



3 **Dodgy recruiters encourage domestic helpers to abscond**



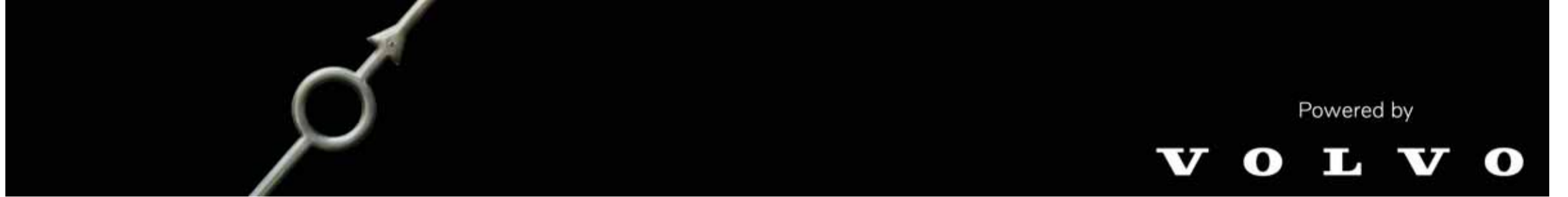
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Kuwait allows unvaccinated under-18 residents to return

Direct air links with India resume from today with 5 daily flights

Opposition MPs say exit of PM, speaker only solution

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: A number of opposition lawmakers yesterday lashed back at National Assembly Speaker Marzouk Al-Ghanem, who spoke of a political breakthrough in the country, saying that the only solution to the country's political crisis is through the departure of the speaker and the prime minister. Ghanem said on Sunday that a number of initiatives had been floated during the parliamentary recess with the aim of achieving a breakthrough for the country's political deadlock.

The speaker said he was confident that some positive results will appear before the start of the next Assembly term in late October. He did not provide any details about the initiatives. Ghanem also lashed out at the opposi-

tion, charging them of obstructing all goodwill initiatives to resolve the political standoff.

But MP Marzouq Al-Khalifa accused Ghanem of protecting corrupt officials and insisted the main demand of the opposition will remain "the departure of the speaker and prime minister". Former opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani insisted that the "real breakthrough is in the departure of the speaker and the prime minister", and also through substantial change to governance policies.

MP Khaled Al-Otaibi said what has put the country into this situation are those who breached the constitution and prevented grillings, adding that "no solution will come from those who manufacture crises", a clear reference to the Assembly speaker.

Continued on Page 2

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The Cabinet yesterday issued a decision allowing residents under 18 years of age who have not been vaccinated to return to the country, provided they pledge to take the vaccine after arriving. The decision tasked the interior ministry to make returnees sign undertakings that they will take the vaccine in Kuwait. It also called for applying institutional and home quarantine whenever necessary and urged the application of health measures.

Kuwait has so far refused to allow expats who have not taken two doses of approved vaccines to return to the country. Those who have taken Chinese or Russian vaccines are required to take a third dose of an approved vaccine to be able to return. The Cabinet also issued another decision allowing the return of fans to sports venues, provided they are fully vaccinated and that their total number should not exceed 30 percent of the venues' capacity. All must observe health conditions set by the health ministry.

Health Minister Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet about major progress in the health situation and the sharp drop in the number of coronavirus cases, saying that the infection rate has dropped to just 0.6 percent of tests. As a result, a number of coronavirus treatment

wards at hospitals have been shut down.

Meanwhile, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation announced yesterday that direct commercial flights with India will resume today after a one-year suspension due to the pandemic. The DGCA has scheduled five flights a day according to the seat capacity agreed upon by the two countries, in accordance with the Cabinet's recent decision to increase the airport's capacity, Aviation Control Director Raed Al-Tajer said. The first flight from India is scheduled to arrive at 6:00 am today, he added.

The decision to resume flights was first announced last month, while following COVID-19 protocols, but without giving a timeframe for implementation. Kuwait had suspended commercial flights from several countries including India and Egypt on the advice of health authorities amid a surge in COVID cases. Direct flights with Egypt resumed on Sunday.

Kuwait yesterday reported 71 new coronavirus cases and one death, taking total COVID-19 cases to 410,413 and deaths to 2,425. Another 179 patients recovered from the virus, taking total recoveries to 406,137, Health Ministry Spokesperson Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said. The number of patients receiving medical care in COVID-19 wards is 137, including 46 in intensive care units, he said, adding that another 1,851 patients are receiving regular treatment.

News in brief

Player dies after 40 yrs in coma

MARSEILLE: Former France defender Jean-Pierre Adams has died aged 73 after almost 40 years in a coma, his former club Nimes announced yesterday. Adams, who made 22 international appearances in the 1970s, slipped into a coma after a mistake by his anesthetist during routine knee surgery in 1982. — AFP (See Page 15)



Jean-Pierre Adams

Ex-US army sniper kills 4

WASHINGTON: A former sniper in the US military went on a shooting spree in central Florida, killing four people, including an infant boy in his mother's arms, officials said Sunday. The suspect, identified as 33-year-old Bryan Riley, shot and killed a 40-year-old man, a 33-year-old woman and her three-month-old son in a residential area in Polk County, Florida. The fourth victim was the child's 62-year-old grandmother. — AFP

Uzbeks lift school headscarf ban

TASHKENT: Uzbekistan will allow girls to wear headscarves in schools in a bid to ensure devout Muslim families send their daughters to school, the Central Asian country's education ministry said. Education Minister Sherzod Shermatov said on Saturday the authorities "intend to allow national headscarves and skullcaps in white or light colors" in schools after "the appeals of many parents". — AFP

Saudi man executed

RIYADH: A Saudi man was executed in Dammam yesterday on charges of terrorism and weapons smuggling, the interior ministry said. The man was found guilty of belonging to a terrorist cell and "targeting security personnel by shooting at them". He was also charged "with smuggling weapons in and out of the country and of being a member of a terrorist cell with the aim of destabilizing national security". — AFP

Taliban claim full control of Afghanistan

KABUL: The Taliban yesterday claimed total control over Afghanistan, saying they had won the key battle for the Panjshir Valley, the last remaining holdout of resistance against their rule. Following their lightning-fast victory in mid-August over the former Afghan government's security forces and the withdrawal of US troops after 20 years of war, the Taliban turned to fighting the forces defending the mountainous Panjshir Valley.

As the Islamist hardliners claimed victory, their chief spokesman warned against any further attempts to rise up against their rule while urging former members of the security forces to join their

Continued on Page 2



KABUL: Members of the Taliban Badri 313 military unit stand amid debris of the destroyed Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) base in Deh Sabz district northeast of the capital yesterday. — AFP

6 Palestinians escape from Zionist prison

JERUSALEM: Six Palestinians broke out of a Zionist prison yesterday through a tunnel dug beneath a sink, triggering a massive manhunt for the group that includes a prominent ex-militant. The Zionist Prison Service said an alert was sounded around 3:00 am (0000 GMT) by locals who spotted "suspicious figures" outside the Gilboa prison in the country's north. The group includes Zakaria

Zubeidi, a former militant leader from the flashpoint city of Jenin in the occupied West Bank.

In footage that recalled the iconic 1994 prison escape film "The Shawshank Redemption", the prison service released a video which showed agents inspecting a narrow tunnel beneath a sink and another showing a hole just outside the prison walls. Gilboa - which opened in 2004 during the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising - is a high security site where hundreds of Palestinians are detained among other inmates. The prison service said all those held at Gilboa over "security offences" were being relocated in case additional

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BET SHE'AN: Police and journalists gather around a hole used by six Palestinian prisoners to escape from the Gilboa Prison after they dug a tunnel beneath a sink yesterday. — AFP

Gaddafi son Saadi freed from jail

TRIPOLI: Saadi Gaddafi, a son of Libya's late dictator Muammar Gaddafi who was overthrown and killed in a 2011 uprising, has been freed from jail, said the interim

government. Saadi - the strongman's third son, now aged 47 - was known for his playboy lifestyle and briefly played as a professional footballer in Italy. "Saadi Muammar Gaddafi has been freed from prison," following a court ruling several years ago, a justice ministry source said late Sunday in comments confirmed by the Government of National Unity.

Several media reports suggested Gaddafi had already taken a flight to Turkey. The Turkish foreign ministry, how-

ever, told AFP on Monday it had no information about Gaddafi's possible arrival in Istanbul. Libya's Presidential Council yesterday also announced the release of several other prisoners, including Gaddafi's former cabinet and intelligence chief, Ahmad Ramadan, who was nicknamed "Black Box" for being the keeper of the dictator's secrets.

Saadi fled to Niger following the 2011 NATO-backed uprising, but was

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Saadi Gaddafi

Local

Kuwait Amir receives Chairman of Supreme Judicial Council

Foreign Minister receives call from US counterpart

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday the Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council and the Court of Cassation Justice Ahmad Al-Ajeel. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir yesterday sent a condolence cable to Lebanese President Michel Aoun, over the demise of the Supreme Shite Islamic Council's head Sheikh Abdulameer Qablan. In the cable, His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon his soul. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent the Lebanese president similar cables.

In other news, Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah yesterday received a call from US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. During the phone conversation, the US Secretary of State renewed his country's thanks and appreciation for all efforts exerted to facilitate the evacuation of the citizens of the US and other countries from Afghanistan. Blinken also appreciated the level of distinguished coop-

eration between the US and Kuwait, which has led to the success of all operations.

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister restated that the State of Kuwait is proud of its historical strong and firm relations with the US, and of working together to save people's lives and ensure the safe transit of Afghans to their final destinations. Both officials discussed ways of bolstering bilateral relations in all fields, in addition to the latest regional and international developments.

Separately, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah received yesterday Director of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) Office in Kuwait Dr Samer Haddadin at the Ministry's headquarter on the occasion of the end of his

tenure. During the meeting, Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Al-Sabah praised Dr Haddadin's efforts during his stay in Kuwait and his contribution in coordinating and enhancing the relations between Kuwait and the (UNHCR), wishing him success in his next mission.

Dr Haddadin meanwhile said he was pleased with the attention and care he received from the



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council and the Court of Cassation Justice Ahmad Al-Ajeel. — Amiri Diwan photo

State of Kuwait and the Office of the High Commissioner for the success of his work. He expressed his deep thanks and appreciation to the

State of Kuwait for supporting the efforts of the High Commissioner and its humanitarian projects around the world. — KUNA



Minister receives UNHCR office director

Zain recognized by UNHCR for successful strategic partnership

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, was recognized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for its long list of initiatives and programs launched as part of their strategic partnership throughout the past years. Zain's efforts came as a reflection of the private sector's role in supporting humanitarian causes.

Head of the UNHCR Office to Kuwait, Dr Samer Haddadin, recognized Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti during the gala dinner held at the headquarters of the Arab Media Forum. The event was held on the occasion of Dr Haddadin's departure and to welcome the new Head of the UNHCR Office to Kuwait, Nisreen Rubya'an. Dr Haddadin expressed the UNHCR's gratitude to Zain's continuous efforts to shoulder the various humanitarian initiatives and support refugee causes in the region.

Zain is proud to be one of Kuwait's first private sector companies to form a strategic partnership with the UNHCR by signing a MoU back in 2016. The MoU aimed at finding the best ways for Zain to contribute to the improvement of the living and social conditions of refugees and any other individuals whom the UNHCR provides assistance to. Both parties agreed to regularly consult with one another in order to contribute to the improvement of the wellbeing of refugees.

Zain believes the private sector has a vital and active role in supporting the public sector and global agencies like the United Nations and the UNHCR to uplift the plight of refugees around the world. For this, the company has embraced and launched many programs and initiatives throughout the past years in line with the UNHCR's needs and goals.

Zain has a number of prominent humanitarian contributions in partnership with

the UNHCR, including the #ZainWithRefugees campaign, field trips to refugee camps, online donation campaigns, strategic partnerships with local and global humanitarian entities, and more.

In 2017, Zain launched its humanitarian campaign #ZainWithRefugees in collaboration with the UNHCR. The campaign aimed at improving the living conditions of thousands of refugees in the region who suffer from the lack of essential supplies during the harsh winter season. Donations were utilized to provide families with financial support, winter clothing, thermal blankets, heaters, and more.

Zain prides itself in its long list of joint collaborations with the UNHCR, including the extension of mobile telecommunications coverage to reconnect displaced families in the Middle East, offering telecom services in deprived areas, as well as awareness campaigns through SMS services and social media channels.

In relevance to the international refugee situation, Zain partnered with Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) to organize a humanitarian trip that saw 12 of its volunteered employees visiting



KUWAIT: Head of the UNHCR Office to Kuwait Dr Samer Haddadin honors Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti during event.

and supporting Syrian refugees in Lebanon to distribute food, clothes, blankets and cater to a number of KRCS-supported projects. Zain also continued its annual Clothes Donation

Campaign and extended it this year to Kuwait University, where over 10.5 tons of clothes were donated and sent by Kuwait Society for Relief to displaced Syrian families.

Taleban claim full control of...

Continued from Page 1

regime's ranks. "With this victory, our country is completely taken out of the quagmire of war," chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said. "Anyone who tries to start an insurgency will be hit hard. We will not allow another," he later added at press conference in Kabul.

The Taleban published a video of their flag being raised over the governor's house in Panjshir - underscoring a historic win that has seen the anti-Taleban bastion defeated for the first time during 40 years of conflict. It remained in the hands of resistance fighters during Soviet rule, a subsequent civil war and the Taleban's first regime of the late 1990s. The National Resistance Front (NRF) in Panjshir - made up of anti-Taleban militia and former Afghan security forces - on Sunday acknowledged suffering major battlefield losses and called for a ceasefire. But yesterday, the group said in a tweet that its fighters were still present in "strategic positions" in the valley.

The NRF includes local fighters loyal to Ahmad Massoud - the son of the famous anti-Soviet and anti-Taleban commander Ahmad Shah Massoud - as well as remnants of the Afghan military that retreated to the Panjshir Valley. As Taleban fighters amassed in the valley, Massoud yesterday called on Afghans in and out of the country to "rise up in resistance".

The Taleban are yet to finalize their new regime after rolling into the capital Kabul three weeks ago at a

speed that analysts say likely surprised even the hard-line Islamists themselves. As they undertake a mammoth transition into overseeing key institutions and cities of hundreds of thousands of people, Mujahid said an interim government would first be announced, allowing for later changes. "Final decisions have been taken, we are now working on the technical issues," he said at a press conference.

Afghanistan's new rulers have pledged to be more "inclusive" than during their first stint in power, with a government that represents Afghanistan's complex ethnic makeup - though women are unlikely to be included at the top levels. Women's freedoms in Afghanistan were sharply curtailed under the Taleban's 1996-2001 rule.

This time, women will be allowed to attend university as long as classes are segregated by sex or at least divided by a curtain, the Taleban's education authority said in a lengthy document issued on Sunday. But female students must wear an abaya (robe) and niqab (face-veil), as opposed to the even more conservative burqa mandatory under the previous Taleban regime. However, some universities in Kabul remained closed yesterday and those that did open saw a drastic fall in the number of students - some who complied with the new rules, and others who resisted.

Afghans are also facing a host of other challenges, including looming financial and humanitarian crises. "The authorities pledged that the safety and security of humanitarian staff, and humanitarian access to people in need, will be guaranteed and that humanitarian workers - both men and women - will be guaranteed freedom of movement," a statement from UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. The Taleban spokesman said the group had assured a visiting UN team of cooperation. — AFP

Meanwhile, Ghanem yesterday denied a press report that he made contacts with former prominent opposition MP Musallam Al-Barrak, who has been living in exile for the past three years. Ghanem said on Twitter that he categorically denies the report. Barrak's group, the Popular Action Movement, also denied the report in a statement.

Barrak and about a dozen former opposition MPs and activists have been living in self-exile in Turkey since the summer of 2018 to escape jail terms passed by Kuwait's top court for taking part in storming the National Assembly building in late 2011 following an anti-corruption protest. Opposition MPs have been campaigning to secure the return of the exiles, but their efforts have been unsuccessful so far.

Gaddafi son Saadi freed...

Continued from Page 1

extradited to Libya in 2014. He was held in a Tripoli prison, accused of crimes committed against protesters and of the 2005 killing of Libyan football coach Bashir Al-Rayani. In April 2018, the court of appeal acquitted him of Rayani's murder.

Since the 2011 uprising, Libya has sunk into chaos, with an array of rulers and militias vying for power. A 2020 ceasefire ended the factional fighting and paved the way for peace talks and the formation of a transitional government this March, ahead of elections set for December. But preparations are marred by disputes over when to hold elections, what elections to hold and on what constitutional grounds.

Saadi was the third son of the flamboyant colonel

6 Palestinians escape from...

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escape tunnels have been dug beneath the facility. Hours before much of the Zionist entity was set to shut down for Jewish New Year celebrations that begin at sundown yesterday, police, the army and agents from the Zionist Shin Bet internal security agency were conducting a manhunt, a police statement said. The search included aerial surveillance vehicles, sniffer dogs, roadblocks and checkpoints.

In Jenin governorate, where some Palestinians fired into the air to celebrate the escapees, Zionist forces were deployed heavily, an AFP reporter said. Jenin governor Akram Rajoub told AFP: "For the moment the situation is calm, but the surveillance is unprecedented." With rumors about the escapees' whereabouts spreading rapidly online, Jenin has become an area of focus, partly given Zubeidi's ties there.

The Jenin refugee camp, which adjoins Jenin city, is used to Zionist incursions despite being in a West Bank area officially under Palestinian control, said Hassan Al-Amouri, a community leader. "Anything is possible" in a camp where many residents are armed, he told AFP. Unrest has spiked in Jenin in recent weeks. A gun battle broke out last month as

who took power after a bloodless coup in 1969. For 42 years, the self-styled "Leader of the Revolution" ruled his "Jamahiriya", or "state of the masses" with an iron grip, though not necessarily a coherent direction. The economy was hamstrung by the capricious leader's whims - and he was accused of using the country's oil wealth to fund and arm rebel groups across Africa and beyond.

As he concentrated power in an ever-smaller, more nepotistic circle, he destroyed any institutions - military or political - that might challenge him. Meanwhile, his family lived a life of opulence, with private jets, luxury sports cars and a supervacht. On Oct 20, 2011, rebels stormed Muammar Gaddafi's Mediterranean hometown of Sirte, where he and his son Mutassim were killed.

Another son, Seif al-Arab, had perished in a NATO air raid in April 2011, and his brother Khamis died in combat four months later. But other members of the Gaddafi clan survived, including his wife Safiya, eldest son Mohammed, daughter Aisha, heir apparent Seif al-Islam, high-roller Hannibal and playboy Saadi. — AFP

Zionist forces came under fire while looking for suspects, leaving four Palestinians dead.

Zionist Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, an observant and religious Jew, held consultations with defense and prison chiefs in the final hours before New Year, or Rosh Hashanah, begins. He called the escape "a serious event that required a comprehensive effort by all of the security services". All six who escaped were accused of planning or carrying out attacks on Zionists.

Zubeidi was the former head of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades and a well-known figure among Palestinians and Zionists. He was arrested over "terror allegations" in 2019 in a West Bank village near Ramallah. He had previously faced charges from the Palestinian Authority for taking part in deadly a shooting attack on the residence of Jenin governor Qaddura Musa in 2002.

Zubeidi in 2007 agreed to lay down his arms and went on to help found Jenin's Freedom Theatre. In 2011, the theatre's well-known director Juliano Mer-Khamis was gunned down in Jenin's refugee camp, in an attack that remains unsolved. Another of the escapees is Mahmud Abdullah Ardah, a prominent member of the Islamic Jihad militant group who had been serving a life sentence since 1996.

Islamic Jihad supporters in Gaza were distributing goods across the Zionist-blockaded enclave yesterday - gifts to celebrate the jailbreak, AFP reporters said. Hamas, the Islamist group that controls Gaza, called the escape "a heroic act and a victory for the will and determination of our heroic detainees". — AFP

Opposition MPs say exit of PM...

Continued from Page 1

MP Mohammad Al-Mutair said the announcements from Ghanem are not new, charging him of standing against the people and the constitution. He said the prime minister should know there will be understanding only with those who respect the constitution. Leading opposition MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri accused Ghanem of "destroying the country and the constitution" and of creating crises and problems, calling for his resignation.

Local

Unscrupulous recruiters target helpers, encouraging absconding

Some helpers run away after they're promised higher salaries, union says

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Facing a dearth of workers, some local recruitment agencies are poaching domestic helpers already under contract, and in some cases, enticing them to abscond from their current employment in exchange for higher salaries.

"We reported them [illicit recruiters] to the police and they will catch them eventually. They are unlicensed recruiters and are illegal. Some of them are also using social media to entice household helpers to abscond," Khaled Al-Dakhan, head of Kuwait Union for Domestic Labor Offices (KUDLO), told Kuwait Times.

"Many of our member recruitment agencies have complained against them. We are really concerned because we discovered some domestic helpers are running away because they were promised a higher salary. We reported them to the police, and these people involved in illegal recruitment will be punished," he said.

Since the start of the pandemic, Kuwait has throttled the recruitment of domestic labor. This has not only led to shortages in the formal, regulated market, but also in the black market. Domestic laborers, especially house help from places like the Philippines, come to Kuwait on two-year contracts. But some end up fleeing their sponsors' homes before the end of the contract, working illegally for hourly wages or in other peo-

ple's homes and businesses.

As the demand for domestic helpers has grown, some recruiters are now targeting domestic helpers already in the country, encouraging them to leave their sponsors, whether they've completed their contracts or not. Dakhan warned against licensed offices that are leased to recruiters allegedly encouraging domestic helpers to escape from their sponsors to work by the hour, which is more profitable for the helpers and the office.

"This is illegal, and the only person affected by a helper's escape is the sponsor, plus us - the legal recruiters. The sponsor is harmed financially and morally as following a long wait of around five months to hire the helper, she absconds after a week," he said.

Kuwait Times also spoke to a local recruitment agency that has posted ads on social media to recruit domestic helpers already in the country. "I don't think we can be called illegal recruiters - we have a licensed office here in Kuwait and we recruit only local workers who are searching for a job. We help people - also those on domestic helper visas - but only those who are ready to transfer or released

by their sponsors," said the secretary of the company, which requested not to be named.

"Why not earn a bigger salary? For someone earning KD 120 as a domestic helper, we can raise that to KD 300 or even KD 400. We all came here to work, and if there are opportunities like this, we must take advantage of them," she added. Another ad, seemingly targeted at domestic helpers, offered anyone interested in a job in Jahra as a caregiver a salary of KD 500 per month.

Mariam Macapudi, President of the Filipino Association of Secretaries of Employment Agencies in Kuwait (Fil-Aseak), a group comprising of 200 licensed recruitment agencies, said she was among those who brought this matter to the attention of KUDLO.

"The problem here is as a licensed agency, we invest money in our recruits. When this worker runs away, the government will demand airfare from us. Other financial issues must also be settled before they are sent home. If the worker is arrested two years later, she will be fingerprinted and deported without punishing the person who harbored her or employed her. There are many unofficial offices



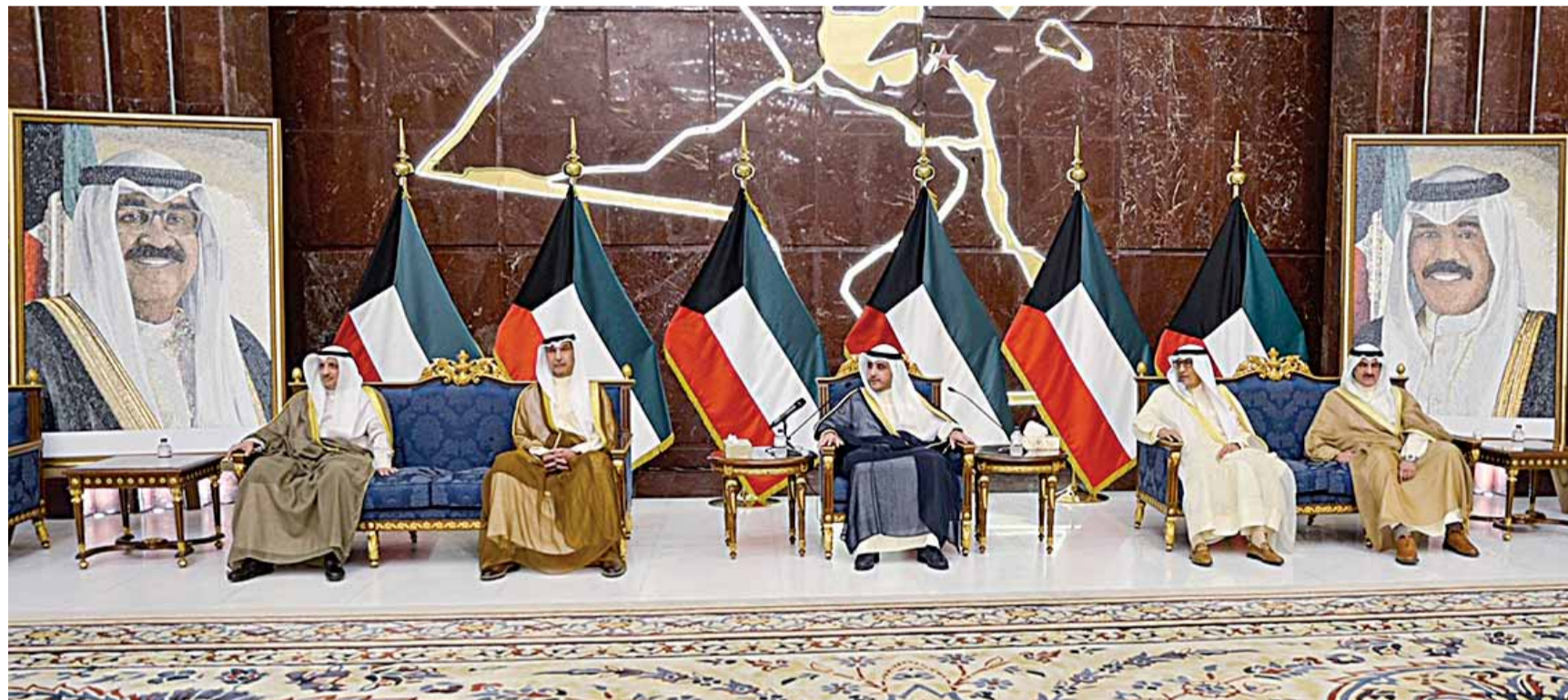
around Kuwait, and some are using social media to post vacancies. Some domestic helpers will be tempted to run away, especially those who suffer abuse at their workplaces. At the end of the day, authorities will look for the offices that brought them here," Macapudi said.

The law says a domestic help visa (article 20) can be transferred to a private sector work visa (article 18) if the employer has a business of their own. As of June 2020, there were nearly 680,000 domestic workers in Kuwait - 325,000 from India and nearly 150,000 from the Philippines. Local and their international partner agencies are allowed to charge employers up to KD 990 for hiring new domestic helpers. Employers are also obliged to pay for 14 days of quarantine at local hotels.



Unofficial offices post vacancies on social media

Diplomatic attaches take oath



KUWAIT: Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah yesterday attended a ceremony at the Foreign Ministry's Diwan where 39 diplomatic attaches swore in to assume their posts. —KUNA

Kuwait offers Apple to enter through KDIPA

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Finance proposed Apple to enter Kuwait through Kuwait Direct Investment Public Authority (KDIPA) to ensure its listing on the roster of foreign companies that are exempt from paying taxes under double taxation treaties, according to sources. The US technology giant had postponed entering Kuwait through its Apple Pay service, adding that the ministry held several meetings with company representatives to explain its tax situation in case it signed up with local banks to apply the Apply Pay service.

The company first asked the finance ministry to exempt it from the rule that stipulates a 5 percent deduction from the total returns of Apple Pay in Kuwait, Al-Rai Arabic daily reported yesterday, quoting the sources. Apple argued it should not be considered an investment that must pay taxes, as the company presented a description of its financial payment service done through apps and not through its presence in Kuwait, which exempts it from any local taxes.

It seems finance ministry officials were not convinced, said the sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "They believe that activating the Apple Pay service locally will constitute moving of money outside Kuwait to a foreign company, as Apple will collect a percentage of each transaction from banks that use its payment services, be they Kuwaiti or others," they explained. "They insist Apple must pay taxes as the law stipulates, which is at five percent in this regard." Ministry officials also believe that even if the company doesn't have premises in Kuwait, this will not exempt it from paying taxes as long as it benefits from the country's markets, the sources noted.



Fire reported in Salmiya restaurant



KUWAIT: This handout photo released by Kuwait Fire Force shows a fire engine at the site of a blaze reported in Salmiya yesterday.

KUWAIT: Salmiya firemen put out a blaze reported in a restaurant in the area, Kuwait Fire Force said yesterday. The fire started in the chimney of the eatery located on Amman Street. The blaze was

brought under control before the flames could spread further, KFF explained.

No injuries were reported as an investigation was opened into the case, it noted. Meanwhile, Kuwait



Kuwait Fire Force Director Lt Gen Khaled Al-Mikrad visits injured fireman Major Nasser Al-Malik.

Fire Force Director Lt Gen Khaled Al-Mikrad yesterday visited Major Nasser Al-Malik in Razi Hospital, where he was hospitalized after he was injured while on duty, KFF said.

Kuwait allows sports fans back into stadiums

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Cabinet decided yesterday to allow sports fans back into stadiums with the start of the 2021-2022 season. The Center for Government Communication said on Twitter that only vaccinated fans would be given access to stadiums. It added that fans would be allowed to use only 30 percent of stadium capacity, emphasizing that health guidelines should be followed during games and training. —KUNA

Local

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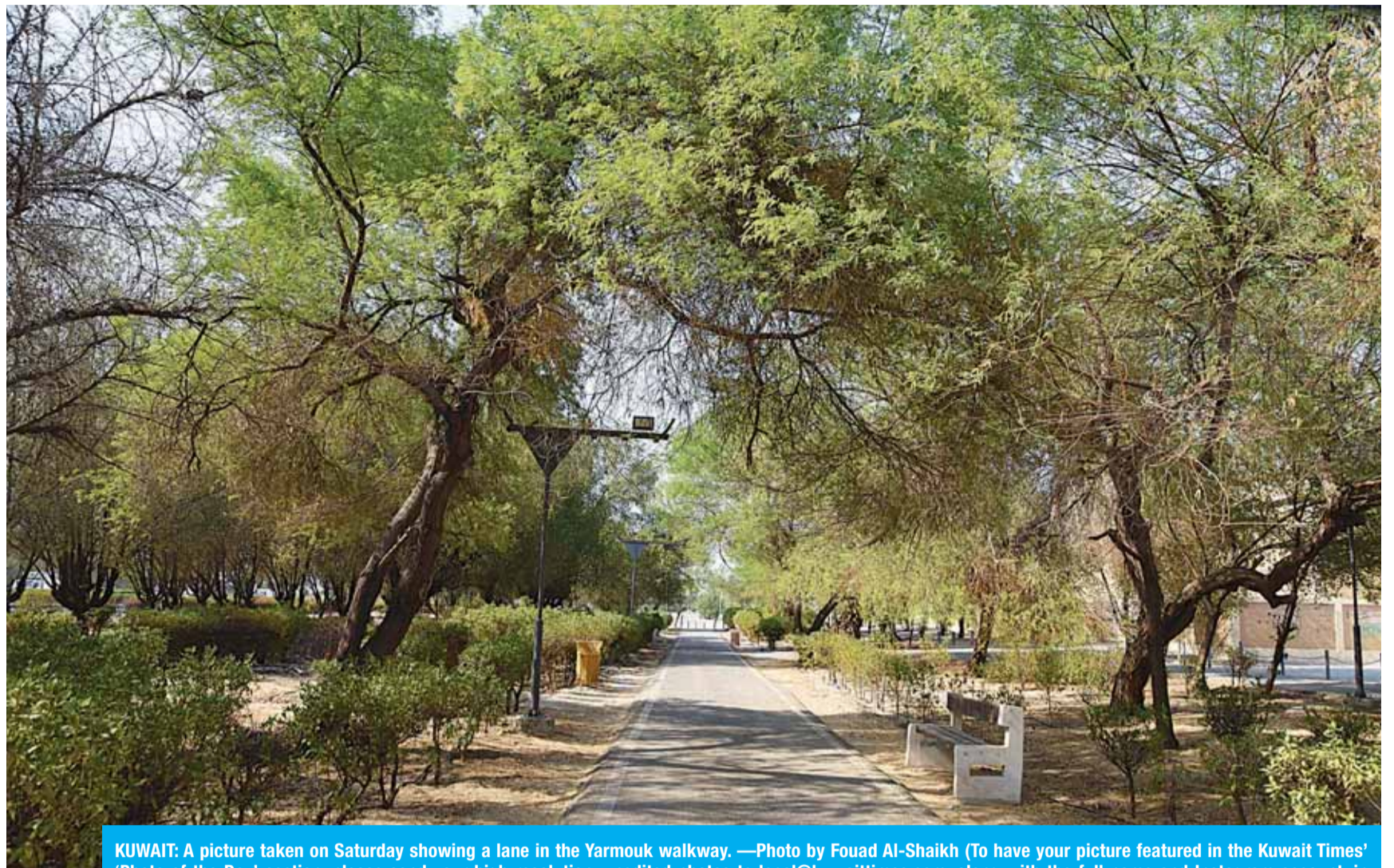
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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A picture taken on Saturday showing a lane in the Yarmouk walkway. —Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh (To have your picture featured in the Kuwait Times' 'Photo of the Day' section, please send your high resolution, unedited photos to local@kuwaittimes.com, along with the full name and Instagram account, in addition to a description showing the picture's location and date taken)

News in brief

70% targeted people fully vaccinated in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Around 70 percent of targeted people have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in Kuwait, member of the Supreme Committee for COVID-19 Dr Khaled Al-Saeed said. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health released a statement in which it denied rumors alleging mass resignations among doctors in protest against the COVID-19 treatment protocols in Kuwait.

Study to enroll women in Kuwait army

KUWAIT: Kuwait Army is studying the possibility of allowing women to enroll in military service, Deputy Chief of Staff for Human Forces Affairs Dr Khaled Al-Kandari said. He made his statements to reporters on the sidelines of an event held at the Avenues Mall on Sunday to encourage Kuwaiti young men to join the army.

Euro birds ban lifted

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources has lifted the ban on importing all types of live birds, hatching eggs and one-day-old chicks from Denmark, Germany, Belgium, Romania, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands. The authority banned importing all types of live birds, hatching eggs and one-day-old chicks from Benin due to the spread of a severe bird flu in the country, spokesman Talal Al-Daihani said yesterday. Arriving bird shipments will be tested for diseases and if found, the owner bears costs for returning the shipment to the country of origin, he added.

Health Ministry launches COVID-19 vaccination in northern Abdali area

KUWAIT: The Health Ministry announced yesterday that it launched a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination center in the northern Abdali area with the capacity to immunize 2,000 individuals per day. In a press statement, Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad — the ministry's official spokesman — said that the launch of the center came after the success of a similar facility in Wafra, which vaccinated 29,000 individuals between August 19 and September 2. On the Abdali center operations, Dr Sanad revealed that the facility houses 12 vaccination units in addition to an emergency and observation rooms operating from 10:00 am to 08:00 pm. —KUNA



KUWAIT: This handout photo released by Kuwait's Ministry of Health yesterday shows the COVID-19 vaccination center in Abdali. —KUNA photos



The Abdali COVID-19 vaccination center seen from the inside.

Al-Sayer partners with Trash Hero Kuwait for blood donation



KUWAIT: To inspire the Kuwaiti community with a noble idea of donating blood to save lives, and considering the current pandemic situation and an increased need of life-saving blood in hospitals, Al-Sayer Holding conducted a blood donation campaign in association with Trash Hero Kuwait, a non-profit organization, and Kuwait Central Blood Bank for five consecutive days.

More than 30 volunteers contributed five hours a day to support 60+ donors who visited to donate blood and take part in the role of protecting people's lives. Kuwait NGOs including 'Green Hands', 'Tarahom', 'Kuwait Response and Rescue Squad' and 'Spread the Passion' immensely supported the program. All participants underwent a medical assessment before donation to ensure they are sufficiently fit and healthy to give blood.

Nehad Al-Hajj Ali, GM of Corporate Excellence at Al-Sayer Group, expressed his high gratitude for the volunteers who joined. "Such

gathering shows great solidarity from us to others, who we never met or know," he said. "Blood donation is an excellent service to humanity, and we look forward to partner in such voluntary services to service our community."

Such activity aligns with United Nations Sustainability Development Goals, particularly the 'Good Health and Well-Being' and 'Partnerships for The Goals' targets, to make positive change among people and to join hands with active organizations that aim to create a more prosperous society.

Al-Sayer Holding expressed gratitude to the management and staff at Blood Bank Jabriya unit for an effective support on these critical days. "As part of Al-Sayer corporate social responsibility, we are always keen to raise awareness among our employees, customers, and society to elevate the spirit of giving and coming together for the prosperity of Kuwait community," it noted.

Money supply down by 0.8 percent in July

KUWAIT: Kuwait's money supply (M2) declined 0.8 percent in July on a monthly basis, recording KD 38.7 billion (\$127.7 billion), the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said on Sunday. Private sector deposits made in the Kuwaiti dinar at local banks slid by 0.6 percent to KD 34.7 billion (\$114.5 billion), according to the state monetary authority's economic research department. Deposits in foreign currencies also decreased by 4.6 percent to KD 2.2 billion

(\$6.6 billion). Domestic banks' claims on the CBK in the Kuwaiti dinar, represented by CBK bonds, settled at KD 2.9 billion (\$9.6 billion) as their total assets decreased by 1.4 percent, reaching KD 73.8 billion (\$244 billion). Net foreign currency assets at domestic banks increased by 2.4 percent to KD 5.9 billion (\$19 billion), as time deposits at CBK shed 21.8 percent to reach KD 1.9 billion (\$6.2 billion). The balances of cash credit facilities (loans) increased by 0.4 percent to reach KD 40 billion (\$132 billion). Meanwhile, the average interest rates on treasury bonds of one-year maturity remain unchanged at 1.375 percent. The financing of Kuwaiti imports decreased by a monthly 16.7 percent, recording KD 475million (\$1.5 million), with the average US dollar exchange rate against the Kuwaiti dinar remained steady at KD 302.5. —KUNA

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Philippines lifts Manila lockdown as COVID surges

IS group's menace rebounds in troubled Afghanistan amid concerns

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CONAKRY: People celebrate in the streets with members of Guinea's armed forces after the arrest of Guinea's president, Alpha Conde, in a coup d'etat in Conakry.—AFP

Guinea coup leaders demand talks

Guinea awaits future; army seizes power

CONAKRY: The West African state of Guinea awaited word on its future yesterday as a new military junta summoned the outgoing cabinet a day after toppling the president. Elite troops led by Lieutenant-colonel Mamady Doumbouya told outgoing ministers and institutional leaders to gather at 1100 GMT at parliament in the capital Conakry. "Any refusal to attend will be considered a rebellion," they warned.

Impoverished and volatile, the West African state was hit by fresh turmoil on Sunday when special forces arrested 83-year-old President Alpha Conde, declared they were scrapping the constitution, and imposed a curfew. Land borders have been shut, the government dissolved and top governors and other senior administrators have been replaced by the military, the junta said.

Discontent had been growing for months over a flatlining COVID-hit economy and the leadership of Conde, who became Guinea's first democratically elected president in 2010. Five years later, he was re-elected - but in 2020 he sparked fury after ramming through changes to the constitution enabling him to sidestep a two-term limit. Doumbouya appeared on public television on Sunday draped in the national flag, accusing the government of "endemic corruption" and "trampling of citizens' rights".

"We are no longer going to entrust politics to one man, we are going to entrust politics to the people," the coup leader said. "Guinea is beautiful. We don't need to rape Guinea anymore, we just need to make love to her." He promised to launch a "national consultation to open an inclusive and calm transition."

An umbrella group called the FNDC, which led protests against Conde's constitutional changes, said imprisoned members would be freed. A video sent to AFP by the putschists on Sunday showed Conde sitting on a sofa surrounded by troops. Wearing a rumpled shirt and jeans and sitting on a sofa, he refused to answer a question from a soldier about whether he had been mistreated.

Troubled nation

Guinea's 13 million people are among the poorest in the world even though their country is a treasure trove of minerals from bauxite and iron ore to gold

and diamonds. It has rarely known stability since declaring independence from France in 1958 and bloody repression is entrenched. Conde was accused of following that same path towards authoritarianism in the final years of his rule.

Dozens of people were killed during demonstrations against his bid for a third term and hundreds more were arrested. He was proclaimed president last year after elections that his main challenger Cellou Dalein Diallo and other opposition figures denounced as a sham. The latest turbulence erupted on Sunday morning, when gunfire broke out in the centre of Conakry. For several hours, the situation was unclear, as the government said an attack on the presidential palace had been "repulsed".

There has been no official account of any casualties and there was no report of any major incident during the night. The end of Conde's regime triggered jubilation in some parts of Conakry, especially

in pro-opposition districts. The junta on Sunday said that land and air borders had been closed, but yesterday said that air frontiers had been reopened. Conakry, usually a bustling city, awoke in calm yesterday. Many shops were closed, and the main market of Medina was exceptionally quiet.

International condemnation

Outside Guinea, international leaders condemned the latest bout of turmoil in West Africa, a region where many countries are struggling with poverty, inequality and jihadist bloodshed. "Violence and any extra-constitutional measures will only erode Guinea's prospects for peace, stability, and prosperity," US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said, urging all parties to abide by the rule of law.

The African Union and the United Nations both called for Conde's release. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), through its acting president, Ghana's leader Nana Akufo-Addo, threatened sanctions if Guinea's constitutional order was not restored. The EU and France, the former colonial power, have both condemned the coup - the latest in a region that has seen recent military takeovers in Mali and Chad.—AFP



Special forces arrest President Alpha Conde



GOMA: A woman walks in the courtyard of the Kayembe camp for displaced people, near Goma. 4,000 or so households live in a camp for displaced people set up in a schoolyard in Kayembe, 4 km north of Goma.—AFP

At least 30 dead in DR Congo massacre blamed on jihadists

BUNIA: Rebels shot or hacked to death at least 30 people in a new massacre in northeastern DR Congo, local and UN sources said yesterday. Members of civil society blamed the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a group linked to the so-called Islamic State, for the attack on Saturday in the province of Ituri.

Dieudonne Malangayi, acting chairman of the chiefdom of Walese Vonkutu, initially said 14 people died but told AFP that more bodies had been discovered in the bush and the toll could rise further. "The civilians who went to look for the bodies of the victims found 16 others in the bush, which makes 30 civilians massacred," he said. A UN source confirmed that at least 30 people had died in the attack. One civilian who helped look for bodies said the victims had mostly been attacked with machetes or shot.

Augustin Muhindo Musavuli, a village elder who took part in the search, said he had seen 17 dead, mostly hacked to death by machete, but also shot dead. Some had their throats slit, others were disembowelled. "We went into the bush with young people, accompanied by soldiers," he told AFP by telephone from Bunia. "We transported the bodies on moto-

bikes... Lots of people died." The ADF, which the United States has deemed a terrorist group, is considered the deadliest of scores of armed militias that roam the mineral-rich eastern DR Congo.

Since May, the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri have been under a state of siege, with the army and police replacing civilian authorities as they fight armed groups. Malangayi complained that the army took no action despite being alerted on Friday to rebel movements in the area. "ADF rebels entered in the morning (on Saturday) and operated all day," he said. He accused them of looting homes and shops, and killing mostly farmers.

Feared group

The ADF first emerged as a rebel movement in neighboring Uganda in 1996, but is today presented as the Islamic State's Central Africa Province. It has been accused of killing thousands of civilians since 2013. The bodies from Saturday's attack were transported to hospital morgues in the area, said Malangayi. David Beyza Katabuka, head of the local Red Cross, said he could not send a team to bury the bodies. "We fear for our security and we don't have enough equipment to do the work," he said.

In addition to ADF, Ituri suffers from inter-communal violence that left tens of thousands of people dead from 1999 to 2003. A European peacekeeping force intervened in 2003, under French command, but after several years of calm, violence resumed in 2017. In late May, more than 50 people were killed in the region in a single day in an attack on two villages.—AFP

Who's left of the Gaddafi clan and where are they?

TRIPOLI: Libyan strongman Muammar Gaddafi was ousted and killed in the 2011 uprising, but several of his family members survived. Nearly a decade on from the dictator's gruesome slaying, what has happened to them? On Sunday, Gaddafi's third son, Saadi, was released from a prison in Tripoli, three years after he was acquitted over the murder of a football coach while still accused of shooting protesters during the revolution.

Three of the eccentric ruler's other seven sons died in the uprising, including Mutassim, who was killed by rebels in the dictator's home town of Sirte on October 20, 2011, the same day as his father. Another son, Seif Al-Arab, perished in a NATO air raid in April 2011, and his brother Khamis died in combat four months later, at the height of the revolt.

But other members of the Gaddafi clan survived, including his wife Safiya, his eldest son Mohammed - from his first marriage - and his daughter Aisha, who are known to be living in exile. In July, the dictator's erstwhile heir apparent, Seif Al-Islam Gaddafi, who is wanted for crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court (ICC), emerged from years in the shadows. He told the New York Times he was planning a political comeback, and did not rule out running in general elections expected in December.

The family

After the fall of Tripoli to rebels in August 2011, Safiya, Mohammed and Aisha escaped to neighboring Algeria. They were later granted refuge in the Gulf sultanate of Oman on condition they do not carry out political activities, the country's then foreign minister Mohammed Abdelaziz told AFP in 2013. Aisha, a lawyer by profession and a former UN goodwill ambassador, had been part of an international defense team for Saddam Hussein after the Iraqi leader was ousted in the 2003 US-led invasion.

High-rolling son Hannibal also sought refuge in Algeria after the uprising, before trying to sneak

into Lebanon to join his wife, Lebanese model Aline Skaf. But Lebanese authorities arrested and charged him in 2015 with withholding information about prominent Muslim Shiite cleric Mussa Sadr, who went missing in 1978 during a visit to Libya. Hannibal and his wife had sparked a diplomatic incident with Switzerland in 2008 when they were arrested in a luxury Geneva hotel for assaulting two former domestic employees.

Playboy son Saadi Gaddafi - once a professional footballer in Italy - fled to Niger after the uprising, but was later extradited to Libya, where he was wanted for the 2005 killing of Libyan football coach Bashir Al-Rayani and repression during the revolt. In April 2018, the court of appeal acquitted him of Rayani's murder, and he was freed from jail on Sunday, according to a justice ministry source and another source at the prosecutor's office. Several media reports on Sunday suggested Gaddafi had already taken a flight to Turkey.

Heir apparent

Seif al-Islam, whose name means "sword of Islam", was captured by a Libyan militia from Zintan in November 2011, days after his father was killed. In June 2014 he appeared via video from Zintan, western Libya, during his trial by a Tripoli court. In 2015, he was sentenced in absentia to death for crimes committed during the revolt. The armed group which captured him announced in 2017 that he had been released.

But he remained out of the public eye until the New York Times interviewed him in Zintan in July 2021, when he said he was no longer a prisoner and was planning a political return. "The men who used to be my guards are now my friends," he said, deploring Libya's descent into chaos in the decade since his father's overthrow and killing.

Clan and tribe

During his glory days, Muammar Gaddafi considered himself the "Leader of the Revolution" and declared Libya a "Jamahiriya", or "state of the masses" run by local committees. Thousands of his supporters, including from his own Kadhadfa tribe, fled Libya during and after the regime's fall, with many settling in Egypt and Tunisia. The clan also included members of Gaddafi's revolutionary guard - a paramilitary force tasked with protecting the regime against its detractors - who were not necessarily blood relatives.—AFP

International

Islamists' grip on power at stake in lacklustre Morocco election

People 'still skeptical'; 64% of Moroccans plan to abstain

RABAT: Moroccans go to the polls tomorrow for parliamentary and local elections that will determine the fate of the Islamist party that has ruled since the Arab Spring uprisings. First elected in 2011, the moderate Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD) hopes to win a third term this year, having clung on to power at the head of coalitions for the whole intervening decade.

But there are few clear battle lines between the PJD's coalition partners and the opposition, and big decisions on key policy areas like agriculture, energy and industry remain in the hands of King Mohammed VI. Opinion polls are banned in Morocco near election time, but a survey in February by the Moroccan Institute for Policy Analysis showed around 64 percent of people planned to abstain. Political science professor Ahmed Bouz highlighted "voters' feeling that elected officials have little leeway to make decisions".

People are still skeptical of whether elections make a difference to how the country is governed, even after a 2011 constitutional reform, he added. Morocco adopted the new constitution after decades of skirmishes over the separation of powers and the king's role in the day-to-day running of the country. Drawn up in reaction to the February 20th Movement, the local version of the Arab Spring uprisings around the Middle East and North Africa, the document moved the country closer to a system of constitutional monarchy without giving up the king's central role.

King on top

Regardless of who holds elected office, major decisions come from the palace, including during

the coronavirus crisis. The extent of the crown's powers has led some local media to mock the PJD's attempts to take credit for the successes of their latest term. Mohammed VI has already announced a plan for a "new model of development" with a "new generation of reforms and projects" in the coming years.

All parties are expected to sign up, regardless of who wins the election. The plan's major aims include reducing the country's wealth gap and doubling per-capita economic output by 2035. "The major directions are set and the elections only serve to produce the political elites capable of implementing them," said political scientist Mohamed Chiker.

During the election campaign, most parties have ignored issues of individual liberties, in particular the call by some activists to decriminalize sex out of wedlock, a divisive subject in Morocco. "It's disappointing but not surprising that politicians are ignoring our appeal," said Sonia Terrab of the "Hors la loi" ("Outlaws") collective. For now, three major movements dominate the political scene: the PJD, the National Rally of Independents (RNI) and the Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM).

'Widening the distance'

In the run-up to the vote, allegations of irregular campaign spending rather than policy debates have dominated headlines. "Monstrous amounts of money have been spread around to try and foil the people's will," senior PJD official Abdelaziz Aftati said Saturday, without naming the alleged culprits.

PAM has been more direct, accusing the RNI -



RABAT: Supporters of the Progress and Socialism party (PPS) gather during a campaign rally in Sale near Rabat, few days ahead of the parliamentary elections. —AFP

led by billionaire businessman and agriculture minister Aziz Akhannouch - of "flooding the political scene with money". RNI, a junior member of the current coalition, said it "rejected categorically" the allegations. Mud-slinging aside, and with little to differentiate the parties, the election is "widening the distance between voters and the institutions", political scientist Mustapha Sehami said. Even an electoral turnout of 45 percent "would be a nice surprise" after just 43 percent in 2016, he added.

Changes to the voting system mean that

Moroccans will vote in both parliamentary and local elections on the same day for the first time, in an effort to boost turnout. The electorate of almost 18 million are to vote for 395 deputies and more than 31,000 local and regional representatives. Meanwhile, parties' shares of seats will be calculated based on registered voters, rather than those who actually cast their ballots, in an amendment seen as favoring smaller parties. On the same vote share as in 2016, the new system would leave the PJD with around 80 seats, rather than the 125 it scored last time around. —AFP

In COVID-swamped Texas, patients die stranded in clinics

HOUSTON: Daniel Wilkinson survived two tours of duty in Afghanistan but died of gallstones, deteriorating slowly as his under-equipped doctors looked on helplessly. Wilkinson, 46, lived only 90 minutes by car or 30 minutes by helicopter from Houston, renowned for its top-flight hospitals. The problem is the Texas health care system has been utterly overwhelmed by people suffering from the Delta variant of the coronavirus.

In this wealthy state, 14,700 people were hospitalized as of September 1, just below a record set in January as a winter COVID wave wreaked havoc across America. "In the previous surges, we kept a little over 750 patients. Right now we've been running between 820 and 850 patients, so the hospitals are quite full," said Roberta Schwartz, executive vice president of Houston Methodist Hospital, which is actually a group of hospitals.

Things are so bad that a conference room at one of the facilities is being used to treat patients. So rural health facilities are being forced to keep patients they are not equipped to care for-like Wilkinson. He was admitted August 21 to the only hospital in his county, a block from his home in the town of Bellville, population 4,000. The clinic did not have the equipment to remove his gallstones, so it tried to organize a transfer by helicopter to another hospital.

"Our staff and our physician worked nonstop for over six hours trying to get him that transfer to a tertiary care center anywhere," said Daniel Bonk Fache, the CEO of Bellville Medical Center. "Our emergency room doctor at that time actually went on Facebook trying to get him transferred," said Bonk Fache. A doctor near the Texas capital Austin offered to take in Wilkinson, then called back five minutes later to say there was no room at his hospital.

Find a bed, somehow

"We get a few calls every day from rural hospital leaders that are just frantically trying to find a place to send these patients," said John Henderson, president of the Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals. Sprawling Texas has 158 such facilities, more than any other US state. Henderson said Wilkinson's case was not an isolated one. "I would say every day this week we've had a situation that didn't end well and resulted in a patient's death," said Johnson. Hospital staff feel powerless and overwhelmed by the frantic search for hospital beds somewhere bigger and more equipped.

"We lose" a nurse essentially every day, because that nurse has to call all of the hospitals in the surrounding areas to prove that we are doing our due diligence to get them elsewhere," said Renee Poulter, who manages the nursing staff at the Bellville clinic. "And that takes hours, hours if not the whole day spent phoning every hospital in the great state of Texas to see if anyone will accept your patient," she added. The Bellville facility is not designed to have an intensive care unit but like many, out of necessity, it had to fashion one.

"We have a critical, ICU-level COVID-positive patient at our rural facility that we have been taking care of for 11 days because we cannot find him a higher level of care," said Poulter. To help them, Texas is providing these uber-busy rural hospitals with respirators, oxygen and other means of stabilizing their patients. It is also bringing in nurses from other states. Two such helpers showed up last week in Bellville, one coming from Pennsylvania and the other from Alabama, each working six shifts per week. —AFP

Zionist mob killings bond grieving families but divide remains

LOD: Two men from Zionist entity who lost close relatives in sectarian mob violence, one Jewish and one Arab, have bonded in grief - but their contrasting pursuits of justice highlight a deep divide. Both are mourning loved ones who were killed in the mixed city of Lod during the spasm of inter-communal unrest that tore through Zionist entity during the latest Gaza war. Malek Hassuna, who is Arab, said his 31-year-old son Mussa, a scrap metal trader, was shot dead by Jewish vigilantes on May 10, leaving behind a wife and three children.

Effi Yehoshua, who is Jewish, said his 56-year-old brother Yigal, an electrician, was killed a day later when a rain of stones hit his car. He was survived by his wife and two children. Seven Arab suspects have been indicted in Yigal's killing, police said. Four Jewish suspects were arrested in Mussa's death, but then released, with no indictments filed. "This is not justice," said Hassuna, 62, who recounted how he was mourning his son when he heard that Yigal, his work colleague, had died.

"Yigal was my friend," Hassuna said. He said he visit-

ed Yigal's grieving family and told them, "your pain is my pain". The two bereaved men began exchanging messages and voice notes. Months later, sitting on Hassuna's couch, Yehoshua, 58, told AFP: "Every time the wound opens, it hurts. It tries to heal and it opens again, and for Malek, the wound doesn't heal either."

Finding the truth

Both men say their loved ones moved easily between the Jewish and Arab communities of Lod, a working-class city of around 80,000 people. About a third of residents are Arab citizens of Zionist state, the descendants of Palestinians who remained after Zionist state's 1948 founding. For years, Jews and Arabs shared Lod, though Arab residents complained of unequal treatment in housing and land.

The calm was shattered in May when unprecedented violence by Arab rioters and Jewish vigilantes left synagogues smoldering, Muslim gravestones smashed, and cars charred along the city's roads. Tensions had flared nationwide after police stormed Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque in response to worshippers throwing rocks and explosives. The fighting exploded when Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas fired rockets and Zionist entity pounded the blockaded enclave with intense airstrikes. "Lod never had anything like this in 70 years," Yehoshua said.

The Arab suspects indicted over Yigal's death included two West Bank residents and five Zionists, police said. According to the charges, the defendants

between \$7.50 and \$10 an hour, just above the minimum wage at the time.

They didn't know it then but the exposure to asbestos and other toxic materials brought the risk of cancer, asbestosis and a host of respiratory illnesses, as well as post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression. "I don't like to remember Ground Zero anniversaries," Gil said tearfully at a recent session of the 9/11 Latino cleaners support group Fronteras de Esperanza, or Borders of Hope, which still meets two decades on. She remembers that after working so many hours, sometimes finding human remains, she would go home and thought she was still cleaning. "I almost freaked out," Gil recalled.

'Injustice'

Gil, like all the cleaners spoken to AFP, cannot work because of illnesses believed to be derived from the 9/11 operation. They dream of becoming legal residents so they can receive benefits and live without the threat of deportation. In 2017, a then-Democratic representative from New York even introduced a bill regarding this but it was never debated in Congress.

"That the people who cleaned do not have papers is an injustice because they lost the most precious thing, which is health," Rubielia Arias, another cleaner, told

opportunity to realize concepts that they had been thinking about for years. "We were thinking it's the beginning of the millennium, we were thinking that this had to be the next generation of buildings, both in terms of safety, as well as environmental impact," recalled Lewis.

Among the most nightmarish images from 9/11 are those of people jumping to their deaths from the towers to escape the blaze. The architects launched ideas about how to evacuate people other than from the stairs. Inventors came back with a giant chute, and a zip wire, with a parachutist demonstrating the latter, Lewis remembers. "It was the scariest thing," he says. "We just couldn't imagine someone who might be a little bit overweight or a little bit afraid taking a jump out the window." In the end, the only solution was to shield the heart of the building with reinforced concrete, "broad enough that people can get out of there," he explained. The architects implemented safety standards on One WTC that have since become standard for skyscrapers. They include wide stairwells to allow a quick evacuation of the 104-storey tower, a signaling light to alert aircraft, fire-resistant cameras and communication tools on every floor to allow rescuers to constantly monitor the situation. —AFP



LOD: Malek Hassuna (left) carries a picture of his late son Mussa (center-right), who was shot dead by Jewish vigilantes on May 10, poses for a picture with Effi Yehoshua (right) as he carries a picture of his late brother Yigal. —AFP

hurled rocks through Yigal's car windows, cracking his skull and causing fatal brain damage. Effi Yehoshua said he attends every court hearing for his brother's alleged killers. "I believe in the legal system, believe in the security forces, that they will arrest these people and give them what they deserve," he said. In the case of Mussa's shooting, police questioned four Jewish suspects but later released them. "Zionist entity makes a distinction, that it's very normal for an Arab to die in cold blood," Hassuna said.



NEW YORK: Clinical social worker Rosa Bramble (center) of 'Borders of Hope' attends a group meeting for immigrant ground zero clean-up workers of the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center attacks, at her office. —AFP

AFP in the modest room she rents in Queens with the help of her son. The now 57-year-old Colombian has been fighting for years for the Hispanic cleaners to be legally recognized. She herself was at the site and has since suffered from various respiratory and stomach illnesses, as well as post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental ailments. —AFP



NEW YORK: This file photo shows the One World Trade Center tower under construction in New York. It is the skyscraper that replaced the Twin Towers in New York's skyline. —AFP

9/11: Ground Zero's forgotten cleaners demand recognition

NEW YORK: Lucely Gil is one of the forgotten victims of 9/11: An immigrant cleaner who spent months clearing up rubble from the World Trade Center and developed cancer apparently from the toxic dust, but who remains unrecognized. At 7:00 am on September 15, 2001, the Colombian entered the immense ash cloud left by the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York. She would collect debris there for up to 12 hours a day, every day, for six months.

Twenty years later, the 65-year-old is still an undocumented migrant and lives with the consequences of that herculean effort: She is a breast cancer survivor, a common illness for women who worked at the site, has lost movement in one arm and suffers depression. For eight months after the attacks, tens of thousands of people-many of them immigrants-cleaned Ground Zero and nearby damaged buildings. They removed 1.8 million tons of rubble from the area and were paid

'Freedom Tower' - The skyscraper symbolizing New York's resilience

NEW YORK: It is the skyscraper that replaced the Twin Towers in New York's skyline. Inaugurated in 2014, the One World Trade Center has become a symbol of resilience after the horror of 9/11. Commonly referred to as the "Freedom Tower," it is America's tallest building at 1,776 feet (541 meters) and an emblem of the US economic capital. From its conception, the tower had to testify to New York's durability - looking to the future despite the tragedy - according to one of its architects, Kenneth Lewis.

As harrowing as the images were of the Twin Towers collapsing to the ground on September 11, 2001, no one questioned replacing them with another skyscraper, situated right next "Ground Zero." For the architects at SOM, which builds skyscrapers around the world, it was an

International

Islamic State group's menace rebounds in troubled Afghanistan amid concerns

IS strikes, sowing mayhem with a bloody airport attack

DOHA: The Taliban had barely completed their takeover of the Afghan capital Kabul when the local affiliate of the Islamic State group struck, sowing mayhem with a bloody airport attack. It was a symbolic strike for the jihadist organization, highlighting its longevity and sparking concern in the West. More than 100 Afghan civilians and 13 US servicemen were killed in the August 26 attack on Kabul airport - the deadliest violence against US forces in Afghanistan since 2011, shattering morale and complicating evacuation efforts.



Deadly violence shattering morale complicates efforts

It was also the bloodiest attack against the US claimed by an IS group affiliate, namely the Islamic State in Khorasan (IS-K), coming at an acutely sensitive moment for the withdrawing forces. It coincided as well with the beginning of the trial of those accused of orchestrating the November 13, 2015 attacks on Paris claimed by IS which resulted in 130 deaths.

The bloody carnage in the French capital marked the peak of the group's so-called "caliphate" which straddled Iraq and Syria between 2014 and 2019. At the end of the week, the world will also mark the 20th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks which were the largest terror attacks on the West in recent times, claimed by the IS group's rival Al-Qaeda. The resurgence of IS in Afghanistan now looks set to inspire radical jihadists of all stripes.

'More attacks'

"Western intelligence agencies should already be on high alert given the upcoming anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, always a period for inspired attacks, and the Taliban's victory in Afghanistan," Katherine Zimmerman,



JALALABAD: Taliban commander Mullah Neda Mohammad watches during an interview with AFP at his office in Jalalabad. As a Taliban commander, he spent years battling the former Afghan government. Now, with his hardline movement back in power, Mohammad vows to continue fighting against rival jihadists, the Islamic State (IS) group. — AFP

an analyst at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington said. "Jihadists have already called for more attacks on the West." Since the collapse of the so-called caliphate following a multinational military assault, the jihadist threat has shifted considerably with IS now probably lacking the capacity to strike in the heart of Europe as in 2015, analysts said.

But the group's reach has continued to be felt through affiliates in Yemen, Nigeria and Mali among others which continue to plot attacks, while remaining hyperactive on social media, drawing in followers. Western intelligence agencies from Langley to Whitehall to Auckland have proved unable to eradicate the threat of lone wolf attackers, radicalized online, who strike with improvised weapons such as knives or vehicles.

As recently as Friday, a Sri Lankan attacker who had been known to police since 2016 and had IS propaganda at his home, injured seven people in Auckland, New Zealand. The IS attack on Kabul airport was all the more shocking because it succeeded despite US President Joe Biden's specific prior warning that intelligence agencies were aware of the plot. "Washington's inability to prevent an attack that was so publicly announced has allowed IS-K to amplify its bloody effectiveness," said Jean-Pierre Filiu, a professor at Paris's Institute of Political Studies.

'Terror threat could grow'

"The face-to-face confrontation of American troops and the Taliban opened a gap in security which the jihadist commandos could exploit." IS sympathizers were quick to capitalize on the attack and its aftermath. "Kabul is ours," proclaimed the pro-IS Hadm Al-Aswar foundation, dismissing Americans and "Taliban apostates" with equal vigor. IS-K has become the fourth most active Islamic State group affiliate globally since the start of the year, according to an expert on the organization known on Twitter only as Mr Q.

The Kabul attack "propelled IS-K into the political and media spotlight", he told AFP. Former US diplomat James Jeffrey said that IS began training jihadists for similar attacks outside Iraq and Syria, and possibly beyond the Middle East, between 2019 and 2020. "Certainly there is at least some risk of a repeat of attacks in Europe organized by ISIS and, as always, attacks by individuals inspired by ISIS," added Jeffrey who was Special Envoy to the international military intervention against IS. Western governments are now warning against complacency. During a visit to Iraq at the end of August, French President Emmanuel Macron called for nations threatened by IS to "not lower our guard, because Daesh (IS) remains a threat". Following the attack on US forces in Kabul, and after US forces killed just three IS fighters, Biden pointedly told the group: "We are not done with you". Analyst Zimmerman warned that left unchecked "it's not hard to imagine how the terror threat could grow in Afghanistan and spill over into the region and even the West". — AFP

Philippines lifts lockdown in capital as COVID surges

MANILA: The Philippines will lift a stay-at-home order in the capital Manila this week as it trials "granular lockdowns", an official said yesterday, in a bid to rein in coronavirus cases and revive the economy. More than 13 million people in the national capital region—the country's economic heartland—have been in lockdown since August 6 amid record infections fuelled by the hyper-contagious Delta variant.

The move to ease restrictions from tomorrow comes after nationwide daily cases exceeded 20,000 for the past three days—double the number at the start of the latest lockdown—straining hospitals as they grapple with a nurses shortage. "Localized lockdowns will be piloted in Metro Manila," said presidential

spokesman Harry Roque, explaining that a household, building or street could be targeted.

"It will be literally a complete lockdown if you are subject to granular lockdown—even the food will be delivered to you." There were no further details about how the more targeted measures would be enforced. The lighter restrictions in the national capital region, which accounts for about a third of the country's economy, will enable many hard-hit businesses to reopen and spur local tourism. Based on previous guidelines, restaurants will be allowed to accept diners and beauty salons permitted to operate—albeit at reduced capacity.

Limited numbers of faithful will be allowed to attend in-person church services. President Rodrigo Duterte said recently the country could not afford more lockdowns, after previous measures shattered the economy and left millions out of work. But with only about 19 percent of the targeted population fully vaccinated and hospitals filling up fast, authorities have had few options to slow the spread of the virus. The country's infection caseload has passed two million, with over 34,000 deaths. — AFP



BINAN: A nurse wearing a personal protective suit walks past suspected COVID-19 patients resting in a parking lot turned into a COVID ward outside a hospital in Binan town, Laguna province south of Manila yesterday. — AFP

Thousands of farmers vow defiance over Indian laws

MUZAFFARNAGAR: Tens of thousands of farmers rallied near India's capital on Sunday, vowing to remain defiant against the government over controversial agriculture laws they say will destroy their livelihoods. Chanting "Farmer, labourer, unity!", the men and women wore yellow and green scarves signifying harvest and mustard fields while waving national and farmer union flags in Uttar Pradesh state's Muzaffarnagar district. The farmers have been camped out on the borders of Delhi since late November in one of the biggest challenges to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government.

Farmers and union leaders reaffirmed at the gathering that they would fight for their rights and continue their sit-in along major highways into Delhi until the legislation is revoked. They also called for a nationwide strike on September 27 to protest against the

laws. "It's like the whole city and the roads are full of farmers," lawyer and farmer's son Amit Chaudhary told AFP from the gathering. "Farmers are not the sort of people to be tired. We work day and night, irrespective of rains or harsh sun. We won't go back till the laws are taken back," he added.

An AFP photographer at the site said at least 50,000 farmers and supporters took part. An umbrella body representing farmer unions said people from 15 states were there. Modi's government says the industry is massively inefficient and in need of reform. But protesters fear the laws deregulating the sector will leave them at the mercy of big corporations. Several rounds of negotiations between the government and ministers have failed to resolve the stand-off.

About two-thirds of India's 1.3 billion population draw their livelihood from farming and the sector has long been a political minefield. The massive gathering comes ahead of crucial polls next year in India's most populous state Uttar Pradesh, home to 200 million people and governed by Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party. The farmer agitation took a violent turn in January when a tractor rally transformed into a rampage in Delhi that left one farmer dead and hundreds of police officers injured. — AFP

News in brief

Weapons seized in Sudan 'legal'

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopian Airlines said yesterday its transport of weapons to Sudan was a "legal and commercial" shipment of hunting guns, after reports the cargo had been confiscated by the authorities in Khartoum. Sudan's SUNA news agency had said Sunday that the weapons were seized by customs and an investigation launched after they were flown in on an Ethiopian Airlines passenger flight. SUNA quoted officials as saying the weapons had originally been sent from Russia to Ethiopia in May 2019 and were held by authorities there for two years. — AFP

Uganda building collapse kills 6

KAMPALA: Rescuers in Kampala called off the search for survivors yesterday after six people were killed in a building collapse during a heavy rainstorm, police said, following an emergency effort that saw eight people including two children pulled to safety. Images posted on social media on Sunday showed construction workers and passers-by digging through debris with their bare hands and firefighters using cutting equipment to saw through buckled metal in a bid to reach people feared trapped. Six bodies were pulled from the rubble of the four-storey building under construction, while two girls aged five and nine were found alive and taken to Kampala's main hospital. — AFP

Crews work to contain oil spill

WASHINGTON: Workers have deployed containment booms and skimmer devices as they attempt to contain a sizable oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico discovered after Hurricane Ida roared through the area, the US Coast Guard said Sunday. The spill is in waters off Port Fourchon, Louisiana - near where Ida made landfall - in a region that is a major hub of the US petrochemical industry. An oil slick now extends more than a dozen miles through the warm waters of the Gulf but has yet to reach shore, the Houston Chronicle reported. The Coast Guard in Louisiana said it had been informed of a spill in that area and was responding, but provided few details. Talos Energy, a Texas firm specializing in offshore oil and gas exploration, has dispatched clean-up vessels and divers to the site. — AFP

Blinken heads to Qatar

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken headed Sunday to Qatar on his first trip since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan as he seeks a united front with allies shaken by the chaos. Qatar, a major US military base, has been the gateway for 55,000 people airlifted out of Afghanistan, nearly half the total evacuated by US-led forces after the Taliban's stunningly swift victory amid a US withdrawal. Blinken will then head Wednesday to the US air base of Ramstein in Germany, a temporary home for thousands of Afghans moving to the United States, from which he will hold a virtual 20-nation ministerial meeting on the crisis alongside German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas. — AFP

Irish gang on trial

RENNES: Nine alleged members of an international network of rhino horn and ivory traffickers went on trial in France yesterday after an investigation that shed light on illicit trade links between Europe and east Asia. French prosecutors started their probe after a random motorway traffic inspection by police in September 2015 that led to the discovery of several elephant tusks and 32,800 euros (\$38,900) in cash in a BMW. The occupants of the car, who claimed they were antique dealers, were allegedly members of the Rathkeale Rovers, an Irish crime gang with roots in the Traveler community. The nine defendants on trial in the town of Rennes, which include alleged traders of Chinese and Vietnamese origin, face up to 10 years in jail and heavy fines, although two of them are on the run. — AFP



MUZAFFARNAGAR: Farmers and supporters representing various unions listen to a speaker as they attend a Mahapanchayat or a huge gathering in Muzaffarnagar against the central government's agricultural reforms. — AFP



KWAZULU-NATAL: In this file photo, former South African president Jacob Zuma removes his eyeglasses as he addresses the media in his home in Nkandla, KwaZulu-Natal. — AFP

S Africa's jailed ex-leader Zuma granted parole

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's former president Jacob Zuma, jailed for 15 months in July for contempt of court after snubbing graft investigators, was placed on medical parole Sunday just two months into his term, prison authorities announced. Zuma, 79, has been hospitalized since August 6 at a health facility outside the prison where he had been incarcerated for ignoring a court order to testify before a judicial panel probing corruption during his nine-year tenure, which lasted until 2018. The Department of Correctional Services said in a statement on Sunday that Zuma's "medical parole" took effect on Sunday and he will serve the rest of the 15-month prison sentence outside jail.

Zuma "will complete the remainder of the sentence in the system of community corrections, whereby he must comply with a specific set of conditions and will be subjected to supervision until his sentence expires," the statement said. The decision was motivated "by a medical report" the department received, it said. Zuma was admitted to hospital for observation on August 6 for an undisclosed condition, and underwent a surgical procedure on August 14. He remains hospitalized.

'Dignity'

The prison authorities appealed to South Africans to "afford Mr Zuma dignity as he continues to receive medical treatment". He started serving his sentence on July 8 at the Estcourt prison, around 180 kilometers northwest of Durban. Two weeks later, he was allowed to leave prison to attend his brother's funeral at his rural home in the town of Nkandla.

His jailing sparked a spree of unprecedented violence and looting of businesses and shops in post-apartheid South Africa, resulting in millions of dollars worth of damage and losses. His successor Cyril Ramaphosa described the unrest as an orchestrated attempt to destabilise the country and vowed to crack down on alleged instigators.

Earlier on Sunday a handful of veterans of the ruling ANC's armed struggle wing Umkhonto we Sizwe, who have staunchly stood behind Zuma in recent years, disrupted a eulogy by party chairman Gwede Mantashe at a funeral of one of group's leaders, chanting for Zuma to be freed from jail. Zuma's spokesman Mzwanele Manyi told AFP that while he had not spoken to the former president since the news broke, "he should have been relieved, anyone can only be elated when this happens". He said Zuma's "unconstitutional" imprisonment had worsened his health. "It (has) had an exponential impact in terms of deteriorating his condition," he said, while refusing to divulge the illness. — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2021

Boursa Kuwait launches new ESG guide

Guide to help drive corporate sustainability in financial markets

KUWAIT: Solidifying its position as a leading advocate for Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting and implementation, Boursa Kuwait launched its new ESG guide to raise awareness and drive the embrace of Corporate Sustainability in the Kuwaiti capital market. The guide aims to introduce the ESG universe to companies listed on the stock exchange and highlight the benefits of ESG disclosure and best practices.

The guide proposes an initial set of sustainability indicators that correspond with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework and the State of Kuwait's sustainable development ambitions as set out in the Kuwait National Development Plan and the "New Kuwait" vision for 2035. It is also aligned with the recommendations of the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE) and the Sustainable Stock Exchanges (SSE) initiative, which Boursa Kuwait has been a proud member of since 2017.

The ESG guide includes recommended sustainability metrics and a set of indicators that will assist market participants in understanding where they currently stand as well as how to improve and set future goals. The guide also explains the different types of ESG reporting, allowing companies to choose and decide on the format that is most suited for them. These metrics and indicators are designed to help listed companies to accelerate their transition towards more environmentally conscious and sustainable business operations. The guide also

aims to aid market participants gain a sound understanding of the many benefits of ESG reporting including a greater ability to make informed decisions and meet the growing needs of their various stakeholders for transparent and regular information.

The launch of the ESG reporting guide stems from Boursa Kuwait's commitment to advance Corporate Sustainability within the company and the wider capital market. Boursa Kuwait has been reporting on ESG through its annual reports and undertaking several initiatives promoting sustainable practices as part of its Corporate Sustainability strategy.

Commenting on the announcement, Boursa Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer, Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi, said: "We have been witnessing significant growth in the adoption of corporate sustainability and an increasing inclination towards sustainable and climate-integrated investments, which is a promising trend. Inspired by this momentum, Boursa Kuwait, armed with its ESG readiness and its well-thought-out Corporate Sustainability strategy, has remained at the forefront of the efforts to promote environmentally conscious business prac-



Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi



Noura Al-Abdulkareem



tics in Kuwait's capital market."

Boursa Kuwait's Head Of Markets Noura Al-Abdulkareem also commented on the launch of the ESG Reporting Guide, saying, "The launch of the ESG guide comes as part of Boursa Kuwait's commitment to help listed companies identify and adopt best practices in ESG reporting. As an exchange as well as a listed company, we aim to lead by example

New guide helps listed companies determine their progress in disclosure and highlights the benefits of environmentally conscious business operations

in ESG disclosure and implementation."

As part of its Corporate Sustainability strategy, Boursa Kuwait has launched many initiatives in partnership with local and international organizations. The initiatives focused on support for non-governmental organizations and charity programs, financial literacy and capital market awareness, the empowerment of women, environmental protection as well as safety and preventive measures against COVID-19. Over the past year, the company has conducted a series of webinars on wide-ranging topics including the assessment metrics and benchmarks of MSCI ESG Ratings and investor relations practices.

Global tax plan should aim higher: Stiglitz

PARIS: Nobel economics prize laureate Joseph Stiglitz praised international backing for a global tax on corporations but said the minimum rate agreed by governments to battle "the dark side of globalization" remains too low.

More than 130 nations have supported a plan to introduce a tax floor of at least 15 percent aimed at preventing countries from competing to offer the lowest rates in order to attract multinationals seeking to minimize their tax bills. "It's a fantastic initiative," Stiglitz told AFP on the sidelines of the Ambrosetti Forum, an economics conference next to the scenic Lake Como in Cernobbio, Italy.

"The system of multinationals' taxation, which is over 100 years old, is not suited for a 21st century globalized economy," he said. The global tax reform was agreed in negotiations led by the OECD and at a meeting of finance ministers of the Group of 20 wealthy and developing countries.

Final agreement is expected in the run-up to the G20 leaders' summit in Rome in October, with hopes the reforms can be in place by 2023. But the American economist said 15 percent is "too low". "I think it should be 25 percent, but politics is the art of com-

promise. I hope they do at least 20 percent," he said.

'Dark side of globalization'

The United States, France and Germany are among the powers that have backed the imposition of a minimum rate to end a "race to the bottom". But some nations are opposed to the plan, most notably Ireland, which has lured the likes of Apple and Google to its shores with a 12.5 percent rate.

"The system we have now is open to abuse and that is one of the reasons why the effective tax rate is so much lower than the official rate," Stiglitz said. "The race to the bottom in which Luxembourg and Ireland played a role undermined global solidarity, it undermined the global economic system, it is part of the dark side of globalization." He said the agreement has also put an end to a "terrible tax war" that started under the Donald Trump presidency which slapped retaliatory tariffs on wine and other EU products in response to digital taxes imposed by France, Spain and others on US tech companies. It "would have been a disaster if that kind of tax war proceeded," Stiglitz said.

Stiglitz vs Austerity

The 78-year-old academic, who was a senior economic adviser to President Bill Clinton in the 1990s, touched on another one of his favorite bugbears: Austerity. Stiglitz warned that the European Union should not return to its belt-tightening ways after the bloc rolled out a massive, 750-billion-euro (\$890 million) fund to bring its 27 members out of their coronavirus-induced economic crisis.

"Europe came together and did the 750 billion European Recovery Fund which was the kind of thing that they should have done during the euro crisis in 2010," he told AFP. "They provided the money without the austerity conditionalities they did in 2010," Stiglitz said.

During the eurozone debt crisis, European leaders imposed austerity measures on Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Cyprus in return for bailouts. The EU has dished out the first tranche of the rescue fund over the summer. "But my impression is that there is not a high level of trust to get the second tranche," Stiglitz said. He said it was a "good thing" that conditions were not set to get the first batch. "They gave some money because of the urgency," he said.

"But if they fall back in the old way of being excessively tight on the conditionality and not give the second tranche because they will say 'you didn't do this or that', some of the old problems could re-appear." With German Chancellor Angela Merkel-an austerity champion-bowing out, "maybe the new German government will also be more flexible", the economist said. But, he added, "That's still an open question." —AFP



Joseph Stiglitz

High inflation looms over ECB meeting

FRANKFURT: Rising eurozone inflation will provide the backdrop for the meeting of European Central Bank governors Thursday, with markets hoping for hints of when policymakers might start easing their massive pandemic-era stimulus. As the economic recovery gathered steam in the 19-nation club, consumer prices rose at a pace not seen in the past decade, reaching three percent in August—well above the ECB's new two-percent target.

ECB president Christine Lagarde previously promised to "look through" the surge and policymakers expect the rate to rise even further in coming months before falling back. "We are more worried about the inflation rate being too low in the medium term rather than too high," Isabel Schnabel, a member of the ECB's executive board, said last month.

The ECB considers the jump in consumer prices to be driven by one-off, pandemic-related effects as energy prices recover and policies aimed at mitigating the economic impact are rolled back.

As such, observers do not expect the ECB's governing council to adjust historically low interest rates or announce any significant change to their colossal bond-purchasing program, despite some grumbling among its 25 members. Jens Weidmann, the president of the German Bundesbank, urged the ECB in August not to

ignore the risk of a higher inflation outlook, and said the ECB must stand ready to gradually scale back its bond-buying.

Focus on Lagarde

"Even if some ECB hawks re-emerged over the last days, we don't expect their pushback to be strong enough to deliver any changes to the ECB's monetary policy stance," ING bank economists Carsten Brzeski and Antoine Bouvet said. The ECB launched its 1.85-trillion-euro (\$2.2 trillion) pandemic emergency bond-buying program (PEPP) last year to help the euro region weather the coronavirus crisis. The huge asset purchases, scheduled to run until March 2022, are aimed at keeping borrowing costs low to keep credit flowing and boost economic growth.

The ECB will on Thursday also unveil the latest quarterly growth and inflation forecasts, but analysts expect few surprises. The inflation outlook is predicted to stay roughly unchanged, at 1.5 percent in 2022 and 1.4 percent in 2023 — well below the 2.0 percent target.

Lagarde's news conference on Thursday will be scoured for any signs of future changes in strategy as the eurozone bounces back from the coronavirus shock.

Future policy needs to be "almost surgical", she recently told Time magazine, adding it was "no longer a question of massive support, it's going to be a question of focused, targeted support in those sectors that have been badly hurt". All eyes are on the ECB's next move after the Federal Reserve began openly discussing scaling back stimulus in the United States, where the economic recovery



MARSEILLE, France: French President Emmanuel Macron (left) listens to ECB chief Christine Lagarde during the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille. —AFP

is seen as further along.

'Modest' slowdown

In a speech to the annual Jackson Hole symposium in late August, Fed chair Jerome Powell said "it could be appropriate to start reducing the pace of asset purchases this year". But Natixis economist Dirk Schumacher said the ECB would want to "signal its independence" from its US peers.

Talk of when to end the PEPP purchases or of making any changes to a pre-pandemic bond-buying scheme known as APP were likely to be postponed until after the September meeting, he added.

However, several ECB board members have recently signalled their openness to adjusting the pace of the emergency bond purchases. "If infla-

tion and the economy recover, then there will logically be a gradual normalization of monetary policy, and of fiscal policy too," ECB vice president Luis de Guindos told a Spanish newspaper. A solid economic rebound is underway across the eurozone thanks to mass vaccinations, while concerns that the Delta variant could scupper the recovery have so far not materialized.

Consequently, the ECB could start by "signalling a 'modest' slowdown" in the pace of the PEPP scheme, from 80 billion euros per month to 60-70 billion euros, suggests Frederik Ducrozet, a strategist at Pictet Wealth Management. The slower pace could be framed as a "recalibration of stimulus", not a sign that the program is being wound down, said Marco Valli, an economist at UniCredit. —AFP

Social cost of 2019's plastic more than GDP of India

MARSEILLE: The pollution, emissions and clean-up costs of plastic produced in 2019 alone could be \$3.7 trillion, according to a report released yesterday by wildlife charity WWF, warning of the environmental and economic burden of this "seemingly cheap" material.

There is increasing international alarm over the sheer volumes of fossil-fuel based plastics entering the environment, as microplastics have infiltrated even the most remote and otherwise pristine regions of the planet. In its report, WWF said societies were "unknowingly subsidizing" plastic, with their estimates for the lifetime costs of 2019 production equivalent to more than the gross domestic product of India.

"Plastic appears to be a relatively cheap material when looking at the market price primary plastic producers pay for virgin plastic," said the report. "Plastics: The cost to society, environment and the economy, produced for WWF by the consultancy Dalberg. "However, this price fails to account for the full cost imposed across the plastic life cycle."

It estimated that unless there was concerted international action, a projected doubling of plastic production could see costs rocket by 2040 to \$7.1 trillion. The analysis looked at factors including the greenhouse gas emissions in the production process, health impacts, waste management and estimates of the reduction in the economic "services" of ecosystems on land and in water.

Since the 1950s, roughly 8.3 billion tons of plastic have been produced with around 60 percent of that tossed into landfills or into the natural environment. Tiny fragments have been discovered inside fish in the deepest recesses of the ocean and peppering Arctic sea ice. The debris is estimated to cause the deaths of more than a million seabirds and over 100,000 marine mammals each year.

"Tragically, the plastic pollution crisis is showing no signs of slowing down, but the commitment to tackle it has reached an unprecedented level," said Marco Lambertini, Director General of WWF International, in a statement.

'More plastic than fish'

The report comes as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) meets in the French port city of Marseille, with one motion under consideration calling for an end to plastic pollution by 2030. Earlier in September the European Union threw its weight behind calls for a legally-binding international agreement to reduce plastic pollution, during UN-hosted talks in Geneva. The UN Environment Program has said the planet is "drowning in plastic pollution", with about 300 million tons of plastic waste produced every year. The proposed resolution is due to be discussed during the United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi next year. —AFP



KABUL: A man pushes his bicycle loaded with plastic cans along a roadside in Kabul on Sunday. —AFP

Business

NBK Economic Report

Kuwait's external surplus fell on lower oil exports in 2020

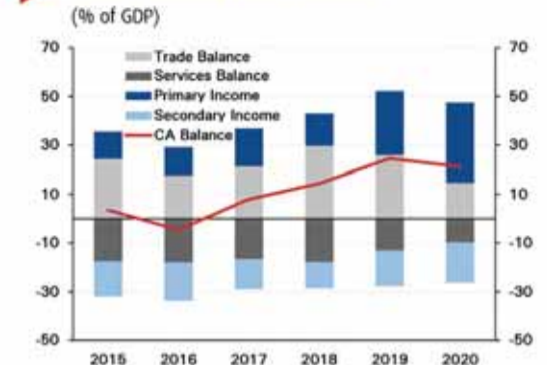
Current account surplus narrowed in 2020 to KD 6.9 billion

KUWAIT: Kuwait's current account surplus narrowed in 2020 to KD 6.9 billion (21.1 percent of GDP) from KD 10.1 billion (24.5 percent of GDP) in the previous year. The (percent of GDP) decline in the surplus came on the back of reduced oil exports, and despite a fall in imports, outbound tourism and workers' remittances. As for the financial account, it registered a decline in net outflows as the reduction in government deposits abroad (repatriation of deposits) outweighed the rise in direct and portfolio investment outflows from the country. Therefore, the surplus in the overall balance of payments declined to KD3.3 billion in 2020.

Trade balance of goods surplus witnessed a steep fall in 2020, from KD 10.7 billion in 2019 to KD 4.7 billion. This was largely on the back of the decline in oil exports (-38.5 percent y/y) due to a combination of low oil production (-9.1 percent y/y to avg. 2.4 mb/d) and sharply lower oil prices (KEC: -35.6 percent y/y to avg. \$41.4/bbl). In addition, non-oil exports declined by 27.3 percent which could be a reflection of trade disruptions and the decline in external demand due to the impact of the pandemic. Meanwhile, imports dropped by 15.5 percent, which helped to offset part of the fall in the goods surplus.

Moreover, the services account deficit narrowed to KD 3.1 billion from KD 5.4 billion in the previous year as the government's imposition of mobility and travel restrictions to combat the spread of the coronavirus

Chart 1: Kuwait current account



Source: Central bank of Kuwait, CSB

limited Kuwaitis' overseas travel and spending opportunities (-52.9 percent y/y to KD 1.8 billion).

The primary income account, which includes Kuwaiti investment returns from abroad, remained relatively stable at KD 10.6 billion (32.9 percent of GDP). Direct and portfolio investment returns increased by 7.5 percent y/y and 4 percent y/y, respectively, on the improvement in the performance of financial markets in the 2H20, which was supported by loose monetary policies and positive investor sentiment especially after the rollout of the anti-coronavirus vaccines in late 2020.

'Territory of humanity'

Recent research has warned that massive destruction of tropical forests combined with climate change are pushing the Amazon towards a disastrous "tipping point" which would see tropical forests give way to savannah-like landscapes. This would not only drastically change the region's climate, but have an impact on global climate systems as well, scientists say. Rates of tree loss drop sharply in the forests where native peoples live, especially if they hold some degree of title-legal or customary-over land, other research has shown. IUCN officials are reviewing the COICA measure, along with 20 others proposals submitted after the deadline last year, "to make sure they are both 'new' and 'urgent,'" said Enrique Lahmann, a senior administrator.

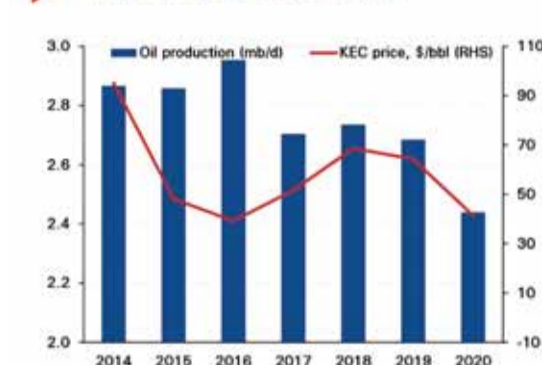
"Both criteria are required." A decision is expected today, his office said.

While the vote, which would be held in the coming week, would not have legal weight, it demonstrates the strength of feeling among indigenous groups. In an emotional press conference, Diaz Mirabal-flanked by indigenous leaders from French Guiana and Ecuador-implored world leaders to take heed of his message.

"We are asking governments to help us protect our territory, which is also the territory of humanity," he said. "Because if the Amazon rainforest disappears, people will die everywhere, it's that simple."

"It is crucial to stop extracting the oil, the gold, the uranium," he added. "This is wealth for Europe, the United States, Russia, and China, but is poverty for us." — AFP

Chart 2: KEC price and production



Source: OPEC monthly bulletin

The secondary income deficit narrowed to KD 5.4 billion on lower workers' remittances. These declined by 7.3 percent, partly due to a reduction in the expatriate population in Kuwait by 4 percent in 2020. Financial account net outflows declined to KD 6.5 billion compared to a net outflow of KD 10.2 billion last year. This came despite the rise in direct and portfolio investment outflows and the increase in the central bank's reserve assets due to the notable fall of government deposits abroad.

Kuwait's investment outflows remained higher than its historical averages, with direct investments abroad

increasing by KD 2.3 billion and portfolio investments rising significantly by KD 17.2 billion. Most of these investments were directed toward equity investments (75.3 percent of flows). Moreover, general government and local banks' deposits abroad decreased in 2020 by KD 14.5 billion and KD 0.6 billion, respectively, while non-resident deposits at local banks fell slightly by KD 0.3 billion, compared to an increase of KD 1.6 billion the year before.

Despite the impact of the pandemic on oil prices, the CBK reserve assets increased in 2020 by KD 2.6 billion, helping Kuwait's gross international reserves to reach KD 14.7 billion (45.2 percent of GDP) by the end of the year. This level equates to around 13.6 months goods and services import cover.

Following a year of economic distress, the current account surplus is expected to increase in 2021 in line with the anticipated recovery in global economic activity and energy demand growth. Kuwait's oil exports revenues should benefit from higher average oil prices in 2021, markedly improving Kuwait's external position (OPEC's decision in the second half of the year to unwind the May 2020 production cuts will result in higher real exports for Kuwait, but this will only positively affect year avg. outcomes in 2022). However, downside risks remain and could arise from further resurgence of COVID-19 outbreaks and possibly lower oil prices.

Conservation meet mulls plan to save 80% of Amazon

MARSEILLE: Should 80 percent of the Amazon be declared a protected area by 2025? The world's top conservation body is poised to decide whether its 1,400 members can vote on this controversial proposal, put forward by indigenous groups. Submitted under an emergency provision to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the measure calls for a "global action plan" to halt rampant deforestation and the destructive extraction of precious minerals and oil.

Over the last two decades, the Amazon has lost roughly 10,000 square kilometers every year, according to assessments based on satellite data. "That's the emergency, not just for us but for humanity," Jose Gregorio Diaz Mirabal, a leader of the Curripaco people in Venezuela, told AFP at the Congress venue in Marseille. For the first time in the IUCN's 70-year history, indigenous groups have a separate status alongside government agencies and national or international NGOs. Diaz Mirabal submitted the Amazon proposal for the newly admitted organization COICA, which represents more than two million indigenous people in nine Amazon nations.

"We have been neglected, and now we have a voice and will exercise that voting right," he said.



RURÓPOLIS, Brazil: A herd of cattle is seen at a farm in Rurópolis, Para state, Brazil, in the Amazon rainforest. — AFP

Armed with voting rights, native groups join conservation fray

MARSEILLE: Newly-armed with voting rights, indigenous peoples have come to the world's leading conservation congress meeting in the French city of Marseille both hopeful and wary. They have demands, and will not go quietly into the night, their representatives say. "It makes no sense for consultants and companies to come to teach us how to protect what we have always successfully protected," said Jose Gregorio Diaz Mirabal of COICA, which represents more than two million indigenous people across nine Amazon nations. Their boldest proposal is for a measure to ensure that 80 percent of the Amazon is declared a protected area by 2025.

The reasoning is simple. "Half of [tropical] forests, and 80 percent of biodiversity" in the world are found in indigenous territories, said Peter Seligmann, a veteran conservationist who set up an NGO-Nia Tero (Our Land) — run in part by indigenous leaders.

Walter Quertehuari is a leader of the Wachiperi people in southeastern Peru. His commune in the Amarakaeri reserve is recognized on the IUCN Green

List for its work in protecting biodiversity.

Unable to attend the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) meet in person due to Covid restrictions, Quertehuari reminded participants by videolink that his people have safeguarded more than 400,000 hectares of forest for more than 15 years. By staying off the deforestation taking place all around them, he explained, his people have not only protected a crucial biodiversity hotspot but prevented planet-warming CO2 from leaching into the atmosphere.

Now it's time for a payday. "We are talking about



HYERES, France: A gray heron stands in the "Vieux-Salins" in Hyeres, southeastern France. — AFP

'Virtuous cycle': Putting a price on CO2 in Gabon's forests

MARSEILLE: How much is a tree worth when its roots are in the ground and its leaves are helping suck carbon from the air? Answer: in most places, far less than the dollar value of its wood. The value we put on nature is the subject of a motion at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille. A trailblazing partnership attracting particular attention is just getting off the ground in the rainforest of Central Africa, which absorbs tons of CO2 — the gas responsible for climate change. At the end of June, Gabon received \$17 million from the Central African Forest Initiative (Cafi), which was launched in 2015 by the UN to bring together Central African countries and international donors.

"If a tree is standing it's worth nothing, if you cut it down it's worth something, but that's useless for the planet," said Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Costa Rica's former environment minister who now heads the Global Environment Facility, a specialized funding organization. "Without Gabon, there won't be rain in Africa. Without the Congo Basin forest we will never, never, achieve 1.5 degrees Celsius," he said referring to one of the ambitions outlined in the Paris climate deal.

'No real alternative'

Saving the world's rainforests is an "extremely ambitious goal", said Bard Vegar Solhjell, Director of the Norwegian Development Agency (Norad), which is funding the Gabonese operation. "But we have no real alternative if we want to avoid catastrophic climate change," said Solhjell, Norway's former environment minister. Norad is spending hundreds of millions of

dollars on programs to fight deforestation in several areas of the world. From Brazil to Indonesia, trees are felled at an industrial scale largely to make way for the expanding footprint of agriculture. But the picture is different in Gabon, which has preserved its section of a forest system that covers nearly 90 percent of its territory and spreads out across the Congo Basin. In this region, protection of forests is inextricably linked to the fight against poverty, said Solhjell.

Local people rely on slash-and-burn farming and cutting trees for firewood. According to Cafi, Gabon's forests absorb 140 million tons of CO2 every year and emit about 30 million. They also house 60 percent of the remaining population of critically endangered forest elephants. The country has agreed to combat illegal logging and reduce forest degradation. The June payment was part of a much larger fund available for the country, which can claim payments for emission reductions.

'Virtuous cycle'

Flore Koumba Pambo, scientific adviser at the Gabon National Parks Agency, said the funding would help fuel other projects, such as the Ivindo National Park, which has just been named a UNESCO World Heritage Site. She hopes it is the start of a "virtuous cycle", adding: "We are very proud of this recognition." For Rodriguez, the Gabon partnership is a testing ground and possible blueprint for other initiatives. It is also "a great opportunity to talk about carbon pricing"—a thorny issue that will be discussed at crunch UN climate talks in Glasgow. The donors say transparency is a crucial part of the process, as is evaluation. "We've also invested a lot in building up civil society, we have seen how important working with that side is," said Solhjell. In terms of assessing the value of natural services and supporting developing countries to preserve natural heritage, he said the Gabon project had clear benefits. "We are actually paying for the services Gabon is doing to the region and the world," he said. —AFP

But "indigenous communities have the right to self-determination," he added.

'We are nations'

The full integration of indigenous peoples into the IUCN has been a lengthy and tortured process, sources within and outside the organization acknowledge. "We have long been invited to attend, but indigenous peoples do not see themselves as conservation organizations," Victoria Tauli-Corpus, a former UN special rapporteur from the Philippines, told AFP.

"We are nations, we are peoples," she added. "And besides, membership is so expensive. Where do they think indigenous peoples can find the money?"

IUCN members—some 1,400 government ministries, research institutes and non-governmental organizations large and small—pay anywhere from 300 to 20,000 Swiss francs (about \$300 to \$21,000), depending on their size and resources. "Since the 1980s there have been indigenous group members," said Enrique Lahmann, director of the World Conservation Congress. "Inuits were among the first."

But after years discussion and debate, native groups now have a separate status alongside government agencies and NGOs. "This is the first time that the IUCN has made changes within its categories" Lahmann said. Due to COVID, there are far fewer indigenous activists than in the past at the congress, which usually attracts upward of 10,000 participants.—AFP



MARSEILLE: French President Emmanuel Macron (center) shakes hands with US actor Harrison Ford (right) during the IUCN World Conservation Congress Sunday. — AFP

Business

Digital transformation is not a choice but a must: Al-Roshood

KFH is a success partner with SMEs and entrepreneurs

KUWAIT: In an interview with Entrepreneur Magazine, Abdulwahab Al-Roshood, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer at KFH said that since 1980s KFH has been a pioneer in supporting the youth and the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). He added that KFH is a success partner with SMEs and entrepreneurs, where several companies started their relationship with KFH with a credit facility of KD50k, and now the credit facility surged to reach KD3mn. This underlines the significant role of KFH in improving these businesses and transforming them into larger companies.

Al-Roshood said "the SMEs unit in KFH serves the needs of SMEs and Micro business and provides more attention, assistance, and financial consultation for the SMEs. This comes in line with KFH's social responsibility and the stimulus plan that CBK launched in 2020 where SMEs was a main league among the segments. In respect of opportunities and trends, industries are expected to rise in the months ahead, something which Kuwaiti entrepreneurs should take advantage of. Al-Roshood said that technology has short- and long-term positive outlook; however, he advised entrepreneurs to

consider the fast changes happening in this specific sector.

Meanwhile, Al-Roshood indicated that as entrepreneurs face unprecedented challenges, patience, agility and ability to adopt to change are important qualities they should have, in addition to proper management of cash flows, capital raising, good marketing and communication strategies and learning from competitors.

He added that entrepreneurs should also have clear visions while realizing the importance of perseverance, initiative, and responsiveness, and most importantly they should have strong belief and confidence in themselves.

Advice to entrepreneurs

Al-Roshood said that Kuwait and the banking sector have always been supportive to entrepreneurs and the SMEs sector, as this segment plays an instrumental role in boosting the economy and paving the way to larger projects and more advanced and innovative businesses, while creating jobs for the youth and achieving prosperity and development. He advised entrepreneurs to remain in customers minds as the preferable choice,



Abdulwahab Al-Roshood

and to protect assets, secure smart financing with proper budgeting and consider digital transformation through innovation, readiness and agility.

Lessons learned

Al-Roshood said that despite the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 has taught us great lessons about the importance of adapting to change, coping with crisis, having different attitudes to risk and redesign priorities. Most importantly, it taught us that digital transformation is not a choice, but a must. "We learned that what matters most for businesses is to offer customers uninterrupted services under all circumstances. This is possible through having a stronger digital presence with adaptive systems and multiple channels both physical and virtual, along with rigid controls

to defend the interests of both customers and shareholders," He added.

Al-Roshood emphasized the role of KFH in supporting SMEs, saying that it is one of the main sectors that are targeted to receive support from the government, and subsequently from the banks, to achieve Kuwait 2035 vision. He added that KFH is considered the first bank in Kuwait to designate a financing department for SMEs sector.

Al-Roshood said that the growth of SMEs segment was going in acceptable direction, however, during 2020, SMEs sector has faced a huge challenge due to COVID-19 pandemic as it is considered the most affected sector by economic instability due to its size, structure and nature.

He pointed out that KFH was considerate towards the situation and circumstances of the SMEs which were hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic repercussions. KFH worked closely with the SMEs sector and provided them with varied and flexible solutions through restructuring and deferring debts until they recovered and resumed business activity.



Incheon Airport Services obtains ISO certificates

KUWAIT: The New Chief Executive Jung June Ahn of Incheon Korea for Airport Services in a statement to the newspaper or media announced they obtained the ISO (9001:2015) certificate in the quality management system, the ISO (14001:2015) certificate in the envi-

ronmental management system, and the ISO (10002:2018) certificate in the customer satisfaction system in quality management to deal with complaints in institutions, from Royalcert, Germany.

After the auditing all of Incheon Korea for Airport Services' technical and administrative departments, the standards fulfilled the requirements for quality management system and excellent in their service. The ISO certificate in quality system management contributes to achieving an internationally acclaimed standard in their administrative processes. These standards will boost both citizens and passengers' confidence in Terminal 4, a very important gateway between Kuwait and the world.

India Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai to showcase resurgent India

DUBAI: The India Pavilion in Expo 2020 Dubai starting October 1 is set to showcase a resurgent India's march to becoming a \$5 trillion economy in the post-COVID world. The Pavilion which is a technology marvel will not only capture the vibrant Indian culture and its past but also the capabilities and opportunities that it presents as a global economic hub to the domestic as well as the foreign investors.

Outlining the overarching theme of India's participation at the six-month Expo 2020 Dubai running up to March 2022, B V R Subrahmanyam, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, government of India said that: "India Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai will showcase resurgent India's march to becoming a \$5 trillion economy. India's exceptional fightback against COVID-19 and the country's emergence as a global business hub presenting huge opportunities for the world will be the overarching theme of India's participation at Expo 2020 Dubai."

The India pavilion will see participation from number of Indian states who will be displaying their culture, tradition and tremendous business opportunities along with the top corporate groups from India, and the public sector companies. Large number of prominent government ministers, officials, celebrities are set to visit India pavilion during the six months of Expo 2020, which will also host number of cultural events.

Subrahmanyam said, "At Expo 2020 Dubai, the India Pavilion is ready to showcase the face of an India rising on the pillar of sustainability along with opportunity and mobility - a nation ready to lead the world's future." The Pavilion will exhibit the country's cultural diversity, ancient treasures, achievements, and leading opportunities with cutting-edge technologies. One of the largest pavilions at the Expo 2020 Dubai, India Pavilion will feature an innovative kinetic facade made up of 600 individual colorful blocks. It is developed as a mosaic of rotating panels that will depict different themes as they rotate on their axis. It represents the theme of 'India on the move' and is a unique amalgam of the rich heritage and technological advances of the nation.

As India celebrates 75 years of its independence, the India Pavilion will mirror the celebrations of Amrit Mahotsav, which was launched by the Prime Minister of India and will bring to the world the New India through many activities and cultural extravaganzas.

The entire four-storey structure is divided into two parts. The zones are identified based on 11 primary themes - Climate and Biodiversity, Space, Urban and Rural Development, Tolerance and Inclusivity, Golden Jubilee, Knowledge and Learning, Travel and Connectivity, Global Goals, Health and Wellness, Food

Agriculture and Livelihoods and Water.

The India Pavilion will also be hosting and co-creating leadership discussions, international trade conferences, and seminars to explore opportunities to partner with other participating nations.

At the India Pavilion, the visitors will also get the chance to witness star-studded nights, multiple cultural shows, Indian festivals celebration and relish the Indian delicacies. The specially designed logo of India's participation has been created to give a new holistic global brand experience to India's participation at Expo 2020 Dubai. The logo's circular form represents unity, commitment and the community which forms the central pillars of India; and signifies continuity and evolving lifecycles in one of the world's most vibrant democracies and fastest-growing business centers.

The logo design showcases the chakra (wheel), which reflects strength, courage and progressive movement. The colors have been taken from the Indian flag, where Saffron symbolizes strength and courage; White indicates peace and truth; and Green represents fertility, growth, and auspiciousness.

It will be used in all the official communications and stationery during Expo 2020 Dubai.

Burgan Bank announces winner of Al-Thuraya Salary Account draw

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

The Al-Thuraya account holders have the option to hold money in Kuwaiti Dinar and other major currencies and can access account-related services such as standing orders, loans and credit cards, and benefit from the discounts and offers throughout the year.

Gulf Bank announces 10 winners of Al-Danah monthly draw for Aug

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its monthly Al-Danah draw on Sunday, to announce the winners for August. The 10 lucky winners received cash prizes of KD 1,000 each. The winners are:

Omar Ashraf Ismail Morsy Gomaa
Hasan Ali Makki Jawad
Samera Tahir Mohammed Hasan Alattar
Ehsan Younes Alasemi
Mahde Zuber Jawad Reda/minor
Chan Soo Kim
Huda Mustafa Wazzan
Saad Jassim Eyadah Sulaiman
Hameeda Sayed Taama Zadah
Kholoud Waleed Khaled Zi-Zahar

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

Numerous benefits

The Al-Danah account is the only account that

rewards customers for their loyalty by providing loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances gained in the previous year, which are then transferred to the current year to reward customers for their loyalty to the Bank.

Accordingly, all chances gained by existing Al-Danah customers in 2020 (from January 1 to December 31, 2020) have been transferred to the 2021 draws. It is also worth noting that all account draws are attended by a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, with the quarterly and annual draws also reviewed by Ernst & Young.

Annual grand prize

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

Opening an Al-Danah Account

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



AMSTERDAM: Europe's leading banks each year book 20 billion euros (\$24 billion), or 14 percent of their total profits, in 17 territories with particularly favorable tax regimes, said a report by the EU Tax Observatory.

European banks active in tax havens despite scandals

BRUSSELS: European banks have not reduced their presence in tax havens, despite several scandals that have revealed the dubious practices multinationals use to avoid taxes, according to a study published yesterday. Europe's leading banks each year book 20 billion euros (\$24 billion), or 14 percent of their total profits, in 17 territories with particularly favorable tax regimes, said a report by the EU Tax Observatory, which is housed at the Paris School of Economics.

That percentage has remained stable since 2014 when a wave of revelations, such as Lux Leaks and Panama Papers, exposed the tax practices used by companies and high-wealth individuals to avoid tax.

"Despite the growing importance of these issues in the public debate and in the political world, European banks have not significantly reduced their use of tax havens," the report said. The Observatory, which is headed by Berkeley University professor and tax expert Gabriel Zucman, reviewed data published by 36 financial institutions over the 2014-2020 period, with a special focus on big banks HSBC, Deutsche Bank, and Societe Generale.

"We observe a diversity of situations: for HSBC, the bulk of haven profits come from just one haven (Hong Kong), while in other cases multiple tax havens are involved," it said.

Hong Kong banks

HSBC was tipped as a leader of these practices with more than 62 percent of its pre-tax profits booked in tax havens between 2018 and 2020, com-

pared to 49.8 percent for Italy's Monte dei Paschi, which came in second place. Standard Chartered rounded out the podium. To be sure, both HSBC and Standard Chartered are while domiciled in London-leading Hong Kong retail and commercial banks. HSBC derives the vast majority of its profit in Asia, with China and Hong Kong the major drivers.

Hong Kong, a major global financial center with a 16.5 percent corporate tax rate, is also where Standard Chartered's biggest business is. "We are a global business and have substantial commercial operations in both high tax and low tax jurisdictions," the bank said in an emailed response to AFP's inquiries. "We do not artificially divert profits to low tax jurisdictions," it said, adding: "We only engage in tax planning that supports a genuine commercial activity."

Germany's Deutsche Bank and NordLB come in fourth and fifth. The report identifies 17 states and territories as preferred destinations, including the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Jersey and Guernsey, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Macau, Panama and the EU member states of Malta and Luxembourg. "Profits booked by banks in tax havens are abnormally high: 238,000 euros per employee, as opposed to around 65,000 euros in non-haven countries," the report said.

"This suggests that the profits booked in tax havens are primarily shifted out of other countries where service production occurs," it added.

Expectations have been high for financial institutions to change their practices in the wake of a series of international financial scandals revealed in the major investigations that became known in the press as Lux Leaks and the Panama Papers. The study landed as countries are the final stretch of negotiating an international framework for the taxation of multinationals, which is backed by the G20 and the OECD. The plan would introduce a tax floor of 15 percent on the profits of the largest international firms, though the financial sector could be excluded in the final compromise. —AFP

Pre-Viking gold treasure found in Denmark

An amateur archeologist has found 22 gold objects with sixth century symbols that could yield new details about pre-Viking peoples in Denmark, the museum that will house the treasure said yesterday. Some of the objects have runic motifs and inscriptions which may refer to the rulers of the time, but also recall Norse mythology, Mads Ravn, director of research at the Vejle museums in western Denmark, told AFP. "It is the symbols on the items that makes them unique, more than the quantity found," according to Ravn, who said the treasure weighed

about one kilogram.

One piece even refers to the Roman emperor Constantine from the early 4th century, said Ravn. "The find consists of a lot of gold items, including a medallion the size of a saucer," Ravn added. According to initial examinations, the treasure could have been buried as an offering to the gods at a chaotic time when the climate in northern Europe dramatically turned colder after a volcanic eruption in Iceland in 536 sent ash clouds into the sky.

"They have many symbols, some of which have not been seen before, which

will enable us to enlarge our knowledge of the people of this period," he said. The treasure was found near Jelling in south-western Denmark, which historians say became a cradle for kings of the Viking-age which lasted between the 8th and 12th centuries. The treasure will be on display at the museum in Vejle from February 2022. The amateur archeologist using a metal detector found the treasure about six months ago but the news was only disclosed now.-AFP



Beyonce shares B-day collage as stars pay tribute to songstress

Beyonce has shared a collage of highlights from her life and career to mark her 40th birthday. The 'Crazy in Love' hitmaker has transformed her official website into her own tribute to mark four decades on the planet, starting in 1981 with baby pictures, right up to 2021, with her latest Ivy Park collection and her record-breaking Grammy wins included. The R&B megastar also posted visuals from her time in the group Girl's Tyme, as well as Destiny's Child and her 'Black Is King' visual album. The post was titled 'B AT 40 THANK YOU', and at the bottom of the mammoth artwork, the 'Love On Top' hitmaker wrote: "THANK U TO THE PHOTOGRAPHERS, EDITORS, TV HOSTS, TALK SHOW HOSTS, AWARDS PROGRAMS AND MY FAMILY FOR YOUR VISUAL CONTRIBUTION. (sic)" Meanwhile, DJ Khaled, Lil Nas X and Doja Cat are among those who have paid tribute to Beyonce today. Apple Music put together a video to celebrate Queen B's birthday, featuring a host of huge music stars. 'Wild Thoughts' hitmaker Khaled opens the clip with the message: "I wanna do a big shout out to Beyonce. Happy birthday. God bless you and your beautiful family." Rapper Doja gushed: "I love you, I don't know I'm shouting right now." Ciara said: "It's Ciara here, and I am wishing you the happiest birthday." Lil Nas X added:

"Happy birthday. Thank you for sharing your gift with the world." In another video curated by Harper's Bazaar, Oprah Winfrey and Taylor Swift were among the famous faces to say a few words about the music icon. The talk show legend began: "Hello, Miss B." Before later adding: "Let me tell you, the forties are everything you've been waiting for." Pop megastar Taylor said: "Happy birthday Beyonce, it's Taylor ... the fact that you have paved the road that every female artist is walking down now, and the fact that you have done so with such kindness and grace, to say I admire you, there is just not a word for it." Meanwhile, Beyonce's music mogul husband, Jay-Z, recently hailed his wife as "super detail-oriented" and "inspiring". The power couple have collaborated musically, toured together, and, most recently, joined forces for Tiffany & Co.'s About Love campaign. And the 51-year-old hip-hop superstar revealed why it's so easy to work with his "super talented" spouse in a rare interview last week. The '99 Problems' hitmaker - who has Blue Ivy, nine, and four-year-old twins Rumi and Sir with the 'Dreamgirls' star - gushed: "She's super detail-oriented, obviously, as you can see from her work. "She's an incredibly hard worker, super talented, very inspiring."



Camila Cabello: Lockdown changed my life

Camila Cabello thinks the COVID-19 lockdown changed her life. The 24-year-old singer managed to turn her life around amid the lockdown, after years of non-stop work left her feeling "burnt out and broken". Camila - who shot to fame as a teenager as part of Fifth Harmony - explained: "Before lockdown I was burnt out. I was living with a really high amount of anxiety. "It was too much and it was not

sustainable. I felt like I was running with a broken leg but I wasn't really listening to how I felt. "I kept telling myself everything was good, 'I should feel fine, I should feel OK'. "What I needed to do was say, 'How do I actually feel?' and letting that be OK. I needed to give myself permission to ask for help - because I needed help. I needed therapy. "The pandemic gave me that pause to say, 'Let's not carry on running on this broken leg, let's fix it.' "In the past there were plenty of times when I've been working - not home or having any time for relationships, not having time to be healthy and happy - just working non-stop and not feeling good but doing it anyway. "That's something I would never do now." The 'Havana' hitmaker is now more determined than ever to strike a healthy "balance" in her life. Camila - who is dating fel-



Tori Spelling's dog has died

The 48-year-old actress - who has four children with husband Dean McDermott - has been left heart-broken by the passing of her canine companion Arthur Bear Reynolds, who she described as one of the "greatest loves" of her life in a touching tribute which also saw her praise the benefits of rescuing elderly pooches. Alongside a video montage of pictures of Arthur, soundtracked by Brandi Carlile's The Story: "It breaks my heart [broken heart emoji] that we had to say goodbye to Arthur Bear Reynolds... "We rescued Arthur during The Woolsey fires. So thankful to @muchloveanimalrescue for giving me the privilege to be Arthur's forever mom. " Sadly senior rescues are not as desirable as puppies. But, if you have the opportunity to be a forever home to a senior pet do it! It's life changing. "Arthur was close to 20 when he passed. We didn't get a long time with him but I've cherished the years we had together. I was his human. He was one of the greatest loves of my life. I told him all the time I wish we had met each other when he was a pup. He was so loving. He loved having the kids all over him. He was such a warrior! He never gave up. Such strength and will." Tori will miss her dog "forever" and admitted her

home feels empty without him. She continued: "I will miss him forever. My room seems so empty now without him. The music I put to these pics popped into my head as I held his paw for the last time. "Haven't listened to this song in years but after I did it made complete sense. Arthur and I were made for each other. "Dogs give us unconditional love. Unlike humans. Yet, it's our pets we have the shortest journey with??. I hope you are running thru beautiful fields now Arthur. I [heart emoji] U. xoxo(sic)" The '90s star's husband Dean announced the news on his Instagram. He shared a photo of him holding the pooch's paw with an emotional note. Tori's husband, Dean, also paid tribute to his furry friend on his own Instagram account. He wrote: "This beautiful guy Arthur Bear McDermott got his angel wings today. This man survived being abandoned during the Wolsey fires, and found us. "He was such a sweet man and loved our family. God bless you Arthur, have fun with all the ones that we've lost along the way, and now you have found in heaven. See you down the road. #mansbestfriend #arthur (sic)".

Jennifer Hudson: Aretha Franklin was an inspiration to me

Jennifer Hudson has hailed Aretha Franklin as an "inspiration". The 39-year-old singer considered the 'A Natural Woman' singer a close friend before her death in 2018, and was even named by Aretha as the person she wanted to play her in the biopic of her life - a role she fulfilled in the new movie, 'Respect'. And now, Jennifer has said Aretha was a "motherly" figure to her, and was always interested in hearing about her life, especially wherever her 12-year-old son David Jr. - whom she has with David Otunga - was concerned. She said: "Aretha ... she had a regal presence. And when we first had our meeting, she said, 'Are you shy or something?' And I said, 'Well, I am sitting with the Queen of Soul! What do you expect?' "But she was just very still. Full of presence. I noticed she didn't speak much. She said what she said, and that was that. But eventually it became more, well, motherly. And even in her last days I would talk to her weekly. She ended up teaching me more about life, while teaching me about her life. "She was always asking about my son. Or, 'What's going on with this?' Well, this is how it is for people like us.' So she was schooling me and I was always listening. She was really speaking from experience." Jennifer also explained the music legend was an inspiration to her because of the things she had "overcome" in her life. She told The Sunday Times newspaper's Culture magazine: "Anyone would assume that Aretha Franklin had it made. But, no, everyone has a life. Everyone has a story. Everyone goes through something. And



when you see someone like that overcome what she has overcome, it inspires you. It definitely did me." Meanwhile, Jennifer previously revealed she spoke to Aretha just one week before her death, and said the legendary singer had "sang to [her]" during their call. She said: "She told me what she had eaten. I don't remember what that meal was, and then she sang to me on that call. I can't remember the song. It was by the Isley Brothers and she said, 'Jennifer, now that's the Isley Brothers,' and I said, 'Yes, ma'am, I know.' "And then, my son is a cook, too, so I ended up telling her about him cooking and sending her a video. Because she was so present. She always knew what was going on, even in my life."

Penelope Cruz tackles stress with meditation

Penelope Cruz uses transcendental meditation to ease any stress in her life. The Oscar-winning actress - who has two children, 10-year-old son Leo and eight-year-old daughter Luna, with her actor husband Javier Bardem - first experimented with meditation when she was a teenager but she started taking the practice seriously to decompress from her film sets and to ease any worries she may have. She said: "I practiced meditation as a teenager, I stopped for a while, then I took the transcendental meditation courses and I chose to dedicate myself to it." Penelope is always busy with her career and her family and wants to devote herself as much as she can to her children, although her own mother Encarna keeps telling her to take more time for herself, despite never taking that advice herself when she was raising the 'Nine' star and her siblings. Speaking to Italian publication IO Donna, she said: "I have a trait that I inherited from my mother, who was equally



demanding with herself: she was very busy and yet - very generous - she managed to give everything to her three children. Now she says to me: you have to relax, you have to rest, you have to find time for yourself..." Penelope - who won the Best Supporting Actress Academy Award in 2008 for her performance in Woody Allen's 'Vicky Cristina Barcelona' - will have spent 30 years working as an actress and she has to pinch herself each day that her childhood dream came true. She said: "Acting was my dream since I was - maybe - two years old. A dream that does not bore: with each role you start from scratch. "So I think: thank you!"

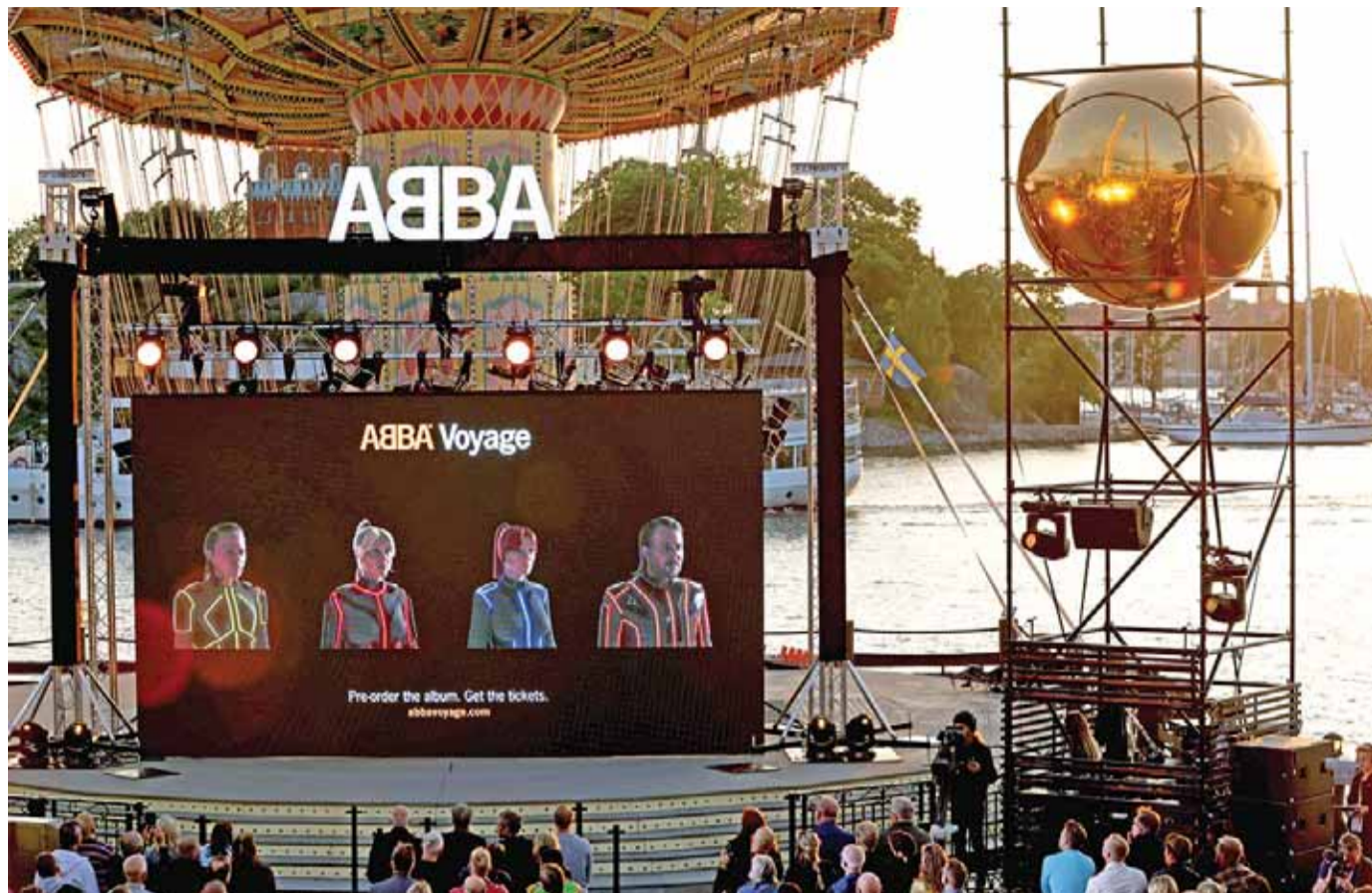
Spears's boyfriend Asghari spotted ring shopping

Britney Spears' boyfriend Sam Asghari has been spotted ring shopping at Cartier. The 27-year-old fitness instructor was seen perusing the selection of diamonds on offer at the luxury jewelry chain's store in Beverly Hills, just hours after it was claimed he and the 39-year-old pop megastar are ready to get engaged. The dark-haired hunk was seen leaning over the counter inspecting the dazzling rocks as he received help from an employee. The couple have been dating since 2016, after meeting on the set of Britney's 'Slumber Party' music video, and the loved-up duo are said to be ready to "embrace the next chapter" of their relationship. A source told 'Entertainment Tonight': "Britney and Sam are an end game couple. But for them, it's all about

timing. "All of their dreams for their relationship have been on pause due to the conservatorship. They haven't been able to progress like a normal, adult couple. It's like dating in high school. That's been their experience for the last two years or so." Jamie Spears, Britney's dad, is planning to step down from his daughter's conservatorship, which he has at least partially controlled since it was established in 2008. And the 'Toxic' hitmaker now feels ready to move on with the rest of her life, as she looks to the future with Sam. The insider shared: "Things are finally looking up and it's starting to become very real for them that soon they'll be able to take back the reins and have full control as a couple. "They are ready to embrace that next chapter, and love each other without limits or without feeling like they are on a leash. Naturally, an engagement is the next step." In fact, the source explained that it's a case of when rather if the couple will get engaged. The source said: "They're finally getting closer to the 'when' thanks to Britney's conservatorship suit yielding in her favor. It's all very real for Sam especially, and engagement is on his mind now more than ever. He and Britney want that badly. "They want the whole family thing too. It's just a matter of timing."



Lifestyle | Feature



Members of the Swedish group ABBA are seen on a display during their Voyage event at Grona Lund, Stockholm, during their presentation of the first new song after nearly four decades. — AFP

Money, money, money: ABBA return to UK singles chart

For the first time in 40 years, ABBA are heading back to Britain's top 10 singles chart after thrilling fans with plans for a new album and virtual concert. Two singles released by the Swedish group from their upcoming album "Voyage" sit at numbers six and seven, based on preliminary CD and vinyl sales and on streaming data, the Official Charts Company said on Sunday. "I Still Have Faith In You" ranks higher thanks to more physical sales so far, while "Don't Shut Me

Down" is Britain's most downloaded song this week. Both songs have been streamed over 500,000 times.

The full chart comes out next Friday, and the tracks will mark ABBA's first appearance in the UK top 10 for singles since "One Of Us" in December 1981, according to the company. ABBA have notched up over 400 million album sales over 50 years despite parting ways in 1982 and resolutely resisting all offers to work together again-until now. The band

announced their comeback on Thursday. The album is due to be released on November 5, and the London gig featuring their digital avatars is expected in May 2022. ABBA are not the only throwback in this week's UK top 10. Elton John features as a lead artist for the first time in almost 20 years with "Cold Heart (Pnau Remix)", a collaboration with Dua Lipa. — AFP

Girls Aloud star dies of cancer aged 39

Singer Sarah Harding, whose group Girls Aloud was one of Britain's most successful female bands, died on Sunday aged 39 just over a year after revealing she had breast cancer. Her mother Marie announced the news on Instagram, alongside a black-and-white photograph of the English singer smiling. "I know she won't want to be remembered for her fight against this terrible disease—she was a bright shining star and I hope that's how she can be remembered instead," the post said. Harding announced in August 2020 that she had been diagnosed with advanced breast cancer, and later said that the upcoming Christmas was likely to be her last.



In this file photo Sarah Harding from the group 'Girls Aloud' meets with fans as she arrives at the premiere of the film, 'Horrid Henry', in central London. — AFP

She released an autobiography in March 2021, explaining she had decided to reveal her illness to encourage others to seek medical advice if needed even during the COVID-19 pandemic. "As scary as it was to go public about my diagnosis, it was the right thing to do, and the amount of support I've received is incredible," Harding said. "I've been inundated with lovely messages from my fans. I'm grateful beyond words for that." Girls Aloud were formed in 2002 on the ITV reality show "Popstars: The Rivals", with Harding one of the five members alongside Nadine Coyle, Nicola Roberts, Cheryl Tweedy and Kimberley Walsh. — AFP

Jane Birkin to skip French film festival after 'minor' stroke

British actress and singer Jane Birkin has cancelled her appearance at the American Film Festival in Deauville, France, as she recovers from a stroke, her family said yesterday. The 74-year-old former partner and muse of French crooner Serge Gainsbourg "suffered a minor form of stroke a few days ago," the family said in a statement to AFP. "She is doing well," the statement added. Birkin was to discuss "Jane," a documentary about her by

her daughter Charlotte Gainsbourg that was presented in Cannes in July, at the Deauville festival that opened Friday.

Born on December 14, 1946 in London, Birkin has long been one of France's favorite English performers and remains indelibly associated with Gainsbourg and his moody melodies from the 1960s and 70s. "When I see the French listening to these old songs from 40 years ago, I realize they are part of their history, but they're also part of mine," she wrote in her 2018 memoir "Munkey Diaries." The book also revealed that Birkin fought a long battle with leukemia that first developed in the late 1990s. She had appeared in good health during recent public appearances, including at this year's Cannes film festival, or on stage during the Francofolies music festival in La Rochelle in July. — AFP



British actress and singer Jane Birkin

Afghanistan becoming 'country without artists,' exiled directors warn Venice

There was moving testimony from Afghan filmmakers at the Venice Film Festival this weekend, as two female directors warned against trusting the Taliban's promises. "In just two weeks, the most brilliant elements have left the country, at least those who were able," 38-year-old director Sahraa Karimi told reporters at the festival on Saturday. "Imagine a country without artists," added Karimi, who has won several international prizes for her work. She said the Afghan film industry had entirely stopped "in the space of a few hours" after last month's sudden takeover by the Taliban in the wake of the US military's withdrawal.

"The archives are now under the control of the Taliban. The work of directors vanished in a few hours. Some were able to leave with their computers, others with nothing at all." Her fellow Sahraa Mani, known for a documentary about victims of incest "A Thousand Girls Like Me", added: "This collapse meant we lost everything." Mani, with a timid but determined air, used the example of Kabul's only mixed music school. "The Taliban are now occupying the building. They have destroyed the students' instruments and the students are in hiding," she said on the verge of tears.

Mina, who became the first head of the

Afghan Film Organization in 2019, spoke of her personal escape on August 15. "I started my day normally, and several hours later I had to take the hardest decision in my life: to stay or leave the country. "We are actors, directors, producers, we are not politicians. We just want to realize our dreams." She described her fellow exiles as "ambassadors of Afghan identity", and warned against trusting the Taliban.

"Not only are they more cruel, they are wiser due to their use of technology." "We can only be saved by the international community. Help us! We need hope. Please be our voices and speak about our situation," added Mani. The pair were joined at Venice by members of the International Coalition for Filmmakers at Risk (ICFR), which was formed at last year's festival to help artists from countries in turmoil such as Myanmar. Today in Afghanistan, "the status of artist puts you in danger, you're at the top of the list," said Orwa Nyrabia, the Syrian head of the International Festival of Documentary Film in Amsterdam. "We all have an interest in saving them, it's in our interest." — AFP

'Shang-Chi,' with an Asian lead, sets a N America box office record

The North American box office got a big boost as Disney's new "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings," featuring Marvel's first leading Asian superhero, scored an unexpectedly strong \$71.4 million opening, industry observer Exhibitor Relations reported Sunday. That figure, for the Friday-through-Sunday period, was a Labor Day weekend record, the Hollywood Reporter said, and the film is expected to take in an additional \$12.1 million. "This is a fantastic opening on a traditionally quiet Labor Day weekend," said David A. Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research. "The three-day number is a record-breaker for the holiday, a positive finish to the summer... (marking) a sensational weekend for the industry."

"Shang-Chi" stars Canadian actor, stuntman and erstwhile Deloitte accountant Simu Liu as Marvel's newest superhero, a former assassin in the shadow of an evil father. It also features Awkwafina, Tony Leung and Michelle Yeoh. The film, which has drawn strong reviews for its choreography and Asian representation, enjoyed the second biggest opening of this pandemic year, behind Marvel's "Black Widow," which had an \$80 million opening.



In this file photo Canadian actor Simu Liu arrives for the world premiere of Marvel's "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings" at the El Capitan theatre in Hollywood, California. — AFP

By way of comparison, Universal's slasher film "Candyman" topped last weekend's box office with just \$22 million before slipping to second place this weekend with a three-day take of \$10.6 million (\$13 million for four days). It stars Yahya Abdul-Mateen II. In third place this weekend was "Free Guy" from 20th Century, at \$8.7 million (\$11.2 million for four days). The sci-fi comedy stars Ryan Reynolds as an everyman bank teller who finds himself inside a huge video game. Paramount animation "PAW Patrol: The Movie" came in fourth, at \$4 million (\$5.2 million for four days). It tells the story of a boy and the brave young pups who help him save their city from an impeachment-worthy mayor. And in fifth was Disney's family adventure film "Jungle Cruise," with a take of \$3.95 million (\$5.2 million for four days).

Rounding out the top five were: "Don't Breathe 2" (\$2.2 million for three days; \$2.7 million for four) "Respect" (\$1.2 million; \$1.5 million) "The Suicide Squad" (\$905,000; \$1.1 million) "Black Widow" (\$748,000; \$903,000) "The Night House" (\$552,000; \$700,000)—AFP



Swedish former Elite model Ebba Karlsson (left), French lawyer Anne-Claire Le Jeune (center) and ex-BBC journalist Lisa Brinkworth pose during a photo session in Paris. — AFP

'Haunted': Ex-models speak out against French fashion boss

After keeping silent for years, more than a dozen women hope their harrowing testimonies will spur prosecutors to pursue a pillar of the French fashion industry, accused of abusing young models with widely known impunity over dozens of years. "It's haunted me for 20 years," Lisa Brinkworth, a former BBC journalist, told AFP of her encounter with Gerald Marie, the former Europe chief of the Elite modeling agency, and its fallout. Brinkworth is one of several women who met with investigators from the French police's child protection brigade last week, with others set to do so in the coming days.

The inquiry was opened in September 2020 after complaints lodged over alleged rapes and sexual abuse between 1980 and 1998, including of minors. Although that would normally put them beyond France's statutes of limitations for prosecution, the women hope their accounts



(From left) US actor Craig Robinson, US actress Kate Hudson, US director Ana Lily Amirpour and British actor Ed Skrein arrive for the screening of the film "Mona Lisa and the Blood Moon" presented in competition during the 78th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido. — AFP

Rom-com queen Kate Hudson takes 'brave' turn with dark fairytale at Venice

Kate Hudson showed a very different side of herself at the Venice Film Festival on Sunday, playing a hard-nosed stripper in dark fairytale "Mona Lisa and the Blood Moon". The actress said she was excited to take on the role, which is a world away from her best-known parts in sunny, crowd-pleasing romantic comedies like "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days" and "Bride Wars". She said the moment of revelation came when she found herself "at 3am lying on the concrete in Bourbon Street," referring to the central New Orleans location of the film.

"That's when I felt we really do crazy things for the movies," Hudson told reporters in Venice. The film, which is competing for the Golden Lion at the festival, tells the story of a Korean girl with telepathic powers who escapes from a mental institution and forms a bond with Hudson's erotic dancer. It is directed by Iranian-American Ana Lily Amirpour, who has established herself as a visionary newcomer in the style of uber-hip filmmaker Jim Jarmusch—especially with her 2014 debut about Iranian vampires, "A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night".

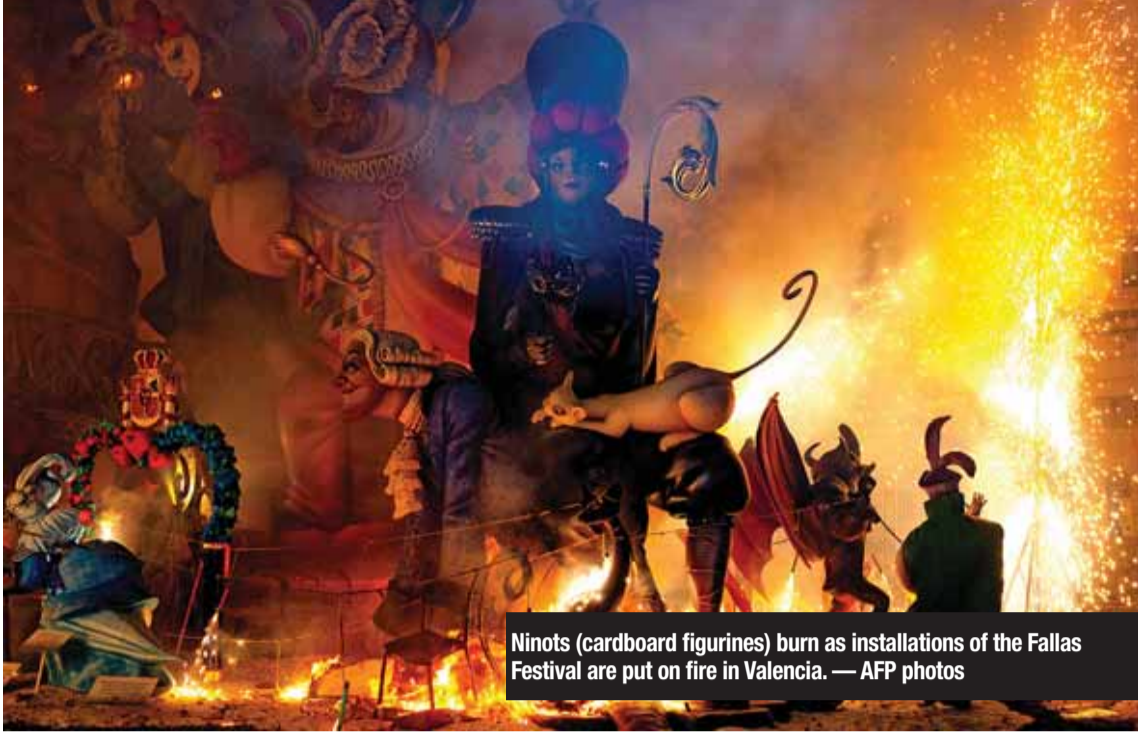
"We got into this (film business) to take risks and do things that put yourself out there, and make choices that are brave," said Hudson. "When you get to work with filmmakers that do that, it's just an exciting experience. Amirpour said she had been "a fan of Kate forever". "I've seen every movie she's done," Amirpour said at the press conference ahead of the film's red carpet premiere. "She was full of a baby when I met her, and I said 'Get that baby out and then come and be a stripper.'" — AFP

will nonetheless lead to criminal charges, especially if they spur more recent victims to speak out. "I just think now that the time is right. He was untouchable for too, too long," said Brinkworth.

'Kept on going'

At the time of the alleged offences, Elite Models had launched the careers of household names including Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford and Marie's former wife, the supermodel Linda Evangelista. Brinkworth encountered Marie in 1998, when she was posing as a model for a report on the US financier Jeffrey Epstein, who was facing multiple charges of sex trafficking of minors before his 2019 suicide. She was also investigating Jean-Luc Brunel, a French modeling agent and associate of Epstein, who was charged with rape of minors over 15 as well as harassment last December.

"I was just astonished by the number of women who were making allegations against Gerald Marie," she said. During a dinner at a nightclub in Milan, she says, Marie repeated propositioned her and offered to pay for sex, before pinning her to a chair and assaulting her through her clothes. — AFP



Ninots (cardboard figurines) burn as installations of the Fallas Festival are put on fire in Valencia. — AFP photos



Spain's *Fallas* festival returns after pandemic pause



Valencia's "Fallas" festival wrapped up with fireworks and the burning of colorful sculptures on Sunday after returning to the eastern Spanish city following a pandemic-induced hiatus. The five-day festival is traditionally held in March but was cancelled last year as the COVID-19 pandemic swept Spain. This year, officials postponed the start of the UNESCO-recognized event until September 1. It was the first time that the festival was suspended since the end of Spain's 1936-39 civil war.



Each year, residents make hundreds of colorful puppet-like sculptures—some as big as a four-storey building—out of wood, plaster and papier-mache for the festival. Called "ninots", the sculptures depict fairytale characters and cartoonish effigies of politicians and celebrities. One ensemble from this year's event was



inspired by the hit Spanish Netflix series "Money Heist". It depicted several people wearing red overalls and Salvador Dali face masks like the main characters in the show. The ninots are displayed in the streets of the Mediterranean city and then burned on the last day of the festival in a bonfire called the "Crem"—in a centuries-old tradition honoring St Joseph, the patron saint of carpenters.

Fireworks lit up the night sky as this year's bonfire, which features about 750 sculptures, was held without the thousands of spectators that the event usually draws. The bonfire was brought forward by two hours to allow festivities to end before a nightly virus curfew came into effect at 1:00 am (2300 GMT). After

much debate a customary flower offering to the Virgin Mary was allowed to proceed—but without people lining the route, as is tradition. "These are not Fallas as such, more like Fallas-related events that comply with health regulations," said Valencia mayor Joan Ribó. The Fallas festival is believed to have originated from pagan rituals marking the end of winter. The pandemic has forced the cancellation of many of Spain's most famous fiestas, including Pamplona's bull-running festival and Seville's Holy Week processions. — AFP



People take images of a falla during the Fallas festival in Valencia.

Sports

Medvedev faces Dutch qualifier in US Open quarter-finals

Alcaraz youngest men's quarter-finalist since 1963

NEW YORK: Russian second seed Daniil Medvedev marched into the US Open quarter-finals on Sunday, where a shock Dutch qualifier will try to deny him a third straight trip to the New York semi-finals. Medvedev defeated British 24th seed Daniel Evans 6-3, 6-4, 6-3, making his fourth trip to the last eight in the past five Grand Slams as he chases his first Slam title.

Medvedev, who lost this year's Australian Open final to Novak Djokovic and the 2019 US Open final to Rafael Nadal, has not dropped a set in four matches. "Now I just want to make it to the finals again to have another thing to remember, and hopefully a better one," Medvedev said.

Medvedev next faces 117th-ranked Botic Van de Zandschulp, who outlasted Argentine 11th seed Diego Schwartzman 6-3, 6-4, 5-7, 5-7, 6-1 in four hours and 20 minutes. "I don't really have words for it," Van de Zandschulp said. "Played so many matches. Some of them I was on the brink of defeat, but I pulled through and won them."

He also matched the best showing by any US Open qualifier, last-eight runs by Frenchman Nicolas Pietrangeli in 1999 and Gilles Muller of Luxembourg in 2008.

"First time for me in America and it feels great," said Van de Zandschulp, who wondered how his homeland was reacting to his run. "No one expected me to reach the quarter-finals," he said. "I think they are amazed and hopefully proud."

An Evans double fault handed Medvedev a break for a 3-1 lead and the Russian held three times to take the first set. After trading second-set breaks to 3-3, the Russian broke at love in the seventh game and held out from there.

In the third set, Medvedev broke on a forehand

winner in the third game and took the final eight points, holding and breaking at love for the match. There are only nine seeds among the men's last 16 — the fewest to get this far at a Slam since nine at Wimbledon in 2013, and at a US Open since eight in 2005.

Fernandez ousts Kerber

Canadian teen Leylah Fernandez followed her shock upset of 2020 US Open winner Naomi Osaka by defeating German 16th seed and three-time Grand Slam champion Angelique Kerber 4-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-2. "I just tried to use all my trainings from back home," Fernandez said. "They told me take it point by point. I was glad I was able to execute it."

Seven of the top nine women's seeds reached the last 16, with Osaka and top-ranked Wimbledon champion Ashleigh Barty exiting early. Fernandez, who turned 19 yesterday, advanced to a first Slam quarter-final against Tokyo Olympic bronze medalist Elina Svitolina, the fifth seed from Ukraine.

Svitolina, who turns 27 next Sunday, beat two-time major winner Simona Halep 6-3, 6-3 to reach her eighth Grand Slam quarter-final. Svitolina,

coming off a WTA title in Chicago, stretched her win streak to nine matches. "That's going to be a very tough match," Fernandez said. "She returns a lot of balls. She's aggressive. I'm just going to go on court and try to keep doing what I've been doing."

Second seed Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus, who made a Slam-best run to July's Wimbledon semi-finals, eliminated Belgian 15th seed Elise Mertens 6-4, 6-1. Sabalenka will next face Czech eighth seed Barbora Krejčíková, the reigning French Open champion who held on to beat two-time Grand Slam



NEW YORK: Russia's Daniil Medvedev hits a return to Britain's Daniel Evans during their 2021 US Open Tennis tournament men's singles fourth round match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York on Sunday. —AFP

champion Garbine Muguruza 6-3, 7-6 (7/4).

Krejčíková led a set and two service breaks before Muguruza rallied. But the Spaniard could not convert three set points in the 10th game of the second set and Krejčíková then came back strong after a medical timeout off the court to treat what she told the umpire was trouble with her diaphragm.

Muguruza, apparently annoyed by the time Krejčíková took between points during the remainder of the match, offered a chilly handshake at the net and departed before Krejčíková, breathing hard, made her way from the court escorted by a trainer

and doctor. Spanish 18-year-old Carlos Alcaraz, who upset Greek third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas, reached his first Slam quarter-final by downing 141st-ranked German qualifier Peter Gojowczyk 5-7, 6-1, 5-7, 6-2, 6-0.

Alcaraz, ranked 55th, is the youngest US Open men's quarter-finalist since Brazilian Thomaz Koch in 1963. The Spaniard will face Canadian 12th seed Felix Auger-Aliassime, who beat American Frances Tiafoe 4-6, 6-2, 7-6 (8/6), 6-4, with one of the two assured of playing his first Grand Slam semi-final. —AFP

Pakistan cricket head coach Misbah resigns in blow to World Cup plans

LAHORE: Pakistan cricket head coach Misbah-ul-Haq resigned yesterday, citing family concerns and bio-bubble restrictions in a move that leaves team preparations for next month's World Cup in tatters. The 47-year-old, who took over as head coach in September 2019, said he had made the decision while undergoing mandatory quarantine after testing positive for COVID-19 following Pakistan's tour of the West Indies last week.

"The quarantine time provided me with an opportunity to reflect on the past 24 months, future commitments and bio-bubble environment and on considering that I made the decision," Misbah said in a statement released by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). Misbah admitted the timing of his decision — which came as Pakistan named a 15-man squad for the Twenty20 World Cup to be held in the United Arab Emirates next month — "may not be ideal".

"But I don't think I am in the right frame of mind for the upcoming challenges and it makes sense for someone fresh to step in and take the side forward," he said. Bowling coach Waqar Younis also resigned yesterday, saying Misbah's decision had prompted him to step down.

"After Misbah shared with me his decision and future plans, it was a straightforward one for me to resign as we had walked into the roles together, had worked collectively as a pair and now also step down together," Waqar, a legendary former fast bowler, was quoted as saying in the PCB release.

Misbah, appointed chief selector in 2019 before leaving the post after a year, coached Pakistan in 16 Tests, with the team winning seven, losing six and drawing three. Under him Pakistan managed to win six of their 11 ODIs, with four losses and one no result, as well as secure 16 wins in 34 Twenty20 internationals, losing 13 and five no results. —AFP

Cantlay edges Rahm for US Tour Championship, \$15 million playoffs payout

WASHINGTON: Patrick Cantlay held off top-ranked Jon Rahm to win the US PGA Tour Championship Sunday and claim the \$15 million FedEx Cup playoffs top prize. Cantlay two-putted for birdie at the par-five 18th to cap a one-under-par 69 that gave him a 21-under-par total and a one-shot victory over Spain's Rahm, who made the second birdie of his two-under 68 at the final hole to finish on 20-under. "I played great today. It hasn't even sunk in yet," Cantlay said. "I just kept telling myself to focus and lock in and I did a great job of that today."

While Cantlay had said throughout that he was trying to approach each round as usual and tune out the prospect of a monster payday, he admitted

Tennis star shares abusive social media posts

WASHINGTON: American tennis player Sloane Stephens has become the latest prominent athlete to share the personal burden of what she said were the relentless and "exhausting" attacks she receives on social media. "I am human," Stephens said on Instagram a day after being inundated by more than 2,000 "messages of abuse/anger" following a third-round loss to Germany's Angelique Kerber at the US Open.

"It's so hard to read messages like these, but I'll post a few so you guys can see what it's like," said Stephens, who voiced her concerns just as a number of other Black female athletes have also recently spoken out about the mental health toll high-pressure sports can take. One of the abusive messages read: "I promise to find you and destroy your leg so hard that you can't walk anymore @sloanestephens!... I hope you enjoyed your last

Bottas to join Alfa Romeo as Russell set for Mercedes

PARIS: Valtteri Bottas has signed a multi-year deal with Alfa Romeo starting next season, the Formula One team announced yesterday, paving the way for George Russell to join Lewis Hamilton at Mercedes. "A new chapter in my racing career is opening: I'm excited to join Alfa Romeo Racing for 2022 and beyond for what is going to be a new challenge with an iconic manufacturer," Bottas said in a statement.

Bottas, 32, has spent the past five seasons alongside seven-time world champion Hamilton at Mercedes, having replaced Nico Rosberg, who retired after winning the 2016 title. The Finn has won nine Grands Prix and claimed 17 pole positions in 92 starts with the team, but has not consistently been able to challenge Hamilton.

Bottas finished second in the world championship the past two seasons but is a distant third this year.

that it wasn't just another week. "It was tough," he said. "It was definitely different than any other week. It was the longest lead I've ever held. But I just tried to stay, day after day in the present, and I did an amazing job of that this week because the last couple days I made some mistakes I don't usually make and I was able to really center myself and hit a lot of good shots when I needed to."

Cantlay came into the tournament stacked to a two-shot lead — and a four-stroke advantage over Rahm — under the staggered scoring system that awarded the 30 starters strokes based on their place in the playoff standings. He led every day, with Rahm pushing hard but unable to get past him.

Cantlay's third bogey of the day at the par-four 17th saw his lead shrink to one, the American doing well to limit the damage after going right off the tee from where his second shot bounced through the green. He responded with a booming drive up the middle of the fairway at the par-five 18th, where he two-putted for birdie from 11 feet.

Rahm pushed to the bitter end, his second shot at

moments on court today."

Stephens, who won the US Open in 2017 and once ranked No. 3 in the world, commented: "This type of hate is so exhausting and never-ending. This isn't talked about enough, but it freaking sucks." Her comments came in the wake of intense attention to four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka, who withdrew from the French Open and skipped Wimbledon this year over mental health issues she said were exacerbated by the harsh light of media attention.

Osaka's case increased public awareness of the mental-health challenges facing professional athletes, particularly women and athletes of color. Osaka, after suffering a stunning upset loss at the US Open on Friday to Canadian teen Leylah Fernandez, said she was taking an indefinite break from tennis.

Former junior world champion Taylor Townsend, who is African American, said in a video on CNN that she had also received harassing social-media messages, calling her "a piece of s—" and criticizing her for "my body image, my race, my skin color."

Stephens, meanwhile, said she also received many positive messages, for which she was thankful. "I'm happy to have people in my corner who sup-

port me," she told CNN. "I'm choosing positive vibes over negatives ones... but it's not always smiles and roses." On Sunday she wrote on Instagram that she hopes "this conversation continues" while thanking fans for their "kind and thoughtful messages." —AFP

His last win came at the Russian Grand Prix in September 2020.

"I am proud of what I have achieved (at Mercedes) and I am fully focused on finishing the job as we fight for another world championship," said Bottas. "But I am also looking forward to the new challenges that await me next year."

Bottas will effectively replace compatriot Kimi Raikkonen at Alfa Romeo. The 2007 world champion is retiring from the sport at the end of the campaign. "The potential of the setup is clear and I am relishing the opportunity to help lead the team forward up the grid," said Bottas. "Especially with the new regulations in 2022 giving the team a chance to make a leap in performance." Alfa Romeo have picked up just three points through 13 races this season and are ninth in the constructors' championship.

"With (Bottas), we bring to Hinwil a strong team player with experience at the sharp end of the grid," said Alfa Romeo team boss Frederic Vasseur. "Valtteri has been an integral part of a team that rewrote the history books and he has four constructors' world titles to his name: he is the right driver to help Alfa Romeo Racing make a step forward towards the front of the grid."

18 tracking the pin only to bounce through the green and into the greenside rough from where he got up and down for birdie. Rahm's only other birdie was a tap-in at the fifth hole.

"A couple shots I keep going back, that stretch of 10, 11, 12, I was in position to put a little bit of pressure and I just didn't," Rahm said. "But at the same time, I shot my lowest score ever for four days on this golf course, which has usually been a challenge for me."

In fact, Rahm's 72-hole total of 266 was actually three shots lower than Cantlay's 269. But the Spaniard went into the event four adrift in the staggered start system. Asked if he felt "in his heart of hearts" that he had won the tournament, Rahm said "No. Because I didn't," he said. "That's the reason why we have this system we have. In scoring when they show you the sheets and points, it felt really weird to have this feeling of disappointment of not winning on a day you are making \$5 million. Then I'm thinking, you know, yeah, I gave it my all. It wasn't enough." —AFP



NEW YORK: USA's Sloane Stephens looks at her racket during her 2021 US Open Tennis tournament women's singles third round match against Germany's Angelique Kerber at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York, on Friday. —AFP



SPIELBERG: In this file photo taken on June 27, 2021 third placed Mercedes' Finnish driver Valtteri Bottas looks on after the Formula One Styrian Grand Prix at the Red Bull Ring race track in Spielberg, Austria. —AFP

Mercedes are expected to announce the arrival of Russell from Williams in the coming days. Russell, 23, has spent three seasons at Williams, and impressed in a one-off appearance for Mercedes at last year's Sakhir Grand Prix as a stand-in for Hamilton after he tested positive for COVID-19. —AFP



ATLANTA: Patrick Cantlay of the United States celebrates with the FedEx Cup after winning during the final round of the TOUR Championship at East Lake Golf Club on Sunday in Atlanta, Georgia. —AFP

Sports

Italy set new unbeaten record as Germany thump Armenia

Lingard, Saka lead England past Andorra; Spain thrash Georgia

PARIS: Italy broke the world record for the longest unbeaten run in international football with a goalless draw at Switzerland on Sunday, while Germany got their World Cup qualifying campaign back on track by thrashing Armenia 6-0. European champions Italy should have taken all three points, but Swiss goalkeeper Yann Sommer saved Jorginho's second-half penalty. "The ball didn't want to go into the goal," Italian coach Roberto Mancini told RAI. "We had too many chances today not to win the match... We have to be more clinical and more precise." The draw, however, extended Mancini's side's unbeaten run to 36 matches, breaking the previous mark they shared with Brazil and Spain. The Azzurri remain top of Group C, four points above Switzerland who have two games in hand.

Italy are bidding to banish the memories of their shock failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup. The group winners automatically reach next year's finals in Qatar, with the runners-up heading into the play-offs.

The Germans brushed off the cobwebs of their underwhelming 2-0 win over Liechtenstein in Hansi Flick's first match in charge by thrashing previous leaders Armenia to go top of Group J. Bayern Munich winger Serge Gnabry scored twice in the first 15 minutes. Timo Werner set up Marco Reus, who was recalled by Flick, to put the result beyond doubt before netting himself to complete a dominant opening 45 minutes.

The home crowd in Stuttgart were given a fifth goal

to cheer by Jonas Hofmann early in the second period, before the four-time world champions added further gloss in added time through 19-year-old debutant Karim Adeyemi. They now lead Armenia by two points, with Romania a point further back after beating Liechtenstein 2-0. A shock home loss to North Macedonia earlier this year had put Germany's qualification in danger.



Belgium impresses with win over Czech

England cruise at Wembley

A much-changed England labored for long periods before seeing off Andorra 4-0 in their first match at Wembley since their Euro 2020 final defeat by Italy on penalties. Jesse Lingard, who missed out on Gareth Southgate's Euro squad, put the hosts ahead in the 18th minute, but a second goal did not arrive until substitute Harry Kane's penalty 18 minutes from time.

England, for whom Southgate made 11 changes, did

enjoy a late goal spree as Lingard netted a second and Bukayo Saka marked his birthday by finding the net. That goal brought loud cheers from the crowd at Wembley — where Saka missed the decisive penalty in the shootout against the Italians in July.

"He (Saka) got a fabulous reception, before and during the game," Southgate told ITV. "You can see how popular he is with the rest of the team as well." England have won all five of their matches in Group I and visit Poland, who they lead by five points, tomorrow. Robert Lewandowski scored twice and Adam Buksa grabbed a hat-trick as the second-placed Poles hammered San Marino 7-1. Spain, who are in danger of not qualifying automatically, thrashed Georgia 4-0 in Badajoz. First-half goals from Jose Gaya, Carlos Soler and Ferran Torres ensured they would bounce back from their loss to Sweden with a win. Pablo Sarabia also netted after half-time, but although the 2010 World Cup winners move top of Group B, they are only one point ahead of Sweden who have two games in hand.

Belgium put one foot in Qatar with an impressive 3-0 victory over the Czech Republic which saw Romelu Lukaku mark his 100th cap with a goal. The Chelsea striker has now scored 67 goals for his country and 50 in his last 50 appearances. Eden Hazard and Alexis Saelemaekers also got on the scoresheet as Roberto Martinez's Belgium stretched six points clear of the Czechs at the top of Group E. — AFP



BASEL: Switzerland's goalkeeper Yann Sommer saves a penalty kicked by Italy's midfielder Jorginho (center) during the World Cup 2022 qualifier football match between Switzerland and Italy, on Sunday at St Jakob-Park stadium in Basel. — AFP

Subs steal show from Aubameyang and Salah in dramatic draw

JOHANNESBURG: Mostafa Mohamed scored in the final minute to snatch a 1-1 World Cup Group F qualifying draw for 10-man Egypt in Gabon on Sunday after Jim Allevinah had put the dominant hosts ahead. Billed as a showdown between high-profile English Premier League forwards Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang of Gabon and Mohamed Salah of Egypt, the stars had to take back seats as two substitutes netted. All the drama came in the final 19 minutes in Franceville, starting with a red card for Egypt midfielder Omar Gaber after being yellow-carded twice. Allevinah put Gabon ahead two minutes later, beating goalkeeper Mohamed el Shenawy from inside the box after the visitors failed to clear a free-kick.

Egypt coach Hossam el Badry reacted to falling behind by introducing Mohamed I3 minutes from time and the Galatasaray forward nodded in a dramatic equalizer after his chip was parried. Salah missed a win over Angola last Wednesday because Egypt is on the United Kingdom coronavirus "red list" and he would have been forced to quarantine for 10 days on his return had he gone to Cairo.

Meanwhile, Namibia went top of Group H with a surprise 1-0 away victory over Togo thanks to a spectacular second-half goal by Elmo Kambindu. After coming off the bench in a 1-1 draw with Congo Brazzaville three days ago, Kambindu was promoted to the starting line-up by coach Bobby Samaria for the match in Lome.

The change paid off eight minutes into the second half when Kambindu scored with a bicycle kick after Deon Hotto floated a free-kick into a crowded goalmouth. Namibia have four points from two matches, one more than Sadio Mane-inspired Senegal.

Togo pointless

Togo are pointless under recently hired Portuguese coach Paulo Duarte after also losing in Senegal, and are all but out of the running to finish first and secure a place in the final qualifying round. Rwanda and Kenya,

who drew 1-1 in Kigali, are other countries with little hope of being among the 10 group winners after the sixth and final round of mini-league matches in November. Kenya have two points and Rwanda one after two matches each in Group E.

When Rwanda goalkeeper Emery Mvuyekure fumbled a low cross, Michael Olunga hammered the ball into the net on nine minutes for the visitors. The lead lasted 11 minutes before a header from centre-back Abdul Rwatubyaye struck a fellow Rwandan and landed in the Kenyan net. Qatar-based Olunga was a constant threat, but could not score again to secure the victory Kenya desperately needed after being held by Uganda in Nairobi on Thursday.

There should have been seven matches, but the Group I clash between Guinea and Morocco was called off on Sunday because of a "volatile political and security situation in Conakry", according to CAF. Guinean special forces head Colonel Mamady Doumbouya said soldiers had seized power, dissolved the constitution of the mineral-rich but impoverished country, and detained President Alpha Conte. The Moroccan delegation managed to stay "safe" at a Conakry hotel before later departing the country to head home, national football federation official Mohamed Makrouf told AFP in Rabat. — AFP

Former France defender Adams dies after almost 40 years in coma

MARSEILLE: Former France defender Jean-Pierre Adams has died aged 73 after almost 40 years in a coma, his former club Nimes announced yesterday. Adams, who made 22 international appearances in the 1970s, slipped into a coma after a mistake by the anesthetist during routine knee surgery in 1982. The anesthetist had to take responsibility for eight patients that day — many of the staff at the hospital were on strike — and left a trainee to keep an eye on Adams. Both were found guilty in court in the 1990s and received a one-month suspended sentence and a 750 euro (\$890) fine. "I was not up to the task I was entrusted with," commented the trainee later.

His widow Bernadette cared for him for the remainder of his life following his discharge from hospital 15 months after the operation. "Jean-Pierre feels, smells, hears, jumps when a dog barks. But he cannot see," Bernadette said in 2007. Bernadette, who had two sons with Adams, told the BBC in 2016 that despite the sentences handed to the anesthetist and the trainee, the hospital in Lyon had never apologized. Born in Dakar in 1948, Adams was one of the first men born in West Africa to play for France. His center-back partnership with Marius Tresor for France was nicknamed "the black guard" by then French national coach Stefan Kovacs. "We learned this morning of the death of Jean-Pierre Adams," Nimes wrote on Twitter, extending their "sincere condolences to his family". Adams also played for Nice and Paris Saint-Germain. Nice tweeted their condolences and said they would pay homage to him before their next Ligue 1 home match with Monaco on September 19. PSG also tweeted a tribute to "one of its glorious old players" saluting his "joie de vivre" and his charisma. — AFP

Poland gives visa to second Belarusian Olympic athlete

WARSAW: Poland has provided a humanitarian visa to a second Belarusian athlete, Olga Safronova, who said it would have been "dangerous" for her to remain home, the Polish news agency PAP reported yesterday.

Safronova came to neighboring Poland, which has been offering refuge to a growing number of Belarusian dissidents, after she was dropped from the Belarus roster for the Tokyo Olympics when her horse was deemed to be limping.

But "when I came to Poland and got the horse examined, it turned out that it was completely healthy and fit to compete," she told PAP. She then spoke out against Belarusian strongman Alexander Lukashenko and sports officials, according to her lawyer Tomasz Wilinski, and landed on a list of traitors. "It was this list where if you found yourself on it, you could not work or continue your sports career," Safronova said. "If I hadn't left Belarus, it would have been dangerous for me... Here I feel safe and my horses are safe," she added. Poland gave both her and her partner humanitarian visas and she is now living and training outside of Warsaw, with plans to apply for Polish citizenship and represent the country at sporting events. — AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144

Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401

CHANGE OF NAME

I, GAFFAR SYED HUSSAIN SHANAWAS, Tindivanam V.R.P. Dist, Tamil Nadu, hereby declare that I have changed my name as SYED SHANAWAS S/o SYED HUSSAIN, Tindivanam V.R.P. Dist, Tamil Nadu. (C 0642)

I, SHABBIR TAHER BHAI SAMPLEWALA hereby declare that I have changed my name as SHABBIR TAHER BHAI RATLAMWALA. So, from now and in future I will be known by my new name, Shabir Taher Bhai Ratlamwala, Add: 501, Noorani Nagar, Dhar Road, Indore (M.P.). (C 0643) 6-9-2021

EMERGENCY ☎ 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**



SAO PAULO: Argentina's Lionel Messi (left) and Brazil's Neymar are seen after employees of the National Health Surveillance Agency (Anvisa) entered to the field during the South American qualification football match for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 between Brazil and Argentina at the Neo Química Arena in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on Sunday. — AFP

FIFA 'regrets' chaos at Brazil vs Argentina match

Uproar as clash abandoned following COVID controversy

LAUSANNE: FIFA said yesterday it regretted the chaotic scenes that preceded the suspension of the World Cup qualifier between Brazil and Argentina and a decision on possible disciplinary action would be taken "in due course".

The match at Sao Paulo's Neo Química Arena on Sunday was halted when Brazilian health officials ran onto the pitch seven minutes after kick-off, triggering a melee involving team officials and players from both sides. The officials intervened just hours after health authorities in Brazil said four England-based players in Argentina's squad should be placed in "immediate quarantine" for breaching COVID-19 protocols. The sides were just seven minutes into the match, which was played in front of only 1,500 spectators because of coronavirus restrictions.

"FIFA regrets the scenes preceding the suspension of the match between Brazil and Argentina for the CONMEBOL qualifiers of the FIFA World Cup 2022 which prevented millions of fans from enjoying a match between two of the most important football nations in the world," football's world governing body said in a statement.

"The first match official reports have been sent to FIFA. This information will be analyzed by the

competent disciplinary bodies and a decision will be taken in due course," FIFA added. Brazil's National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA) said the Argentinian Premier League players — Giovanni Lo Celso and Cristian Romero of Tottenham, and Aston Villa's Emiliano Martinez and Emiliano Buendia — had given "false information" when they entered Brazil.

Romero, Lo Celso and Martinez were all in Argentina's starting lineup for Sunday's game, prompting the intervention of ANVISA officials. In scenes of confusion on the pitch, Argentina captain Lionel Messi and his teammates left the field while Brazil's squad began a practice game.

After the game was abandoned, Messi criticized the intervention of the Brazilian officials. "We've been here for three days, why are you doing this just now?" he said on Argentina's TyC network. Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni told reporters that "at no time were we told that they could not play

the game". The Argentina team arrived back in Buenos Aires early yesterday.

The controversy comes after nine Brazilians based in the Premier League failed to travel to South America following objections from their clubs.

'Series of breaches'

Brazilian officials were unrepentant about the decision to halt the game, however. "We got to this point because everything that ANVISA directed, from the first moment, was not fulfilled," ANVISA director Antonio Barra Torres said on Brazilian



Premier League players "breached quarantine"

television.

The four players "were directed to remain isolated while awaiting deportation, but they did not comply. They went to the stadium, and they entered the field, in a series of breaches," the official added.

A government order dating from June 23 prohibits the entry into Brazilian territory of any foreign person from the United Kingdom, India or

South Africa, to prevent the spread of variants of the coronavirus.

"ANVISA considers that this situation represents a serious health risk and recommends that the local health authorities (of Sao Paulo) order the immediate quarantine of the players, who are prohibited from taking part in any activity and from remaining on Brazilian territory," the agency said in a statement earlier Sunday.

The agency also said Argentina's delegation had been warned in a meeting on Saturday that the players at the center of the controversy must be quarantined and should not play any part in Sunday's game. South American football's governing body CONMEBOL said in a statement that the game had been "suspended" but did not say when or if the match would be replayed, or whether either team would forfeit the game.

"By decision of the match referee, the match organized by FIFA between Brazil and Argentina for the qualifiers for the World Cup is suspended," CONMEBOL said in a statement. "The referee and the match commissioner will submit a report to the FIFA Disciplinary Committee, which will determine the steps to follow. These procedures adhere strictly to current regulations." — AFP

India win fourth Test after England collapse

LONDON: Ravindra Jadeja and Jasprit Bumrah sparked a dramatic collapse as India beat England by 157 runs to win the fourth Test at the Oval yesterday and take a 2-1 lead in the five-match series. The tourists bounced back in style following their innings defeat in the third Test at Headingley and cannot now lose the series.

England, set 368 to win, were relatively well-placed at 141-2 after lunch on the last day but Jadeja and Bumrah both struck twice as England lost four wickets for six runs, slumping to 147-6. There was no way back from there. England lost two more wickets before tea including captain and star batsman Joe Root, bidding for a fourth hundred in successive Tests, who played on to recalled all-rounder Shardul Thakur for 36.

Umesh Yadav, in for the dropped Mohammed Shami, then cleaned up the tail to the delight of India fans among a capacity crowd reveling in the south London sunshine. Yadav, who took six wickets in the match, ended proceedings when he had James Anderson caught behind off the new ball shortly after tea.

England have little time to regroup

before the fifth Test at Old Trafford starts on Friday. India's victory came 50 years on from their first Test — and series — win in England at the Oval in 1971. Left-arm spinner Jadeja, again preferred to star off-break bowler Ravichandran Ashwin, was eventually rewarded for a probing spell on a wearing pitch.

Haseeb Hameed, 43 not out overnight, added just 20 more runs in 108 balls yesterday. Jadeja pierced his defense with a delivery that pitched just outside leg stump and turned to clip the top of the opener's off stump.

Ollie Pope, who made 81 in the first innings, was bowled for two by Bumrah giving the fast bowler, gaining significant reverse swing, his 100th Test wicket. Bumrah then took his second wicket in five deliveries when a brilliant yorker clean bowled Jonny Bairstow for a duck.

Ali was powerless to prevent further collapse, the all-rounder also falling for nought when he deflected a Jadeja delivery that turned and bounced out of the rough straight to short leg. England had earlier resumed on 77-0, with Rory Burns 31 not out.

History, however, was against the home team as the most they have made to win in the fourth innings of a Test is 362-9, requiring 359, against Australia at Headingley in 2019. Burns and Hameed had denied India an early breakthrough Sunday after the tourists had piled up 466 in their second innings, with player of the match Rohit Sharma scoring 127 — his first Test century outside of India.



LONDON: England's James Anderson (center) reacts after losing his wicket during play on the fifth day of the fourth cricket Test match between England and India at the Oval cricket ground in London yesterday. — AFP

Thakur strikes

Yadav and Bumrah opened the attack yesterday, with the pair both bowling a significantly fuller length and straighter line than on Sunday. However, it was all-rounder Thakur — playing in his first Test since suffering a hamstring injury in the drawn series opener in Nottingham

— who ended the opening stand.

With just his fourth ball of the innings, and one delivery after Burns had completed a fifty to take England to 100, Thakur's excellent leg-cutter to the left-hander took the outside edge and was caught by wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant.

Hameed completed a 123-ball fifty —

his fourth in five Tests — before he mistimed a needless slog-sweep off Jadeja only for Mohammed Siraj to drop a routine catch at mid-on. But Dawid Malan, slow to respond to Hameed's call, was run out for five by substitute fielder Mayank Agarwal's throw from cover to Pant. — AFP