



**11** UK-Kuwait steering committee agrees to continue cooperation



**14** 'Joe Ferrari' case lifts lid on Thai police corruption



**19** Treats and tradition in tiny Tehran teahouse

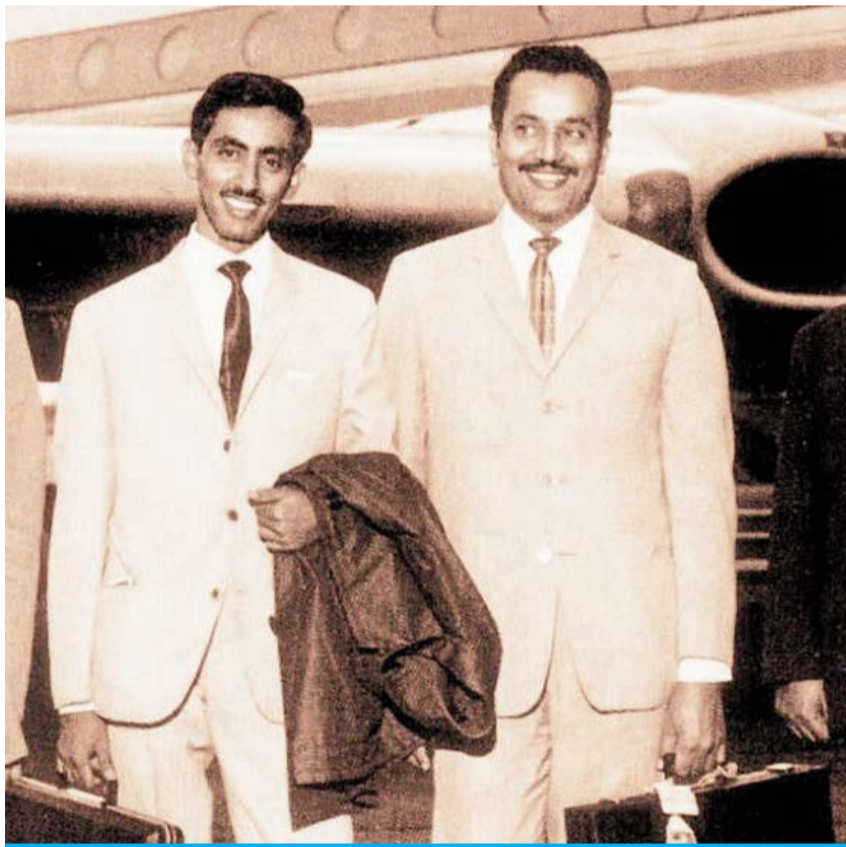


**22** Morgan hat-trick as US thrash Paraguay 8-0



# Kuwait Times celebrates 60 years of journalism

First English-language daily in the Arabian Gulf • Founded by the late Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan in 1961



Abdulaziz Al-Musaeed and Yousuf S Al-Alyan pioneered journalism in modern Kuwait. Kuwait Times in English and Al-Rai Al-Aam in Arabic were both founded in 1961 and established their offices on the same street that would later become known as Shar'e Al-Sahafa (Journalism Street) in Industrial Shuwaikh.

**KUWAIT:** On September 24, 1961, Kuwait Times published its first issue, ushering in a modern era of Kuwait journalism and establishing the first English-language daily in the Arabian Gulf. Kuwait Times was founded by Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan, who was also president and founding member of the Kuwait Journalists Association.

Established just after Kuwait's independence and the start of the country's development renaissance - coupled with a social movement, cultural diversity and the welcoming of Arab and foreign residents - Kuwait Times served as the first newspaper for non-Arabic-speaking residents in Kuwait, bringing them the news of the world and presenting Kuwait's news to the world. It represented the state abroad in front of the international community.

Founder Yousuf Al-Alyan received the paper's license from the Printing and Publications Department, which was then managed by the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The license was issued around the same time as the license given to late Abdulaziz Al-Musaeed to publish the Al-Rai Al-Aam newspaper, which was Kuwait Times' neighbor on Sahafa Street.

We hope our dear readers enjoy our special retrospective supplement on the history and origins of Kuwait Times in the following pages.

See Pages 2 to 10



Kuwait Times founder Yousuf Al-Alyan

## News in brief

### 6bn COVID shots given

**PARIS:** More than six billion doses of anti-COVID vaccines have been given around the world. The vaccination drive has reached a steady rhythm taking 29 days to clock up the sixth billion. Nearly 40 percent (2.18 billion) of the six billion shots have been administered in China. India (826.5 million) and the US (386.8 million) complete the trio of countries that have given the most jabs. — AFP

### Pollution kills 7m a year

**GENEVA:** The World Health Organization strengthened its air quality guidelines yesterday, saying air pollution was now one of the biggest environmental threats to human health, causing seven million premature deaths a year. Urgent action is needed to reduce exposure to air pollution, said the UN body, ranking its burden of disease on a par with smoking and unhealthy eating. — AFP

### Quake triggers panic in Melbourne

**MELBOURNE:** A rare quake rattled southeastern Australia yesterday, shaking buildings, knocking down walls and sending panicked Melbourne residents running into the streets. The shallow 5.9 magnitude tremor hit east of the country's second-largest city at the start of the working day and was one of the largest to hit the country in decades. — AFP

### Post-Bouteflika leader dies

**ALGIERS:** Veteran Algerian politician Abdelkader Bensalah, who served briefly as interim president after his mentor Abdelaziz Bouteflika was forced to resign in 2019, died yesterday aged 79, the president's office said. His death after what friends said was a long illness came just days after that of Bouteflika, who died on Friday at the age of 84. — AFP

### Lebanon raises fuel prices

**BEIRUT:** Crisis-hit Lebanon yesterday raised fuel prices for the second time in less than a week amid severe rationing spurred by the collapse of a subsidy system that has depleted state coffers. The revised price list published by the energy ministry yesterday set the price of 20 liters of 95-octane petrol at 202,400 Lebanese pounds (\$13 at the black market rate), up from 174,000 pounds the previous week. — AFP (See Page 16)

## KNPC's Clean Fuels Project fully operational

**KUWAIT:** State-owned Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) has hailed the successful operation of its mega, eco-friendly Clean Fuels Project (CFP). "This is a historic milestone," KNPC CEO Walced Al-Bader told KUNA on Tuesday, adding that the ambitious project is a source of pride not only for KNPC but also for the entire Kuwaiti oil sector. He expected that this cutting-edge project will elevate Kuwait's standing in the global oil industry.

## Afghan robotics team design future in Qatar

**DOHA:** The nine members of an all-girl Afghan robotics team evacuated from Kabul to Qatar have built on their star status and captured hearts since fleeing their homeland. Now back in education and working on their entries for a global robotics competition, the girls worry about their immediate future but hope they can one day return to Afghanistan.

Team member Ayda Haydarpour, 17, who switched onto digital engi-

neering playing Super Mario as a child, said it was "too hard" to follow events in Afghanistan but hopes to return to open the first STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) school. "My grandfather used to ask me lots of questions about his tablet and phone," she said with a smile. "In Afghanistan, robotics is new, especially for women," said Haydarpour, who has three sisters back in Afghanistan.

Her mother had worked as a teacher at a girls' high school, but the facility is yet to reopen following last month's fall of the government to the Taliban. The Taliban had banned women from work and education, confining them to homes during their

Continued on Page 21

## Bats with COVID-like viruses found in Laos

**PARIS:** Scientists have discovered another clue to the origins of the virus that causes COVID-19, with bats living in caves in Laos found to be carrying a similar pathogen that experts suggest could potentially infect humans directly. The virus has killed millions since it emerged in China in late 2019, and controversy continues to swirl around where it came from. Some experts say it is animal-driven but others have pointed to the possibility the pathogen leaked from a lab.

Researchers from France's Pasteur Institute and the National University of Laos said their findings showed that viruses genetically close to the SARS-CoV-2 virus "exist in nature" among bat species in the limestone caves of northern Laos, which neighbors China. Of the viruses they identified among the hundreds of bats tested in Vientiane Province, three were found to closely resemble the virus that causes COVID-19, particularly in the mechanism for latching on to human cells.

"The idea was to try to identify the origin of this pandemic," Marc Eloit, who leads the Pasteur Institute's pathogen discovery laboratory, told AFP. Eloit, whose team analyzed the samples collected, said there were still key differences between the

viruses found and SARS-CoV-2. But he said the work was "a major step forward" in identifying the pandemic's origin, confirming the theory that the coronavirus that has spread across the world could have started with living bats.

The authors of the study, which has been submitted to Nature for peer review, warned that their findings suggest the new viruses "seem to have the same potential for infecting humans as early strains of SARS-CoV-2". "People working in caves, such as guano collectors, or certain ascetic religious communities who spend time in or very close to caves, as well as tourists who visit the caves, are particularly at risk of being exposed," the authors said.

Continued on Page 21



KUWAIT: KNPC's Clean Fuels Project (CFP) is now fully operational. — KUNA



DOHA: Members of an all-girl Afghan robotics team pose for a picture at the laboratory of Qatar's Texas A&M university on Sept 14, 2021. — AFP



# Kuwait Times celebrates 60 years since its founding

First English-language daily in the Arabian Gulf • Founded by the late Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan in 1961



The late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem with KT founder, late Yousuf Al-Alyan. (Date unknown)



The late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (left) with the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (center) with KT founder, Yousuf Al-Alyan. (Date unknown)



The late Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah with Saud Al-Abdelrazzaq, Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan and Baqer Khuraibet in January 1969.



The late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan onboard an aircraft during their return from Doha.



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan with a journalists' delegation in Lebanon.

On September 24, 1961, Kuwait Times published its first issue, ushering in a modern era of Kuwait journalism and establishing the first English-language daily in the Arabian Gulf. Kuwait Times was founded by Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan, who was also president and founding member of the Kuwait Journalists Association.

Established just after Kuwait's independence and the start of the country's development renaissance - coupled with a social movement, cultural diversity and the welcoming of Arab and foreign residents - Kuwait Times served as the first newspaper for non-Arabic-speaking residents in Kuwait, bringing them the news

of the world and presenting Kuwait's news to the world. It represented the state abroad in front of the international community. Its premises was and remain in Industrial Shuwaikh on Sahafa Street.

Founder Yousuf Al-Alyan received the paper's license from the Printing and Publications Department, which was then managed by the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The license was issued around the same time as the license given to late Abdulaziz Al-Musaeed to publish the Al-Rai Al-Aam newspaper, which was Kuwait Times' neighbor on Sahafa Street.



The late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad receives editors-in-chief to congratulate them, including Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan.



HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan and Kuwait Times Deputy Editor-in-Chief Dr Ziad Al-Alyan.



HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan.

**Journalism visionary:  
 Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan**  
 The late Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan (may Allah bless his soul), was one of the pioneers of journalism in Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf. He served as Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times from its establishment in 1961 until he passed away in December 2007. He was born and attended high school in Kuwait, then went to Britain and joined the prestigious University of London, where he obtained his BSc in Economics and Political Science in 1953.

Al-Alyan was fond of knowledge and exploring the world. His educational trip to England and visits to European countries were attributed to his contacts with various people and cultures and his wish to understand their languages, which was the reason behind his fluency in several foreign languages. He spoke French, German, Italian, Farsi and Hindi, besides Arabic and English.  
 He was selected as honorary president of Kuwait Journalists Association in appreciation of his role in serving journalism, replacing the late dean

Abdulaziz Al-Musaeed. He was one of the founders of KJA in 1964 as well as Editor-in-Chief of Al-Fajr Al-Jadeed. Al-Alyan served as KJA President from 1978 until 1985 and from 1990 until 1992.  
 Al-Alyan was awarded many honors and medals including the Ordre du Merite from the French president in 2004 and the medal of the Order of Francisco de Miranda from the Venezuelan president, in addition to other awards and honors.  
 The paper witnessed and participated in documenting the most notable

events in Kuwait's modern history, starting with the establishment of democracy, the first parliamentary elections, ratifying the constitution of the state, the establishment of diplomatic relations, Kuwait's joining of the United Nations and Arab League, and the establishment of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.  
 The paper documented the creation of ministries, establishments, companies, judiciary, Kuwait University, Kuwait International Airport and oil projects. The paper also witnessed the development of infrastructure, health

and education in the 1970s, along with the construction of schools, hospitals and residential cities. It was an eyewitness to the golden era of sports in the 1980s and the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the 1990 Iraqi invasion and then the US-led liberation of Kuwait in 1991, reconstruction and integral challenges in the 1990s. It continues to cover events until today, completing its 60th year of continuous and regular publishing without interruption.



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan with late National Assembly Speaker Jassem Al-Khorafi.



Kuwait Times Deputy Editor-in-Chief Dr Ziad Al-Alyan, Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan and Kuwait Times Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain.



Mohammad Sharar with Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan, Ahmad Behbehani and Faisal Al-Qenaie at KJA.



(Left to right) Ibrahim Al-Mulla, Saeed Shamas, Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan and Zaman Aqeel Zaman.





Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan, Abdellatif Al-Ashmar and Hatim Ghanim.



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan with Jumaa Yaseen, Raouf Shahouri and Khalid Qatma in Lebanon during a ceremony in honor of Melhem Karam.



Journalist Sameer Attallah with Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan.



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan upon his return from Paris after his recovery.



(Left to right) Wajid Domani, Jassim Al-Mutawa, Mohammad Badee, Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan, Mohammad Balbaki, Hidaya Al-Salem and Ahmad Behbehani.



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan with the journalists' delegation in Lebanon.



Dr Ziad Al-Alyan with his father Yousuf Al-Alyan.



The late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah with Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan.



Yousuf Al-Alyan

**Evolution, innovation**

To succeed, newspapers, like civilizations, must evolve. In 2005, Kuwait Times started the first ever English-language tabloid in Kuwait, the Friday Times. A 48-page weekly, the Friday Times is the invention of the current Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan. Seeing the need to provide continuity to Kuwait's English-language readers, Al-Alyan decided to make the newspaper a true daily by offering readers an exciting mix of local commentary, news, opinion and analyses. Filled with color pages showcasing interesting features about culture, technology, society and entertainment, Friday Times provides a relaxing read for the weekend.

An innovative idea, the Friday Times reshaped the face of Kuwait's newspaper industry. Friday Times carries forward the heritage and traditions of its parent, Kuwait Times, by providing a forum for debate and discourse on everything from expatriate labor laws to the business and investment environment. It embodies the ideals of innovation and creativity, encouraging and inspiring the evolution that keeps



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan with the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (left) and with current Amir HH Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (right).

Kuwait Times and Friday Times connected to and loved by Kuwaitis and expatriates alike.

The Friday Times also served as an avenue for innovation that helped Kuwait Times when it entered the field of social and digital media in the late

2000s. In a few short years, media in the region and the entire world was dramatically altered by the development of social and online media. Kuwait Times not only launched a website but also adopted channels including Instagram, Facebook and

Twitter to reach audiences across a range of platforms.

In its 60-year history, Kuwait Times has had only two Editors-in-Chief - Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan and Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan, and three deputy editors-in-chief - Abdulaziz Al-Alyan,

Dr Ziad Al-Alyan and in September 2020, Kuwait Times welcomed Abdullah Boftain, who took on the role of deputy editor-in-chief to help channel the newspaper's further online development and growth.

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# A witness to Kuwait's history in the making

By Jamie Etheridge

I came to Kuwait in 2004 to serve as the managing editor of Kuwait Times. At that time, there was great optimism here due to the ouster of the Saddam regime in Iraq. Everywhere I went, people predicted that Kuwait would soon flourish like neighboring Dubai, grow a booming economy and open to the world after years under the sword of Damocles posed by its northern neighbor.

The period of optimism quickly morphed, however, into a period of political transition and upheaval. The Nabihah Khamsa movement, then the advent of women's suffrage, opened the



Jamie Etheridge, Managing Editor

door to greater political participation across a spectrum of local society. It was my job to cover this change in the newspaper and I still remember the day I stood with my Kuwaiti female friends for hours in a long queue of women voters in

Rawda when they cast their ballots for the first time ever. I watched as they ululated and cried with joy at this momentous event and celebrated along with them.

But the cries of joys quickly merged into disappointment and disgruntlement when change did not occur as quickly as hoped. Instead, protest after protest led to parliamentary dissolution and Cabinet resignations and reshuffles.

Kuwait Times reported it all, doing our utmost best to remain objective and give all sides equal voice in our pages. We believed in the larger project - the building of Kuwait's

future - and we still do.

Ultimately, the domestic political turmoil settled as Kuwait and the rest of the Gulf turned their attention first to the global economic meltdown and then to the tumultuous Arab Spring.

In 2009, I left the newspaper to take a break, but returned again at the end of 2013. In the nearly eight years since, Kuwait has witnessed another round of incredible and world-altering events. None of us who lived here in 2015 or care about Kuwait and its people will ever forget the heartbreaking tragedy of the bombing of the Imam Sadiq mosque in Kuwait City during Ramadan. I toured the mosque after the bombing and

wrote about that terrible day. But I also wrote about how Kuwaitis from all segments of society as well as residents came out in a show of strength and unity and refused to be cowed by hate and violence.

None of us could have foreseen the coming of the global pandemic in early 2020, but Kuwait Times worked day and night to provide coverage and all the news and information our readers needed to stay informed in those early, dark days. I'm proud to say that I led the charge in bolstering our digital channels to build the places where readers could find the information and news they needed during the crisis.

Today, Kuwait Times marks 60 years of journalism in Kuwait. Sixty years of hard work and dedication and recording Kuwait's history, its leadership and national days, pioneering development, crises, successes and triumphs. I am honored and grateful to have had the opportunity to serve Kuwait's journalism for the greater part of 17 years and feel lucky to have worked at Kuwait Times, recording parts of this incredible country's journey, to have been witness to Kuwait's history in the making.



KJA honors Sheikh Khalifa Duaij Al-Sabah.

## Founding members of KUWAIT JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION



Baqer Ali Khuraibet (center); Khalid Al-Essa Al-Saleh (top right); Ghanim Yousuf Al-Shaheen (top left); Abdulaziz Fahad Al-Fulaij (bottom right) and Yousuf Abdulaziz Al-Musaeed (bottom left)

Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan (center); Ghanima Fahad Al-Marzouq (top right); Abdulaziz Al-Musaeed (top left); Sulaiman Ahmad Al-Hadda (bottom right) and Jassem Mubarak Al-Jassem (bottom left)



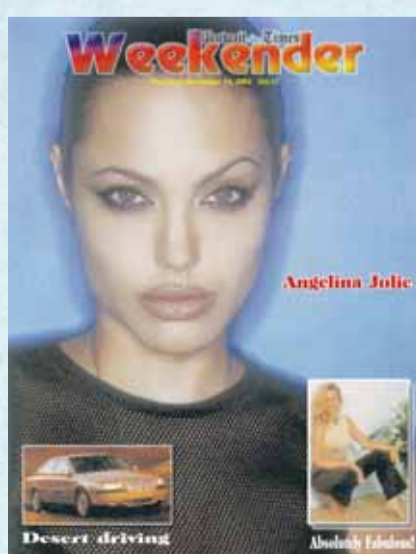
**Diversity for a diverse readership**  
In 1983, Badrya Darwish joined Kuwait Times and brought with her a worldview of diversity and excellence. She helped shape and launch a variety of additional publications and supplements including the widely popular Al-Fajr Al-Jadeed magazine.

Kuwait Times communicated with the country's burgeoning communities by becoming the country's only multilingual newspaper, publishing in English, Urdu, Malayalam and Tagalog. A separate 16-page daily insert provided thorough coverage of the Indian and Pakistani communities

in Kuwait and political and economic events shaping South Asia. The weekly Filipino Panorama pages highlighted the activities and contributions of the Filipino community in Kuwait as well as key events and changes in the Philippines.

Darwish also helped develop

Weekender, a special weekly full-color insert providing information about local events, activities and entertainment news. She developed Junior, an exclusive pullout focusing on Kuwait's youth and offering educational content, youth news and coverage and information of school-based activities and events.





Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan and Kuwait Times General Manager Badrya Darwish with Melhem Karam and his spouse.



French Ambassador decorates Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan with the Ordre du Merite medal.

Remarkably, Kuwait Times has had only a handful of managing editors in its 60 years, including Dara Kadwa, Clement Mescina, Masudullah Khan and most recently, Jamie Etheridge, who served as managing editor for almost 13 years, from 2004 to 2009 and again from 2013 until the present.

The Kuwait Times, with 60 years of journalism, is proud of its professional achievements and its role in representing Kuwait abroad and defending its causes. It is the link with international media, news agencies and readers interested in news about Kuwait around the world. It is

also considered a communication bridge with non-Arabic speaking residents and diplomatic missions and embassies in Kuwait. The paper has achieved wide-ranging distribution inside and outside the country over these years. It has gained a large popular base of readers and long provided the market with distinguished journalistic expertise.

Kuwait Times embodies the best of Kuwait - professionalism, creativity, innovation and determination to thrive, and we are proud of its achievements and continue to build its future in the role of serving Kuwait and all its readers.



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan (center) walking with Mohammed Abu Al-Hassan, former information minister (left) and Walid Al-Jassim, Al-Rai newspaper Editor-in-Chief (right) during a KJA symposium on the press and publications law.



Editor-in-Chief of Lebanese Al-Afkar magazine Waleed Awad with his Kuwait Times counterpart Yousuf Al-Alyan.



Ahmad Behbehani and Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan pictured during the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad's meeting with a delegation from the Chamber of Commerce.



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Ahmad Behbehani and Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan attend an event at the Russian Embassy in Kuwait.



Waleed Al-Nisf at Wael Al-Saqer Diwan with Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan during a lunch in honor of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad.

**FOCUS ON**

**KUWAIT TIMES**  
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

**Kuwait Times and Yousuf Saleh Alyan**  
*Kuwait Times*

*Kuwait Times* is an institution every Kuwaiti can feel proud of. Founded on September 24th, 1961, by Yousuf Saleh Alyan, *Kuwait Times* was the first English-language newspaper in the Gulf. Alyan founded the paper with the intention of providing reliable, reputable and incisive reporting in English for readers throughout Kuwait. Alyan also wanted to present a positive image of Kuwait abroad and believed that the best way to do that was by launching a media outlet in a language spoken throughout the world. Nowadays, *Kuwait Times* is the largest English-language paper in Kuwait and provides in-depth coverage of events throughout Kuwait, the Middle East, and the rest of the world. From its beginnings to the modern day, *Kuwait Times* has provided English-language news to Kuwaitis and expatriates alike, informing and enlightening its public about a broad range of issues, both local and international.

In 1983, *Kuwait Times* further increased its reach by becoming Kuwait's only multilingual newspaper, reporting the news in Urdu, Malayalam and Tagalog, as well as English. It continued to innovate and push the boundaries of journalism within Kuwait. Developments have included the addition of *Junior* and *Friday Times*. *Junior* is a pull-out concerned with issues dear to Kuwait's youth, which combines news with educational material and details of up-and-coming events. *Friday Times*, launched on April 1st, 2005, is a 40-page weekly tabloid, the first of its kind in Kuwait. It delivers riveting content on culture, entertainment, politics, science and technology, and also provides a forum for debate and discussion on issues ranging from sport to business.

**Yousuf Saleh Alyan**  
Born in 1932, Alyan received a degree in Politics and Economics in London in 1955, and served as a diplomat in France for a while. In 1961, after returning to Kuwait, he founded *Kuwait Times*. He was also one of the founding members of the Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA), and held the chairmanship from 1978 to 1983, and again from 1990 to 1992. Alyan also spoke several languages, including Arabic, English, French, Italian and Persian. Alyan saw a free press as a fundamental necessity for a functioning democracy and hailed Kuwait's long tradition of free speech and freedom.

He died on December 5th, 2007, at the age of 75. Tributes to him poured in from media, political and business figures throughout the world. Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed Al-Sabah stated that, "Kuwait has lost one of its patriotic sons who contributed to the building of Kuwait's journalism and the establishment of KJA." However, Alyan's memory lives on in the form of *Kuwait Times* and the proud legacy of journalistic endeavour he helped to create.

**Prepositions of time and place**

1. Read the text. Note down all the references to dates. Write the rule for the use of the following prepositions:  
in: \_\_\_\_\_  
on: \_\_\_\_\_  
from - to: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Note down all the references to places. Write the rule for the use of the following prepositions:  
in: \_\_\_\_\_  
throughout: \_\_\_\_\_  
to: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Thank You**

Kuwait Times management and staff would like to thank Al-Qabas and Al-Anbaa newspapers as well as Kuwait Journalists Association and KUNA for their support and for sharing their archives.

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10

60<sup>th</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY  
1961-2021

**Kuwait Times**  
Established 1961

The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

I joined Kuwait Times in June 1983 and started working in the computer department to operate the image setter. There were five other colleagues with me of various nationalities. I worked in this department till 1985, then shifted for a few months to the advertising dept.

Then I went to the US. I came back to Kuwait in the same year and worked in the reception until the brutal



Islam Al-Sharaa

Iraqi invasion in 1990.

After the liberation of the country, we returned to the newspaper, which was in ruins. The offices needed a lot of work to return to working order. Since then I took over the management of the computer department, until the present time. Due to the efforts of the late Mr Yousuf Saleh Al-Alyan and his wise leadership, the computer department went completely online, from the newsfeeds to the printing of the pages.

Madam Badrya's efforts and her guidance gave me the necessary experience to develop myself and stay abreast with modern technology. The newspaper printing process when I

started was a lot different than now. It was very tough working with the intertype machines, and making the pages took too much time. The newspaper pages were prepared using molten lead - it was hard work, especially if there were mistakes that had to be corrected.

We then moved on to using bromides and printing them on computers. They were then taken to the production department to be photographed to make plates for printing. Later, the process was completely computerized to produce the newspaper in the least amount of time.

All credit goes to the late Mr Yousuf Al-Alyan, after God, for what I have achieved till now, as he was like a father and teacher to me. His interest in the latest technology and training to develop the computer department motivated me. Whenever I felt tired or sick, he urged me to take care of my health. I remember an incident the night before he passed away. I was feeling dizzy and fatigued. He advised me to go to the doctor and not neglect myself, so I went. In the morning, I learned he had passed away. This was a great shock to me, because I had spoken to him only a few hours ago.

Likewise, Madam Badrya takes the credit for what we have achieved, and for her support and guidance. Mr Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan then took over the administration and developed the newspaper. He was educated in Britain and had an influential impact on Kuwait Times.

I got the opportunity to join Kuwait Times when I came to Kuwait in 1986. I worked in a small room with four experienced translators. They told me to start reading the Arabic papers and translate them to English, and then compare the translation with the original text. I asked myself, am I back to grade one?! But believe me - that was one of the best pieces of advice I have received.

One of the first "shocks" I



Abdellatif Sharaa

got was when a file that had more than 500 A4 pages was placed in front of me. I was told to go through it - the minutes of the parliament session that day - look for important news, translate it and give them to the front-page editor. That night was very long, and I left the paper at 2:00 am. It was not easy!

Kuwait Times used to have Urdu and Malayalam sections, and the editors of those sections also hovered over my head for stories. That put a lot of pressure on me, and one night I showed it, without knowing that the founder of the paper Yousuf Al-Alyan (Abu Tareq), may Allah bless his soul, was present. He called me into his office, cracked a few

jokes, then said: "Relax, my boy! The job has to be done, but do it on your own terms." That was his way of telling me the job had to be done - period!

When Iraq invaded Kuwait, I went to the paper that day - August 2, 1990 - and Abu Tareq was there. He spoke about what took place, adding that it will not last long, and will end one way or another. How true his words were! Kuwait was liberated in February the next year. I was out of Kuwait for around two years after the invasion. After I returned, I rejoined Kuwait Times. There were new faces, but the system remained the same!

The managing editor told me to keep my sentences short. He used to review the stories and wanted to know exactly what was behind what was said, especially when it came to parliament and Cabinet reports, adding to the pressure on me. Many are the stories that can be told about life in the newsroom, but here is a final one for now.

There were a few times when Iraqi troops amassed at the borders, and once things were believed to be credible, so allied troops got prepared and the atmosphere was seething. Kuwait's information minister at the time, the late Sheikh Saud Nasser Al-Sabah, called a sudden press conference. Without hesitation, Abu Tareq gave me no chance to say yes or no and took me with him. He made me write the story, which I really liked later as some quotes were taken from it.

After almost 35 years with the paper, I must say Happy Birthday Kuwait Times, and keep going!

## Senior staff look back...

My journey at Kuwait Times started in May 1990. It was interesting one, and I got to learn how a newsroom works. The pressure to meet deadlines and the busy schedule doesn't make me think of anything else during my working hours. I started as a proofreader - I used to come



Antonio Coelho

to Kuwait Times at 3 pm and end up leaving at 2 am the next day. We used to get the news from agencies via a telex printer, where we had to separate the business, sports, international and local reports.

Editors used to pick up the main stories, lay out the page and give it to the composers. The stories then came to us for proofreading. After marking the errors, we used to give it back to the typists. The page was set manually by the page-makers, who used to paste the text and pictures and send it to the montage department for making plates.

After the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, I rejoined Kuwait Times in September 1991.

We resumed with a few staff with 12 pages, which steadily increased. I used to come in the afternoon and finish by 3 am. Since there were no buses and few cars on the road, I used to sleep in the reception area, then catch the first bus at 5 am to go home. After the invasion, we couldn't know whether it was day or night as the sky was covered with smog from burning oil wells set alight by the retreating Iraqi troops.

As the years flew by, I was promoted as an editor. Things slowly changed from manual work to computers, where news flowed on our screens and not by telex. As an editor, I did almost all sections - from local and sports to business, international and special supplements. Things got even better when we switched to working online. I look back with pride working with Kuwait Times in the past and also in the present.

At Kuwait Times we all work like a family - we care for and respect each other. The atmosphere is sociable. Our Founder and Publisher, the late Mr Yousuf Al-Alyan, was humble and friendly, always greeting everyone, from the teaboy to the editors. I am lucky to have worked with the Alyan family for more than 30 years. They treat everyone equally. My best wishes to Kuwait Times for celebrating 60 years this year and also to our editor-in-chief, managing editor and all the staff.



BACKBURNER

THEBACKBURNERKW



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan with Faisal Al-Qenaia at KJA.



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan with a guest at Kuwait Journalists Association.



William Burns at the American Embassy with Suleiman Al-Shaheen and Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Yousuf Al-Alyan.



Local

# Kuwait Amir congratulates Saudi Arabia on National Day

## Sheikh Nawaf receives new Interior Ministry Undersecretary



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. —Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations yesterday to the Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Highness praised the kingdom's blessed development and civil accomplishments, wishing King Salman good health and for the Kingdom progress and prosperity. 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 similar cables. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince also sent a cable of congratulations to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at

Bayan Palace yesterday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. His Highness the Amir also received Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah. Furthermore, His Highness received Minister of Interior Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and the Interior Ministry Undersecretary Maj Gen Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on the occasion of his new post.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received Ghanem, Sheikh Hamad, Sheikh Thamer and Sheikh Faisal at Bayan Palace.

In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a condolence cable to Algerian

President Abdelmadjid Tebboune over the death of former President Abdoulqader bin Saleh. In the cable, His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow mercy and forgiveness upon his soul. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables. Furthermore, His Highness the Amir had earlier cabled Egyptian President Abdelattah Al-Sisi, expressing sincere condolences over the passing away of former defense minister Field Marshal Mohammad Hussien Tantawi. In his cable, His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon the deceased's soul and solace for his family. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent cables of identical sentiments to President Sisi. —KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Minister of Interior Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and the Interior Ministry Undersecretary Maj Gen Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

## Prime minister meets Bangladeshi counterpart



NEW YORK: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. —KUNA photos

NEW YORK: His Highness the Amir's Representative, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the fringes of the UN General Assembly 76th session

on Tuesday. The two senior officials discussed bilateral relations and issues of mutual significance. His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also held a similar meeting with Georgia's Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili in New York. Kuwait's Foreign



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets Georgia's Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili.

Minister and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the United Nations Mansour Al-Otaibi attended both meetings. —KUNA

## Kuwait Foreign Minister joins 3G meeting

NEW YORK: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah yesterday participated in the 14th ministerial meeting of the Global Governance Group (3G) at the invitation of Singaporean Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan. Held at the headquarters of Singapore's permanent delegation at the UN on the sidelines of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly, the meeting discussed the health reflections of the novel Coronavirus pandemic worldwide, the outcomes of the G20, a roadmap for the G20 leaders' summit due in Rome from October 30-31.

The Kuwaiti foreign minister had taken part late Tuesday in the GCC-EU ministerial meeting, which was held on the sidelines of the 76th session of the



NEW YORK: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah participates in the 14th ministerial meeting of the Global Governance Group (3G). —KUNA

UN General Assembly. The meeting discussed ways to strengthen relations between the two sides, as well as discussing the latest regional and global developments. Sheikh Dr Ahmad also participated in the ministerial meeting to follow up on the outcomes of Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership, held on the sidelines of the UN General

Assembly session as well. The participation came at the invitation of the Iraqi Foreign Minister Fouad Masum, where Sheikh Dr Ahmad Al-Nasser thanked him for the invitation. In a statement, the participants affirmed the support of the Iraqi government in its efforts to establish security and stability in Iraq. —KUNA

## UK, Kuwait agree to strengthen cooperation

LONDON: Building on a new action plan signed by the United Kingdom and the State of Kuwait at the 17th session of the Joint Steering Group in London yesterday, the two countries will begin to work to strengthen their cooperation in the areas of cyber security, trade, education and development.

The ministerial meeting was held yesterday at Lancaster House, and was chaired by the British side, by Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa Affairs James Cleverly, and the Kuwaiti side by Deputy Foreign Minister Majdi Al-Dhafiri.

The new action plan would allow the United Kingdom and Kuwait to resume joint military exercises during 2022, including the 'Desert Warrior exercise'. Cleverly and Dhafiri also discussed plans for meetings between Kuwaiti offi-

cial and experts from the UK's National Cyber Security Center later this month.

On the trade front, the two sides agreed to work together to set up a virtual and in-person trade event between the United Kingdom and Kuwait at the British Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai. The British Council and the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters in Kuwait also agreed to implement a roadmap to enhance the creative economy in the State of Kuwait.

"The breadth of discussions is a shining example of our deep bond, which highlights its importance in enhancing ties between our two friendly countries," Cleverly said. "The Joint Steering Group ensures that the UK and Kuwait are prepared for future challenges, and benefit from emerging opportunities across the sphere of our historic relationship."

British Ambassador Belinda Lewis thanked the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs and all other participating Kuwaiti government ministries for their co-operation. The partnership has delivered a meaningful and targeted action plan for both sides to achieve over the coming months, with specific progress expected in defense.



LONDON: British Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa Affairs James Cleverly (left) and Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Majdi Al-Dhafiri shake hands after signing the action plan.

## Kuwait applauds IAEA's pivotal role

VIENNA: The State of Kuwait appreciated the leading role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in maximizing benefit from peaceful applications of the nuclear energy. Speaking on behalf of Kuwait at the 65th Regular Session of IAEA General Conference yesterday, Counsellor of Kuwait Embassy in Austria Abdullah Al-Obaidi said the UN nuclear watchdog plays a pivotal role in sharing nuclear expertise among its member countries. The State of Kuwait has always been keen on contributing to the Agency's efforts to implement nuclear and safeguards, including the initiative "Atoms for Peace and Development," the Kuwaiti diplomat said. "Kuwait stands ready to work with the Agency and all other stakeholders to make better use of nuclear science in improving the living conditions and public health," he affirmed.

Obaidi spoke highly of Marie Sklodowska-Curie Fellowship Program (MSCFP) aiming to increase the number of women in the nuclear field. "This program is in consistency with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035, which attaches great importance to women's role," he went on saying. The State of Kuwait appreciates the IAEA's endeavor "Building Capacity for Nuclear Security," he said, noting that his country has built an effective partnership with the Agency under the technical cooperation program (2022-2023).

"This program includes five projects in the fields of nuclear applications in the oil industry, production of Genetically Modified crops (GM crops), potable subterranean waters, treatment of cancer, and power generating stations," Obaidi revealed. Affirming the right of all countries to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, he cautioned that proliferation of nuclear weapons poses a grave threat to world peace and security. "Kuwait attributes maximum importance to the verification of the implementation of the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards agreements," Obaidi said, reiterating the call for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to join these agreements and implement the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

He also renewed the call for the Islamic Republic of Iran to return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) based on the UNSC Resolution 2231. He voiced hope that Iran would recommit itself to the JCPOA and the Additional Protocol, thus allowing the IAEA monitors to verify the peaceful nature of the country's nuclear program. "In this context, Kuwait's mission welcomes the recent visit to Iran by IAEA Director General and hopes this promising step would help turn a new leaf in the relations between the Agency and Iran," he stated.

"The State of Kuwait is committed to the efforts aiming to declare the Middle East a nuclear-free region in keeping with the outcomes of the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)," he stressed. He further underscored the need of the Zionist entity to join the NPT, and reminded of the content of the statement of the Arab group of states on the capabilities and risks of the Zionist entity's nuclear program.

Obaidi welcomed the outcomes of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons held in New York in November 2019 under the chairmanship of Jordan. He voiced hope that Kuwait would host the second session of the conference in November. On Monday, the State of Kuwait was elected chair of the 65th Regular Session of IAEA General Conference for the first time since it joined the Agency five decades ago with the 173 member states unanimously voting. —KUNA

**Kuwait Times**  
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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

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DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF  
ESTABLISHED 1961

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**YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN**

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## Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait and US flags are displayed on Kuwait Towers yesterday, in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## ABK partners with LOYAC for 'Back to School' initiative

**KUWAIT:** As part of its continued commitment to give back to the community, a team of volunteers from Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) partnered with LOYAC in the "Back to School" program to provide school necessities to under-privileged students. The outreach program aims to serve around 70 students between the ages of six and 14, providing them with supplies such as backpacks, notebooks, pens, pencils and other essentials. Fawzy Althunayan, General Manager of Board Affairs at ABK, said: "We are pleased to support this 'Back to School' initiative with LOYAC as part of our commitment towards the community and belief in the importance of education. Learning is a collective responsibility and requires efforts from the teachers, students, parents and the community. We all have a role to play in the development and empowerment of our next generation as they are our future assets, and at ABK we are proud to have a hand in this and in the betterment of our youth's education. We are always guided by our aspiration to be an active community partner and a contributor towards a sustainable future."

# New system links job titles to academic qualifications in Kuwait

## Over 42K foreign workers left private sector in six months

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) added a new section to its website which classifies job titles according to the academic qualifications job holders are required to have. And while the new system only specifies the academic level a job holder must have to be hired for any given job, Al-Qabas Arabic daily reported yesterday quoting informed sources that under the new qualification system, work permits can only be issued or renewed as long as the holder provides proof of academic qualification that matches the job title they are assuming.

The new service available on PAM's website allows employers to search according to the job title, job number in accordance with the GCC directory, and academic qualifications, Aseel Al-Mazyad, Official Spokesperson and PR and Media Director at PAM, said yesterday. Users should follow these steps: Enter the website: www.manpower.gov.kw; select 'information'; select 'jobs and qualification'. "By adding this service, PAM aims to simplify the search for those in charge to get the expected results in the shortest time possible," Mazyad added. The

service is only available in Arabic for the time being, however.

Meanwhile, Al-Qabas also reported yesterday that PAM has decided to allow the transfer of workers from six sectors - industry, farming, shepherding, fishing, co-ops and free trade



### Transfer allowed from six sectors

zones - to other jobs in the private sector. PAM has made things easier for business owners and employees amid the coronavirus pandemic, especially during the suspension of air travel, as it issued several decisions allowing the transfer of workers from sectors that were previously

banned, Mazyad said. The ban had been lifted on March 3 to allow local firms to hire labor from inside Kuwait while outside recruitment remains closed. The ban was then reinstated on July 15, before being lifted against yesterday.

### Workers' exodus

In other news, a report emerged yesterday suggesting that investors are leaving Kuwait in search of other opportunities in the Gulf, particularly after the decision not to renew work permits of residents who reach the age of 60. Meanwhile, the Al-Jarida daily report quotes statistics from the Public Authority for Civil Information which indicate that more than 42,000 foreign workers have left the private sector during the first half of this year. Sources quoted in the report said this is a logical result that proves that the country is moving ahead with making Kuwait a repulsive environment for those with rare specialties, qualified workers and professionals.

While the stats revealed that 42,334 residents left Kuwait, the newspaper reports that neighboring Gulf countries and others attracted some



of them, particularly doctors and those with rare specialties who can contribute to their development. The sources warned against the continuation of such moves that may empty Kuwait of qualified labor and shake the stability of those remaining, especially as they see large numbers of their colleagues head to other countries where they feel they have job security. The sources called for putting an end to the labor exodus due to the danger it poses to the private sector and the entire national economy.

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## stc participates in CHRO Table Talk

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its participation in the CHRO Table Talk series organized by HR Tech MENA Summit in partnership with Oracle. The purpose of the talk was to discover the various ways and methods HR executives accelerate employee engagement, as well as the role that this caliber plays in setting and sustaining the organization's culture.

The virtual event welcomed various Chief Human Resources Officers from some of the leading companies in the region, including stc's CHRO, Ahmad Hamad Al-Hammad. Topics discussed included promoting employee engagement, wellbeing, knowledge management, and innovation, especially given the cultural transitions that have taken place since the pandemic. The talk was organized in a casual setting over a cup of coffee with HR peers expressing their various views and techniques on managing remote working, demands for flexible hours, in addition to the fogged phenomenon of the work and personal life balance.

During the discussion, Hammad mentioned the importance of acknowledging the hard work and effort put forth by employees and instilling that recognition into the cul-

ture. stc has cultivated its corporate culture to be performance driven. This included focusing on employee growth initiatives and compensation programs that reward employees based on their performance. Fostering this type of culture in the organization was supported by stc's internal digital strategy that enabled employees to be productive while contributing to others. The performance management process and culture at stc identified clear metrics applicable to employees and linked their roles to the organizational strategy of the company. The sense of purpose that employees possess correlates not only with their performance and satisfaction but also with meeting the needs of stc customers.

In terms of empowering and developing skillsets, stc provided access to several platforms that could assist in upskilling and reskilling employees through e-learning, special development, and assessment programs. Al-Hammad highlighted that one of the key aspects of employee engagement is to provide platforms that develop both technical and soft skills. This comes as one of the main pillars under the HR's people strategy, focusing primarily on providing employees with various opportunities for growth and self-development to reach their full potential.

Currently, leading with data serves as a key of measurement for HR within large organizations to measure the quality and performance of their employees. Businesses are leaning towards data-driven approach to gauge organizational output and through that take decisions to optimize the people strategy set in place. Hammad emphasizes that HR analytical measuring tools and dashboards serve as a critical component in

understanding important metrics such as turnover data, employee engagement, performance, assessments for potential growth, and other factors that can greatly enhance the workforce caliber.

Commenting on his participation, Hammad said, "It essential for any organization to invest in its employees and provide them with an environment that allows them to reach their full potential. Following the pandemic, we witnessed an unexpected transitional period that completely changed the way employees connected with the organization's culture due to remote working protocols. The blurred boundaries of the work and personal life balance proved to be challenging for some more than others. Now in our gradual return to normal working protocols, we can utilize our experience to strengthen the corporate culture as a whole and connect with our employees through various methods that proved to be resilient."

Hammad added, "On behalf of stc, I would like to thank the HR Tech MENA Summit organizers and Oracle for extending their invitation to participate in the CHRO Table Talk's series. The platform brings together the views of leaders within their industries to discuss interesting topics related to the challenges and opportunities organizations are facing today. Overall, we are highly pleased with the outcome and turnout of this virtual talk and look forward to participating in similar initiatives within the near future."



Ahmad Hamad Al-Hammad

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APPLE ROYAL GALA (NEW ZEALAND/ SPAIN) / KG	SENIORITA BANANA (ECUADOR)/KG	POMEGRANATE (EGYPT)/KG	DATES FOAM BOX/PC	POTATO/KG

<b>INDIAN VEGETABLES</b>			
 SEPT 23,24,25 0.890	 0.165	 SEPT 23,24,25 0.295	 SEPT 23,24,25 0.160
GREEN BANANA / SNAKE COURD / LADIES FINGER / BOTTLE COURD (INDIA)/KG	CUCUMBER (KUWAIT)/KG	BEEETROOT/KG	INDIAN ONION/KG

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 SEP 23,24 2.895	 SEP 25,26,27 2.195	 SEP 23 1.990	 SEP 27,28 2.195	 SEP 23,24,25 1.290	 SEP 23,24,25 1.250	 SEP 23,24,25 1.350	 SEP 23,24 0.990
INDIAN MUTTON MIXED CUTS/KG	INDIAN FRESH BEEF BONELESS/KG	PAKISTAN BEEF WITH BONE / KG	TANZANIAN MUTTON MIXED CUTS/ KG	PONY FISH (MULLEN) / KG	SEA PRAWNS - SAUDI/ KG	SULTAN BIG SAUDI / KG	TILAPIA EGYPT / KG

 SEP 23,24,25 0.795	 SEP 23,24,25 1.195	 SEP 23,24,25 1.290	 1.190	 0.450	 0.260	 1.590
NADEC LONGLIFE FULL FAT MILK 4 X 1 LTR	AL ISLAMI FROZEN CHICKEN GRILLER 2 X 1000 GM	AMROON FROZEN BUFFALO BONELESS SLICE 900 GM	HILAL WHOLE CHICKEN 2 X 900GM	ALMARAI PLAIN YOGHURT FULL FAT 1 KG	AQUA GULF DRINKING WATER LOW SODIUM 6 X 1.5 LTR	SADIA WHOLE CHICKEN 2 X 1200GM

 SEP 23,24,25 0.995	 SEP 23,24,25 1.990	 SEP 26,27,28 0.975	 SEP 23,24,25 1.990	 SEP 26,27,28 0.690	 SEP 23,24,25 0.490	 SEP 26,27,28 1.490
TANIMA PALAKKADAN UNDA MATTIA RICE 5 KG	ALMONDS WHOLE USA/KG	NESSCAFE 3 IN 1 CLASSIC COFFEE 28 X 20GM	SHUROOQ SUNFLOWER OIL 4LTR	TANG ORANGE POUCH 1 KG	CADBURY DAIRY MILK ASSORTED 37GM 4-1 FREE	FERRERO NUTELLA 750GM

 SEP 23,24,25 0.950	 SEP 23,24,25 0.395	 SEP 26,27,28 1.990	 SEP 23,24,25 0.990	 SEP 26,27,28 1.750	 SEP 23,24,25 0.995	 SEP 26,27,28 1.190
NESTLE CONDENSED MILK 3 X 395 GM	MOONG WHOLE/KG	KLF NIRMAL COCONUT OIL 2 LTR	GALAXY JEWELS DIAMOND PACK 200 GM	DEVAAYA BASMATI RICE 5 KG	MUNEERA BIRYANI WHITE RICE 5KG	MOTTAMAD BIRIYANI RICE 5 KG

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 SEP 23,24,25 0.490	 SEP 23,24,25 3.490	 SEP 23,24,25 0.495	 SEP 23,24,25 0.790	 SEP 23,24,25 2.790	 SEP 26,27,28 1.790	 SEP 26,27,28 0.890
SIGNAL CAVITY FIGHTER T/PASTE 2 X 120CM	OMO DETERGENT POWDER AUTOMATIC 10KG	PRIL DISHWASHING LIQUID LEMON 1.5LTR	LUX BEAUTY SOAP ASSORTED 6X120 GM	ARIEL DETERGENT POWDER ASSTD 2 X 2.5 KG	HEAD&SHOULDERS AD ASSTD SHAMPOO 2X400 ML	PONDS TALC ASSORTED 3 X 300 GM



Shots in the dark:  
China sends aid to  
Myanmar rebels

## South Africa corruption informers face threats

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BANGKOK: Former Nakhon Sawan province district police station chief Thitisan Utthanaphon, nicknamed 'Joe Ferrari', leaves the Crime Suppression Division in Bangkok, after he surrendered to the authorities following accusations of torture and suffocation to death of a drug suspect. - AFP

# 'Joe Ferrari' case lifts lid on Thai police

## Thitisan's corruption case fires up calls for reform

**BANGKOK:** A flashy cop with a taste for fast cars falls from grace following the leak of spine-chilling footage of a brutal interrogation gone wrong. Not the plot of a blockbuster thriller, but the vivid reality of a story that has gripped Thailand in recent weeks and spotlighted police corruption that experts say infects almost every level of society in the kingdom. The case of Thitisan Utthanaphon, a former police station chief in a rural province - nicknamed "Joe Ferrari" for his extravagant lifestyle - has fired up calls for reform. The 41-year-old stands accused of murder, abuse of power and other offences after a drug suspect was suffocated with six plastic bags wrapped around his head in an alleged attempt to extort about \$60,000. The incident was initially hushed up and recorded as an amphetamine overdose until a lawyer revealed the cause of death in a Facebook post.

In a move typical of the networks of patronage that critics say underpin systemic corruption, Thitisan was then transferred to a regional police bureau in a nearby province - commanded by the father of his television-presenter girlfriend. But worse was to come for him: Another lawyer released a chilling video leaked by a junior policeman that appeared to show Thitisan suffocating the handcuffed suspect while other officers held him down.

The footage went viral, shocking the kingdom and prompting police to arrest Thitisan and several other officers. Thitisan denies all the charges against him. Sittira Biabungkerd, the lawyer who released the video, told AFP he did it to stop police "helping each other to get away" with murder. "Many people may think that interrogating suspects using black plastic bags no longer goes on because times have changed," he said. "But this case shows that in reality it still goes on in secret."

## How France was blindsided by the Australia-US deal

**PARIS:** In June this year, French leader Emmanuel Macron welcomed Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison to Paris, with concern about the two allies' troubled submarine contract high on his mind.

In remarks made on the sunlit steps of the Elysee Palace, he turned to "dear Scott" as he called him and promised that France would "go further and faster, if possible" and "respond to Australian needs". While Macron sounded like a slightly anxious salesman worried about a client slipping away, Morrison didn't mention the landmark deal worth Aus\$50 billion (31 billion euros, \$36.5 billion) when it was signed in 2016. He said nothing in his public remarks about what is known as "the contract of the century" in France, which has since opened a giant rift in the Western alliance.

"We had heard about Australian worries about the contract," a source close to Macron acknowledged on condition of anonymity. "That's why we made ourselves available to respond to their questions and give them assurances. "The president took the initiative to invite Morrison in June."

Australian concerns were a matter of public record, with worries focused on cost over-runs and delays, as well as the

## What lies beneath: Swiss search for weapons

**GENEVA:** The pristine turquoise waters of Lake Geneva may appear serene, but lurking below are piles of bombs, cartridges and possibly even chemical weapons discarded decades ago. Long believed to be safely slumbering beneath thick layers of protective sediment, the munitions at the bottom of the biggest lake in the Alps have raised fresh safety and environmental concerns.

"We believe there are bombs and shells, and proba-

### Flash cop, fast cars

Revelations about Thitisan's wealthy lifestyle and a string of celebrity relationships made headlines after his arrest. Investigators told local media he owned a luxury mansion in Bangkok, a fleet of 42 top-end cars including a \$1.5 million Lamborghini Aventador and had a personal fortune estimated at \$18 million - all on a police superintendent's salary of around \$1,300 a month.

Activist Srisuwan Janya told AFP the anti-money laundering authority has been asked to investigate Thitisan's wealth. "It is impossible that a man with some 40,000-baht salary can have 40 cars including luxury cars," Srisuwan said. Some of Thitisan's substantial wealth came from auctioning hundreds of imported luxury cars seized by Thai customs,



### Former police chief accused of murder

according to senior officers quoted in local media. Investigators are due to hand over their findings to the National Anti-Corruption Commission on September 24 before deciding whether to forward the case to the state prosecutor.

After taking power as army chief in a 2014 coup, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha vowed to eradicate corruption.

bigger issue of whether the 12 submarines would be fit for purpose once they entered service in the early 2030s. In 2016, when the contract was signed, Canberra wanted conventional diesel-powered subs. But five years later, a trade war with China and growing concern about Beijing's assertiveness around the Pacific had led to calls for nuclear versions, which can stay submerged for longer.

### Summer of worries

Interviews with high-level French officials paint a picture of Paris doing everything to keep the contract on the rails. Only on September 15, hours before an official announcement, did Paris learn that Australia was ditching the French deal and entering a new partnership for nuclear submarines with the US and UK called AUKUS. The sense of rage in Paris is over what Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian called "duplicité", "treachery" and a "stab in the back" - as well as Morrison's lack of candour.

The Australian prime minister said on Sunday that Paris would have known Canberra had "deep and grave concerns" about French submarines beforehand, saying that he had raised issues with the deal "some months ago," as had other Australian ministers. Over their dinner at the Elysee Palace in June, Macron pressed "ScoMo" for details about Australian worries about the contract with France's Naval Group. Overall, the visit by the conservative Australian "did not go well," according to a third French source, who declined to give more details.

Two weeks earlier on June 2, Greg Moriarty, the top civil

bly rifle ammunition," Jacques Martelain, the Geneva canton's head geologist said. Some also fear there might also be phosgene bombs - deadly chemical weapons - sitting on the bottom of the lake, he said. For the first time ever, Swiss authorities will soon start mapping the piles of munitions in the lake to determine what kind of explosive debris is there, how much, and whether it should be removed.

Switzerland is a famously neutral country that did not fight in the two world wars, but its long-held position is one of well-armed neutrality. Between World War I and the mid-1960s, thousands of tons of munitions, from artillery to grenades and detonators, were sunk in lakes across the nation. Following two explosions in storage depots, one of them inside a mountain, the army started to get rid of surplus post-World War II stockpiles by using underwater dumps.

Seven years on, the Joe Ferrari case shows how little has been achieved in stamping out police malpractice, and observers hold out little hope of serious change.

Reform has been a "spectacular failure" because those connected to the top are shielded by "protection and favouritism" and whistleblowers are punished or silenced, said analyst Thitinan Pongsudhirak of Chulalongkorn University. In an attempt to kickstart police reform, the government approved a draft amendment to the National Police Act early this year. But the draft remains under deliberation in parliament, moving at a snail's pace as committee members - some of them former policemen - haggle over the details.

Since the Prayut administration depends on police support, it is careful about reform, said lecturer Paul Chambers of Naresuan University. "The only change the Joe Ferrari case will likely spur is that rogue cops take greater care to hide the illegal activities in which they engage," Chambers told AFP, pointing to repeated past efforts to reform the police. "None have worked and none are likely to anytime soon." Royal Thai Police Chief Suwat Jangyodsuk has blamed the current scandal on "one bad apple". But public trust in the khaki-uniformed police force has long been eroded.

Almost every Thai entrepreneur, whether their business is legal or not, is familiar with paying local police just to operate - from motorcycle taxi riders and street food hawkers to brothel owners and drug traffickers. Nearly half of Thais said they had paid bribes to the police in the previous 12 months, according to a study by Transparency International published in November 2020. And Thailand's economic crisis, fuelled by the pandemic, has only made corruption worse, with police given more power to enforce COVID-related laws. Thailand has lost 19 places in Transparency International's corruption ranking since 2014, and now stands 104th out of 180 countries. —AFP



SYDNEY: A file photo shows French President Emmanuel Macron (2nd left) and Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull (center) standing on the deck of HMAS Waller, a Collins-class submarine operated by the Royal Australian Navy, at Garden Island in Sydney. —AFP

servant in Australia's Department of Defense, had set alarm bells ringing in Paris after he raised the possibility of "alternatives" to the French deal because of ongoing difficulties. Defense Minister Florence Parly contacted her Australian counterpart Peter Dutton on June 9 to seek clarification and was given further reassurances, a fourth French source said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Macron also sent a personal letter to Morrison after their dinner in June, while contacts between Australian and French officials, engineers and military officers intensified. —AFP

Over the decades, the Swiss army is estimated to have dumped more than 8,000 tons of munitions in the Thun, Lucerne and Brienz lakes. Authorities studied those stockpiles carefully and decided around a decade ago that it was safer to leave them where they were, resting at significant depths and covered with thick layers of sediment. They estimated that there was little danger in leaving them untouched, while removing them risked shifting the sediment, releasing pollutants and causing significant damage to the aquatic ecosystem.

However, experts have warned that the situation is different in Lake Geneva, where a private armaments company, Hispano-Suiza, dumped excess munitions right up until the 1960s. The company, which no longer exists, had a number of arms factories in Geneva, but cantonal authorities don't know why it used the lake as a dumping ground. —AFP



KIEV: An undated handout photograph shows the chief aide to Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, Sergei Shefir. The chief aide to Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky was targeted in an assassination attempt yesterday when his car came under fire. —AFP

## Gunmen target Zelensky's aide

**KIEV:** Gunmen opened fire with automatic weapons on a car carrying a senior aide to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday, in what officials said was an attempted assassination in response to his crackdown on oligarchs. Sergiy Shefir, a 57-year-old former scriptwriter and longtime associate of comedian-turned-politician Zelensky, was reported to have escaped without serious injury.

An adviser to the interior minister, Anton Herashchenko, said on Facebook that the attack took place around 10 am yesterday near the village of Lisnyky south of the capital Kiev. He said Shefir's driver was "seriously injured" and that police had launched a special operation in the area. "Unidentified individuals fired about 10 shots from a 7.62 calibre automatic weapon," Ukraine's Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova said on Facebook.

She said the authorities had opened an attempted murder investigation. Photos published by officials showed a black Audi with bullet holes along its bonnet and on the driver-side door. Official reports did not say whether Shefir was injured, but a lawmaker representing Zelensky's "Servant of the People" party said he was fine. "I briefly spoke to him, everything is fine, he is alive and well." Davyd Arakhamia was quoted by Russia's RIA Novosti news agency as saying. He said police had taken Shefir to a "safe" location.

### 'Shadowy oligarchs'

Another aide in Zelensky's office said the attack was an attempt to "demonstrably kill a key member of the team". Mykhailo Podolyak told the Interfax-Ukraine news agency the attack was in response to "politics directed at limiting the traditional influence of shadowy oligarchs". Zelensky's spokesman said on Facebook that the president, who was on a working visit to the United States, would soon make a public statement.

Sergiy Nykyforov said no "insidious actions" would affect the president's plans to "de-shadow and de-oligarch" Ukraine. Shefir was born in the industrial central city of Kryvyi Rig and studied to be a metallurgist, but as a student began doing comedy for the popular KVN show with his brother, Boris. In 2003 he co-founded a production company called "Kvartal 95" with Boris and Zelensky, who was elected president in 2019. Shefir produced and wrote the "Servant of the People", a show in which Zelensky portrayed a schoolteacher who becomes president and which eventually launched his political career. —AFP

## International

# Shots in the dark: China sends COVID aid to Myanmar rebels

## Beijing sends nearly 13 million doses to the generals

**MUSE:** Delivering vaccines to Myanmar's junta, but also to rebel groups that are the generals' sworn enemies, China is playing both sides to fight the coronavirus and strengthen its hand in the messy politics of its southern neighbor. Beijing has already handed over nearly 13 million doses to the generals, who ousted Aung San Suu Kyi in February and plunged Myanmar and its healthcare system into chaos.

The junta has appeared powerless to halt the spread of the virus, spooking authorities on the other side of its porous, 2,000-kilometre frontier with China, where officials are waging a "zero case" war on COVID-19. So Beijing has quietly shipped thousands of vaccines, medical workers, and construction materials for quarantine centers, multiple rebel groups told AFP.

Chinese Red Cross staff "come to help us sometimes... to help us prevent the COVID pandemic," said Colonel Naw Bu, spokesman for the Kachin Independence Army (KIA). "But they did not come to stay here," added the colonel, whose group - numbering thousands - controls territory in Myanmar's northern jade-rich hills. "They just came for a while and went back." The KIA is one of Myanmar's more than 20 ethnic rebel groups - many of whom control swathes of remote border territory - who have fought each other and the military over the drugs trade, natural resources and autonomy.

But they are all vulnerable to COVID. As a third wave ripped through lowland Myanmar in July, the KIA inoculated 10,000 people in their Laiza head-

quarters with Chinese jabs, Naw Bu said. Health workers had also crossed over from China to deliver masks and hand sanitizer, he added. It is a scene familiar along the porous border. The Shan State Progress Party rebel group has vaccinated 1,000 people in areas under its control with Chinese vaccines, a spokesperson said.

It had ordered a total of half a million, he added. "Good neighbor" China had also promised to supply doses to the Ta'ang National



### China playing both sides to fight COVID

Liberation Army, based in nearby territory, spokesman Brigadier General Tar Phone Kyaw said. Meanwhile, in the border town of Muse, men work on a new quarantine centre that will house up to 1,000 beds for traders keen to resume business with the country's giant, COVID-wary neighbor. The workers are Myanmar nationals, but the building materials were all provided by authorities in China's Yunnan province, AFP found.



**MUSE:** In this file photo, motorists pass the China-Myanmar border gate in Muse in Shan state, as the Chinese city of Ruili near the border with Myanmar imposed a lockdown and started mass testing after three COVID-19 coronavirus cases were reported. — AFP

### Rebel buffer

The aid is receiving none of the fanfare of Beijing's diplomacy elsewhere in Asia and across Africa. "China will as always, according to their needs, provide necessary assistance and support to the Myanmar people in their fight against the epidemic," a Chinese foreign affairs spokesman said when asked if Beijing was helping insurgent groups fight COVID-19.

But Enze Han, a University of Hong Kong associate professor in public administration, said it "makes

sense" for authorities across the border to help. "If China wants to protect itself from COVID... it needs to create a buffer zone," he said. And ethnic Chinese groups, using Chinese SIM cards and currency, live along the border in areas "basically grafted onto the lower belly of China," explained David Mathieson, an analyst formerly based in Myanmar. If major clashes between rebels and the military broke out - as it did in 2017, sending thousands fleeing into China - it would be a "worst-case scenario" for Beijing, he said. — AFP

## South Africa's lone criminal profiler battles crime wave

**PRETORIA:** The woman's breasts had been cut off, but her genitals were untouched. An unusual choice for a killer. Even stranger, no blood had spilled at the crime scene. The body must have been moved. It may have been the work of a murderer-but not a mutilator, says Elmarie Myburgh, the only criminal profiler in South Africa's police force. It's a tough job anywhere in the world, but especially in this country of almost 60 million people, where someone is killed every 25 minutes and 115 rapes are reported every day.

"There are just so many cases," says Myburgh, who has investigated 70 murders and 90 rapes-many by repeat offenders-over her 25 years in the role. "Compared to other countries, like let's say Norway or Sweden, we have more murders in Pretoria on a Saturday than they have over the whole year." On top of which, South Africa's police struggle with a reputation for inefficiency and corruption, while years of underfunding and budget cuts have seen their ranks decimated.

Two of Myburgh's colleagues-including the woman who hired her-have come and gone. Myburgh's cramped Pretoria office overflows with files of interrogations, ballistics, blood reports and medical examinations. All of it is crime scene evidence that the trained criminologist has used to reconstruct the personalities of murderers to help



**HAMMANSKRAAL:** Lieutenant Colonel Elmarie Myburgh, South Africa's only criminal profiler, carries a mannequin after students' practical exam during a Psychological Motivated Crimes course at the South African Police Service Academy in Hammanskraal. — AFP

track down suspects. She carefully studies each beating, and how the violence escalates to a fatal blow, looking for hints to a killer's relationship with the victim.

### 'Nervous'

Myburgh was already working for the national police when South Africa's first psychological investigation unit was set up after the end of apartheid in 1994. Back then, the FBI was at the forefront of criminal profiling. "Now we may be quite on par with them," Myburgh says. She remembers her first crime scene clearly: "A man who was literally lying on his back, and there was a big rock on the top of his

head." Then 27, she'd already seen her share of gruesome photos. "But it's a different story when you go to the crime scene. The blood, the smell," she says.

Soon after, the young Myburgh was called for another murder: a woman stabbed repeatedly in her home. "We sat in the living room speaking to the husband and the front door was open so there was a draft, and then the next moment the door closed," she says. "I was a bit nervous, I must say." Neither of those cases was resolved due to lack of evidence. Over the years Myburgh has accepted that frustration is part of the job, especially in South Africa. The system is so overburdened that just getting telephone records or DNA results can take months or years. — AFP

## Trump sues niece and The New York Times

**NEW YORK:** Former US president Donald Trump on Tuesday filed a \$100 million lawsuit against his estranged niece Mary Trump and The New York Times, alleging they engaged in "an insidious plot" to obtain his tax returns for the paper's Pulitzer Prize-winning investigation of his finances. The lawsuit, filed in Dutchess County, New York state, says that New York Times reporters Susanne Craig, David Barstow and Russ Buettner conducted "an extensive crusade to obtain Donald J. Trump's confidential tax records."

"The defendants engaged in an insidious plot to obtain confidential and highly-sensitive records which they exploited for their own benefit and utilized as a means of falsely legitimizing their publicized works," the lawsuit says, alleging they were "motivated by a personal vendetta." The New York Times and the three journalists won the Pulitzer in 2019 for their investigation of the Trump family's finances, which the Pulitzer Prize Board said "debunked his claims of self-made wealth and

revealed a business empire riddled with tax dodges."

The newspaper's story alleged that Trump had received more than \$400 million in today's terms from his father's real estate empire, much of it through fraudulent tax schemes. Mary was the daughter of the eldest Trump brother Fred Trump Jr, who died in 1981 from complications due to alcoholism. In her no-holds-barred 2020 memoir, "Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man," she revealed that she was the primary source for the New York Times investigation.

### 'Loser'

Trump's 27-page lawsuit asserts that the New York Times reporters "relentlessly sought out his niece, Mary L. Trump, and convinced her to smuggle the records out of her attorney's office and turn them over to The Times." Times reporter Craig tweeted yesterday: "I knocked on Mary Trump's door. She opened it. I think they call that journalism." The lawsuit alleges that, by providing information, Mary Trump was in violation of a non-disclosure agreement signed in 2001 after a settlement over the estate of Donald Trump's father, Fred Trump Sr. The former president is seeking \$100 million in compensation and damages, as well as all the proceeds from his niece's book.

Deokaran was a key witness in an investigation on suspicious personal protective equipment tenders in the Gauteng province-which includes Johannesburg city-as part of a flurry of COVID-related scandals that sparked public outrage last year. "Those brave enough to expose corruption continue to face threats to their lives from people acting with impunity, and the environment is even more hostile to whistleblowers," Corruption Watch said in a report exposing "continued rot" in South Africa.

Nine suspects have been arrested in connection with the case, of whom at least six are facing trial on murder charges. President Cyril Ramaphosa, elected on a promise to root out graft, last month described Deokaran's death as a "stark reminder of the high stakes" of this quest. The motive for Deokaran's murder has not yet been determined.



**WASHINGTON:** In this file photo, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Army General Mark Milley (left) chats with US President Donald Trump after he delivered the State of the Union address at the US Capitol in Washington, DC. — AFP

In a statement quoted by NBC, Mary Trump called her uncle "a loser." "It's desperation. The walls are closing in and he is throwing anything against the wall that he thinks will stick," she said. "As is always the case with Donald, he'll try and change the subject." Trump is under investigation in New York for tax fraud and other alleged wrongdoings relating to the financial activities of his Trump Organization. — AFP

The provincial premier, David Makhura, said the information Deokaran shared had led to dismissals and claims to recover funds from businesses and government officials.

The government this week launched a unit to protect whistleblowers in public service. Corruption Watch stressed that guaranteeing their safety was "a matter of urgency" to avoid discouraging people from testifying. The group said nearly 2,000 whistleblowers had helped show that corruption continued "unabated" during the first half of 2021 in both public and private sectors. Most of the revelations of extortion and abuse of authority concerned the police. Corrupt procurement and mismanagement were also reported in coronavirus response schemes, public funding for schools and housing, and food aid. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Military plane disappears

**MOSCOW:** A Russian An-26 military transport aircraft with six people on board disappeared yesterday near the Far Eastern city of Khabarovsk, the emergencies ministry said. The ministry said that at 6:45 pm local time (0845 GMT) it learned that "an An-26 aircraft had disappeared from radar 38 kilometers from Khabarovsk airport". "According to preliminary data, there are six people on board," the ministry added on its Telegram channel. The ministry said that a helicopter had been dispatched to search for the aircraft. The search, however, was complicated by the onset of darkness in Khabarovsk and "unfavourable weather conditions", the ministry said. Once notorious for plane accidents, Russia has improved its air traffic safety record in recent years. — AFP

#### HRW, Amnesty slam Cameroon

**YAOUNDE:** Rights watchdogs Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International yesterday condemned "repression" in Cameroon and demanded the release of 124 opposition activists who have been held for one year. Yesterday, security forces used tear gas and water cannons to disperse nationwide protests calling for the resignation of President Paul Biya, 88, who has ruled the central African country with an iron fist for nearly 40 years. They made more than 500 arrests, allegedly beating many of the protesters. Of those, 124 remain in jail, all of them members of the main opposition Movement for the Rebirth of Cameroon (MRC). None has been tried, their lawyers say. — AFP

#### Rare Australian earthquake

**MELBOURNE:** A shallow quake rattled southeastern Australia yesterday, sending panicked residents running into the streets of the second-largest city of Melbourne. The rare quake hit east of the city just after 9:00am local time and was felt hundreds of kilometers away. The US Geological Survey put the magnitude of the quake at 5.8 and said it struck at a depth of 10 kilometers. Images shared on social media showed rubble strewn across the popular shopping area around Melbourne's Chapel Street, with bricks apparently coming loose from buildings. Zume Phim, 33, owner of Melbourne's Oppen cafe, said he rushed onto the street when the tremor hit. "The whole building was shaking." — AFP

#### Germany nominates Tedros

**BERLIN:** Germany is nominating Ethiopia's Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus for a new term as the head of the World Health Organization, the health ministry said yesterday. With Germany's nomination secured, the 56-year-old former health minister appeared to be the only person in the race a day before the deadline for submissions today. Tedros was elected as the head of WHO in 2017 and became the first African to take the helm of the UN health agency. He has not yet confirmed that he was a candidate for a second five-year term, but a number of diplomatic sources said he would stand. Tedros enjoys relative popularity over his role in steering the WHO's efforts to coordinate the tumultuous global pandemic response, and even if other candidates were put forward at the last minute, he was widely expected to come out on top. — AFP

## South Africa corruption informers face threats

**JOHANNESBURG:** A South African corruption watchdog yesterday warned that whistleblowers face hostility and threats on their lives, a month after the murder of a health official who exposed coronavirus-linked graft shook the country. The safety of whistleblowers hit the limelight when provincial government official Babita Deokaran, 53, was gunned down in Johannesburg on August 23 after dropping off her child at school.

## Business

# Lebanon raises fuel prices as subsidies are phased out

## People reel from severe rationing spurred by collapse of a subsidy system

BEIRUT: Crisis-hit Lebanon yesterday raised fuel prices for the second time in less than a week amid severe rationing spurred by the collapse of a subsidy system that has depleted state coffers. Grappling with its worst-ever financial crisis, Lebanon has gradually increased fuel prices in recent months because the cash-strapped central bank can no longer afford to fund fuel imports.

The latest price hike, expected to be followed by further increases in coming weeks, is widely seen as a prelude to a final and definite lifting of fuel subsidies by the government. The revised price list published by the energy ministry yesterday set the price of 20 liters of 95-octane petrol at 202,400 Lebanese pounds (\$13 at the black market rate), up from 174,000 pounds the previous week.

Since the end of June, the price of petrol has more than tripled amid severe rationing that has turned entire streets into chaotic queues for cars lining up to fill up at the pumps. To fill a medium-sized vehicle's tank, most Lebanese would now have to pay close to the monthly minimum wage

of 675,000 Lebanese pounds, at a time when nearly 80 percent of the population is estimated to live below the poverty line. George al-Brax, a member of the syndicate of gas station owners, told local media yesterday that the latest price hike was not "final," suggesting that prices will soon go up again.

He also cautioned that the imminent lifting of subsidies would not spell the end of long petrol queues which began at the start of summer and have since only gotten worse.

The energy ministry's announcement yesterday came as many pumps across the country remained closed to customers. Importers and gas station owners say they are out of stock but authorities have accused them of hoarding supplies to sell at higher prices once subsidies are officially lifted.

Prime Minister Najib Mikati, whose government was sworn in on Monday after 13 months of political paralysis, told CNN this month that 74 percent of more than \$10 billion dollars spent on subsidies had been "misused by traders". — AFP



BEIRUT, Lebanon: A general view shows the ravaged port of Lebanon's capital Beirut. Lebanon is facing one of its worst-ever economic crises. —AFP

## Is China's pledge to cut coal funding a game-changer?

BEIJING: China's pledge to stop funding overseas coal has been welcomed as a climate landmark that could dry up funding for smoke-billowing plants in poor countries. But the world's top polluter has not set out a timeline for when it will take effect, and it is not clear whether funders will be forced to pull the plug on projects under construction or in planning.

### This is what we know:

#### What did China promise?

China on Tuesday said it will stop providing funding for coal projects overseas. "China will step up support for other developing countries in developing green and low carbon energy and will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad," President Xi Jinping told the United Nations General Assembly.

#### Is it a game-changer?

Yes and no. China is the biggest public funder of overseas coal plants and its shift is symbolic. Both Japan and South Korea—the two other biggest state funders—have said they will stop funding projects by year end. "China was the last man standing on this front," said Li Shuo, a climate analyst for Greenpeace China. It is hoped the move will discourage China's private players from investing.

"When public money goes somewhere, private money tends to follow," Li added. But China's overseas coal footprint is small in real terms. A total of 13 percent of the money going into coal plants worldwide between 2013 and mid-2019 came from China, according to Boston University's Global Development Policy Center.

This means recent China-funded coal projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America and even parts of Eastern Europe will only generate about 53 gigawatts (GW) — a fraction of the 1,188 GW global coal pipeline according to advocacy movement Endcoal. About 87 percent of total funding for coal plants in developing nations come from entities outside China.

#### So, who funds global coal?

Private banks and institutional investors from Japan, the US and the UK bankroll a bulk of the coal projects in the developing world. Commercial banks in Japan were the top lenders to overseas coal projects and loaned \$76 billion, bankrolling nearly a quarter of all coal plants in developing countries.

The US, with \$68 billion mostly from private lenders, funded 21 percent, while Britain gave seven percent of all loans. Chinese state banks invested over \$50 billion on overseas coal-fired projects in the five years to 2019.

#### Will China deliver?

China has been promising to green its overseas infrastructure investments amid criticism that new coal plants would derail global climate goals. Lenders are also taking note of resistance to Chinese-funded coal projects in countries including Bangladesh, Kenya and Vietnam.

"China has slowly passed the early... feverish years of emphasizing big numbers", said Li from Greenpeace, and "slowly it is moving towards improving project quality, including sustainability."

Beijing didn't fund any new coal projects in the first half of 2021 under its \$1 trillion Belt and Road Initiative infrastructure push, according to the commerce ministry. But there are still several caveats to Xi's promise. Importantly, it is unclear whether it will cover private players—or only freeze funding from public banks—as well as when it will kick in, and if it will halt projects already being built. — AFP

## Evergrande agrees deal to avoid default on key bond

BEIJING: Embattled Chinese property titan Evergrande said yesterday it had agreed a deal with domestic bondholders that should allow the conglomerate to avoid missing one of its interest payments and avoid default, but its deeper debt burden remains. Financial markets have been hit this week over fears that the sprawling firm could collapse, with the potential to pulse through the world's second-biggest economy and possibly beyond.

Chinese authorities have injected capital into the markets yet have remained conspicuously silent over Evergrande's woes, allowing rare protests from despairing investors and leaving analysts guessing over Beijing's plans to mop-up any spillover from the developer's demise. In a statement to the Shenzhen stock exchange, Evergrande's property unit Hengda said it had negotiated a plan to pay interest due on its 2025 bond, worth 232 million yuan (\$35.9 million).

Evergrande has admitted facing "tremendous pressure" as it tackles a debt pile of more than \$300 billion,

and has warned that it may not be able to meet its liabilities. Yet founder Xu Jiayin, a billionaire once counted as Asia's richest man, on Tuesday said the company will "step out of the darkest moment soon".

In Wednesday's statement, Hengda said investors "who bought and held the bonds" before September 22, 2021 "are entitled to interest paid this time". The group has made no mention of its larger repayments on interest for an offshore bond due today—a payment worth \$83.5 million on a dollar-denominated bond, in what observers view as a big test for the company. Even if it misses the payment, the company would still have a 30-day grace period before it is deemed in default. Evergrande did not reply to AFP requests for comment.

Analysts said yesterday's repayment will go some way to soothing anxious markets in the short term.

But "for confidence to return more meaningfully, it will need the market to see sight of the broad restructuring plans for Evergrande", Gary Dugan, chief executive officer at the Global CIO Office, told Bloomberg News. The Evergrande crisis has triggered protests outside a number of the company's offices in China by investors and suppliers demanding their money—some of whom say they are owed as much as \$1 million.

#### Waiting on Beijing

Given the company's liabilities, analysts and investors have speculat-

## ADB cuts Asia growth forecast on slow COVID vaccine rollout

MANILA: The Asian Development Bank warned of "lasting scars" from the coronavirus pandemic as it cut its 2021 growth forecast for developing Asia on slow vaccination rates, surging infections and crippling lockdowns. A shortage of doses, which has hampered efforts to inoculate the vast region stretching from the Cook Islands in the Pacific to Kazakhstan in Central Asia, could worsen as evidence of waning vaccine protection increases demand for booster shots, the lender said Wednesday.

The Philippines-based ADB forecast growth of 7.1 percent—compared with its previous prediction in April of 7.3 percent and a slight contraction in 2020 — but said the recovery "remains fragile". Vaccination rates have been uneven across the region, where less than a third of the population was fully protected against COVID-19 at the end of August, the lender said in an update of its flagship Asian Development Outlook.

That compared with more than 50 percent coverage in the United States and nearly 60 percent in the European Union. The ADB warned that delayed vaccine rollouts and the emergence of new variants were among the biggest risks to the outlook—and could have long-term damaging consequences.

"Income losses caused by the pandemic in particular threaten to leave lasting scars and have a multidimensional effect on regional economies," the ADB said. Progress on reducing poverty in developing Asia had been set back "at least two years", and prolonged school closures would lead to higher-than-expected learning and earning losses.

While the regional economy was expected to expand this year and next, the recovery had "diverged" in the first half of 2021 as the hyper-contagious Delta variant ripped through some countries.

In two-thirds of the developing

ior-level government contacts.

"When I became trade minister, I wrote to my Chinese counterpart in January setting out how we can work more closely together. I am still waiting for a reply," Tehan said in a Monday speech. "One of the most important things about negotiating the accession process of any country into the CPTPP is that you have to be able to sit down at ministerial level, look your economic partner in the eye, and talk about that accession process." Tehan also indicated China would have to resolve disputes at the World Trade Organization (WTO) stemming from a slew of politically driven sanctions on Australian imports.

"All parties will want to be confident that any new member will meet, implement and adhere to the high standards of the agreement as well as to their WTO commitments and their existing trade agreements," he said. "It's in everyone's interests that everyone plays by the rules."

#### 'Economic coercion'

Australia this month asked the WTO to rule



SHANGHAI: People are seen in the Evergrande Center building in Shanghai yesterday. —AFP

ed the government will likely step in with some kind of help for the corporate giant to prevent a damaging implosion. But the vagueness of the filing—which did not give details on how much it would pay and when—left others warning the company remains deep in trouble. The payment announcement "is likely only a temporary reprieve with no signals from the Chinese government over what steps, if any, it will take to assist an orderly wind down or restructuring," said Jeffrey Halley, an analyst at OANDA.

While predominantly a developer, Evergrande—which employs 200,000 people, has a presence in more than 280 cities and claims to indirectly

generate 3.8 million Chinese jobs—has been on a buying spree for more than a decade. The company has hired experts including financial services firm Houlihan Lokey—which advised on the restructuring of Lehman Brothers when it went under during the global financial crisis—as it tries to avoid a collapse. State regulators have also dispatched a team of financial advisers to assess the company, according to reports. News of the deal provided support to equities Wednesday, with Shanghai leading most Asian markets up, even as traders returned from a long weekend break to play catch up with Monday's global rout. — AFP



GHAZIABAD: Workers build a bridge in Ghaziabad, India. The Asian Development Bank has cut its growth forecast for developing Asia. —CAFP

Asian economies, the share of the population that has been fully vaccinated was 30 percent or lower, the ADB said. "Growth tended to be stronger in economies that had progressed the most in controlling the pandemic," it said. East Asia, where vaccination rates were among the highest in the region and governments

were quick to contain outbreaks, was set to grow 7.6 percent this year, compared with an earlier forecast of 7.4 percent. Forecasts were lowered for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, where nations have struggled to obtain enough doses to inoculate their populations as they battle fresh waves of infections. —AFP

## Australia sets terms for China to join Pacific pact

SYDNEY: China must end a freeze on contacts with senior Australian politicians if it hopes to join a trans-Pacific trade pact, Canberra's trade minister said yesterday, setting de facto preconditions for accession. Dan Tehan linked China's bid to join an 11-nation trading alliance with steps to improve bilateral relations that are at their lowest ebb in decades.

China formally applied to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) last week, and is lobbying to gain the consensus support of members including Australia. This comes after a war of words between the two countries, a string of sanctions on Australian goods and a months-long freeze on sen-

against China's imposition of crippling tariffs on Australian wine exports, after initial consultations failed to resolve the dispute. Wine sales by Australia to China plummeted from over Aus\$1 billion (\$840 million) to a virtual trickle after Beijing imposed the tariffs, according to industry figures.

Australia is also challenging Chinese tariffs on barley at the WTO and has objected to sanctions on a string of other goods, which Canberra describes as "economic coercion." The measures are widely seen in Australia as punishment for pushing back against Beijing's operations to impose influence in Australia, rejecting Chinese investment in sensitive areas and publicly calling for an investigation into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic. But the Chinese embassy in Australia this month lobbied Canberra to join the CPTPP, telling an Australian parliamentary inquiry that China's accession "would benefit all CPTPP members and the rest of the world." Signed by 11 Asia-Pacific countries in 2018, the partnership is the region's biggest free-trade pact and accounts for around 13.5 percent of the global economy. — AFP



Business

# Al-Rashed Int'l Shipping: Kuwait's shipping leader

With a seven-decade history in providing quality services, Al-Rashed International Shipping Co has grown into a leading logistics partner across the region



Saad Al-Rashed



Bassim S Al-Rashed



Ravi Varrier



Pradeep Menon

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait has one of the world's largest oil reserves and is a developing economy. One of the forerunners in assisting the country's development by aiding the logistics and project movements for almost seven decades, Al-Rashed International Shipping Co is currently among Kuwait's leading shipping companies.

A division of The Al-Rashed Group - a long-established trading company founded in 1911 by late Abdul Aziz Abdul Mohsin Al-Rashed, from the highly respected Al-Rashed family, Al-Rashed International Shipping Co was founded in 1952 as Al-Rashed Shipping and has been in its current

form since 1991.

The service repertoire includes 360-degree shipping services including but not limited to freight (air, land and sea), customs clearance, freight forwarding, LCL, RORO, bulk/breakbulk/general cargo, tankers, project logistics, third party logistics, procurement and warehousing. In line with their vision, 'A regional player with a global vision, Al-Rashed has associate offices in UAE, Iraq, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Oman along with an extensive global agent base.

Al-Rashed International Shipping Co represents over 200 principals who perform shipping and air-

freight related activities across the globe in all segments. A company of reliable quality, Al-Rashed has been awarded the quality management system certification with UKAS accreditation as per the ISO 9001, 18001 and 14001. This certification acknowledges the quality system maintenance within the company's activities of shipping, vessel handling, air and ocean freight, inland transportation, project logistics, warehousing, and integrated supply chain solutions.

Al-Rashed has been instrumental in assisting in the Kuwait government's mission to send oxygen aid to India and Tunisia, where COVID wreaked

havoc due to a massive oxygen shortage. Kuwait's Public Authority for Industry (PAI), along with various ministries of the Kuwait government, Kuwait Port Authority, Kuwait Customs and the Indian Embassy in Kuwait, worked tirelessly to procure and send oxygen and supplies.

Al-Rashed International Shipping Co currently is under the management of the 3rd generation of the Al-Rashed family - Bassim S Al-Rashed, the chairman who is ably guided by Saad Al-Rashed, owner and Managing Director, Ravi Varrier, CEO and Pradeep Menon, CFO run the day-to-day activities of the organization.

## DHAMAN sponsors Kuwait Diving & Life Saving Club

**KUWAIT:** The Health Assurance Hospitals Company (DHAMAN) announced its sponsorship of the Kuwait Diving and Life Saving Club, the official representative of Kuwait in international and regional competitions and championships in the field of diving and underwater activities.

This sponsorship includes the participation of the Kuwait Team for Underwater Photography & Video, part of the Kuwait Diving & Life Saving Club, in the World Underwater Photography & Video Championship to be held in Portugal during 24 September to 10 October 2021 with a delegation including 12 members as the only Arab team participating in this international event.

Director of Public Relations & Corporate Communications at DHAMAN Ali Al-Hamad said that the Company supports sports activities in line with DHAMAN's vision to encourage a healthy lifestyle in the Kuwait and its belief that practicing sports of all kinds contributes to maintaining better health for all members of society and motivating the community to practice sports to improve their health, as sports are an effective platform in achieving health prevention goals. He added that DHAMAN pays attention to encourage young Kuwaiti talents to represent Kuwait in various international and regional forums, based on its



Kuwait team for underwater photography & video, part of the Kuwait Diving & Life Saving Club



Ali Al-Hamad

social responsibility as the first company in the Gulf to provide its services through the integrated health maintenance system (HMO) and the first healthcare Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) in the Middle East.

Al-Hamad expressed the pride and honor that DHAMAN feels because of the Club's participation in this international championship to represent Kuwait, especially since it is the only Arab team in the tournament, and having one of the Company's youth employees

is among the members of this team, as the Company encourages employees and all members of society to actively participate in practicing their athletic hobbies, interact with the community organizations, as well as succeed and progress in all areas of their lives.

On his part, the Secretary of the Kuwait Diving & Life Saving Club Mohammad Al-Saraawi expressed joy for having the Club representing Kuwait in the World Underwater Photography & Video Championship to be held in Portugal, as the first tournament organized after a period of hiatus imposed by the developments of the COVID-19 pandemic in the world. He expressed gratitude for DHAMAN's sponsorship and support for the national team in this important international tournament.

## AUB honors its employee Faris Al-Faris

**KUWAIT:** Within Ahli United Bank's keenness to encourage its young national employees, and its pride in their excellence and devotion to develop their skills, Jehad Saud Al-Humaidhi, AUB' Chief Executive Officer (CEO), honored Faris Al-Faris, Personal Banker - Retail Banking at AUB who achieved the first position among the participants from all Kuwaiti banks on the Certified Bank Branch Manager (CBBM) program recently organized by the Institute of Banking Studies (IBS).

On this occasion, Jehad Al-Humaidhi said that AUB management prides itself on the national competences it has, that spare no effort to develop and enhance their scientific and professional skills and represent a model example for ambitious youth who endeavor for achieving success and excellence, adding that AUB is committed to developing the skills of its employees to ensure their excellence in



Jehad Al-Humaidhi honoring Faris Al-Faris

performance and to keep up with all new developments in the banking sector.

Al-Humaidhi stressed that AUB continues to encourage and qualify its employees, especially national one, at all departments and administrative levels, by harnessing all possibilities to develop their skills through local and international courses and workshops, according to a carefully established

training plan, emphasizing AUB's incessant commitment to investing in its human resources, addressing obstacles before them and paving the way for them to achieve more excellence. Al-Humaidhi extended sincere appreciations to IBS management, and praised their prominent role in preparing, qualifying and training banking sector employees and creating a spirit of competition that enhances the distinguished young employee who will become the leaders of the future.

Al-Humaidhi pointed out that the AUB's investment in its human wealth is the best investment to advance performance and efficiency in various fields, as such investment achieves a direct reflection on excellence in customer satisfaction and attains a high level of performance that boosts the Bank's unique position. From his part, Faris Al-Faris expressed his happiness for achieving the first position in the CBBM program organized by IBS, saying, "I am very proud of this excellence achievement after stiff competition among participants from all Kuwaiti Banks. I extend my sincere gratitude to AUB management that created for us an ideal work atmosphere. I also thank my co-workers for their support during my participation in the program, which concluded in my achieving the first position."

## Nigeria, Ghana sprint to join digital currency race

**LAGOS:** Nigeria and Ghana are racing to adopt a central bank digital currency as they look to ride the wave of popularity of cryptocurrencies in West Africa's two largest economies. Central banks in both countries have partnered with foreign financial tech companies to create digital versions of their currencies, joining the global train of countries exploring the initiative.

Nigeria, Africa's largest economy, will launch its eNaira digital currency on October 1, while Ghana will trial e-Cedi from this month. Nigeria has seen a boom of cryptocurrencies, despite a ban on banks making the transactions, as people look for ways to escape the weakening naira currency and offset high cost of living and unemployment in Africa's most pop-

ulous country. "Nigerians are investing in cryptocurrency as a means of store value and to carry their funds outside the shores of the country," said Ayodeji Ebo, head of retail investment at Lagos-based investment firm Chapel Hill Denham. "eNaira will be for transactionary purposes."

Central banks across the world are exploring ways to create virtual money as legal tender following the growth in digital payments, cryptocurrency and privately issued stablecoins. Both so-called central bank-backed CBDCs and cryptocurrency are virtual money: CBDCs are issued and regulated by the central bank while the other is out of government control.

China became the first major economy to pilot a digital currency last year. Since then, five countries have launched digitized currencies, according to a CBDC tracker by American think-tank Atlantic Council. Although some African countries such as Kenya, South Africa and Rwanda are exploring CBDCs, Nigeria and Ghana have already reached advanced stages.

The Bank of Ghana is partnering with German firm Giesecke+Devrient (G+D) to pilot the e-Cedi.



A trader changes dollars for naira at a currency exchange store in Lagos

The scheme is part of a broader plan to digitize the country and its government. G+D will provide the technology that will be tested in a trial phase with local banks, payment service providers, consumers and others. — AFP

## Fed may hint at ending stimulus, but no big moves likely

**WASHINGTON:** Will they or won't they? Markets worldwide will be holding their collective breaths yesterday as they await the Federal Reserve's decision on whether it will begin to close the taps on its monetary stimulus. The growing consensus is that the much-anticipated first step will not be announced until November and ultimately begin in December.

But Fed Chair Jerome Powell could still provide details on the plans to start to taper the massive bond buying program that kept the US financial market from collapsing during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) will announce its decision at 1800 GMT, after which Powell will hold a press conference where he certainly will be asked to elaborate on the bank's tapering schedule. Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said "it seems reasonable to expect Chair Powell to drop some pretty unsubtle hints that a decision in November is a good bet."

"We suspect his remarks will be sprinkled liberally with caveats, because neither he nor anyone else knows for sure what will happen to the COVID situation over the next six weeks," he said.

The continued spread of the Delta variant of COVID-19, which has slowed the progress in restoring jobs lost during the pandemic, and the possible impasse in Congress over raising the federal borrowing limit and funding the government add elements of uncertainty to the outlook for the world's largest economy.

### Start to taper

When the pandemic hit in March 2020, the Fed slashed its benchmark interest rate and began buying bonds and other securities to ease lending conditions and ensure the financial system would not seize up. Powell has made it clear the key borrowing rate will remain at zero for some time, until there is substantial further progress in the labor market. But with the taper announcement expected, "managing expectations about the first rate hike... will be important," said Rubeela Farooqi of High Frequency Economics. She said traders also will be watching the quarterly economic forecasts Fed officials will be releasing yesterday, since they will offer clues on whether committee members are expecting tighter policy sooner. But the first step will be for the Fed to reduce the monthly asset purchases currently totaling at least \$80 billion in Treasury securities and \$40 billion in agency mortgage-backed securities.

Market watchers, as well as hawks on the FOMC, are concerned the stimulus is helping to fuel price increases that may prove more lasting than Powell had predicted. The Fed's preferred inflation measure, the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index, rose at a rapid 4.2 percent pace in July, far above its two percent goal. "A growing number of FOMC members are correctly becoming concerned that the strong rebound in aggregate demand, stemming from the unprecedented monetary and fiscal stimulus, has been a culprit in pushing up inflation, and, if aggregate demand continues to grow solidly, high inflation will persist," said Mickey Levy of Berenberg Capital Markets. — AFP

# Residential real estate is poised to grow

## Kuwait's favorable demography, housing program and attractive yields to support sector growth

**KUWAIT:** Housing, one of the basic requirements in the hierarchy of human needs, plays a big role in the economy. At a macro level, it boosts the construction sector, promotes investment in related infrastructure and other amenities, and aids in job creation. For example, in the US, housing's share of GDP was 17.5 percent in 2020. In Kuwait, the construction sector had contributed to 5.1 percent of non-oil GDP in 2019 and 2.9 percent in 2020. Real estate, renting and business services had contributed to about 9 percent of GDP in 2018.

Being a key consideration in the migration of labor, the availability of affordable housing options in a country facilitates labor mobility. Ensuring adequate housing facilities would aid in retaining the local labor force and attracting foreign talent. Lending for housing promotes financial market development through avenues such as securitization. Homeownership benefits individuals as well through capital appreciation in the long term and provides secure collateral against inflation and market fluctuations.

### Population growth

Kuwait's population has grown at a CAGR of 4.1 percent, and the number of nationals has grown at 2.3 percent from 2005-2020. The country's population is estimated to be 4.5 million in 2025 and 5.4 million in 2050.5. The annual rate of growth has slowed to 1 percent in 2020 and is estimated to slow to 0.34 percent by 2050.6 However, with a relatively high population density of 232 people/sq. km, the estimated growth in population would support the demand for residential real estate.

With over 50 percent of the total population (nationals and non-nationals) and 75 percent of the Kuwaitis below 40, Kuwait's young demography is favorable for real estate demand. Although recent policies focusing on reducing expat numbers would present some downside, policy reconsiderations such as the review underway for work permits to expats over 60 and sustained demand for high-quality residential spaces from Kuwaiti nationals would support residential real estate.

### State housing program

A government house built on a minimum 400 square meter plot or a minimum 400 square meter apartment provided by the PAHW at nominal value, plus a monthly rent allowance of KD 150 during the waiting period. A minimum 400 square meter plot of land provided by the PAHW at nominal value. A long-term, interest-free loan of KD 70,000 and building materials worth KD 30,000 at a subsidized price are provided by the Savings and Credit Bank for the construction of the house. During the waiting period for allocation, a monthly rent allowance of KD 150 is paid to the applicant.

A KD 70,000 long-term, interest-free loan from the Savings and Credit Bank, to buy an apartment or

house with a minimum area of 360 square meters, or to build a house if the citizen already owns land. Along with the loan, KD 30,000 worth of building materials is provided by the bank for construction or renovation. The government's expenditure on rent allowance for FY 2020 stood at KD 2.9 billion. Though a new mortgage law is being proposed, a continuation of the state's aid in housing would be a growth driver for residential real estate.

The current low-interest-rate environment has resulted in a search for investment opportunities with higher returns. Kuwait's real estate presents one such alternative. For example, the annual rate of return on investment properties had ranged from 6.9 percent to 8.4 percent in Q3 2020.10 Measures are taken to handle the impact of COVID-19 such as sharp reduction in interest rates and postponement of debtor instalments had contributed to an increase in demand in private residences with their prices increasing by 8.2 percent y-o-y in Q3 2020.11

### Supply constraints

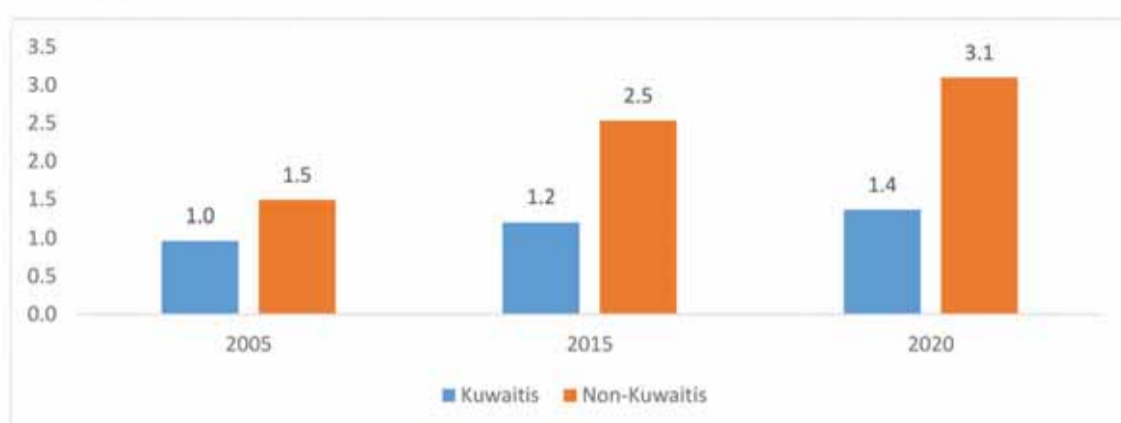
Residential zones comprise around 10 percent of Kuwait's area.12 In a 2013 study by the Real Estate Association, the vacant land parcels had stood at 14,079 against 108,288 pending applications for housing with the PAHW. While measures such as allocation of funds towards housing as part of government development program and increased offerings in emerging areas such as Sabah Al-Ahmad and new projects such as Jaber Al-Ahmad residential city scheme are aiming to increase supply, delays in construction and preference for spacious villas seem to contribute to the constraints in supply.

### Residential real estate performance

Kuwait's residential market has been on the uptrend since 2016, with transactions increasing on an annual basis both in terms of volume and value. The effect of COVID-19 pandemic was felt in the real estate market during the initial phase of 2020, with a recovery following towards the end. The residential sector witnessed pent-up demand in the last two quarters of 2020, which resulted in Annual volumes and values reducing only mildly. Residential Real Estate sales in the first four months of 2021 have been strong with sales peaking during March.

Adequate liquidity, low job losses for citizens and the measures taken by the government to contain the COVID-19 pandemic such as stringent lockdown followed by a cautious phased re-opening, imposition of curfews as required, allocation of KD 500 million to support efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 and vaccination drives have ensured the recovery of demand in the residential sector after a dip in the first two quarters in 2020.14 Monetary policy support measures such as postponement of loan repayments, increase in loan-to-value limits by 10 percent for purchase of residential land, and pur-

Figure: Population of Kuwait (in millions)



Source: Central Statistical Bureau

chase or construction of houses also lent support to residential real estate's recovery. The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has been executing and delivering several projects lately. There has been an increase in residential offerings from emerging areas such as the Sabah Al-Ahmad, Saad Al-Abdulla, and Jaber Al-Ahmad in recent quarters. Increased offerings from these relatively active but less saturated areas have kindled investor interest and has been a key driver of demand in recent quarters.

The residential segment has been the key driver of overall real estate activity in Kuwait, as investment and commercial segments have been facing the pressure of increased vacancies and falling rents due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Investment Real Estate sales fell by more than 50 percent in 2020, compared to the previous year.

In terms of pricing, Kuwait's residential prices have bounced back after bottoming out in Q3 2018. Kuwait's Residential Home Price Index exhibited a rising trend during 2019 and peaked during Q1 2020 before the pandemic. On a year-on-year basis, the residential price index has registered growth in all of all quarters between Q4 2018 to Q3 2020.

### Affordability of residential real estate

The average price of residential real estate has picked up after bottoming out in 2017. There was a steep correction in prices since the oil price crash of 2015. Residential prices have recovered since then, with 2020 witnessing the highest growth rate at 11 percent. The rebound in demand has led to an increase in prices. Although the average salary of Kuwaiti nationals has been increasing every year since 2015. They are broadly in line with inflation, which indicates no major increase in real disposable income since the oil price crash during 2015.

Compared to other GCC markets such as Dubai,

Abu Dhabi, and Riyadh, Kuwait's residential affordability appears to be low. The residential price to income ratio for Kuwait stands at 16.5, which is approximately thrice that of Dubai or Abu Dhabi. Kuwait's ratio is significantly higher than Riyadh and stands higher than even London.

The implication of the ratio is that it takes approximately 16.5 years to repay the financing procured to purchase a residential apartment in Kuwait from the disposable income of an average Kuwaiti national by paying monthly instalments. Kuwait city's average residential price to income is the highest among the GCC, making it one of the least affordable places to own a residence.

### Challenges

The government owns 95 percent of the land in Kuwait and largely controls residential real estate development through parceling of land plots and their allocation. Kuwait's laws restrict private companies from buying and trading residential property. While this was intended to control real estate prices and inflation, the efficiency and competition associated with private sector participation could improve supply. To address the concern of increase in prices, alternative measure such as price increase ceiling or increase in supply of buildable land could be considered. Lack of Financing Options/ Immature Mortgage Market

### Conclusion

Residential real estate is poised to grow driven by favorable demography, state housing program, attractive yields, and upcoming new residential developments. Faster implementation of projects with increased private sector participation would ease supply constraints and price pressures. Passage of the new mortgage law and additional measures such as availability of yield curve would pave way for a healthy mortgage market in Kuwait.



## NBK Academy welcomes 25th batch of trainees

**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) welcomed the 25th batch of new employees to its annual program, "NBK Academy," as part of the bank's strategy to attract and retain national talents. This unique program is designed to contribute to NBK employees' professional development and sharpen their skills to provide added value to the banking industry.

The event was attended by the new trainees and the welcome ceremony was attended by Salah Al-Fulaij, CEO of National Bank of Kuwait, Kuwait, Sulaiman Al-Marzouq, Deputy CEO of National Bank of Kuwait - Kuwait, Emad Al-Ablani, GM - Group Human Resources, Mohamed Al-Othman, GM- Consumer Banking Group, Ahmed Bourisly, GM - Corporate Banking Group, and Mohammed Al-Kharafi, Head of Group Operations, in addition to several officials from Talent Management & Training & Development.

The program extends over a period of four months, during which 14 trainees will be trained in various areas of the banking industry, Design Thinking, Boosting Productivity, Innovation, Digital Trends in Banking, in addition to core banking topics and fully understanding all the departments and groups within NBK. The participants on a later stage of the program go through rotation in various departments in order to better understand the banking sector.

The Academy's programs are specifically designed to cater to university graduates who have successfully passed the selection criteria qualifying them to join the program. It also includes engaging internationally



Najla Al-Sager

accredited trainers to enable employees to acquire specialized banking skills.

On this occasion, Najla Al-Sager, Head of Talent Management, Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait, said: "The NBK Academy Program reflects the Bank's commitment to develop national banking leaders in line with the latest and best international standards. Our strategy aims to achieve sustainable development, in addition to our mandate to fulfill our national role and maintain our social responsibility." Al-Sager highlighted the uniqueness of NBK Academy as the first of its kind in the Kuwaiti private sector, which is specifically focused on providing training and development to the bank's national youth. "I am extremely confident in the abilities and qualifications of all participants and their ability to successfully graduate thanks to their qualifications, skills and efforts," Al-Sager confirmed. Al-Sager called on the participants to strive for excellence, as this training provides a crucial step in paving the way for professional advancement and is considered a milestone in preparing them to assume leadership positions, pointing out that NBK encourages all its employees to continue personal and professional development to maintain their qualifications and enhance their expertise.

NBK Academy was launched in 2008 to pave the way for young graduates to join the banking sector, through providing best in class training approaches that have been developed in cooperation with world renowned institutions and universities to keep pace with skills required to enter the job market.

## KFH launches a back-to-school grand financing campaign

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Executive Manager - Automobiles & Equipment - Ahdh Alessa said that KFH has launched Back-to-School grand financing campaign titled "we are back with happiness" that includes several financings offers.

The campaign provides an opportunity to avail several services and advantages provided to KFH customers and other banks on the start of a new scholastic year. It is a compacted campaign comprising several investment and finance products and programs. The campaign covers customers interested in purchasing or leasing new or used cars or boats, obtain educational finance, finance against a financial guarantee, open "Hesabi" account or investment plans "Jameati" during the period 12/09 - 12/10 at all KFH showrooms and branches.

Alessa emphasized in a press release that KFH provides, through the campaign, several advantages including 0 percent profit on new cars as part of a selected group presented by the agents including: Infinity, GMC, Porsche, Mercedes, BMW, Nissan, Honda, VW, Haval, Great Wall, Chery, Gator, Terralord" to fulfill the needs of all customers of luxurious and economic cars in addition to the competitive prices on a variety of cars as part of the leasing product with maintenance including "Toyota, Infinity, Lexus, VW, GMC, Kia and Jack" as well as used cars. Regarding boats, marine equipment, motorcycles, the campaign provides multiple advantages e.g., a grace period for the first instalment maturity, no salary transfer certificate required, finance with competitive profit margin in addition to other advantages provided by various companies to KFH customers on a selected category of motorcycles. He added that, for the finance vs financial guarantee customers the campaign offers competitive profit with a finance period approximating 10 years and flexible settlement methods. He indicated that this facility is a trade finance facility offered to individuals against a full financial guarantee on the total debt. Attachment shall be implemented on fixed deposits or customer's personal saving account. The product provides full



Ahdh Alessa

coverage for the commercial needs of the individual. The finance limit shall be determined based on the value of the deposit or the attached amount from the saving account. The product provides other advantages including continued profit on deposits throughout the credit period, speedy completion of transactions and competitive profit.

Regarding "Hesabi" program, he said that KFH has offered "Hesabi" program with qualitative advantages as part of its continuous care of various customer categories, ages and interests. The product fulfils their need to obtain a distinguished service as per certain standards and methods that match global standards regarding quality, accuracy, and speed.

As soon as the social allowance is transferred to "Hesabi" program the customer enters the monthly draw on KD 250/- prize for 10 winners monthly in addition to monthly draws on 3 cars (Jeep Wrangler Sport) during the campaign "Win with Hesabi" for youth. Hesabi card is a prepaid card issued by KFH to "Hesabi" customers which provides special discounts for the holders as well as a prolonged prizes program during the year.

He indicated that the best investment for children is their university education. Accordingly, KFH has designed an investment plan for a long-term higher education plan "Jameati" to achieve a bright future for them by saving monthly amounts. According to "Jameati" plan the customer may withdraw 60 percent of the balance in the first year and 60 percent every year after the first withdrawal. The targeted amount may reach KD 120,000. The investment plan "Jameati" is included in the Takaful Insurance. The Takaful insurance policy is issued automatically in the customer's name. In case of death or total disability (due to sickness or accident) during the plan term the Takaful insurance policy shall cover the remaining unpaid part of the targeted amount.

Alessa emphasized that the campaign contributes to the enhancement of the local market and the businesses of agents and suppliers. The campaign grants customers remarkable advantages to achieve their aspirations and needs as part of KFH endeavor to provide the best services, preserve customers base, attract new customers, increase KFH market share, highlight KFH role as a pioneer in driving economy. He added that KFH has made outstanding contributions to the retail market at the local level and contributed to the activation of the internal trade movement by diversifying its finance products and activities.

Lifestyle | Features



Saudi designer  
*Hala Al-Aitah*



A model displays a creation by Saudi designer Hala Al-Aitah (left) during a fashion show in the Saudi Red Sea resort of Jeddah. — AFP photos



Models display creations by Saudi designer Hala Al-Aitah during a fashion show in the Saudi Red Sea resort of Jeddah.—AFP photos

## Audiences back in Milan as Italy fashion seeks 'rebirth'

The taxis and courtesy cars, street style and front row stars were back in Milan yesterday as fashion week returns with mostly live audiences for the first time in 18 months. Fendi, Prada, Versace, Dolce & Gabbana, Missoni, Ferragamo, Etro—almost all the big fashion houses have opted for in-person shows for the spring/summer 2022 women's collections. Out of 65 catwalk shows over the next five days, 43 will have a physical audience, as will 77 out of the 98 presentations—and many of the parties are back. However, COVID-19 will still make its presence felt. Invitees will be required to show proof of vaccination or negative test, and wear masks. Many buyers and journalists are unable to travel to Milan due to ongoing travel restrictions, and the number of attendees at events is being restricted.

With many shows dubbed "more intimate", there is also no sign yet of a return to the budget-busting blockbuster shows of previous years. However, this season is

full of novelty. Roberto Cavalli is back, under new artistic director Fausto Puglisi, while MM6 Maison Margiela and Luisa Spagnoli have shows for the first time. Gucci is not on the catwalk schedule in Milan but will unveil a new project entitled The Vault, while Giorgio Armani celebrates 40 years of his Emporio line with a retrospective exhibition.

### 'Moment of rebirth'

Italy was the first European country to face a wave of coronavirus cases in February 2020, sparking a nationwide lockdown that plunged the eurozone's third largest economy into recession. But a successful vaccination campaign has brought hopes of a return to some kind of normality and economic growth. Carlo Ferro, president of the Italian Trade Agency, said the resumption of physical events at Milan Fashion Week "comes in a context of economic restarting and shows the courage of the organizers, the tenacity of the companies and the support of Italian industry".

The numbers on the Italian fashion industry—including the textile, clothing, leather, shoe and leather goods sectors—are encouraging, with turnover in the first quarter of 2021 up 24 percent compared to the same period in 2020. It is still 15 percent lower than before the pandemic, but industry players are hoping a sharp increase in orders will make up some of the difference by year end. The collections this week "mark a moment of rebirth", said Carlo Capasa chairman of Italy's national fashion chamber, the CNMI. — AFP



On the occasion of the opening of Milan Fashion Week, Benetton's CEO Massimo Renon and Italian rapper Ghali Amdouni, better known as Ghali (center) are pictured during a Benetton press conference to present United Colors of Ghali, a capsule collection designed by the musician. — AFP

## Treats and tradition in Tehran's oldest, tiniest teahouse

With his trimmed beard, red scarf and bronze-coloured waistcoat, Kazem Mabhtutian serves a steady stream of customers in the smallest and oldest teahouse in Tehran, but at 63 years old, he is counting on God to find him a successor. Tucked in an alleyway of the Grand Bazaar, wedged between a clothes shop and the door of a mosque, his 1.5-square-metre chaikhaneh (tea house) is invisible from the main street. And yet it is the most famous among tea connoisseurs in the Iranian capital.

In between pouring glasses of steaming brew for his customers, Mabhtutian tells the century-old story of the fabled Haj Ali Darvish Tea House with pride. His father Haj Ali Mabhtutian, nicknamed the Dervish or Beheshti, or "He who deserves paradise", was born in Hamedan in western Iran, he says. "He came to Tehran at the age of 15 to earn a living. He bought this shop from Haj Hassan who had opened it in 1918." Arranged around him are cups and teapots, boxes of tea and a samovar water-heater. There is an antiquated radio, a paraffin lamp, statuettes of dervishes, and gold-coloured sticks of Nabat, a saffron-scented barley sugar. On the wall, a tourism ministry certificate assures that the place "is part of the intangible heritage of the national culture".

### 'Tea of kindness'

Aside from the traditional Iranian black tea, Mabhtutian prepares cardamon, cinnamon, mint, thyme and hibiscus brews every day from 7:30 am. But his favorite is his signature "tea of kindness", a mixture of mint, lemon and saffron which gives it a zesty yellow color. Business is usually steady: experts say that Iranians consume an average of nine small glasses of tea a day, or 100,000 tons nationwide every year. "Until 2007, my father ran this house, known as the smallest in the world," said Mabhtutian. "Then he broke his leg and never returned to work. He stayed at home until his death in 2018 at the age of 92."

Kazem then left his advertising agency job and took over the business. "I don't regret it at all," he said. "Advertising was a business, but this is a question of love. I chose this job with my heart, not for the money." On the menu, the price of a cup of tea is listed at 100,000 rials (35 cents), but "the rates are not fixed," he said. "It depends on the financial situation of the customer." Every day he serves some 200 customers. "Most of them come from outside the market because they know us," he said. "There used to be a lot of tourists



Owner Kazem Mabhtutian, 63, serves tea at the smallest and oldest teahouse tucked away in an alleyway of the Grand Bazaar in the Iranian capital Tehran. — AFP photos

too, because this shop was in the guidebooks, but the foreigners disappeared with the pandemic."

### 'Made with love'

Given the miniature size of the teahouse, there are no tables, but customers can pull up a plastic stool outside, amid the bazaar's bustle. Seated there was Shafagh, a 32-year-old graphic designer, with her friend Forough, 47. "Everyone sells tea, but the important thing is to know how to make it," said Shafagh, enjoying a cup of kindness tea. "It's like cooking—when someone makes tea with love, it tastes completely different."

Forough chimed in that "I also come to chat with the owner. I think his tea is noth-

ing like the tea served in other places". Every weekday, Habibollah Sayadi, 70, leaves his nearby clothing shop to enjoy his Iranian black tea. "I'm a regular—I've been coming here for almost 50 years because I love the taste of his tea," he said, adding approvingly that "Mr Kazem respects hygiene" in times of Covid. Mabhtutian, the owner, is getting on in years and is still single, so does he worry about what will become of his beloved shop in future? "Not at all," he said confidently. "God will find me a successor. A place like this one does not die." — AFP



Owner Kazem Mabhtutian (left) drinks tea with his customers outside his smallest and oldest teahouse.

## Lifestyle | Features

## Rare rhino horns go up in flames in India anti-poaching campaign

Nearly 2,500 rare rhino horns were destroyed yesterday in the first ceremony of its kind in northeastern India as part of an anti-poaching drive to mark World Rhino Day. The endangered one-horned rhinoceros used to be widespread in the region but hunting and habitat loss have slashed its numbers to just a few thousand, with most now found in India's Assam state. Trade in rhino horn has been banned since 1977 by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

But conservationists warn poaching attempts continue amid demand from China and Vietnam, rhino horn is promoted as a wonder ingredient in traditional medicine. "A rhino horn has supreme value only when it is intact to the living rhino. These horns have no value," Assam's Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said

during the ceremony in the town of Bokakhat. "With today's action, Assam wants to send two messages-that we don't believe that rhino horns have any medicinal value and that we only believe in preserving the living rhinos."

The town is near the UNESCO-listed heritage site Kaziranga National Park, home to more than 2,000 one-horned rhinos-the world's biggest population. At the ceremony, horns were carefully placed in layers in several large furnaces before being set alight, sending plumes of smoke into the air above fierce orange flames. The animal parts-which contain keratin, the same protein as comes in human hair and nails-had been kept in storage by the government since 1969.

Some of the horns had been seized from poachers. Others were removed from rhinos that had died of natural causes. All rhino deaths in the state are recorded by

local police. Before the ceremony, officials extracted DNA from each horn and gave each animal part a unique ID number to create a gene database for scientific studies and conservation efforts. Assam's Forest and Environment Minister Parimal Suklabaidya added that 94 horns were also set aside and would be kept for heritage purposes. The International Rhino Foundation said on Monday in its annual report that two of the herbivores were killed by poachers in Assam in 2020.

But the global body added that rhino poaching deaths have been declining in recent years amid conservation efforts in India and neighboring Nepal. The population of the one-horned creatures had grown to more than 3,700 after plunging to just 100 in the early 1900s, it added. — AFP



## Cavers find snakes but no genies in Yemen's 'Well of Hell'

A team of Omani cavers has made what is believed to be the first descent to the bottom of Yemen's fabled Well of Barhout-a natural wonder shunned by many locals, who believe it is a prison for genies. The forbidding 'Well of Hell', whose dark, round aperture creates

a 30-metre (100 foot) wide hole in the desert floor of Yemen's eastern province of Al-Mahra, plunges approximately 112 meters (367 feet) below the surface and, according to some accounts, gives off strange odors. Inside, the Oman Cave Exploration Team (OCET) found snakes, dead animals and cave pearls-but no signs of the supernatural.

"There were snakes, but they won't bother you unless you bother them," Mohammed Al-Kindi, a geology professor at the German University of Technology in Oman, told AFP. Kindi was among eight experienced cavers who rappelled down last week, while two colleagues remained at the surface. Footage provided to AFP showed cave formations and grey and lime-green cave pearls, formed by dripping water. "Passion drove us to do this,

and we felt that this is something that will reveal a new wonder and part of Yemeni history," said Kindi, who also owns a mining and petroleum consultancy firm. "We collected samples of water, rocks, soil and some dead animals but have yet to have them analyzed," he said, adding that a report will soon be made public.

"There were dead birds, which does create some bad odors, but there was no overwhelming bad smell." Yemeni officials told AFP in June that they did not know what lay in the depths of the pit, which they estimated to be "millions and millions" of years old, adding that they had never reached the bottom. "We have gone to visit the area and entered the well, reaching more than 50-60 meters down," Salah Babhair, director general of Mahra's geological survey and mineral resources

authority, said at the time. "We noticed strange things inside. We also smelled something strange... It's a mysterious situation."

Over the centuries, stories have circulated of malign figures known as jinns or genies living in the well, which some regard as the gate of hell. Many residents of the area are uneasy about visiting the vast pit or even talking about it, for fear of ill fortune. Yemenis have had enough bad luck as it is. The country has been embroiled in a devastating civil war since 2014 that has triggered what the United Nations describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with two-thirds of its 30-million population dependent on some form of aid. — AFP



## Los Angeles to open 'Parthenon of film museums,' says Tom Hanks

Los Angeles is finally getting a museum for movies-and it's about time, said Tom Hanks, as he welcomed journalists to a special pre-opening event Tuesday. The world capital of filmmaking and home of Hollywood boasts museums for everything from natural history to selfies, but until now has never had one dedicated to the silver screen. After decades of delays, the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures opens to the public next week.

"It matters for Los Angeles to have this film museum," said double-Oscar winner Hanks, who serves as a trustee. "We all know that films are made everywhere in the world, and they are wonderful films. And there are other cities with film museums. "But with all due respect, a place like Los Angeles, created by the Motion Picture Academy... this museum has really got to be the Parthenon of such places." Upon opening, the museum-run by the Oscar-awarding Academy-will be the largest film-dedicated museum in North America.

Drawing on some \$390 million funding from Hollywood institutions old and new-including Disney, Warner and Netflix-and beyond, the building was designed by famed architect Renzo Piano. Piano reworked a historic 1930s department store to house the museum's main galleries. He added the gleaming, orb-shaped David Geffen Theater, which appears to hover above the museum's courtyard, inviting some obvious comparisons to the "Star Wars" films. "Don't call this the Death Star!" joked Piano, at Tuesday's press conference. "Call it the Zeppelin. A Zeppelin to take you [to] a different world."

## NIGER NOMAD FESTIVAL REVERBERATES WITH ELECTRIC GUITARS

"That guitar sounds crazy happy!" grins Oumar Alassane, sitting on his motorbike with an arm around the shoulder of a friend, a short distance from a stage in the desert. It is 8 pm, just the start of a full evening of musical acts at Ingall, a small oasis town in northern Niger that hosts the three-day Cure Salee festival. Alassane, a young Fulani, is among the thousands who throng to the event every September to mark the end of the rainy season. For him and his village friends, opportunities to enjoy live music are rare, though the desert town is far from deadly the jihadist attacks that have struck the west and east of the country.

Held on the outskirts of the old quarter, the celebration of Saharan pastoralism attracts a multitude of nomadic Wodaabe-part of the Fulani grouping-and Tuaregs, some herding their livestock hundreds of kilometers to Cure Salee, named for springs rich in mineral salts. A succession of electric guitarists takes turns to perform and in the early evening, stroboscopic lights begin to color the starry night. "Really it's good," says 18-year-old Alassane.

"All year round we are in the bush, so at La Cure Salee, the breeders come to



A group of Tuareg musicians is seen playing in a concert at the Cure Salee, in Ingall.

party." "And then also, we are looking for a future wife!" adds one of his friends, to peals of laughter-though the humor belies the key role the festival plays in courtship and betrothal for these far-flung peoples. For now, about 100 youths are gathered in front of the stage. The boys and girls remain in separate groups and some can

be seen throwing sidelong glances across the divide. In nomadic Saharan society, concerts by small groups of musicians in the hollow of a dune are preferred to large gatherings.

Cola and cigarettes  
But during major festivals, from

Tamanrasset in Algeria to Bamako in Mali via Niger, people seize the chance to dance amid a packed throng. Some people stay away from the performers on their bikes, periodically starting their engines to blow away the sand. Others are packing into the front of the crowd, everyone listening to guitar riffs and the music of a DJ and his sonic palette, worthy of some of West Africa's best nightclubs. As the night draws on, young people begin to dance languidly, always with a headscarf for the boys and a modest veil for the girls.

All have donned fine clothes, in hues that are explosions of color in daytime but now merge into the night. "I brought three bazins (shiny fabric used for clothes), but there is one that I only take out in the evening," said a Fulani teen. No alcohol is allowed, but street vendors sell cola and cigarettes in the middle of the crowd. In the morning, after a long night, some youths straddled their motorcycles to flee into the bush and sleep, far from the festival. They would come back in the afternoon, after the raging heat of midday. On the makeshift stage, the music goes on. — AFP



Academy Museum of Motion Pictures trustee Tom Hanks speaks onstage during the Academy Museum Opening Press Conference at Academy Museum of Motion Pictures. — AFP

The museum presents a broad overview of more than a century of motion pictures from around the world. Modern Tinseltown treasures include costumes from "Bram Stoker's Dracula," an orc from "The Lord of the Rings," the amphibian man from "The Shape of Water," and "Star Wars" droids C-3PO and R2-D2. Older heirlooms include a "Rosebud" sled from "Citizen Kane," regularly named the best film ever made. Only three wooden sleds were ever made-on set, director Orson Welles wasn't happy with the first take, but wrapped filming after the second was thrown onto a furnace for the film's climactic scene, meaning the third survived.

"Do we need a movie museum? Yeah. Because we need to celebrate everything that this town has brought to the world," said Hanks. The museum's temporary space opens with an exhibition of Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki's work, leading visitors through a "tree tunnel" inspired by classic "My Neighbor Totoro" to see sketches of flying castles and early character designs.

"We want to bring through all of the international and diverse stories of moviemaking through our galleries," museum director Bill Kramer told AFP. After a star-studded opening gala Saturday, the museum opens to the public on September 30. — AFP



A couple of friends on a motorbike get to a concert during the Cure Salee, in Ingall, northern Niger.



A group of men look at the women on the stage during the Cure Salee. — AFP photos

Sports

# Manchester City hit six, thrash Wycombe

## Liverpool cruise in League Cup

LONDON: Manchester City started their bid to lift a fifth successive League Cup with a 6-1 rout of Wycombe, while Japan forward Takumi Minamino inspired Liverpool's 3-0 victory at Norwich on Tuesday. Everton and Watford were the major Premier League casualties in the third round, losing to QPR and Stoke respectively. City will move past Liverpool onto a record nine League Cup triumphs if they take the trophy this term.

The holders made the perfect start to that mission as Pep Guardiola was rewarded for fielding a strong attack featuring Kevin De Bruyne, Phil Foden, Raheem Sterling, Ferran Torres and Riyad Mahrez at the Etihad Stadium City, who gave debuts to six academy graduates, were stunned in the 22nd minute as Brandon Hanlan tapped in his first ever goal for third tier Wycombe. But Guardiola's men equalized seven minutes later when De Bruyne sprinted onto Foden's pass and slotted into the far corner for his first goal since May.



### Everton and Watford on losing end

was lucky to grow up in Barcelona. Won the Champions League with seven players from the Barca academy. That is unique. Here, you have the feeling that we have not just one or two potential players but many of them. They have something special."

Liverpool had already won 3-0 at Carrow Road in the Premier League earlier this season and their reserves managed to repeat that scoreline. Reds boss Jurgen Klopp made nine changes to the side which beat Crystal Palace on Saturday, with Kaide Gordon, 16, and fellow teenager Conor Bradley handed debuts. Minamino, making his first appearance of the season after a thigh injury, fired them into a fourth minute lead as he drilled home from Divock Origi's header.

#### 'Really good moment'

Norwich squandered the chance to level before half-time when Christos Tzolis' penalty was saved by Caoimhin Kelleher after Bradley fouled

Dimitris Giannoulis. Origi doubled Liverpool's advantage in the 50th minute, heading in Kostas Tsimikas' cross for his first goal in 12 months. Minamino grabbed his second goal with 10 minutes left, netting in clinical fashion from close-range. "Footballers want to play, that's clear. He was with his national team, got injured and was then not fit," Klopp said of Minamino. "It was not like he didn't play for 60 weeks. Taki is in a really good moment, training well and deserved the two goals."

Liverpool's Merseyside rivals Everton crashed



MANCHESTER: The scoreboard shows the final 6-1 score after the English League Cup third round football match between Manchester City and Wycombe Wanderers at the Etihad stadium in Manchester, northwest England on Tuesday. — AFP

out at second tier QPR, losing 8-7 on penalties after a 2-2 draw. Rafael Benitez made five changes after Everton's defeat at Aston Villa and Charlie Austin twice put QPR ahead, with Lucas Digne and Andros Townsend equalizing for the visitors. In the shoot-out, Tom Davies' penalty was saved by Seny Dieng and Jimmy Dunne converted the winning kick.

Watford paid the price for making 11 changes as the Hornets suffered a surprise 3-1 defeat by sec-

ond tier Stoke at Vicarage Road. Southampton held their nerve to win 4-2 on penalties at second tier Sheffield United after a 2-2 draw. Leeds also survived a shoot-out, beating Championship team Fulham 6-5 after a 0-0 draw. Burnley striker Jay Rodriguez bagged four goals - one more than his team had scored in five league games this season - in a 4-1 victory over Rochdale. Brentford crushed League Two's bottom club Oldham 7-0 thanks to four goals from Marcus Forss. — AFP

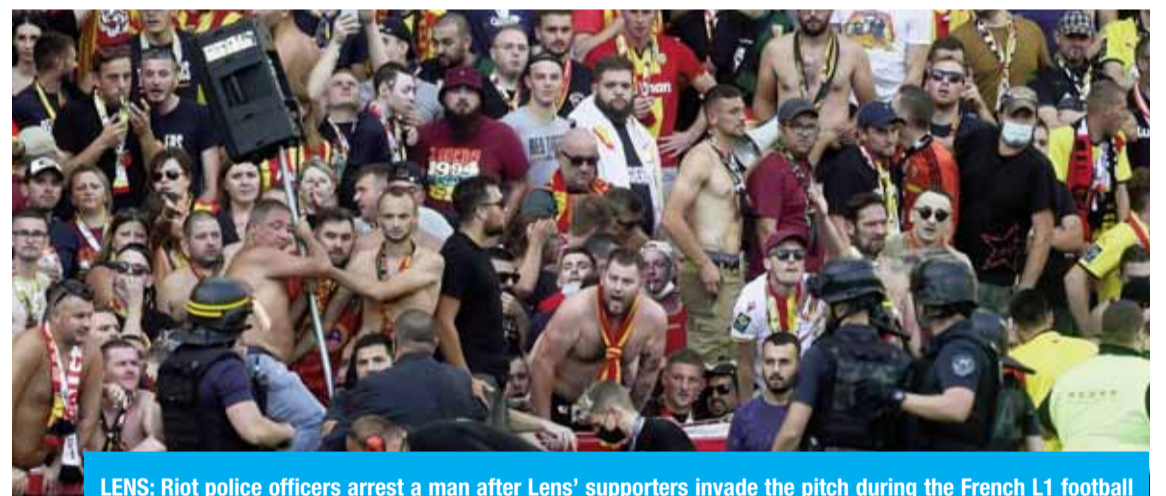
## Inquiries launched after Lens-Lille pitch invasion

LILLE: Local authorities announced yesterday several investigations had been opened after the pitch invasion during the Ligue 1 game between Lens and Lille, including for "inciting hatred" and "sexual exhibition". Dozens of Lens supporters stormed the Stade Bollaert-Delelis pitch at half-time on Saturday to confront the visiting Lille fans stationed in a corner of the ground after tensions flared with other spectators.

Riot police intervened to separate the factions

of opposing supporters as both sets of fans hurled seats at each other over a partition fence. Six people sustained minor injuries and police made two arrests. A 26-year-old Lille supporter appeared in court Monday charged with "violence against a person holding public authority". The hearing was postponed until October 18 and the man was released under judicial supervision.

Another inquiry is looking into "acts of inciting hatred and display of racist or xenophobic signs", the Bethune public prosecutor's department told AFP. After the match a photograph circulated in the media and social networks showing a man purportedly making a Nazi salute. Authorities are also investigating "events considered sexual exhibition" after a supporter was pictured, according to witnesses, exposing himself to a section of Lens fans, including a number of families. — AFP



LENS: Riot police officers arrest a man after Lens' supporters invade the pitch during the French L1 football match between RC Lens (RCL) and Lille (LOSC) at Stade Bollaert-Delelis in Lens. — AFP

## Afghanistan wants to host Pakistan for cricket series

KARACHI: Newly appointed Afghanistan cricket chairman Azizullah Fazli said yesterday he would visit neighboring Pakistan later this week to invite the side for a one-day series. The war-torn nation has steadily risen in international cricket over the past few years, with stars such as the world's top

spinner Rashid Khan, but there have been calls for a boycott of the men's team after the hardline Taliban's takeover last month.

The change of government has called into question the future of Afghanistan's participation in Test matches, as under International Cricket Council regulations, nations must also have an active women's team. The Taliban are yet to announce a policy on women playing sport, but a senior official has said it would be "not necessary". Avoiding commenting on the latest developments, Fazli said he planned to visit other regional cricketing powers.

"I am taking a tour of Pakistan from September 25 and then will go to India, Bangladesh and the United

Arab Emirates to meet officials of cricket boards," he told AFP over the phone from Kabul. Fazli said he would meet new Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Ramiz Raja, "and offer to host Pakistan for the series which we were due to play in Sri Lanka in September".

The three-match one-day series between Pakistan and Afghanistan was cancelled over logistical problems and a COVID-19 outbreak in Sri Lanka. It was part of a one-day league which is a qualification process for the 2023 World Cup. "We are seeking to improve Afghanistan cricket so that will come with cooperation from other countries," Fazli added.

Raja confirmed Fazli would visit Pakistan. Fazli, in

his second term as chairman after serving the board from September 2018 to July 2019, said he was committed to improving facilities in Afghanistan. Afghanistan are in Group 2 of the Super 12 stages of the Twenty20 World Cup due to start from October 17 in the United Arab Emirates.

Australia has threatened to cancel a Test match with Afghanistan in Brisbane in November unless the Taliban allow women to play cricket. The new rulers on Tuesday sacked Hamid Shinwari as Afghanistan Cricket Board chief executive, replacing him with Naseeb Zadran Khan, linked to the Haqqani network, which is responsible for some of the worst attacks in the country's history. — AFP

## KNPC's Clean Fuels Project...

Continued from Page 1

Refinery to 454,000 barrels per day and 346,000 barrels per day respectively of high-quality and eco-friendly oil byproducts.

Otaibi told KUNA that the project's design and execution have complied with the highest international environmental criteria. He estimated the capital cost of CFP at a total of KD 4.68 billion (roughly \$15.5 billion). The Kuwaiti private sector has a 35 percent share of total investments in this national project, he indicated.

Deputy CEO of Mina Abdulla Refinery Wadha Al-Khateeb told KUNA that MAB implemented two of

the three main parts of the CFP. Each was executed by a consortium of three international companies, she said. Khateeb added that the project will cut nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides and other pollutants to the minimum level. "This will boost the profitability and competitiveness of Kuwaiti products as well as conserve the environment," she said.

Khateeb recalled that KNPC had recently succeeded in producing low sulfur marine fuel that meets the strict standards of the International Maritime Organization. Kuwait has become one of few countries producing this high-quality fuel worldwide, she said. Deputy CEO for Mina Al-Ahmadi Refinery Shujaa Al-Ajmi told KUNA that the CFP will help materialize a number of KNPC's strategic objectives such as upping Kuwait's refining capacity to 1.6 million barrels per day by 2025 and boosting investment company revenues, environmental performance and safety and operational reliability. — KUNA

stressed that the virus is "not an ancestor of the pandemic strain". "This work confirms the expected diverse nature of bat infecting coronaviruses and increases the evidence that natural spill-over events from bats to humans can occur," said Hibbert.

The authors of the Laos study, which has been posted on the site Research Square, said their results suggest the pandemic coronavirus potentially evolved through mixing between different viruses and species of bats. James Wood, Head of Department of Veterinary Medicine at University of Cambridge - who was also not involved in the research - said it suggests "recombination between different viruses was likely involved, rather than there being a simple evolution of a single lineage over a long period".

In a comment to the Science Media Centre he said this not only underscores the likely role played by bats and perhaps other animals living closely together, but also shows the "risks inherent in living wildlife trade", where markets can help drive cross-species zoonotic transmission. — AFP

## Afghan robotics team design...

Continued from Page 1

brutal rule of Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001. On Tuesday, the Taliban vowed girls would be allowed to return to school although they have so far been effectively excluded, with a spokesman saying "more time is needed". While Haydarpour dreams of one day working for tech giant Microsoft, she is adamant that she wants "to go back and serve my people". In the robotics laboratory at Texas A&M, one of several US universities with an outpost in Qatar, Haydarpour hunched over a laptop decorated with colorful badges while her teammates assembled components.

The girls evacuated to Qatar were placed in one of three institutions depending on their needs with full scholarships granted by Doha. Some of their teammates remain in Afghanistan while others are in Mexico and the UAE. But the nine girls in Qatar all get together after school to work on their entries for the First Global Challenge robotics competition.

Asked how their second day of school had gone, following their arduous departure from Afghanistan on a Qatari military plane and 10 days quarantine amid the coronavirus pandemic, the girls chimed back "all good" in chorus. Eight of the girls had a spirited exchange about a faulty component on a circuit board they were building to use on a CubeSat weather station.

"For one week we couldn't fix it - so we changed

the wire," said Haydarpour, holding up a printed circuit board trailing cables onto a lab bench dotted with toolboxes. Beside her, another member of the team assembled the plastic housing for the weather station while periodically checking her phone. On the other side of the table, half of the girls worked to build a robot capable of scooping up plastic balls and firing them away.

"It's for the shooter for the balls," said 18-year-old Somaya Farooqi, the team leader, as she and her teammate Florans conferred on how to fix a motor. She had earlier told AFP that she was "so sad because we lost our family, our (robotics) coaches, our life" by abruptly leaving Afghanistan.

Roya Mahboob, founder of an Afghan software company, helped form the team which went on to develop a low-cost ventilator last year at the height of the pandemic. The girls made headlines in 2017 after being denied visas to take part in a robotics competition in Washington - before then-president Donald Trump intervened and they were allowed to travel. The same year the girls won a prestigious robotics award.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken dropped in on the girls during a visit to Qatar earlier this month. "I was honored to meet several remarkable women & girls of the Afghan Robotics Team. Their journeys & STEM aspirations are inspiring," he tweeted. Benjamin Cieslinski, a laboratory manager at the university, called the girls' skills "a really high level" despite their ordeal. But Haydarpour still worries about the future and education of girls in her country. "What will happen in Afghanistan?" she asks. "It's too hard to see your country in that situation." — AFP

## Bats with COVID-like...

Continued from Page 1

International experts sent to China by the World Health Organization (WHO) in January concluded that it was most likely that the SARS-CoV-2 virus jumped from bats to humans via an intermediate animal. A competing hypothesis that the virus leaked from a lab like the specialized virology laboratory in Wuhan was deemed "extremely unlikely", although it has yet to be ruled out.

Martin Hibbert, professor of Emerging Infectious Disease at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine - who was not involved in the Laos research - said the most closely related virus was found to be able to infect human cells "as easily" as SARS-CoV-2 and therefore might be capable of infecting humans. But he

## Sports

# Inter fire title warning shot at Fiorentina to reclaim top spot

## Atalanta beats Sassuolo, to meet Inter on Saturday

**MILAN:** Inter Milan underlined their desire to retain the Serie A title on Tuesday after coming back from a goal down to win 3-1 at Fiorentina and move top of the pile. Simone Inzaghi's side came away from an intense match against a revitalized Viola in Florence with all three points thanks to two quickfire strikes early in second half from Matteo Darmian and Edin Dzeko and Ivan Perisic's tap-in late on.

That completed a turnaround after the break as Inter were deservedly losing at half-time through Riccardo Sottil's opener for Fiorentina, who had come into the game in form but fell to a painful second defeat of the season. Champions Inter are unbeaten in their first five games and sit first with 13 points, one ahead of Napoli who are at Sampdoria today looking to maintain their 100 percent start to the campaign.

"This win today was one of a really good team, because we're a really good team. We definitely struggled in the first half and thank goodness it was only 1-0 at half time," said Dzeko to DAZN after scoring his fourth goal for Inter since moving from Roma in the summer. "In the second half we were more solid and we scored those two goals which changed the match."

A further two points back are local rivals AC Milan and Atalanta, who won a frenetic match with Sassuolo 2-1 thanks to goals in the first half from Robin Gosens and Davide Zappacosta and take on Inter at the San Siro on Saturday.

Vincenzo Italiano's Fiorentina, who finished the game with 10 men after Nicolas Gonzalez was sent off with 11 minutes remaining following two yellow

cards in quick succession for dissent, sit sixth on nine points alongside Roma.

"I think we need to look at this as a glass half full, because for 60 minutes we were as good as the champions of Italy and we had enough chances to go two ahead," said Italiano to DAZN. "But when you don't take advantage they have too much strength, quality and solidity to not come back at you."

### Inter's title warning

The win for Inter against an intense Fiorentina side was a warning to Serie A's contenders that they have every intention of going the long haul in the title race despite losing key players in the summer. They were on the ropes at the start with Samir Handanovic twice denying Dusan Vlahovic and Alfred Duncan clipping the crossbar from distance before Sottil opened the scoring midway through the first half.

However, they came out after the break with a different attitude, and with 10 minutes of the restart they were ahead, Darmian first rifling home the leveller before Dzeko leapt highest to head the away side in front from Hakan Calhanoglu's corner.

From then on Inter were the better team and once Gonzalez daftly got himself red carded there was only going to be one winner, Perisic's easy finish from a Roberto Gagliardini pass was merely the cherry on the cake for Inzaghi's men.

Earlier Genoa escaped Bologna with a 2-2 draw thanks to a late Domenico Criscito penalty which came almost straight after the hosts thought they



**FLORENCE:** Inter Milan's Bosnian forward Edin Dzeko (left) heads for the ball and scores during the Italian Serie A football match between ACF Fiorentina and Inter Milan at The Artemio Franchi Stadium in Florence, on Tuesday. —AFP

had won with a spot-kick of their own. Criscito slotted home the leveller in the 89th minute after Kevin Bonifazi was penalized for knocking over Yayah Kallon when it looked as though he himself had been pushed.

Bologna coach Sinisa Mihajlovic was sent off amid fierce protests over what he later called a "non-existent penalty" from the home side, who were trying to bounce back from a 6-1 demolition at

the hands of Inter at the weekend.

He had thought his team were destined to win when Marko Arnautovic slammed home his penalty five minutes from the end, which came after Aaron Hickey's drilled opener for the hosts early in the second half and Genoa forward Mattia Destro's equalizer in the 55th minute. Bologna are seventh on eight points while Genoa sit 14th on four points. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Hulk misses penalty

**SAO PAULO:** Hulk missed a penalty as Atletico Mineiro drew 0-0 with defending champions Palmeiras in their all-Brazilian Copa Libertadores semi-final tie on Tuesday. Former Brazil international Hulk crashed his 42nd-minute spot kick off the foot of the post after sending Palmeiras goalkeeper Weverton the wrong way at Sao Paulo's Allianz Parque. Atletico had been awarded the penalty moments earlier after former Chelsea forward Diego Costa was bundled over in the area by Palmeiras center-half Gustavo Gomez. Palmeiras, who are chasing a third Libertadores title after wins in 1999 and 2020, struggled to carve out goalscoring chances against a rugged Atletico defense. The winner of the Palmeiras-Atletico tie will face either Brazilian team Flamengo or Ecuador's Barcelona SC in the final. —AFP

#### Eto'o for president

**YAOUNDE:** Samuel Eto'o is running in December's election for the presidency of the Cameroon football federation, the former Barcelona star said yesterday. The role as football chief in the country set to host January's Africa Cup of Nations became vacant when the incumbent Seidou Mbombo Njoya saw his tenure cancelled by the Court of Arbitration for Sport. Eto'o had supported Mbombo's election campaign, but two years after his retirement from playing the 40-year-old says his passion for the game is driving him back. "I am honored and pleased to announce my candidacy for the Presidency of the Cameroon Football Federation. After careful considerations, I have decided to take this initiative out of love for Cameroon and passion for our football," Eto'o said on social media. —AFP

#### Ref's car on fire

**SARAJEVO:** Several fans of Bosnian top-flight side Velez Mostar set on fire the car of a referee after being angered by decisions he made during their team's match, police said yesterday. The match played in Mostar, in southern Bosnia, was interrupted a few minutes before the end on Tuesday after dozens of angry Velez supporters invaded the pitch. Referee Sabirija Topalovic and his two assistants left for Sarajevo but their car was intercepted in a tunnel by another vehicle with four people on board, a police officer told AFP. "After damaging the car they threw a burning torch in it." One person was injured and hospitalized in nearby Jablanica, he said, and added the search for the assailants was still ongoing. —AFP

#### Jones' pendant found

**GREEN BAY:** Green Bay running back Aaron Jones said Tuesday a pendant containing his father's ashes which was feared lost during the Packers' victory over the Detroit Lions has been found. Jones, who scored four touchdowns during Green Bay's 35-17 win over the Lions at Lambeau Field on Monday, revealed after the game that a necklace he had been wearing in honor of his late father had been lost. However Jones tweeted on Tuesday that the pendant — in the shape of a football, with some of his father's ashes inside — had been found by trainer Bryan Engel. Jones finished the game with 115 total yards including 67 rushing yards and 48 receiving en route to four touchdowns. —AFP

## Milan's Maignan speaks out as Juve probe racist abuse

**ROME:** AC Milan goalkeeper Mike Maignan on Tuesday blasted those who racially abused him before his team's 1-1 draw at Juventus at the weekend and the football authorities' attempts at tackling the problem, saying that he was "black and proud".

Juventus confirmed to AFP that they had launched an investigation into the abuse, caught on a video which spread quickly on social media. It showed an off-camera fan launch a stream of racist insults at the France international while he warmed up ahead of Sunday's match at Juve's Allianz Stadium.

In an Instagram post, the 26-year-old Maignan said that "as long as these events are treated as 'iso-

lated incidents' and no comprehensive action is taken, history is bound to repeat itself over and over again".

"Do the people who make decisions know what it feels like to hear insults and chants reducing us to animals? Do they know what it does to our families, to our loved ones who see it and who do not understand why it's still happening in 2021?" he continued. "I am not a 'victim' of racism. I'm Mike, upright, black and proud."

A Juve spokeswoman told AFP that they were working to identify the person who insulted Maignan. Italian media report that the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) is also considering opening its own investigation into the incident.

This is the second incident of racism in a Serie A stadium since football grounds were re-opened to the public at 50 percent capacity at the start of this season. On Friday the FIGC opened an investigation into alleged racist chants by Lazio fans towards Milan midfielder Tiemoue Bakayoko earlier this month. —AFP



**TURIN:** AC Milan's French goalkeeper Mike Maignan (left) grabs the ball in front of Juventus' French midfielder Adrien Rabiot (right) during the Italian Serie A football match between Juventus and AC Milan at the Juventus stadium in Turin, on Sunday. —AFP

## Kuwaiti referees seek Int'l badges through Asian Championship

**AMMAN:** Kuwait's handball referees Dalal Al-Naseem and Maali Al-Enezi wish to achieve the international refereeing badges through the 18th Asian Women's Championship, held in Jordan, with the participation of 11 teams, including Kuwait. On the sidelines of the Asian Championship, Enezi said yesterday that the chance for her and her colleague Naseem to obtain the international badge is greater after this official participation. She pointed out that the current tournament includes only three women's referees from Kuwait and Iran. Meanwhile, Naseem affirmed that she participated in various competitions in the GCC and on the Arab level. Naseem and Enezi are the first women from the GCC to get the continental refereeing badges.

In the meantime, Kuwait women's handball team



**AMMAN:** Kuwait's handball referees Dalal Al-Naseem and Maali Al-Enezi. —KUNA photos

secured its first victory in the tournament, beating Palestine 28-20. The win gives Kuwait its first two points in the competition, as the team prepares to play Singapore today. The Jordanian capital, Amman, host the 18th Asian Women's Handball Championship from 15-25 September, with the participation of 11 teams divided into two groups, from which the top five places will qualify for the World Cup in Spain next December. —KUNA



**Kuwait vs Palestine in action as part of the 18th Asian Women's Championship.**

## Morgan hat-trick as US thrash Paraguay 8-0

**LOS ANGELES:** Alex Morgan bagged the fifth international hat-trick of her career as the United States thrashed Paraguay 8-0 in an international friendly on Tuesday. Morgan took her international goals tally to 114 in her 188th international as the world champions routed the South Americans for the second time in five days.

The US women had romped to a 9-0 win over

the Paraguayans in the first of two back-to-back friendlies last Thursday. But any question marks over whether they might ease up in Tuesday's return in Cincinnati were erased after a one-sided opening as the US rattled in five goals in the first 15 minutes.

Rose Lavelle opened the scoring on four minutes before Sophia Smith doubled the lead two minutes later. Morgan then bagged two goals in six minutes to make it 4-0 before Catarina Macario put the US women 5-0 up in the 15 minutes.

Morgan completed her hat-trick in the 53rd minute before 39-year-old striker Carli Lloyd scored her 134th international goal in the 78th minute. Macario completed the rout with her second goal eight minutes from full-time. —AFP



**CINCINNATI:** Rose Lavelle #16 of the United States celebrates her goal in the first half with teammates Alex Morgan #13 and Casey Krueger #20 during a Women's International Friendly against Paraguay at TQL Stadium on Tuesday in Cincinnati, Ohio. —AFP

## Derby deducted 12 points after entering administration

**LONDON:** Wayne Rooney's Derby County have been deducted 12 points by the English Football League after entering administration yesterday. The

second-tier side have taken 10 points from eight games this season but are now rooted at the foot of the Championship, six points adrift of second-bottom Nottingham Forest.

Derby, twice English champions, had signaled their intention to appoint administrators last week, citing a failure to identify new owners and the continued financial impact of the coronavirus. Yesterday, the club announced it had appointed three managing directors of business advisory firm

Quantuma as joint administrators.

"We are in the early stages of assessing the options available to the club and would invite any interested parties to come forward," said Quantuma managing director and joint administrator Andrew Hosking. "Our immediate objectives are to ensure the club completes all its fixtures in the Championship this season and finding interested parties to safeguard the club and its employees." —AFP

## Sports

# Koeman refuses to answer questions in Barcelona press conference

## Suarez fires Atletico top with late double at Getafe

**MADRID:** Barcelona's under-pressure coach Ronald Koeman delivered a bizarre press conference yesterday as he read a pre-prepared statement before leaving without answering questions. Koeman's position is fragile, after Barca followed up a 3-0 defeat by Bayern Munich in the Champions League last week with a 1-1 draw at home to Granada in La Liga, with the team's tactics and style coming under scrutiny.

In his press conference, Koeman sat down and was introduced by the club's press officer, who said the Dutchman wanted to read a short statement. Reading from a piece of paper, Koeman said: "Hello everyone. The club with me as coach is in a situation of rebuilding. "The financial situation of the club is connected to the sporting activities and vice-versa. This means we as a team have to rebuild the team without being able to make any big financial investments. This needs time. The young talent today could be the next big world stars in just a few years. To rebuild this team, young players will be given opportunities like Xavi and Iniesta had in their day. But we must ask for patience.

"Achieving a high ranking in La Liga is a great success. In the Champions League we can't hope for miracles. The defeat by Bayern Munich last week has to be analyzed with that perspective. The process we're in now with the staff and the team deserves unconditional support, in words and actions. I know the press recognizes this process.

"It's not the first time in Barcelona's history this has happened. We count on your support in these difficult times. As staff and players, we are very happy with the great support of the fans, like we had in the match against Granada. Visca Barca, thanks to everyone."

Several names, including Xavi Hernandez, Roberto Martinez and Antonio Conte, have been mentioned as possible successors to 58-year-old Koeman, whose relationship with club president Joan Laporta has been strained in recent weeks.

After the defeat at home to Bayern, Laporta posted a video addressed to Barcelona supporters in which he said: "I am as disappointed and upset as all

of you are... Do not doubt we will resolve this situation." Koeman was asked about the club's loss of identity after the draw against Granada on Monday. His team had delivered 54 crosses and ended the game with central defenders Gerard Pique and Ronald Araujo playing up front.

"If you see the list of players, what do you do? Play tiki-taki? Tiki-taki when there are no spaces?" said Koeman. "We did what we had to do. We tried to win another way. We don't have players one-on-one or with speed. We're talking... I'm not going to say



Barca in 'rebuilding mode'

more because it seems I have to argue about everything." Barcelona head to Cadiz tonight in La Liga, having won two and drawn two of their opening four league games.

### Atletico on top

Elsewhere, Luis Suarez scored twice, including an injury-time winner, as Atletico Madrid came from behind to beat 10-man Getafe 2-1 and move top of La Liga on Tuesday. Hosts Getafe took the lead through Stefan Mitrovic on the stroke of half-time, but the game changed when Carles Alena was sent off in the 74th minute. "In the first half, we had a lack of movement, of dynamism, and the match was flat until the opponents' goal," said Atletico coach Diego Simeone. "In the second period, the match had more rhythm, more intensity, we had more efficiency in attack."

A goalless draw with fellow unbeaten side Athletic



**GETAFE:** Atletico Madrid's Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez celebrates his second goal during the Spanish League football match against Getafe at the Col Alfonso Perez stadium in Getafe on Tuesday. — AFP

Bilbao at the weekend saw them drop two points behind Real in the early table and Simeone's men were far from convincing again for long stages. A limp first-half display from the visitors ended in poor fashion as Getafe defender Mitrovic headed home.

Antoine Griezmann and Suarez, who saw a header strike the crossbar, both went close to an equalizer before former Barcelona midfielder Alena gave Atletico a helping hand. Alena, who had already been booked, was given a straight red card following a VAR review for a poor studs-up challenge on Brazilian international Matheus Cunha.

Suarez made Alena pay only four minutes later, running onto Mario Hermoso's long pass and lashing a left-footed shot into the roof of the net. The Uruguayan completed the comeback just as the clock ticked past 90 minutes, nodding in at the back post as

Getafe goalkeeper David Soria backtracked after initially attempting to collect Sime Vrsaljko's cross.

Suarez, who was making only his third league start in six games this term, has now scored three La Liga goals this season. Griezmann, though, is still yet to find the net in four appearances since rejoining the club from Barcelona. "He is in the process of adapting to this new Atletico, which is no longer the Atletico he had known," said Simeone of the Frenchman. "I'm sure he will shine like before, I have no doubts."

Elsewhere on Tuesday, Bilbao lost 2-1 at home to Rayo Vallecano, for whom Colombian veteran Falcao scored his first goal in memorable style, a winner six minutes into injury time. And Celta Vigo notched up their first victory of the campaign by beating winless Levante 2-0 thanks to goals from Iago Aspas and Brais Mendez. — AFP

## Gambling group DraftKings bids \$22.5b for Entain

**LONDON:** UK gambling giant Entain yesterday said it had received a takeover bid from US rival DraftKings worth \$22.5 billion as online sports betting surges on both sides of the Atlantic. Entain said the offer came after it had rejected a lower figure from DraftKings, as the gambling sector looks to consolidate.

"The board of Entain will carefully consider the proposal and a further announcement will be made as and when appropriate," the statement added. The UK firm had previously revealed the cash and shares offer but did not disclose the price at the time.

Entain's statement said DraftKings' improved offer was priced at £28 per share, giving a value of £16.5 billion (\$22.5 billion, 19.2 billion euros). The rejected offer had been priced at £25 per share and comes

after Entain in January snubbed a takeover approach from US casino giant MGM worth £8.0 billion.

Laura Hoy, equity analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown, said that even if the DraftKings bid was accepted, "usual regulatory scrutiny could be further complicated by antitrust concerns due to BetMGM, Entain's joint venture with US Casino operator MGM".

Entain owns Britain's betting-shop chains Ladbrokes and Coral, as well as various online gambling websites focused on football and horse racing bets. DraftKings specializes in fantasy leagues betting, notably across the major US sports of American football, basketball, baseball and ice hockey. Entain's share price soared 18 percent late Tuesday on news of the fresh takeover approach that was made shortly before the close of London trading. It rallied a further eight percent at the open yesterday to sit at £24.43. London's benchmark FTSE 100 index, on which Entain is listed, climbed one percent overall.

### Sector consolidation

The takeover announcement comes after gambling

group 888 earlier in the month agreed to buy the non-US operations of rival William Hill in a deal aimed at creating a leading online betting group. US group Caesars Entertainment agreed to the sale in a deal worth £2.2 billion. Caesars had bought all of William Hill, which has more than 1,400 betting shops in the UK, for around £3.0 billion last year but said at the time that it was interested in holding onto only the US part of the business. US gambling is taking off after the country's Supreme Court in 2018 lifted a ban on sports betting in the United States. — AFP

The ban had covered almost the entire country for 25 years, with the notable exception of Las Vegas. While the US has lifted restrictions, officials in the world's biggest gambling city Macau have unveiled plans for a crackdown on the industry.

Macau's government has proposed direct supervision over the gambling sector, slashing the value of big operators. The move comes as the government in mainland China embarks on a crackdown on a wide range of industries — including tech and private education firms — as it looks to tighten its grip on the world's number two economy. — AFP

## Plant, Alvarez trade punches ahead of November showdown

**BEVERLY HILLS:** Saul "Canelo" Alvarez and rival Caleb Plant came to blows on Tuesday as a press conference to hype their November showdown for the undisputed world super middleweight crown erupted into violence.

Unbeaten American Plant was left with a cut under his right eye following the fiery exchange at the Beverly Hilton hotel in Beverly Hills. Mexican star Alvarez, widely regarded as the best pound-for-pound fighter in boxing, triggered the melee after coming face-to-face with Plant.

With both men appearing to trade expletives, Alvarez shoved Plant forcefully in the chest, sending the 29-year-old from Tennessee staggering across the stage. Plant responded with a wild left hook — which Alvarez ducked comfortably before landing two counter-punches, causing a cut under Plant's right eye. Security and members of both fighter's entourage both scrambled onto the stage to break up the fight. The following press conference also threatened to erupt after Plant

again addressed Alvarez with an expletive-laden tirade before accusing the Mexican of being a "drug cheat."

Alvarez tested positive for a banned steroid in 2018, forcing postponement of his fight with Gennady Golovkin. "You're a drug cheat...you're a cheater," Plant snapped. "Don't make excuses before the fight," Alvarez responded angrily. "Say whatever you say. I'm gonna see you on November 6. You're gonna see something special, and feel something special." Alvarez later said the face-off turned violent after Plant insulted his mother. "He can say whatever he wants to me, but not to my mum," Alvarez said. "He swung, I just pushed him." Plant meanwhile insisted Alvarez triggered the brawl. "All we was doing was staring at each other. He had something to say, I had something to say. He's gonna beat me, I'm gonna beat him," he said. "And then he did what he did."

Alvarez will defend his World Boxing Association, World Boxing Council and World Boxing Organization crowns against Plant, the



**BEVERLY HILLS:** (From left) Canelo Alvarez speaks to Caleb Plant during a press conference ahead of their super middleweight fight on November 6 at The Beverly Hilton on Tuesday in Beverly Hills, California. — AFP

International Boxing Federation champion. Alvarez, 56-1 with two drawn and 38 knockouts, seeks his eighth win in a row. He beat Britain's Callum Smith by unanimous decision in December 2020 for the WBA and WBC crowns and added the WBO title three months ago by beating Britain's Billy Joe Saunders.

Plant, 21-0 with 12 knockouts, won the IBF crown by defeating Venezuelan Jose Uzcategui by unanimous decision in January 2019. He has defended it three times since then, most recently beating countryman Caleb Truax by unanimous decision in January. — AFP

vaccinated. "We're going to have 67 players in our camp and they're all going to be vaccinated," Columbus president John Davidson said. "Everything we do, we do together as a team." Rinaldo spoke out against the vaccine at a Canadian political rally last week, saying he was "pro-choice." General manager Jarmo Kekalainen said "the ball is in his court right now" regarding Rinaldo's future with the team. Rinaldo has scored 18 goals and has 758 penalty minutes in 354 career NHL games with Philadelphia, Boston, Arizona, Nashville and Calgary. Throughout his career, Rinaldo has split his time between the NHL and American Hockey League and has never scored more than five goals in an NHL season. Rinaldo will begin the season with the Blue Jackets farm team in Cleveland.

### Kaprizov re-signs

Elsewhere, forward Kirill Kaprizov has re-signed

with the Minnesota Wild, the club announced on Tuesday. The five-year, \$45 million deal locks up the Calder Memorial Trophy winner through at least the 2025-26 season. The 24-year-old Russian, who was the near unanimous winner of the league's Rookie of the Year Award last season, led all NHL rookies in goals and points last season with 27 goals and 51 points in 55 games. He received 99 of 100 first-place votes.

The Wild are expected to make a run at the playoffs and Kaprizov is a big piece of their puzzle. He played six seasons in the KHL before joining the Wild and there was talk he might return to Russia if the two sides couldn't work out a deal. The new contract comes just one day before the Wild are set to opening training camp for the 2021-22 season. Kaprizov won a gold medal with the Olympics Athletes from Russia at the 2018 Winter Olympics and is expected to play for his country at the men's Olympic hockey tournament in February in Beijing, China. — AFP

## Blue Jackets to pass on unvaccinated Rinaldo

**LOS ANGELES:** Forward Zac Rinaldo has been barred from attending the Columbus Blue Jackets training camp because of the NHL journeyman's refusal to get the COVID-19 vaccine. The 31-year-old Rinaldo is the second person from the Blue Jacket's organization to have a falling out with the team over getting the vaccine in the midst of a global pandemic that has killed over four million worldwide.

Last week, Columbus parted ways with Canadian assistant coach Sylvain Lefebvre over his refusal to be

## Nets say 'positive' contract talks with Harden, Irving

**NEW YORK:** The Brooklyn Nets have had "positive" contract extension talks with James Harden and Kyrie Irving as the team aims to build a championship-winning roster, general manager Sean Marks said Tuesday. Harden and Irving are reportedly close to agreeing terms on new long-term deals which could see both players remain in Brooklyn for three and four more seasons respectively.

"We've had very positive conversations with both of those guys," Marks said. "We're looking forward to sitting down with them over the next two weeks and furthering those discussions. Those guys know exactly how we feel and I think they've been vocal about wanting to be part of this and building this together. I think we've got an opportunity to do something special here for the foreseeable future."

Irving and Harden form part of Brooklyn's "big three" along with Kevin Durant, but injury problems last season meant all three players were rarely fit to play together at the same time. Both Irving and Harden missed crucial playoff games against the Milwaukee Bucks in the Eastern Conference semi-finals last season as the Nets were eliminated in seven games. Marks said both Harden and Irving were "ready to go" for the start of the 2021-2022 season, which tips off next month.

"From what we've seen they look great," Marks said. "Our performance team has been with them, our coaching staff has been with them, spending considerable time with them and can attest that they are in great spirits and are ready to go like the rest of the team."

"It will be a work in progress as to how we proceed with all of our guys, not just James and Kyrie. It's a marathon not a sprint, and we're trying to save those guys from themselves half the time. But they feel good, they look great, so that's a positive."

Marks said the Nets meanwhile would start the season with "realistic" championship aspirations. "Our goal is to be the last team standing," he said. "There's probably six, eight or 10 teams that have the same goal and a realistic one. For us it's about owning that, and not shying away from that. We want to do everything we possibly can to try and accomplish that."

The Nets have bolstered their roster with the addition of veteran guard Patty Mills, as well as James Johnson and Paul Millsap. "We added 3 veterans with high IQ and high character and that's always a really positive thing for a coaching staff," Nets coach Steve Nash said. "We're out to win a championship, we own that." — AFP

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