



## 4 Vintage cars displayed at Marina Crescent



## 12 Libya welcomes back tourists after years of war



## 16 Man Utd rebound, Chelsea extend lead as Man City slip



# Kuwait expels Lebanese envoy over minister's remarks, drugs

## Kuwait also recalls its ambassador from Beirut for consultations



BEIRUT: A picture shows the Kuwaiti Embassy in the Lebanese capital yesterday. Kuwait gave Lebanon's envoy 48 hours to leave the country over comments by Lebanese Minister of Information George Kordahi (inset) on the Yemen war. — AFP

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait gave Lebanon's envoy 48 hours to leave the country yesterday, a day after Saudi Arabia made a similar move over a minister's comments about its war in Yemen. The diplomatic row, which has also seen Bahrain expel Lebanon's envoy, has dealt another blow to Lebanon, already in the midst of crippling political and economic crises. Lebanon had been counting on financial assistance from the Gulf to rescue its economy. The dispute was sparked by the broadcast last week of an interview in which Lebanon's Information Minister George Kordahi criticized the Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen.

"Kuwait... asks the Lebanese envoy to leave country in 48 hours," Kuwait's foreign ministry said yesterday in a brief statement carried by state news agency KUNA. The statement added that Kuwait's top diplomat to Beirut was also being recalled for consultations. Kuwait's foreign ministry said the expulsion and recall was based on the "failure" of the Lebanese government to "address the unacceptable and reprehensible statements against the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the rest" of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

The GCC is a six-member regional body that

includes Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar. Kuwait's decision was also based on "the failure of the government of the Lebanese Republic to take the necessary measures to deter the continuous and increasing smuggling operations of the scourge of drugs to Kuwait and the rest of the GCC," the ministry said, adding the move will not affect Lebanese residents in Kuwait.

In his remarks - recorded in August but aired on Monday - Kordahi called the seven-year war in the Arabian Peninsula country "futile" and said it was "time for it to end". Kordahi said Yemen's Houthi rebels were "defending themselves... against an external aggression". The Houthis are backed by Saudi Arabia's regional rival Iran, which also wields significant influence in Lebanon, due to its strong backing of the powerful Shiite movement Hezbollah.

Lebanon is in the grip of an economic and financial crisis seen by the World Bank as one of the world's worst since the 1850s. The United Arab Emirates meanwhile has summoned Lebanon's ambassador over Kordahi's comments. It also recalled its diplomats and prohibited its citizens from traveling to Lebanon.

Continued on Page 2

### News in brief

#### Jordan to expel unvaccinated

**AMMAN:** Jordan warned yesterday that it will start deporting any foreign workers who have not received two jabs of a COVID-19 vaccine by mid-December. Tens of thousands of Egyptians, Filipinos and other nationalities work in the kingdom, which has opened centers dedicated to the free vaccination of Jordanians and foreigners. In a statement, the interior ministry reminded foreign workers that they should "get vaccinated free of charge and do not need to present a residence or work permit". — AFP

#### US sanctions Iran drone program

**WASHINGTON:** The US Treasury hit Iran's drone program with sanctions on Friday. The Treasury said lethal unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps have been used to attack US forces and international shipping in the Gulf region. The sanctions singled out Brigadier General Saeed Aghajani, who leads the Revolutionary Guards' UAV Command. — AFP

#### Gitmo detainee details torture

**WASHINGTON:** A Pakistani held at the US military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba told a sentencing jury how he was raped, beaten and waterboarded by CIA interrogators in the first-ever public account of torture by someone detained in the wake of the Sept 11 attacks. Majid Khan was sentenced to 26 years in prison by the jury Friday afternoon after he pleaded guilty to helping in Al-Qaeda plots in 2002. — AFP

#### Meta: Facebook's bet to save itself

**WASHINGTON:** Facebook's name change offers a convenient diversion as scandal plagues the platform, but the new handle is also key to the firm's costly effort to save itself from very real threats, experts said. Jokes and vitriol poured in after CEO Mark Zuckerberg unveiled the new corporate handle "Meta", with critics blasting it as a transparent effort to distract from its whistleblower crisis. — AFP (See Page 6)

## Kuwait opens COVID vaccine registration for children aged 5-11

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait has opened registration for children aged 5 to 11 to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, the health ministry announced yesterday. After registering online, legal guardians of the

children will receive a text message on the date, time and place of vaccination, the ministry said in a statement. Yesterday, Kuwait reported only 12 new coronavirus cases and no deaths in the past 24 hours, along with 34 new recoveries. There are only six cases in intensive care units and 14 people in COVID wards, while 366 others are receiving treatment.

The United States on Friday authorized the Pfizer vaccine for children aged 5 to 11, paving the way for 28 million young Americans to soon get immunized. The decision came after a high-level medical panel

advising the US government endorsed the shots, ruling that the known benefits outweighed the risks of side-effects.

Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah had said last month that the country was waiting for authorization to start vaccinating children below 12 years of age, adding the ministry is prepared whenever the approval is granted. In addition to Kuwait and US, only a handful of other countries including China, Chile, Cuba and the United Arab Emirates are inoculating younger children with various vaccines.

Continued on Page 2

## Alzheimer's progression cause found

**WASHINGTON:** Toxic protein clusters thought responsible for the cognitive decline associated with Alzheimer's disease reach different regions of the brain early and then accumulate over the course of decades, according to a new study Friday. The research, published in Science Advances, is the first to use human data to quantify the speed of the molecular processes leading to

the neurodegenerative condition, and could eventually have important implications for how scientists design treatments.

It also upends a long-held theory that said Alzheimer's progression was mainly caused by clusters spreading between different brain regions in a "chain reaction", as has been found in mice and was thought true of people too. "Two things came together that really made this work possible," Georg Meisl, a chemist at the University of Cambridge and the paper's lead author told AFP. "One is very detailed data from PET (scans) and various different datasets we've put together, and the other thing is the

Continued on Page 2

## Needle-free vaccine patches coming soon

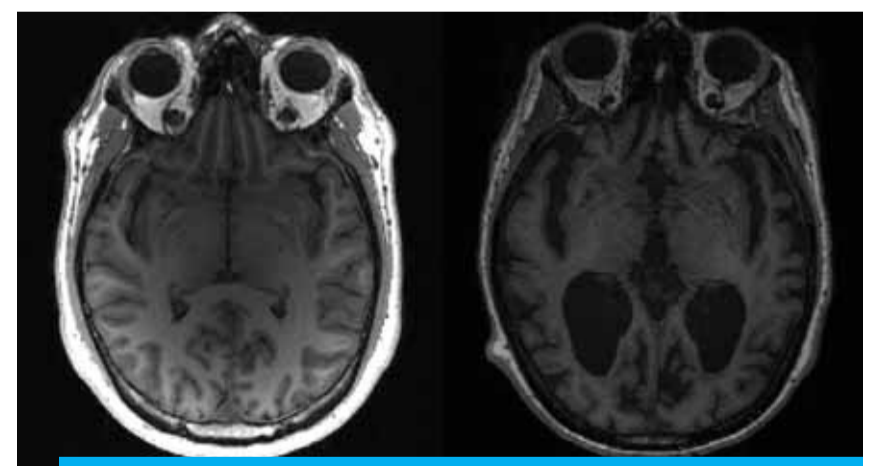
**WASHINGTON:** Effective vaccines, without a needle: Since the start of the COVID pandemic, researchers have doubled down on efforts to create patches that deliver life-saving drugs painlessly to the skin, a development that could revolutionize medicine. The technique could help save children's tears at doctors' offices, and help people who have a phobia of syringes.

Beyond that, skin patches could assist with distribution efforts, because they don't have cold-chain

requirements - and might even heighten vaccine efficacy. A new mouse study in the area, published in the journal Science Advances, showed promising results. The Australian-US team used patches measuring one square centimeter that were dotted with more than 5,000 microscopic spikes, "so tiny you can't actually see them," David Muller, a virologist at the University of Queensland and co-author of the paper, told AFP.

These tips have been coated with an experimental vaccine, and the patch is clicked on with an applicator that resembles a hockey puck. "It's like you get a good flick on the skin," said Muller. The researchers used a so-called "subunit" vaccine that reproduces the spikes that dot the

Continued on Page 2



This undated image shows an MRI image of a healthy brain (left) and an Alzheimer's brain (right) with large black gaps where brain has shrunk. — AFP



Image shows a skin patch and its applicator tested to vaccinate against COVID-19. — AFP

## Local

# Kuwait displays Failaka's antiquities at Expo 2020



DUBAI: Failaka's antiquities, featured in Kuwait's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai, tell the stories of civilizations that dwelled in the small Island east of Kuwait City. Visitors flocked to the pavilion to set their eyes on antiquities from Failaka Island and take pictures of them. — KUNA

## Jahra folklore troupe lights up Kuwait pavilion



DUBAI: Al-Jahra folklore troupe lit up the stage at Kuwait pavilion in the 2020 Expo Dubai with a musical performance attracting visitors from different

nationalities. With fervor and intensity, the troupe provided the cheering audience with songs expressing loyalty and passion to Kuwait. — KUNA

## Nature lightshow at Kuwait's pavilion



DUBAI: Through an elaborate lightshow, visitors to the Kuwait pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai are introduced to nature and animals native to Kuwait.

Visitors are provided with visuals and information of animals and birds living in Kuwait beamed on the palm of their hands. — KUNA



## Kuwait expels Lebanese envoy...

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait's comments on drug smuggling echo Riyadh's line, which extended to Saudi Arabia on Friday imposing a suspension on all imports from Lebanon. Saudi Arabia announced in June that it had confiscated thousands of Captagon pills hidden in a shipment of fruit from Lebanon. Captagon, a drug popular among fighters in war zones, usually blends amphetamines, caffeine and other substances in pill form.

Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib Mikati reacted quickly, saying he "regretted" the Saudi move. "We

are deeply sorry for the kingdom's decision and hope that it will reconsider.

As for us, we will continue to work to solve what needs to be solved," he said. Saudi Arabia, which wields strong influence over many Gulf states, has stepped back from its former ally Lebanon in recent years, angered by the influence of Hezbollah.

On Tuesday, the Lebanese government said that Kordahi's statements were "rejected and did not reflect the position of the government", adding that the interview in question took place before Kordahi was appointed to the cabinet in September. Kordahi, a well-known television presenter, told local reporters on Wednesday that the interview in question took place on Aug 5 and was his "personal opinion". "I did not wrong anyone. I did not attack anyone. Why should I apologize?" he said. "I stated my position with love as a human who feels Arab suffering." — AFP

## Kuwait opens COVID vaccine registration...

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, Kuwait also announced yesterday that the Wafra and Abdaly medical centers will receive citizens and residents today and tomorrow

from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm for the COVID-19 vaccination even without a prior appointment. Director of the central administration for primary health care and head of the mobile immunization units team at the ministry Dr Dina Al-Dhubaib revealed that the center will receive those willing to take the first jab or complete their immunization with a second dose, without having to make a prior appointment. The process will only be on the specified dates, she stressed. The Wafra and Abdaly centers are situated in the south and north of the country to mainly serve those in far-flung areas. — Agencies

## Alzheimer's progression...

Continued from Page 1

mathematical models we've been developing over the past ten years."

Specifically, the researchers used close to 400 post-mortem brain samples from Alzheimer's as well as 100 positron emission tomography scans from people living with the disease to track the aggregation of tau, one of two key proteins implicated in the condition. In Alzheimer's disease, tau and another protein called amyloid-beta build up into tangles and plaques -

known together as aggregates - that cause brain cells to die and lead to brain shrinkage.

This in turn results in memory loss, personality changes and inability to carry out daily functions associated with the condition, which affects 44 million people globally. Past research, mainly performed on animals, suggested the aggregates form in one region then spread throughout the brain, much like how cancer spreads. The new study suggests that while such spread may occur, it's not in fact the main driver of disease progression.

"Once we have these seeds, little bits of aggregate throughout the brain, they just multiply and that process controls the speed," said Meisl. An analogy from the COVID pandemic is how travel bans between nations generally proved ineffective at stopping the spread of the virus, because it was already replicating within the countries trying to keep it out. — AFP

## Needle-free vaccine patches...

Continued from Page 1

surface of the coronavirus. Mice were injected either via the patch over the course of two minutes, or with a syringe.

The immune systems of those who got the patch produced high levels of neutralizing antibodies after two doses, including in their lungs, vital to stopping

Covid, and the patches outperformed syringes. The researchers also found that a sub-group of mice, who were given only one dose of vaccine containing an additional substance called an adjuvant used to spur immune response, "didn't get sick at all," said Muller.

What makes them more effective? Vaccines are normally injected into our muscles, but muscle tissue doesn't contain very many immune cells needed to react to the drug, explained Muller. In addition, the tiny spikes cause localized skin death, which alerts the body to a problem and triggers a greater immune response. For the scientist, the logistical advantages couldn't be clearer. — AFP

## Local

# Kuwaiti physician awarded international neurocritical care society fellowship

## Kuwait ENT surgery conference highlights advanced techniques

**CHICAGO/KUWAIT:** The Neurocritical Care Society (NCS) has awarded Dr Yasser Abulhasan of Kuwait its fellowship, making him the first physician from the MENA region to acquire this fellowship. Dr Abulhasan, an assistant professor of anesthesiology at Kuwait University, as well as anesthesia and critical care consultant, was honored alongside other 25 physicians during NCS 19th annual meeting, held in Chicago. In a statement to the press, Dr Abulhasan said "this is the first time that Kuwait has a seat in this specialized international medical community, and it is a global achievement added to the health care sector in Kuwait, which is always striving to develop and reach the level of advanced countries in this field. "This achievement is added to the other Kuwait medical achievements, who seeks to achieve a number of goals worldwide, mostly providing quality care for patients by identifying and implementing the best medical practices for acute Neurological Disorders, he added.

Dr Abulhasan stressed the need to attract young doctors to this specialty, provide more incentives and develop successful strategies by raising awareness in the field of intensive care in Kuwait and looking at scientific solutions at the state level to encourage doctors to train and work in this field. NCS is working to facilitate professional cooperation by providing a forum of communication, cooperation and exchange of ideas between doctors and healthcare-related professionals in various specialties, Dr Abulhasan added.

### Clinical research

Furthermore, the US-based society aims to foster clinical, experimental, and outcomes research focused on developing innovative and cost-effective medical and surgical interventions for acute neurological disorders, added the Kuwaiti physician. He also mentioned that NCS develops standards for advanced fellowship training, program accreditation,

and physician certification in the subspecialty of neurological intensive care. In 2019, Dr Abulhasan was also granted "2019 Presidential Citation" award from NCS, making him also the first physician from the MENA region to acquire such a prestigious prize.

Established in 2002, NCS is a multidisciplinary, international organization with more than 2,800 members from 61 countries. Its main mission is to improve outcomes for patients with life-threatening neurological illnesses. NCS membership is com-



### During NCS 19th meeting in Chicago

prised of physicians, pharmacists, nurses, and advance practice providers who treat a wide range of neurocritical conditions.

### ENT Conference

In other medical-related news, the 43rd Conference of Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Surgery was held recently in Kuwait and reviewed the most prominent advanced surgical techniques in ENT surgeries. The virtual conference, which was held between October 29 and 30 under the aegis of Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah, is an important platform to provide cooperation opportunities and build bridges of communication with ENT experts and specialists, the Ministry's ENT Departments Council Head, Director of Zain Center and Conference Chairman Dr Mutlaq Al-Sihan said



CHICAGO: The Neurocritical Care Society (NCS) awards Dr Yasser Abulhasan its fellowship. —KUNA

in a press statement yesterday. The event attracted international consultants, in addition to Kuwaiti consultants and doctors, which made it an important gathering for exchanging knowledge and experience and a place to enable experts to keep pace with the latest studies and results in this rapidly developing field, he said.

The two-day conference handled modern surgical techniques in cochlear implants, micro-surgeries

for the ear, the latest techniques used in cochlear implants and the installation of audio equipment, he added. The conferees shed light on the negative effects of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on the sinuses and the resulting diseases and how to treat them surgically, as well as showing videos of various surgical operations and broadcasting live broadcasts of surgeries from Zain Center, the conference's chairman noted. —KUNA

## Kuwait's envoy takes part in festival on liberation anniversary

**WASHINGTON:** Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Friday took part in a festival held at the Bush School of Government and Public Service College in Texas State commemorating the 30th anniversary of the war of liberating Kuwait. The celebration featured some senior officials of administration of former president George H W Bush that included former Vice President Dan Quayle and Secretary of State James A Baker. During the festival, the ambassador stressed Kuwait's appreciation for the US efforts made to liberate the country 30 years ago, affirming that Kuwait will never forget the American stance during the war. He also lauded two events within the framework of the US-Kuwaiti ties: the liberation



WASHINGTON: Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah speaks during the conference. — KUNA photos



Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (right) with former US Vice President Dan Quayle (center) and Secretary of State James A Baker.

of Kuwait and the growing strategic relations between the two sides. Meanwhile, Quayle and Baker said that the then US president took the

right decision to liberate Kuwait 30 years ago. They expressed their satisfaction about the relations level between the two countries. —KUNA

## ACK, business council sign agreement

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

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

With this significant decision, both parties will receive the opportunity to participate in mutually coordinated educational and service activities where the utmost support, coordination and expertise will be exchanged between the two. The agreement with KBC will bolster ACK's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center to provide greater opportunities for the coming generations in the fields of



KUWAIT: Australian College of Kuwait and Kuwait Business Council in Dubai and Northern Emirates officials in a group photo during the event.

innovation and entrepreneurship

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

On the other hand, ACK is one of the first private universities in Kuwait, established in 2004 with the

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

## Fireman, officer hurt in Salmiya blaze

**KUWAIT:** A fireman and an officer were injured in a fire reported in Salmiya yesterday. The two were treated onsite as firemen extinguished the blaze, which was on the second floor of a six-storey building in the area, Kuwait Fire Force said yesterday. An investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.

Meanwhile, firemen managed to isolate and control a fire on a 70-foot yacht that was docked at Khairan Marina, after moving away other boats from the area. The fire was put out without injuries. Likewise, firemen responded to a call about water leaking into a 36-foot yacht. Two individuals were found in good health and secured by firemen. Similarly, Salmiya firemen responded to a call about



KUWAIT: A fireman battles a blaze inside a Salmiya building yesterday.

a sunken boat with 11 persons on board. Seven men on board were rescued without any injuries, KFF noted in a statement.

Separately, fire broke out inside a garage in Fahaheel Industrial area. Firemen responded to the



Firemen are seen tackling a blaze on a yacht.

call and fought the blaze, which started from a vehicle inside the garage, and were able to control the flames from spreading. No injuries were reported. Also yesterday, KFF reported that firemen put out a

blaze in a vehicle that slowly spread to five other vehicles in Sharq. No one was hurt, according to KFF, which noted that investigations were opened in each incident to reveal the cause of the fire.

### News in brief

#### MP Wasmī to leave soon for treatment

**KUWAIT:** MP Dr Obaid Al-Wasmī announced that he plans to leave Kuwait for treatment abroad as soon as the "first report on pardon is signed". In a post on his Twitter account yesterday, Dr Wasmī said that he wanted to "smile in Kuwait, not outside of it," renewing his message to "smile, you are in Kuwait".

#### Study on crime increase

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Interior Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah yesterday assigned the research center at the Saad Al-Abdullah Police Academy to prepare a comprehensive study about the increase in crime rates in society and find solutions for the problem. The minister instructed the society to cooperate with relevant state departments including the health, education, information, social affairs and Islamic affairs to come up with "swift solutions" and protect society from violence, the interior ministry said in a statement.

#### Oil price at \$83.70 pb

**KUWAIT:** The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 59 cents to \$83.70 per barrel on Friday, compared with \$83.11 pb the day earlier, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. At international oil markets, Brent crude rose by six cents to \$84.38 per barrel and so did West Texas Intermediate, going up to \$83.57 per barrel, up 15 cents.

#### Kuwait committed to UN

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait said it is totally committed to the payment of its financial contributions to the United Nations without any delay, urging other members to follow suit so that the UN can do its tasks properly. Member of Kuwait's Permanent Delegation at the UN Counsellor Abdulaziz Al-Ajmi made the remarks during a recent UN General Assembly debate on the international organization's financial position.

## NBK provides exclusive back-to-school offers from Eureka

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is keen to provide rewards to its customers all year round, according to their different lifestyles. In this context, the bank provides exclusive monthly offers in partnership with Eureka for Thahabi Package, Privilege and Private Banking Customers.

These monthly offers are available for NBK Customers when making purchases on Eureka website or app on specific days every month, using eligible NBK Visa Credit Cards including NBK Visa Infinite Privilege Credit Card, NBK Visa Infinite Credit Card, NBK-Kuwait Airways (Oasis Club) Visa Infinite Credit Card, and NBK-Kuwait Airways (Oasis Club) Visa Signature Credit Card.

In November, the discounts will last for three days and include the following products:

- 20 percent discount on Apple MacBook Air 2020
- 20 percent discount on Apple iPad Pro 2021 12.9" 128 GB WiFi (Gray)
- 10 percent discount on Apple AirPods Pro with wireless charging
- 10 percent discount on Smart Tank

- 15 percent discount on HP ink cartridge
- 8 percent discount on HP colored ink (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow)
- 15 percent discount on Samsung Galaxy S21Ultra 256 GB and 512 GB in Black and Silver
- 10 percent discount on Samsung Smartwatch

On this occasion, Mohammed Akram, Head of segments, Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait said: "We are keen to partner with leading brands to provide exclusive offers and services to our customers."

"We strive to provide special, exclusive offers for our customers all year round, as part of our endeavors to meet their needs and offer them a holistic, exceptional banking experience," Mohammed Akram added. Akram emphasized that NBK is committed to provide a unique range of benefits for its customers from NBK Credit Card holders, as well as to keep in touch with them to identify their expectations and meet their needs.

NBK Visa Credit Cards are the best payment method for the convenience they provide to customers, in addition to the various benefits when using their cards for shopping, including NBK Rewards Program, NBK Miles Program, Purchase Protection and Extended Warranty. Additionally, NBK Visa Credit Cards provide a unique lifestyle, and eligibility for exceptional campaigns all year round, which are always gain customers' satisfaction and interaction.

## Millions of users use KFH Quran App on smart phones

KUWAIT: The Holy Quran application, launched by Kuwait Finance House (KFH) on iOS and Android, stands as an added value that deepens the identity of the organization and contributes to the spread of the holy book of Allah. Also, it provides easy memorization and recitation process of the Holy Quran and highlights the meanings and interpretations of verses. The application has achieved an unprecedented and tremendous demand worldwide. Millions of people are using the application which has recorded the highest downloading ratio among similar applications. KFH is the first bank at the local and regional levels to place this application under the disposal of smart phone users.

KFH "Quran" application comprises several advantages which have rendered it as the center of interest. The application presents the Holy Quran in different colors that would allow the reader to read and recite the whole Quran easily. The application provides the facility to refer to the interpretation or translation of any of the Quran verses instantly. Also, it provides night reading advantage, and a report on the sequence of pages read and the reading time. The application contains the advantage of searching for verses text wise, in addition to several other advantages that provide easy and facilitated reading.

For Android devices, the application provides further additional functions e.g. vocal recitation by adding the best and most reputable reciters in the Arab world, verses

# Vintage cars on display at Marina Crescent

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Over 70 vintage vehicles were on display at the Marina Crescent on Friday as part of the season-opening event by the Q8 Old Cars Team. The event was sponsored by the Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem. Hundreds of visitors enjoyed taking photos inside the classic vehicles of different makers and models including Nissan, Chevrolet, Mini Cooper, Mercedes, Dodge, Ford and others.

Kuwait's heroes addressed inspirational presentations about their achievements. Faisal Al-Musawi, a diver with kinetic disability and who set a world record in scuba diving, narrated his success story. Yousef Al-Qallaf, a firefighter, spoke about his challenges in firefighting and winning a bronze medal in a world championship - the first Arab to win a medal at the competition.

Other teams also participated in the one-day event, including the Kuwait Owl Team, Tiger Squad Team, Expo 965 and others. The program also had competitions and prizes for the audience. All participating teams and the Q8 Old Cars Team members were awarded for their participation.



KUWAIT: Vintage vehicles on display at the Marina Crescent as part of an event hosted by the Q8 Old Cars Team. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## AUB organized virtual internship program for university students

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) provided a virtual internship program for several students of universities in Kuwait. This internship program was set up to reflect AUB's commitment to the local community, and its endeavor to enable Kuwaiti students to develop their skills and enhance their confidence to streamline the start of their careers in finance and banking area.

Several university students in Kuwait participated in the virtual internship program organized by the AUB, including Australian College of Kuwait (ACK), Gulf University for Science and Technology's (GUST), American University of the Middle East (AUM) and Kuwait University.

Commenting on the virtual internship program, AUB's Human Resources General Manager,

Naqeeb Amin said: "Throughout its long history, the Bank has gained great resilience and unlimited ability to adapt to various variables. Hence, we have devoted efforts to swiftly respond to the changing conditions in today's fast-paced world, especially in such exceptional circumstances posed by COVID-19 pandemic."

Amin said: "Through this virtual internship program, AUB managed to contribute to the development and advancement of university students' skills to achieve attunement between theoretical education and practical application, as well as acquiring experiences provided by professional bankers, which help students upgrade their abilities and skills to conform to the needs of the banking labor market."

Amin assured that AUB is keen to make efforts to develop local talents in both favorable and unfav-



Naqeeb Amin

orable economic conditions, within its commitment to its CSR to train and develop Kuwaiti skills and competencies. Therefore, the bank is keen to provide more digital training solutions that provide the highest degree of flexibility and help trainees to receive greater and more comprehensive internship opportunities without being constrained by distance or time, with adherence to provide trainees with the same level of interaction and normal theoretical and practical benefit.

Amin added: "AUB takes pride in its digital infrastructure and electronic training platform, within a unique system for the training and development based on the best international practices in this area. It is worth mentioning that AUB has been able to achieve great progress in digital advancement. In this context, Learning and Development Team launched the individual training plan, via the e-learning platform, Learning Management System (LMS) which SAP provides for online training courses, in addition to designing easy-to-learn and effective internship programs to improve the opportunities and effectiveness of training provided by the bank."

## Burgan Bank hosts seminar on breast cancer

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank has organized a breast cancer awareness seminar for its employees in collaboration with Kuwait Hospital. The initiative supports the Bank's strategic focus on employees' health and well-being, and its endeavors to contribute at a larger scale to raising society's awareness about major health issues.

The seminar was organized by the Internal Communications Unit - Human Resources and Development, in line with the Bank's internal health and wellness initiatives, to contribute to raising the female employees' awareness around the importance of breast cancer's early detection through regular screening. The seminar was an opportunity to share medical guidance and advice and highlight key information and facts related to breast cancer including the types, symptoms, causes, risk factors, treatments, and prevention methods.

Reema Al-Asbahi, Senior Manager - Internal Communication and Employee Engagement commented "Burgan Bank is dedicated to developing a supportive internal environment that protects and boosts all the aspects of employees' health and wellbeing. As we are particularly driven to supporting our female

employees, we have collaborated with Kuwait Hospital to offer a 55% discount on mammograms to encourage regular checkups. We have also organized this seminar to contribute to spreading awareness on one of the deadliest cancers for women, and to help advance the collective fight against it."

Dr Dalal Al Aradi, General Surgery Consultant at Kuwait Hospital stressed that "Breast cancer affects 1 out of 8 women, all age categories included, with 11 % of women diagnosed with cancer under 40. It is therefore crucial to include regular screening in any woman's health routine checkups as the percentage of remittance and complete recovery increases the earlier the disease is detected. Initiatives similar to this seminar should be encouraged to help communicate largely around breast cancer and share accurate and medical information that can save lives. We are glad to collaborate with Burgan Bank to contribute to maximizing the benefits of the awareness messages shared with the employees, by spreading the educative understanding of the disease to a larger segment of the community."

Burgan Bank is dedicated to contributing to positive change in Kuwait through social, educational, cultural and health strategic programs aligning its actions as a leading Kuwaiti financial institution with the needs and interests of the community. It will pursue its initiatives related to promoting the overall community wellbeing and supporting the national health plans on fighting major diseases and threats to public health.



Smoke bombs, floods, virus fears as Glasgow readies for COP26

## Turkey pressing US for F-16 after F-35 plan killed

Page 6

Page 7



HUMERA: A damaged tank stands abandoned on a road near Humera, Ethiopia. — AFP

# Ethiopia's war hits one-year mark

## Fighting rages on; threat of famine looms

**ADDIS ABBAB:** Nearly a year ago, as the world awaited the outcome of the US presidential elections, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed deployed troops in Ethiopia's Tigray region. Abiy promised that the operation, launched November 4 2020, would be swift and targeted. Instead, it has devolved into a prolonged war marked by massacres, mass rapes and a looming threat of famine.

### How did we get here?

The 2019 Nobel Peace Prize winner said from the beginning that his objective was to detain and disarm leaders of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the regional ruling party which dominated national politics for three decades before Abiy took office. The move was unavoidable, he said, after the TPLF staged attacks on army camps in the region.

But it also followed months of tensions, with TPLF leaders complaining of being sidelined by Abiy's government. After a few weeks of air strikes and heavy fighting, federal forces took control of the regional capital Mekele in late November and Abiy declared victory. Yet in the months that followed, the TPLF mounted a successful counterinsurgency. By late June the rebels controlled most of the region again, prompting the military to largely withdraw and Abiy's government to declare what it

described as a "humanitarian ceasefire".

### Where is the fighting now?

The TPLF then launched offensives into the neighboring Afar and Amhara regions. Its leaders said their goals were to deny Abiy's forces the chance to regroup and re-enter Tigray and to break what the UN describes as a de facto blockade on humanitarian aid. Abiy, in turn, called for mass mobilization against the TPLF, which his government has officially designated a terrorist group. In recent weeks fighting has been concentrated in Amhara, south of Tigray. Much of northern Ethiopia is under a communications blackout and access for journalists is restricted, making battlefield claims difficult to verify independently.

TPLF spokesman Getachew Reda has not ruled out a march on Addis Ababa, telling AFP: "If that's what it takes to break the siege on Tigray, why not?" Tigray itself has seen little fighting since late June, yet the Ethiopian air force has carried out a

series of air strikes there in recent days. The government says the strikes target rebel facilities including training centers, but the TPLF denounce a disregard for civilian lives. Over a dozen people have died since the campaign began this month.

### The humanitarian situation

More than 400,000 people in Tigray have "crossed the threshold into famine", a senior UN official told the Security Council in July, and conditions have deteriorated since then. Basic services including electricity, banking and telecoms "are being denied by the Ethiopian government", a US State Department spokesperson told AFP in September, pointing to "indications of a siege".

The UN estimates 100 trucks of food and non-food aid must reach Tigray each day to meet needs on the ground, yet the actual number entering the region since mid-July amounts to just 15 percent of that. Earlier this month AFP documented starvation deaths in many parts of Tigray, citing internal documents from aid groups. The government blames the

TPLF for Tigray's aid woes, saying its incursions into Afar and Amhara have obstructed deliveries. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been displaced by the fighting there, raising fears that large-scale suffering may be spreading well beyond Tigray.

### The prospects for peace

Abiy's government has framed the war as an internal "law enforcement operation" and resisted mediation efforts including early appeals from high-level African Union envoys for talks with Tigrayan leaders. In August the AU appointed former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo as high representative for the Horn of Africa as part of a drive to promote regional peace and security.

Diplomats say Obasanjo is trying to facilitate talks, but success is far from assured. "It is hard to see these particular protagonists sitting around the table and hashing things out," said William Davison, senior Ethiopia analyst for the International Crisis Group. "I think, depressing as it is, more and more this does look to be playing out on the battlefield." Even if talks materialize, "it would be delusional for anyone to think that things will go back to 'normal' after so much bloodshed and destruction," said Awet Weldemichael, a Horn of Africa security expert at Queen's University in Canada. — AFP



**Prolonged war marked by mass rapes, massacres**

## Defiant Sudanese march against bloody coup

**KHARTOUM:** Thousands of Sudanese anti-coup protesters took to the streets yesterday to support the country's democratic transition which a military takeover and deadly crackdown derailed. The protests come almost a week after the military last Monday detained Sudan's civilian leadership, dissolved the government and declared a state of emergency, leading to a chorus of international condemnation.

Earlier demonstrations against the coup were countered by a security response that has left at least nine protesters dead and wounded around 170. Despite the bloodshed, organizers yesterday aimed to stage a "million-strong" march against the military's power grab, similar to mass protests that led to the toppling of autocrat Omar Al-Bashir in 2019. Hundreds gathered in the capital Khartoum and its twin cities of Omdurman and Khartoum-North, according to witnesses and AFP correspondents.

"No, no to military rule", and "We are free revolutionaries and we will continue the road" of democratic transition, they chanted in Khartoum. Others held posters of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, ousted by the military, with slogans saying, "Don't back down." In east Khartoum, protesters set car tyres on fire and held posters reading, "It's impossible to go back", while in the city's southern district banners expressed concern that the country might end up back on Washington's state sponsors of terrorism list.

That designation, accompanied by years of crippling sanctions, was lifted only last December which opened the way this year to more than \$50 billion in debt relief and renewed largesse from the International Monetary Fund

and World Bank. After the coup, the World Bank suspended aid to Sudan. Other protesters called for "freedom to the members of cabinet" who have been detained since the putsch. Several pro-democracy activists have also been arrested following the takeover led by General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, Sudan's de facto leader since the ouster of Bashir which came at the cost of more than 250 lives.

On the eve of the rallies, a US official put this week's death toll at between 20 and 30, adding the protests would be a "real test" of the intentions of Sudan's military. "We call on the security forces to refrain from any and all violence against protesters and to fully respect the citizens' right to demonstrate peacefully," the official in Washington said on condition of anonymity. A similar call came from Britain's special envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Robert Fairweather. "The security services and their leaders will bear responsibility for any violence towards any protesters," he said on Twitter. On Friday, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on the military "to show restraint and not to create any more victims."

Phone lines were largely down by yesterday, as security forces deployed in large numbers and blocked bridges connecting the capital, Khartoum, with its sister cities. They set up random checkpoints on main roads, randomly frisking passers-by and searching cars. Before the protests began Sudan's information ministry, which backs a civilian government, warned in a statement "that the coup authority is planning to fabricate instances of destruction to justify its excessive violence". — AFP

## Ethiopia PM: From peace laureate to wartime ruler

**ADDIS ABABA:** Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power vowing sweeping reforms that earned him a Nobel Peace Prize, before becoming mired in a brutal internal conflict that threatens to destabilize the entire Horn of Africa region. As the war in northern Ethiopia drags into its second year, the 45-year-old's image as a modern peacemaker lies in tatters and the surge of hope that accompanied his initial appointment in 2018 has faded, at least for his critics.

When the deeply ambitious Abiy, who was sworn in for a new term this month after a landslide win in June elections, picked up his Nobel in 2019 for Ethiopia's rapprochement with neighboring Eritrea, he declared: "War is the epitome of hell for all involved." But he remains defiant despite mounting international alarm over the conflict that has killed thousands of people and pushed hundreds of thousands to the brink of starvation.

"It's hard to imagine a greater fall from grace than Abiy Ahmed's. From the celebrated heights of a Nobel Peace Prize to a pariah in just two years," said Cameron Hudson, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Africa Center. "This is certainly not the first time the West has been seduced by the promise of a next-generation leader. And it's not the first time we have been let down by that leader."

Abiy blames the former ruling party of the Tigray region, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), for starting the war, and there is considerable domestic support for what his government long termed a "law enforcement operation". While visiting soldiers at the front during Ethiopian New Year celebrations in September, he declared that the TPLF was doomed to certain defeat. "The current bandits are target practice for us... by practising on them, we will build a strong military," he said.

### Seizing the moment

Born in the western town of Beshasha to a Muslim father and Christian mother, Abiy has



JIMMA: In this file photo, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is offered a bouquet of flowers by a child as he disembarks the plane upon his arrival in Jimma during his visit to the city. — AFP

described sleeping on the floor in a house with no electricity or running water. Fascinated with technology, he joined the military as a radio operator while still a teenager. In his Nobel speech, he recalled his time during the 1998-2000 war with Eritrea, saying his entire unit was wiped out in an artillery attack that he survived only because he had left a foxhole to get better antenna reception. He rose to lieutenant-colonel before becoming the first head of Ethiopia's cyberespionage Information Network Security Agency. Then came stints as a lawmaker and minister of science and technology. Abiy's path to high office can be traced to late 2015. A government plan to expand Addis Ababa's administrative boundaries into the surrounding Oromia region was seen as a land grab, sparking protests led by the Oromos, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, and the Amharas, the second-largest.

The TPLF-dominated ruling coalition imposed states of emergency and carried out mass arrests, but the protests continued. When then-prime minister Hailemariam Desalegn abruptly resigned, coalition members chose Abiy to become the first Oromo prime minister in 2018. He released dissi-

dents from jail, apologized for state brutality and welcomed home exiled groups-part of a democratic rebirth meant to culminate in the most competitive elections in Ethiopia's history.

### Road to war

But all the while, Tigray was seething. The TPLF did not take kindly to Abiy's perceived attempts to sideline them. When Abiy dissolved the ruling coalition and formed the Prosperity Party in 2019, the TPLF refused to go along and defied him by holding "illegal" regional elections last year. In November 2020, Abiy ordered troops into Tigray, a move he said was in response to TPLF attacks on federal army camps.

He promised a swift victory, but fighting has spread into neighboring regions and there have been many reports of atrocities including massacres and mass rape. Critics say Abiy has embraced the same authoritarianism many hoped he would end, overseeing mass arrests and abuses by security forces. Gone are the heady early days of "Abiymania"—now his opponents openly disrespect him. "He started to behave as a lost child at a crossroads." — AFP

## International

# How influencer and army veterans raised \$7 million to rescue Afghans

## An extraordinary operation to evacuate terrified Afghans

ENGLEWOOD: When Instagram influencer Tommy Marcus read that Kabul had fallen to the Taliban he sprang into action, without knowing that like-minded US veterans were also desperate to do something. "I was more horrified and disgusted and just wanted to help," recalls the 26-year-old New Yorker, who is known to his 800,000 followers as "Quentin Quarantino."

With just a few clicks on his phone from his home in New Jersey, Marcus started what would become an extraordinary operation to evacuate hundreds of terrified Afghans. In three days he raised \$7.2 million and rallied to his cause retired soldiers and former diplomats, as well as experts in asylum law, humanitarian aid and airlifts from war zones.

It is a plotline worthy of a Hollywood movie: a combination of the power of social networks, rapid crowd-funding and the logistical efficiency of American veterans that led to the rescue of 565 Afghans. AFP has spoken to several of the main actors of "Operation Flyaway," which was launched on August 17 and is ongoing, and reviewed contractual and budgetary documents related to chartered planes and arrivals in the United States. Messages from Afghan women, children, LGBTQ people, social workers, journalists and interpreters to organizers begging for help to flee the country have also been read.

Marcus, known on social media for humorous memes that target ex-president Donald Trump and tackle issues related to vaccinations and abortion, was stunned by the images of desperate Afghans hanging from a US military plane that was taking off from Kabul airport. He was overwhelmed by photos and messages from Afghans pleading with him to act, including one from a woman who wrote: "For

humanity and justice accept me as a refugee in a safe country."

### 'Liberal-pacifist'

Marcus posted a message to his followers saying he wanted to help but wasn't sure how, and within a few minutes "thousands and thousands" of responses poured in, he told AFP. Among them was one from a longtime fan who claimed to be working with a group that recently got a few hundred people evacuated to France and was now out of money, according to Marcus.

The influencer urged his followers to help him raise at least half a million dollars in 24 hours.



**\$7.2 million raised in 3 days**

Instead, \$5 million poured in, he said. Within three days, he had received more than \$7 million, with 123,000 people donating an average of \$59 each. "It was a crazy viral burst of money," said Marcus, who then needed to figure out what to do with it. The self-described "liberal-pacifist" turned to war-zone professionals for guidance.

He was approached by Raven Advisory, a former



KABUL: A man rides a motorcycle with a boy and three girls along a street in Kabul city. — AFP

Pentagon and CIA security services agency, and enlisted Karen Kraft, a former US Army Reserve officer turned TV producer who heads a veterans association. "Everybody had a shared sentiment that we have to do something," said Kraft, the backbone of the operation. Jason Hatch, a retired army officer and ex-diplomat, took responsibility for finding papers of Afghans already in transit in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kosovo, Uganda and Albania. "This

is the purest thing that I've ever done," Hatch said.

They spent \$4.79 million on chartering several flights that helped rescue the 565 Afghans. The money was shared between several charter companies including Egyptian firm Mayfair and Kiwifit, owned by New Zealand businessman Nicolas Steele. US authorities have previously investigated Steele on suspicion of fraud, according to the Washington Post. — AFP

### News in brief

#### 14 dead in village attack

BUNIA: At least 14 civilians were killed in north-eastern DR Congo early on Friday when their village was attacked by two armed groups, monitors said. The deaths occurred in the village of Gina in Ituri province, "during an incursion by the #CODECO-UDPC and ALC" groups, the Kivu Security Tracker (KST) said on Twitter. "They also attacked #Nizi, in the same territory," it said. The assault began at 4:00 am and lasted for seven hours until the armed forces regained control of the area, one of its specialists told AFP, asking not to be identified. Ituri is one of three eastern provinces in the vast Democratic Republic of Congo battling armed groups. The gold-rich province has a long history of ethnic feuds, some of which are rooted in long-standing herder-farmer disputes over cattle. — AFP

#### Dozens of homes destroyed

BANGKOK: Myanmar troops on Friday shelled a restive western town, with an ensuing fire destroying dozens of houses, as well as the office of charity Save the Children, witnesses and local media reported. The Southeast Asian country has been in chaos since a coup in February, with more than 1,200 people killed in a crackdown on dissent, according to a local monitoring group. Across Myanmar, "self-defense forces" have sprung up to take on the junta, escalating attacks and bloody reprisals. Junta troops shelled the town of Thantlang in western Chin state after a confrontation with a local self-defense force, according to Khit Thit media and The Chindwin news outlet. — AFP

#### Dozens detained in India

GURGAON: Dozens of people, many from Hindu right-wing groups, were arrested Friday in India for disrupting Muslim prayer gatherings, local media reported, in the latest sign of growing sectarian tensions in the country. Hindu groups have been pressuring authorities for weeks in the northern city of Gurgaon on the outskirts of New Delhi to stop Muslims offering Friday prayers in open spaces. On Friday police deployed several hundred extra officers and arrested at least 30 people as crowds of locals and Hindu groups chanted slogans, local media reported. Critics have accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party of persecuting minorities, including India's 200-million-strong Muslim population. Modi's government rejects having a Hindu agenda and insists that people of all religions have equal rights. — AFP

#### WHO's Tedros set to stay

GENEVA: Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, one of the most prominent figures during the COVID-19 pandemic is the sole candidate to lead the World Health Organization once his current term expires, the WHO announced. In his application letter, the Ethiopian former health and foreign minister said COVID-19 had "ravaged the world" and in a second term, he wanted to make sure the planet was "truly ready" to deal with another such crisis. Elected to the WHO leadership in 2017, his five-year mandate runs out in August. "A single candidate was proposed by member states by the September 23, 2021 deadline: Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus," the WHO said in a statement. Tedros was nominated by 28 countries, the UN health agency said. —

## Turkey pressing US for F-16 after F-35 plan killed

WASHINGTON: The United States is discussing Turkey's request to buy F-16 fighters after a deal for more advanced F-35s was scrapped due to Ankara's purchase of a Russian missile system, officials said. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on October 17 that Ankara wants to buy the cheaper F-16s using the \$1.4 billion it allotted for the cancelled F-35 deal. But one US official said that any possible F-16 order could be dogged by the same issue that forced the cancellation of the F-35s: Turkey's decision to buy an S-400 missile system from Russia. The S-400, used to track and shoot down attacking aircraft, was seen as a threat to the F-35 joint strike fighter program adopted in several NATO countries.

US defense officials met in Ankara Wednesday with Turkish counterparts to resolve remaining issues from the F-35 program, and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke Thursday with Turkish counterpart Hulusi Akar, saying in a statement that the Pentagon recognized "Turkey's military modernization needs." The F-16 request could be discussed when US President Joe Biden meets with Erdogan on the sidelines of the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow which begins on Sunday.

### Russian intelligence platform

According to Turkish media, the country wants to buy 40 F-16s and kits to upgrade 80 warplanes



ARIZONA: F-16's fly over Phoenix International Raceway during the national anthem before the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series in Avondale, Arizona. The US is discussing Turkey's request to buy F-16 fighters after a deal for more advanced F-35s was scrapped due to Ankara's purchase of a Russian missile system. — AFP

in its current fleet. In 2002 Turkey joined several other NATO allies who agreed to buy the F-35, and five years later reached a deal to participate in its production, an agreement worth potentially billions of dollars to Turkish industry. But just as the United States was preparing to deliver the first two of 100 aircraft planned for the Turkish air force, in 2017 Ankara announced it was buying an S-400 battery. One week after the Turkish ministry of defense received the first delivery of S-400 components in July 2019, Washington announced the cancellation of Turkey's F-35 program.

US officials said the presence of the S-400 would allow the Russians-NATO's primary adversary to collect information on the aircraft's crucial stealth capabilities. "Turkey cannot field a Russian intelligence collection platform in proximity to where the F-35 program makes, repairs, and houses the F-35," said Pentagon Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition Ellen Lord at the time. Five months later, Washington slapped sanctions on Turkey's Presidency of Defense Industries, which is in charge of defense technology imports, for violating US sanctions on Russia. — AFP



MENLO PARK: People visit a newly unveiled logo for 'Meta' - the new name for Facebook's parent company, outside Facebook headquarters in Menlo Park. — AFP

## Meta: Facebook's high-stakes bet to save itself

WASHINGTON: Facebook's name change offers a convenient diversion as scandal plagues the platform, but the new handle is also key to the firm's costly effort to save itself from very real threats, experts said. Jokes and vitriol poured in after CEO Mark Zuckerberg unveiled the new corporate handle "Meta," with critics blasting it as a transparent effort to distract from its whistleblower crisis.

But Zuckerberg argued the name demonstrates the company's commitment to building its "metaverse," a virtual reality version of the internet that would make online experiences - like chatting with a friend or attending a concert - feel face-to-face. Making a success of the aspirational ambition though would help address real, long-term threats like an eroding youth user base, regulatory scrutiny and even the sway fellow giants like Apple hold over Facebook.

"With this announcement Mark Zuckerberg revealed his end game: He's making a play to control the future of the internet," said Evan Greer, director of digital advocacy group Fight for the Future.

Zuckerberg said the firm's metaverse investment will take a \$10 billion bite out of the company's profit this year, and earlier this month Facebook announced plans to hire 10,000 people in the European Union over the next five years for the project. Zuckerberg's pitch of an immersive, virtual world of real-looking concerts, sports and meetings that can be attended via a headset are, even he admits, a ways off.

Since the launch a year ago of the Quest 2 virtual reality headset, from the Facebook-owned brand Oculus, about 1.87 million devices have been sold worldwide, according to researchers at Statista. At this point, they're mainly used to play immersive games, with controllers for a game of tennis, for example. Facebook has also begun building more informal spaces, such as "workrooms," where participants appear around a round table as personalized avatars that look like cartoon characters.

### Tangible change

Building up the metaverse will happen as the company undertakes what Zuckerberg called a "retooling" to focus on young adults - people aged 18-29. Facebook has been losing young people for years to other platforms - the rise of TikTok has been a particular threat - but it has continued to grow. However, as Zuckerberg's comments show, concern is building about keeping those people and the aim is that the metaverse will help. — AFP

## BBC unveils impartiality plan after UK criticism

LONDON: The BBC on Friday revealed plans to ensure the "highest editorial standards, including impartiality" across its output after warnings from the British minister in charge of its funding that it needed to change. The release of the plan comes after government ministers have taken aim at the broadcaster over the summer.

New Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries, who is leading talks over the corporation's funding, has called the BBC a "biased leftwing organization" and its license fee model a "completely outdated concept". The broadcasting giant commissioned a wide-ranging study on its reporting standards in the wake of revelations that former journalist Martin Bashir lied to Princess Diana in order to secure a bombshell interview with her in 1995.

Lead author Nicholas Serota said the BBC needed "to ensure that impartiality, accuracy, fairness and integrity are embedded more deeply across the organization." The broadcaster said it accepted the report's findings and issued an action plan for what it called its "biggest and most significant push" to ensure unbiased content. Senior staff should be pushed to "represent audiences from all parts of the UK, both on and off screen," the plan said.

It also included proposals to extend anti-bias training and quantitatively monitor impartiality. "In this country we have been justifiably proud of the standards of our national debate," BBC boss Tim Davie wrote in the Daily Telegraph on Friday. "The BBC has an important role to play. It is fundamental to our public service duty to ensure all voices and views across every part of the UK are heard," he added. Dorries earlier this month accused the BBC of a "lack of impartiality". — AFP

## International

# Beijing introduces new COVID-19 curbs, maintains zero-tolerance

## Flights, weddings cancelled as China tackles COVID outbreak

**BEIJING:** Beijing introduced new COVID-19 curbs yesterday to stamp out a "serious" outbreak as the Chinese capital maintains its strict zero-tolerance policy, with less than 100 days before it hosts the Winter Olympics. China's leading epidemiologist Zhong Nanshan said yesterday that authorities could contain a nationwide outbreak within a month-but also warned the "pandemic cannot be eradicated within a short period of time".

The outbreak has hit at least 14 of China's provinces and millions have been tested in the past week. The situation is "serious and complex" and the epidemic "is still developing rapidly", Mi Feng, spokesperson for the National Health Commission, told a press conference yesterday. In Beijing, authorities ordered all cinemas closed until November 14 in the capital's Xicheng district, which lies west of Tiananmen Square and is home to over a million people.

China announced 59 locally transmitted virus cases yesterday-the highest since mid-September-including two cases in Beijing linked to a tourist group infected in the north of the country. While the number is low compared to daily case counts in other countries, authorities are pushing Beijing to contain the virus ahead of the Games, which begin on February 4. The city-which hosted the Summer Olympics in 2008 - will become

the first to host both events. The new centre of the outbreak is 650 kilometers from Beijing, in the city of Erenhot, on the border with Mongolia.



### Outbreak hits at least 14 provinces

Some six million Chinese people in cities where the virus has been detected are now under travel restrictions. The country's nationwide train operator will suspend or limit routes in affected areas, state news agency Xinhua reported yesterday. Entry into numerous regions is now conditional on a negative test result-particularly for those coming from affected areas.

#### Flights, weddings cancelled

Beijing officials on Friday told residents to postpone weddings and keep funeral ceremonies short, as disease controls across China were tightened just months

before the Winter Olympics kicks off in the capital. The world's most populous nation has reduced infection numbers to a trickle since its initial epidemic last spring thanks to a zero-tolerance approach of border closures, targeted lockdowns and long quarantine periods.

But China is now grappling with flare-ups in a dozen regions linked to tourists, spurring officials to order millions to stay home, restrict inter-provincial travel and ramp up testing. Case numbers remain far lower than in most countries. But authorities are not taking any chances, with tens of thousands of people in Beijing - which will host the Winter Olympics in February - under lockdown after a handful of cases were detected.

Residents should "postpone weddings, keep funerals brief, don't organise banquets, and reduce unnecessary gatherings", deputy chief of the city's disease control centre Pang Xinghuo said at a Friday press conference. Tourist spots will further limit capacity, while the newly opened Universal Studios resort will enter a "state of emergency epidemic prevention", said Beijing's deputy publicity chief Xu Hejian, without giving further details.

Queues stretched down the roads outside Beijing's medical centers as people sought to comply with newly enhanced COVID controls. Software developer Tu Anling, 24, told AFP she needed a test before being

allowed to board a train to Nanjing, a city 1,000 kilometers to the south. "I initially arranged to meet friends here (in Beijing), but the recent outbreak made many suddenly say they're not coming," she said.

Many regions are demanding passengers show a negative test before entering, especially those from cities that have recently reported cases. Others told AFP they needed tests to sit academic or professional exams. With Beijing officials keeping a wary eye on outbreaks in other parts of China, around half of all flights at the capital's two main airports were cancelled Friday, according to Chinese tracking platform Feichangzhun.

On Thursday rail authorities ordered two Beijing-bound high-speed trains to stop and sent over 450 passengers to be tested after staff members were identified as close contacts of infected people. Fearful of outbreaks, a number of other cities have also strengthened COVID rules. Authorities in Harbin - the capital of the northeastern Heilongjiang province - warned 10 million residents against outbound travel and grounded a third of flights at the city's airport. About six million people are under lockdown across China including around four million in the northwestern city of Lanzhou and the Inner Mongolian county of Ejin, where around 35,000 people live.— AFP



**GLASGOW:** Activists gather at a 'Pilgrims Procession' - an opening ceremony to a series of non-violent direct actions being organized by the Extinction Rebellion climate activist action group at Glasgow Green near the Scottish Event Centre (SEC) in Glasgow. — AFP

## Smoke bombs, floods, virus fears as Glasgow readies for COP26

**GLASGOW:** A soft drizzle fell on a cluster of American climate activists as they set off smoke bombs in George Square in Glasgow's city centre. The clouds of white smoke were symbolically aimed at the heads of state beginning to arrive in Scotland's biggest city for COP26, the United Nations climate change conference which starts today.

The demonstration on Thursday night was one of the first in an expected multitude of protests and publicity stunts planned as tens of thousands of delegates pour into the city during the next fortnight. Home to around 635,000 people and still grappling with the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, locals appear divided in their feelings towards the event. "I am very proud that COP is being held in Scotland," said Isabelle Barkley, a Glasgow resident who strolled over to join the activists.

Barkley added she has previously seen Nelson Mandela speak here, as well as countless Scottish independence rallies and Black Lives Matter protests in recent years. In the coming two weeks the square, named after the 18th century British King George III, is set to be one of the main gathering areas for climate activists. On November 5, up to 100,000 protesters will rally in the square after marching through the city, according to organizers. "There is so much negativity in the world today," said Barkley. "We need to be positive, to remember that we can all do our bit for this. Eat less meat. Buy less plastic."

#### 'Increase in cases'

Heavy rainfall has lashed Glasgow as it prepares for the conference, which will be attended by more than 100

world leaders including US President Joe Biden. Although the city is famous for its rainy climate, the extent of the recent downpours has left some roads flooded, causing delays to public transport. As a security measure, police have blocked off the streets surrounding the summit venue - the Scottish Event Campus, known as the SEC Centre - beside the River Clyde, further inconveniencing locals. But for many, the overriding concern is that the huge global event, due to be attended by up to 25,000 delegates from 200 countries, could cause a surge in COVID-19 cases. Devi Sridhar, a professor of global public health at the University of Edinburgh and a member of the Scottish government's COVID advisory group, warns it is happening at the worst possible time. "A mass event (with major movement of people in & out) with an infectious virus will cause an increase in cases," she said on Twitter last week. If the predicted increasing infections "put stress on limited health services" then they could prompt the "need for further restrictions," Sridhar added.

#### 'Failure and cop-out'

Shaun Clerkin, a 60-year-old Glasgow resident watching the smoke bomb scenes in George Square, is pessimistic about the attendees reaching an agreement. "To be quite frank: I believe COP26 will be a failure and a cop-out," he said.

He also accused the event organizers of "infringing on the rights of everyday Glaswegians" and shielding visitors from the city's very real social problems. "We've got homeless people on our streets," Clerkin said. "We've got lots of people living in temporary accommodation: in hotels and bed-and-breakfasts. They are living in very substandard accommodation. "But at the end of day, the city council wants to hide the homeless and the poor from the delegates at the conference."

But for the climate activists in the square, the summit cannot be allowed to fail. "The outcome of COP26 here in Glasgow is nothing less than life or death for people around the world," says Andrew Nazdin, the protest's 33-year-old organizer. —AFP

## Modi invites Pope to India

**ROME:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday asked Pope Francis to visit India, a significant opening towards the head of the Catholic Church who has long sought an official invitation to the Hindu-majority country. Modi, 71, invited Francis during a meeting at the Vatican on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Rome. "Had a very warm meeting with Pope Francis. I had the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues with him and also invited him to visit India," Modi said on Twitter after the talks. The pope, 84, has been on record saying that he wants to visit India. The Vatican had even drafted a schedule for a papal trip several years ago, according to religious news website Crux. "Thank you very much for your visit. I'm happy, I'm very happy," a smiling Francis said as he grasped Modi's hand at the end of the visit, according to footage released by the Vatican. Modi replied: "I would like to see you in India." Francis, leader of the world's 1.3 billion Catholics, is hoping to push the defence of religious freedom in the world's second most populous country.

Activists say that religious minorities in India have faced increased levels of discrimination and violence since Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party

## US authorizes Pfizer vaccine for children

**WASHINGTON:** The United States on Friday authorized the Pfizer COVID vaccine for children aged five-to-11, paving the way for 28 million young Americans to soon get immunized. The decision came after a high-level medical panel advising the government this week endorsed the shots, ruling that the known benefits outweighed the risks of side-effects.

The United States follows only a handful of other countries including China, Chile, Cuba and the United Arab Emirates that are inoculating younger children with various vaccines. "As a mother and a physician, I know that parents, caregivers, school staff, and children have been waiting for today's authorization," said acting Food and Drug Administration chief Janet Woodcock in a statement. "Vaccinating younger children against COVID-19 will bring us closer to returning to a sense of normalcy."

The vaccine rollout should begin in earnest after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention convenes a panel on Tuesday to further discuss clinical recommendations. Pfizer and its partner BioNTech announced this week the US government had bought 50 million more doses as it works to protect children, including eventually those under five. In a clinical trial involving more than 2,000 participants was found to be more than 90 percent effective at preventing symptomatic disease. The vaccine's safety was also studied in more than 3,000 children, and no serious side effects have been detected in the ongoing study.

In this age group, the vaccine is given as two shots three weeks apart, dosed at 10 micrograms - a third what is given to older age groups. Severe COVID is rarer in children than adults, but far from non-existent. According to the CDC, there have been 8,300 COVID hospitalizations of children aged five-to-11 since the start of the pandemic, and 146 deaths. There have also been more than 5,000 pediatric cases of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), a rare but highly serious post-viral complication, including 46 deaths.—AFP



**LOS ANGELES:** The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is prepared for administration at a vaccination clinic in Los Angeles, California. The United States has authorized the Pfizer COVID vaccine for children aged 5-11 after a committee of experts found its benefits outweighed risks. — AFP

(BJP) came to power in 2014. While Muslims, who make up around 14 percent of the population, have borne the brunt, Christians, who account for just over two percent, have also suffered a rise in reported violent attacks. The last papal visit to India was made by Pope John Paul II in 1999.

#### 'Cordial'

Yesterday's Vatican visit was Francis and Modi's first meeting. A senior official in the prime minister's office told AFP the "very warm" talks-scheduled to last 20 minutes-went on for nearly an hour. In an unusually short note, the Vatican described it as "a brief conversation" in which "the cordial relations between the Holy See and India were discussed".

Modi's office said the leaders discussed "fighting climate change and removing poverty". There was no mention of the red-button issue of religious freedom. Under the pretext that Christians are seeking forcibly to convert Hindus, more than 300 violent incidents have been recorded this year, according to a report by a group of NGOs released this month. This included a reported attack on a prayer house by around 200 members of the BJP and Hindu groups in the northern state of Uttarakhand in early October. The local head of the BJP said the prayer house held "suspicious gatherings". At least three states run by the BJP have passed legislation aimed at preventing "forced conversion" and dozens of people have been arrested.—AFP

### News in brief

#### Bali 'suitcase murder' case

**DENPASAR:** An American woman convicted as a pregnant teenager of helping to kill her mother at an Indonesian luxury hotel was released from prison on Friday after six years behind bars. In a case dubbed the 'suitcase murder', Heather Mack was handed a 10-year jail term in 2015 while her boyfriend Tommy Schaefer got 18 years for the murder of Chicago socialite Sheila von Wiese Mack on the holiday island of Bali. Schaefer beat the 62-year-old victim to death with a fruit bowl during an argument at the five-star St. Regis resort. The couple then stuffed the woman's body into a suitcase and tried to flee with it in a taxi, but quickly abandoned the blood-soaked luggage. Mack, who was pregnant at the time of the crime, was found guilty on a lesser charge of assisting in the murder. — AFP

#### 3 security agents killed

**KANO:** Gunmen have killed three security agents in northwest Nigeria's Zamfara state, a spokesman said yesterday, in the latest violence in the volatile region. Around 150 gunmen known locally as bandits ambushed policemen and civil defense officers in Shinkafi district on Thursday, said Ikor Oche, the state's Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corp spokesman. "The bandits opened fire on a team of five police and civil defense personnel on patrol at around noon, killing two of our personnel and a policeman," Oche said. "The criminals burnt the patrol van along with the body of a civil defense officer who was driving the vehicle," he said. Two personnel escaped. Northwest and central Nigeria have been plagued by gangs who raid villages, kidnap residents, loot and burn homes. — AFP

#### US East Coast hit by flood

**WASHINGTON:** Flooding from heavy rain hit parts of the US East Coast on Friday, particularly the area around Washington, with potential for some of the worst damage in decades. The area stretching from the US capital north to Baltimore is facing "the biggest tidal flood events of the past 10-20 years," the National Weather Service said. It said that in some areas the damage could be the worst since that caused by Hurricane Isabel in 2003. "Tidal flooding, strong winds, and severe thunderstorms capable of producing damaging wind gusts and localized rainfall flooding will impact the region," the local office of the NWS said. Coastal flooding alerts have been issued from the state of Virginia all the way north to New Jersey. In the Maryland state capital, Annapolis, located an hour's drive from Washington on the Chesapeake Bay, the water came up to people's knees. — AFP

#### Queen Elizabeth's health

**ROME:** Queen Elizabeth II is in good spirits, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson stressed yesterday after doctors advised the 95-year-old monarch to rest for at least another fortnight. The Queen, who spent a night in hospital last week for "preliminary investigations", has since been following medical advice to recuperate and been conducting only light work. She cancelled a two-day trip to Northern Ireland last week while her appearance at the upcoming COP26 UN climate conference, which starts on Sunday in Scotland, has also been shelved. Following the latest advice, Buckingham Palace said Friday she would continue to carry out desk-based duties and some virtual audiences but no official visits in the next two weeks. "I spoke to Her Majesty and she's in very good form," Johnson told UK broadcaster Channel 4 in Rome, where he is attending a weekend G20 summit. — AFP



**VATICAN CITY:** Pope Francis welcomes Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a private audience at The Vatican. — AFP

# Business

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2021

## Zain participates in Global Digital Power Summit 2021

### Huawei organizes summit on the sidelines of GITEX Technology Week in Dubai

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, participated in the Global Digital Power Summit 2021, organized by Huawei on the sidelines of GITEX in Dubai, with the aim of enabling organizations to seize the opportunities inherent in renewable energy by relying on digital technologies to achieve sustainability goals.

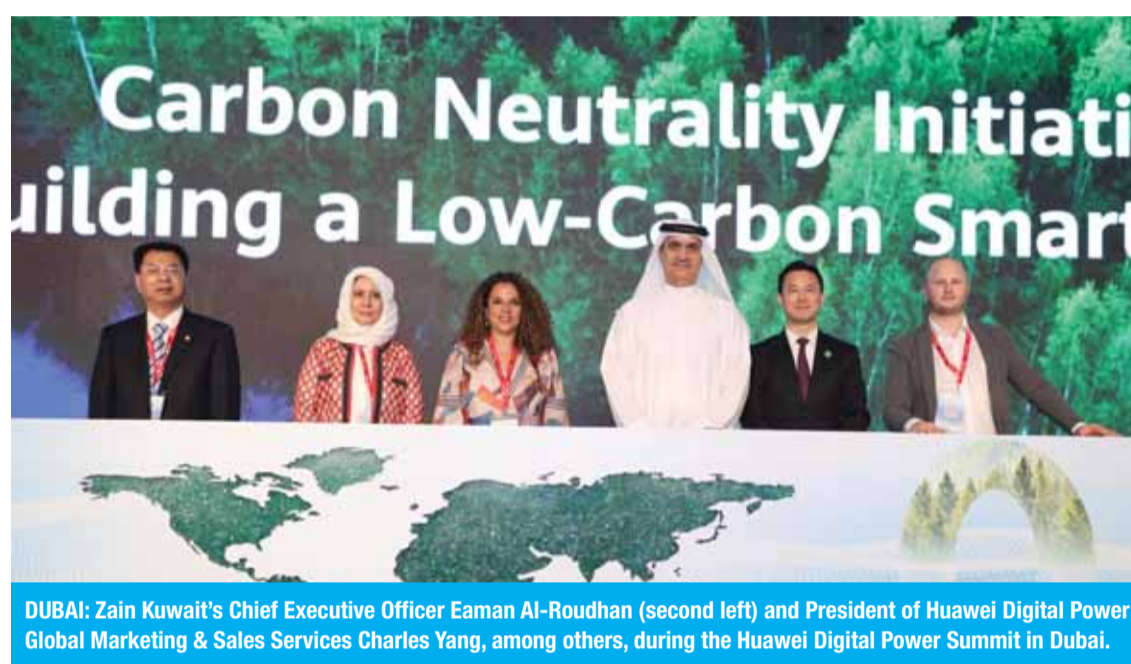
Zain's participation in the global efforts that deal with digital energy business, as hopes are pinned on advancing the digital transformation in the energy sector to get rid of carbon emissions, as it looks forward to the success of these efforts that seek to integrate digital and electrical technologies to generate safe energy, which is accelerating greater after the pandemic, indicating that the technological sectors are currently looking to rely on safe energy, especially with the stage of economic recovery as a contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The company stated that the telecommunications industry is taking collaborative measures to be fully transparent about the climate emissions resulting from that industry, and the sector has developed a roadmap for climate action at the industry level, in the aim of achieving "net-zero" greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, reducing carbon emissions by 50 percent on 2030 in line with the Paris Climate Agreement, as Zain is one of the 50 mobile telecommunications companies that make up more than two-thirds of mobile telecommunications companies in the world, to reveal the impact of its operations on the climate, such as its energy consumption rates and greenhouse gases emissions.

Zain Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan said during the participation in the Digital Energy Summit: "Zain realizes that the risks of climate change are an unfolding crisis that poses serious risks to the prosperity and well-being of the region. Zain is taking concerted actions in achieving its goals to reduce carbon emissions and is also committed in its operations to reducing its environmental footprint."

Zain shared its commitment towards initiatives that help in reducing environmental impact, as the company is serious about playing a proactive role in building its operations, as well as managing its products, services, and value chain to achieve its goals related to reducing carbon emissions.

Al-Roudhan added: "On the other hand, as part of our social contract, and in order to create more resilience, we intend to use our reach to build awareness of the communities in which we work



DUBAI: Zain Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan (second left) and President of Huawei Digital Power Global Marketing & Sales Services Charles Yang, among others, during the Huawei Digital Power Summit in Dubai.

- **Eaman Al-Roudhan:** Zain adopts technology sector initiatives to achieve carbon neutrality
- **Charles Yang:** Huawei's digital energy business is a vital support branch for achieving sustainability goals

on about climate-related issues, as our commitment involves taking decisive action to conserve energy, as well as helping the business sectors of our customers to contribute in reducing carbon emissions by adopting the latest digital solutions and using renewable energy sources." Al-Roudhan concluded: "The main objective of this participation is to invest our efforts and expertise with our partners in the technology sector to cooperate in achieving carbon neutrality, and to rely on new sources of energy such as solar energy, which will contribute to enhancing our competitiveness in the energy sector and providing a secure and sustainable future for the next generations."

Zain is keen on aligning its actions with the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report and with the goals of Paris Agreement, along with the recommendations of the Global Mobile

Telecommunications Union (GSMA), and through digital transformation initiatives, expanding the reach of the list of services as much as possible. The company is working to unleash many opportunities offered by the Sustainability Developmental Goals (SDGs), and as part of these efforts, Zain was keen to be a member of the 'Carbon Disclosure Project' (CDP), when it took a decisive step in disclosing its climate impacts and energy consumption, and its greenhouse gas emissions and is now rated in this global project in Management Scope (B), making it the first telecom company in the Middle East and Africa region to achieve this rating in the areas of addressing climate change. Charles Yang, President of Huawei Digital Power Global Marketing & Sales Services said: "The world awaits the potential of Gulf countries and the Middle East in sustainable digital energy, and

that in light of the efforts made by companies in the region to achieve sustainable digital transformation, the energy business will be Huawei's digital technology is one of the vital support branches to achieve sustainability goals and reduce carbon emissions."

Charles pointed out that about 40 percent of carbon emissions globally come from electrical systems, as many countries have set a timetable for achieving carbon neutrality, but we must design electrical systems based on new and safe sources of energy. Carbon neutrality is one of the priorities that Huawei's digital energy business focuses on in the Gulf region over the coming years, as Huawei's digital energy business was established earlier this year, as it aims to support the transformation of the work of various sectors, industries, and institutions to be green with low carbon emissions and costs, operational.

Huawei operates its digital energy business globally in five areas: smart photovoltaics, data center facilities, mPower power systems for electric vehicles, on-site power, and integrated power solutions.

Over the recent years, Zain has taken significant steps to address its environmental footprint by setting brief targets to reduce emissions, reduce waste, raise awareness, and identify the risks and opportunities of climate change. Zain is keen on contributing to regional and international efforts to help deal with policy and regulatory reforms such as those stipulated in the 'Paris Agreement' formulated by the United Nations, by setting emissions reduction targets, reducing waste and aligning with the 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs). Through a series of concerted actions, the company is demonstrating its commitment to ensuring that the impacts of any climate-related risks and potential negative impacts on the environment are mitigated and minimized.

To achieve its strategic objectives, Zain works to meet the expectations and needs of its customers and is always ready to offer new services that reach the level of its customers' aspirations in line with the development witnessed by the world in the technological fields. Zain seeks to play a decisive role as a digital communications provider amidst changes and technological transformations in the markets, by providing the latest solutions and services to accelerate the growth of the business environment, whether in the sector of large institutions or small and emerging businesses.

## Oil giant Saudi sees opportunity in climate crisis

RIYADH: The climate crisis does not look like good news for the oil industry, but Saudi Arabia is sniffing an opportunity that could help retain its energy dominance for decades. Not only is the world's top oil exporter ramping up production, it is also making a major play for the trillion-dollar emerging industries touted as a route to cleaner air.

Such a move by one of the globe's biggest polluters has not gone down well with environmental campaigners, with Greenpeace complaining of "greenwashing". But a push for the Saudi-promoted "circular carbon economy" is likely to feature at the United Nations' COP26 climate talks in Glasgow, starting today, after winning G20 approval during the kingdom's presidency of the body last year.

The message screamed out loud and clear at this week's Future Investment Initiative (FII) conference in Riyadh: the Saudis are sticking with oil, and they want it to be part of the solution. "I'm sure that people have noticed that we have been repositioning ourselves," Energy Minister Abdulaziz bin Salman told the thousands-strong gathering dubbed "Davos in the desert", featuring superstars of the business world. Prince Abdulaziz, who cast doubt on predictions of dwindling oil demand, was speaking after Saudi Arabia promised to go carbon-neutral by 2060 and pledged more than \$1 billion for circular carbon economy initiatives and to produce "clean" fuel for 750 million of the world's poor.

### 'Green era'

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, known as MBS, the de facto ruler who briefly appeared at the Riyadh conference, has called it a "green era" for the country, which is simultaneously raising oil production to 13 million barrels a day by 2027. Prince Abdulaziz flashed up a graphic on the big screen emphasizing Saudi plans for "pre-



RIYADH: Saudi Investment Minister Khalid Al-Faleh is pictured during an interview with AFP TV on the sidelines of the annual Future Investment Initiative (FII) conference in the Saudi capital Riyadh. —AFP

eminence in the global energy sector" through leadership in oil and gas, petrochemicals, renewables, hydrogen and carbon, listed in that order.

The UN has warned that even with aggressive cuts in greenhouse emissions, average world temperatures are poised to rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels by 2030, accelerating a devastating trend of drought, floods and extreme heat worldwide.

So circular carbon efforts—sucking carbon from the air and emissions, and repurposing it for products such as cleaner fuels and fertilizers—are needed to ease pollution further, experts say. "The circular carbon economy may not sound great to those advocating for a hard break with hydrocarbons, but it is the logical way to produce a number of low or zero-emission fuels," Karen Young, director of the Program on Economics and Energy at the Middle East Institute in Washington, said.

The problem with carbon capture and reuse lies in implementation: the technologies are unproven, they can be costly and hard to scale, and they will need vast investment to get off the ground. "The need is hundreds of billions (of dollars) a year," Bill Winters, group CEO of Standard Chartered Bank, told the FII. "Without a market to facilitate that transfer from the private sector into the hands of people that can actually get the carbon out of the environment, we won't get there." —AFP

## G20 seeks consensus on climate, economy and vaccines

ROME: Leaders of the world's most advanced nations met yesterday at the G20 summit in Rome hoping to hammer out a way forward on climate change and vaccine equality, with consensus still outstanding on the most pressing global issues. In their first in-person gathering since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the relaunch of the global economy will also be front and center on the two-day agenda, while the bloc is likely to approve a minimum tax rate for the biggest multinationals.

But looming over the talks is pressure to make headway on tackling global warming, before they join a wider group of world leaders gathering for the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, which starts today. "From the pandemic, to climate change, to fair and equitable taxation, going it alone is simply not an option," G20 host and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi told the assembled group of leaders ahead of the closed-door meeting.

G20 heads of state arrived yesterday morning at Rome's futuristic convention centre known as the "Nuvola" (cloud) in EUR, a southern Rome district built by Benito Mussolini to glorify his fascist regime, posing with frontline health workers in a group photo. The stakes are high, with United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres warning G20 leaders Friday to show "more ambition and more action" and overcome mistrust in order to advance climate goals. To be seen is whether the richest countries will agree to the goal of limiting global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, the most ambitious target out-

lined in the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change.

### 'Two debates in parallel'

Draghi and other EU leaders had hoped to arrive in Glasgow with a commitment in hand on that key threshold, as well as consensus on a mid-century target to reach carbon neutrality. "Next hours will be important to be able to solve outstanding issues," European Council president Charles Michel said ahead of the G20 meeting.

"There are two debates in parallel: should we increase our common ambition on the G20 level, strengthening the goals on climate neutrality... And also what are the concrete goals?" "I understand for some countries dependent on coal it is difficult to accept," Michel said, a veiled reference to China, the world's largest polluter and biggest user of coal.

Complicating the task for the G20 are considerable disparities between top world powers, from China, whose latest emissions-cutting plan has disappointed environmentalists, to Brazil, which insists on being paid to protect its share of the Amazon. While Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russia's Vladimir Putin did not travel to Rome, attending only by video link, US President Joe Biden hopes to revive his country's leadership on the world stage following the tumultuous Trump years.

Yet the Democrat faces a credibility test as his signature climate policy — part of a sweeping economic package — is held up amid infighting within his party in Congress. Biden met Friday with Pope Francis and then French President Emmanuel Macron, where he admitted that Washington had been "clumsy" in its handling of a submarine deal with Australia and Britain that left Paris out in the cold. Later, Biden was scheduled to meet Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson for talks on Iran, after Tehran said it would resume discussions with world powers next month on reviving the 2015 nuclear accord. —AFP



RIYADH: A handout picture provided by the Saudi Royal Palace shows Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz (right) and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (third right) virtually attending the G20 of World Leaders' summit from the capital Riyadh yesterday. —AFP



Business

# stc reports KD 213.8m revenue and KD 23.8m net profit for nine months

stc's strategy played a key role in enabling digital transformation in Kuwait: Abdulrahman

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc), a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its financial results for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2021.

On this occasion, Dr Mahmoud Ahmad Abdulrahman - stc's Chairman, stated: "Driven by the global direction towards digitization and the corporate digitalization outlook, stc's refreshed strategy had a significant role in enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the urgent need for a local digital society has been met by allowing businesses, educational institutions and individuals to remain connected through enhancing stc's network infrastructure in addition to providing online platforms and a variety of the finest and latest comprehensive digital services and products to the individual and business sectors to strengthen the customer experience. The continuous socio-economic changes and the increased demand on digital tools, products and services necessary to continue the daily business operations has prompted stc to enhance its corporate strategy as well as its risk management plans which aim at enabling the company to continuously carry out its operations during the various circumstances to ensure continuity of delivering the best quality and customer satisfaction".

Commenting on the financial results for the nine months period ended 30 September 2021, Dr Abdulrahman said: "Despite the slow recovery process impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, stc was able to record an increase in revenues by 2.3 percent during the first 9 months of 2021 to reach KD 213.8 million compared to KD 209.0 million for the same period in the previous year. This increase is mainly attributed to the Company's resilient performance and the implementation of its flexible strategy. On the other hand, high marketing and sales costs due to stiff market competition led to a decrease in EBITDA by 1.6 percent during the first nine months of 2021 compared to the same period of the previous year. The high depreciation associated with investments in the 5G network assets that the company has extensively utilized also had a significant effect, resulting in a 13.4 percent decrease in net profit during the first nine months of 2021 compared to the same period in the previous year."

### Corporate social responsibility

In terms of stc's corporate social responsibility, Dr Abdulrahman pointed out that the past year witnessed a number of social activities aimed at supporting the government's decisions to battle the pandemic after the cabinet eased travel restrictions, allowing vacci-



nated non-Kuwaiti travelers to return to the country. As part of the company's extensive corporate social responsibility, stc launched a series of campaigns and initiatives to assist customers in overcoming the challenges that appeared in light of the unexpected circumstances the country was going through.

stc's CSR program has consistently focused on supporting causes and initiatives that directly impact the Kuwaiti community. This has provided the Company with the opportunity to engage with communities across all levels of society, primarily focusing on the areas of health, environment, entrepreneurship, sports, and education. Based on its key values, the Company has set a long-standing commitment to consistently implement the initiatives under its CSR program, whether it is through annual agenda, sponsorships, or cause-driven campaigns.

With regards to Company's financial results, engineer Maziad Alharbi - stc's Chief Executive Officer, commented: "stc was able to enhance its operating performance due to the world-wide fundamental changes imposed by the COVID-19 crisis, which increased the demand for the traditional communication and digital services. Whereby, stc has been able to sustain the revenue growth achieved throughout this year by leveraging on the 5G network's capabilities and efficiency. With the recent implementation of the returning to normal life process in Kuwait, stc's dedicated team has proved its professionalism, enthusiasm and devotion towards accelerating the operational performance of stc's B2B and B2C segments. This was represented in providing integrated technical solutions that serve the latest corporate and individual needs for the digital tools that became an integral part of our daily life. On the other hand, the increased demand on the ICT sector resulted from current global trend towards the use of IT systems and security, IoT, cloud computing, big data, storage as well as security services amplified the competition in the telecommunication and ICT industries. In this regard, stc is currently keen on enhancing its IT infrastructure further by hiring the top expertise in the ICT sector besides harnessing the business, profes-

sional, service delivery and project management capabilities in order to develop new business models that will aid the company to enhance, produce and provide comprehensive enterprise database solutions. Thus, stc's updated strategy has reflected the significant need for providing innovative, scalable and diversified technological and IT communications solutions to support the growing demand for those services in order to enhance stc's operational and financial performance in future periods".

Alharbi added, "stc's EBITDA reached KD 57.0 million during the first nine months of 2021 compared to KD 57.9 million during the same period of 2020. Whereas, EBITDA margin reached 26.6 percent in the first nine months of 2021. Accordingly, stc reported net profit of KD 23.8 million (earnings per share of 48 fils) with a profit margin of 11.1 percent in the first nine months of 2021.

ers through adopting a balanced and effective financial policy in relation to the operational and capital expenditure, stc is opt to capitalize on its cost optimization program to achieve better results and enhance its profitability."

The first nine months of 2021 witnessed a number of operational achievements, whereby stc launched a raffle draw of many prizes for customers who subscribe to new commitment plans and those who renew their current plans through zeed offer.

The year witnessed an extraordinary event for stc, whereby, the Company received the approval from the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority's (CITRA) to launch the first-of-its-kind mobile virtual network operator (MVNO) license to launch Virgin Mobile Kuwait in partnership with Virgin Mobile Middle East & Africa. Virgin Mobile Kuwait will operate using stc's network, with

The financial results for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2021		
Total Revenue	KD 213.8	mm
EBITDA	KD 57.0	mm
Net Profit	KD 23.8	mm
EPS	48	Kuwaiti fils
Assets	KD 394.0	mm
Shareholder's Equity	KD 216.0	mm
Book Value	433	Kuwaiti fils
Customer base	1.9	mm

Considering Company's financial position, total assets reached KD 394.0 million as of 30 September 2021, while total shareholders' equity reached KD 216.0 million, with a book value of 433 Kuwaiti fils per share. stc boasts a strong financial solvency position, considered to be amongst the best in comparison to telecom companies in the Middle East. Furthermore, stc's customer base stood at 1.9 mn customers as of end of September 2021."

Alharbi noted: "stc's financial results for the first nine months of 2021 demonstrates company's ability to open up for new areas of improvements and sustain its position as the second largest telecom operator in the Kuwaiti telecom market with a revenue market share of approx. 35 percent. With the ongoing repercussions and challenges we are facing due to the COVID-19 crisis that are still affecting most of the vital sectors worldwide, the economic situation is impeding the recovery process of corporates' operational and financial performance. While the company is mainly concerned about adding value to its customers and achieving good returns for its sharehold-

ers through adopting a balanced and effective financial policy in relation to the operational and capital expenditure, stc is opt to capitalize on its cost optimization program to achieve better results and enhance its profitability."

stc acting as a Host Facilities Based Provider "FBP" with Virgin Mobile Kuwait, offering prepaid plans to users, and making it the first virtual telecom service in the country. Solutions by stc also announced its partnership with Datumcon, a Gulf-based artificial intelligence (AI) and data Science Company, to bring the benefits of AI-enabled video analytics to businesses in Kuwait. Additionally, solutions by stc launched a new promotion especially tailored to support small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) with dedicated data access (DDA) and dedicated internet access (DIA) at competitively low prices. Finally, it is worth mentioning that during the past nine months, the Company announced the launch of its all-new business website featuring a new look and feel, as well as innovative features that complement the unique experience for B2B customers. The new website was specifically designed with the objective of delivering a world-class experience for customers, while meeting their diverse business needs through improved access to a variety of solutions."

## Marginalized Ivorians lament 'curse' of oil

JACQUEVILLE, Ivory Coast: African governments typically hail the discovery of oil and gas as a blessing, but poor villagers in southern Ivory Coast are among those who say it can also be a curse. On the petroleum-rich coastline of Jacqueline, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) from Ivory Coast's economic hub of Abidjan, locals say they have yet to benefit from a decades-old bonanza.

Workers are busy setting down a third pipeline, cutting across farms and villages, to help bring gas from offshore rigs to power stations. But in the village of Addah, found at the end of a bumpy, dusty road, people say they have yet to see any trickle-down from the boom and complain the whole issue is shrouded in secrecy. "I don't understand why a village that has an oil rig has no fire station and no secondary school, or why the hospitals don't have supplies," said Jean Biatchon N'Drin, 32.

"We don't see any benefit from oil on our lives. They have been extracting oil since I was born, and I live in poverty," said Duval Nevry, 27. "We feel that we have been abandoned-the state has forgotten us," he said, gazing out to the rigs, visible from the village's sandy slopes. Fisherman Justin Dagry Yessoh said fishing yields had been hit by the oil and gas development.

"Fishing hasn't been profitable since the pipelines came along," he said.

### Role of state

Ivory Coast is the world's biggest supplier of cacao, the precursor of chocolate, accounting for 40 percent of the global market. But it remains just a small producer of oil, pumping out 36,000 barrels per day in 2019, from a field off Jacqueline that is exploited by several foreign majors. In 2018, crude production was worth around 500 billion CFA francs (\$890 million, 762 million euros), according to a campaign group called the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

Much flak has been directed at the Oil and Gas Council, an entity set up in 2008 gathering elected officials and members of the public to help development using petroleum revenue.

Its president, Leon Lobo, said the council had funded the construction of homes, clinics, water towers and schools, for an overall cost of 800 million francs. But the council depended on the state for funding, he explained. "We do not get money from the oil companies for our projects," he said.

Jacquerville's senator, Francis Lezou Bombro, agreed that state control was a financial chokepoint.

"If you want to help the Jacqueline region (through the energy boom), everything has to go through the state-to the point that if the council wants to give a need, it has to get state approval." Seeking to lure investment, Ivory Coast takes only a small cut of income from foreign majors.—AFP



## Zambia presents budget aiming to end debt crisis

LUSAKA: Zambia's new government laid out its plan to restore financial stability on Friday, presenting a new budget as it engages with international lenders over its crippling debt. Finance Minister Situmbeko Musokotwane unveiled a \$9.8 billion (8.5 billion euro) budget — dwarfed by external debts of \$14.7 billion that caused the nation to default during the pandemic.

"The government has applied for a debt restructuring," he said. "The government is actively engaging the International Monetary Fund for a funded program. It

is very imperative that Zambia gets support from the IMF for our economic reform program."

Once Zambia wins IMF support, Musokotwane said the government would try to restructure its other debts by March. "There is no option to this. Otherwise the debts we owe will choke this nation to a standstill," he said.

The minister also set a target of bringing inflation down to single digits next year, from the current level of 21.1 percent. He also said the government would increase funding to the agencies fighting corruption. Debt had ballooned under the government of Edgar Lungu, who was toppled in August elections by veteran opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema.

Lungu was accused of borrowing heavily to splash out on infrastructure projects during his six-year tenure. Despite vast reserves of copper and other minerals, Zambia's economy contracted in 2020 — the first recession since 1998.—AFP

## Total Revenues

# 213.8

KD Million

EBITDA

9M-2021  
57.0  
KD Million

Net Profit

9M-2021  
23.8  
KD Million

EPS

9M-2021  
48  
Kuwaiti Fils

Subscribers

30 September 2021  
1.9  
Million Subscribers

The Board of Directors of Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc) is pleased to announce to its shareholders that the company has achieved a net profit of KD 23.8 million for the nine months ended 30 September 2021.

## Business

# Alghanim Industries breaks ground on major steel expansion in India

## We are approaching a new transitional period in our region: Alghanim

**KUWAIT:** Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately-owned companies in the region, recently broke ground with a new pre-engineered steel buildings (PEB) manufacturing facility located in Gujarat, India's fifth largest state. The facility will increase the manufacturing capacity of Kirby Building Systems in India from 200,000 metric tons (MT) to 300,000 MT per year. The new plant is expected to be fully operational by late 2022, invigorating India's economy and creating hundreds of jobs. It will be Kirby's third plant in India, joining a global network of five PEB facilities that serve more than 70 countries.

A subsidiary of Alghanim Industries, Kirby Building Systems is credited with the introduction of PEBs in India in the late 1990s, playing a crucial role in the growth of the country's infrastructure on all levels. In addition to building multiple metro stations that connect several provinces, serving thousands of commuters every day, it constructed the Renault Nissan factory in Chennai, the world's single largest PEB building. The award-winning colossal 300,000 sq m facility, built in 2011, has the production capacity of almost 400,000 vehicles per year. Kirby's portfolio in steel structures also includes factory halls, warehouses, and fulfillment centers dedicated to serve a growing e-commerce market, with a number of international clients like Amazon and Toshiba.

The company's journey to the global stage of steel pioneers was paved with constant innovation, expanding into markets with its trademark environmentally conscious and fully recyclable steel.

Alghanim Industries' Executive Chairman Sir Kutayba Y Alghanim, acquired Kirby Building

Systems and relocated the company from the US to Kuwait in 1976. At the time, it catered to a country witnessing economic and urban growth, immersing itself with Kuwait's transition towards a modern and developed nation. Kirby extended its operations beyond Kuwait's borders to both neighboring countries and regions. In addition to its manufacturing facilities in India, Kirby Building Systems also operates facilities in the United Arab Emirates and Vietnam, possessing a combined production capacity of more than 400,000 MT per year. Kirby is presently in the process of operating new manufacturing facilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

"Kirby's success story is one we are very proud of at Alghanim Industries. When we introduced the concept, first in Kuwait and then to the region, the company was a small but ambitious steel business looking to change the way we think about construction. Today, Kirby is a household name that is associated with quality, excellence, efficiency – and a global leader in the PEB sector. Our significant investments in this area will support the fast-growing demand for our products, and continue to set the standard across all of our markets. We are grateful for the support of our customers who have been and remain at the heart of everything we do." Pointing toward further plans of investment in



Kutayba Y Alghanim



Kirby factory in Hyderabad

the PEB industry Alghanim also added that "we are approaching a new transitional period in our region, that we believe will bring forward huge opportunities in this sector. The technological innovations we have championed for over four decades are ideally suited to support the rapid growth and development highlighted by Kuwait's vision 2035, and that of neighboring countries like Saudi Arabia, which is embarking on a transformative journey under its Vision 2030. At Alghanim Industries, we continue to strive to do our part in supporting these ambitious and forward-looking goals."



## ABCK-AmCham Kuwait hosts webinar on 'How to do Business with US military'

**KUWAIT:** ABCK-AmCham Kuwait hosted a webinar and workshop on 'How to do Business with the US Military' with speakers from the US Army's Regional Contracting Center-Kuwait (RCC-KU), the US Army's Corps of Engineers, and the US Air Force 386th Expeditionary Wing. This event was done in collaboration with AmCham Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Oman and Qatar; sponsored by AmCham Kuwait's Chairman's Club Member - Venice.

The event started with the opening remarks by AmCham Kuwait's Chairman - Pete Swift, followed by opening remarks from the event's sponsor, Venice represented by Tom Deren, Vice President for the Middle East.

Major Eric Forcey, Contracting Officer and Ms. Nancy Segarra, Procurement Analyst from the Regional Contracting Center -Kuwait (RCC-KU) opened the webinar by covering the following topics: why should companies do business with the US Federal government, what RCC-KU does, what do they buy, how to read solicitations and contracts, which systems do companies need to register in, how to respond to opportunities, government expectations for contractors, common errors which cause rejected invoices, and how to get a positive past performance. The presenters highly encouraged vendors to do business with the US Federal government and highlighted that there were several opportunities available, as they stated that during 2021, RCC-KU spent over

\$41 Million. The RCC-KU spoke about routine purchases which included commodities and services, as these are something that they often seek.

Technical Sergeant Sheba-Mary Wynn, Infrastructure Flight Chief and Staff Sergeant Michael Roybal, Contracting Officer representing 386th ECONS, spoke about their role and the teams which provide the US government support: construction, services, commodities, Government Purchase Card (GPC) team, as these provide numerous opportunities to local vendors. One important aspect to note is that when the purchasing team sends out direct emails to vendors, they will always come from a .mil or a .gov domain; therefore, they asked that vendors pay attention to avoid being scammed. The presenters also highlighted that companies do not necessarily have to be registered in SAM, as there are smaller purchases done by the GPC team on the spot. These purchases must not exceed KD 9,800 and construction purchases are limited to KD 600.

Yvette Walker, the Contracting Chief of the Expeditionary District of the US Army Corps of Engineers, highlighted that they are one of the world's largest public engineering design and construction management agencies. The US Army Corps of Engineers has a large military construction program; however, they also support disaster relief efforts by responding to national and global disasters by providing engineering, con-



tingency planning, and construction support capabilities. Walker also spoke about current and upcoming opportunities with the Expeditionary District to support efforts in Kuwait and in Iraq, as they are currently soliciting for specific projects which can be found in SAM. Capabilities can be sent to her team directly.

The presentations concluded with a Q&A followed by a one-hour workshop on 'How to do Business with the US military from a contractor's perspective' with AmCham Bahrain's speaker, Michael Sedge partner at Relyant Global Company. To conclude, the presenters ensured that vendors understood that having no previous

experience does not disqualify them from doing contracts with them. They also encourage companies to collaborate in scopes in which one cannot fulfill certain capabilities.

The US military works carefully to meet the needs of its customers, while ensuring that contractors receive impartial, fair, and equitable treatment. ABCK-AmCham Kuwait: Is a non-profit organization operating since 1985 and is composed of 500 corporations, small and medium-sized companies, and prominent business leaders and entrepreneurs, both American and Kuwaiti. ABCK-AmCham Kuwait has acted as an advocate for American interests in the state of Kuwait.

## ABK highlights importance of staying vigilant while banking

**KUWAIT:** Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK), continues its efforts in raising awareness on the importance of staying vigilant and learning best practices for debit/credit card users in line with Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and Kuwait Banking Association's (KBA) nationwide awareness campaign, 'Let's Be Aware'. Furthermore, with the pandemic boosting card payments online and in person, it is crucial now more than ever for customers to stay aware of their personal banking information security.

Muneerah Al-Maraghi, Executive Manager - Retail Banking at ABK, said, "With cashless transactions rising, we are committed to keeping customers secure and well informed. Online and mobile banking provides customers with easy access to complete transactions; however, their phone and data must be secure. We urge all our personal and corporate customers to take appropriate precautions to safeguard their personal identification information and limit their digital footprint to avoid fraudulent usage." To ensure the safety of personal information, online banking users can take a number of precautions such as being updated on all transactions on their accounts, being vigilant online, protecting their mobile devices, and creating strong passwords and regularly changing them.

Should a client fall victim to fraud or suspect their information has been compromised, they should call their bank and credit card issuers immediately so they can take steps to protect their account. The 'Let's Be Aware' campaign will continue disseminating crucial information on banking services and practices, including filing complaints, special needs services, fraud management, investments and savings, and loans and borrowing.



Muneerah Al-Maraghi

## NBK Economic Report

### GCC equity markets remain resilient, make strong gains

**KUWAIT:** The third quarter saw the weakest performance for global equities since 1Q20, breaking the bullish streak that lasted over a year. A range of adverse developments led to weaker sentiment and performance over the quarter, including Fed tapering talk, slower growth prospects, higher inflation, the risk of financial contagion from China (Evergrande), and US debt ceiling concerns. Rising US treasury yields may also have hindered stock market momen-

tum over the quarter. However, markets regained traction in the first two weeks of October, as investors bought the dip, helped by solid corporate earnings and easing virus concerns. GCC equity markets bucked the trend, with strong gains in 3Q and so far in October, as confidence remained solid with support from higher oil.

While 3Q21 saw a downturn in global markets due to increasing headwinds, GCC markets outperformed their global peers by a wide margin (MSCI GCC +7.8 percent q/q), helped by higher oil prices, vaccine progress, and a better fiscal outlook. In the lead were Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, and Bahrain, which were up 12.6 percent, 7.5 percent and 7.4 percent, respectively. Solid gains were also seen in Qatar and Saudi Arabia (7.0 percent and 4.7 percent), while Oman bucked the trend, down 3 percent. The bullish momentum extended into October, tracking global markets, with the MSCI GCC up 4.8 percent in the month-to-date. It is noteworthy that the top two year-to-date per-

formers, Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia, with exceptional gains of 56 percent and 37 percent YTD, witnessed increased IPO activity, including Adnoc Drilling's \$1.1 billion and Arabian Internet and Communications Services Co's \$966 million IPOs in September, with both offerings receiving overwhelming demand.

The strong IPO activity is set to continue, with the potential near-term listing of several large cap Saudi and UAE firms including the Saudi Stock Exchange (Tadawul), a chemicals subsidiary of SABIC, Emirates Global Aluminum, and Adnoc's fertilizer joint venture Fertiglobe. Kuwait's strong performance (All-Share up 7.5 percent q/q) was led by the premier market (+8.1 percent q/q), with the strongest gains coming from the consumer and financial services sectors, pushing market capitalization to a near 12-year high of over KD 40 billion, while turnover continued to be healthy, at KD 50 billion/day in October. Kuwait's All-Share index was up a solid 26 percent in the year

to date (as of October 22), making it among the best emerging market performers so far this year.

Although markets have generally performed well this year on recovery optimism, vaccine progress and stimulus support, near-to-medium term market prospects are subject to notable downside risks stemming from the pandemic, inflation, and policy-related uncertainty (upcoming Fed tapering and sooner-than-expected rate hikes). Continued supply chain constraints and softer growth prospects are further sources of concern in addition to high US stock valuations. The possibility of rising bond yields, higher inflation, and the expected US policy rate hikes in 2022-2023, may also prove to be a drag on equity market sentiment. On the other hand, November and December have historically been among the best months in terms of stock market performance, especially in the US. Finally, GCC markets will continue to be influenced by oil prices, the pace of structural reforms, geopolitics, and pandemic-related developments.



KUWAIT: British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis (left), Marzooq Adel Alghanim (Center) and Brig Khaled Mahmoud Mohammed, assistant general director of Traffic Department during the launch.



British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis makes her remarks



Marzooq Adel Alghanim

# Adel Alghanim Automotive launches the sporty sedan MG GT in Kuwait

## Ambassador Lewis conveys her best wishes for the brand during the spectacular launch

KUWAIT: MG Adel Alghanim has introduced the new MG GT, reflecting the British-born brand's commitment to diversify its line-up by unveiling a sporty new model. The new MG GT offers Kuwait car buyers a fresh new alternative in the sedan sector, with its aggressive sporty looks and 1.5L and 1.5T powertrains for optimum power and performance.

The MG GT, which is inspired by the classic two-door MGB sports car, is the third sedan to join MG's growing line-up of cost-efficient and high-value-for-money cars. With the brand's focus on younger buyers, as demonstrated by its "Do More" campaign, the MG

- Third-generation MG family design language fully incorporated in the sporty MG GT
- New model brings variety to the enhanced line-up from the British-born brand
- 1.5T and 1.5L powertrains reflect power, performance, comfort and fuel economy

GT is set to resonate strongly with this demographic, reflecting their independence, aspirations and passion. The new 1.5T MG GT is equipped with a highly-efficient four-cylinder turbocharged engine, which delivers maximum horsepower of 173 PS and 275N.m maximum torque to accelerate the car from 0-100 km/h in 8 seconds, and comes in two trims: COM and LUX. The 1.5L model is equipped with a fourth-generation, fuel efficient. Both models are equipped with an 8-speed intelligent iCVT gearbox and XDS curve dynamic control system, which adds to the driving experience. The dynamic performance is further assisted by the sports chassis, which is of aerospace-grade aluminum and has a compact structure, resulting in high driving comfort and stronger handling stability.

The new GT is the brand's first sports sedan to feature the third generation of its family design language. A large 'Digital Flaming Grille' is separated from the narrow, LED headlights, enhancing the powerful and dynamic presence. Complementing the strong downward-pressing bonnet, at the rear the MG GT features a slightly upturned ducktail, which reinforces the sporty look. An end-to-end chrome line along with the wide shoulder of the car, and optional tomahawk alloy wheels, add to the premium look and feel.

The dynamic look and feel is reflected in the interior, which is available in contrasting red or black. The seats' structure adopts a design layout that considers and takes into account the principles of ergonomics, providing optimal comfort for the driver and better support for

the body. A large 10" touch screen is fitted as standard, as is a remote boot opening function.

Befitting MG's reputation for offering great value, the new MG GT is well-equipped with a range of technologies that reflect MG's forward-thinking approach. The model comes with a body electronic stability control system, and a PDC rear reversing radar, as well as MG Pilot intelligent driving assistance system, a 360° view monitoring system, cruise control and forward collision warning among other features. During the ceremony, British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis conveyed her good wishes to the MG brand in the market and commented: "I am delighted to see a new British car being launched in Kuwait today. The UK automotive

industry is a thriving part of the British economy, contributing around £60 billion per year in turnover and supporting around 800,000 jobs. British cars are one of our most valuable exports to Kuwait and MG cars are an exciting part of this, famous around the world for historic models, awards and automotive achievements. I wish MG Adel Alghanim Automotive every success!"

Tom Lee, Managing Director of MG Motor Middle East, commented: "The MG GT is a well-equipped sporty car that further enhances the diverse nature of our exceptional line-up in the Middle East. The car is the ideal model for younger buyers who are looking for a cost-efficient, sporty car that delivers a strong performance and provide drivers with an exciting driving experience."

Marzooq Adel Alghanim, President of Adel Alghanim Automotive, commented: "The MG GT is an exceptional addition to our MG line up in Kuwait. The GT is the culmination of years of intricate development and British excellence. The MG GT brings forth an exhilarating driving experience that caters perfectly to the needs of younger drivers along with being packed with high tech features at an enticing price point."



The newly launched MG GT



The audience attending the launch ceremony

## KFH launches intake 8 of 'Forsah' program

KUWAIT: Considering the continuing efforts towards the training of employees and the development of their capabilities and its keenness to attract and qualify national creative and talented youth, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched intake 8 of "Forsah" program which includes Kuwaiti topper graduates in several universities. "Forsah" program comprises condensed training programs and workshops aiming to refurbish trainees' skills in various bank activities, view financial products and services as well as management and planning methods in cooperation with highly distinguished instructors as part of KFH strategy to train and qualify

program has become a remarkable training model. He expressed his trust in the trainees' ability to make the best out of the program which represents a good opportunity for the participants to gain great knowledge and diversified expertise.

He indicated that the developments which the banking industry is witnessing and the increase in customers' needs considering the spread of digitalization and technology, have induced KFH to attract youth talents, enhance their expertise and develop their capabilities to reflect positively on providing the best services and products and alleviate the bank's performance.

Al-Omar affirmed that KFH endeavor in this respect shall add high value to the customer's experiment, thus facilitating procedures and providing fast, secure and high-quality digitalization services. Al-Omar reiterated the significance of the specialized training programs (Forsah) as they are compatible with the bank's strategy which aims to render KFH as the customers' first choice and enhance its pioneering role in the innovative sharia compliant financial services. He indicated that the com-



national labor.

KFH Group Chief Human Resources Officer, Zeyad Al-Omar reiterated the bank's concern about the development its employees' capabilities and skills, namely youth, place such skills and capabilities at the service of the bank and its customers and enhance their expertise through a comprehensive vision, taking into consideration the good skills and remarkable educational performance of the trainees. This would provide an opportunity to build young leaders who can continue KFH pioneering position and act with high professionalism that is compatible with the advanced banking world.

He added that "Forsah" program has achieved remarkable success since its launch in 2009 and gained significant reputation inside and outside Kuwait. The

petitive environment in the banking sector is a basic motive to alleviate performance and adopt the change and innovation culture.

He added that considering its leading position as a global Islamic financial institution, KFH is keen on attracting distinguished graduates to join "Forsah" program and enhance employees' capabilities, indicating KFH team comprises a highly qualified and talented national experts. In this context, Al-Omar emphasized that this stage requires highly talented and innovative minds to continue development and reach new advanced levels of distinction in offering services and facilitating procedures that would finally give the customer a magnificent experience and enhance his satisfaction.

### 'Forsah' program

The "Forsah" programs, launched periodically by KFH, include advanced training courses that employ diversified educational methods. Previous intakes of the program comprised delegation journeys to Silicon Valley, field workshop and visits to tech giants e.g., Microsoft, Google, Apple, and other IT giants. Also, it includes visits to the largest and most advanced US universities in the field of digitalization e.g., Berkley University in California, field visits to the innovation center in Silicon Valley and several other global and reputable fintech organizations, and field visits to KFH-Turkey, a leading bank in digitization, to view KFH-Turkey's services, innovation, and research center as part of a team comprising hundreds of engineers.

It is worth mentioning that KFH has launched last month intake 7 of "Forsah" program which the bank has designed to attract Kuwaiti toping graduates in IT from local and foreign universities. The program included condensed and comprehensive training programs related to the most advanced IT applications in the banking field. The program contributes to the development of the trainees' self-abilities to employ them at the service of KFH and its customers.

## US inflation a challenge for Biden

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden has bet that the high US inflation rate will decline and help the case for the spending plans he's staked his presidency on, but data released Friday instead showed prices remaining stubbornly high in the world's largest economy.

There were also signs of an acceleration in wages that could further fuel inflation, as well as a spike in consumer expectations of price increases to come. The Commerce Department reported inflation climbed 4.4 percent last month compared to September 2020, its biggest jump since January 1991 and the latest complications for the president's proposal to spend \$1.75 trillion on an array of social services.

That bill, dubbed Build Back Better, has faced a tortuous path through Congress, where some moderate Democrats have worried it could make the price situation worse. "I don't think that these investments will drive up inflation," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in an interview with CNBC from Rome, where G20 leaders including Biden are gathering.—AFP

## AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad draw

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) held the weekly draw on October 27, 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: Salimah J Abbadi, Ahmad Mohamad Al-Zoebi, Hasan Ahmad Ali, Muneerah Abdullah Al-Khaldi, Mohammad Ali Jragh, Huwaidi Sahar Al-Hajri, Khdeir Ahmad Al-Kady, Ali Abdullah Al-Qattan, Anfal Adel Al-Atwan, Salah Ahmad Al-Ghareeb, Sakeenah Abbas Abdullah, Ghaneemah Ghanim Al-Thiab, Kausar Islam, Nalawala Akil Abdulhusain, Mariam Bashar Al-Ali, Saleh Mohamad Saleh, Maasoumah Abdullaheem Al-Saffar, Nawaf Hamad Al-Ghanim, Latifah Mohammad Al-Mutairi And Abdullah Rajab Mohammed.

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

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

## Lifestyle | Features

**Baldwin** shooting armorer has 'no idea' why live rounds present

The armorer responsible for weapons on the film set where Alec Baldwin shot and killed a cinematographer has "no idea" why there were live rounds present, her lawyers said Friday. The statement is the first public comment from 24-year-old Hannah Gutierrez-Reed since Halyna Hutchins' death during the making of 19th-century Western "Rust" in New Mexico last week. The live round from a Colt .45 that Baldwin fired during rehearsal passed through Hutchins' body and struck director Joel Souza in the shoulder.

"Ultimately this set would never have been compromised if live ammo were not introduced," said the statement from representatives of Gutierrez-Reed. "Hannah has no idea where the live rounds came from." As the film's armorer, Gutierrez-Reed was responsible for supplying and keeping weapons safe on set, ensuring that they were accounted for at all times and locked away when not in use. Her comments come after days of reports of safety lapses on set, including claims that crew members had used prop weapons for live-ammunition target practice on the day of the tragedy—a notion Gutierrez-Reed dismissed on Friday.

"Hannah and the prop master gained control over the guns and she never witnessed anyone shoot live rounds with these guns and nor would she permit that," the statement said. "They were locked up every night and at lunch and there's no way a single one of them was unaccounted for or being shot by crew



In this file photo US actor Alec Baldwin attends DreamWorks Animation's 'The Boss Baby: Family Business' premiere at SVA Theatre in New York City. — AFP

members." More than a dozen weapons were being stored in a prop truck on the set, according to law enforcement documents seen by AFP on Friday.

**'Compacency'**

Baldwin—who served as a producer on the low-budget movie, as well as its lead actor—was handed the gun by assistant director Dave Halls, who told detectives he hadn't fully checked the weapon before declaring it "cold" (safe). Halls was fired as assistant director on a previous movie for gun safety violations, that film's producers said this week. Investigators in Santa Fe, where "Rust" was being made, said they had seized a cache of ammunition, some of which they believe was live.

Sheriff Adan Mendoza told reporters there was "some complacency" on set, and crew members had complained about lax protocols in the lead-up to the

accident, including two previous incidents in which guns were fired. Lawyers for Gutierrez-Reed said neither of those accidental discharges was her fault, and painted a picture of a production where safety procedures played second fiddle to budget considerations. They said production constraints made it "extremely difficult" for Gutierrez-Reed to focus on her job as an armorer. "She fought for training, (for time) to maintain weapons, and proper time to prepare for gunfire but ultimately was overruled by production and her department.

"The whole production set became unsafe due to various factors, including lack of safety meetings. This was not the fault of Hannah." Since last week's tragedy, calls have grown for a ban on real guns in movies, with advocates insisting that today's special effects are good enough to make plastic weapons look realistic. But Oscar-winning actor Matthew McConaughey told AFP there was no need for a ban, and genuine firearms should be perfectly safe. "There's a safety protocol, and if it's followed, it can be safe on set," the "Dallas Buyers Club" star said. "One of the beautiful things about how film sets work—the organization is incredible." The accident on "Rust" must have happened because "they missed protocol. Somewhere. I don't know if they were in a rush," he said. —AFP

Thousands mourn south Indian film star **Puneeth Rajkumar**

Thousands of bereaved cinema fans thronged the streets of Bangalore on Friday after the sudden death of regional Indian film star Puneeth Rajkumar from a heart attack at just 46. The actor, known as "Powerstar" for his action roles in the Kannada-language film industry, was admitted to hospital on Friday morning with chest pains and died shortly afterwards. Prime Minister Narendra Modi led tributes, tweeting that a "cruel twist of fate has snatched away from us a prolific and talented actor... The coming generations will remember him fondly for his works and wonderful personality." Karnataka chief minister Basavaraj S. Bommai said that Rajkumar was the state's "most loved superstar... A huge personal loss and one that's difficult to come to terms with."

Authorities enhanced security around the actor's house fearing violence by his fans, some of whom could be seen chasing the ambulance in which his body was being taken from the hospital. Elsewhere his admirers were crying and hugging. "It is very painful to have lost him. He was a gem in the Kannada film industry and he is unforgettable. It is very painful," one bereft fan, Sandeep, told AFP. Local media reports said Rajkumar was rushed to hospital after he collapsed while working out in his gym.

Son of another actor known simply as Rajkumar, Puneeth Rajkumar had recently wrapped up the shoot of "James" and was to begin work on a new film soon. Having made a name for him-



self as a child actor, he starred in some 30 films, with his debut action-comedy flick "Appu" being one of the biggest hits. Hindi-language Bollywood is India's biggest film industry but the vast country also produces hundreds of films in its 21 other official languages every year.

"It feels as though I have lost a younger brother. My thoughts & prayers go out to his family with whom I share a close bond," tweeted Mohanlal, a major star in Malayalam-language cinema in the south Indian state of Kerala. Chiranjeevi, a superstar in the Telugu-language film industry, said Rajkumar's demise was a "huge loss" to the Kannada industry and the Indian film fraternity at large. Rajkumar is survived by wife Ashwini Revanth and has two children. — AFP



European tourists, escorted by security personnel, visit the old town of Ghadames.



European tourists, escorted by security personnel.

**Libya** welcomes back tourists after years of war

Libya has hosted its first group of foreign tourists in a decade, with an excursion to an oasis town deep in the desert previously off-limits to visitors due to years of war. French traveller Jean-Paul, who first visited Libya more than a decade ago, was among some 100 mostly European tourists on the trip. He said he had long wanted to return to the "magnificent country, with extraordinary scenery and very welcoming people". "Events meant for 10 years that wasn't possible—then we were told we could finally come back on a supervised trip, with a security detail," the 57-year-old said.

"People here are very welcoming and you get the feeling that Libyans really want to see tourists again." Police sirens

echoed around the oasis of Ghadames, its old white buildings set amid a sea of palm trees, as the convoy of dozens of four-wheel-drives ferried the Italian, French, Icelandic and Swiss tourists through town. Libya had been mostly off-limits to tourists throughout the four-decade rule of Muammar Gadhafi. When the dictator was overthrown in a 2011 uprising, foreign visitors mostly continued to stay away as the country plunged into lawlessness and armed conflict.

Today, thanks to a year of relative calm following an October 2020 ceasefire and a United Nations-led peace process, the first group of tourists since 2012 were able to visit, on a tour paid for by the state. Tour guide Ali Al-Kouba says he wants to "break the wall of fear"



An aerial view shows the Libyan town of Ghadames. — AFP photos

for foreigners wanting to visit the vast Libyan Sahara. Italian traveller and tour operator Giovanni Paolo, who wore a Tuareg-style yellow scarf against the desert wind, agreed. "We were sure we'd be welcome in this wonderful country," he said.

The visitors arrived via a border crossing with Tunisia which had opened in September after months of closure due to the coronavirus pandemic. They spent a night under the stars before heading deep into the dunes and rocky stretches of the southern Libyan wilderness. Finally they reached Ghadames, the "pearl of the desert" some 650 kilometers (400 miles) south of the capital Tripoli. The UNESCO-listed oasis city, a pre-Roman Berber settlement and a key stop on Saharan trade routes, has unique multilevel architecture with whitewashed, covered alleyways beyond the reach of

the brutal summer sun. The tourists wandered through the old city taking photos of its traditional houses, propped up with palm trunks. They also visited the newer part of town, where a mosque with striking minarets faces modern villas echoing the style of the old town.

**'Exceptionally welcoming'**

Jean-Jacques Sire, a 67-year-old Frenchman with a white beard, said he had visited Libya twice in the 1990s and "met an exceptionally welcoming population". "When I found out that there was a group of people ready to come back, I didn't hesitate," he said. Tourism has been a tiny industry in Libya, whose economy has been dominated by oil and gas since the mid-20th century. But it did see a brief uptick in the 2000s as the Gadhafi regime mended ties with the outside world, spurred by the UN in

2003 lifting sanctions that had included a flight ban.

Tripoli also created a ministry for the sector and issued tourist visas for the first time, allowing some 110,000 foreign visitors to holiday in the country in 2010, bringing in \$40 million (34 million euros). But all that came to an abrupt halt with the outbreak of an armed revolt in 2011. And despite a year of relative calm, the country still sees localized outbursts of fighting and most countries advise their citizens against visiting. But Khaled Derdera, who organized the tour, said he wanted to challenge the idea that Libya is "a country in decline". "The idea of the trip was to bring back European tourists—and today, here they are, on Libyan soil," he said. —AFP



An aerial view shows the Libyan town of Ghadames, a desert oasis some 650 kilometers (400 miles) southwest of the capital Tripoli, during an organized tour for tourists in the town.



European tourists, escorted by security personnel, visit the old town of Ghadames.



## Archaeologists in Mexico find 1,000-year-old Mayan canoe

A well-preserved Mayan canoe, estimated to be about 1,000 years old, has been found in Mexico during construction work on a major rail link, the country's National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) said. A team of INAH underwater archaeologists found the pre-Hispanic vessel between the southern states of Yucatan and Quintana Roo in a cenote-underground rivers that are common in the Yucatan Peninsula and sacred to the Maya people. It was found during work on the "Maya Train", President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's contro-

versial tourism project which is intended to link Caribbean resorts with ancient archaeological sites.

"The small boat could have been used for the extraction of water from the cenote or for the deposit of offerings during rituals," INAH said in a statement Friday. It is the first canoe of this type so well preserved from the Mayan region, researchers said. Previously, only fragments of these boats have been found in Guatemala and Belize.

The canoe has been initially dated to between 830 and 950 AD, but a November

analysis, with the support of the University of Paris, will seek to determine its age and wood type, INAH said. In Mexico, where several pre-Hispanic societies such as the Aztecs and the Maya flourished, archaeological finds are common. In September, the remains of a staircase were found in a pyramid in the Xochitecatl Archaeological Zone. In January this year, authorities said that more than 8,000 archaeological objects had been found in the first four sections of the Maya Train's construction. — AFP



## SHE-ZAM! WOMEN SHOW WHY MAGIC HAS BEEN MISSING A TRICK

Sitting behind a card table in the secretive Magic Castle, Kayla Drescher widens her eyes and nods exasperatedly when asked about being called a "female magician." "Yes, I am very, very sick of being asked what it's like to be a woman in this industry," she says. "Female magician' feels like I'm being placed in a subcategory of magic... I'm being placed in a metaphorical box, not just an illusion." But while the label is "exhausting" and "annoying" for Drescher, "we still have such a small percentage of women in this industry—I think it does still need to be talked about."

The stereotype of a magician in a top hat sawing his glamorous, sequined female assistant in half endures among the wider public, who can rarely name performers beyond Harry Houdini, David Copperfield and David Blaine. While the outfits have changed, still just seven percent of magicians operating today are female—roughly the same proportion as the membership of the elite "Academy of Magical Arts" that calls the Magic Castle home.

Drescher is one of two billed female headliners on the night of AFP's visit to the cavernous members-only institution on a hill above Hollywood which is devoted to the art of illusion. As the reaction of a spell-bound audience to Drescher's baffling card



People arrive at the Magic Castle.



View of the Magic Castle, in Hollywood, California. — AFP photos

audiences—like the aficionados and rowdy wine-drinking Halloween parties filling the "Close Up Gallery"—tend not to care about a performer's gender.

Instead, it is the "shocking old-fashioned" mindset of magicians that is keeping the number of women in her trade low—and that is something she feels is important to keep "yelling about." Drescher has

men, so suits, large trouser pockets, big hands, all these different elements, very masculine-style stuff," said Drescher, who hosts the "She-zam" podcast. "You have to get through, jump over, a lot of hurdles in order to be respected in the community for being a magician and not just a woman. And that's always annoying."

### 'Feels really gross'

According to Drescher, if the assistant could just as easily be replaced with an inanimate object like a lamp or a table "she doesn't need to be there... she's a prop." "The mutilation of women..." she sighs. "It just feels really gross in 2021. But luckily it is shifting." The last few years and #MeToo have massively boosted demand for female magicians, says Drescher. But in-built obstacles remain, including the powerful status of reform-resistant, generally male-dominated magic "clubs."

The Academy of Magical Arts itself faced allegations of sexual harassment in a Los Angeles Times investigation last year. Its general manager resigned, and his replacement Herve Levy told AFP that policies to improve "diversity and inclusion" have been put in place, including training for staff to prevent sexual harassment. The group now has 36 women on its magicians' roster. The other female headliner on the evening of AFP's visit is Mari Lynn, who performs with her husband John Shryock. "We're more of an illusion team. I always call myself a co-star, rather than an assistant," she says.

The couple from Arizona used to perform a trick in which she would turn the

tables by locking him up, known as "The Assistant's Revenge." When she started out, Lynn found some audiences were "much more critical of the females trying to take the male roles." "But I am really happy to see that things are changing. It's coming around slowly."

### 'Proven wrong'

Tonight Lynn and Shryock are performing "The Great Escape," which sees them joined center-stage by their two daughters. Sixteen-year-old Jasmine wants to be a solo magician herself one day, while 13-year-old Hailey has her heart setting on

becoming a doctor. "I'm really optimistic going forward that Jasmine will not have as hard of a time as I did," says her mother Lynn.

While Jasmine learnt by performing with her parents "in every magic show since I was born," she noticed early on that most of her friends who were also interested in magic were boys. "There have been times where someone in the class will be like, 'oh girls can't do magic as good as boys do,'" she says. "And then they're proven wrong." — AFP



Magicians John Shryock (right) and his wife Mari Lynn pose with their daughters Hailey (13) and Jasmine (16) after their performance at the Magic Castle.

tricks and subtle sleights of hand later in the evening will show, women may be a minority in magic but are no less of a draw. Drescher, 31, has been performing since she was seven, and has long found that

long dealt with male magicians excluding her, assuming she is someone's girlfriend, or even one time requesting she "do magic by a poolside in a bikini" in Las Vegas. "Magic is very much written by men and for



Magicians John Shryock (right) and his wife Mari Lynn pose with their daughters Hailey (13) and Jasmine (16) at the Magic Castle.



John Shryock, his daughter Jasmine, 16, and his wife Mari Lynn rehearse before their performance at the Magic Castle.



Magician Kayla Drescher practices with gift cards before her performance at the Magic Castle.



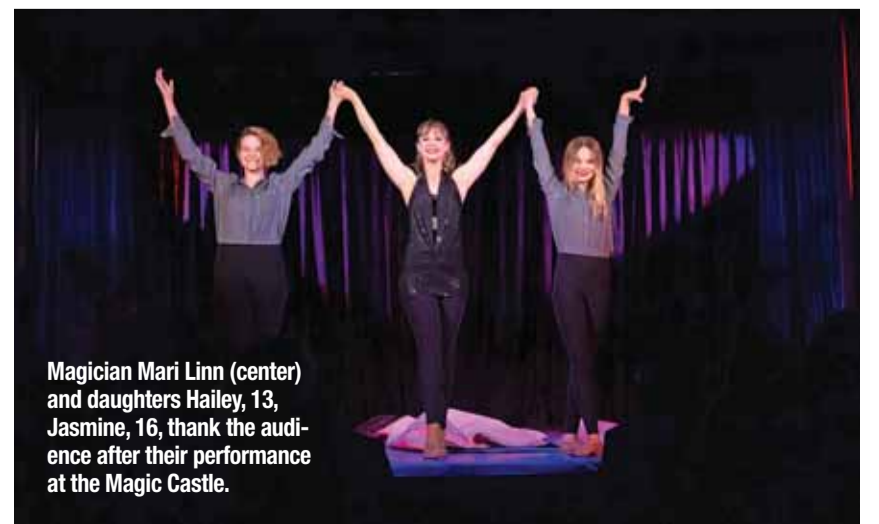
Magician Kayla Drescher performs at the Magic Castle.



John Shryock rehearses with his two daughters Hailey, 13, (left) and Jasmine, 16, who wants to be a magician, before their performance at the Magic Castle.



Magicians John Shryock and his wife Mari Lynn perform at the Magic Castle.



Magician Mari Linn (center) and daughters Hailey, 13, Jasmine, 16, thank the audience after their performance at the Magic Castle.

## Sports

# Butler gets hot as Heat roll over Hornets, James powers Lakers

## Lillard leads Blazers past Clippers; Harden regains form in win

LOS ANGELES: Jimmy Butler scored 32 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, while Bam Adebayo had 26 points, as the Miami Heat stretched their winning streak to three straight games with a 114-99 win over Charlotte Hornets on Friday.

Adebayo added 19 rebounds, and Tyler Herro came off the bench to score 26 for the Heat in the battle between the NBA's top defensive team (Miami) against the top offensive club. The Hornets came into the game averaging 121 points per game.

"The IQ level of this team is very high," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "We have experienced, savvy guys, but guys who can read situations in real time. That matters in this league." Gordon Hayward scored a team high of 23 points and Miles Bridges scored 22 for the Hornets in front of a crowd of 19,600 at FTX Arena in Miami.

The Hornets were missing Terry Rozier, who is out with an injured ankle. Hornets' forward PJ Washington returned Friday night after missing two games with a sprained right knee. He had nine points in 22 minutes off the bench.

The Hornets' LaMelo Ball struggled, as the reigning NBA rookie of the year finished with just six points on two-of-14 shooting. "It's one of 82. We'll learn from it. We'll respond," Hornets coach James Borrego said. "I saw a lot of fight tonight."

Elsewhere, LeBron James returned from a two-

game injury absence to score 26 points and dish out eight assists as the Los Angeles Lakers beat his old team the Cleveland Cavaliers 113-101. James, who made just one of 10 three-point attempts, missed two games with a sore right ankle.

Carmelo Anthony scored 24 points and Russell Westbrook finished with 19 points for the Lakers, who halted the Cavaliers' three-game winning streak. The Lakers, who won for the third time in four games, took control down the stretch with Anthony hitting three three-pointers in front of a crowd of 19,100 at Staples Center. Rookie Evan Mobley led the Cavaliers with 23 points.

In Toronto, rookie Scottie Barnes scored 21 points and grabbed nine rebounds as the Toronto Raptors edged the Orlando Magic 110-109. Fred VanVleet scored 16 of

his 19 points in the fourth quarter for the Raptors, who have defeated the Magic nine straight times dating back to 2019. Barnes scored 19 points in the first half alone.

Gary Trent also had 19 points while OG Anunoby tallied 16 as the Raptors completed a four-game homestand by going 2-2. The Magic trailed by 12 points with two minutes remaining but scored the final 11 points of the contest and had a shot to win in the final second, but Cole Anthony misfired on a jump shot.

Anthony scored 24 points for the Magic, who



MIAMI: Jimmy Butler #22 of the Miami Heat drives to the basket against Kelly Oubre Jr #12 of the Charlotte Hornets during the second half at FTX Arena on Friday in Miami, Florida. — AFP

have lost five of six. Mo Bamba added 14 points with 18 rebounds and Jalen Suggs scored 21 points, while Wendell Carter had 17 points and 12 rebounds in the loss.

In Portland, Damian Lillard scored 25 points and Jusuf Nurkic added 14 points and 17 rebounds as the Portland Trail Blazers breezed to a 111-92 win over the Los Angeles Clippers. CJ McCollum had 14

points as the Trail Blazers won consecutive games for the first time this season and avenged a 30-point loss earlier in the week.

James Harden broke out of his slump by finishing with 29 points, eight assists and eight rebounds and the Brooklyn Nets overcame a sluggish start to record a 105-98 victory over the Indiana Pacers in New York. — AFP

## Klopp blasts Man Utd red card story as 'fake news'

LIVERPOOL: Jurgen Klopp has labelled media reports suggesting he believed Manchester United should have received more red cards against Liverpool at Old Trafford last weekend as "fake news". The Athletic and Daily Mail said Klopp thought referee Anthony Taylor could have dismissed five players but did not want to further embarrass United, who lost 5-0 last week.

Taylor initially booked Paul Pogba for his second-half challenge on Naby Keita but dismissed the France midfielder after a VAR review as Liverpool inflicted a humiliating defeat on Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men. The Athletic said "sources close to the Liverpool bench" thought Manchester-born Taylor did not send off more United players because he "took pity" on them.

But Klopp was angry about the reports in his pre-match press conference on Friday. "I didn't think a second about it — not a second," the Liverpool boss said. "The Athletic said 'people close to the staff', which I always think is a dangerous saying. You cannot do these kind of things. It's just not right — it's a lie."

The Mail listed what it deemed four potential red card-worthy incidents in addition to the Pogba sending-off — involving Fred, Cristiano Ronaldo, Bruno Fernandes and Harry Maguire — and said Liverpool doubted Taylor's impartiality.

"We spoke about Ronaldo's situation and my view was it could be a red card. When I saw it back, he gets the ball, it's a dark yellow, completely fine," said Klopp. "But we never spoke about that. Why would you make a story like that? You have to be serious in these things — all of you (journalists). You cannot do these things just to sell a few lines. These are real fake news, not what (Donald) Trump was talking about."

United manager Solskjaer also expressed his frustration at what he called "blatant lies" after media reported Pogba refused to speak with him and suspended contract negotiations following the Liverpool debacle. — AFP

## Braves pitchers baffle Astros to grab World Series lead

WASHINGTON: Atlanta's Ian Anderson and four Braves relief pitchers combined to allow only two hits in blanking the Houston Astros 2-0 on Friday and seize the lead of the World Series.

Anderson became the first World Series rookie pitcher since 1912 with five no-hit innings as the Braves grabbed a 2-1 edge in Major League Baseball's best-of-seven championship.

"It was something special, something you dream about," Anderson said. "The crowd really brought it and I felt like I was feeding off it." Anderson's 1.26 earned-run average through eight career playoff starts ranks second on the all-time list. "I don't know what it is about the post-season," Anderson said. "It brings my pitching to another level."

The 23-year-old American right-hander walked three and struck out four while throwing 39 of his 76 pitch-

es for strikes. But he was removed by Braves manager Brian Snitker, who must carefully use pitchers after star Charlie Morton suffered a broken leg in game one.

"It was fine," Anderson said. "Obviously you want to stay out there but I have the utmost trust in Snit and those guys in the bullpen. I have all the faith in the world in them. Those guys are going to get us where we need to be."

Braves reliever AJ Minter mystified a Houston lineup hitting .276 in the playoffs in the sixth and Luke Jackson kept the Astros hitless in the seventh. But Atlanta left-hander Tyler Matzek lost the no-hit bid in the eighth when pinch-hitter Aledmys Diaz singled to left field.

The only no-hitters in MLB playoff history have been Don Larsen's perfect game for the New York Yankees in the 1956 World Series and Roy Halladay's no-hitter for Philadelphia in 2010. Not since the 1967 St Louis Cardinals had a team gone hitless through seven innings in a World Series contest.

"We didn't threaten very often," said Astros manager Dusty Baker. "But when you shut us down, usually our guys come back and have a big game the next night. I hope history repeats itself." With Atlanta clinging to a 1-0



ATLANTA: Guillermo Heredia #38 of the Atlanta Braves celebrates the team's 2-0 win against the Houston Astros in Game Three of the World Series at Truist Park on Friday in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

edge, Matzek had to hang on as Jose Siri replaced Diaz as a pinch runner then stole second base and took third on a throwing error by Braves catcher Travis d'Arnaud.

"I came in a little lackadaisical," Matzek said. "I wanted to turn it on for the guys. I didn't want to let the guys down. We worked so hard." Matzek got Michael Brantley to fly out to third base

to end the inning. D'Arnaud smashed a solo homer for Atlanta in the eighth for an insurance run.

Braves left-hander Will Smith allowed Alex Bregman a single in the ninth but Yordan Alvarez, Carlos Correa and Kyle Tucker flew out to end Houston's final threat. "Flush it and move on," Bregman said. "Give them credit. They pitched their tails off." — AFP

## Kuwait qualifies for AFC U-23 Asian Cup

KUWAIT: Kuwait qualified for the AFC U-23 Asian Cup after beating Saudi Arabia 2-1 yesterday; its second win in as many matches in their qualifying group stage. The win gives Kuwait six points after they beat Bangladesh 1-0 in the first match on Wednesday. Eid Al-Rashidi and Yousef Al-Rashidi scored for Kuwait, while Feras Al-Braikan scored for Saudi Arabia in the match hosted in Uzbekistan yesterday. The six points were enough for Kuwait, which is participating with the Olympic team in the tournament, to secure its spot in the continental competition next year regardless of the result of its next match against Uzbekistan. Meanwhile, Kuwait Football Association (KFA) President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah announced a KD 1,000 grant to each Olympic team player after Kuwait qualified for the AFC U-23 Asian Cup. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Olympic team players celebrate yesterday after beating Saudi Arabia and advancing to the AFC U-23 Asian Cup. — KUNA

## PSG beat Lille with late Di Maria strike

PARIS: Neymar set up Angel Di Maria to score an 88th-minute winner as Paris Saint-Germain came from behind once again, this time to beat reigning French champions Lille 2-1 on Friday. With Kylian Mbappe missing and Lionel Messi taken off at half-time, PSG needed captain Marquinhos to equalize in the 74th minute after Jonathan David had given the away side a first-half lead at the Parc des Princes.

Di Maria had set up the equalizer and he then arrived to fire low into the net from Neymar's lay-off and secure a win that allows PSG to extend their lead at the top of Ligue 1 to a massive 10 points over second-placed Lens before the rest

of the weekend's games. Nevertheless this was another in a long line of disjointed displays from Mauricio Pochettino's team and the coach was again left with questions to answer.

It was the third time in four home league games that PSG have come from behind to score a late winning goal, and here it came against a Lille side who are in mid-table after a poor start to their title defense. The absence of top-scorer Mbappe due to illness did not help, nor did that of injured playmaker Marco Verratti.

"It is not by chance that the team responded the way they did. It shows the mentality and the character that they have," Pochettino insisted. "We want to win in the best possible manner, and by the biggest margin. The truth is that it's often a struggle but it's not by chance that we have won 10 league games out of 12."

### Messi's goal drought

Messi was taken off at the interval and

is still without a goal after five appearances in Ligue 1. That record is surely not what anyone expected from him when he arrived in August. Perhaps he eventually

will start scoring for fun in France, but he will go into November still looking to break his duck. To be fair Messi has been making an impact in the Champions

League, with three goals in three appearances in Europe.

His premature substitution here was a precautionary measure ahead of Wednesday's Champions League clash with RB Leipzig in Germany — the Argentinian had been struggling with a minor injury during the week. "We think he will be available for the match against Leipzig," Pochettino told broadcaster Amazon Prime. Neymar's form has also been a source of concern, and the Brazilian still has just one goal to his name this season, and that from a penalty. Here the world's most expensive player sometimes cut a frustrated figure and talked his way into a late booking, but that was before he teed up Di Maria for the winner.

Earlier Lille were rewarded for a fine first-half showing with the opening goal just after the half-hour mark. Burak Yilmaz, who had come close to scoring in the first minute, got to the byline and cut the ball back for Canada striker David to turn it into the net from close range. — AFP



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Argentinian midfielder Angel Di Maria celebrates after scoring a goal during the French L1 football match between PSG and Lille at the Parc des Princes stadium, in Paris, on Friday. — AFP

Sports

# Scaffolding to Sachin's storm: Sharjah's 40-year love of cricket

Ground synonymous with India-Pakistan rivalry in 80s, 90s

**SHARJAH:** Sharjah's love affair with cricket extends into the Twenty20 World Cup as memories of Javed Miandad's last-ball six and Sachin Tendulkar's "desert storm" linger at the famed venue. Businessman Abdul Rahman Bukhatir brought the game to the United Arab Emirates to provide support to former cricketers from India and Pakistan. The ground remained synonymous with India-Pakistan rivalry in the 1980s and 1990s before the action shifted to more modern venues of the subcontinent.

Sharjah airport which was used by the British forces stationed here.

"Then there was the flow of expatriates coming in for jobs. Mr Bukhatir was the pioneer in bringing in players from India and Pakistan and letting them play for his clubs. The first Bukhatir League — a 50-over tournament — started in 1975 and it has been literally going on the trot for the past 46 years."

The famous venue has hosted 241 ODI matches. Having began life with 5,000 seats and scaffolding for stands, it can now accommodate about 16,000 spectators. It remains way ahead of the Sydney Cricket Ground that has hosted 161 ODIs since 1979.

Miandad made the venue special on April 18, 1986, with an innings that still rankles in many Indian fans' minds as it was a defining knock in cricket rivalry between the two nations. Chasing 246 for victory, the Pakistan batsman hit an unbeaten 116 off 114 balls to rob India of victory on the final ball with a six off Chetan Sharma.

The match remained the most memorable at Sharjah until Tendulkar unleashed his magic against Australia. The batting great hit 143 off 131 balls to tear into the Australian bowling that included Damien Fleming, Michael Kasprovicz and spin wizard Shane Warne on April 22, 1998. The match was halted due to a sandstorm and then Tendulkar exploded. The knock came to be known as the "desert storm".

**Match-fixers**

"Those two matches will forever be in our minds and the third one was when Pakistan bowled out India for 127 with Imran Khan returning career-best figures of 6-14, but were later skittled out of 87," remembers Khan of a 1985 match.



**Bukhatir 'Father of Cricket' in UAE**

Formally established in 1982, the venue hosted its first ODI two years later when Zaheer Abbas' Pakistan faced Sri Lanka in the Asia Cup. But Mazhar Khan, honorary secretary of the Sharjah Cricket Council, told AFP that a match between a Sunil Gavaskar XI and a Javed Miandad XI in 1981 opened the doors for top-level cricket.

"Mr Bukhatir has helped a lot of cricketers by supporting them through benefit purses. He is the 'Father of Cricket' in the UAE," Khan told AFP. "Cricket started in the mid-1970s and was played on the tarmac of



**SHARJAH:** Fans of Bangladesh's team cheer during the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup cricket match between Bangladesh and West Indies at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium in Sharjah on Friday. — AFP

The ground later lost favor with top nations led by India who banned their players from the venue due to reports of match-fixing activities. It returned as an ODI venue in 2010 when Afghanistan made it their home base.

Pakistan also played their cricket at the three venues in the UAE — Sharjah, Dubai and Abu Dhabi — after the attack on the Sri Lankan team bus in 2009 kept overseas teams away from the cricket-crazy nation. The

powerful Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) returned to the famed arena with the lucrative Indian Premier League in 2014, 2020 and 2021. Cricket's base in the UAE has shifted to Dubai which owns a bigger stadium located close the International Cricket Council (ICC) headquarters. Despite that, Khan claims Sharjah, with its new corporate boxes, still draws the best and the most passionate crowds and will remain the home of UAE cricket. — AFP



**DUBAI:** India's captain Virat Kohli (left) greets Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan at the end of the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup cricket match between India and Pakistan at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai on October 24, 2021. — AFP

## Afghanistan focus on Namibia after Pakistan loss

**ABU DHABI:** Afghanistan are desperate to bounce back from the narrow defeat against Pakistan in the Twenty20 World Cup when they face Namibia today, said fast bowler Naveen-ul-Haq. A blitz from batsman Asif Ali who smashed pace bowler Karim Janat for four sixes in the penultimate over helped Pakistan to a five-wicket win in Dubai on Friday. "The mood is a bit dull after we lost a close game," Haq told media yesterday.

"We desperately want to get back in the match against Namibia," said Haq of the Abu Dhabi fixture which will be the first Twenty20 international between the two sides. Namibia qualified from the first round at the expense of more fancied Ireland and the Netherlands and have beaten Scotland by four wickets in their first Super 12 Group 2 match.

"We are looking forward to the game against Namibia," said Haq, who conceded just two runs in the 18th over, leaving Pakistan to score a tough 24 off the last 12 balls. Asif smashed Janat's first, third, fifth and sixth ball searing over the boundary to seal Pakistan's third win in as many games.

Haq said the whole team has rallied behind a dispirited Janat. "It can happen to any bowler," admits Haq who was the best bowler in the Twenty20 blast in England and Wales this year, claiming 26 wickets for Leicestershire. "He was down but everyone supported him and we all have to get back," said Haq. "If you look he had bowled his first three overs very well."

Haq declared the Group 2 points table was still wide open. "Table is open other than Pakistan who are almost in the semi-finals," said Haq with Pakistan on top with six points. Afghanistan are placed second with one win and a defeat. "Three teams are vying for a semi-final spot and we are a side that can beat any team in the tournament and that we proved last night

against Pakistan," said Haq. "We are up for India and New Zealand," said Haq of their opponents on November 3 and 7 — both in Abu Dhabi.

**Fan plea**

Meanwhile, Afghanistan skipper Mohammad Nabi pleaded for T20 World Cup calm on Friday after thousands of ticketless fans tried to storm the Dubai Stadium for the high-profile clash against neighbors Pakistan.

All tickets had been sold for the game but the chaos meant that many fans who had bought tickets were prevented from entering. Nabi asked Afghan fans to buy tickets to watch the team's remaining matches in the tournament. "For the Afghan fans, please buy a ticket and come to the stadium. Don't repeat this again. This is not good," said Nabi after his team had lost by five wickets.

The International Cricket Council apologized to ticket holders who could not enter the stadium where the final will also be staged on November 14. "More

than 16,000 tickets had been issued for tonight's game between Pakistan and Afghanistan," said an ICC statement.

"However, thousands of ticketless fans travelled to the venue and then attempted to force entry into the stadium. Dubai Police and security staff secured the stadium to ensure the safety of everyone inside and brought in significant additional resources to disperse the crowd and calm the situation. The ICC, BCCI (hosts Board of Control for Cricket in India) and ECB (Emirates Cricket Board) apologize to any fans with valid tickets who were unable to enter the stadium."

They added: "The ICC has asked the ECB to undertake a thorough investigation into tonight's events to learn any lessons and will work closely with authorities to ensure there is no repeat of this situation in the future." Friday's events brought back memories of the 2019 50-over World Cup clash between the two teams in Leeds which was scarred by fighting and a pitch invasion. — AFP

## Kohli blasts 'pathetic' India critics

**DUBAI:** India captain Virat Kohli launched a blistering attack on his team's critics yesterday, blasting them as "spineless" and "pathetic". Kohli was furious over the social media reaction to his team's 10-wicket loss to arch-rivals Pakistan in the opening game of the T20 World Cup.

"There's a good reason why we are playing on the field and not a bunch of spineless people on social media that have no courage to actually speak to any individual in person," said Kohli. "It has become a social pandemic in today's world, which is so unfortunate and so sad to see because this is literally the lowest level of human potential that one can operate at. And that's how I look at these people."

Kohli was particularly angry over the abuse aimed at India's only Muslim player, fast bowler Mohammed Shami who played in the defeat. "Attacking someone over their religion is the most pathetic thing that a human being can do," said Kohli.

"They have no understanding of how much effort we put on the field. They have no understanding of the fact that someone like Mohammed Shami has won India matches in the last few years. Honestly I don't even want to waste one minute of my life to give any attention to those people and neither does Shami and neither does anyone else on the team."

In an indication of the passion and controversy generated by the rivalry, India police arrested three Muslim students and a teacher for celebrating Pakistan's crushing victory. The arrests came after police launched an investigation into several hundred students who burst into celebrations in Kashmir following last Sunday's match which was watched by millions across South Asia.

Anti-India sentiment is widespread and deep in Muslim-majority Kashmir, a Himalayan territory claimed in its entirety by both India and Pakistan. Last weekend was the first time in 13 white-ball World Cup meetings that Pakistan had defeated India. Since then, Pakistan have won two more games against New Zealand and Afghanistan to move to the brink of the semi-finals.

India play their second match against New Zealand today. "It's been a long break for us. It's been a lot of time waiting and just doing nothing, really, for us as a team," admitted Kohli of the lopsided schedule. "Now we're just itching to go back on the park and be competing again and look to correct the things that didn't happen well in the first game."

Kohli will step down as captain of the T20 team at the end of the tournament as India look to add the 2021 title to their victory at the inaugural event in 2007. — AFP

## Sad day for Australian cricket as greats Davidson, Mallett die

**SYDNEY:** Australian cricket was in mourning yesterday after the deaths of former greats Alan Davidson and Ashley Mallett within 24 hours of each other. Test spinner Mallett died aged 76 fol-

lowing a long battle with cancer, while legendary allrounder Alan Davidson passed away at 92. Davidson, a destructive left-arm fast bowler and hard-hitting lower-middle order batter, was hailed as "one of cricket's finest players and most influential and beloved figures". "Alan was a colossal figure in our game," said Cricket Australia chairman Richard Freudenstein. "Not only as one of the finest players to have represented Australia and New South Wales, but for the positive influence he exerted across the game as an administrator, mentor and benefactor."

Davidson made his Test debut on the 1953 Ashes

tour against England and went on to play 44 Tests, taking 186 wickets at 20.53 with best figures of 7-93, while scoring 1,328 runs. After overcoming a series of injuries, he was at his peak in the late 1950s and early 1960s under the captaincy of close friend Richie Benaud.

During a golden period for the Australian team that included three Ashes series victories as well as successful tours of South Africa and India, Davidson was widely recognized as the game's pre-eminent all-rounder. He later spent 33 years as president of Cricket NSW, 20 years as a Trustee of the Sydney Cricket Ground and five years as an Australian Test selector between 1979-84. Mallett was remembered as a humble man who also played a significant role in Australian cricket.

Nicknamed "Rowdy" in an ironic nod to his quietly spoken nature, he played 38 Tests from his debut against England in 1968, taking 132 wickets at an average of 29.84. He still holds the best figures for a finger spinner in Australia with 8-59 against Pakistan at Adelaide in 1972, but his efforts in India were heralded as his greatest. On the 1969-70 tour, he took 28 wickets, playing a key role in Australia securing a rare series win in India.

"Ashley Mallett was a wonderful player, admired journalist and highly acclaimed author," said Freudenstein. "He played a significant part in Australian cricket not only as a player but as a prolific storyteller who has preserved the memories of some of the game's greatest and moments in time for people to enjoy through the ages."

After his playing career ended, Mallett coached many young spinners, setting up the Spin Australia program and the Spin Academy in Sri Lanka. He also wrote numerous books, including biographies of batting great Victor Trumper and fellow spin wizard Clarrie Grimmett. — AFP



Alan Davidson



Ashley Mallett

## Manchester United thump Spurs

Chelsea take advantage of Man City shock, Liverpool slip



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's English defender Eric Dier heads towards the Manchester United goal during an English Premier League football match at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: Manchester United bounced back with a 3-0 win at Tottenham yesterday as Chelsea took advantage of stumbles by Liverpool and Manchester City to extend their lead at the top of the Premier League to three points. Liverpool blew at 2-0 lead at Anfield as Brighton battled back to earn a deserved 2-2 draw. City are now five points off the top after Pep Guardiola's 10 men were beaten 2-0 by Crystal Palace at the Etihad.

United were humiliated 5-0 at Old Trafford by Liverpool last weekend to leave manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer hanging on to his job. But the Norwegian's decision to switch to a back three and start with a veteran strike pairing of Cristiano Ronaldo and Edinson Cavani paid off. Ronaldo's sumptuous volley from Bruno Fernandes' cross settled United's nerves six minutes before half-time. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner then turned provider for Cavani to dink the ball over Hugo Lloris. Marcus Rashford came off the bench to round

off a badly-needed three points and performance for Solskjaer's men, who registered just a second clean sheet in 22 games. Chelsea extended their lead at the top to three points as Reece James scored twice in a 3-0 win at Newcastle. The Magpies are hoping to follow in the footsteps of Chelsea and City's success following huge investment from foreign owners.

However, Saudi-owned Newcastle have a battle just to remain in the top flight as they remain rooted in the bottom three without a league win this season. All the goals arrived in the second-half as James produced two stunning finishes from right wing-back before Jorginho's penalty rounded off the scoring.

### 'It feels like defeat'

Liverpool stretched their unbeaten run to 24 games in all competitions, but will feel two points slipped away after another flying start. "It feels like a

defeat," said Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp. Mohamed Salah's scoring streak came to an end at 10 games, but the Egyptian set up the opener as his pass was swept into the far corner by Jordan Henderson.

Sadio Mane doubled the home side's advantage with a back post header before the Senegalese had another goal ruled out for handball after he caught Brighton goalkeeper Robert Sanchez in possession. The Seagulls grabbed a lifeline before half-time when Enock Mwepu's cross flew over the stranded Alisson Becker. Brighton snatched a point when Leandro Trossard rounded off a brilliant team move 25 minutes from time.

### City slump

City's first home defeat of the season rounded off a perfect day for the Chelsea in the title race. Wilfried Zaha punished slack defending from Ruben Dias and Aymeric Laporte to fire into the far corner after six minutes. Laporte was then sent off for

pulling down Zaha as the last man in first-half stoppage time. Gabriel Jesus thought he had equalised midway through the second half only for the goal to be ruled out for offside against Phil Foden.

The 10 men were then caught out two minutes from time when Conor Gallagher smashed high past Ederson. Arsenal are up to sixth after a fast start and some inspired goalkeeping from Aaron Ramsdale earned the Gunners a 2-0 win at Leicester. Gabriel and Emile Smith Rowe struck inside the opening 18 minutes for the visitors at the King Power.

But they relied on Ramsdale thereafter as the England international made a miraculous save from James Maddison among a string of impressive stops. Burnley registered their first win of the season in style with a 3-1 victory over Brentford to move out of the bottom three. Southampton opened up a four-point cushion over the relegation zone thanks to Che Adams' strike in a 1-0 win at Watford. — AFP

## England pummel Australia; Proteas edge Sri Lanka

DUBAI: Jos Buttler's unbeaten 71 and inspired bowling by Chris Woakes powered England to an eight-wicket over Australia and close in on a semi-final spot at the Twenty20 World Cup yesterday. Buttler put on an opening stand of 66 with Jason Roy, who made 22, as England romped home to their victory target of 126 in 11.4 overs in Dubai.

Buttler smashed five fours and five sixes in his 32-ball knock to drive England to their third successive win in the Super 12 stage. Woakes and Chris Jordan shared five wickets between them to help bowl Australia out for 125 after they elected to field first.

Woakes sent the dangerous David Warner trudging back to the pavilion, caught behind for one, to signal his intent after England elected to bowl in the Super 12 contest in Dubai. Woakes then removed Glenn Maxwell and returned figures of 2-7 from his first three overs of excellent seam bowling and in between took a superb catch to see off Steve Smith for one.

Fellow quick Chris Jordan (3-17) returned impressive figures of 3-17 to flatten the Australian batting despite a fighting 44 by skipper Aaron Finch. Australia fell to a precarious 51-5 after leg spinner Adil Rashid trapped Marcus Stoinis lbw for nought and Liam Livingstone claimed the wicket of Matthew Wade, for 18.

Finch counterattacked as he took on Tymal Mills and Jordan for a few boundaries. He put on 47 runs with Ashton Agar, who made a run-a-ball 20, to give some respectability to the total. The left-handed Agar hit two straight sixes off Woakes' fourth over but fell to Mills while attempting another big hit. Jordan came back firing to dismiss Finch and Pat

Cummins, who had the first two balls of his three-ball stay over the fence, on successive balls. Adam Zampa avoided the hat-trick. Mills gave away 45 runs from his four overs but got Mitchell Starc out on the final ball of the innings to bowl out the Aussies. In reply, England started solidly before Zampa trapped Roy lbw, after an appeal the on-field umpire denied but Australia successfully reviewed. Agar had Dawid Malan caught behind for eight with his left-arm spin but the wicket proved only a minor bump on England's road to victory.

Buttler kept punishing the bowling, raising his half-century with a six. He had Jonny Bairstow, who hit the winning runs, for company till the end. England stay top of group 1 with six points ahead of Australia and South Africa, who edged out Sri Lanka in the first match of the day.

Earlier, David Miller and Kagiso Rabada combined to propel South Africa to a thrilling victory as they edged Sri Lanka by four wickets despite a hat-trick by Wanindu Hasaranga in the T20 World Cup. With South Africa needing 15 off the final over bowled by Lahiru Kumara, Miller smashed two sixes and Rabada struck the winning boundary as South Africa reached their target of 143 with one ball to spare in Sharjah.

Miller finished with 23 off 13 balls while Rabada made 13 off seven to carry their team home after Hasaranga took the third hat-trick in tournament history. South Africa skipper Temba Bavuma admitted it had been a tough few days after the Quinton de Kock controversy. De Kock was recalled to the team on Saturday after refusing to take the knee in Tuesday's game against West Indies.

Hasaranga's figures of 3-20 were not enough for Sri Lanka who made 142 in their innings. His triple strike was spread over the final ball of his third over and first two of his fourth and pushed South Africa to a precarious 112-6 with his second victim, Bavuma, out for 46. The left-handed pair of Miller and Rabada then smashed 34 runs between them to give South Africa their second straight



DUBAI: England's Jos Buttler plays a shot as Australia's wicketkeeper Matthew Wade watches during the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup cricket match at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium yesterday. — AFP

win in the Super 12 stage.

Sri Lanka's Pathum Nissanka had hit 72 but South Africa bowled out their opponents for 142. Leg-spinner Tabraiz Shamsi returned figures of 3-17 from his four overs of leg spin and fast bowler Pretorius also took three wickets after South

Africa elected to field first. De Kock returned to the South Africa starting lineup after missing the previous match after refusing to take the knee. Having apologized for his stance, he knelt down in support of the anti-racism gesture along with the rest of the Proteas team. — Agencies