.

stc also collaborated with Alia International Hospital through an interactive social post to provide free breast cancer screening tests as a complimentary service that was announced on the company's Instagram page. Additionally, customers visiting stc's main branches throughout Kuwait received giveaways as part of the awareness campaign.

In terms of the initiatives under stc's internal campaign, the Company organized an event for female employees at REBEL Gym, the first smart kickboxing gym, with the aim of shedding light on the importance



KUWAIT: Group photo at the Alia International Hospital stand at stc headquarters.

of practicing regular fitness activities to reduce the risk of contracting breast cancer. Another fitness activity that focused on walking will also be organized for female employees, reflecting the values stc stands by when it comes to maintaining a healthy lifestyle that can help prevent the formulation of diseases.

As part of its collaboration with Alia International Hospital, stc provided its female employees with the opportunity to learn more about self-examination techniques to detect breast cancer. The sessions were held at a dedicated booth at stc's headquarters in support of the initiative. Other than the self-exams and check-ups, female stc employees received a 50 percent discount on early detection tests and free giveaways for visiting the booth.

Additionally, stc launched an awareness campaign providing valuable information on breast cancer through the Company's dedicated public and staff Instagram accounts, which is scheduled to resume throughout the month of October. Educational videos produced in collaboration with Tabeey App were posted on the account to support the cause.

On this occasion, Danah Al-Jasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, praised the continuous efforts of stc's team in showcasing the Company's eagerness and dedication in raising awareness on health risks that may affect members of the Kuwaiti society. Jasem extended her gratitude and appreciation to all those who participated in this cam-

paign, including the management teams of Alia International Hospital, REBEL Gym and Tabeey App for their role in making this initiative a success.

Jasem said, "Stemming from stc's CSR framework and our active role in supporting the Kuwaiti society, we organized a series of initiatives under this campaign that involved our customers, employees, and the public. Each activity aimed at spreading awareness on the importance of maintaining a healthy and balanced lifestyle. This campaign builds on the various activities launched by stc since the beginning of the year, which includes our initiative with the Kuwait Blood Bank which kicked off on the World Blood Donor Day."

She added, "On top of the goals associated with raising awareness on this matter, the Company strives to organize such events that enhance its role in supporting the healthcare field, in addition to other fields such as education and the environment through various contributions."

Jasem concluded that stc will spare no effort in continuing its various health and awareness campaigns by collaborating with institutions that help spread awareness on causes that benefit the Kuwaiti society. It is also worth mentioning that this initiative comes as an additional step under the annual "#Because We Care" campaign, which focuses on raising awareness on various causes, organizing fitness activities, and hosting informative lectures.

News in brief

Kuwait's Defense Minister congratulates Qatari counterpart

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of congratulations to Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs, Dr Khalid bin Mohammad Al-Attiyah on his re-appointment. In the cable, Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali, wished the Qatari counterpart success, good health and wellness to bear the burdens of this important position. He also wished Qatar and its people further progress and prosperity.

Age limit for Indian helpers

KUWAIT: Kuwait and India have agreed to set a 30 - 55 age limit for domestic helpers recruited from India to Kuwait, as per an agreement signed recently between the two countries. The agreement also stipulates a minimum KD 100 monthly salary to be deposited into the worker's bank account, Al-Qabas Arabic newspaper reported yesterday.

Request to operate car park

KUWAIT: The Public Utilities Management Company has submitted a request to Kuwait Municipality to start operating a multi-storey car park that was built in the Dasman district of Kuwait City with a capacity for 2,300 vehicles. The building, the largest of its kind in Kuwait, has been out of service since construction was completed in 2019, Al-Anbaa Arabic newspaper reported yesterday.

Oil drops 88 cents

KUWAIT: Kuwait crude oil dropped 88 cents during Tuesday's trading sessions to reach \$84.28 per barrel (pb), Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. Benchmark Brent rose 99 cents to \$85.32 pb and West Texas Intermediate gained 58 cents to \$83.02 pb.

Drugs found in shipment

KUWAIT: Shuwaikh customs officers discovered around 4 kg of shabu hidden in a container of furniture that arrived from Iran, the Kuwait General Administration of Customs said in a statement yesterday.

EPA distributes eco-friendly bags at co-ops

KUWAIT: The Environment Public Authority distributed one million eco-friendly bags among cooperative societies in the country's six governorates on Tuesday. The move is part of a campaign to raise public awareness about environment protection and minimize use of harmful plastic bags, said director of EPA's public relations and media department Sheikha Al-Ibrahim. EPA carries out this campaign in cooperation with the fund of environment protection with a view to encouraging the public to use the eco-friendly or ecobags instead of the traditional ones that are hazardous to environment, she said. Ecobags are made of organic materials and alcohol (fennel) that degenerate in hot water and leave no harmful impacts on air, soil or water. An ecobag is strong enough to carry up to 10 kg, she pointed out. After the end of the ongoing campaign, EPA will coordinate with cooperatives countrywide to replace the traditional bags with the eco-friendly ones, Ibrahim added. — KUNA



Local

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

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

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

Kuwait's Sept trade surplus with Japan nearly doubles

TOKYO: Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan in September nearly doubled from a year earlier to JPY 64.7 billion (\$566 million) on robust exports, government data showed yesterday. The surplus surged by 180.7 percent, up for the sixth straight month, and Kuwait posted black ink with Japan for 13 years and eight months, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary report. Kuwaiti overall exports to Japan jumped 110.1 percent year-on-year to JPY 74.7 billion (\$653 million) for the sixth straight month of expansion. Imports from Japan declined 20.0 percent to JPY 10.0 billion (\$87 million), down for the first time in seven months. Middle East's trade surplus with Japan inflated 146.6 percent to JPY 660.2 billion (\$5.8 billion) last month, with Japan-bound exports from the region soaring 95.7 percent from a year earlier. Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other natural resources, which accounted for 95.1 percent of the region's total exports to Japan, surged 98.1 percent. The region's overall imports from Japan fell 4.7 percent on sluggish car shipments. Japan posted a global trade deficit of JPY 622.8 billion (\$5.4 billion) in September for the second consecutive month of red ink, as car exports plunged 40.3 percent due to supply chain disruptions in Southeast Asia. However, exports from the world's third-biggest economy still rose 13.0 percent from a year earlier, thanks to sales of steel and mineral fuels. Imports also grew 38.6 percent on higher bills of crude oil, medicine and coal. China remained Japan's biggest trade partner, followed by the US. The trade data are measured on a customs-cleared basis before adjustment for seasonal factors. — KUNA

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Vehicles drive towards Kuwait City at sunset. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Russia to enhance cooperation with Kuwait in various fields

MOSCOW: Russia expressed its desire to strengthen cooperation with the State of Kuwait in investment, economic and trade fields. This came in a statement yesterday by the Russian Foreign Ministry after the talks held between Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Majdi Al-Dhafiri and the Russian President's Special Envoy to the Middle East and Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov the previous day. The statement said that the two sides affirmed their common determination to enhance cooperation in the trade, economic and investment fields based on agreements previously reached at the highest levels. Furthermore, the statement noted that the talks touched on the developments in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and the Palestinian-Israeli settlement, stressing in this regard the importance of forming a system for



MOSCOW: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Majdi Al-Dhafiri (left) holds talks with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister and Presidential Special Envoy for the Middle East and Africa Mikhail Bogdanov. — KUNA

collective security and sustainable development in the Arab Gulf region based on the principles of mutual respect and good neighborliness.

Dhafiri had delivered a message on Tuesday from Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah to his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov. Speaking to the press at the end of talks, Dhafiri said the letter includes Kuwait's vision on ties with Russia. The ties are based on distinguished and stable bonds as well as mutual understanding and appreciation of each other, he added, noting that Kuwait values its

relations with friends and allies in Russia. Dhafiri described talks with the Russian side as "explicit and clear", saying they were based on common grounds of understanding and harmony. The talks covered means of developing and upgrading the bilateral relations in all fields to the strategic partnership level, he said, terming ties with Russia as "wonderful". Expressing common concerns, the two sides said that there would be intensified political talks in the near future to enhance harmony and understanding between Kuwait and Russia, and between Russia and GCC states, he made clear. — KUNA

Saudi bowling chief to attend Kuwait Open final

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: President of Saudi Arabia's Bowling Federation Abdulmalek Al-Shithri, accompanied by Secretary General Jayed bin Majid Al-Otaibi, will attend the closing ceremony of Kuwait Open Bowling tournament on Saturday at Kuwait Bowling Center in Salmiya. Shithri's presence was out of the Saudi Bowling Federation's keenness to have effective participation in the tournament. The two guests will attend competitions during the last

two days of the tournament in support of the Saudi national team.

Today will see the conclusion of the men's A+ trials before the start of the final rounds, which will continue until the last day, as competition is getting more intense as participants vie to be in the top three places. The beginners and juniors competitions concluded with Abdulrahman Al-Kandari winning the under-18 competition, with Abdulrazaq Mohammad second and Hussein Maytham third. The beginners U15 competition was won by Yusuf Faraj, followed by Nasser Al-Kandari and Ali Karti.



Abdulmalek Al-Shithri



Kuwait men's ice hockey league kicks off

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti National Men's Ice Hockey League 2021-2022 opened at Kuwait

Winter Games Club (KWGC) in Bayan on Tuesday with five teams participating. The 15-round tournament opens the club's new season of the game, KWGC Chairman Fheid Al-Ajmi said. The women's edition of the league gets underway next week with four teams competing, he pointed out. The club will for the first time organize competitions of the game for three age categories - eight years and under, 10 years and under and 12 years and under, he added. — KUNA



Kuwait Times
ESTABLISHED 1961
THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

STAY CONNECTED

- Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**
- Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**
- Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait
Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616/7 | Fax: 24835620 - 24835621
E: info@kuwaittimes.net



Growing in numbers and power, criminal gangs terrorize Haiti

Neglected eastern Sudan tribes in 'quest for justice'

Page 7

Page 6



VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis points to a tablet computer as he invites the faithful to download the 'Click to Pray' app, from the window of the Apostolic Palace overlooking St Peter's square in the Vatican during the weekly Angelus prayer. — AFP

Vatican relaunches 'Click to Pray' app

Log-in to God: New version available in 7 languages

VATICAN CITY: It's so secular, clicking to order food, clicking to buy shoes or clicking to reserve tickets. Pope Francis wants you to click to pray. The Click to Pray app is being relaunched, the Vatican said Tuesday, permitting more Catholic faithful to "connect your prayer with the world".

Click to Pray 2.0 will be launched on November 1 after a test period on beta users comprised of cloistered monks and nuns around the world, Vatican officials said. The new version—available in seven languages—offers more individualization, allowing users to set an agenda to schedule prayers, provides more in-depth background about specific prayers and also links to Vatican-approved outside initiatives such as Tweeting with God.

"The idea is to be able to use it (the new app) and give an instrument to people to pray, to be in communion," Monsignor Lucio Ruiz, secretary of the Dicastery for Communication, which oversees the Holy See's entire communication network said. Asked whether the app was launched to counteract declining church attendance in the West, he said it was "not a replacement for something". "It's understanding culture, reading it and listening and seeing where we are, to be able to be there," Ruiz said. "Because where people are, the Church must be."

while an evening prayer is under the title "Contemplate and rest". The new version was launched to coincide with the opening of the Synod, a global assembly of Catholic church leaders on the theme "Communion, Participation, and Mission", expected to last until 2023.

Besides social media, the Vatican has multiple traditional media resources to spread the Church's message to the 1.3 billion Catholics around the world, including

the Holy See's official website, a daily newspaper and a radio. But outside Saint Peter's Basilica Tuesday, no European visitors approached by AFP had heard of the app. On the Google Play Store, most users gave the app five stars, although some cited glitches, especially of having to sign in repeatedly. One user gave the app one star, saying: "God knows who I am, why should I need to identify to the Pope, too?" — AFP



Pope has 19 million Twitter followers

Pope Francis, 84, is no stranger to social media—he has a whopping 19 million Twitter followers and 8.3 million on Instagram and a high tolerance for selfies—and has acknowledged that social networks can be an "opportunity to promote encounter with others". Since it first appeared in 2016, the social media app has been downloaded by more than 2.5 million people, offering daily prayers and messages from the pope, while allowing users to send prayers to others.

Pakistani-American 'raped and beheaded' ex-envoy's daughter

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani-American man accused of raping and beheading his girlfriend, the daughter of a former ambassador, went on trial yesterday in the capital Islamabad. The brutal murder of Noor Mukadam, 27, sparked protests across the country and calls for reform to Pakistan's gender violence laws. Zahir Jaffer, 30, from a wealthy industrialist family, has denied killing Mukadam. "The trial has formally started. Our first witness was examined today and we will produce five more witnesses at the next hearing", Shah Khawar, a prosecution lawyer told AFP outside the court in Islamabad.

The 27-year-old was attacked after refusing a marriage proposal, attempting repeatedly to escape Jaffer's sprawling mansion in an upscale neighborhood in Islamabad but blocked each time by his staff, a police report said. Jaffer raped and tortured her with a knuckle duster before beheading her with a "sharp-edged weapon", it added. "Her life could have been saved had the accomplices acted otherwise," the report said, which was presented to the court in a previous hearing.—AFP



ISLAMABAD: Policemen escort Zahir Jaffer (2nd left), a Pakistani-American man who went on trial accused of raping and beheading his girlfriend - the daughter of a former ambassador, after his court hearing in Islamabad yesterday. — AFP

Log-in to God

On Tuesday, the app's community page listed a host of prayers from around the world, with headlines such as "Please pray for my daughter", "Prayer for my sick mother" and even one "for my career". After creating a profile, a user can organize a prayer agenda, choosing content and setting notifications and reminders to pray during the day. "With Jesus in the morning—Start your day" reads the caption on the app for a morning prayer.

Boy's surprise walk-on charms Pope Francis

VATICAN CITY: A boy who walked unexpectedly onto the stage to say hello to Pope Francis during the weekly Wednesday audience at the Vatican won a white papal skullcap to take home. The boy, wearing a black tracksuit with yellow stripes, grasped a smiling Francis by the hand, before being offered a chair next to the pontiff by a senior Vatican official.

The child, who Francis later said suffered from unspecified learning difficulties, clapped enthusiastically. He did not stay sitting for long, though. After getting up and grasping the pope's hands again, he asked the official for Francis's cap, touching it to make it clear what he wanted. The 84-year-old pope referenced the boy during his address, saying: "I was reminded of what Jesus said about the spontaneity and freedom of children, when this child had the freedom to approach and move as if he were at home."

"And Jesus tells us if you don't make yourselves like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." He told the crowd in the Paul VI hall inside the Vatican: "Have the courage to approach the Lord. I thank this child for the lesson he taught us all. "And may the Lord help him in his limitation, in his growth, because he has acted from the heart."

The boy was later waved off the stage by Francis, proudly wearing his brand new "zucchetto" - the type of small and round white ecclesiastical skullcap worn by the pope. It was not the first time the head of the Roman Catholic Church has been upstaged during the audience. In 2018 a mute child from the pope's native Argentina climbed onto the stage and rolled around the floor, before taking a keen interest in a colourfully-dressed Swiss guard.—AFP

Celebrate this Season with Kalyan

CASH BACK 25%

UPTO

PAY JUST 10% AND AVAIL GOLD RATE PROTECTION OFFER*

UPTO 25% CASH BACK* ON MAKING CHARGES FOR GOLD JEWELLERY
UPTO 20% CASH BACK* ON DIAMOND JEWELLERY
UPTO 20% CASH BACK* ON UNCUT & PRECIOUS STONES JEWELLERY

Cashback* will be by way of instantly redeemable vouchers.
The offer on uncut and precious stone jewellery will be only for the stone charges*.

OFFER VALID TILL 30TH NOV 2021

WWW.KALYANJEWELLERS.NET | FOLLOW US ON [Social Media Icons] KALYANJEWELLERSMIDDLEEAST

International

Blinken promises US' shift from military focus in Latin America

Biden seeks to champion stable democracies

QUITO: The United States has focused too much on security over other assistance in Latin America, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said yesterday, as he vowed a concerted push to encourage democracy. Amid a rise both of authoritarians and populists in Latin America, Blinken is visiting Ecuador and Colombia as President Joe Biden seeks to champion stable democracies.

Both nations receive US security training and are led by conservatives who have taken controversial measures, with Colombian forces this year killing dozens of anti-government protesters and Ecuador on Tuesday announcing a state of emergency just as Blinken visited. "Our record on improving civilian security in the region's democracies has been mixed," Blinken was to say in a speech Wednesday in the Ecuadorian capital Quito, according to advance excerpts.

"That's because too often, we tried to fix this problem by relying too much on training and equipping security forces, and too little on other tools in our kit," he was to say. "And we focused too much on addressing the symptoms of organized crime, like homicides and drug trafficking, and too little on the root causes. We're working to correct that imbalance."

Among US initiatives that go beyond security, Blinken pointed to the Biden administration's greater push on fighting corruption, including denying visas to officials involved in graft.

Blinken said the United States, alongside its frequent calls for elections, would also be more attentive to economic concerns such as improving labor standards, health care and education. "This should be obvious, but the reality

“We’re working to correct that imbalance”

is that we've often put more energy into strengthening civil and political rights - such as free and fair elections, the rule of law, freedom of speech and assembly - than we have into strengthening people's economic and social rights."

Challenge from China
The Biden administration, largely fol-

lowing the lead of former president Donald Trump, has ramped up pressure on leftist autocratic leaders in Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, where President Nicolas Maduro has suspended dialogue with the US-backed opposition. While US statements have been more cautious, questions about democracy have also been rising in the region's most populous nation, Brazil, where far-right President Jair Bolsonaro has taken a page from Trump in sowing doubts about the legitimacy of upcoming elections.

"We find ourselves in a moment of democratic reckoning," Blinken was to say. While democracy in recent decades has brought "unprecedented prosperity" to Latin America, he was to say that the future depended on whether elected leaders can "deliver on the issues that matter most to people."

His call for an economic focus comes as China lavishes loan money for infrastructure in Latin America, worrying the United States which sees a rising and authoritarian Beijing as the biggest long-term challenge.

In Ecuador, which has received billions of dollars in Chinese loans to fund electricity, oil and other projects, Blinken



QUITO: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken gives his thumb up during a visit to the Camari market centre, where local artisans and farmers exhibit their products, in Quito. —AFP

said he was not asking countries to "choose between the United States and China" but called for greater scrutiny about Beijing's investments in sensitive areas. While far smaller in financial scope

than China's loans, the United States recently sought to make a tangible impact by announcing \$150 million in loans for small businesses run by women in Ecuador. —AFP

News in brief

50 killed after vehicle falls

LUBUMBASHI: At least 50 people were killed when the vehicle they were in plunged into a river in southeastern DR Congo, a local source said on Tuesday. "A truck fell into the Kaluma-Ngongo with more than 50 passengers on board" on Sunday, said Harce Kayumba, spokesman for the Haut-Katanga regional government. Divers launched a search and rescued two survivors who are being treated in hospital. The search continues for the other passengers, Kayumba added, without giving any further details of the accident. In neighboring Lualaba province, the derailment of a goods train "caused the death of nine people and left 36 injured, 11 seriously," provincial interior minister Adeoda Kapenda told AFP. Road accidents are frequent in the Democratic Republic of Congo, often caused by ignoring traffic rules, with old vehicles not subjected to technical inspections. — AFP

Ukraine COVID deaths soar

KIEV: Ukraine yesterday reported record coronavirus vaccination numbers as the country re-imposed restrictions amid a surge in infections and deaths. According to a government tally, 226,587 people were vaccinated over the past 24 hours - the highest figure since the beginning of the ex-Soviet country's vaccination drive in February. A flurry of pictures on social media showed long queues of people in vaccination centers in cities across the country in recent days. The rush came after restrictions came into force on Monday in several regions in the east and south of the country worst hit by surging coronavirus cases. "It is only with mass vaccination and compliance with quarantine that we can avoid a further increase of infections," Health Minister Viktor Lyashko said in a statement. — AFP

Pointing gun at journalists?

PARIS: French far-right presidential hopeful Eric Zemmour pointed a sniper's rifle at journalists at an arms fair yesterday, a stunt that reinforced his anti-media populist credentials but that drew condemnation from opponents. Zemmour, who has emerged as a front-runner for presidential elections next year, turned the weapon on reporters at the Milipol arms fair in Paris, telling them with a smile: "It's serious now, eh? Get back, move." Zemmour, a former journalist who is an admirer of ex-US president Donald Trump, is yet to declare his candidacy for the polls next April, but is positioning himself as an anti-elite, anti-immigration champion. — AFP

Nigeria army kills 50 'bandits'

LAGOS: Nigerian helicopter gunships have killed more than 50 "bandits" during an operation in the restive northwest, regional authorities said on Tuesday. Heavily armed gangs known locally as bandits have terrorized northwest and central Nigeria for years, raiding and looting villages, but the attacks have become even more violent in recent months. "In an inspiring success for the security forces, over 50 bandits have been neutralized during a combined ground and air assault" in the Birnin Gwari district of Kaduna state, regional security official Samuel Aruwan said in a statement. The armed bandits, on motorcycles, were spotted "waiting to ambush the ground forces", said Gwari. — AFP

Google debuts new Pixel, latest try in smartphone fight

SAN FRANCISCO: Google launched new Pixel 6 smartphones on Tuesday, its latest attempt to field a champion in a sector the tech giant has dismally failed thus far to conquer. Smartphone sales are dominated by Apple and South Korean electronics colossus Samsung, but Google is aiming to expand its single-digit market share with the newest Android-powered Pixel line.

Google touted the phones as completely "reimagined" during a presentation in which it pointed to security, speed, style and sophisticated software capabilities. "This year is quite a bit different," said Google devices senior vice president Rick Osterloh. Pixel phones have been seen as a way for Google to showcase the capabilities of its free Android mobile operating system, but its share of the global smartphone market has been meager.

Analyst Brad Akyuz explained "Pixel's mediocre penetration performance" by citing handset glitches in past models and US mobile service providers subsidizing other brands in offers to customers. "The one area where the Pixel has excelled at is software, but it has not been enough to differentiate much," he added. The new handsets take a page from Apple's playbook with sophisticated hardware and a custom chip that tap into the internet giant's other offerings.

Samsung uses Google-backed Android software to power phones, offering handsets at a wide variety of prices. Apple has consistently aimed iPhones at the high-end of the market, controlling the hardware and software so tightly it has raised antitrust concerns. "We have state-of-the-art hardware, which means Pixel can deliver even more impressive real-world performance, as well as new



The new Google smartphone, Pixel 6, is displayed. Google on October 19, 2021 debuted its flagship Pixel 6 smartphones, the latest effort in a market the tech giant has failed to conquer. — AFP

AI-driven experiences that have never been possible before," said Osterloh.

Pixel 6 models, with superfast 5G wireless capability, debut Google's own Tensor chip crafted to enable computers to think more like people do. The Pixel 6 hardware and software mix ramps up the smartphone's

ability to understand what has been called another step toward a future of "ambient computing," according to Osterloh. The phrase refers to being able to access the internet or computing power conversationally at any time as portrayed in the 2013 science fiction romance film "Her." — AFP

UK health leaders urge COVID curbs as infections rise

LONDON: Healthcare leaders urged the British government yesterday to reinstate some coronavirus restrictions to ease pressures on hospitals because of spiraling case numbers. But ministers remain opposed to reintroducing any curbs, arguing the situation is still far better than earlier this year and the country is learning to "live with the virus". A total of 223 deaths from Covid-19 were registered on Tuesday - the highest 24-hour toll since March - while there is mounting concern at daily case rates.

The country is averaging more than 40,000 new cases a day for the first time since the summer, and the number of patients admitted to hospital is increasing. Matthew Taylor, head of the NHS Confederation representing the state-run health service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, said hospitals were feeling severe pressure and action was needed as the busier winter period approaches. "We've got a very particular problem over this winter, and we need to act," he told Sky News.

Taylor said health leaders report the worsening Covid-19 situation means they are missing key targets in areas such as waits in emergency departments, ambulance response times and treatment backlogs. "Is it better to act early and take meas-



LONDON: Commuters, some wearing face coverings to help prevent the spread of coronavirus, walk out of a Transport for London (TfL) underground train in London yesterday. — AFP

ures which don't stop the economy working - but I recognize they are inconvenient for people - or do we wait for things to get worse and possibly risk having to take more severe measures?" he added.

'Policy is working'

The government, which lifted coronavirus restrictions in July, insists it is closely watching the statistics, which have been attributed to high numbers of infections in school-age children. But it maintains the situation does not yet warrant a return to restric-

tions, such as compulsory indoor mask-wearing and working from home where possible.

"I don't see any cause for changing the course at this minute," Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng told the BBC. "This is a virus that we are learning to live with. "Clearly any increase is concerning and we're monitoring the data on a daily basis. "But for now, we think that this policy is working," he added, referring to the government's vaccination campaign and latest offer of booster jabs to the more vulnerable. — AFP

Growing in numbers and power, criminal gangs terrorize Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE: Last week's kidnapping in broad daylight of 17 US and Canadian missionaries and their families in the Haitian capital highlighted criminal gangs' growing hold on the country, fueled by a deep political crisis and the powerlessness of the judicial system. Cases of kidnappings have more than doubled over the past year as gangs have grown increasingly numerous and powerful, leaving an already weak police force unable to cope.

In the most recent kidnapping on Saturday outside Port-au-Prince, members of the brazen 400 Mawozo gang are demanding \$17 million for the

release of the missionaries and their families, according to Haitian officials. More than 600 cases of kidnappings for ransom were recorded in the first three quarters of 2021, compared to 231 during the same period last year, according to the Center for Analysis and Research in Human Rights, a Haitian civil society group.

Gangs have increased their hold on the country in recent years. More than 150 criminal groups, some of them previously dormant, were identified in the Caribbean country in 2019, according to Marie-Yolène Gilles of the Je Klere Foundation, a human rights group. Today, they are too numerous to be counted, said Gilles, adding that "in each neighborhood, an armed man is there to be the leader." With no investigations conducted to trace the recipients of ransom payments, Haiti finds itself locked a vicious cycle where payoffs only help gangs thrive. Half-a million dollars here, a million dollars there, Gilles says. "That's money! Where is it hidden?"

'War arsenal'

Officially, 16,000 police officers watch over Haiti's 11 million inhabitants. But in reality, the police force is much smaller. Some agents are dispatched to guard public and private figures, while others have simply given up their posts and left to seek a better future abroad. The police force is severely under-equipped and unprepared to take on the gangs that possess a veritable "war arsenal" that they are happy to showcase in videos on social media, said Marie-Rosy Auguste Ducena, from the National Human Rights Defense Network.

This creates a "climate of terror" among the population, but also makes it clear to the police that "each time they have to confront them, they risk dying," added Ducena. According to the Center for Analysis and Research of Human Rights, 37 police officers have died on duty so far this year, compared to 28 killed last year. — AFP

International

Nigerians protest a year after bloody EndSARS crackdown

'EndSARS, remember them, remember them'

LAGOS: Nigerian youths held memorial protests in Lagos and Abuja yesterday, one year after security forces violently suppressed mass protests against police brutality and bad governance. Under heavy police watch, dozens of protesters rallied in a procession of cars waving green and white national flags from windows at the Lekki tollgate in Lagos, the site of the crackdown on last year's #EndSARS demonstrations. Police briefly fired tear gas at the end of the protests at Lekki where they had allowed the car procession to pass through the tollgate with protesters blasting horns and chanting for justice.

“**People united can never be defeated**”

At least six people were arrested at Lekki, according to an AFP correspondent at the scene. "EndSARS, remember them, remember them," shouted one man from inside a police van after he was detained. Last year's rallies began over brutality by the SARS special police unit but snowballed into protests over bad governance in the largest mass demonstrations in Nigeria's modern history. They came to a halt after October 20, 2020, when security forces shot at thousands of peaceful protesters gathered at the Lekki tollgate in Lagos.

Several dozen protesters also gathered in Abuja yesterday to mark the one-year anniversary, chanting "The people united can never be defeated". "We came here for the memorial. It's very sad what happened. We are

here to tell Nigerians and the world that we are still in pain," said actress Princess Joy, 23, at the Abuja rally. "We are not worried, this time is going to be peaceful, no fight, no quarrel, no nothing, except if the government wants." At some southern cities including Port Harcourt and Nsukka, candle-lit marches are set for the evening.

'Fallen heroes'

The crackdown at Lekki tollgate was live-streamed on social media and Amnesty International has since said it has confirmed that at least 10 people were killed. The Nigerian army denied shooting live rounds, telling a judicial panel only blanks were used to disperse a crowd that had violated a curfew. Information Minister Lai Mohammed yesterday dismissed what he called the "phantom massacre" at Lekki, criticizing Amnesty and US network CNN for "shamelessly" continuing to report unproven deaths. "One year later, and despite ample opportunities for the families of those allegedly killed and those alleging a massacre to present evidence, there has been none: No bodies, no families, no convincing evidence, nothing," he told reporters.

The protest movement is named after the social media hashtag #EndSARS, a reference to the notorious Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) unit that was later disbanded. Nigerian singer Falz, who has over eight million followers on Instagram, was among those who planned rallies in Lagos. "It is impossible for us not to memorialize our fallen heroes," Falz wrote. "We will never ever forget." "Innocent Nigerian citizens waved flags and sang till they were shot at, injured and killed."

Recent weeks have seen multiple warnings against more EndSARS protests by the authorities, who say they turned into rioting and pillaging last year. According to Amnesty, at least 56 people died nationwide during the weeks of protests in 2020. Police



ABUJA: Protesters gather with placards in their hand, during a protest to commemorate one year anniversary of EndSars, a protest movement against police brutality at the Unity Fountain in Abuja yesterday. — AFP

reported 51 civilians and 22 officers killed in and around the demonstrations, with 205 police stations and other buildings set ablaze or vandalized. In February, several dozen protesters gathered at the Lekki tollgate to demand justice for the victims of the crackdown. All the protesters were arrested.

'Culture of impunity'

In a new report, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said Tuesday that victims were still awaiting justice. It said it had interviewed 54 people, including victims and their family members, protesters, civil society members, doc-

tors and journalists. The rights group was unable to confirm a death toll but witnesses told researchers they saw "what appeared to be at least 15 lifeless bodies and that military officers had taken away at least 11."

"Failure to pursue justice will strengthen the culture of impunity and reinforce the perceptions that brought protesters to the streets in the first place," said HRW researcher Anietie Ewang. Nigeria set up the judicial panel last year to investigate the bloodshed and wider allegations of police abuses. Public hearings ended on Monday and its findings should shortly go to the government. — AFP



PORT SUDAN: Photo shows an elevated view of the southern port of Port Sudan along the Red Sea in the country's northeast, with the Agricultural Bank of Sudan Grain Silos (left). — AFP

Sudan's Red Sea ports coveted by regional powers

SUAKIN: From Washington to Moscow, Tehran to Ankara, Sudan's strategic Red Sea ports, blockaded for a month by protesters, have long been eyed by global powers far beyond Africa's borders. Blessed with natural resources such as gold and rich in maritime biodiversity, the picturesque region of white sands and mangroves stretches some 714 kilometers - from Sudan's borders with Egypt in the north to Eritrea in the south.

"Sudan's Red Sea ports are a trade hub for neighboring landlocked countries like Chad, Ethiopia and central Africa," Ahmed Mahgoub, head of Port Sudan's southern terminal, told AFP. But traffic through Sudan's main maritime nerve centre Port Sudan has been paralyzed since anti-government protests broke out in mid-September amid disenchantment with the region's political and economic marginalization.

So since October much of the trade has been rerouted via other regional ports, mostly in Egypt. The protests are just the latest chapter in decades of intense tribal and factional infighting driven in part by Sudan's shifting political alliances under ousted president Omar Al-Bashir. He was deposed in April 2019 after mass protests against his three-decade iron-fisted rule. Demonstrators say they oppose an October 2020 peace deal between Sudan's post-Bashir transi-

tional government and rebel groups as "it does not represent" them.

Militarily strategic

The protests in the east have also triggered unrest in the capital Khartoum, where pro-military demonstrations erupted on Saturday demanding the dissolution of the embattled transitional government. But for foreign powers who covet Sudan's Red Sea coast, the region has strategic military dimensions. It hosted Iranian fleets for decades under Bashir, to the dismay of Tehran's regional rival Saudi Arabia, whose Red Sea port of Jeddah lies opposite Port Sudan on the other side of the waterway.

And in 2017, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Bashir negotiated the building of a naval base in Port Sudan, to be staffed by up to 300 military and civilian personnel and to include nuclear-powered vessels. That same year Bashir also signed a 99-year lease for the island of Suakin with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a move that angered Egypt and other rival Sunni Muslim powerhouses worried about Ankara's spreading regional influence. The deal provides for building maintenance, docks for ships and renovating Ottoman-era edifices on the island.

Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II is said to have dubbed Suakin the "white city" as it is home to spectacular buildings made of porous coralline limestone quarried from coral reef. Suakin is one of many Red Sea islands held by Sudan which analysts see as "integral to the country's national security". The islands cover a total area of 23,100 square kilometers, equivalent to the size of Djibouti, said Shaimaa Abdelsameea, a professor at the Red Sea University. — AFP

had an income of 120,000 SDG (\$300). Now I am struggling to buy food."

The demonstrations began when key eastern tribes opposing the transitional government in Khartoum blocked roads and stopped shipments at the Red Sea port. They are calling for the cancellation of parts of an October 2020 peace deal signed between the government and rebel groups. The deal, which includes a section on east Sudan, is viewed by protesters as "not representing" them. Similar protests broke out in the past, but they were brief and on a smaller scale.

"Some 60 percent of trade passes through Port Sudan with an average of 1,200 containers daily," said Ahmed Mahgoub, head of the southern terminal of Port Sudan. "We are losing hundreds of thousands of dollars by the day," he told AFP. The government has said life-saving medicines, IV fluids and crucial commodities such as wheat and fuel are already running low. Local bakeries in Khartoum and elsewhere across Sudan have been shuttered due to the shortages.

Sudan has been grappling with deep economic woes that worsened following the April 2019 ouster of president Omar al-Bashir after mass protests against his rule, themselves triggered by financial hardship.

Neglected eastern Sudan tribes in 'quest for justice'

PORT SUDAN: Under the harsh rule of ex-president Omar Al-Bashir, Sudan's eastern tribes felt abandoned and neglected, even taking up arms against him. But two years after his ouster, they remain marginalized and economically deprived. For millennia, the tribes living between the borders with Egypt and Eritrea have enjoyed a unique culture, with traditional dress, houses and food.

Sudan's eastern communities largely belong to the ethnic Beja people who inhabit rocky terrains in the states of Gedaref and Kassala. They have followed a nomadic life as cattle herders and farmers, wandering the lands between the banks of the Nile to the west and the Red Sea coast to the east. "The Beja have always been averse to urban life," said Moussa Saeed, a sociology professor at Red Sea University. Today around 90 percent still lead a rural existence living in simple huts covered with jute "despite its harshness", he added.

For more than a decade under Bashir, the eastern communities were part of the armed struggle against his government protesting against economic neglect, marginalization and disenfranchisement. In late 2018, they joined nationwide demonstrations against Bashir's rule that eventually led to his ouster in April 2019. But in recent weeks, they have been among protesters blockading the country's main seaport in Port Sudan and a key route leading to Khartoum, severely straining the already struggling economy.



SAWAKIN: A Sudanese man walks beneath an arch at a dilapidated building in the abandoned ancient island of Suakin in eastern Sudan - home to spectacular buildings made of porous limestone quarried from coral reef. — AFP

Now many ordinary Sudanese citizens are struggling to make ends meet. "We spend hours looking for bread, but all the bakeries are closed because of short wheat supply," said 17-year-old tea vendor Ashgan, outside a bakery in northern Khartoum. "This is the last thing we needed. We're already suffering".

'No plan to end crisis'

The knock-on effects have spread nationwide. On Sunday, protests erupted in South Darfur following bread shortages due to low wheat supplies linked to the Port Sudan closure. Sudanese economist Mohamed Al-Nayer blamed the government's failure "to promptly address the crisis in the east" exacerbating an already complex economic situation. "Like Bashir's regime, the government has no plan or even strategic reserves to cover the country's needs," he added.

Port Sudan received only 27 ships in September, down from 65 in August, according to the country's cargo association. Other smaller ports in the east, including Osman Digna in Suakin city, have also been blocked. Last week, Trade Minister Ali Geddo told AFP that businessmen had been forced to redirect shipments to other ports since early October. Some

33,000 port workers and others who work in customs and shipping offices have had no income since the closure, the association added.

This has coincided with futile efforts by the transitional government to pull the country out of economic misery caused by decades-long mismanagement and US sanctions under Bashir. In recent months, it has embarked on IMF-backed economic reforms including scrapping diesel and petrol subsidies, as well as declaring a managed float of the Sudanese pound to stem a rampant black market. And the country is still reeling from a triple-digit inflation rate which only slightly eased in August and September.

Sudan has also been gripped by a bitter and deepening political divide among key factions steering the transition under an August 2019 power-sharing deal. On Friday, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok described it as the "worst and most dangerous" chapter facing the transition. He cited splits among civilians and the military sharing the running of the sovereign ruling council, as well as factional infighting among themselves. Several civilian politicians have also blamed the military for the crisis in the east and a failed coup attempt in September. — AFP

East Sudan protests snarl trade, deepen economic woes

PORT SUDAN: Hundreds of trucks packed with goods stand idle in Port Sudan, dozens of container ships lie anchored and untouched. For more than a month demonstrators have blockaded Sudan's key sea port. Roads to other provinces and the capital Khartoum have been cut, docks shuttered and even Port Sudan airport was closed for a time.

Four weeks since the crisis erupted in mid-September, basic supplies to the rest of the impoverished northeastern African nation have been delayed, triggering a fresh wave of shortages nationwide. "I have been stuck here for more than 24 days and my family depends on my income," truck driver Mostafa Abdelqader said. "I could have transferred six shipments during this time and

Business

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2021

Lebanon hikes fuel prices in de facto end to subsidies

Lebanon CB audit demanded by creditors to resume

BEIRUT: Lebanon raised fuel prices yesterday in a de facto end to state subsidies, pushing the cost of filling a vehicle's tank to more than the monthly minimum wage in the poverty-stricken nation. Subsidies were gradually phased out over the past few months to shore up diminishing foreign currency reserves at the central bank, which could no longer fund fuel imports.

A revised price list published by the energy ministry set the cost of 20 liters (5.3 gallons) of 95-octane petroleum at 302,700 Lebanese pounds, or around \$15 at the black market rate. This is around five times the price of 61,100 pounds set at the end of June, adding to the economic pain in a country where power cuts are common and basic goods including medicine have become scarce. The revised price "marks a complete lifting of petroleum subsidies," Fadi Abou Chakra of the country's fuel distributors' association said.

"The fuel price hike will cause the cost of services to also increase, especially transportation," he added. The energy ministry yesterday also raised the price of diesel and cooking gas following a drop in the value of the Lebanese pound against the dollar on the black market.

The nose-diving pound was selling for around 20,500 pounds to the greenback, its lowest value in months, money exchangers told AFP. An energy ministry official said that the "latest petroleum prices were calculated on the basis of a currency exchange rate of 20,000 pounds to the dollar as per a central bank request." The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because he is not

authorized to comment on the issue.

The price increases have mostly erased massive queues at gas pumps that clogged streets across the country during the summer when importers and gas station owners severely rationed supply.

To fill a medium-sized vehicle's tank, Lebanese would now have to pay more than the monthly minimum wage of 675,000 pounds, at a time when nearly 80 percent of the population is estimated to live below the poverty line. The International Monetary Fund and France are among creditors demanding an audit of the central bank as part of urgent reforms to unlock financial support for Lebanon. The World Bank has called the country's economic crisis one of the planet's worst since the mid-19th century.

The Alvarez & Marsal (A&M) auditing firm had launched an audit in September last year but was forced to pull out some two months later because the central bank failed to hand over necessary data.

Yesterday, President Michel Aoun met with A&M managing director James Daniell, who informed him that "the company will begin tomorrow its forensic financial audit of Lebanon's central bank after all arrangements were completed," the presidency said. Finance ministry official Georges Maarawi told AFP that the auditing firm "will have 12 weeks to collect information and draft a report," under the terms of its contract with the Lebanese government.

The contract with A&M was signed by Finance Minister Youssef Khalil last month only days after he



BEIRUT: Lebanon raised fuel prices yesterday in a de facto end to state subsidies, pushing the cost of filling a vehicle's tank to more than the monthly minimum wage in the poverty-stricken nation.

took up his post. In December, parliament approved a bill that suspends banking secrecy laws for one year to allow for the forensic audit—which is widely seen as a necessary prelude to any agreement with

the IMF over financial assistance. Maarawi, the finance ministry official, said that Lebanese authorities are currently holding "technical meetings" with the IMF, without elaborating. — AFP

Chief economist Gopinath to leave post in Jan: IMF

WASHINGTON: IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath will leave her post and return to Harvard University's economics department in January, the fund announced Tuesday. Harvard extended Gopinath's leave of absence by one year, which allowed her to serve at the IMF for three years, the statement said.

She heads the International Monetary Fund's research department which produces the quarterly World Economic Outlook report with its closely watched GDP growth forecasts. IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva praised Gopinath, who "made history" as the first woman to serve in the top economics post, for her critical analysis during the pandemic. "Gita's contribution to the Fund and our membership has been truly remarkable—quite simply, her impact on the IMF's work has been tremendous," Georgieva said in a statement. "We benefitted immensely from her sharp intellect and deep knowledge of international finance and macroeconomics as we navigate through the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression."

She had a key role in setting global vaccination targets to end the COVID-19 pandemic, and also helped set up a Climate Change team inside the IMF to analyze, among other things, optimal climate mitigation policies, Georgieva said. Gopinath's decision



WASHINGTON, US: Gita Gopinath, the Chief Economist of the International Monetary Fund, speaks during an IMF conference. — AFP

to leave was not linked to the recent controversy surrounding Georgieva, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Georgieva, who previously served in a top position at the World Bank, was implicated in an investigation showing officials pressured economists to alter results of the bank's closely-watched "Doing Business" report that ranked countries based on business-friendly policies.

But the IMF board last week expressed confidence in Georgieva and said the report did not conclusively show she "played an improper role." Gopinath's decision to leave the fund was "unrelated to the events the last few weeks," the person said. Gopinath, a dual US-Indian citizen, was appointed to her role in October 2018. The IMF said the search for a replacement will begin shortly. — AFP



Jack Ma

Alibaba shares soar as Jack Ma reported on Europe trip

BEIJING: Alibaba shares surged more than six percent yesterday after billionaire founder Jack Ma was reported to be in Europe, fuelling investor hopes that the worst of China's regulatory crackdown for the internet giant might be over. Ma has kept a low profile ever since mainland officials spiked what would have been a world record \$37 billion initial public offering for Alibaba's financial group Ant last November.

That shock decision kicked off what became a cascading series of crackdowns by Chinese authorities on a host of tech and other industries deemed to have become too powerful, unregulated or monopolistic. Ma's presence in Spain—for a "study tour of the agricultural industry and technology related to the environment"—was reported by the South China Morning Post, which is owned by Alibaba.

The paper said the 57-year-old, who retired from the role of Alibaba's chairman in 2019, was attending a series of business meetings in Europe. It said he had also stayed in Hong Kong for "private time" with his family before his trip abroad, citing an anonymous source familiar with Ma's itinerary.

An Alibaba spokesperson declined to comment. But the news sent Alibaba's shares soaring, closing 6.67 percent higher in Hong Kong yesterday. So far this month, the firm's share price has surged 23 percent as hopes rise the company is now out of the dog

house with authorities in Beijing.

That sentiment has also helped buoy Hong Kong's stock exchange, which has been hammered by China's regulatory crackdown in recent months. The Hang Seng Index, one of the worst performers this year, is now up 10 percent since closing at a five-year low on October 6.

"It's getting clearer and clearer that the worst of Beijing's crackdowns are behind us, in particular in the technology sector as they were the first to suffer," Jackson Wong, asset management director at Amber Hill Capital, told Bloomberg News. Alibaba fell out of favor soon after Ma gave a speech criticizing China's financial regulators. Authorities pulled Ant's IPO and followed up with an antitrust probe of Alibaba, eventually fining the company \$2.75 billion. Chinese authorities have also ordered Ant to undergo restructuring as a condition for reviving its IPO. — AFP

Lebanon's car culture questioned in crisis

BEIRUT: By challenging Lebanon's national passion for automobile ownership, and driving growing numbers towards greener or more collective transport, the economic crisis is succeeding where everything else failed. In the absence of a functioning public transport system, car culture has thrived and many households, even modest ones, boast multiple vehicles.

Since 2019, however, an ever worsening financial crisis has made petrol unaffordable for many and long queues at gas stations unbearable for the rest. One of the by-products of Lebanon's historic shortages and currency crisis is the first meaningful dent in decades in the reign of the private automobile.

Tuk-tuks, bicycles, carpooling and affordable buses—which were once out of the question for many—have since become more popular amid changing public attitudes and skyrocketing transport costs, including higher taxi fares. "Before the crisis, I relied on my family's car or a taxi, but this has all become unaffordable," said Grace Issa, a 23-year-old customer service professional whose workplace is around 20 kilometers (12 miles) from home. Her only option to get to the office now is a private coach operated by Hadeer, a start-up without which she would not have accepted her new job in the first place.

"I now spend about 30 percent of my salary on transportation instead of 70 percent," she told AFP as she boarded a bus to go back home.

'Unclean, unsafe'

There are more than two million cars for six million people in Lebanon. Car imports have fallen by 70 percent over the past two years and many Lebanese can no longer afford new vehicles with the local currency losing about 90 percent of its value against the dollar on the black market.

Dwindling foreign currency reserves have forced authorities

to scale back subsidies on imports, including fuel, causing prices to skyrocket. Twenty liters (4.4 gallons) of petrol are now worth around a third of the minimum wage, while nearly 80 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.

In response to the crisis, Boutros Karam, 26, and three friends launched Hadeer, which provides affordable bus transport along the country's northern coastal highway. Unlike the dilapidated public transport system, buses operate along a fixed schedule, are equipped with wi-fi and tracking services and are relatively safer for women who often report harassment on public coaches and vans.

Sixty percent of Hadeer's customers are women. "The public transport problem is an old one but it was compounded recently by the fuel crisis and the fact that many can no longer afford to move around" using taxis or their

decades to revamp public transport have been shelved. In 2018, the World Bank approved a \$295 million package to jumpstart the country's first modern public transport system. The Greater Beirut Public Transport Project, however, never took off and the Lebanese government is now looking to use the funds to help support the country's poorest. "Discussions are under way with the government of Lebanon regarding the feasibility of restructuring and reprogramming the entire World Bank portfolio which also includes the Greater Beirut Public Transport Project," World Bank spokesperson Zeina El-Khalil told AFP.

In the coastal city of Batroun, a popular tourist hotspot during the summer, the tuk-tuk has gained traction among visitors and residents alike, according to Toni Jerjes, who manages a service offering the auto rickshaws. "The crisis has changed the



BATROUN: A passenger pays a tuk-tuk taxi drivers as he arrives to destination in the Lebanese city of Batroun north of the capital. — AFP

own cars, Karam said. The start-up, which has also developed a mobile app that allows customers to book seats in advance, is breaking stereotypes Lebanese have harbored regarding mass transit, Karam added. Many of our customers "were not accustomed to using collective transportation", Karam said. "They used to refuse it because it was seen as unclean... and unsafe."

'Way of life'

Lebanon has had a railway network since the end of the 19th century but it has been out of service since the start of the country's 1975-1990 civil war. Several proposals over the

Lebanese people's transportation habits. Tuk-tuk is a less expensive and faster option," he said.

In the city of Tripoli further north, Natheer Halawani has relied on a bicycle for nearly two decades to move around. He has lobbied for a bicycle boom in his car-clogged city for years, but in the end, it was the economic calamity that finally put the wheels in motion, and he says more people are now pedaling through the city's streets. The private vehicle "is not just a means of transport, it is also a way of life", he said. For the 35-year-old, the crisis provides "a suitable opportunity to rethink" such old transportation models.—AFP

Business

KFH achieves KD 168.1 million net profit until end of Q3 2021

Al-Marzouq: Net profit increased by 66.1% compared to same period last year

KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq said that KFH has, by the grace of Allah, reported net profit of KD 168.1 million until end of Q3 of 2021 for KFH shareholders; an increase of 66.1 percent compared to the same period last year.

Earnings per share until end of Q3 of 2021 reached 20.08 fils; an increase of 66.0 percent compared to the same period last year. Net financing income reached KD 443.0 million; a decrease of 1.7 percent compared to the same period last year. Net operating income reached KD 364.3 million; a decrease of 9.3 percent compared to the same period last year, affected by the decrease in investment income compared to the same period last year.

Financing receivables as of the end of Q3 of 2021 reached KD 11.3 billion, ie, an increase of KD 597.2 million or 5.6 percent compared to the same period last year. Investment in sukuk as of the end of Q3 of 2021 reached KD 2.7 billion; a decrease of 0.3 percent compared to end of year 2020.

Total assets as of the end of Q3 of 2021 reached KD 21.97 billion ie, increase of KD 469 million or 2.2 percent compared to end of year 2020. Depositors' accounts as of the end of Q3 of 2021 reached KD 16.0 billion, ie, increase of KD 692 million or 4.5 percent compared to end of year 2020.

Shareholders' equity as of the end of Q3 of 2021 reached KD 1.9 billion; same level as end of year 2020. In addition, the capital adequacy ratio reached 18.07 percent which is above the minimum limit required by regulators. This ratio confirms the solid financial position of KFH.

Sustainable growth

Al-Marzouq said that KFH has achieved growth in all key financial indicators and maintained good ratios in terms of return on average assets, average shareholders' equity, operating expenses, NPFs, debt

coverage ratio as well as other financial indicators. This comes as a result of the efficient operational performance, the flexible business model of KFH, and the disciplined implementation of the Bank's strategy where sustainable growth is the most prominent pillar. "Thanks to its effective approach and prudence in risk management, KFH was able to manage the Coronavirus crisis and cope with its repercussions with high flexibility. The bank kept its commitment towards its customers and society," he added. Al-Marzouq expressed his optimism about the improving operating environment, saying that the receding pandemic threats and the rise in oil prices, which supports the state balance, are providing momentum to the economic activity and greater confidence in the business environment. He also emphasized the importance of enhancing the economic reforms efforts and balance free of oil-price fluctuations.

Green sukuk

Al-Marzouq emphasized KFH's role in sustainability through issuing green sukuk, indicating that the bank has succeeded in arranging sustainability sukuk issuance transaction for KFH-Turkey amounting to \$350 million. The sustainability sukuk issuance is considered as the first of its kind to be issued by an Islamic financial institution and the first tier two sustainability sukuk issuance transaction globally.

Meanwhile, Al-Marzouq highlighted the successful issuance of \$750 million AT1 Mudaraba Sukuk by KFH, saying that the historic sukuk is the largest issuance in Kuwait in terms of size with its subscription orders exceeding \$2 billion, by close to 3 times the targeted issue size.

Society as a cornerstone

Al-Marzouq emphasized the social responsibility leading role KFH plays in the humanitarian and societal fields, responsible investments, educational, health and

environmental activities, workforce, youth and entrepreneurs support, as well as dealing with society as corner stone and compass in formulating the bank strategies.

Leading national role

He emphasized that KFH is moving forward in its leading national role through supporting and financing the government development projects, providing wide range of retail and corporate banking and financial solutions as well as SMEs. Al-Marzouq also said that KFH has a diversified financing portfolio that covers different vital sectors including energy, water, power, infrastructure and construction.

Solid financial results

Meanwhile, Acting Group CEO at KFH, Abdulwahab Essa Al-Rushood said that KFH has successfully achieved solid financial results for the nine months ended 30 September 2021 despite the challenges Coronavirus imposed on the operating environment locally and globally.

He confirmed that KFH enjoys high liquidity ratio and solid capital base that support business growth and adherence to regulatory requirements. Also, Al-Rushood highlighted the importance of continuous improvement of asset quality and developing credit facility policies and governance systems within best practices.

Supporting the capital base

Al-Rushood said that KFH keeps supporting capital base to diversify financing sources, raise the financial and investment capabilities of the Bank and support various economic projects and infrastructure projects in Kuwait and countries where Group subsidiaries operate (Turkey, Bahrain, Germany, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia).

113m digital banking transactions

Al-Rushood said that KFH enhances innovation strategy in banking solutions,

adding that the number of e-banking transactions implemented by KFH customers via KFHonline on the website or through the mobile application exceeded 113 million transactions for the first nine months of 2021, an increase of 26 percent compared to the same period last year.

He added that the high demand from customers on KFH's digital services confirms that the Bank is a digital pioneer distinguished by its diversified solutions that match the customer needs.

Business and strategies

Al-Rushood said that several global awards that KFH has won confirm its credibility and the prestigious position it enjoys regionally and globally, its strong financial position, the integrity of its procedures and directions and its feasible strategies and actions. The awards include "World's Best Islamic Bank 2021" Award from Global Finance Magazine and "Best Domestic Bank 2021" Award from Asiamoney. In addition, Global Finance Magazine has named KFH as the Safest Islamic Bank in the GCC for 2021 as part of its annual ranking of the World's Safest Banks.

A distinguished generation of youth talents

Al-Rushood said that KFH has obtained recognition from official local entities for its role and efforts to localize staff and provide them with training, support students and youth and attract distinguished graduates in partnership with universities and academic institutions. He added that KFH has made remarkable progress in qualifying a distinguished generation of Kuwaiti youth competencies in the industry. Al-Rushood cherished the trust of shareholders and customers and the support of the Board of Directors as well as the efforts of the employees and all partners and stakeholders, affirming KFH's endeavor to enhance its leadership in the Islamic financial services industry.



Al-Marzouq

- Financing receivables reached KD 11.3 billion an increase of 5.6%
- Depositors' accounts reached KD 16.0 billion an increase of 4.5%
- The rise in oil prices supports the state balance and provides momentum to the economic activity
- Leading role in sustainability through issuing Green Sukuk
- Society is a corner stone and compass in formulating the bank strategies
- KFH keeps supporting and financing the government development projects



Al-Rushood

- Solid financial results despite the pandemic challenges
- High liquidity ratio and solid capital base support business growth
- More than 113 million e-banking transactions in 9 months
- Qualifying a distinguished generation of national youth competencies

Praise be to Allah

بيت التمويل الكويتي
Kuwait Finance House



Financial Results until end of Q3 - 2021

		30/09/2021	30/09/2020	%
Net Profit for Shareholders	"KD Million"	168.1	101.2	66.1
Earnings per Share	"Fils"	20.08	12.10	66.0
Net Financing Income	"KD Million"	443.0	450.5	(1.7)
Net Operating Income	"KD Million"	364.3	401.8	(9.3)
		30/09/2021	31/12/2020	%
Financing Receivables	"KD Million"	11,345	10,748	5.6
Total Assets	"KD Million"	21,971	21,502	2.2
Depositors' Accounts	"KD Million"	16,009	15,317	4.5
Total Shareholders' Equity	"KD Million"	1,929	1,936	(0.4)

Business

German central bank chief to quit at crunch moment for ECB

ECB monetary policy and German coalition talks face questions

FRANKFURT: German central bank president Jens Weidmann, a fierce opponent of loose monetary policies in Europe, will step down at the end of the year after a decade at the helm, the Bundesbank said yesterday. His departure comes as the European Central Bank faces difficult questions over its future monetary policy and as coalition talks to form the next German government formally get under way.

Weidmann, a member of the ECB's 25-member governing council and head of the Bundesbank since May 2011, intends to step down on December 31 for "personal reasons", the Frankfurt-based institution said in a statement. His term would have ended in April 2027 but the long-time president told colleagues in a letter that "after 10 years it is time to begin a new chapter".

As Weidmann steps down, the ECB is under pressure to respond to rising inflation in the eurozone and will shortly have to decide when to wind down its massive pandemic-era stimulus program.

Weidmann, who often clashed with ECB leadership while in office, thanked ECB President Christine Lagarde despite the "sometimes difficult discussions" the pair had participated in over recent years. In a statement, Lagarde said she respected Weidmann's decision, praising his "willingness to find compromise". In recent weeks, Lagarde has

said the ECB should not "overreact" in the face of "transitory" pressures that have seen inflation rise well above the bank's two-percent target.

But in his departure letter, typically hawkish Weidmann warned it would be "decisive" for the ECB's strategy "not to lose sight of future inflation risks". Crisis response measures were also only "proportionate for the crises they were designed to tackle", according to Weidmann. Stability, he added, would only be achieved if "monetary policy observed its narrow mandate and does not let itself be led by fiscal policy or the markets".

The early end of Weidmann's tenure could "tilt the debate within the ECB a bit more in a dovish direction", said Holger Schmieding, chief economist at Berenberg Bank. "But not very much. He is not the only hawk on the ECB council," Schmieding said. The Bundesbank president's exit will create a headache for the parties engaged in coalition talks to form the next German government, which will likely appoint Weidmann's successor. The outgoing Bundesbank president represented the country's uncompromising stance against inflation during Angela Merkel's tenure as German chancellor.

Among the parties taking part in talks, the liberal FDP has supported a more conservative direction for monetary policy than the Social Democrats and Greens. The next German govern-



FRANKFURT: In this file photo, Jens Weidmann, president of the German Central Bank (Bundesbank), smiles as he arrives to attend the weekly cabinet meeting at the Chancellery in Berlin. — AFP

ment would nonetheless be likely to appoint "a less hawkish successor", said Schmieding. Weidmann had his term as president renewed to 2027 in 2019. His resignation will have to be formally accepted by the German president. —AFP

KFH announces gold winners in Al-Rabeh Account

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has announced the winners of the quarterly draw (third quarter) of 3kg of gold each, and the monthly draw of Al-Rabeh account. The winners of the quarterly draw of 3kg gold each are: Ahmed Al-Khalaf, Anwar Al-Ansari, and Amani Abu Gamaz. The winners of the monthly 1kg of gold are Aisha Al-Budaiwi, Mohammad Al-Kandari, and Mohammad Al-Bidan for the month of September.

Through monthly, quarterly and annual draws, KFH gives 45 Al-Rabeh account holders the opportunity to win up to 77kg of gold in prizes ranging from 1 to 3kg of gold over a full year, in addition to the annual draw of a grand prize of 12kg of gold. The prizes are targeted to existing and new customers of Al-Rabeh account, with salaries not less than KD 500. When their salaries are transferred to the Al-Rabeh account, they will be eligible to win unprecedented prizes by being entered into the draws, which are: a monthly draw, except the month of December, with three individuals winning 1kg of gold each, and a quarterly draw with three winners per draw winning 3kg of gold each (except the fourth quarter draw, which has only one winner). At the end of the campaign, an annual draw is made to pick three winners, the first-place winner receives a grand prize of 12kg of gold. The second-place winner receives 3kg of gold and the third-place winner receives 2kg of gold. The total number of winners is 45 customers, and the total prizes at the end of the campaign is 77 KG of gold.

Al-Rabeh account is available in Kuwaiti dinar for individuals, with a salary transfer required for customers to enter the draw. Regarding the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer should deposit three salaries during the three months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the three months prior to the draw. Every additional KD 50 in the account increases the customer's chances to win, thus with these benefits and rewards, Al-Rabeh account, is suitable for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts, with the possibility of saving and investing. Al-Rabeh account confirms KFH's continued keenness to deliver premium products that meet customers' aspirations and enhance the bank's leadership in the market.

China eyes coal price intervention to curb cost spikes

BEIJING: China pledged to reduce soaring coal prices as it ramps up production to relieve increasing pressure on the country's economy—despite promising to reduce fossil fuel emissions. The world's number two economy expanded slower than expected in the third quarter as an energy crisis began to bite, official data showed this week, with electricity shortages and production cuts dragging industrial output.

It comes as Beijing—one of the world's leading polluters—says it will reduce emissions and its reliance on the fossil fuel. The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) said Tuesday it was studying measures to intervene in coal prices, which have risen rapidly and hit record highs. "The current price increase has completely deviated from the fundamentals of supply and demand," it said, pledging to have prices return to a "reasonable range". It warned authorities would take a "zero tolerance" approach and "severely crack down on" activities like spreading false information or price collusion.

In a separate notice on Tuesday, the NDRC stressed coal mines should aim for more than 12 million tons in daily output, with local authorities to ensure production is maximized. The surging price of coal and supply shortages, both factors behind



recent power outages in China, have fanned concerns about global supply chains. A production snarl in China could hit global exports and bump up prices at a time when factory price inflation is already high. Meanwhile, the country's thermal coal futures fell in overnight trading. Nearly 60 percent of China's energy-hungry economy is fuelled by coal, and it has pledged to become carbon neutral by 2060.

In recent months China has been hit by widespread power cuts, forcing factories to delay production as businesses are ordered to minimize energy usage. Officials have been looking

for ways to combat the price rally as the winter months approach.

Mines have been ordered to expand coal production, while top state-owned energy firms must ensure adequate fuel supplies at all costs. Local governments have also been taking action, with coal port Qinhuangdao reaching an agreement with miners, power plants and railway operators to cap some supplies costs, according to the state-run Economic Daily. China's coal inventories stand at 88 million tons, enough to last 16 days, according to the NDRC. —AFP

Huawei to announce Huawei nova 9 in Mideast, Africa region

KUWAIT: Huawei's been in the consumer business since 2011. For the past 10 years, the company has made continuous investments into the R&D of its consumer products. Just in the smartphone space, Huawei pioneered a lot of technology and design that are seen in today's phones. For instance, Huawei was the first to introduce a triple-camera setup with Huawei P20 Pro. With P30 Series came SuperZoom, which let consumers take incredible zoom shots that consumers didn't think were possible with smartphones. And these two are just the tip of an iceberg. According to the company, Huawei is currently serving 730 million users, and connecting 1 billion devices worldwide. These figures attest to Huawei's success and the trust consumers have in the company.

Huawei isn't giving up when you factor in the oppressive market environment that Huawei was put in for the past year. The challenges have only strengthened Huawei's resolve. The company remains committed to consumers and to the international markets, and still has something up its sleeves that it can't wait to show the world. In fact, Huawei's preparing to unveil a new smartphone - Huawei nova 9.

What's the Huawei nova Series?

Unless you are an avid Huawei fan, there is a good chance you have not heard of Huawei's nova Series. Now in its sixth year, the Huawei nova Series is positioned as a trendy flagship smartphone for the younger generation. The name is derived from Latin. Nova, the singular adjective of Latin 'novus', means new. It represents youth, vitality and confidence. Interestingly, the word 'innovation' also contains 'nova'. As for the series itself, if we were to summarize it in three words, it would be: innovation, chic and identified. Let us go deeper and see how these three words relate to Huawei nova.

Innovation is the foundation of the Huawei nova Series. From the very beginning, the Huawei nova Series has always featured some of the best



technology - including design, camera, fast-charging solutions, apps and more - that Huawei has to offer since its inception in 2016. The style of Huawei nova Series is chic and identified, having its own signature nova brand icon and coming in chic colourways and designs that stylishly adorn its users, as well as providing a premium entertainment experience, people who own this product have the unique "nova" style.

For instance, the Huawei nova Series is known for its extremely thin and lightweight devices, like the Huawei nova 5T being just 7.87mm thin and weighing just 174g, and the Huawei nova 7 with a 7.96mm thin body and a weight of 180g. The nova Series is also identified by the premium entertainment experiences it offers. With the Huawei nova Series, Huawei pioneered AI beautification features to take selfies to a new level. With the series, consumers are also given access to a wide range of amazing Huawei technology, such as Super Night Mode, software and battery optimisations, Huawei SuperCharge and more.

The next in line: Huawei nova 9

From the upcoming Trendy flagship & Camera King - Huawei nova 9, you can expect the same excellence in design, camera, charging technology and smart features as you get from other new Huawei smartphones. From a design perspective, it is safe to assume you will get a nova that



comes with a curved display with a high 120Hz refresh rate. In addition to the incredible colourways expressed in novel textures made with innovative manufacturing processes.

The camera won't disappoint, they never do. The Huawei nova Series has always been an early adopter of flagship-grade technology. It comes with a 50MP Ultra Vision Camera at the back and the new Continuous Front/Rear Recording feature complemented by the 32MP front camera for easy, high-quality vlog creation.

As well as a long-lasting battery life, the 66W Huawei SuperCharge support ensures fast charging speeds, which help alleviate users' low battery anxiety. Like any other Huawei products, the Huawei nova 9 is steeped in Huawei's innovative DNA, delivering excellent user experiences across different usage scenarios. The nova Series also enables multi-device connectivity for it to synergize with other devices in Huawei's massive all-scenario ecosystem, such as the Huawei earbuds, smart watches, tablets and laptops.

Running on the latest version of EMUI 12, Huawei nova 9 provides smooth and fast control response as well as app launch experience. Whether for working, studying, remote communication, gaming, entertainment or asset editing, the new smartphone offers a brand-new, all-scenario interaction which is straightforward, fast and smooth, safe and reliable.

China new-home prices fall for first time in six years

BEIJING: China's new-home prices fell for the first time in six years last month, data showed yesterday, as the property sector struggles after a government clamp-down, while a default at several major developers added to contagion concerns from the Evergrande crisis. The latest reading follows official figures showing the real estate and construction industries shrank in the third quarter for the first time since the early stage of the pandemic, which acted as a huge drag on the world's number two economy. Figures on Wednesday showed that the cost of new homes in 70 large and medium-sized cities saw a small decrease in September, the National Bureau of Statistics said without giving a precise percentage, though Bloomberg calculations found they dropped by around 0.08 percent.

That represents the first drop since April 2015. Prices in the secondary market slipped 0.19 percent, a second monthly fall, Bloomberg said. The latest readings will be considered especially worrying as September is usually seen as a peak season for the home market, and emerge as property firms come under the spotlight after the government began clamping down on their borrowing. This has in turn limited their ability to press on with building and selling projects, putting even more pressure on their bottom lines.

The biggest casualty of the crackdown is China Evergrande, one of the nation's biggest property developers, which is teetering on the brink as it struggles under debts of more than \$300 billion. The firm has missed several payments on its bonds and a 30-day grace period on an offshore note is up on Saturday, leaving investors concerned about what will happen. Still, it has managed to meet its domestic obligations.

Fears that the firm could collapse and send shockwaves through the Chinese economy—and possibly globally-rattled markets earlier this month, though Beijing has said any fallout would be containable. Several domestic property rivals have in recent weeks already defaulted on debts and have seen their ratings downgraded. Hong Kong-listed Sinic Holdings became the latest to miss a payment, S&P Global Ratings said yesterday. S&P said the latest non-payment would "trigger cross defaults and accelerate demands for repayment of the company's other debts... some of which are already overdue". —AFP

Business

Boeing forecasts 20-yr ME commercial jet and services market valued at \$1.4tn

Projected widebody deliveries will be highest proportion of any region at 44%



Randy Heisey, Boeing managing director of Commercial Marketing for the Middle East

KUWAIT: Boeing said yesterday that airlines in the Middle East will require 3,000 new airplanes valued at \$700 billion and aftermarket services such as maintenance and repair worth \$740 billion, with the region positioned to capitalize on the recovery of regional and international travel and cargo demand. Boeing provided the estimate in its 2021 Commercial Market Outlook (CMO), a forecast of 20-year demand for commercial airplanes and services.

Middle East passenger traffic and the region's commercial fleet are projected to more than double over the 20-year forecast period, according to the CMO. More than two-thirds of airplane deliveries to the Middle East will accommodate growth, while one-third of deliveries will replace

older airplanes with more fuel-efficient models such as the 737 MAX, 787 Dreamliner and 777X.

"The Middle East region's role as a global connecting hub continues to be important for developing markets to and from Southeast Asia, China and Africa," said Randy Heisey, Boeing managing director of Commercial Marketing for the Middle East. "The region has been a leader in restoring confident passenger travel through multi-faceted initiatives that aid international travel recovery."

Air freight represents an ongoing area of opportunity for Middle East airlines, with the freighter fleet projected to nearly double from 80 airplanes in 2019 to 150 by 2040. Notably, air cargo traffic flown by Middle East carriers has

increased since 2020 by nearly 20%, with two of the world's top-five cargo carriers based in the region.

The 2021 Middle East CMO also includes these projections through 2040:

- To accommodate increased passenger and cargo traffic, airlines are predicted to grow their fleets to 3,530 jets.
- The region will continue to see robust wide-body demand, with 1,570 deliveries supporting a growing network of international routes.
- The current single-aisle fleet of 660 airplanes is forecast to nearly triple to 1,750 jets.
- Commercial services opportunities include fleet renewal, maintenance, repair and parts supply, and operations optimization.

Boeing's 2021 Pilot and Technician Outlook forecasts that the region is estimated to require 223,000 new aviation personnel by 2040, including 54,000 pilots, 51,000 technicians and 91,000 cabin crew members.

As a leading global aerospace company, Boeing develops, manufactures and services commercial airplanes, defense products and space systems for customers in more than 150 countries. The company leverages the talents of a global supplier base to advance economic opportunity, sustainability and community impact. Boeing's diverse team is committed to innovating for the future and living the company's core values of safety, quality and integrity.

CBK honors NBK for its special efforts in supporting 'Let's Be Aware' campaign

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) was honored by Central Bank of Kuwait, in appreciation of its special role and active contributions in supporting "Let's Be Aware" banking awareness campaign.

In a ceremony held in the presence of a delegation from the bank headed by Isam Al-Sager, Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait, the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, Dr Mohammad Y Al-Hashel, praised the bank's efforts in providing all capabilities to support the campaign that targeted raising awareness and spreading financial culture among all segments of society.

On the sidelines of the ceremony, the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait praised NBK's active role in making the campaign a success, and spreading it to the broadest segments of customers of the Kuwaiti banking sector. On this occasion, Abdul-Mohsen Al-Rushaid, Assistant General Manager of Communications Department at National Bank of Kuwait said: "At NBK, we are proud of this honoring, which is a recognition of the bank's efforts to increase financial inclusion, being a driver of sustainable devel-



KUWAIT: The governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait presents a commemorative shield to National Bank of Kuwait in recognition of its efforts in supporting the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign.

opment." NBK is a key partner in all initiatives of the Central Bank of Kuwait aiming to enhance financial and economic stability in Kuwait, in addition to raising financial culture and spreading banking awareness in the community, he added. Al-Rushaid noted that over almost a whole year, NBK harnessed all its capabilities to support the "Let's Be Aware" campaign by publishing educational material and awareness content through all of its social media platforms and digital channels to raise customers' awareness, develop their skills, and help them make well-informed decisions in their financial transactions. NBK frequently organizes various activities that contribute to raising awareness about all topics related to the banking sector. It also organizes various activities and training courses for its employees to enhance their experience in combating

fraud and financial crimes.

It is worth mentioning that "Let's Be Aware" campaign aims to spread financial, credit and banking culture among the banking sector's customers and the society, at large.

The campaign covers many topics such as the process of borrowing, banking cards, familiarization with the rights of special needs customers, as well as advice related to cybersecurity and the protection of bank accounts. It also provides guidance regarding complaint submission mechanisms, and protection of customers' rights, and introduction of the functions of the banking sector and its role in promoting and developing the economy, so that all segments of society become more familiar with banking and financial transactions.

AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad weekly draw

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) held the weekly draw of 20 October 2021 of Al-Hassad Islamic account, the first Islamic prizes account in Kuwait which offers over 750 prizes over a 12 month period and provides numerous features. Such features include the simplest and easiest savings program, highest number of winners, largest prize value, loyalty multipliers, and unique account opening feature online with all ease with instant deposit option.

The bank announced 20 winners of KD 1,000 as follows: Dalal Adel Al-Khudhur, Khairallah Raheef Jaaz, Eisa Adel Al-Eisa, Salem Abdullah Al-Rashed, Ghada Hamza Al-Issa, Jasem Mohammad Al-Qattan, Akil Ahmedally, Ahmad Ali Al-Shamlan, Abd Al-Emam Jassim Abdullah, Abdulraouf Radhi Eissa, Mahmoud Ahmed Al-Radhwan, Ameer Saheb Sayed Salar, Afeefah Yousef Shaaban, Abdulhakeem Ibrahim Mubarak, Abdullateef Adnan Al-Hemeli, Amir Abdulhameed Al-Sayegh, Manal Mohammad Al-Kandari, Yasmeen Alsadek, Abdulazeiz Ibrahim Ali And Dalal Habbas Al-Sehali. The draws of Al-Hassad include several cash prizes, such as KD 100,000 each Eid and the grand quarterly draw of KD 250,000 prize which continues to be a key aspiration for customers who are wishing to fulfill their dreams.



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

PREMIER MARKET WEEKLY TECHNICAL BULLETIN

WEEK ENDED ON 20 OCTOBER 2021

No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance										Valuation Multiples *				
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	952	954	954	943	11	10,127,670	7	0.74%	13.57%	951	960	23.2	2.05	2.0%	1.27
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	238	240	242	237	5	42,026,188	3	1.27%	9.59%	237	242	21.8	1.14	2.0%	1.13
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	225	224	225	223	2	29,553,667	1	0.45%	-0.89%	222	226	NM	0.98	0.0%	1.01
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	233	233	235	232	3	9,414,894	1	0.43%	9.39%	230	234	18.4	0.95	2.0%	1.05
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	809	823	825	808	17	17,548,085	16	1.98%	21.57%	815	825	35.9	3.71	1.1%	1.41
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	770	770	773	766	7	1,351,092	-1	-0.13%	35.56%	761	773	63.2	4.52	0.0%	1.05
204	National Investments	Financial Services	201	206	207	199	8	5,524,159	6	3.00%	52.59%	203	206	7.4	0.95	4.9%	1.24
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	158	157	159	155	4	5,271,608	0	0.00%	-1.26%	153	159	NM	1.52	3.1%	0.59
252	Al Imtiaz Investment	Financial Services	137	135	140	134	6	30,498,179	-1	-0.74%	20.54%	134	140	NM	0.82	0.0%	0.99
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	157	165	170	157	13	38,947,456	8	5.10%	51.38%	159	177	32.0	1.21	0.0%	0.97
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	766	774	775	759	16	2,120,009	15	1.98%	17.81%	761	777	19.5	1.82	0.7%	1.11
501	National Industries	Financial Services	243	245	246	243	3	10,779,795	3	1.24%	39.20%	239	246	6.3	0.91	0.0%	1.44
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	843	859	862	837	25	627,719	20	2.38%	13.77%	846	867	32.2	0.97	5.8%	0.93
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	966	917	970	910	60	1,334,167	-48	-4.97%	43.28%	900	960	26.1	2.16	5.8%	0.72
526	Al Qurain	Basic Materials	388	379	388	371	17	3,396,765	-7	-1.81%	12.13%	374	387	30.4	1.00	4.0%	0.75
603	Agility	Industrials	977	974	980	967	13	5,385,605	-2	-0.20%	44.08%	966	981	28.4	1.86	0.9%	1.49
605	Zain	Telecommunications	599	600	602	599	3	6,238,220	1	0.17%	-0.99%	597	602	13.9	2.24	5.5%	1.36
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	3,305	3,314	3,350	3,291	59	511,135	14	0.42%	-12.77%	3286	3315	6.1	3.82	12.0%	0.49
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	231	239	239	230	9	13,130,059	9	3.91%	10.65%	234	240	NM	0.76	0.0%	0.86
818	Ahli United Bank	Banking	285	290	290	285	5	21,088,884	5	1.75%	27.75%	287	293	21.5	2.33	1.3%	1.13
821	Warba Bank	Banking	272	283	286	272	14	31,563,602	12	4.43%	19.92%	278	286	16.8	2.25	0.0%	0.99
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	641	635	642	628	14	1,696,926	-9	-1.40%	4.44%	628	645	20.1	1.82	2.7%	0.44
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	371	376	378	371	7	4,444,862	5	1.35%	2.73%	371	378	NM	1.57	0.0%	0.48
826	Shamal Az-Zour	Utilities	234	235	236	234	2	2,874,922	1	0.43%	-15.16%	233	238	20.3	4.92	5.1%	0.68
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	1,810	1,938	1,940	1,810	130	1,205,972	135	7.49%	76.18%	1872	1960	13.9	7.40	2.1%	0.76

* As of end of week closing

Lifestyle | Features



A picture shows the newly opened Madame Tussauds museum in Dubai. — AFP photos



A waxwork of Barbadian singer Rihanna.

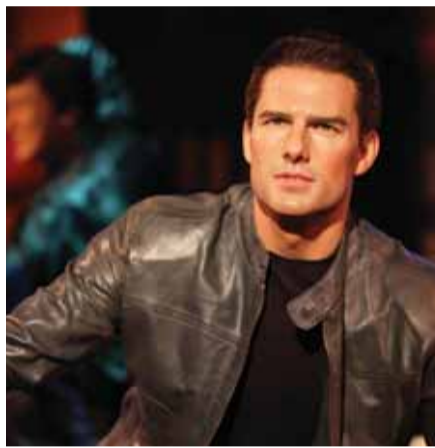


A waxwork of Indian cricket player Virat Kohli.

Madame Tussauds opens museum in Dubai

London's renowned waxwork museum Madame Tussauds opened this week its first outpost in the Arab world in Dubai, which hopes to attract millions of tourists to Expo 2020. The brand, which began life in London where it boasts 250 wax sculptures that draw millions of visitors annually, also has smaller branches in the United States, Europe and Asia. "We have opened our doors on the 14th of October this year very close to Expo 2020," Sanaz Kollrud, general manager of Dubai's Madame Tussauds, told AFP. "We expect many visitors locally and internationally to come in. "We have chosen the talents that are relevant and popular in the region."

The Dubai branch displayed 60 sculptures of "global stars", including football sensation Lionel Messi and pop singer Rihanna. And about 15 were from the



A waxwork of US actor Tom Cruise.

region including Lebanese pop stars Nancy Ajram and Maya Diab. With only limited oil reserves, the emirate of Dubai has been focusing on the development

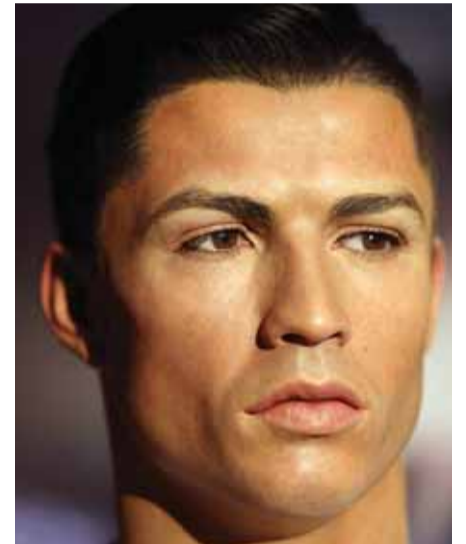
of tourism and the entertainment sector. Dubai is counting on the six-month Expo 2020 Dubai-which opened on October 1 after a one-year delay to attract millions of visitors and boost its pandemic-hit economy.

Ronaldo wearing 'wrong' shirt

The Dubai branch said yesterday it will soon change the shirt of the wax figure of Cristiano Ronaldo after online backlash that the Portuguese footballer was wearing the "wrong" jersey. London's renowned waxwork museum opened this week with Ronaldo's wax figure donning the striped black and white shirt of his previous team, Italy's Juventus. In August, Ronaldo returned to Manchester United in the English Premier League on a two-year contract with an option to extend that deal by a further season.

"With the ever-changing, fast world of sports where players regularly move teams, fans of Cristiano Ronaldo will be excited to hear that his wax figure is being updated with his new Manchester United jersey very soon," the museum said in a statement to AFP. "Each figure at the attraction has been captured in a moment of time and resembles an iconic part in their history."

A number of British and Portuguese online media outlets had noted that the 36-year-old star footballer at the museum was wearing the "wrong shirt" of Juventus, which Ronaldo left after three seasons. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner first made his name on the world stage in six years at United between 2003 and 2009. — AFP



A waxwork of Portuguese footballer Cristiano Ronaldo.



Members of the media attend a press preview to experience SUMMIT by Night ahead of the grand opening of SUMMIT One Vanderbilt in New York. — AFP photos



A woman poses as members of the media attend a press preview to experience SUMMIT by Night ahead of the grand opening of SUMMIT One Vanderbilt in New York.

Walking on 'Air': New York's newest skyscraper attraction

What does it feel like to hover over 1,000 feet (300 meters) in the air? A new tourist attraction opening in New York this week tries to answer that question. "Air," an art installation by artist Kenzo Digital, opens today inside the recently completed One Vanderbilt tower, now the Big Apple's fourth-highest tower. An elevator that is all glass, including the floor, takes thrill

seekers up the side of the building in Midtown Manhattan to 1,200 feet in just 42 seconds.

There, they step out onto three floors of glass and mirrors that offer spectacular views but also aim to distort one's sense of where they are, leaving them with a feeling they are floating. The experience challenges "the perception of space and plunges the visitor into a factory of silhou-

ettes and skyscrapers," according to Kenzo, who is known for his collaborations with signer Beyonce. It is "euphoric and multisensory" he says.

Nick Barat, who got a sneak preview as part of a press visit on Monday, said the art installation made it different from the city's other observatories, such as the Empire State Building. "It makes you think about the relationship you have with the city and yourself," he told AFP. One Vanderbilt, next to Grand Central station, is 1,401-feet high including its spire. Only the One World Trade Center and the residential skyscrapers of Central Park Tower and 111 West 57th Street in New York are taller. The Kohn Pederson Fox-design boasts two glass boxes that jut out of the building and suspend guests 1,063 feet above Madison Avenue. On a clear day it is possible to see more than 60 miles (100 kilometers) away. — AFP



Christine Tan sits in the window and poses for a picture as members of the media attend a press preview to experience SUMMIT by Night.

'Afghanistan not forgotten': Antiques dealer runs Expo pavilion

Afghan antiques dealer Muhammad Umar Rahimi carried his most prized possessions to display at Expo 2020 Dubai, hoping to portray his war-scarred homeland in a light different to that under Taliban rule. Near a fast food outlet on the sprawling world fair site in the United Arab Emirates, with no sign to indicate the location of the Afghan Pavilion, Rahimi has on display 300 items-from daggers and carpets to saffron and deep-blue lapis lazuli stones.

"When the Afghan government collapsed, Expo organizers decided that this be turned into a people's pavilion for the people of Afghanistan," Rahimi, who has

been living in Vienna for more than 40 years, told AFP. The 63-year-old said it was then that he took it upon himself to contact Expo and organize the pavilion, which was running the risk of not opening at all as the Taliban took control of Kabul in mid-August.

An Expo 2020 spokesperson said that in light of developments in Afghanistan

the fair welcomed "the initiative of the Afghan business community to run the pavilion and share with the world the story of the people of Afghanistan". Far from the scenes of war and destruction, traditional robes, hand-woven rugs and lute-like rubabs decorate the pavilion at the fair that opened earlier this month. "This exhibition is extremely important for

Afghanistan," said Rahimi. "There are a lot of Afghans who live here."

With the help of two of his sons and his brother, all of whom live in Austria, Rahimi transported items from his personal collection at his own expense. "It's part of my blood. It's my profession," he said. "We worked day and night, 20 hours a day... and completed this in 72 hours."

The Afghan pavilion opened about a week after Dubai inaugurated the six-month Expo on October 1, with a delay of nearly a year due to the coronavirus pandemic. According to the Afghan consulate in Dubai, one of seven emirates that make up the UAE, the Gulf country is home to approximately 150,000 of its citizens. Many of them run successful businesses, while others work in shops, restaurants and construction.

'Fertile land'

On August 15, Taliban fighters took Kabul after a lightning offensive launched in May as the United States and NATO began the final stages of withdrawing their troops. The hardline Islamists are seeking diplomatic recognition as well as assistance to avoid a humanitarian dis-

aster, having returned to power after two decades of war. No country has yet to recognize the Taliban, whose first stint in power between 1996 and 2001 was brutal with public executions and a ban on women leaving the home unchaperoned.

Rahimi did not want to comment on the political situation in Afghanistan but stressed the overwhelming desire for peace and for a safe, stable and prosperous homeland. He said his participation in the Expo was to introduce people to his home country and what it can offer. "It is so Afghanistan's name is not forgotten, and people see our culture and fertile land," Rahimi told AFP. "We want peace... and we have hope in the future of Afghanistan." Fawaz Al-Shamri, who had stumbled upon the Afghan pavilion after visiting the nearby Saudi one, said that it was enlightening to learn more about the Afghan culture. "This is a chance to see what they offer," said the Saudi citizen. — AFP



This picture shows a view of the pavilion of Afghanistan during the Expo 2020 in the Gulf Emirate of Dubai. — AFP photos

Netflix braces for staff walkout and LGBTQ rally over Chappelle special

Netflix bosses braced for an employee walkout and rally in Los Angeles yesterday as anger swelled over a recent Dave Chappelle comedy special that activists say is harmful to the transgender community. The streaming giant has found itself embroiled in an intense and highly public controversy over Chappelle's "The Closer," in which the stand-up star insists "gender is a fact" and accuses LGBTQ people of being "too sensitive."

"A list of firm asks" will be presented to Netflix content chief Ted Sarandos at the rally, which organizer Ashlee Marie Preston said Tuesday had been moved to a larger site due to "overwhelming demand." Organizers did not specify their demands ahead of the rally, although Preston said the event would call for content that prioritizes "the safety and dignity of all marginalized communities." Transgender Netflix employee Terra Field has called on the streamer to add a content warning to "The Closer," and to promote more "queer and trans comedians and talent." "A place can't be a great place to work if someone has to betray

their community to do so," Field wrote in a blog post Monday.

"The Closer" has been condemned by LGBTQ groups, which cited studies linking stereotypes about minorities to real-world harm. But Sarandos wrote to staff last week that "content on screen doesn't directly translate to real-world harm," and emphasized the importance of defending "artistic freedom." Three employees including Field were reportedly suspended after crashing a virtual meeting for executives over the episode, but later reinstated. Another was sacked for leaking internal data about the cost of the episode.

The walkout and rally have drawn support from film and television celebrities such as Jameela Jamil ("The Good Place") and Jonathan Van Ness ("Queer Eye"), who have recorded a video message expressing "love and support" for the movement. Acclaimed comedian Hannah Gadsby-who has her own popular Netflix specials-last week called the streaming giant an "amoral algorithm cult." — AFP



A billboard for the Dave Chappelle Netflix special "The Closer" is seen in Hollywood, California. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features

Squid Game-boosted Netflix pulls in subscribers

Netflix reported billion-dollar profits and booming subscriber growth Tuesday that beat forecasts as global hits like Squid Game drew viewers in droves. Analysts had been worried that a surge in Netflix subscriptions during pandemic lockdowns would be followed by a plunge as the world opened back up. But the streaming entertainment star said that in the third quarter it made a profit of \$1.45 billion on revenue that grew 16 percent to \$7.5 billion in that period. Subscribers jumped by 4.4 million, double the growth seen in the same quarter in 2020, allowing the platform to end the period with 214 million worldwide.

After rolling out a lighter-than-normal slate of content in the first half of this year due to COVID-related production delays, Netflix said it was finishing the year with "what we expect to be our strongest Q4 content offering yet." "Our programming strategy is to provide members with a wide variety of high quality content that's loved and watched in large numbers," it said in a statement. New seasons of original Netflix series Money Heist and Sex Education were the biggest returning shows, viewed by 69 million and 55 million households respectively, according to



Shoppers takes picture with cosplayers dressed in outfits from the Netflix series "Squid Game" at a shopping mall in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — AFP

the Silicon Valley powerhouse.

Free speech controversy

Squid Game became Netflix's biggest show ever, watched by a "mind-boggling" 142 million households in the four weeks

after its release in mid-September, executives said. "The breadth of Squid Game's popularity is truly amazing; this show has been ranked as our #1 program in 94 countries," Netflix said. Squid Game-themed products were on their

way to retail outlets, Netflix told investors. Most of the subscriber growth in the quarter came from the Asia-Pacific region, which accounted for 2.2 million added Netflix members. Joe McCormack, senior analyst at Third Bridge, pointed to the power of the Squid Game phenomenon.

"Squid Game was Netflix's recent example of generating a global hit, with two-thirds of the company's total subscribers viewing the series in the first four weeks," he wrote. But Netflix has also been plunged into America's culture wars by a Dave Chappelle comedy special that raises concerns about free speech and censorship, but has been slammed by its own employees as transphobic. In "The Closer," boundary-pushing mega-star Chappelle responds to critics who have accused him of mocking transgender people in the past by asserting that "gender is a fact" and accusing LGBTQ people of being "too sensitive."

"In our country you can shoot and kill" a Black man, "but you'd better not hurt a gay person's feelings," says the stand-up comic, who is Black. While the show has been condemned by LGBTQ groups including GLAAD, which cited studies linking stereotypes about minorities to real-world harm-Netflix has so far stood

firm, insisting the show will not be taken down. But the streaming giant finds itself trapped at the center of arguably its most intense controversy yet.

Chappelle remains hugely popular, at a time when Netflix is competing with rivals such as HBO and Disney in the so-called streaming wars. "We compete with a staggeringly large set of activities for consumers' time and attention like watching linear TV, reading a book, browsing TikTok, or playing Fortnite, to name just a few," executives said in the letter. They noted that engagement at Netflix climbed 14 percent during the hours Facebook was hit with a major outage early this month. Netflix said it is continuing to push into gaming, focusing on mobile devices first, in a methodical approach expected to take years to bear meaningful fruit.

"Imagine three years from now some future Squid Game is launching and it comes along with an incredible array of interactive or gaming options that is all built into the service," Netflix chief Reed Hastings said on an earnings call. "A company like Disney is still ahead of us in some of those dimensions of putting that whole experience together but boy are we making progress." — AFP



Iranians arrive for the opening day of the 38th Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF) in the Iranian capital. — AFP photos

Tehran short film fest opens, with shot at Oscars for first time

Tehran's International Short Film Festival opened this week, for the first time as an Oscar-qualifying event, giving winning entries a shot at an Academy Award. The festival jury has members from the Islamic republic as well as Italy, Japan, France and Austria. The festival, now in its 38th edition and running until Sunday, earned qualification this year as a gateway to Hollywood's annual awards showcase. The event



Iranians watch a movie in the opening day of the 38th Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF).

"was added as a qualifying festival in the Short Films categories this year," the US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences confirmed. "And it is the only current qualifying festival in Iran." The designation came despite high tensions between Washington and Tehran, which have had no diplomatic relations since 1979, before the festival began.

This year's showcase also coincides

with efforts to resume negotiations on reviving Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with the United States and other world powers, with the goal of ending a punishing sanctions regime. "I am both happy and proud of the qualification of our festival," the event's president Sadegh Moussavi told AFP. "It's a big success of cultural diplomacy," he said with a smile. "We think that culture and art can have a status more prestigious than politics." Tehran's festival has been a springboard for the big names of Iranian cinema, including Asghar Farhadi, a two-time Oscar winner, Bahman Ghobadi and Reza Mirkarimi, said festival spokesman Mansour Jahani.

Censorship accusation

Moussavi said Tehran's application to the Academy was initially rejected because its entrants are not required to pay fees. "We replied that our country was under sanctions and therefore it is impossible for those who want to present their films to pay registration fees," he said. Tehran is the only short film festival without such fees among about 130 in the world which are Oscar eligible, Moussavi said. Following recognition by the Academy, this year's festival competition received more than 6,400 entries from 128 countries — 2,000 more than last year.

Five Iranian films and 58 from abroad were selected for the grand prize and the winner will be presented to the Academy for possible Oscar nomination. The selections upset some young Iranian directors whose films were not accepted, and led to accusations of censorship, including from film-maker Farnoush Samadi. "It is my duty to write to the Academy to protest this censorship, injustice and non-professional actions of the Tehran Festival," Samadi said on Instagram. — AFP

opening ceremony via Skype to deliver a message of hope. "COVID and the climate crisis have shown us how fragile we are as human beings," she said. "But we have also been demonstrating how resilient, inventive, and how creative we can be." Books had helped people to escape the isolation of the pandemic and make sense of the world, said Atwood, author of "The Handmaid's Tale". "Books are both time travel devices and empathy machines. They take us to distant lands, allow us inside other worlds," she added.

Young readers

The fair, which opens to trade visitors yesterday before welcoming the general public later in the week, runs until Sunday. It comes as the book industry has been "doing pretty well over the past 18 months", according to Boos, with people in many countries using the slower pace of life during lockdown to read more-adolescents especially.

In the United States, printed book sales rose by more than eight percent in 2020 to record their best year in a decade, according to the NPD research group. Growth was driven by teen categories but also adult non-fiction, as people turned to cookbooks and DIY books to pass the time at

Beauty salon a women's haven in the Taliban's Kabul

It is one of the last places in Kabul where women can meet outside their households, a bubble of freedom and even frivolity away from the gaze of men. Mohadessa has kept her beauty salon open despite threats from Afghanistan's new rulers. Since the Taliban seized Kabul in mid-August, many women have disappeared from public spaces, driven into private areas out of fear and sometimes very real threats. But Mohadessa's beauty salon has, for now, remained a place where women can relax among themselves outside the household and share their woes-or forget them in favour of fun and fashion.



A customer shows her make-up done by a beautician at a beauty salon in Kabul.

The oasis of feminine industry provides income for the staff and moments of indulgence for the clients, but its days may be numbered. "We don't want to give up and stop working," the 32-year-old entrepreneur told AFP over the hubbub of women getting ready for a wedding celebration. "We love that we have a job, and it is necessary for women to work in Afghan society-many of them are the breadwinners for their family." Customers are dropped off outside and whisked past posters advertising fashion and beauty brands that are now blotted out with white paint. They quickly disappear into the shop through a heavy curtain. Once inside, the women shed their headscarves and outer garments and their excited voices compete with the hum of hair-dryers as they choose their new looks.

Screaming mob

The last time the Taliban ruled Afghanistan, between 1996 and the US-led intervention of 2001, women were



In this photograph, a beautician applies make-up to a customer at a beauty salon in Kabul. — AFP photos

obliged to wear the all-covering burqa. Under the Islamist movement's interpretation of Islamic law, beauty salons were banned outright. Just having painted nails meant a woman could risk having her fingers cut off. But since the Taliban returned to the capital and declared their Islamic Emirate, the movement has been at pains to present a more liberal face to the world.

Keen to secure international finance to head off economic disaster that could undermine their war gains, they have not rushed to reimpose restrictions on daily life. That is not to say Mohadessa has not received threats. A Taliban mob has shouted abuse outside her shop, but she has made use of the legal limbo to continue. "I can say that the women at this salon are courageous because they come to work with fear," she said. "Every day they open the salon, they come in, and they continue to work, despite this fear."

Message of 'resistance'

On the day AFP visited, around 30 women had braved the climate of fear to come to the shop and prepare for a wedding, where the sexes are traditionally segregated during celebrations. The women were clearly enjoying the rare chance to dress up and pamper themselves, with elaborate hair and eyelash decorations complementing a colorful make-up palette. The bride's sister, English teacher Farkhunda, gazes at the results of an hour-long makeover. "Yes, it's nice. It's beautiful. It's my first real day out since the end of August," she said cheerfully.

But under the splash of glittery eye-

shadow, one of her pupils is immobile, taken during a gun and bomb attack when she was a teenager. "You see my eye? I lost it on my way to school when the Taliban attacked us. But I am not scared of them. I don't want to talk about them. Today is for celebration," she said. The light-hearted mood is as fragile as the delicate bejeweled hair bands. At every movement of the curtain hiding the door to the outside world, the women stiffen and briefly fall silent.

But none of the clients want to tone down their look, a stylized, ultra-feminine rebuke to the Taliban's looming curbs on free expression: dense foundation, long false lashes, dazzling colors and a China doll finish. And 22-year-old Marwa, not her real name, with her asymmetric haircut exposing an ear dotted with piercings and decorative chains, sees a message of "resistance" in the stylings. "We are not people with blue burkas. We are not people with black burkas. That's not who we are," she said.

'Knife to my throat'

Some of the women dream of leaving, others of change. Farkhunda hopes she can get back to work while Mohadessa, determined to stay open, fears for her life. She showed AFP a letter she believes comes from the Taliban's new Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, warning her to close down. Her response: "Until they come and put a knife to my throat, I'm staying here." — AFP

Frankfurt book fair returns but 'not back to normal'

The Frankfurt book fair, the world's largest, celebrated its return Tuesday, but with fewer big names attending and star author Margaret Atwood only joining via video link, was not quite back to its former glory. After going almost fully digital in 2020 to curb the coronavirus spread, this year's fair will see publishers, booksellers, authors and readers meeting face-to-face again. But it will be a more muted version of past editions, as uncertainty about travel restrictions has kept many international visitors away.

"Back to business does not mean back to normal," fair director Juergen Boos said at the opening, but the event nevertheless offered a chance for the industry to "reconnect", he added. Award-winning novelist Margaret Atwood, whose native Canada is this year's guest of honor, dialed into the



Visitors walk at booths at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2021 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany yesterday. — AFP

home. In Germany, the European Union's largest book market, bookstores used the shutdowns to expand their online sales, leading to a 20-percent jump in internet revenues to 2.2 billion euros (\$2.5 billion). Audio and e-books also saw double-digit growth. "The book industry has passed the COVID stress test," said Karin Schmidt-Friderichs, chairwoman of the German Publishers and Booksellers Association.

Christmas concerns

But the news for the industry is not all

good. The book trade, with global revenues of around \$100 billion annually, is not immune to the shortages of raw materials and supply chain problems disrupting economies as countries rebound from the coronavirus downturn. With the crucial Christmas holiday season fast approaching, publishers are sounding the alarm about paper shortages, bottlenecks at shipping ports and higher transport costs.

"I fear that this Christmas, people cannot be sure of getting any book they want at short notice," Jonathan Beck, head of

renowned German publishing house C.H. Beck, told the Handelsblatt financial daily. Books could also become more expensive, he warned.

COVID curbs

This week's Frankfurt gathering is the latest example of trade fairs stirring back to life, and comes after the German city of Munich welcomed 400,000 visitors to the IAA auto show in September. Daily visitor numbers are capped at 25,000 however, less than half the usual capacity. Frankfurt fairgoers must also wear masks and show proof of vaccination, recovery from COVID or a negative test.

More than 2,000 exhibitors from upwards of 80 countries are attending, well below the 7,500 exhibitors from over 100 countries who attended in 2019. Some 300 authors are coming, including Canada's Michel Jean, Dany Laferriere and Michael Crummey. But compared with past years when the likes of Atwood, Ken Follett, Cecelia Ahen and Nicholas Sparks visited, this year's event lacks the same star power. Several large publishing houses are also staying away, preferring to take part online instead. — AFP

Sports

Liverpool battle to Champions League win, Messi fires PSG

Real Madrid, Manchester City, Ajax win big

PARIS: Liverpool survived an Atletico Madrid fightback to win 3-2 and Lionel Messi scored twice as Paris Saint-Germain came from behind to beat RB Leipzig by the same score on a breathless night of Champions League action on Tuesday.

In other games, Karim Benzema netted for Real Madrid as the 13-time European champions thrashed Shakhtar Donetsk 5-0 in Ukraine on the eve of the start of his trial in France on charges of complicity in blackmail.

Much of the night's drama happened at the Wanda Metropolitano in the Spanish capital where Mohamed Salah scored another impressive goal, twisting away from a string of Atletico defenders before his shot deflected in off James Milner to open the scoring.

Naby Keita doubled Liverpool's lead with a stunning volley but Atletico hit back with French international Antoine Griezmann scoring twice to fire up the home crowd. Just as Atletico seemed to have the upper hand, Griezmann was given a straight red card for a high boot in the face of Roberto Firmino.

A pulsating game was decided from the penalty spot in the 78th minute as Salah sent Jan Oblak the wrong way after Mario Hermoso pushed Diogo Jota. The Egyptian's 31st Champions League goal makes him the club's top scorer in

the competition, overtaking Steven Gerrard. In a dramatic finish, Atletico were denied a penalty when the referee studied the VAR and decided Jota had not fouled Jose Maria Gimenez.

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp told BT Sport: "We played a really solid second half in a tough game with intense football from both teams. We got the penalty, then there was a red card and obviously it was in our favor." The Reds

had given the Qatar-backed club the lead but a Leipzig side crushed 6-3 at Manchester City earlier in the competition held their own.

Leipzig went ahead through goals from Andre Silva and Nordi Mukiele as PSG suddenly looked disoriented. But Messi was set up by Mbappe for the equalizer and then deftly chipped in a 74th-minute penalty awarded for a foul on the France striker. Mbappe's missed spot kick proved unimportant.

PSG top Group A with seven points but Manchester City bounced back from their defeat in Paris in the last matchday by crushing Club Brugge 5-1 in Belgium. Pep Guardiola declared City's win "one of the best performances in Europe we've done so far" after Riyad Mahrez scored twice and 19-year-old Cole Palmer was among City's scorers.

In Kiev, Benzema scored the final goal in Real's rout of Shakhtar. A first-half own goal from Serhiy Kryvtsov put Real on their way before Vinicius Junior scored two superb goals and set up Rodrygo for the fourth before Benzema completed the job.

Sheriff Tiraspol's fairytale run of results in the competition ended with a 3-1 defeat at Inter Milan. Goals from Edin Dzeko, Arturo Vidal and Stefan de Vrij sealed the win over the side from



Inter Milan spoils Sheriff's fairytale run

are top of Group B with three wins out of three while Atletico are equal on four points with Porto, who beat AC Milan 1-0 in Portugal.

Mbappe penalty

At the Parc des Princes, Messi scored twice and Kylian Mbappe sparked but later missed a penalty as PSG came from behind to beat RB Leipzig 3-2. Mbappe



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Kylian Mbappe (left) greets teammate Lionel Messi during their team's UEFA Champions League first round group A football match against Leipzig at The Parc des Princes stadium, in Paris, on Tuesday. —AFP

Moldova but Sheriff remain top of Group D despite having the same number of points as Real.

Borussia Dortmund and Erling Braut Haaland had an off night as they were beaten 4-0 by Ajax at the Amsterdam

Arena. Former West Ham striker Sebastian Haller scored his sixth Champions League goal in three games as Ajax took an iron grip on Group C with a maximum nine points. Dortmund are second on six points. —AFP

News in brief

Fan critical after beating

BRUSSELS: Five arrests have been made after a Manchester City fan was left in critical condition following a fight after a Champions League match with Belgian club Brugge. The City fan was a Belgian and was badly beaten at a motorway service station where rival fans first stole his club scarf. Police said they had made five arrests after the fight that began inside the service station shop and continued outside on the forecourt. "His life is in danger," a police statement said. "The victim is a 63-year-old from Ninove." The victim's son runs a Manchester City fan club 'Blue Moon Belgium', and the club's star player is the Belgian midfielder Kevin de Bruyne. "They left my father for dead after an act of mindless violence," the son wrote on social media. Brugge condemned the violence that followed City's 5-1 win over the Belgian champions. —AFP

Gymnast hurt in training

KITAKYUSHU: Japanese gymnast Hitomi Hatakeda suffered a serious spinal injury yesterday after falling off the uneven bars in training, the Japan Gymnastics Association said. Hatakeda, who appeared at the Tokyo Olympics, was taken to hospital and diagnosed with damage to her central spinal cord and bruising of the cervical vertebrae. The 21-year-old qualified for Thursday's world championships all-around final in fourth place in Kitakyushu, in western Japan, but was forced to withdraw. Hatakeda is coached by her mother Yukiko. Her father, Yoshiaki, is a former gymnast who won bronze in the team event for Japan at the 1992 Olympics. Her younger sister, Chiaki, is also a gymnast. —AFP

PSG fans blocked from Marseille

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain fans will be banned from travelling to Marseille for Sunday's Ligue 1 contest after several French matches were marred by violence in recent weeks, the Interior Ministry said yesterday. "Away games by the PSG club often disrupt public order" while "certain" Marseille fans "often display violent behavior," the ministry said. Individual or group travel by PSG supporters will also be prohibited starting at midnight Saturday because relations between the clubs "have been tainted with animosity for several years," it added. The decision comes after riot police and security staff had to intervene to stop fan clashes or acts of hooliganism at a series of Ligue 1 matches last month that saw dozens injured. Marseille has been involved in the violence more than once. —AFP

Panda pride for Mbappe

PARIS: French footballer Kylian Mbappe will act as godfather to the twin pandas recently born at Beauval zoo, the animal park authorities said yesterday. Chinese Olympic diving gold medalist Zhang Jiaqi will be the godmother alongside the Paris Saint-Germain star at a naming ceremony on November 18. "It's an honor for the zoo to have top athletes leaning over the pandas' cradle," zoo director Delphine Delord said. "The baby pandas are in good health, they weigh four kilos each, have opened their eyes and started to move" Delord said of the 10-week-old cubs. Only 2000 pandas remain alive in the wild although the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) removed them from the red list of endangered species in 2016. The cubs are the offspring of Yuan Zi and Huan Huan who were loaned to France by China a decade ago. —AFP

Back to the future as Salah spearheads Liverpool's revival

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool came close to missing out on this season's Champions League but with Mohamed Salah in stunning form and a clean bill of health, Jurgen Klopp's men look like contenders for the trophy once more.

Salah took his tally for the season to 12 goals in just 11 games with a double as the Reds enjoyed a victorious return on Tuesday to the Wanda Metropolitano, where they won the Champions League two years ago.

Liverpool's thrilling 3-2 victory against Atletico Madrid leaves them on the brink of qualification for the last 16 after just three games. AC Milan and Porto have also been swept aside, with the six-time European champions making a potentially awkward group look easy.

Liverpool have also started strongly in the Premier League, sitting just a point behind leaders Chelsea and boasting the only unbeaten record in the English top-

flight. Dating back to a late rally to secure their place in the top four last season, the Reds are now 21 games unbeaten in all competitions.

Salah's return to the form that saw him score 44 goals in an incredible debut season at Anfield in 2017/18 has been the principle cause. The Egyptian has scored memorable solo goals against Manchester City and Walford in recent weeks and even has luck on his side at the minute as another jinking run made space for a shot that was deflected in for the opening goal against Atletico.

The only blot on Salah's season was a missed penalty against AC Milan in the opening group game, his first miss from the spot for Liverpool since 2017. However, he put that behind him with a calm and precise finish with a penalty to win the game in Madrid 12 minutes from time.

Salah record

That strike made more Liverpool



MADRID: Liverpool's Egyptian forward Mohamed Salah shoots and scores a penalty kick during the UEFA Champions League Group B football match between Atletico Madrid and Liverpool at the Wanda Metropolitano stadium in Madrid on Tuesday. —AFP

history for Salah as he surpassed Steven Gerrard as the club's highest scorer in the Champions League, with his two goals taking him to a tally of 31. He is also the first player to score in nine consecutive matches

for the club. "He is a hungry player, he's a hungry striker," said Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker. "He's showing on the pitch all the time, making really nice goals, not just easy goals." —AFP

Foden dazzles, Palmer cameo showcases Man City youngsters

BRUGES: Phil Foden ran the show for Manchester City in their 5-1 hammering of Club Brugge in the Champions League, but it was the goalscoring cameo of fellow academy graduate Cole Palmer that underlined the club's vast strength in depth.

Operating in a false number nine role, Foden tormented the Brugge defense before he was withdrawn on 64 minutes — with City 3-0 up and cruising against a side that had held Paris Saint-Germain in their opening game. Three minutes later and Palmer, just on as a replacement for Kevin De Bruyne, added to City's lead with a clinical finish from Raheem Sterling's pass for his first European goal.

England coach Gareth Southgate recently called Foden's emergence as an England star "fabulously exciting", and the 21-year-old, who missed the Euro 2020 final with injury, did not disappoint in Belgium. His sublime chipped pass for Joao Cancelo resulted in the Portugal defender breaking the deadlock after City dominated the first 30 minutes against overmatched opponents.

Foden's constant movement forged numerous openings for City, whose failed pursuit of Harry Kane in the summer has forced Pep Guardiola to get creative with his attack to compensate for the lack of a genuine center-forward.

"He can play as a striker, dropping when he wants and going in behind. He can attack really well with Rodri, with Kevin. Phil has a special talent," said Guardiola. "We don't have a real striker to score 25 goals so we have to put as many players as possible close to the box to score a goal. He's one of the guys."

"When Phil plays close to the box you have the feeling he can always create something for himself. He played really well," added Guardiola.

Guardiola unwilling to rush youth

While City's spending power is almost unparalleled, and often questioned by rivals, the club is showing it can nurture talent as well as compete financially for any player on the market. Foden had



BRUGES: Manchester City's Cole Palmer (center) celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal during their team's UEFA Champions League first round day 3 Group A football match against Club Brugge at the Jan Breydel stadium in Bruges on Tuesday. —AFP

to bide his time before developing into a core member of City's first team, providing the blueprint for the likes of the exciting Palmer.

Guardiola said he plans to keep the 19-year-old attacking midfielder at the Etihad this season and turn down any approach from clubs to take him on loan. Palmer made a late appearance as a substitute in Saturday's 2-0 Premier League win over Burnley, and then scored a hat-trick just a couple hours later for the under-23s against Leicester's reserves.

"Cole has a special quality, in front of the box he has this talent that is difficult to find. When he has the ball there, most of them finish in the net," said Guardiola. "But I know how it works with young players in all countries, especially this one (England) as well. So let's be calm, let's be patient like we've done with Phil. He's a player for our future, for the future of this club."

Palmer became just the third teenager to score for City in the Champions League after Foden and Kelechi Iheanacho. But Guardiola insisted the teenager would not be fast-tracked into his plans, name-checking a handful of other youngsters for whom the Spaniard has high hopes. —AFP

Destination 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia — via Spain and Rwanda

PARIS: While the vast majority of cricket eyes are firmly focused on events in the Gulf where the 2021 T20 World Cup is just getting underway, a small minority are locked on events in Spain and Rwanda. The Desert Springs Cricket Ground in Almeria, a verdant cricketing outpost in a parched corner of south-east Spain, is currently hosting the European qualifiers for the next edition of the T20 World Cup, to be held in Australia next year.

Denmark, Germany, Italy and Jersey are the four teams bidding to finish in the top two and progress to the global qualifier. Hardly big names in the world of cricket but each side has its share of players claiming first-class experience.

Italy's Jade Dernbach, 35, spent 15 years with Surrey and represented England in 35 T20s and 24 ODIs, playing in the 2012 T20 World Cup. The South African-born fast bowler qualifies for Italy through his mother and came on board after being tapped up by captain and head coach Gareth Berg, who plies his trade as an all-rounder for Northamptonshire.

"He (Berg) picked up the phone and he outlined what he was looking to achieve with Italian cricket and where he thought I could fit in on that journey," Dernbach told The Cricketer. "He gave me some glowing reviews in terms of what it could be like for me, what I could add. It was nice to be wanted by someone." Dernbach duly made his second international debut 2,757 days after his last international appearance in 2014 when he took 1-17 from his four overs in the six-wicket win over Denmark on Monday. On the other side of the deck that day was another former England player.

Denmark's Amjad Khan, 41, won a single Test cap against the West Indies in 2009 and played one T20 international but injuries cut short his chances, not just with England but in county cricket as well where he turned out for Kent and Sussex. Already the only Danish cricketer to play Test cricket, the Copenhagen-born Amjad, who is not quite as fast a bowler these days as he was in his pomp, set another record in that game against the Italians on Monday. —AFP

Sports

Antetokounmpo leads Bucks in Nets blowout, LeBron's Lakers stumble

Durant's 32 points, Harden's 20 not enough for Brooklyn in Irving's absence

LOS ANGELES: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 32 points as the Milwaukee Bucks launched the defense of their NBA crown on Tuesday with a 127-104 victory over the Brooklyn Nets, as LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers were outgunned by the Golden State Warriors.



MILWAUKEE: The Milwaukee Bucks receive the 2021 NBA Championship ring before the game against the Brooklyn Nets on Tuesday at the Fiserv Forum Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



LOS ANGELES: Stephen Curry (right) of the Golden State Warriors goes to the hoop under pressure from Anthony Davis and LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers during their NBA season opener in Los Angeles, California on Tuesday. — AFP photos

Warriors win behind Curry's triple-double

Antetokounmpo picked up where he left off in guiding the Bucks to victory in the NBA Finals last season, leading an emphatic all-round offensive display that included 14 rebounds and seven assists. The two-time NBA Most Valuable Player was one of five Bucks who cracked double figures on a night when Milwaukee's fans celebrated as the team raised its first championship banner in 50 years at the Fiserv Forum.

Khris Middleton had 20 points while Pat Connaughton also made 20 off the bench. Jordan Nwora added 15 points while Jrue Holiday, who left the game with an injury early on, had 12 points. Antetokounmpo was pleased with the way the Bucks turned their attention to the challenge of the Nets after the pre-game festivities.

"It was hard — we all were excited to get the rings, and seeing our banner," Antetokounmpo said. "It's kind of hard to

balance that, to go from that excitement and emotional state to go and play a game. But I think we did a great job. We were able to focus on our gameplan and ourselves and get a win. We've got a deep team. Everyone's ready to step up and ready to play. We play hard and play together."

'It wasn't good'

It was a chastening loss for Brooklyn, who have started the season without the services of Kyrie Irving. The Nets have left Irving out of the line-up for the foreseeable future because of his refusal to take the COVID-19 vaccine, which makes him ineligible for home games in New York due

to city laws. In Irving's absence, Kevin Durant led the Brooklyn scorers with 32 points while James Harden had 20. New signing Patty Mills added 21 — making seven-from-seven from three-point range — while Nic Claxton had 12 points.

"It wasn't good obviously," Nets coach Steve Nash said. "We weren't as sharp as we needed to be, we weren't as physical as we needed to be, we weren't as organized as we needed to be. We just didn't play well tonight." In Tuesday's other season-opener, the new-look Los Angeles Lakers suffered a humbling 121-114 loss to the Warriors at the Staples Center. James led the Lakers scorers with 34 points while Anthony Davis chimed in with 33.

But the Lakers stars were the only two Los Angeles players to make double figures, while blockbuster new signing Russell Westbrook was restricted to eight points, five rebounds and four assists. Instead it was the Warriors who looked the more cohesive unit, with Stephen Curry leading the way with 21 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists — Curry's first triple-double since 2016.

"This is a good feeling," Curry said. "We had a lot of excitement coming into this season — a new cast of characters mixed with our core. We weathered the storm tonight. I played like trash — shot the ball terribly — but if we can win a game like that where we just stuck with it

defensively, it's a good omen for us."

Six Warriors players made double figures, with Jordan Poole just behind Curry with 20 points. The Lakers led 59-53 at half-time but were blown away by the Warriors after the break. Lakers coach Frank Vogel said his team remained a work in progress but was heartened by the scoring of James and Davis.

"Those two guys were spectacular," Vogel said. "We're going to be pretty good if we get those type of performances. We just have to be better defensively. This is a team which is all new to each other. Everyone is finding their way a little bit, and each day they're getting a little bit better." — AFP



ABU DHABI: Namibia's David Wiese (right) and JJ Smit celebrate their victory at the end of the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup cricket match between Namibia and Netherlands at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday. — AFP

Master-blaster Wiese gives Namibia first T20 World Cup win

ABU DHABI: David Wiese bludgeoned an unbeaten 66 as Namibia stayed alive at the T20 World Cup yesterday with a six-wicket triumph over the Netherlands. In a sweltering Abu Dhabi, where temperatures soared to 36 degrees, former South Africa international Wiese hit five sixes and four boundaries as Namibia chased down their target of 165 with six balls to spare.

It was Namibia's first ever win at the World Cup and kept alive their hopes of making the Super 12 stage. In their opening game on Monday, they had crashed to 96 all out and lost by seven wickets to 2014 champions Sri Lanka. Defeat almost certainly means the Dutch, who lost their opener to Ireland, also by seven wickets, will be eliminated. Even a win over Sri Lanka in their concluding Group A game on Friday may not be enough.

Wiese, the 36-year-old all-rounder who played for his native South Africa in the 2016 T20 World Cup, set Namibia on their

way with a half-century off 29 balls. He was well-supported by captain Gerhard Erasmus who contributed 32 off 22 balls with the pair putting on 93 for the fourth wicket. In a desperate attempt to stem the barrage, Dutch skipper Pieter Seelaar employed seven bowlers.

Earlier, opener Max O'Dowd made a second successive half century to lead Netherlands to 164-4 after being put into bat. The New Zealand-born O'Dowd batted for virtually the entire innings, making 70 off 56 balls with one six and six boundaries.

He was eventually run out off the third ball of the final over after a knock which followed on from his 51 in his side's opening loss to Ireland. Colin Ackermann also played a solid role with the bat as the South African hit 35 off 32 balls. Scott Edwards added a quickfire, unbeaten 21 from 11 balls to give the Dutch innings added extra impetus. — AFP

Bellinger blast rescues Dodgers, Astros tie series

LOS ANGELES: Cody Bellinger smashed a three-run homer as the Los Angeles Dodgers rallied to beat the Atlanta Braves 6-5 on Tuesday while the Houston Astros recovered to score a series-levelling 9-2 victory over the Boston Red Sox.

Bellinger's monster eighth-inning home run off Atlanta reliever Luke Jackson turned a 5-2 deficit into a 5-5 tie game just as the Dodgers appeared to be sliding towards a third straight defeat in their National League Championship Series. Chris Taylor singled to keep the inning alive before Mookie Betts drove in a run-scoring double to put the Dodgers ahead at 6-5 heading into the ninth, allowing closer Kenley Jansen to lock down the win.

After Atlanta stunned the Dodgers with walk-off victories in the opening two games of the best-of-seven series, Tuesday's game three at Dodger Stadium had acquired must-win status for the reigning World Series champions.

But until Bellinger's homer, the Dodgers looked to be heading for defeat after a fitful display from starting pitcher Walker Buehler and a spluttering offensive performance. "Man, pure elation, joy — it's just hard to imagine a bigger hit that I can remember," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said of Bellinger's game-changing homer.

"We were dead in the water. You could see it," Roberts added. "It just flipped everything. We needed that kind of shot in the arm." The Dodgers' victory left Atlanta



LOS ANGELES: Cody Bellinger #35 of the Los Angeles Dodgers hits a 3-run home run during the 8th inning of Game 3 of the National League Championship Series against the Atlanta Braves at Dodger Stadium on Tuesday in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

2-1 ahead in the series. "Right now, any win is huge, but the way we won tonight shows we're still fighting," said Dodgers leadoff hitter Betts, paying tribute to team-mate Bellinger.

"He's been huge. This is the Belli we know. Throughout the season he's battled some injuries, but now he's ready to go," Betts said. The Dodgers had taken the lead in the first inning with a two-run homer from Corey Seager.

But with Buehler looking vulnerable, the Braves poured it on with a flurry of scoring in the fourth inning to take a 4-2 lead, before Adam Duvall's single scored Ozzie Albies to make it 5-2 in the top of the fifth. Braves manager Brian Snitker backed his team to recover from the shattering loss. "They will be fine, they will be ready to play," Snitker said. "They're going to pre-

pare as always. We have lost tough games before and bounced back and done really good things."

In Boston, 2017 World Series champions Houston erupted with eight runs in the final two innings to defeat the Red Sox in game four at Fenway Park. Boston had looked to be closing in on a 3-1 American League Championship Series lead after Xander Bogaerts' two-run homer put them 2-1 up in the first inning. The Sox preserved that lead until the eighth inning, when Jose Altuve tied it up at 2-2 with a home run.

Altuve's homer opened the floodgates, with Jason Castro driving in a run for Carlos Correa in the ninth. Michael Brantley then emptied the bases with a three-run triple to make it 6-2 before Yordan Alvarez, Correa and Kyle Tucker extended the Astros' lead to 9-2. — 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

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075

CHANGE OF NAME

I, PRANNAV PETHAMBAR, holder of Indian Passport No. T0708345, resident at Kuwait would like to change my name to given name: Prannav and surname: Peethambar. (C 0963)

I, PROCARIUS MARIANESAN, holder of Indian Passport No. T2417987 declare to change my name from PROCARIUS MARIANESAN to PROCARIUS MARIA NESON. Given Name: PROCARIUS, Surname: MARIA NESON, Father Name: MARIA NESON. (C 0964) 21-10-2021

I, MADAGALA MALLIKARJUN S/o, MADAGALA ANANADAIAH D.No. 15/20, Thirugudu Palli, Yarragunta Kota Post, Obulavaripalli Mandal, YSR Kadapa District, A.P., have changed my name as MADDURI MALLIKARJUN S/o MADDURI SUBBARAMAIAH. (C 0961) 20-10-2021

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSALHOTLINE 128

EMERGENCY ☎ 112

WANTED

We are looking
Sales Executive
for Reputed Printing Press
in Shuwaikh

who is good Kuwait Market
Experience with Arabic
Speak and own Car
Salary with Commission

Call Direct after 2 pm
Mob.: 99202561

S Korea's Pohang to face Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal in AFC Champions League final



JEONJU: Pohang Steelers' Alex Grant (right) celebrates his goal with teammates against Ulsan Hyundai during the AFC Champions League semi-finals football match between South Korea's Ulsan Hyundai FC and FC Pohang Steelers in Jeonju yesterday. — AFP

JEONJU/RIYADH: South Korea's Pohang Steelers will face Saudi giants Al-Hilal in the AFC Champions League final after defeating title-holders Ulsan Hyundai 5-4 on penalties yesterday. Saudi giants Al-Hilal stayed on course for a second AFC Champions League title in three years with a tense 2-1 semi-final victory over cross-city rivals Al-Nassr on Tuesday.

Pohang Steelers and Ulsan Hyundai, the two sides, rivals on South Korea's east coast, were locked at 1-1 after 120 tense minutes with Pohang equalizing with just a minute left of normal time to force the extra period.

Skipper Kang Sang-woo was the hero for Pohang, holding his nerve to slam his winning penalty into the corner, before being mobbed by his teammates. Ulsan top the K League but it was mid-table Pohang who started better and hit the post in the opening quarter at Jeonju World Cup Stadium, where there was a sparse, socially distanced crowd.

The two sides conjured up only three shots on target between them in 45 minutes of cautious first-half football. But the game came to life after that. Pohang goalkeeper Lee Jun had looked shaky

throughout and it was his mistake that allowed Ulsan to score when he fumbled a routine stop into the path of Yun Il-lok.

The 2009 champions Pohang squandered three clear-cut chances in the space of 10 frenetic minutes, but just when Ulsan looked like they had weathered the storm, their skipper Won Du-jae was red-carded in the 68th minute. It was all Pohang after that and the pressure told in the 89th minute when their British-born Australian defender Alex Grant popped up with a looping header that went in off the post to force extra-time.

Title clash

Al-Hilal's Mali striker Moussa Marega and Saudi international Salem al-Dawsari struck either side of the break in Riyadh to set up a title clash with Pohang in the final on November 23. Al-Hilal won their third Asian title in 2019 but were dramatically kicked out of the tournament last year after several members of their squad tested positive for COVID-19.

But the team known locally as "Al-Zaeem", or "The Boss" seem to have successfully banished the memories of that fateful day from their minds with an impressive run this year as they moved

within striking distance of another international trophy.

Al-Hilal and Al-Nassr have clashed on numerous occasions domestically but the magnitude of a crucial continental clash was not lost on them as both teams made a cautious start at the King Saud University Stadium in the Saudi capital. The first notable chance fell Al-Hilal's way but al-Dawsari failed to take advantage of the opportunity by firing wide from the edge of the box after receiving a pass from Matheus Pereira.

Al-Hilal were not to be denied for long though as Marega scored his first goal of the tournament in the 17th minute. Mohamed al-Burayk found Bafetimbi Gomis with a long pass and the 36-year-old Frenchman deftly steered the ball for Marega who made no mistake with a right-footed shot to the bottom left corner of the post.

Al-Nassr raised their game a notch after that but were dealt a body blow when defender Ali Lajami was sent-off seconds before half-time for a foul on Marega. Despite the setback Al-Nassr managed to hold their own and found the equalizer five minutes after the break with Anderson Talisca heading home



Hilal's forward Bafetimbi Gomis celebrates the win with Hilal's coach Leonardo Jardim during the AFC Champions League semifinal football match between KSA's Al-Nassr and KSA's Al-Hilal on Tuesday, at the Mrsool Park Stadium in Riyadh. — AFP

from close from a cross by Abdulfattah Asiri following a corner.

Sultan al-Ghanem and Talisca missed chances thereafter for Al-Nassr and soon Al-Hilal wrested control once again with al-Dawsari scoring his third goal of the

knockouts, his chip taking a slight deflection off Abdulla Madu before finding the net. Al-Hilal survived several anxious moments after that with Abderrazak Hamdallah an Abdulla Madu missing chances in stoppage time. — AFP

Steve Bruce leaves Newcastle by 'mutual consent' after takeover

LONDON: Steve Bruce has left his position as Newcastle manager by "mutual consent", 13 days after a Saudi-led takeover at St James' Park, the Premier League club announced yesterday. Bruce, whose departure was widely expected, took charge of his 1,000th match as a manager in Sunday's 3-2 defeat by Tottenham — his only game under the new owners.

His assistant, Graeme Jones, will take charge of the team for Saturday's trip to Crystal Palace, with the Magpies still searching for their first Premier League win of the season and sitting just one place off the foot of the table. Former Roma coach Paulo Fonseca is the bookmakers' favorite to succeed Bruce, with ex-Bournemouth boss Eddie Howe and former Borussia Dortmund manager Lucien Favre also linked with the job.

"Newcastle United can confirm that Steve Bruce has left his position as head coach by mutual consent," said a club statement, which confirmed the search for a new head coach was under way. "He leaves the Magpies after more than two years in charge, having steered the club to 13th and 12th-place finishes in the Premier League."

Bruce, 60, said he was grateful to have had the opportunity to manage the "unique" club, saying he had experienced "highs and lows" during his tenure.

"This is a club with incredible support, and I hope the new owners can take it forward to where we all want it to be," he said. "I wish everyone the very best of luck for the rest of this season and beyond."

In an interview with the Daily Telegraph, Bruce admitted the Newcastle job could be his last. "It's taken its toll on my whole family because they are all Geordies (from the Newcastle area) and I can't ignore that," he said.

"This will probably be me done as a manager — until I get a phone call from a chairman somewhere asking if I can give them a hand," he added. "Never say never, I've learnt that." Bruce, who managed a long list of clubs including Sunderland and Aston Villa, also hit out at the critics whom he felt never gave him a chance at the club.

"By the time I got to Newcastle, I thought I could handle everything thrown at me but it has been very, very tough," he said. "To never really be wanted, to feel that people wanted me to fail, to read people constantly saying I would fail, that I was useless, a fat waste of space, a stupid, tactically inept cabbage head or whatever. And it was from day one."

Newcastle takeover

The £305 million (\$420 million) Newcastle takeover was rubber-stamped by the Premier League earlier this month after it received legally binding assurances that the Saudi state would not control the club. Bruce was a deeply unpopular figure with the Newcastle supporters, in part due to his past as manager of northeast rivals Sunderland. A recent poll from the Newcastle United Supporters Trust found



NEWCASTLE: Newcastle United's English head coach Steve Bruce looks on during the English Premier League football match between Newcastle United and Tottenham Hotspur at St James' Park in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, north east England on Sunday. — AFP

that 94 percent of fans wanted him to quit.

However, he kept the club afloat by staying out of relegation trouble in his two full seasons in charge despite the limited resources provided by Ashley. A wave of Saudi investment is expected to transform Newcastle's

fortunes on the pitch, following the example set by English champions Manchester City and French powerhouse Paris Saint-Germain. The club have not won a major trophy since 1969 despite regularly attracting crowds of more than 50,000. — AFP