

**3** Meet Al-Buloshi, Kuwait's young and aspiring motocross rider



**4** Zain sponsors Arabian Gulf Theater Troupe



**5** Taiwan tensions could spark 'open conflicts'



**16** Thompson-Herah and Wightman sprinkle Commonwealth stardust



# Kuwait restates unswerving stance on non-proliferation

## Diplomat calls for a nuke-free Middle East



Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the UN Tareq Al-Banai

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait reiterated its unwavering position on preservation of international security and peace and nuclear non-proliferation only out of its outright commitment to respecting international conventions. This came in a speech delivered by Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the UN Tareq Al-Banai during the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

He said the world has agreed that the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the keystone of the non-proliferation system, calling for ensuring the credibility of the NPT, especially amid the ongoing developments. While marking the 50th anniversary of the NPT, it is the responsibility of all parties to work hard to maintain this treaty.

He added that there is an opportunity

for this conference to make genuine headway should the countries, especially nuclear ones, honor their vow to adopt a relevant ambitious plan with specific goals. The Kuwait diplomat pointed out the swift and serious developments experienced by the world over the last period, with some nuclear countries announcing continuation and upgrading of their nuclear arsenals and insistence on the nuclear deterrence policy.

Al-Banai went on saying that these developments necessitate clear-cut and unequivocal mechanisms within the framework of the NPT. However, he voiced hope that Kuwait and Gulf concerns about this agreement would be taken into account, calling for following up on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 2231 regarding verification and monitoring in Iran.

Al-Banai called on the parties to the

Iranian nuclear agreement to return to the negotiating table with a view to arriving at an agreement that could ensure that Iran's nuclear program is peaceful. Kuwait's new permanent representative at the UN strongly condemned any nuclear tests that could undermine human safety or any provocation or behavior that might jeopardize international security and peace.

He noted that Kuwait had contributed to Arab efforts to press for freeing the Middle East of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, based on a resolution adopted during the 2010 review conference. He added that the conference had asked the then UN secretary general and the three countries that adopted the resolution to hold a conference on a nuclear-free region.

Continued on Page 6

## Beyond hummus: Palestinians cook up food trends



JERUSALEM: A cook prepares plates of hummus to be served to clients at a restaurant in the Old City of Jerusalem. — AFP

**JERUSALEM:** From the ancient alleys of Jerusalem's Old City to kitchens around the world, Palestinians are stirring new trends in cooking while abiding by traditions. The trend has whipped up a growing appetite for specialized books and food tours. "It's changing for the better, I think. Many Palestinians are keen on promoting their foods," said Nassar Odeh, as oven aromas wafted over a Jerusalem street.

The Palestinian entrepreneur has spent the past few months watching gourmands drift in and out of his new eatery, Taboon, named after the traditional clay oven. Customers are tucking into dishes such as Armenian lahmajoon, a thin pizza with ground meat and spices which Odeh remembers being sold to hungry crowds in the Old City decades earlier.

"Armenian dishes are part of the Palestinian culture," said Odeh, whose bar also serves drinks from the occupied West Bank. "This is extremely important because this emphasizes the Palestinian presence and the entrepreneurship," he said. "We need to be proud of our products."

Opened last year in what was once the family's souvenir store, Taboon is part of a string of new Palestinian bars, cafes and restaurants. Beyond those within the Old City walls, they have sprung up in other areas of annexed east Jerusalem such as the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, or further afield in Ramallah in the West Bank. — AFP (See Page 11)

## China deploys warships, fires ballistic missiles

**PINGTAN:** China fired ballistic missiles and deployed fighter jets and warships on Thursday as it held its largest-ever military exercises around Taiwan, a show of force sparked by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to the island. Pelosi was the highest-profile US official to visit Taiwan in years, defying a series of stark threats from Beijing, which views the self-ruled island as its territory.

In retaliation, China launched a

series of exercises in multiple zones around Taiwan, straddling some of the busiest shipping lanes in the world and at some points just 20 kilometers from the island's shore. The drills began around 12 pm, and involved a "conventional missile firepower assault" in waters to the east of Taiwan, the Chinese military said.

The aim was to test the precision of the missiles and their ability to deny an enemy access to or control of an area, Eastern Theater Command spokesman Senior Colonel Shi Yi said in a statement. Taiwan said the Chinese military fired 11 Dongfeng-class ballistic missiles "in several batches" and condemned the exercises as "irrational actions that undermine regional peace".

Continued on Page 6

## Blue Origin sends six to space

**WASHINGTON:** Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin on Thursday launched six people to space, including the first from Egypt and Portugal, on the company's sixth crewed flight. Mission "N-22" saw the New Shepard suborbital rocket blast off around 8:58 am local time (1358 GMT) from Blue's base in the west Texas desert. The autonomous, reusable vehicle sent its crew capsule soaring above the Karman line, the internationally recognized space

boundary, 62 miles (100 kilometers) above sea level.

"I'm floating!" a crew mate could be heard saying on a livestream, as the capsule coasted to its highest point and the passengers experienced a few minutes of weightlessness. Both the rocket and capsule separately returned to the base - the latter using giant parachutes - completing the mission around 11 minutes after lift-off. The crew included Egyptian engineer Sara Sabry, and Portuguese entrepreneur Mario Ferreira, both the first people of their countries to leave Earth.

It also included Coby Cotton, one of five co-founders of the YouTube sports and comedy channel Dude Perfect, which boasts more than 57 million followers. — AFP

## Taliban: No info about Zawahiri

**KABUL:** The Taliban said Thursday they have no knowledge of Ayman Al-Zawahiri's presence in Afghanistan, days after US President Joe Biden announced the Al-Qaeda chief had been killed by a drone strike in Kabul. A carefully phrased Taliban statement neither confirmed Zawahiri's presence in Afghanistan nor acknowledged his death, but carried the first official mention of his name since Sunday's strike.

Zawahiri's assassination is the biggest blow to Al-Qaeda since US special forces killed Osama bin Laden in 2011, and calls into question the Taliban's promise not to harbor militant groups. The United States led an invasion in 2001 that toppled the first Taliban government, after the hardline Islamist group refused to hand over bin Laden following the 9/11 attacks. "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has no information about Ayman Al-Zawahiri's arrival and stay," Thursday's Taliban statement said. "The leadership of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has

Continued on Page 6



PINGTAN: Chinese military helicopters fly past Pingtan island, one of mainland China's closest point from Taiwan, in Fujian province on August 4, 2022. — AFP



TEXAS: A Blue Origin capsule on display in Van Horn, Texas. — AFP



PANJSHIR: A Taliban fighter carries a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) at a road checkpoint near the Bazarak district in Panjshir Province. — AFP

## Local

# Panel discussion highlights importance of raising awareness on women's empowerment

## Women's society hosts activists to speak on challenges



KUWAIT: (From left) Reem Al-Eidan, Asrar Hayat and Lulwa Al-Qaoud attend the panel discussion. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



A general view showing part of the audience.

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: The Women's Cultural and Social Society held on Wednesday the second meeting of the Girl's Club, under the title of 'A leader, Empowered and Able to Achieve', in the presence of the counsellor, life coach and society member Reem Al-Eidan, Secretary of Kuwait Transparency Society Asrar Hayat, and Surgeon Lulwa Al-Qaoud.

The meeting's main objective was to raise awareness on the importance of women's role in society and to educate them to be effective members of the community, Hayat told Kuwait Times. She added that the main issue she discussed in the meeting was to explain the challenges that face women in society and the ways to confront them.

She pointed out that anyone who tries to differentiate between men and women is either a person who lacks awareness, or someone who has certain political agendas, citing what is currently happening in the parliament, and saying that those with prejudiced opinions are considered to be dissonant voices that should not be paid attention to. "The Kuwaiti constitution and the Islamic religion do not

differentiate between men and women in terms of rights or duties," she stated.

Hayat stressed the importance of women focusing on achieving their goals and ambitions, and not paying attention to the many obstacles that may stand in front of them as long as their behaviors do not go out of public taste, or do not cause any harm to anyone. She said that women must determine their own future and defend who they want to be someday, because they are the only ones who will live through the challenges that accompany their choices.

"Any change in the world faces resistance," Hayat said. "There are those who resist technology, science and development, and there are those who resist women, while there are those who resist change in general, and not women themselves. Therefore, most men stand by the side of women,

while those who stand against them are a small group who do not represent the majority."

She mentioned that the new generation of girls still needs to be educated about the importance of empowering women in society, especially since information has become easily available with the technological development and social media. She called on girls to stay away from being preoccupied with material temptations on social media and to seek a good education that guarantees them a better future.

### Remarkable confidence

Meanwhile, Eidan told us that during the meeting, the girls' confidence in themselves and their awareness of the importance of empowering women was remarkable. She pointed out that she noticed that the participants have a clear idea

about their future goals and an awareness of all political and economic conditions that the world is going through despite their young age.

"This meeting was a track adjustment for the participants' ambitions, and aims to enhance their confidence in their abilities through a dialogue session in which we talked about their rights and duties, as well as empowerment, health and legal awareness," Eidan mentioned. "We made sure to enhance the spirit of citizenship and the importance of their role in the development of the country, as well as confronting corruption through academic empowerment and community participation."

In the meantime, Qaoud talked about her work experience in the medical field and discussed with the participants the challenges she faced as a female surgeon. Qaoud stressed while talking to the participants the importance of being able to deal with the professional pressures they may face in the future, while she told Kuwait Times that the Kuwaiti society has become more open to supporting women's aspirations, calling on girls to insist on achieving all their dreams.



"Any change in the world faces resistance"

## Beat your eyes' allergies

By Dr Ahmad Abbadi

KUWAIT: Allergies are the body's immune system reaction to foreign substances, such as dust. The immune system which is your defense system is known to protect the body from anything that might threaten it. As a result, when you come into contact with a foreign substance, your immune system will produce specific materials known as antibodies that will search for those substances and label them as dangerous, even though they are not. Thus, you will get allergies that might irritate your eyes, resulting in allergic conjunctivitis.

Allergic conjunctivitis is a medical term used to describe allergies of the transparent layer that lines the eyelids and eyeball, known as the conjunctiva. The conjunctiva has two main functions, providing protection and lubrication by producing tears and mucus. Thus, preventing foreign substances such as allergens from entering the eye. If the eyes come in contact with something that might initiate an allergic conjunctivitis episode, the function of the conjunctiva will be compromised.

There are many things that might cause allergic conjunctivitis. For example, items that we use on daily basis such as, makeup set, perfume, detergents, contact lenses and hair shampoo. However, some patients might be allergic to pets, for instance cats, dogs and birds. In addition, some patients might experience seasonal allergies resulting in allergic conjunctivitis, especially during the Summer due to dust storms and in Autumn due to pollens. Furthermore, allergic conjunctivitis might be a result of indirect contact with the eyes, through insect bites or pest repellent.

Allergic conjunctivitis have two main types. Firstly, acute allergic conjunctivitis which is a condition that occurs suddenly and for a short period of time. In comparison to, chronic allergic conjunctivitis

that is less common and happens year-round.

Allergic conjunctivitis is relatively common, it effects nearly 40 percent of the general population, especially during hay fever season, however not all patients might experience the same symptoms. Some of the common symptoms of allergic conjunctivitis include, red, itchy or swollen eyes, excessive tearing, swollen eyelids and sensitivity to light.

If allergic conjunctivitis are suspected, patients are advised to visit their near ophthalmologist to get their eyes checked. The doctor will take a detailed history from the patient to figure out the source of allergies. In addition, the doctor will examine the patient's eyes using a device with a light that does not touch the eyes directly. It might also include putting some drops onto the eyes of the patient

to examine them properly, that might sting a bit. In chronic allergic conjunctivitis, doctors might decide to perform some blood tests to determine the source of allergies and treat

them accordingly.

After a thorough examination of the eyes, the doctor will provide the optimal treatment plan that might include keeping a protective distance from the sources of allergies, eye drops or and tablets to resolve the episode of allergic conjunctivitis.

Allergic conjunctivitis like all medical conditions has its complications. Although seasonal and year-round allergies might cause eyes discomfort while performing your daily activities, they usually clear up completely in a short period of time without complications. Nevertheless, in severe cases of allergic conjunctivitis, patients might develop ulcers or scarring of the eyes due to the excessive itching of the eyeballs, which can lead to long-term damage to vision. Thus, patients are advised to visit their eye doctor if they are experiencing allergic conjunctivitis symptoms for some time, to help them elevate their symptoms and to preserve their eyesight.

- Dr Ahmad Abbadi is an Assistant Registrar Ophthalmologist at Al-Bahar Eye Centre



KUWAIT: A picture showing the difference between a normal eye (left) and an eye with allergic conjunctivitis.



KUWAIT: Shiite Muslims gather to listen to a cleric recite the story of Ashura, in Kuwait City on August 3, 2022. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Local

# Meet Thunayyan Al-Buloshi, Kuwait's young and aspiring motocross rider

## Ten-year-old dreams of representing Kuwait in Rally Dakar



KUWAIT: Thunayyan Al-Buloshi shows off his medals and trophy won in his young career. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Some parents won't let their kids play sports due to concussion risks, which may prevent the child from developing his self-affirmation, expanding personal boundaries, and evolving his physical courage. Motocross is a dirt-bike racing sport in which riders compete on off-road courses like gravel, mud, or grassy roads. The risks are worth the rewards in a child's development; that is what the father of Thunayyan Al-Buloshi believes. He is supporting his child by all means to achieve his son's dream of being involved in a unique extreme sport in Kuwait.

Buloshi, a 10-year-old Kuwaiti boy, is passionate about being a star in the motocross sport. He practiced basic riding skills to improve his techniques. Riders must find just about every way to have fun in the dirt, from spending a great day riding at the track or trail, to competing in organized races. That is why the sixth grader chose 'Keep Smiling' as his motto. Buloshi told Kuwait Times that he started in the dirt bike sport five months ago, due to his love of the extreme sport to kick the adrenaline up. "I ride for fun and hope to reach the professional level in the future," he said.

Buloshi has been in two races in the UK. "I was the first Kuwaiti to collaborate with FAB-Racing, I got

first place in motocross track, and I got a trophy for the first base," he said. "My Parents encourage me to evolve in the game. My father wants me to skydive with him, but due to age restrictions, I did dirt bike sport instead. I take all the precautions in order not to get serious injuries," he noted.

### 'I can do it'

Buloshi is planning to participate in a major race in Kuwait next month, adding, "I will participate in the KTM race. There is a camp that I will sign up for to get the proper training." He has a dream to be experienced as a dirt biker and teach the sport to other young bikers. "I want to be able to finish the Rally Dakar which is every motocross rider's dream. I only have to believe in myself that I can do it. My father taught me when I was seven years old; I started with a bicycle step by step until I could ride the bike. I'm waiting for my younger brother to reach three years old to teach him how to ride an electric bicycle."

Buloshi's father thinks that motocross sport does not have a big focus in Kuwait, which is why he supports his child to be able to evolve. "Most parents are afraid of getting their children to be involved in such sport," he pointed out. "I worry about my child, but if there is safety, things will be good. My son will get my full support; I will make him participate in local,



regional, and international races. I will get him a private coach to teach him the latest techniques in dirt bike sport. I bought him the KTM 65 bike for KD 1,700. I'm investing in my son."

"Kuwait has only one annual race called Kuwait Motor Town (KMT). My child is guided by Omar Al-Medlej, who is a biker in the Kuwaiti army along with

his Coach Mohammed Jaffar, a professional KTM rider," he indicated. "He is getting proper training and practicing. There are a lot of races that he will participate in." He expressed his hope to open an academy for his son in the future in order to reach more young people and teach children this kind of sport like the MX Factory academy.

## Otaibi tenders credentials as Kuwait Ambassador to Russia

MOSCOW: Kuwait's new Ambassador to the Russian Federation Mansour Al-Otaibi tendered a copy of his credentials to Russian Special

Presidential Envoy for the Middle East and North Africa Mikhail Bogdanov on Thursday. Bogdanov, who is also Deputy Foreign Minister, received the credentials during his meeting with Ambassador Otaibi where they discussed the special relationship between their two countries and explored ways to cement cooperation in various areas. They expressed a shared desire to enhance the political dialogue on international issues of common concern and issues related to MENA region, according to a statement from the Foreign Ministry of Russia. — KUNA

## Kuwaitis' private sector allowance will not stop

KUWAIT: Employment support for nationals working in the private sector will not stop according to the Public Authority of Manpower. Sources within the authority clarified that this government allowance is for the support of Kuwaiti employees who work in the private sector. Moreover, this aligns with government policies to localize employment in the private sector, especially since "there are serious plans to increase Kuwaiti employment which includes thousands of jobs that could bring more locals to switch away from government employment."

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, the sources told Kuwait Times in the meantime that "not lowering the support for locals working in the private sector does not mean that there are plans of increasing it, as the expenditure currently is KD

538 million yearly, which equates to KD 44.8 million monthly."

The total number of local workers in the private sector is about 71,800 employees, which is equal to 4.1 percent of the number of total employees there. Sources have also shown that it is possible to review the eligibility of some employees to earn that support, as per recommendations of the budgets committee of the National Assembly, as some the payment could be seen as unnecessary for workers who earn over KD 5,000 per month, for example.

The Public Authority for Manpower already spends monthly allowances based on the academic level of the Kuwaiti employee. Workers within the health field receive KD 790, while people working in law, accounting, information services, statistics, economics, nursing, finance, financial management, insurance, exports, and education receive KD 740. Other degree holders receive KD 690 per month.

As for high school and diploma holders with a course of at least two years, receive KD 629, while middle school certificate holders along with at least two years training courses receive KD 571 per month. As for middle school holders and less receive KD 481 and KD 456 respectively.

necessary to have an executive list that will also take time to finish, which imposes the postponing of the project to send to the National Assembly," said the sources.

In response to remarks from previous MPs concerning the lack of having an election panel for about 60 years, the sources explained, "Elections in Kuwait are run transparently and independently by the judicial authority which supervises electors and the election process, as well as the counting of ballots, gathering the results, and making sure of the eligibility of candidates beforehand."

The government's role, on the other hand, only ensures that factors in the election process only affect it positively, such as providing security, election committees and their needs, explained the sources. Moreover, the government encourages the judicial authority and supports the election process, ensures media freedom to candidates and their campaigns, while also allowing international supervisors and journalists to enter Kuwait and supervise the integrity of Kuwaiti elections.

"All previous elections received international acknowledgement that Kuwaiti elections were going successfully in integral and transparent conditions without the existence of a private national panel to supervise elections, as judicial authorities already suffice in their work," the sources affirmed to Kuwait Times.

On the occasion of the



Subscribe or renew your subscription  
KD 20 instead of KD 30 for 1 year

For individuals only

Tel: 24833199 ext: 353-355-356



kuwaittimes.com

## National Election Authority to be left for upcoming Assembly

KUWAIT: Ministerial sources told Kuwait Times that the National Election Authority remains a priority for the government, as it is planned to ensure transparency in the executive authority and make sure a transparent democratic process takes place in the upcoming elections that invigorates parliamentary work. Sources clarified that the project has already been submitted to the parliament about a month prior to the 2020 elections of the National Assembly. However, it has not been discussed because due to lack of time. Meanwhile, the dissolved National Assembly has been preoccupied with other issues, the sources explained.

The government will reenlist the issue to the National Assembly after the upcoming elections expected at the end of September. However, it will not affirm the project with urgency in fear of disqualifying it by the Constitutional Court, as time will be a serious issue for the National Election Authority, the sources noted. "In case the project was submitted in urgency, it will be

## Local

**Kuwait Times**  
Established 1961  
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT  
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF  
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher  
**YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN**

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

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432  
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7  
FAX : 24835620/1  
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 353/3561  
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125  
COMMERCIAL : 24835618  
P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.  
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com  
Website: www.kuwaittimes.com

## Kuwait FM receives phone call from Nepali counterpart



Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah received on Thursday a phone call from his Nepali counterpart, Narayan Khadka. They discussed the deep-rooted relations tying their two countries and ways of bolstering such relations across various sectors. The ministers

also discussed latest developments on regional and international fronts. — KUNA

## Kuwait welcomes Yemen truce extension deal

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait on Wednesday welcomed an agreement between Yemen's warring parties to extend a truce brokered by the United Nations (UN) for another two months. The efforts of UN special envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg were instrumental in keeping the truce intact, said a foreign ministry statement, hoping the step would lead to a definitive political solution to the conflict.

Meanwhile, the Muslim World League (MWL) welcomed on Wednesday the agreement between Yemen's warring parties to extend the truce. In a press release, WML Secretary General and Chairman of the Association of Muslim Scholars Sheikh Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa commended efforts exerted by Saudi Arabia to achieve such critical outcome for the benefit of the Yemeni people. Dr. Issa highlighted the big role played by the kingdom to strengthen security and stability in the region and the world, in particular through the Initiative of March 2021 to reach a comprehensive solution. MWL chief also hailed efforts exerted by UN Special Envoy to Yemen Hans Grundberg in boosting commitment to the truce.

On Wednesday, Grundberg announced that the parties to the Yemeni conflict had agreed to extend the UN-mediated truce, under the same terms, for an additional two months, from 2 August 2022 until 2 October 2022. "This truce extension includes a commitment from the parties to intensify negotiations to reach an expanded truce agreement as soon as possible," Grundberg stated. — KUNA

## KFH launches summer program with 'Sadu House'

**KUWAIT:** In collaboration with Sadu House, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) launched the summer program "Fun with Weaving" for the children of "Baiti" account customers. KFH organizes this program as part of its strategic partnership with Sadu House, targeting children of "Baiti" account customers from the ages of 7 to 14 years old. It is the second summer program to be held this year, as the first program, "Fun with Weaving 1", started last May and was concluded last week with an exhibition displaying all the handicrafts done by the participants during the course.



Maryam Abaalkhail

Senior Public Relations and Event Management Coordinator at KFH- Maryam Abaalkhail said that the Fun with Weaving" program extended over a week and included knitting and handicrafts workshops as well as teaching new skills in weaving by supervisors and specialists at Sadu House.

Abaalkhail added "As part of the efforts in supporting sustainability and preserving the environment, and continuing KFH's sustainability strategy, all materials used in the workshops are made of recycled materials to convey an important message to the participating children on the importance of recycling and protecting the environment." KFH offers a "Baiti" account for children from birth until the age of 14. The account contributes to instilling the concept of saving among children, as it is an investment account that provides many privileges and helps children develop the concept of saving as a banking behavior that contributes to building their future.

## Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** An aerial view of the Shaheed Park in Kuwait City. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# Keep your cool in hot weather

**KUWAIT:** High temperatures kill hundreds of people every year. Heat-related deaths and illness are preventable. Take measures to stay cool, stay hydrated, and stay informed. Getting too hot can make you sick. You can become ill from the heat if your body can't compensate for it and properly cool you off. The main things affecting your body's ability to cool itself during extremely hot weather are:

### High humidity

When the humidity is high, sweat won't evaporate as quickly. This keeps your body from releasing heat as fast as it may need to.

### Personal factors

Age, obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn, and prescription drug use all can play a role in whether a person can cool off enough in very hot weather. People aged 65 and older are at high risk for heat-related illnesses. Those who are at highest risk include people 65 and older, children younger than two, and people with chronic diseases or mental illness. Closely monitor people who depend on you for their care and ask these questions: Are they drinking enough water? Do they have access to air conditioning? Do they need help keeping cool?

People at greatest risk for heat-related illness can take the following protective actions to prevent illness or death: (1) Stay in air-conditioned buildings as much as you can. Air-conditioning is the number one way to protect yourself against heat-related illness and death. If your home is not air-conditioned, reduce your risk for heat-related illness by spending time in public facilities that are air-conditioned and using air conditioning in vehicles. Contact your



**KUWAIT:** Pigeons drink water in Kuwait City during the hot weather. High temperatures kill hundreds of people every year. Heat-related deaths and illness are preventable. Take measures to stay cool, stay hydrated, and stay informed. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

local health department or locate an air-conditioned shelter in your area.

(2) Do not rely on a fan as your main cooling device during an extreme heat event. (3) Drink more water than usual and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. (4) Limit use of the stove and oven—it will make you and your house hotter. Even young and healthy people can get sick from the heat if they participate in strenuous physical activities during hot weather. (5) Limit your outdoor activity, especially midday when the sun is hottest. (6) Drink more water than usual and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink more. Muscle cramping may be an

early sign of heat-related illness. (7) Never leave children or pets in cars. (8) Check the local news for health and safety updates.

If you play a sport that practices during hot weather, protect yourself and look out for your teammates: (9) Schedule workouts and practices earlier or later in the day when the temperature is cooler. (9) Monitor a teammate's condition and have someone do the same for you. (10) Seek medical care right away if you or a teammate has symptoms of heat-related illness. Everyone should take these steps to prevent heat-related illnesses, injuries, and death during hot weather. — Agencies



**AMMAN:** The Arabian Gulf Theater Troupe celebrating its win in Jordan.

## Zain sponsors Arabian Gulf Theater Troupe

**AMMAN:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its sponsorship of the Arabian Gulf Theater Troupe, which recently represented Kuwait at the closing ceremony of the International Free Theater Festival held in Amman, Jordan. During the event, the troupe received a number of prestigious awards, including the festival's best show.

Zain's support to the Arabian Gulf Theater Troupe - established by a number of Kuwaiti theater pioneers in 1963 - comes as part of the company's belief in the vital role played by the private sector in shouldering the various local

efforts in culture, art, and theater, which ultimately contribute to the nation's cultural progress and add to the community's social fabric.

The Arabian Gulf Theater Troupe recently took part in the 17th edition of the International Free Theater Festival held at the Royal Cultural Center in Amman, Jordan. During the event, the troupe received a number of accolades after an impressive performance. The troupe's play "Anarchia" won the festival's best show award, while actress Fatima Al-Osaimi won best actress, and actor Faisal Al-Saffar won the judging award.

Zain is keen on supporting initiatives and programs that add to the local art and touristic scenes and will spare no efforts in shouldering any group with a creative vision that serves the local community and contributes to enriching national economy. The company is especially keen on being a part of initiatives that enrich the Kuwaiti culture, heritage, and rich history of theatrical achievements.

## National Guard celebrates technical services' graduates

**KUWAIT:** The Technical Service Department at Kuwait National Guard celebrated the graduation of three batches, in the attendance of National Guard Undersecretary Engineer General Hashem Abdurrazaq Al-Refaei who conveyed the congratulations of IIIH Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, the Head of the National Guard. The graduates were prepared to become technical personnel within the fields of mechanical military, military production and mechanical process of military substances. The National Guard undersecretary honored the graduates, encouraging them to utilize their abilities in the courses they learned within their units.

He also expressed his happiness in the commencement of these unprecedented rounds in the National Guard in collaboration with the Australian College of Kuwait which prepares its enrolled students through theoretical and technical studies, to excel in the use of their equipment and develop their abilities. "The National Guard leadership provides all the possible upgrades and improvements of its units to excel in their technical units, and push the support of state departments in order to achieve the goals set for 2025," the undersecretary General added. The ceremony was also attended by Major General Faleh Shujaa Faleh, Brigadier Engineer Esam Naif Esam, and Jassem Muhammad Al-Refaei, member of ACK's board, among other officials.



Hashem Al-Refaei



Myanmar junta charges Japanese journalist with encouraging dissent

Crisis-hit Lebanon hits new lows, years after mega-blast



PHNOM PENH: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (5L) poses for a group photo with other officials during the US ministerial meeting as part of the 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meeting at the Sokha Hotel in Phnom Penh, on August 4, 2022. —AFP

Taiwan tensions spark open conflicts

China launches massive military drills off Taiwan

PHNOM PENH: Southeast Asian foreign ministers urged restraint Thursday as China launched massive military drills off Taiwan, warning the situation risked spiraling into "open conflicts".

"We and countries around the world believe that escalation serves no one and could have unintended consequences that serve no one's interests including ASEAN members and including China."



Southeast Asian foreign ministers urge restraint

from our countries to travel internationally," he tweeted. Kung Phoak, Cambodia's deputy foreign minister and ASEAN spokesman, urged both sides to stabilize the situation.

Miscalculation fear

ASEAN is split between countries with close ties to China, such as Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, and others that are warier of Beijing and its growing international assertiveness.

to play a constructive role in facilitating peaceful dialogue", though it is not clear either side is interested in outside mediation.

"All parties should consider how they can contribute to de-escalating current tensions," Wong told AFP. "One of the risks the region is concerned about is the risk of miscalculation."

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is attending the talks along with his US counterpart Antony Blinken, though they are not expected to hold a one-on-one meeting.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, also in Phnom Penh, condemned the Chinese response. "There is no justification to use a visit as pretext for aggressive military activity in the Taiwan Strait. It is normal and routine for legislators

none has shown an appetite for backing Taipei against the communist giant.

The ministers' statement-which avoided referring to Taiwan by name-said ASEAN "stands ready

Seoul: Pelosi DMZ visit sends clear message to North

SEOUL: After her high-profile trip to Taiwan, US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was in South Korea Thursday where her agenda included a visit to the heavily fortified Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) - but not a meeting with the country's president.

Yoon, who spoke to Pelosi by phone but did not meet her in person as he is officially on holiday this week, is facing growing domestic criticism over his perceived snub of the second in line to the US Presidency.

"What should we make of the fact that [Yoon] is watching a play and have a gathering [with the actors] but not meeting the US House Speaker?"

Yoon took office in May, vowing to boost ties with the United States, including ramping up the joint military drills that always infuriate North Korea, which views them as rehearsals for invasion.

But those talks collapsed and North Korea has conducted a record-breaking blitz of weapons tests so far this year, including firing an intercontinental ballistic missile at full range for the first time since 2017.

At a brief press conference in Seoul, during which she did not take any questions, Pelosi hailed the "special" relationship between South Korea and the United States - but made no mention of her visit to Taipei.

Explosions, fire hit Berlin forest

BERLIN: An "unprecedented" fire broke out Thursday around a German police munitions storage site in a popular forest in western Berlin, sending plumes of smoke into the skies and setting off explosions.

"It would be much more difficult if there were residential buildings nearby," she said. Firefighters called to the site in the middle of the night were confronted with intermittent blasts that sent debris flying and hindered their work.

Police said they were investigating what set off the fire. The store holds munitions uncovered by police, but also unexploded World War II-era ordnance which is regularly dug up during construction works.

Berlin fire brigade spokesman Thomas Kirstein said the situation was "under control and there was no danger for Berliners" but that the fire was expected to last for some time.

Water cannons were also deployed around the safety zone to prevent the fire from spreading. Berlin mayor Franziska Giffey interrupted her holiday to visit the scene, calling the events "unprecedented in the post-war history of Berlin".

But authorities said no firefighting choppers were available as they were already in use to calm forest fires in eastern Germany. They also said the 1,000-metre safety zone applied to the air, so there was a limit to how useful it would be to drop water on the fire from above.



SEOUL: US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and South Korean National Assembly speaker Kim Jin-pyo attend a joint press announcement after their meeting at the National Assembly in Seoul on August 4, 2022. —AFP

special to us," she said, adding that the bond which was forged during the Korean war "from urgency and security... has become the warmest of friendships."

It has since launched massive military drills around the island. China is North Korea's key ally and trade partner. Pyongyang on Wednesday echoed Beijing's criticism of the Pelosi visit to Taiwan, describing it as "impudent interference" in China's internal affairs and blaming Washington for raising regional tensions.



BERLIN: Policemen stand in front of the firefighters' operations management vehicle near Grunewald forest in Berlin after a large fire broke out in the popular forest following an explosion in a police munitions storage site on August 4, 2022. —AFP

Brandenburg, the region surrounding Berlin, as well as parts of eastern Germany have for days been battling forest fires. Temperatures are expected to climb as high as 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) across parts of Germany on Thursday.

US Senate ratifies Finland, Sweden's accession to NATO

WASHINGTON: The US Senate ratified the entry of Sweden and Finland into NATO Wednesday, strongly backing the expansion of the transatlantic alliance in the face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

President Joe Biden hailed the Senate's quick ratification process - the fastest since 1981. "This historic vote sends an important signal of the sustained, bipartisan US commitment to NATO, and to ensuring our Alliance is prepared to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow," Biden said in a statement.

The sole opponent was Republican Josh Hawley, who agreed that the United States should focus on protecting its homeland, but that Washington should concentrate on the challenge from China rather than Europe.

"Putin has tried to use his war in Ukraine to divide the West. Instead, today's vote shows our alliance is stronger than ever," he said. All 30 members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization must agree if Finland and Sweden, officially non-aligned but longtime adjunct partners of the alliance, are admitted.

Only Turkey has raised a challenge, demanding certain concessions from Finland and Sweden to back their memberships. Ankara has demanded the extradition of dozens of government opponents it labels "terrorists" from both countries in exchange for its support.

## International

# Crisis-hit Lebanon hits new lows, years after mega-blast

## Lebanon's ruling class accused of misrule, graft and gross negligence

BEIRUT: Crisis-hit Lebanon marked two years Thursday since a massive port explosion ripped through Beirut, with victims' relatives planning protest marches and the country bracing for silos to collapse at the blast site. The dockside blast of haphazardly stored ammonium nitrate, one of history's biggest non-nuclear explosions, killed more than 200 people, wounded thousands and decimated vast areas of the capital. Yet an investigation into the cause has been stalled amid political interference and no state official has yet been held accountable over the August 4, 2020 tragedy, prompting rights defenders and some victims' families to demand an international probe.

Several heavily damaged grain silos that became a grim symbol of the disaster collapsed last week, and more are dangerously close to coming down, with chunks already falling on Thursday, AFP correspondents reported. French civil engineer Emmanuel Durand, who monitors the silos with sensors, told AFP that four more towers could come crumbling down "at any time". "I hope that seeing the silos fall will give people the will to fight for justice, to battle with us," said Tatiana Hasrouly, who lost her father in the blast.

Politicians "are doing everything in their power to stop the investigation" into the explosion, she said. The mega-blast was a nightmarish moment in the chaotic history of Lebanon, which is mired in its worst-ever economic crisis marked by blackouts, runaway inflation and widespread despair. When protesters from three separate marches converge at the port, they will smell the smoke wafting from the silos where fermenting grain is

smouldering in the blistering summer heat.

### 'A nightmare'

The enormous explosion two years ago was felt as far away as Zionist entity and Cyprus and sowed the kind of devastation normally caused by wars and natural disasters. It further scarred the crisis-tested population and accelerated a massive exodus that recalls the flight from the 1975-1990 civil war. Lebanon's ruling class, accused of misrule, graft and gross negligence, has however clung firmly to power even as the people endure shortages of fuel, medicines and clean water. "This ruling class is killing us every day," Hasrouly said. "If we did not die in the blast, we are dying of hunger, from a lack of basic human rights."

Power cuts last up to 23 hours a day, streets are dark at night and traffic lights out of service, leaving some districts illuminated mainly by the silo fires. Lara Khatchikian, 51, whose apartment was badly hit two years ago, has watched the blazes, calling the sight "a nightmare". "I have felt fear, we couldn't sleep," she said. "It takes superhuman strength to live when you are constantly reminded of the blast."

### 'Deliver justice'

The government in April ordered the silos' demolition, but this has been suspended, partially because of objections from victims' relatives who want them preserved as a memorial. Meanwhile, the probe is also at risk of falling apart, as officials close to the powerful Hezbollah movement have curtailed the work of the lead investigator Tarek Bitar with a series of lawsuits.

A judicial official close to the investigation said

nuclear program in exchange for a gradual lifting of sanctions.

But following the unilateral withdrawal of the United States in 2018 under former president Donald Trump and the re-imposition of US sanctions, Tehran has backtracked on its obligations. Iran subsequently exceeded the JCPOA's uranium enrichment rate of 3.67 percent, rising to 20 percent in early 2021. It then crossed an unprecedented 60-percent threshold, getting closer to the 90 percent needed to make a bomb. The head of the UN nuclear watchdog, Rafael Grossi, on Tuesday warned Iran's program was "moving ahead very, very fast" and "growing in ambition and capacity".

Ahead of Thursday's talks, officials expressed cautious optimism, all the while cautioning that the parties remained far apart on key issues. These include sanctions, Iranian demands for guarantees and the end of a probe by the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The head of the US delegation, Rob Malley, and the head of Tehran's representatives, Ali Bagheri, said on Twitter ahead of the talks that they were coming in good faith but put the onus on each other. Analysts meanwhile said reviving the JCPOA remained the best option. "The last thing the United States needs is a nuclear crisis with Iran that could easily escalate to a broader regional conflict," Suzanne DiMaggio, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said in a statement.

Ellie Geranmayeh, an analyst at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), said that "at the end of the day, Tehran and Washington know the alternatives to a JCPOA collapse are terrible." "This is unlikely to be a meeting that resolves the outstanding issues" but "it could create the breakthrough necessary to push the talks towards a finishing line rather than a collapse," she said. — AFP

be observed. In this context, he hailed the IAEA's role and technical cooperation programs that contribute to building the national capabilities of developing countries and ensuring peaceful nuclear technology.

Proceeding from this fact, Kuwait has always attached special attention to technical cooperation activities, and has backed the IAEA's initiatives for peaceful nuclear usage and laboratory revamp. The Kuwaiti diplomat concluded by hoping that the review conference would promote conviction that open, constructive and fruitful dialogue should continue to ensure sustainable peace, security and stability, boost confidence and curtail nuclear proliferation hazards. — KUNA

"The operations are conducted in an unprecedentedly close range to the Taiwan Island," Meng Xiangqing, a military expert, stressed. "The operations will leave a deterrence effect that is stronger than ever before."

The manoeuvres are taking place along some of the busiest shipping routes on the planet, used to supply vital semiconductors and electronic equipment produced in East Asian factory hubs to global markets. Taiwan's Maritime and Port Bureau has issued warnings to ships to avoid the areas being used for the Chinese drills. And the Taiwanese cabinet said the drills would disrupt 18 international routes passing through its flight information region (FIR).

Taiwan's 23 million people have long lived with the possibility of an invasion, but that threat has intensified under President Xi Jinping, China's most assertive ruler in a generation. Analysts said the Chinese leadership is keen to project strength ahead of a crucial ruling party meeting this autumn at which Xi is expected to be given an unprecedented third term. "China's announced military exercises represent a clear escalation from the existing baseline of Chinese military activities around Taiwan and from the last Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1995-1996," said Amanda Hsiao, senior analyst for China at the International Crisis Group.

"Beijing is signaling that it rejects Taiwan's sovereignty." Nevertheless, analysts have told AFP that China is not aiming to escalate the situation beyond its control - at least for now. Titus Chen, an associate professor of political science at the National Sun Yat-Sen University in Taiwan, said: "The last thing Xi wants is an accidental war." — AFP



BEIRUT: Activists and relatives of the 2020 Beirut port blast victims carry pictures of casualties, in the Lebanese capital's port area on August 4, 2022, on the day that crisis-hit country marks two years since a giant explosion ripped through the capital. — AFP

judge Bitar's work had been paused since December 23. Hezbollah, which has repeatedly accused Bitar of bias, on Thursday condemned what it described as a two-year "intense political and media campaign, which contained false accusations" against it, and called for a "fair" investigation.

UN chief Antonio Guterres on Thursday reiterated his call for an "impartial, thorough and transparent investigation into the explosion". UN experts

and groups including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch had earlier relaunched an appeal to the United Nations to send a fact-finding mission. The rights groups jointly declared that "it is now, more than ever, clear that the domestic investigation cannot deliver justice". Aya Majzoub of HRW said that an international investigation "may be the only hope for the millions of Lebanese people... to get the answers they deserve". — AFP

## Iran nuclear talks set to restart in Vienna

VIENNA: Negotiators kicked off a fresh round of talks over Iran's nuclear program in Vienna on Thursday, seeking to salvage the agreement on Tehran's atomic ambitions. Officials from world powers and Iran were meeting in the Austrian capital for the first time since March, when negotiations, which began in 2021 to reintegrate the United States into the agreement, stalled. In late June, Qatar hosted indirect talks between Tehran and Washington in the hope of getting the process back on track - but those talks failed to make a breakthrough.

In a last-ditch effort, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell submitted a compromise proposal last month and called on the parties to accept it to avoid a "dangerous nuclear crisis". Borrell said the draft text includes "hard-won compromises by all sides" and "addresses, in precise detail, the sanctions lifting as well as the nuclear steps needed to restore" the 2015 pact. Bilateral talks began on Thursday at Vienna's luxury Palais Coburg hotel under the auspices of the European Union's representative Enrique Mora.

The Iranian and Russian delegations, which have traditionally been close in the negotiations, held a separate meeting. Britain, China, France, Germany, Iran, Russia and the United States signed the JCPOA in July 2015. Delegations from all will partake in Thursday's talks, but officials from the US and Iran are not expected to meet face to face. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action aims to guarantee the civilian nature of Iran's

## UK city marks 50 years since Uganda expelled Asians

LEICESTER: Fifty years ago, brutal dictator Idi Amin announced his intention to expel Uganda's thriving community of British South Asians. They were given 90 days to leave or be rounded up into concentration camps. More than 27,000 ethnic Indian and Pakistani holders of UK passports made their way to Britain, which reluctantly took in its former colonial subjects. Many of them came to the English Midlands city of Leicester, and many arrived penniless after Idi Amin expropriated their wealth in a purported drive to give "Uganda back to ethnic Ugandans".

Overcoming English racism and weather, the refugees rebuilt their lives from scratch, as chronicled in a new exhibition marking the anniversary of Idi Amin's incendiary decree of August 4, 1972. "Nobody used to assist us, everybody was against us," retiree Madhukumar Madhani told AFP on a visit to the exhibition at Leicester Museum. "But through sheer hard work, a lot of people have put a lot into the community," he said, noting the prosperity on display in the city's "Golden Mile" - a stretch of road rich in Asian-owned businesses.

Exhibition curator Nisha Popat pointed to parallels today in Britain's generosity, or lack of, towards refugees. "We are in a world where there is a lot of conflict and there's refugees," she said. The intention was about "showing the impact of refugees, but what they went through, and the impact they can have on a

place". The family of British Home Secretary Priti Patel, responsible for refugee policy now, were Gujarati Indians from Uganda who fled to Britain in the 1960s when anti-Asian prejudice was already rife.

To much controversy, Patel is trying to push a policy today that would send asylum-seekers entering Britain illegally on to Uganda's southern neighbor Rwanda, for processing and permanent settlement. The government says it is acting to stop a deadly trade in migrants crossing the Channel from France, and points to its welcome for holders of a type of British passport from Hong Kong, and to refugees from the war in Ukraine. In 1972, the then Conservative government dragged its feet initially, seeking to send some of the Ugandan Asians to other countries before agreeing to honor their passport rights.

They largely succeeded in their new lives, rebuilding the small businesses and shops that were the mainstay of their middle-class prosperity in Uganda. They fared better than Idi Amin, who was overthrown in a 1979 coup and ended up a refugee himself, dying in well-heeled exile in Saudi Arabia, in 2003. His eight-year reign of terror, chronicled to powerful effect in the 2006 film "The Last King of Scotland", resulted in the deaths of an estimated 300,000 people.

Idi Amin was "really very bad with the Asian people", agreed Bhikhulal Pragji Chohan, another retiree in Leicester. "We all, Asian people, all like to do our jobs, and everything they left there and (they) come here without anything," he said. As well as the exhibition, Leicester's Curve Theatre is staging three plays to mark the anniversary. "The story of the Ugandan South Asian exodus to Leicester is one that begins with trauma and upheaval for so many," Curve chief executive Chris Stafford said. "Fifty years on, it is undoubtedly a story of resilience and triumph over adversity." — AFP

## Kuwait restates unswerving...

Continued from Page 1

However, he regretted, the conference was not held due to the absence of the political will and earnestness on the part of all concerned parties. He underlined that all parties have the right to develop research and studies, and possess and use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, but legal commitments and agreements concluded with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must

## China deploys warships, fires...

Continued from Page 1

Taipei did not say where the missiles landed or whether they flew over the island. AFP journalists on the border island of Pingtan saw several small projectiles flying into the sky followed by plumes of white smoke and loud booming sounds. On the mainland, at what is said to be China's closest point to Taiwan, AFP saw a batch of five military helicopters flying at a relatively low altitude near a popular tourist spot. Beijing has said the drills will last until midday on Sunday.

Beijing has defended the drills as "necessary and just", pinning the blame for the escalation on the United States and its allies. "In the face of this blatant provocation, we have to take legitimate and necessary countermeasures to safeguard the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity," foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said at a regular briefing Thursday. Military analysts told Beijing's state broadcaster CCTV that the goal was to practice a possible blockade of the island and contain its pro-independence forces.

"The purpose is to show that the PLA is capable of controlling all the exits of the Taiwan Island, which will be a great deterrent to 'Taiwan independence' secessionist forces," Zhang Junshe, a senior researcher at China's Naval Research Institute, said.

## Taliban: No info about Zawahiri...

Continued from Page 1

instructed the intelligence agencies to hold a comprehensive and serious investigation." Taliban officials had previously conceded that a US drone strike had taken place in an upmarket Kabul suburb, but gave no details of any casualties. Washington said earlier this week that Zawahiri's presence was a clear violation of the Doha agreement signed in 2020 that paved the way for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan a year ago.

The Taliban, in turn, said Washington had breached the accord. "The fact that America invaded our territory and violated all international principles, we strongly condemn the action once again," the statement said. "If such action is repeated, the responsibility of any consequences will be on the United States of America." The Taliban said in their statement that there was "no threat" to any country from Afghanistan's soil. In announcing Zawahiri's death, Biden declared "justice had been delivered" to the families of victims of the 9/11 attacks on the United States.

US officials said Zawahiri was on the balcony of a

three-storey house in the Afghan capital when targeted with two Hellfire missiles early on Sunday. The drone attack was the first known over-the-horizon strike by the US on a target in Afghanistan since Washington withdrew its forces from the country on August 31 last year, days after the Taliban swept back to power. The house targeted in the strike was in Sherpur, one of Kabul's most affluent neighborhoods, with several villas occupied by high-ranking Taliban officials and commanders.

Zawahiri took over Al-Qaeda after bin Laden was killed, and had a \$25 million US bounty on his head. News of his death comes a month before the first anniversary of the final withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and the return to power of the Taliban. No country has yet recognized the new government, which has slowly reintroduced a harsh interpretation of Islamic law that characterized the Taliban's first stint in power.

While the insurgency has ended, the country has been plunged into economic turmoil, with Afghanistan's assets abroad frozen, aid curtailed, and sanctions on key Taliban leaders. "Even if the Taliban face no new sanctions, lifting the existing ones will be harder after Zawahiri's discovery and killing in downtown Kabul," said Nishank Motwani, fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School. "As a consequence of Zawahiri's killing... it is likely that fragmentations within the Taliban will widen that could result in internal violence." — AFP



PANJSHIR: A Taliban fighter keeping a watch at an outpost in Tawakh Village of Anaba district, Panjshir Province. — AFP

## International

# Myanmar junta charges Japanese journalist with encouraging dissent

## Breaching immigration law carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison

**YANGON:** A Japanese journalist detained in Myanmar has been charged with breaching immigration law and encouraging dissent against the military, the ruling junta said Thursday. Myanmar's military has clamped down on press freedoms since its coup last year, arresting reporters and photographers as well as revoking broadcasting licences as the country plunged into chaos.

Kubota has previously made documentaries on Myanmar's Muslim Rohingya minority and "refugees and ethnic issues in Myanmar".

Kubota had arrived in Myanmar on July 14 and was filming a "documentary featuring a Myanmar person", his friend Yoshitaka Nitta told a press conference in Tokyo on Wednesday. He is the fifth foreign journalist to be detained in Myanmar, after US citizens Nathan Maung and Danny Fenster, Robert Bociaga of Poland and Yuki Kitazumi of Japan—all of whom were later freed and deported.

Fenster, who was held in May last year as he attempted to leave the country, faced a closed-door trial inside Insein on charges of unlawful association, incitement against the military and breaching visa rules. He was sentenced to 11 years in prison before being pardoned and deported.

### 'War on journalists'

"The regime has declared war on journalists, and 505a is its preferred charge," said Richard Horsey of the International Crisis Group. "This charge against a Japanese journalist shows the regime is determined to continue stifling objective reporting, whether by local or foreign journalists."

Japan's foreign ministry said in a statement that its embassy in Myanmar was "appealing to the Myanmar authorities for the early release of the Japanese man, and will continue to make efforts to gather information and request his early release".

Tokyo is a top donor to Myanmar and has long-standing relations with the country's military. The already isolated junta stoked further international outrage last week when it announced the execution of four prisoners, in the country's first use of capital punishment



**TOKYO:** File photo shows an activist holds a placard of Japanese citizen Toru Kubota, who is detained in Myanmar, during a rally in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo. — AFP

in decades. "The situation in Burma has gone from bad to worse," United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken said, using the country's former name, after talks with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell. Blinken met Borrell on the sidelines of a meeting of Southeast Asian foreign ministers in Cambodia, from which Myanmar's top diplomat has been excluded over the junta's failure to open talks with its political opponents.

More than 2,100 people have been killed in the crackdown on dissent in Myanmar and almost 15,000 arrested, according to a local monitoring group. As of March this year, 48 journalists remain in custody across the country, according to the monitoring group Reporting ASEAN. Only China jailed more reporters than Myanmar last year, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. — AFP

## Seven decades of China-Taiwan relations

**TAIPEI:** As China embarks on its largest-ever military exercises around Taiwan following US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei, AFP looks back at relations between the self-governing island and Beijing, which views it as part of China.

### 1949: separation

Mao Zedong's communists take power in Beijing in October 1949 after defeating Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (KMT) nationalists in a civil war. The KMT flee to the island of Taiwan and form their own government in Taipei in December, cutting off contacts with mainland China. In 1950, Taiwan becomes an ally of the United States, which is at war with communist China in Korea. The US deploys a fleet in the Taiwan Strait to protect its ally from possible attack.

### 1971: Beijing gets UN, US nods

In October 1971, Beijing takes over China's seat at the United Nations, previously held by Taipei. In 1979, the United States cuts formal ties with Taiwan and establishes diplomatic relations with Beijing instead. Washington goes on to develop a nuanced Taiwan policy were it "acknowledges" China's claim to the island, which is not the same as accepting Beijing's claim of sovereignty. The US also maintains trade and military ties with Taipei. It opposes both Taiwanese independence and any attempt by China to forcibly take the island.

### 1987-2004: relations improve

In late 1987, Taiwan residents are for the first time permitted to visit mainland China, allowing families to reunite. In 1991, Taiwan lifts emergency rule, unilaterally ending a state of war with China. The first direct talks between the two sides are held in Singapore two years later. But in 1995, Beijing suspends talks in protest at a visit by Taiwanese president Lee Teng-hui to the United States. In 1996, China tests missiles off Taiwan to deter voters in the island's first democratic

presidential election. In 2000 elections, the KMT loses power in Taiwan for the first time. Over the next few years trade links between the two sides improve.

### 2005-2015: threats and talks

In March 2005, Beijing adopts a law authorising the use of force if Taiwan declares independence. In April, KMT chairman Lien Chan makes a landmark visit to Beijing for talks with Chinese leader Hu Jintao. In 2008, Taiwan and China resume high-level talks after the KMT's Ma Ying-jeou is elected president on a Beijing-friendly platform. In 2010, they sign a sweeping Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement and in 2014 hold the first government-to-government talks since separation.

### 2016: honeymoon over

In January 2016, Tsai Ing-wen, from the traditionally pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, wins presidential elections. In June, China suspends all communications with Taiwan after the new government fails to acknowledge the "One China" policy. In December 2016, US president-elect Donald Trump breaks with decades of US diplomatic policy by speaking directly, by telephone, with Tsai. In January 2019, Xi Jinping says that the unification of China and Taiwan is "inevitable".

### 2021: US-China tensions

In 2021, Chinese military jets make hundreds of incursions into Taiwan's defence zone. In October, US President Joe Biden says the United States will defend Taiwan if China attacks it, in comments later partly walked back by the White House. Tsai confirms that a small number of US troops are present in Taiwan to help train its forces.

### 2022: Pelosi visit sparks fury

On August 2, after days of speculation and stern warnings from Beijing of unspecified "consequences", US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi lands in Taiwan during a tour of Asia. The highest-profile elected US official to visit the island in 25 years says her visit demonstrates her country's "unwavering commitment to supporting Taiwan's vibrant democracy". A furious China vows "punishment" and launches its largest-ever military exercises in the area, encircling Taiwan on August 4. The exercises include the deployment of fighter jets and warships, and the firing of ballistic missiles. — AFP

## Tuneless Bangladeshi social media star grilled by police

**DHAKA:** An out-of-tune Bangladeshi singer with a huge internet following was hauled in by police at dawn and told to cease his painful renditions of classical songs, sparking a furor on social media. "Hero" Alom, as he styles himself, has amassed nearly two million Facebook followers and almost 1.5 million on YouTube with his unique crooning style and arresting, raunchy videos. One of his numbers, "Arabian Song", in which he appears in traditional Arab clothing on a sand dune with camels superimposed in the background, has garnered 17 million views. But he has also drawn critics' scorn, particularly for versions of classic songs of two beloved national treasures-Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore and Bangladesh's national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.

On Wednesday Alom told AFP that he was "mentally tortured" last week by police who told him to stop performing classical songs, that he was too ugly to be a singer, and to sign an "apology" bond.

"The police picked me up at 6 am and kept me there for eight hours. They asked me why I sing Rabindra and Nazrul songs," he said. Dhaka's chief detective Harun ur Rashid told reporters that Alom had apologised for singing the cherished songs and for wearing police uniforms without permission in his



**DHAKA:** YouTuber Hero Alom speaks during an interview at his office in Dhaka. — AFP

videos. "We received many complaints against him," Harun said. "(He) totally changed the (traditional) style (of singing)... He assured us that he won't repeat this," Harun added.

Farooq Hossain, deputy police commissioner of Dhaka, rejected claims by Alom, 37, that he had also been pressed to change his name. "He is making these comments just to go viral in social media," he told AFP.

Following his ordeal, Alom released a new video depicting himself behind bars in a prison outfit, warbling mournfully that he is about to be hanged. Alom's treatment triggered outrage on social media, with commentators and activists calling it an attack on individual rights—even if his singing grates.

"I am not a fan of your songs or your acting. But if there is an attempt to muzzle your voice, I stand up against it," journalist Aditya Arafat posted. "Don't be broken. You are a hero. No matter what others say, you are a real hero," Sanjida Khatun Rakhi wrote on Alom's Facebook page.—AFP



### Fifth foreign journalist to be detained

Toru Kubota, who was held while covering a protest in Yangon last week, "has been charged under section 505 (a) and under immigration law 13-1", the junta said in a statement. 505 (a) — a law that criminalises encouraging dissent against the military and carries a maximum three-year jail term—has been widely used in the crackdown on dissent.

Breaching immigration law 13-1 carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison. Filmmaker Kubota, 26, was detained near an anti-government rally in Yangon along with two Myanmar citizens. After the charges were filed, he was transferred from police custody to Yangon's Insein prison, a security source told AFP, requesting anonymity.

"He's in good health and embassy officials have visited him already at the police station where he has been detained." According to a profile on FilmFreeway,



**NAIROBI:** A billboard of United Democratic Alliance Party (UDA) presidential candidate William Ruto is seen in Nairobi on August 4, 2022. — AFP

## Kenya's Ruto: Chicken seller turned presidential 'hustler'

**NAIROBI:** Kenya's William Ruto, the sharp-suited deputy president now running for the top office, is one of the wealthiest men in the country but likes to portray himself as a champion of the poor and downtrodden. Despite being dogged by corruption allegations going back years, the ruthlessly ambitious 55-year-old clawed his way to the corridors of power by playing on his religious faith and humble beginnings selling chickens by the roadside.

He has painted the August 9 poll, set to be a two-horse race between Ruto and veteran politician Raila Odinga, as a battle between ordinary "hustlers" and the elite "dynasties" that have dominated Kenyan politics for decades. "We want everyone to feel the wealth of this country. Not just a few at the top," Ruto said as he criss-crossed the country promoting his "bottom-up" economic plan.

Ruto first dipped his toes into politics three decades ago, and has served as deputy president for nine years despite a very public and acrimonious falling out with his boss, the outgoing President Uhuru Kenyatta. The rags-to-riches businessman is making his first stab at the presidency, a post he thought he had in the bag as a reward for supporting Kenyatta in the 2013 and 2017 elections. It was a political marriage of convenience in the aftermath of deadly post-poll violence in 2007-2008 that largely pitted Kikuyus — Kenyatta's tribe — against the Kalenjin, Ruto's ethnic group.

Both men were hauled before the International Criminal Court accused of stoking the ethnic unrest but the cases were eventually dropped, with the prosecution complaining of a relentless campaign of witness intimidation.

### 'Man on a mission'

Their so-called "Uhuruto" alliance began unraveling after Kenyatta stunned the nation in 2018 with a pledge to work with Odinga, his longtime arch-rival who is now running with the endorsement of the ruling Jubilee party.

"I'm a man on a mission," Ruto declared last year, defying the president's call for him to resign as they clashed over Kenyatta's — now failed — bid to change the constitution. Shifting allegiances between political leaders are common in Kenya, where Ruto himself had once lent his support to Odinga before switching to Kenyatta. "Ruto is seen by many people to be one of

the most effective strategists in Kenyan politics," said Nic Cheeseman, a political scientist at the University of Birmingham.

"He's someone with extensive experience of running campaigns, performing very well in campaigns, of seeing politics from both sides. He stood with Odinga, he stood with Kenyatta, he knows most of these figures intimately well, he knows their strengths and weaknesses."

On the increasingly toxic campaign trail, Ruto's venom is now directed as much at Kenyatta as his rival at the ballot box, blaming the government for the country's economic woes and even accusing the president of threatening him and his family.

### 'Perfect storm'

Clad in the bright yellow of his United Democratic Alliance, whose symbol is the humble wheelbarrow, Ruto has been reaching out to those suffering most from the Covid-induced cost of living crisis that has been aggravated by the war in Ukraine.

"I think what Ruto did that was clever is it's the perfect time, he picked the perfect storm," said Kenyan political analyst Nerima Wako-Ojiwa. But she added: "A lot of people have this fear that if he enters leadership, he is going to be the kind of person that we cannot take out."

Observers attribute Ruto's aggressiveness to the fact he has had to struggle to get everything he has achieved in life from his lowly start in Kenya's Rift Valley, the Kalenjin heartland. "I sold chicken at a railway crossing near my home as a child... I paid (school) fees for my siblings," he once said. "God has been kind to me and through hard work and determination, I have something."

His fortune is now said to run into many millions of dollars, with interests spanning hotels, real estate and insurance as well as a vast chicken farm. A teetotal father of six who describes himself as a born-again Christian, Ruto seldom lets a speech go by without thanking or praising God or reciting from the Bible.

He first got a foot on the political ladder — and detractors claim, access to funds — in 1992. After completing studies in botany, he headed the YK'92 youth movement tasked with drumming up support for the autocratic then-president Daniel arap Moi, also a Kalenjin.

In 1997, when he tried to launch his parliamentary career by contesting a seat on his home turf of Eldoret North, Moi told him he was a disrespectful son of a pauper. Undeterred, Ruto went on to clinch the seat, which he retained in subsequent elections. His detractors say he siphoned money from the YK'92 project and used it to go into business, and allegations of corruption and land grabs still hang over him. But he dismisses such claims, once telling local media: "I can account for every coin that I have." —AFP

# Business

FRIDAY, August 5, 2022

## NIC achieves net profit of KD 12m

### National Investments Company announces H1 results for 2022

KUWAIT: National Investments Company has announced its financial results for H1 2022, including an analytical overview of the company's performance and financial position from the beginning of the year until 30 June, 2022.

In a press statement, Fahad Al-Mukhaizim, CEO of the National Investments Company, said: "Our financial results for H1 2022 reflect the strategy followed by the company, as one of the leading investment companies in Kuwait and the region. Despite the KD 3.4 million decline in the second quarter of 2022 compared to KD 15.1 net profits generated in H1 2021, NIC has achieved a net profit of KD 12 million, 15 fils per share since the beginning of 2022."

Regarding assets, Al-Mukhaizim has highlighted a 15.2% growth to reach KD 275.9 million by H1 2022, compared to KD 239.5 million in total assets by H1 2021, regardless of the KD 36 million profits distribution. Al-Mukhaizim also highlighted those total managed assets had witnessed a 5.5% increase to KD 1.13 billion compared to KD 1.07 billion generated by H1 2021.

Other comprehensive revenues grew by 4.7% in the second half of this year to KD 8.3 million compared to KD 7.9 million in the first half of 2021. Al-Mukhaizim went on to say that the total shareholders' equity of the parent company increased by 6.2% to KD 200.9 million, compared to KD 189.2 million in the first half of 2021. He also highlighted the exceptional performance and efforts which have led to exiting three investments: the first is from a local investment company, which was worth KD 7.1 million, and the second was from an international real estate worth 6.6 million euros, in addition to 'NCC San Pietro' deal.

Al-Mukhaizim also highlighted the number of private subscriptions and qualitative listings on Boursa Kuwait, managed by NIC during 2022, where the company worked as a global coordinator and listing consultant for Ali Al Ghanim and Sons Automotive, one of the leading listed automotive companies in Kuwait and the official distributor of international brands, NIC has managed to obtain approvals of the Capital Markets Authority and the Boursa Kuwait to start trading the company's shares on the 'Premier Market' starting on June 7, 2022. The IPO aimed to offer up to 124,875,000 million shares of Ali Alghanim & Sons Automotive Company for 793 fils per share (with a total value of KD 99 million) to eligible investors to increase the shareholders base, one of the basic requirements for listing on Boursa Kuwait's Premier Market. The company received initial purchases with a value of KD 1.08 billion, covering nearly 11 times the offering value.

Al-Mukhaizim also mentioned that NIC has acted as the issuance manager and agent for the IPO process and managed to conclude a capital increase process for National Consumer Holding Company (NCHC), with a value of KD 21 million, which translates to 233% of the source capital paid before the increase, covering 100% of the capital increase. In addition to the special offering of Rai Media Group, as well as playing the investment consultant role for the merger between Boubyan Petrochemical Company and Education Holding Group and as an investment advisor for the merger between Safa Investment Company and Cap Corp Investment Company.

On the performance of the alternative investment sector, Al-Mukhaizim said that the industry has invested in two funds, one is a private equity fund with a capital of \$20 billion investment in the technology sector and managed by Silver Lake, and the other is a fund that invests in private finance and

private equity with a capital of \$9.5 billion, driven by HPS Investment Partners.

NIC's CEO also noted that the performance of the MENA Securities Sector was excellent during the first half of 2022, as the sector continued to record positive results in terms of its investment activities thanks to the efforts of the team and their experience, as the company's positive financial results supported the positive performance recorded by our investment funds despite market fluctuations during the first half of this year, on top of it was Al Wataniya Investment Fund with a return of 6.6%, followed by the Darij Investment Fund with 5.6%, then a Mawarid fund for industry and oil services with a return of 4.6%, and finally Zajil Fund for services and telecommunications at 0.41%.

The investment funds team at The National Investments Company has succeeded in distributing cash dividends during this period for the unit owners listed in the units campaign registered on March 31, 2022, with a total value of KD 11.6 million for all funds, post the return of the semi-annual distribution mechanism, for our funds to form attractive and

added Al-Mukhaizim.

With outstanding performance and following quality standards while serving customers, NIC's wealth management team was able to attract a wide range of individual and corporate investors and increase the company's customer base during the first half of 2022, which had a positive impact on maximizing the company's managed assets, this included establishing many investment portfolios for individuals and institutions locally and internationally, via effective communication and diligent follow-ups, the team also contributed to customers satisfaction and the development of digital service program, including IPO services, applying for direct and indirect subscriptions through investment portfolios, electronic signature, digitalized documents, in addition to the pocket guide program and many more.

The real estate investment division has witnessed positive accomplishments in H1 2022, which has contributed to the financial results achieved by NIC; the division has followed a strategy that offers comprehensive solutions related to real estate manage-

enable them as well as the external investors to participate in public offerings and increase the capital of listed and not listed companies quickly. This new service was launched coinciding with the public offering of Ali Al Ghanim & Sons, which achieved the most extensive public offering in terms of the value of the offering in Kuwait. The service proved an unprecedented success by dealing with thousands of underwriters in an integrated automated method that supports the registration of the subscription application, digital signature, and electronic payment.

Customers can benefit from an additional feature added by NIC to its digital exchange platform, which allows them to connect to third external channels specialized to access trading signals and linking them to an easy-to-use graphical interface; this service is characterized by the quality of financial analysts from more than 500 major financial institutions, such as Morgan Stanley, Credit Suisse, UBS Bank, Barclays Bank, Goldman Sachs, Wells Fargo, JP Morgan, and Deutsche Bank, this new feature enables investors to make decisions after gaining a comprehensive view of market movement.

The trial account of the e-trading service has generated significant interest from investors of the electronic trading service (NICTRADE), as the company has been developing it through the experimental account property, which allows those interested in investing and trading in the capital markets to test their investment decisions in a risk-free environment before investing through the existing account, the trial account also gives new customers a chance to experience the platform and its features such as entering trading orders, following up on them, while taking advantage of real-time market prices transparently and flexibly.

All digital services and features launched by NIC are part of its digital transformation plan, which is based on promoting and adopting the latest digital technologies in all areas of direct business, fundamentally changing the way we operate, to provide valuable services to customers and create a well-established environment that allows expanding financial services for new categories of customers. The digital transformation is consistent with the National Investments Company's strategy of improving an efficient internal IT infrastructure through innovation and permanent development of applications and technologies used and working to apply new technologies focused on the company's strategic objectives that contribute mainly to raising productivity and reducing operational costs, thereby achieving sustainability of core processes and activities.

At the end of his statement, Fahad Al-Mukhaizim expressed his sincere appreciation to shareholders and customers; their trust is much appreciated. We also acknowledge the support of all regulators, our executive management, and employees for their positive contribution to this outstanding performance. Al-Mukhaizim also confirmed that NIC's strategy positioned it as one of the largest investment companies in the region, and witnessing intense competition in the markets, the company continues to focus on achieving strategic objectives that include strengthening its position in addition to maximizing the capabilities of its employees to provide the best products and services of high quality and provide an exceptional level of customer service, with a focus on achieving the best returns to shareholders.



Fahad Al-Mukhaizim

#### Al-Mukhaizim:

- NIC's wise leaders succeeded in capturing great investment opportunities that go with its objectives and generate the highest returns by offering diversified services and adding value to both shareholders and customers

- The company has managed to carry out three successful exits during 2022 and has professionally managed many private subscriptions and qualitative listings

distinct investment opportunities for investors looking to increase capital or regular profit, over the long-term investment horizon, despite the changes in the investment opportunities within the financial markets, therefore NIC is considered the first local company that distributes cash dividends to fund unit holders after the financial crisis in 2008.

Al-Mukhaizim explained that the cash distributions linked to the investment funds were 5% of the nominal value, i.e., 50 fils per unit, post the release of 2021 financial results, with a current return of 5.5%. AlDarj Investment Fund has distributed a cash dividend of 3% of nominal value, 30 fils per unit, by the second half of 2021 with a current return of 6.2%, while Zajil Fund has distributed 5% of the nominal value, i.e., 50 fils per unit during the same period last year, with current revenue of 4.5%.

"Through our planned investment activities, our financial instruments team was able to sign a Market Maker service agreement with seven companies listed on Boursa Kuwait, bringing the number of companies NIC represents as a Market Maker of their shares by about nine companies. We are keen on selecting shares solvency for our clients and provide expertise when managing those shares,"

ment and provides extraordinary services that increase returns, attract investors and customers. The division continued to achieve returns generated from domestic and foreign real estate investments based on comprehensive studies while re-operating external investments and converting them from long-term to managed or easy-to-exit investments.

On a local investment level, our real estate investment team was able to attract a lot of real estate portfolios in addition to achieving big profits because of exiting one of the local real estate projects owned by the company, located in Salmiya area. The division also started a new campaign to develop and improve the assets of the real estate portfolio to increase revenues and property value. The company was also able to maintain reasonable occupancy rates during the first half of 2022 by intensifying efforts in marketing campaigns to raise collection and occupancy rates.

NIC has recently launched a new service to manage subscriptions electronically, which was developed using the latest technologies, and aims to attract large companies interested in the IPO and capital raising procedures, allowing them to reach a large segment of those involved in these offers, and

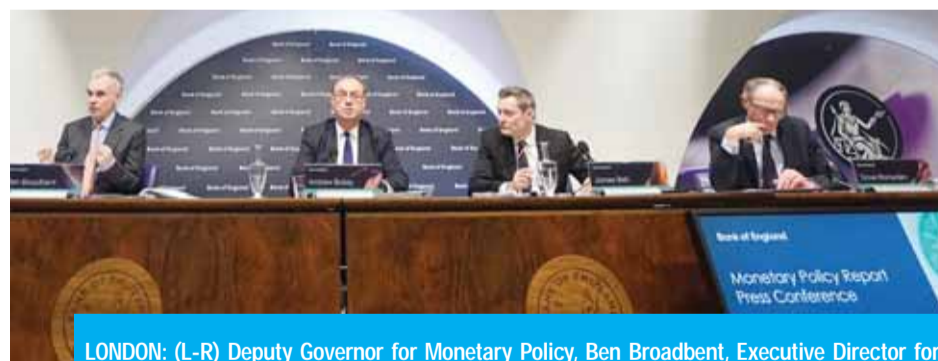
## BoE delivers biggest rate hike in 27 years

LONDON: The Bank of England unleashed Thursday its biggest interest rate hike since 1995 as it forecast inflation topping 13 percent this year and warned of a looming year-long recession. The bank's Monetary Policy Committee voted 8-1 in favour of lifting its key interest rate by 0.50 percentage points to 1.75 percent. The increase tallied with expectations and took borrowing costs to the highest level since December 2008.

The move also mirrors aggressive monetary policy from the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank last month, as the world races to cool red-hot inflation that has been fuelled by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It also ramps up loan repayments for UK consumers and businesses, who are already facing a squeeze from a worsening cost of living crisis.

UK inflation is set to peak at 13 percent, or the highest level in more than 42 years, according to the BoE. "Inflationary pressures in the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe have intensified significantly" since May, read a statement after the decision.

"That largely reflects a near doubling in wholesale gas prices since May, owing to Russia's restriction of gas supplies to Europe and the risk of further curbs. "As this feeds through to retail energy prices, it will exacerbate the fall in real incomes for UK households and further increase UK



LONDON: (L-R) Deputy Governor for Monetary Policy, Ben Broadbent, Executive Director for Communications, James Bell, Governor of the Bank of England Andrew Bailey, and Deputy Governor for Markets and Banking, Dave Ramsden, address the media on the Monetary Policy Report at the Bank of England, in London, on August 4, 2022. —AFP

CPI inflation in the near term."

In more grim news, the BoE predicted the UK economy would enter a painful recession that will last until late 2023. "GDP growth in the United Kingdom is slowing," the BoE said. "The latest rise in gas prices has led to another significant deterioration in the outlook for activity in the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe.

"The United Kingdom is now projected to enter recession from the fourth quarter of this year." However, the recession will be shallower than the 2008 crash that was sparked by the global financial crisis.

The UK economy is expected to shrink by up to 2.1 percent in size from its highest point, according to the central bank's forecast. UK inflation had already jumped to a four-decade high of 9.4 percent in June, deepening the cost-of-living crisis as workers' wages fail to keep pace.

Global inflation is surging as energy prices continue to rocket on key gas and oil

producer Russia's war on neighbouring Ukraine. Consumer prices have also rocketed on supply-chain strains as demand rebounds on the easing of COVID restrictions. That has forced central banks to raise interest rates, risking the prospect of recession as higher borrowing costs hurt businesses and consumers. Inflation is also running at a 40-year peak of 9.1 percent in the United States, and a record high of 8.6 percent in the eurozone. The Fed in July delivered its second straight 0.75-percentage-point increase, in what economists have called the most aggressive Fed tightening cycle since the 1980s.

The European Central Bank then surprised markets last month with a bigger-than-expected 0.50-percentage-point hike, bringing an end to the era of negative interest rates in the eurozone. Policymakers are anxious to quell inflation before it becomes dangerously entrenched and sparks a prolonged economic downturn. — AFP

## HK's Li Ka-shing's firm to sell stake in fintech upstart

HONG KONG: Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-shing's firm is selling its stake in the parent company of fintech upstart AMTD Digital, according to a statement released Thursday, after the company enjoyed a massive rally this week. Hong Kong-based AMTD Digital was worth more than \$203 billion when New York markets closed on Wednesday, making it the world's fifth-biggest financial company on paper, Bloomberg reported.

AMTD Digital was listed just three weeks ago, and reported \$25 million in revenue for the financial year that ended in April 2021. Li's CK Group said in a statement that it holds less than four percent of AMTD Digital's parent company, AMTD Group, and has entered negotiations to sell those shares.

CK added that it has no representatives on AMTD Group's board and has no business dealings with or shareholdings in AMTD Digital directly. The sale would put distance between CK and AMTD Digital's founder Calvin Choi, a former investment banker who is appealing a ban by Hong Kong regulators for failing to disclose conflicts of interest.

Li's CK said its current four percent stake was left over from a sale nearly a decade ago, where CK sold a majority

of its AMTD Group shares. AMTD Group was set up in 2003 and lists CK Asset Holdings as a co-founder, according to its website.

Analysts have partly attributed AMTD Digital's current rally to the small portion of shares that were made available for trading. "The low free float in the company's shares means it will be easier for big shareholders to push up the stock price," research analyst Thomas Nip at Valuable Capital in Hong Kong told Bloomberg, adding that the stock is highly overvalued.

Oktay Kavrak, director at Leverage Shares, told Bloomberg that AMTD Digital was heading for a "nose-dive" given the speed of its ascent. AMTD Digital's swift rally had prompted questions of whether it was the next "meme stock"-shares that skyrocket due to retail trading mania-similar to video game chain GameStop.

In January 2021, small-time stock traders banded together and rocked Wall Street by driving up the prices of shares like GameStop and cinema chain AMC, reaping massive profits. But there is no evidence yet of a clear link between AMTD Digital's stock movements this week and trades driven by social media interest, with some users of Reddit forum WallStreetBets dismissing the connection. — AFP



## Business

# Airbus scraps A350 contract with Qatar Airways in feud

## Locked in dispute with Airbus over degradation of the exterior fuselage surfaces

PARIS: European aircraft maker Airbus has cancelled its contract to deliver 19 A350 planes to Qatar Airways, a source close to the matter said Wednesday, amid a feud between the two aviation giants.

Airbus had already cancelled a multi-billion-dollar order of 50 planes from Qatar Airways, a major customer, earlier in the year, over the airline's grounding of A350 aircraft. Qatar Airways has been locked in a dispute with Airbus over degradation of the exterior fuselage surfaces on some of its A350 wide-body planes.

The issue has led the airline, one of the Gulf region's "big three" carriers, to ground 23 of the aircraft and not accept further deliveries from the European firm until the problem is resolved. Qatar Airways claimed damages from Airbus amounting to \$200,000 per day, per plane out of action.

The order for the 19 aircraft was worth seven billion euros at catalogue prices, though airlines are usually charged less for large purchases. Neither Airbus nor Qatar Airways immediately commented on the cancelled order.

### Court battle

The airline and leading plane-maker have been fighting in the British courts for months over the

paint problem. Qatar Airways launched legal action against Airbus over the issue before the High Court in London in December, with Airbus vigorously defending the A350 against any suggestions the aircraft isn't safe.

Qatar's civil aviation authority grounded the planes judging the exposure of the metal mesh under the paint posed a safety risk. But the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) found it posed no impact on the airworthiness of the aircraft.

In May, both sides said they hoped to reach a negotiated settlement. Qatar Airways is demanding about \$1 billion in damages over the peeling paintwork, which it says is a threat to the A350's lightning conductor.

After the airline last year grounded part of its fleet of A350s, Airbus responded by cancelling an order worth more than \$6 billion for 50 A321s from Qatar Airways. Airbus said that a clause in the contract for the 50 A321 planes allowed its cancellation if Qatar Airways failed to fully honour any of its other contracts, which the airline did by refusing to take delivery of A350 aircraft.

In January, an Airbus spokesman told AFP that the aircraft maker had "terminated" the contract for 50 single-aisle A321neo aircraft, "in accordance with our



rights". Qatar Airways chief executive Akbar Al Baker in June accused Airbus of acting like a "bully" over the dispute.

"A manufacturer must never be allowed to use their market dominance to bully their long-standing

customer," he said at the International Air Transport Association annual general meeting in Doha. Airbus chief Guillaume Faury, for his part, had said he was looking to talk to try to resolve the issue but acknowledged it was difficult. —AFP

## Toyota upgrades forecast as Q1 net profit slumps

TOKYO: Toyota upgraded its annual net profit forecast on Thursday, predicting an earnings boost from the weaker yen even after first-quarter net profit took a hit from pandemic-related supply chain issues. The global chip shortage, COVID-19 lockdowns disrupting Chinese factory output and Russia's invasion of Ukraine are all weighing heavily on the auto industry.

But Japanese companies like Toyota selling products overseas have also benefited from a cheaper yen, which has hit 24-year lows against the dollar in recent months. The world's top-selling automaker now forecasts an annual net profit of 2.36 trillion yen (\$17.6 billion) — up from its previous estimate of 2.26 trillion yen, but still a drop of 17 percent compared with last year's record results.

For the three months to June, the auto titan said net profit fell 17.9 percent on-year to 736.8 billion yen. "Despite the positive foreign exchange effects from the weaker yen, the large impact from lower sales volume due to supply constraints and higher raw materials prices led to a decrease in operating income" in the first quarter, the company said.

Meanwhile, "the revision of foreign exchange rate assumptions had a positive impact on the operating income forecast", it said. Revisions to the predicted impact of "soaring materials prices" and cost-reduction efforts would also cause operating income to decrease this financial year, Toyota added.

Buoyed in part by the weaker yen, Toyota in May logged a record full-year net profit of 2.85 trillion yen for 2021-22. The focus will now be on whether the company can keep its global production target of 9.7 million units for this financial year in light of the parts shortage, said Satoru Takada, auto analyst at research and consulting firm TIW.

Three big automakers in Japan—Toyota, Nissan and



TOKYO: The logo of Japan's Toyota Motor is displayed at a car showroom in Tokyo on August 4, 2022. —AFP

Honda—have been "unable to sufficiently recover production" to meet consumer demand, Takada told AFP. However, Toyota has so far largely escaped the worst of the crises, he said, adding that the company has "customers waiting for its cars thanks to strong demand".

The firm built stronger ties with domestic suppliers after Japan's 2011 earthquake and tsunami, which analysts say helped it weather a pandemic-triggered shortage of semiconductor—an essential component of modern cars—better than its rivals.

But it has been forced to repeatedly adjust production targets because of the chip shortage and pandemic-linked factory closures. Adding to the problems is uncertainty arising from Moscow's war in Ukraine.

Toyota said in March it would halt operations at its only factory in Russia, and stop shipping vehicles to the country.

Ahead of the earnings announcement, SC Capital called Toyota's annual outlook "the most low-balled in the industry", predicting a sharp upwards revision later this year as semiconductor supplies become more abundant.

"Toyota's first quarter... is expected to be bad. But consensus is way too low for the rest of the year, as supply constraints from Shanghai will subside from the second quarter and chip inventory rises more than expected," SC Capital said in a SmartKarma commentary. —AFP

## Legal woes hit Bayer profits in second quarter

FRANKFURT: German chemicals giant Bayer said Thursday it had suffered a net loss in the second quarter due to an environmental lawsuit in the United States, while raising its outlook for the year.

Between April and June, Bayer booked a net loss of 298 million euros (\$303 million), after a 2.3-billion-euro loss in the same period last year. The result was dragged into the red by a 694-million-euro provision to manage legal risks in the United States related to PCB, a product formerly marketed by Bayer's troubled subsidiary Monsanto.

Nonetheless, Bayer CEO Werner Baumann said in a statement that the group had a "strong operational performance" in the quarter. Sales in its agricultural business climbed by 17.2 percent to 6.5 billion euros on the back of rising prices.

Sales of consumer health products rose 6.8 percent to 1.5 billion, while the improvement in pharmaceuticals was smaller, up 2.1 percent to 4.8 billion euros. Bayer raised its outlook for the year, predicting revenues to rise to between 47 billion and 48 billion euros, up from its previous estimate of "approximately 46 billion euros".

The chemicals group also expected an operating-or underlying-profit for the year of around



LEVERKUSEN: File photo shows a board bearing the logo of German chemicals and pharmaceuticals giant Bayer is seen at the group's headquarters in Leverkusen, western Germany. —AFP

12.5 billion euros, up from 12 billion euros previously. Bayer said it did not see any "material financial impact in 2022 from any potential gas supply bottlenecks as a result of the war in Ukraine".

Germany is reckoning with the possibility that Russia may cut supplies of natural gas and has

taken steps towards rationing the fuel. The local VCI chemicals industry group has previously warned that a cutoff would be a "heart attack for the economy". The chemicals industry is reliant on gas as an energy source and as a raw material in production. —AFP

price of \$45 for the past fiscal year. The average oil price of July is 36.9% higher than the yearly average price of \$79.9 per barrel recorded in the past fiscal year 2021/2022. According to the Ministry of Finance, the average price for July is \$34.3 higher than the new budget's parity price of \$75 (without the deduction of 10% of revenues for the future generations' reserve).

Kuwait is supposed to have achieved actual oil revenues of KD 2.510 billion in July. Assuming that production and prices would continue at the current levels - an unrealistic assumption - Kuwait's oil revenues for the entire current fiscal year would reach KD 30.370 billion, after deducting annual production costs pertaining to the entire current fiscal year. It

would be KD 13.629 billion higher than the estimated revenues of KD 16.741 billion for the current budget. Adding KD 2.078 billion in non-oil revenues, total budget expected revenues for the current fiscal year would amount to KD 32.448 billion.

Comparing this figure with the expected expenditures of KD 21.949 billion, it is likely that the public budget to achieve a surplus of KD 10.499 billion. With oil revenues being the only decisive factor, while the oil market situation due to the Russian/Ukrainian war is exceptional, a prudent fiscal policy is required to estimate a discount rate to quantify future risks, which are inevitable and substantial in anticipation of falling into the repeated pitfalls of the past.

## Kuwait's oil revenues to reach KD 30.370bn

KUWAIT: By the end of July 2022, the fourth month of the current fiscal year 2022/2023 ended with the monthly average price of Kuwaiti oil reaching \$109.3 per barrel. It is \$44.3 or 68.2% higher than the new hypothetical price of \$65 estimated in the current budget and \$64.3 higher than the average hypothetical

## Alibaba quarterly revenue flat for first time ever

BEIJING: Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba reported flat revenue growth on Thursday for the first time ever, as the country grappled with an economic slowdown and COVID-19 resurgences kept consumers jittery.

Alibaba's performance is widely seen as a gauge of Chinese consumer sentiment, given its market dominance, and its revenue growth has slowed markedly over the past year. Revenue came in at 205.6 billion yuan (\$30.7 billion) in the April-June quarter, beating analyst expectations despite being slightly below the same period last year, following a decline in the company's China commerce segment revenue, Alibaba said.

The company has been grappling with growing competition and economic fallout from strict COVID restrictions that have battered consumer sentiment, pushed the unemployment rate up and tangled supply chains.

"Following a relatively slow April and May, we saw signs of recovery across our businesses in June," said Alibaba Group's chairman and chief executive Daniel Zhang in a statement. "Despite the soft economic conditions, we managed to deliver stable revenues and narrowed losses in several strategic businesses by improving operating efficiency," he added in an earnings call.

The company's revenue growth was flat "primarily due to a decline in China commerce segment revenue" although this was offset by growth in the cloud segment, Alibaba said. Many parts of China have faced harsh lockdowns in recent months, as officials struggled to stamp out the Omicron variant under the country's zero-COVID policy.

Shanghai, China's biggest city and a major economic hub, was sealed off for two months due to COVID-related restrictions during the quarter. The firm cited "restrictions that resulted in supply chain and logistics disruptions in April and most of May" that bogged down performance in its China commerce sector, although there was a pick-up in demand in June during a popular shopping festival.

Its profit for the latest quarter stood at 22.7 billion yuan, down from 45.1 billion yuan a year earlier. Alibaba has recently been building its international commerce businesses, such as Lazada in Southeast Asia and Trendyol in Turkey. It has also shifted from its aggressive market expansion in the past, amid slowing growth.

### Challenges

Apart from coronavirus curbs, Alibaba has been contending with a regulatory crackdown on China's tech giants and other challenges abroad. US authorities have put the company on a watchlist that could see it delisted in New York if it does not comply with disclosure orders, causing its shares to slump.

The company is seeking a primary listing in Hong Kong which could allow it to access mainland China's vast pool of investors, a move that comes as Chinese tech firms trading in New York grow increasingly worried about regulatory action by US authorities.

Alibaba, a tech behemoth, has also seen its market value plummet after Beijing launched a sweeping crackdown in 2020. In recent years, Chinese officials have taken aim at alleged anti-competitive practices by some of the country's biggest names, driven by fears that major internet firms control too much data and expanded too quickly.

This included a last-minute cancellation of a planned IPO by Alibaba's financial arm Ant Group, which would have been the world's largest public offering at the time. Last week, a report said Alibaba co-founder Jack Ma plans to give up control of Ant Group as part of a strategy to appease Chinese regulators and revive the digital payments unit's initial public offering.

Following the latest results, Alibaba's US-listed shares rose 4.5 percent in pre-market trading. China's economy expanded just 0.4 percent in the second quarter this year, logging its slowest growth since the initial coronavirus outbreak more than two years ago. —AFP

## Business

# Morocco's petro-PM faces heat over soaring fuel prices

## Fuel distributors are 'exploiting the crisis to rack up immoral profits'

**RABAT:** Morocco's Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch, a billionaire petrol baron, is facing a growing online campaign demanding he step down as fuel prices—and energy firms' profits—surge. The government of the North African kingdom, which is heavily reliant on oil imports, insists it is doing its best to ease the economic impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing shock to crude prices.

But that hasn't stopped some 600,000 Facebook accounts sharing Arabic or French hashtags demanding that "Akhannouch quit". United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres has just slammed global energy giants reaping billions in windfall profits for their "grotesque greed" that was harming the world's poorest and urged governments to tax them.

It is a sentiment shared widely in Morocco. Many are calling on the government to halve fuel prices and impose a cap on the profits of petrol retailers—including the dominant player Afriquia, of which Akhannouch is the majority owner.

"This campaign's focus on the prime minister in person reflects anger at the mix of money and politics which Akhannouch is seen as embodying," said analyst Mohamed Chakir. Critics see the premier as "part of the problem rather than as someone presenting solutions", Chakir added.

Petrol prices in Morocco hit record highs of 18 dirhams (\$1.80) for a litre of unleaded in June, fuelling overall inflation expected to top five percent this year, and adding to the misery of farmers hit by the worst drought in decades.

### 'Exploiting the crisis'

While discontent has not spilled onto the streets, the online campaign against Akhannouch has been taken up by opposition parties and trade unions.

"Petrol companies are continuing to fleece Moroccans," leading union the Democratic Confederation of Labour said in a statement, accusing the government of "silence".

It also charged that fuel distributors are "exploiting the crisis to rack up immoral profits". Neither Akhannouch nor Afriquia or its rival fuel retailers have publicly responded to the campaign or the accusations—and Afriquia is not obliged to disclose its profits.

The government has sought to blame rising living costs on the war in Ukraine which has driven up fuel and food prices, accelerating inflation in many countries. Akhannouch was named to head the government in September after his National Rally of Independents (RNI) thrashed the long-ruling Islamists in a parliamentary election.

He promised to improve living conditions and tackle social inequalities exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. The 61-year-old is seen as close to King Mohammed VI and has a personal fortune worth some \$2 billion according to Forbes.

### 'Speculation, manipulation'

Morocco used to subsidise fuel, but this system was scrapped in late 2015 because it was seen as costing the state too much. While the market was liberalised, this was meant to be accompanied by cash payouts to the most needy households—benefits that never materialised.

Many on social media are now calling for taxes on consumers at the pump to be slashed. The government has not responded, although it said in March it would pay out some \$206 million to help out transport workers operating some 180,000 vehicles, who had staged a national strike over spiralling fuel costs.



**RABAT, Morocco:** Morocco's Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch, a billionaire petrol baron, is facing a campaign demanding he step down as fuel prices and energy firms' profits surge. —AFP

It has also doubled subsidies on cooking gas, flour and sugar. The country's economic woes have not gone unnoticed by King Mohammed. In an annual speech to the nation on Saturday, the monarch called for "mechanisms of national solidarity and a determined and responsible campaign against speculation and price manipulation".

Nor is this the first time Afriquia has faced pressure. The firm was among several major com-

panies hit by a boycott in 2018 over a cost-of-living crisis when Akhannouch was agriculture minister. But following the latest criticisms, state news agency MAP has slammed a "tendentious" campaign, saying it was "fuelled by more than 500 fake accounts".

That article sparked another storm on social media, with opposition MPs accusing MAP of pro-Akhannouch bias. —AFP



## Jazeera Airways announces new service to Qassim

**KUWAIT:** Jazeera Airways announced a new direct service to the Qassim province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, operating four return flights weekly starting August 22 to the Prince Nayef Bin Abdulaziz International Airport in the province's capital, Buraydah. The upcoming service follows the success of the previously launched routes to Hail and Abha during the month of July. The airline operates seven routes to Saudi, including Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam and Medinah.

Commenting on the expansion, Jazeera Airways Chief Executive Officer, Rohit Ramachandran, said: "Demand for flights to Saudi Arabia has really grown and we're pleased to offer more choice to the Kingdom for Kuwaiti travellers. The momentum is expected to continue as events and festivals resume in the Kingdom for the cooler months. There are strong ties between Kuwaiti and Saudi families and we now offer a flight for them to connect rather than take to the highway."

Jazeera is responding strongly to the 2030 Vision that is driving growth in travel to Saudi Arabia. With over 60 flights a week now being offered, Jazeera is the number one airline from Kuwait. Jazeera is also working closely with the Saudi Tourism Authority to support the marketing of their event calendar in the Kuwait market to attract travellers.

## Lufthansa records first net profit since pandemic

**FRANKFURT:** Lufthansa said Thursday its freight operations propelled the German airline group to its first net profit since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. Between April and June, Lufthansa recorded a net profit of 259 million euros (\$263 million), over one billion euros more than the same period last year and its first positive quarter since the end of 2019.

Lufthansa was "back in the black", CEO Carsten Spohr said in a statement, describing the pandemic as "the most severe financial crisis in our history". The group—which includes Eurowings, Austrian, Swiss and Brussels Airlines—made huge net losses of 6.7 billion euros in 2020 and 2.2 billion euros in 2021

## Smart government underpins Kuwait's digital future

**KUWAIT:** You've probably heard terms like 'Smart Government' being used a lot lately—but before we go further into this topic, it's worth spending a moment to better understand what the term means. Smart Government means using technology to enable and support better government planning and decision-making. It is designed to improve democratic processes and transform public service delivery. To be truly effective, this emerging governance method relies on consolidated information systems and state-of-the-art communication technologies. It is 'citizen-centric', data-driven and performance-focused.

Perhaps more broadly speaking, we see it as the use of innovative policies, new dynamic business models and technology to address all the financial, environmental, and service challenges facing public sector organizations. At its heart, smart government relies on advanced technologies, excellent telecommunications facilities and a population savvy enough to take full advantage of e-services.

Of course, a forward-thinking nation such as Kuwait has a blueprint for its future society, which includes enabling digitalization, a key part of which is the delivery of e-government services under the umbrella of smart government.

And central to smart government is a high-speed, reliable and robust telecommunications network. Together with local operators, we delivered high-speed 5G networks to Kuwait in 2019, as one of the earliest nations to

adopt this technology in the region. Faster connectivity helped deliver vital services during the pandemic, such as implementing distance learning solutions across Kuwait's education sector, ensuring compliance with the government's social distancing policy. This meant thousands of young people—the future of the nation—were able to continue with their education without risk.

We are already working with local operators to improve and upgrade the existing 5G network, making Kuwait a global benchmark for cutting-edge communications technology. Official data shows that the Internet services provided by the three mobile operators witnessed a great development during 2021, especially in downloading and uploading via HTTP using 4G/5G networks.

While 5G enables faster connectivity, 5G delivered via fiber is widely viewed as the gold standard for networks, providing fast, stable connectivity for all. Our fiber network, built-in close cooperation with the Ministry of Communications, is seen as an essential infrastructure for enabling digital transformation. We are doing our utmost to help turn Kuwait Vision 2035 into reality—by delivering optical fiber to more than 50,000 households, enterprises, and government departments.

Since 2016, we have cooperated with government ministries and commissions to introduce automated tools and platforms within the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) to facilitate office automation. Now KNG is fully automated, saving time, effort and expenditure, including saving a total of five million sheets of paper and 70% storage space. Our automation services have increased office efficiency by 45% and guarantee the security at the same time. KNG stands as a prime example of the power of technology-based automation.

I would like to invite our dear customers to join us in our efforts and contribute to granting food security to local families."

"We are incredibly excited to partner with Deliveroo to deliver much-needed food supplies to our local communities," said May AlTaraqah at the Social Work Society. "Food insecurity is a daily struggle for families around the world; with Deliveroo's Full Life campaign, we are glad to be doing our part to support communities in need—one food relief box at a time."

"Since our inception, Food Box has remained committed to making it easy for everyone to give back to the communities they know and love. We are proud to partner with Deliveroo to give their customers the option to choose from various food boxes of different sizes, prices, and ingredients—all with the ultimate goal of reaching vulnerable communities and doing our part to end food insecurity," said Mohammad Al Salem at Food Box. To contribute to Deliveroo's latest campaign and to deliver food items to those in need, customers can donate a food box through "Food Box" on the Deliveroo.

planned to offer 75 percent of its pre-crisis capacity on passenger airlines. The group also put a number on an expected operating profit for the year, saying it anticipated a result "above 500 million euros". —AFP



**FRANKFURT, Germany:** File photo shows a Lufthansa Airbus A340-300 is pictured after take-off from the airport in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany. —AFP

adopt this technology in the region. Faster connectivity helped deliver vital services during the pandemic, such as implementing distance learning solutions across Kuwait's education sector, ensuring compliance with the government's social distancing policy. This meant thousands of young people—the future of the nation—were able to continue with their education without risk.

We are already working with local operators to improve and upgrade the existing 5G network, making Kuwait a global benchmark for cutting-edge communications technology. Official data shows that the Internet services provided by the three mobile operators witnessed a great development during 2021, especially in downloading and uploading via HTTP using 4G/5G networks.

While 5G enables faster connectivity, 5G delivered via fiber is widely viewed as the gold standard for networks, providing fast, stable connectivity for all. Our fiber network, built-in close cooperation with the Ministry of Communications, is seen as an essential infrastructure for enabling digital transformation. We are doing our utmost to help turn Kuwait Vision 2035 into reality—by delivering optical fiber to more than 50,000 households, enterprises, and government departments.

Since 2016, we have cooperated with government ministries and commissions to introduce automated tools and platforms within the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) to facilitate office automation. Now KNG is fully automated, saving time, effort and expenditure, including saving a total of five million sheets of paper and 70% storage space. Our automation services have increased office efficiency by 45% and guarantee the security at the same time. KNG stands as a prime example of the power of technology-based automation.

planned to offer 75 percent of its pre-crisis capacity on passenger airlines. The group also put a number on an expected operating profit for the year, saying it anticipated a result "above 500 million euros". —AFP

Digitalization strategies also rely on talent having the right knowledge and training to implement these exciting new technologies and practices. Huawei focuses on continuously cultivating local governments' talent and creating value. During the pandemic, we worked with the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) to deliver technology training to more than 500 government IT employees.

And we are proudly helping the government steer the nation towards a low-carbon future, together with investment in greener cloud-based technologies. Kuwait's forward-thinking 'cloud-first' policy means government departments must fully evaluate cloud services first, before considering other options when acquiring new information and communication technology or upgrading existing infrastructure and applications.

All of these signs of progress are building a solid digital foundation for smart government. We believe that smart government provides intelligent and precise responses and brings better social service to meet people's growing needs, which means a lot during Kuwait's future digital journey. We will maintain our long-term investment in Kuwait, and apply our world-leading experience and technologies to Kuwait, such as green energy, AI, and cloud-based service provision, to continue our assistance in implementing the country's New Kuwait 2035 vision.

## Deliveroo launches 'Full Life' campaign

**KUWAIT:** Driven by its deep-rooted belief in the importance of giving back to our local communities, Deliveroo is launching its "Full Life" campaign in Kuwait in collaboration with the Social Work Society and Food Box. As a pillar of the aggregator's global Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy, the campaign initially launched in the UK in 2021 to tackle food insecurities around the world and support local communities across Deliveroo's markets.

Deliveroo's Full Life campaign allows customers to donate food relief boxes from "Food Box" on the Deliveroo app from 03 August to 31 October. All food boxes will then be delivered to the Social Work Society, whose members will assist in their distribution to communities in need.

A variety of food boxes will be available for pur-

chase starting from KD 4.9, giving buyers the option to choose Food Boxes to suit their budgets, and making it easier for everyone to give back. Deliveroo welcomes support from customers, noting that each curated box will include essential food ingredients such as rice, wheat, sugar, oils, canned food, pasta, lentils, and other staples.

Deliveroo riders and employees will also lend their efforts to the distribution process and play a vital role in raising awareness about the campaign, its goals, and how to get involved. Seham AlHusaini, General Manager of Deliveroo Kuwait, commented: "As leaders in the food industry, we firmly believe in our role in ensuring and maintaining food security, especially during these challenging economic times. That is why we are launching the Full Life campaign, consolidating all our efforts to provide basic food staples for families in need."

She added, "I am proud of our Deliveroo employees for their dedication to giving back to all members of our society. I also appreciate the support we received from our campaign partners: Food Box and the Social Work Society. Most importantly,





(From left to right) Logan Lerman, Masi Oka, Hiroiyuki Sanada, Brian Tyree Henry, Bad Bunny, Brad Pitt, Joey King, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Zazie Beetz, David Leitch, Kelly McCormick and Andrea Munoz attend the Los Angeles Premiere Of Columbia Pictures' 'Bullet Train' at Regency Village Theatre in Los Angeles, California.— AFP photos

# BULLET TRAIN REVIEW: BRAD PITT PROVES TO BE A WRY AND SMART COMEDY STAR

By Sahar Moussa

**B**ullet Train tells a story about five assassins aboard a fast moving bullet train who find out their missions have something in common. Brad Pitt is an unlucky assassin determined to do his job peacefully after too many gigs gone off the rails.

Fate, however, may have other plans, as Pitt's latest mission puts him on a collision course with lethal adversaries from around the globe with connected, yet conflicting, objectives on the world's fastest train. Brad Pitt himself, in goofy bucket-hat, nerdy glasses and superannuated surfer dude gear, plays a laid-back hitman codenamed 'Ladybug' whose handler (Sandra Bullock) gives him an easy job, to ease him back into the game after an uproarious series of calamities in previous missions.

In this movie, Pitt proved that he is not only charming, but also a wry and smart comedy star. His role allowed him



to show his flexible physicality, while also firing off jokes. But the most outstanding characters in the film are Lemon and Tangerine - 'twin' hit men, played brilliantly by Brian Tyree Henry and Aaron Taylor-Johnson.

'The Princess' wedding crasher Joey King (known as the Prince) is a cunning

killer who can fake cry on command. There is another killer on the train called the Wolf (Benito A Martinez Ocasio) with a grudge against Ladybug. Also, there is another killer called Hornet (Zazie Beetz). Towering over everyone in legendary evilness is the White Death (Michael Shannon) waiting on the plat-

form at Kyoto.

The movie also features Japanese movie legend Hiroiyuki Sanada in a standout supporting role as the sword-wielding Elder, who gives Ladybug few things to ponder, heading into the movie's final act. The whole journey from Tokyo to Kyoto takes about two hours and 15 minutes. It is full of action where half a dozen assassins shoot, stab and punch each others' faces in pursuit of a briefcase stuffed with cash.

Director David Leitch and screenwriter Zak Olkewicz had rich source material to plunder when they chose to bring Kotaro Isaka's satirical novel Maria Bitoru to the big screen. Bullet Train, the cartoonish neon-soaked action flick, is funny and fast-paced and in my opinion is one of the most entertaining and flashy films of 2022.

The movie appears to come from the same brain as 'Snatch', wearing its pop style on its sleeve and a 'Kill Bill' level mix of martial arts and manga influences. The end of the line is just the beginning in this non-stop thrill-ride through modern-day Japan. Bullet Train



Japanese actor Hiroiyuki Sanada attends the Los Angeles premiere of "Bullet Train".

premiered in Grand Cinemas, Al Hamra Tower in a special screening for the media. It is screening now in all theatres in Kuwait.

Rating: R (Pervasive Language/Brief Sexuality/Strong and Bloody Violence)  
Genre: Action, Mystery & Thriller  
Original language: English  
Director: David Leitch  
Writer: Zak Olkewicz  
Runtime: 2h 6m



(From left ) Brian Tyree Henry and Aaron Taylor-Johnson attend the Los Angeles Premiere Of Columbia Pictures' "Bullet Train".



The mysterious mascot named Momomon attends the Los Angeles premiere of "Bullet Train".

## Beyond hummus: Palestinians cook up new food trends

**F**rom the ancient alleys of Jerusalem's Old City to kitchens around the world, Palestinians are stirring new trends in cooking while abiding by traditions. The trend has whipped up a growing appetite for specialized books and food tours. "It's changing for the better, I think. Many Palestinians are keen on promoting their foods," said Nassar Odeh, as oven aromas wafted over a Jerusalem street. The Palestinian entrepreneur has spent the past few months watching gourmands drift in and out of his new eatery,

Taboon, named after the traditional clay oven.

Customers are tucking into dishes such as Armenian lahmajoon, a thin pizza with ground meat and spices which Odeh remembers being sold to hungry crowds in the Old City decades earlier. "Armenian dishes are part of the Palestinian culture," said Odeh, from the occupied West Bank. "This is extremely important because this emphasizes the Palestinian presence and the entrepreneurship," he said. "We need to be proud of our products."

### 'New concept, new ideas'

Opened last year in what was once the family's souvenir store, Taboon is part of a string of new Palestinian bars, cafes and restaurants. Beyond those within the Old City walls, they have sprung up in other areas of annexed east Jerusalem such as the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, or further afield in Ramallah in the West Bank. They range from a fine dining experience to fusion

menus, blending Palestinian ingredients with European dishes, according to Izzeldin Bukhari, who runs Jerusalem food tours and cooking classes.

"It's a great start; we're really in the beginning," said Bukhari, who plans to offer consulting services to business owners wanting to revitalize their restaurants. "Everyone was doing kind of the same thing, but lately I see people stepping up and doing a new concept, new ideas," he said.

Showcasing the breadth of Palestinian dishes and produce remains central for Dalia Dabdoub, who manages Taboon and owns bars in the West Bank cities of Bethlehem and Jericho. "We want to change the industry, in doing more food that people don't know," she said. A variety of aubergines renowned locally which come from Battir, a village in the Bethlehem area, will soon be hitting the Taboon menu, while some produce is imported from Gaza.

"I always try to choose the tomatoes;

when they come from Gaza they're really red and they're tastier," said Dabdoub. Gazan green chillies, meanwhile, are particularly fierce. The advent of new eateries builds on the Old City's history of hole-in-the-wall spots, specializing in a single dish like falafel. Palestinian chef Sami Tamimi grew up with home cooking, such as school packed lunches of cauliflower fritters stuffed in pita, and went out for certain foods. "I remember carrying a plate and going to the hummus guy," said Tamimi, talking avidly about beloved dishes including stuffed vine leaves and courgettes.

Such traditional foods and contemporary takes were compiled in the chef's 2020 cookbook: 'Falastin'. "Just 10 years ago, if you went to a publisher and said I want to publish a book about Palestinian food, they would say 'Who's going to buy it?'" said Tamimi, who moved to London more than two decades ago.—AFP



Nassar Odeh holds a vegan version of the "lahmajun" (meat on dough) popular Middle Eastern flatbread, while posing for a photo at his venue in the Old City of Jerusalem.



A cook prepares plates of hummus to be served to clients at a restaurant in the Old City of Jerusalem.



A cook prepares to serve plates of hummus, fava beans, and falafel to be served to clients at a restaurant in the Old City of Jerusalem.



Tourguide Izzeldin Bukhari (center), who runs Jerusalem food tours and cooking classes, presents dishes to tourists at a restaurant during a guided tour in the Old City of Jerusalem.



A cook holds a tray of vegan "lahmajun" (meat on dough) popular Middle Eastern flatbread next to a stone oven in the Old City of Jerusalem.— AFP photos



## A real treat: Canadian candy company seeks professional taster

The chance to earn an annual salary of Can\$100,000 (US\$78,000) by tasting more than 3,500 candies, all from the comfort of your couch, sounds like a pretty sweet deal. Candy Funhouse, a Canadian online candy shop, is looking for a "Chief Candy Officer" to lead a team of product taste testers. "Early last year we were looking for Candyologists, our original taste testers and we currently

have three on board," Funhouse spokeswoman Vanessa Janakijevski-Rebello told AFP.

"Now we are on the hunt for our Chief Candy Officer who will guide our Candyologists down the sweetest path possible!" Responsibilities range from approving new products to organizing staff meetings or acting as chief taster, as well as "all things fun." The offer is open to anyone aged five and up living

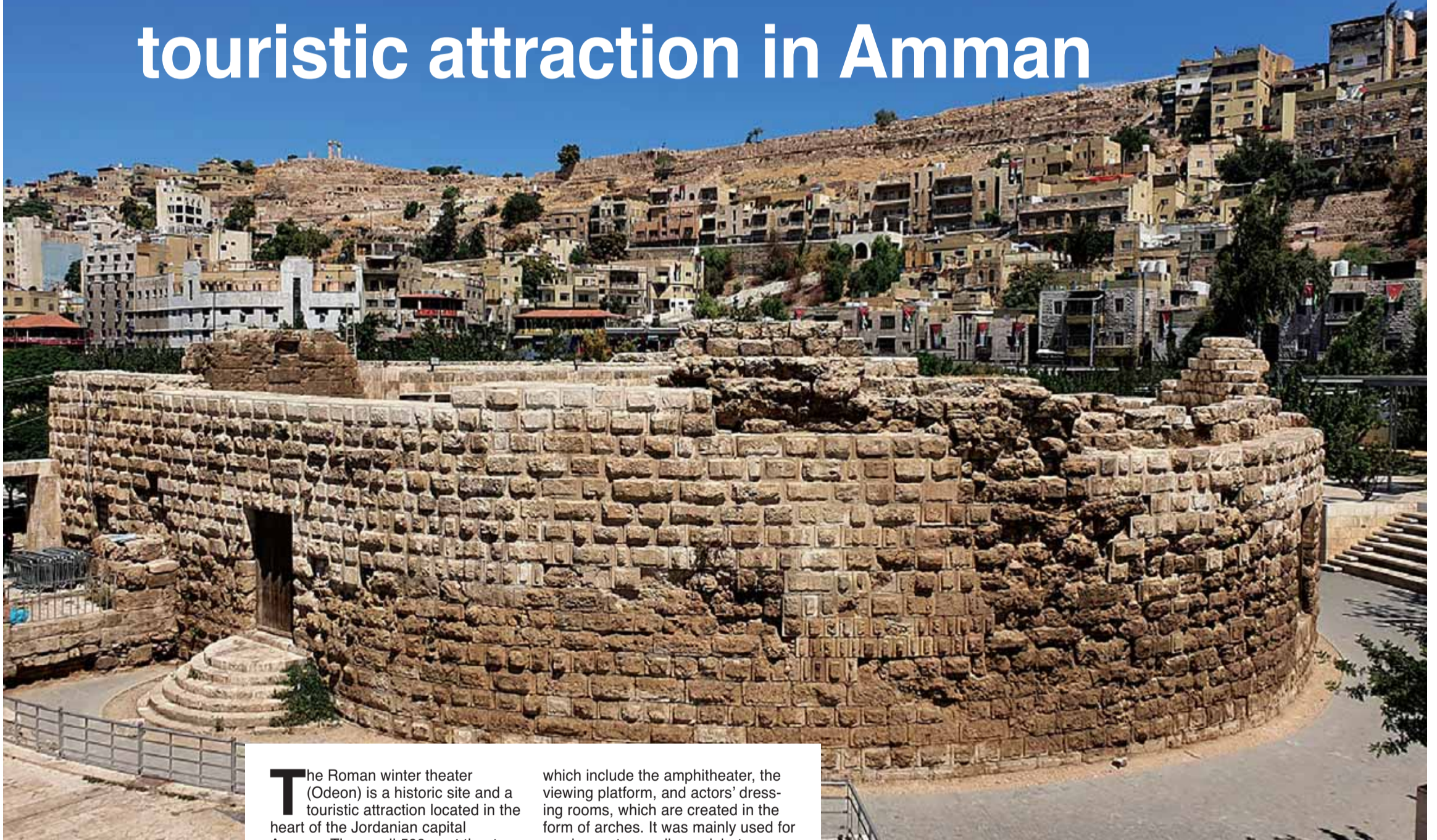
in North America.

The main requirements include having "golden taste buds" and an "obvious sweet tooth," according to the job listing on LinkedIn. Candy Funhouse said it has received more than 100,000 candidates in two weeks. On social media, the posting is a big hit with adults and children alike. One Twitter user said that his eight-year-old daughter had made a LinkedIn profile just to apply. "It's official

@candyfunhouseca, she has applied. Thank you for helping her learn about hard work and the importance of a strong resume, even if she's only 8," Matthew Crooks wrote on his account. Once chosen, the lucky new hire will undergo "extensive palate training." Job benefits include, naturally, "an extensive dental plan." — AFP



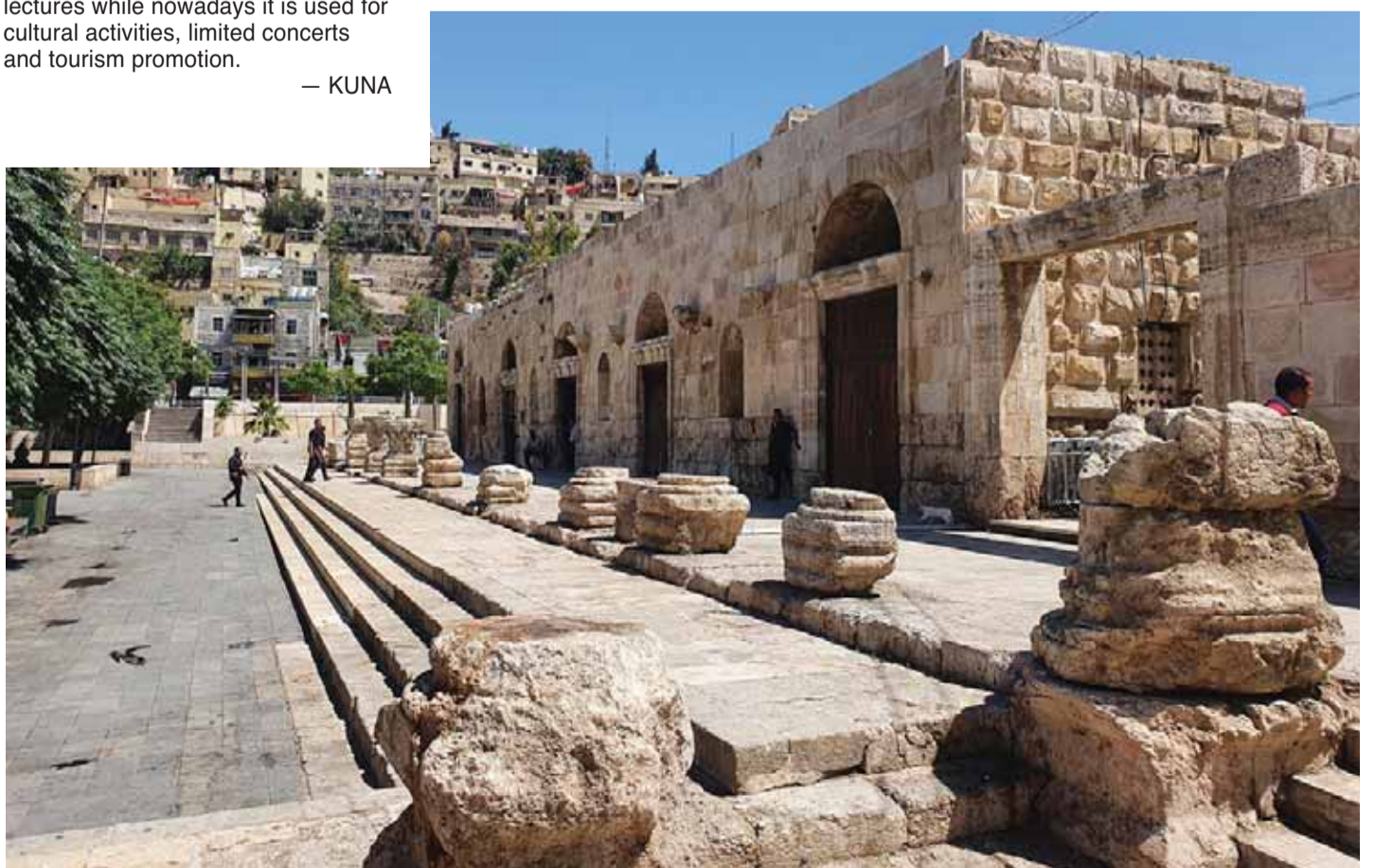
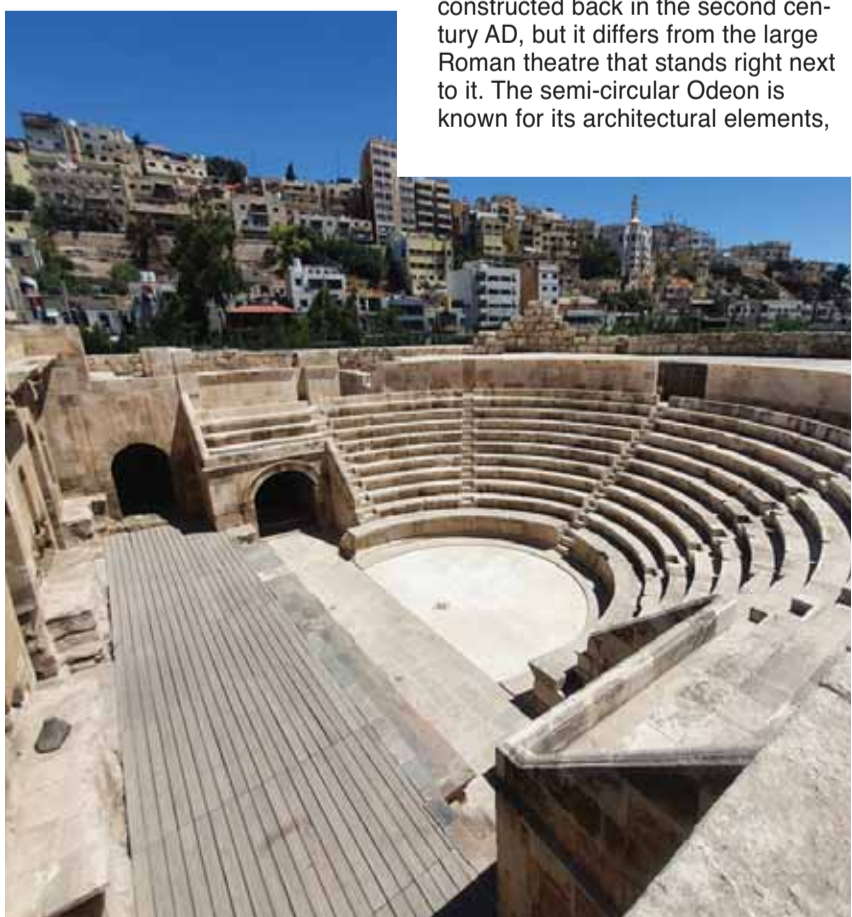
## Odeon.. a historic site and touristic attraction in Amman



The Roman winter theater (Odeon) is a historic site and a touristic attraction located in the heart of the Jordanian capital Amman. The small 500-seat theatre, constructed back in the second century AD, but it differs from the large Roman theatre that stands right next to it. The semi-circular Odeon is known for its architectural elements,

which include the amphitheater, the viewing platform, and actors' dressing rooms, which are created in the form of arches. It was mainly used for music, poetry readings, debates, or lectures while nowadays it is used for cultural activities, limited concerts and tourism promotion.

— KUNA



Lifestyle | Features

## Chrissy Teigen, John Legend announce pregnancy two years after miscarriage

Model Chrissy Teigen and her award-winning singer husband John Legend said Wednesday that the couple is expecting another child, nearly two years after announcing her miscarriage. "The last few years have been a blur of emotions to say the least, but joy has filled our home and hearts again," Teigen wrote on Instagram, captioning a photo of her baby bump. "We have another on the way," she told her nearly 40 million followers, while Legend posted her photo on his account.

In October 2020, Teigen published multiple social media posts recounting

her experience of losing a baby, her third with Legend. One post included a picture of her in a hospital bed, holding the child as Legend kisses her shoulder. She said at the time she was "shocked and in the kind of deep pain you only hear about." The couple's posts about the miscarriage triggered an outpouring of responses.

While some criticized Teigen for sharing, others praised her for lifting the lid on the issue of pregnancy loss. Earlier this year, Teigen, who is also a TV presenter and cookbook author, announced she was undergoing fertility treatment.

In her post on Wednesday, the 36-

year-old admitted she was hesitant to discuss her new pregnancy publicly. "Every appointment I've said to myself, 'ok if it's healthy today I'll announce' but then I breathe a sigh of relief to hear a heart-beat and decide I'm just too nervous still." Teigen and "All of You" singer Legend met on the set of one of his music videos before marrying in 2013. — AFP

In this file photo US singer-songwriter John Legend and his wife model Chrissy Teigen attend the 74th Annual Tony Awards at the Winter Garden Theater in New York City.— AFP



## Lady Gaga dog robber sentenced to four years in US jail



In this file photo taken US singer-songwriter Lady Gaga arrives for the 64th Annual Grammy Awards at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.— AFP

California court on Wednesday sentenced one of three men charged in the armed robbery of Lady Gaga's dog walker, in which the singer's French bulldogs were stolen, to four years in prison. Jaylin Keyshawn White admitted to being part of a gang that shot Ryan Fischer as he exercised the three prize pets in Hollywood in February 2021. At a court hearing in Los Angeles on Wednesday, White, now 20, pleaded guilty to second-degree robbery, and received a four-year prison sentence.

Surveillance footage from the scene of the attack shows a car stopping near Fischer and two people jumping out. One demands that Fischer "give it up" before a struggle, in which a gunshot is heard, and the dog walker falls to the ground, screaming. The attackers each grab one dog-Koji and Gustav-and leave Fischer shouting for help.

The third dog-Miss Asia-ran back to the dog walker after the robbers drove away. The robbery led the "Poker face" singer to offer a \$500,000 reward for the return of the animals, whose theft highlighted a growing trend targeting the valuable breed.

White had been charged in April 2021 along with James Howard Jackson, now 19, and Lafayette Shon Whaley, now 28. The woman who police said handed in the dogs in response to the reward, has been charged with

being an accessory after the fact and with receiving stolen goods. The alleged gunman, Jackson, was mistakenly released from custody earlier this year after what the US Marshals Service described as a "clerical error".

They have offered a reward of up to \$5,000 for information leading to his arrest, saying that he should be considered "armed and dangerous." Fischer sustained chest injuries in the attack, and said on Instagram a month later he had suffered a collapsed lung. Los Angeles police said at the time of the robbery they did not believe the dogs had been targeted because of their owner, but because of the value of the breed on the black market.

Small and friendly-and thus easy to grab-French bulldogs do not have large litters. Their relative scarcity, and their association with stars such as Lady Gaga, Reese Witherspoon, Hugh Jackman, Chrissy Teigen, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Madonna gives them added cache, and means they can change hands for thousands of dollars.— AFP

## Directors 'shocked' by axing of \$90m 'Batgirl' film

The directors of "Batgirl" said Wednesday they were "shocked" that the \$90 million superhero film had been axed by the studio and will now not be released in any format. Warner Bros Discovery announced they were shelving the movie adaptation of the DC Comics character, which was to star Leslie Grace in the title role, alongside Michael Keaton as Batman, preventing it from being seen in either theaters or on streaming platform HBO Max.

"We are saddened and shocked by the news. We still can't believe it," directors Adil El Arbi and Bilal Fallah wrote on Instagram. "As directors, it is critical that our work be shown to audiences, and while the film was far from finished, we wish that fans all over the world



In this file photo US singer-songwriter Leslie Grace attends the opening night premiere of "In The Heights" during the Tribeca Festival at the United Palace Theatre in New York City.— AFP

would have had the opportunity to see and embrace the final film themselves." The movie had completed principal photography and much of the post-production work-where special effects, sound and graphics are added-was also done.

Star Grace ("In the Heights") released an upbeat statement on her Instagram account Wednesday night, saying she was "proud of the love, hard work and intention all of our incredible cast and

### Streaming platforms' belt-tightening

"Batgirl" appears to have fallen victim to a change in corporate strategy after a merger between Warner Bros and Discovery. Warner Bros. had committed to making movies that could go straight to HBO Max as part of an effort to boost subscribers in the increasingly crowded streaming sector.

The decision, which was driven par-



tireless crew put into this film over 7 months in Scotland.

"I feel blessed to have worked among absolute greats and forged relationships for a lifetime in the process!" Her efforts were applauded by El Arbi and Fallah, who described themselves as "huge fans of Batman since we were little kids." "It was a dream to work with such fantastic actors like Michael Keaton, J.K. Simmons, Brendan Fraser... and especially the great Leslie Grace, who portrayed Batgirl with so much passion, dedication and humanity," the "Bad Boys for Life" directing duo added. The move sent shockwaves through Hollywood, where industry veterans said it was unprecedented for a movie to be so close to completion-and with so much money already spent-and not be released.

tially by a need to bypass COVID-hit theaters in 2021, was not popular among creatives and appears to have been rolled back after the tie-up with Discovery.

Trade title Variety quoted industry insiders as saying "Batgirl" had fallen between two stools-not big and glitzy enough for a theatrical release, with its expensive marketing requirements, but too big to make economic sense in the belt-tightening streaming landscape. Variety said the \$90 million hole this would leave in the studio's balance sheet would probably be dealt with via a tax write-down-a process where companies reduce their exposure to tax by subtracting losses from their profits.— AFP

## In Berlin, Rolling Stones end 'Sixty' tour with tribute to Charlie Watts



British rock band The Rolling Stones' singer Mick Jagger performs on stage during a concert as part of their 'Stones Sixty European Tour' at the Waldbuehne at Olympiapark in Berlin.— AFP photos

The Rolling Stones wrapped up their 60th-anniversary tour Wednesday in Germany with an emotional tribute to late drummer Charlie Watts. The legendary British band had opened their European tour with a gig in Madrid on June 1 to mark six decades since they were formed. The "Sixty" tour included 14 concerts across the continent and followed the band's "No Filter" tour, which began in 2017 but saw the North American leg postponed due to the pandemic.

They wrapped up that tour late last year despite the death of Watts last August at the age of 80. Wednesday's concert was the band's 118th appearance in Germany, frontman Mick Jagger

told the audience at the Waldbuehne, an open-air amphitheatre in a forest west of the German capital, adding that they were still as hot as ever.

The group dedicated its last performance to Watts, with Jagger, 79, telling the 22,000 fans the band had had a few glasses of schnapps the night before in Watts' honor. Over more than two uninterrupted hours, the Stones strung together their best-known hits and more recent works, while regularly engaging the crowd, including on a version of "Midnight Rambler" that lasted nearly 10 minutes.

Unsurprisingly, it was the classics "Start Me Up", "Paint it Black", "Jumpin' Jack Flash" and a climactic "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" that really set the crowd on fire. "It's crazy what they're still capable of doing, and the energy they give off at their age," concertgoer Philippe Georgi, 46, enthused to AFP after the show alongside his father Gunther, who is "the same age as Mick".

"Thirty years ago, it was him that invited me to their concert in Munich, and today it's me," he added. As well as celebrating their 60th anniversary, the Stones have also been marking 50 years since the release of one of their most iconic albums, "Exile on Main St".

Jagger and guitarist Keith Richards, 78, were childhood friends who lost contact until a chance encounter as teenagers at Dartford station southeast of London. They would go on to form, along with Watts and guitarist Ronnie Wood, 75, what would become one of the world's best-known rock bands. They did their first tour of the UK in 1963, and have released more than 50 albums, both studio and live, with millions of copies sold.— AFP



## Scientists revive cells and organs in dead pigs

Scientists announced Wednesday they have restored blood flow and cell function throughout the bodies of pigs that were dead for an hour, in a breakthrough experts say could mean we need to update the definition of death itself. The discovery raised hopes for a range of future medical uses in humans, the most immediate being that it could help organs last longer, potentially saving the lives of thousands of people worldwide in need of transplants.

However it could also spur debate about the ethics of such procedures-particularly after some of the ostensibly dead pigs startled the scientists by making sudden head movements during the experiment. The US-based team stunned the scientific community in 2019 by managing to restore cell function in the brains of pigs hours after they had been decapitated.

For the latest research, published in the journal Nature, the team sought to expand this technique to the entire body. They induced a heart attack in the anaesthetised pigs, which stopped blood flowing through the bodies. This deprives the body's cells of oxygen-and without oxygen, cells in mammals die. The pigs then sat dead for an hour.

### 'Demise of cells can be halted'

The scientists then pumped the bodies with a liquid containing the pigs' own blood, as well as a synthetic form of

haemoglobin-the protein that carries oxygen in red blood cells-and drugs that protect cells and prevent blood clots. Blood started circulating again and many cells began functioning including in vital organs such as the heart, liver and kidney, for the next six hours of the experiment.

"These cells were functioning hours after they should not have been-what this tells us is that the demise of cells can be halted," Nenad Sestan, the study's senior author and a researcher at Yale University, told journalists. Co-lead author David Andrijevic, also from Yale, told AFP the team hopes the technique, called OrganEx, "can be used to salvage organs".

OrganEx could also make new forms of surgery possible as it creates "more medical wiggle room in cases with no circulation to fix things," said Anders Sandberg of Oxford University's Future of Humanity Institute. The technique could potentially also be used to resuscitate people. However this could increase the risk of bringing back patients to a point where they are unable to live without life support-trapped on what is called the "bridge to nowhere," Brendan Parent, a bioethicist at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine, said in a linked comment in Nature.

Sam Parnia of the NYU Grossman School of Medicine said it was "a truly remarkable and incredibly significant study". It showed that death was not black and white but rather a "biological process that remains treatable and reversible for hours after it has occurred", he said. Benjamin Curtis, a philosopher focused on ethics at the UK's Nottingham Trent University, said the definition of death may need updating because it hinges on the concept of irreversibility.—AFP



Fans applaud British rock band The Rolling Stones' singer Mick Jagger on stage during a concert as part of their 'Stones Sixty European Tour'.

## Sports

# Aussie upsets Pegula as Halep, Hurkacz fall at Washington

## Badosa, Jabeur reach San Jose WTA quarter-finals

WASHINGTON: Australia's Daria Saville upset top-seeded defending champion Jessica Pegula 7-5, 6-4 on Wednesday at the ATP and WTA Washington Open, where Hubert Hurkacz and Simona Halep also exited. World number 88 Saville ripped the seventh-ranked American in hot and humid conditions while Romanian third seed Halep retired with illness down 7-5, 2-0 to Anna Kalinskaya.

"I stayed really composed," Saville said. "I managed the energy really well. It was very hot. But I thought it's hot for everyone so get on with it." Polish second seed Hurkacz crashed out in his second-round match at the US Open hard-court tuneup, falling to Finland's Emil Ruusuvuori 6-4, 7-6 (7/3).

Wimbledon runner-up Nick Kyrgios of Australia defeated US 14th seed Tommy Paul 6-3, 6-4 to book a third-round date with US fourth seed Reilly Opelka. World number 63 Kyrgios, whose most recent title came at Washington in 2019, broke to open and close the first set. Paul's fourth double fault gave the Aussie a match point and his forehand shot beyond the baseline gave Kyrgios the victory in 85 minutes.

Saville booked a quarter-final match against Canadian qualifier Rebecca Marino, who beat Germany's Andrea Petkovic 6-3, 3-6, 6-1. The 28-year-old Russian-born Aussie won her only WTA title at the 2017 Connecticut Open but dispatched Pegula in 98 minutes for her second top-10 win of the year after

downing Ons Jabeur at Indian Wells in March.

"Everyone's attitude is I'm here to win the tournament and I'm no different," Saville said. "I'm playing really good tennis right now. I'm excited for more." Saville fell to 627th in the world rankings after Achilles tendon surgery that sidelined her for most of last year. Now she's into her third quarter-final of the year after Miami and Guadalajara. "I'm happy," Saville said. "It creates good reputation. Players are going to say, 'She's playing well. She has some good wins this year.'"

Ruusuvuori, set to rise one shy of his career-high to 43rd in the world rankings, denied Hurkacz on all four break-point chances to advance after one hour and 44 minutes. "I just tried to hang in there and stay as tough as can," Ruusuvuori said. "Long rallies, they really drain you and you start to feel dizzy during the points. Very tough." His third-round foe will be Sweden's Mikael Ymer, who ousted 15th seed Aslan Karatsev 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 after eliminating three-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray in round one.

Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka ousted Aussie 11th seed Alex De Minaur 3-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-2. The world number 96 will next face seventh seed Karen Khachanov. US third seed Taylor Fritz beat Australia's Alexei Popyrin 6-4, 6-3 to book a third-round match against British 16th seed Daniel Evans. World number 13 Fritz comes off a five-set Wimbledon quarter-final loss to Rafael

Nadal and two weeks in a boot with a stress fracture in his left foot. "It has felt great. No pain at all. It's a really good sign," Fritz said. "Gives me a lot of confidence moving forward."

### WTA quarter-finals

In another development, second-seeded Paula Badosa survived a scare on the way to a 6-2, 5-7, 7-6 (7/5) victory over US qualifier Elizabeth Mandlik on Wednesday in the WTA hardcourt tournament in San Jose, California. After comfortably pocketing the first set with two breaks of serve, Spain's Badosa went down an early break in the second against her 240th-ranked opponent, who is the daughter of four-time Grand Slam champion Hana Mandlikova. She broke back, but was broken again in the 11th game to give Mandlik a chance to serve out the set and extend the match.

After breaking for a 4-3 lead in the third, Mandlik twice had a chance to serve for the set, but they traded service breaks in the final three games to send it to the tiebreaker, in which world number four Badosa won the last five points to seal the victory. Badosa will next face the winner of Thursday night's marquee clash between four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka and sixth-seeded American Coco Gauff.

Japanese superstar Osaka is unseeded as she plays her first tournament since falling in the first round of the French Open, where she was battling a left Achilles tendon injury. Gauff, the



WASHINGTON: Daria Saville of Australia plays a shot to Jessica Pegula of the United States during Day 5 of the Citi Open at Rock Creek Tennis Center on August 03, 2022 in Washington, DC. —AFP

French Open runner-up, is seeded sixth. Third-seeded Tunisian star Ons Jabeur, playing her first match since her historic runner-up finish at Wimbledon, pulled away late to beat American Madison Keys 7-5, 6-1. Jabeur will face either Veronika Kudermetova or Claire Liu in Friday's quarter-finals. Jabeur got off to a strong start with an early break for a 2-0 lead before Keys surged to a 5-3 lead.

Jabeur responded by winning 10 of the next 11 games. "I'm grateful that I played at night because it's slower and it helps me a

little bit with the conditions," Jabeur said. "I knew it was going to be a tough match for me. I just tried to stay low and hit the ball as much as I can. Make her play another ball and in the end I was feeling much better." American Amanda Anisimova beat Czech Karolina Pliskova for the first time in five attempts to reach the quarter-finals. Anisimova trailed by a set and a break on the way to a 3-6, 7-5, 6-1 victory. Seventh-seeded Daria Kasatkina also advanced, beating American Taylor Townsend 6-4, 6-0. —AFP

## Hendricks sets up South Africa win in Ireland T20 opener

BRISTOL: Reeza Hendricks hit his fourth successive Twenty20 fifty as South Africa defeated Ireland by 21 runs in their series opener at Bristol on Wednesday. Hendricks, who hit three half-centuries in the Proteas' recent 2-1 series win over England, top-scored with 74 in a total of 211-5 and shared a third-wicket partnership of 112 with Aiden Markram (56). "I think I've been working really hard," said Hendricks, now one of just five batsmen to have scored four consecutive half-centuries at this level, during the presentation ceremony. "Momentum is important. I've been enjoying English conditions."

Lorcan Tucker (78) and George Dockrell (43) kept Ireland in the hunt but when the pair were dismissed off successive balls their side's hopes of victory went with them. 'Death-bowling' specialist Wayne Parnell proved his worth for all he was hit for six off the last ball off the innings by tailender Barry McCarthy as Ireland finished on 190-9. Left-arm paceman Parnell returned figures of 2-36, stand-in Proteas captain Keshav Maharaj took 2-29 with his left-arm spin and leg-spinner Tabraiz Shamsi 2-37.

For Ireland, it was yet another case of close but not close enough as they suffered a seventh successive T20 defeat having been competitive against India, New Zealand and now South Africa this season. "We were in the game for a long time," said Ireland captain Andy Balbirnie. "The two wickets in two balls made the difference." Hendricks's latest



BRISTOL: South Africa's Reeza Hendricks hits the ball and scores a four during the first T20 international cricket match between Ireland and South Africa at the County Ground, in Bristol, on August 3, 2022. —AFP

fifty came off 32 balls, including seven fours and a six, while Markram got to the landmark in 25 balls including six boundaries.

The pair fell to consecutive deliveries, with leg-spinner Gareth Delany having Markram caught at deep square leg before Hendricks holed out to point. Ireland, however, did not help their cause by bowling 13 wides - more than two extra overs. South Africa's attack largely kept Ireland in check but a sixth-wicket stand of 86 between Tucker and Dockrell gave the Proteas something to think about. Tucker faced just 38 balls, including seven fours and five sixes. But he fell when skywing Shamsi to wicketkeeper Quinton de

Kock off the last delivery of the 17th over.

Ireland needed 42 off the final three overs and the very next ball saw Dockrell well caught by Markram, diving forward from long-off, as he hit out at Dwayne Pretorius. South Africa suffered a setback before the match started, with captain David Miller ruled out by a back spasm, with fellow batsman Heinrich Klaasen taking his place in the XI. Proteas fast bowler Kagiso Rabada had already been sidelined from both matches in a two-game series that concludes in Bristol on Friday with an ankle injury. "David Miller will hopefully be ready for the next one," said Maharaj. —AFP

## Quartararo heads into Silverstone battling penalty and history

SILVERSTONE: MotoGP returns from its mid-summer break with championship leader Fabio Quartararo aiming to resume his own winning streak while ending the long run of different victors at Silverstone. The French world champion's three-race streak ended in spectacular fashion in Assen at the end of June and he will still be dealing with fallout from that race at Silverstone.

He crashed twice in the Netherlands. The second time he ended his race by flipping over the handlebars of his Yamaha after 15 laps. The first crash, when he slid on a corner and forced his nearest rival in the championship, Aleix Espargaro, into the gravel, could prove costly on Sunday. He was judged at fault and still has his long lap penalty for the crash to serve.

"I am really looking forward to Silverstone," Quartararo said on his team's web site. "I won there last year. This time will be tricky because we know that we have that long-lap penalty. But if I'm really honest, that only motivates me to do even better." While winning last year might give Quartararo confidence, it also highlights one of the statistical oddities of the British Grand Prix. No one has won the race twice in a row since Jorge Lorenzo in 2012 and 2013, a total of seven races because the 2018 (heavy rain) and 2020 (Covid-19) events were cancelled.

Quartararo dominated last year as he won on the way to the world title. This year he leads Spaniard Espargaro, who turned 33 at the end of July and is having a breakout season, by 21 points. After his brush with Quartararo pushed him down to 15th in Assen, Espargaro fought back on his Aprilia, completing a daring double overtake at the

end to finish fourth and claim 13 points, but complained "I lost a victory."

Espargaro calculated that he was better off than if he had finished first and Quartararo second and gained just five points. Yet he lamented that he did not collect a second MotoGP win after his first, in his 200th race, in Argentina in April. "I have just one victory in my career, so I would prefer to gain five points and have the victory." Francesco Bagnaia, who chased Quartararo home in last season's championships is fourth in the standings-behind fellow Ducati rider Johann Zarco-after winning in Assen.

Last year his 14th place at Silverstone, after tyre problems, ultimately left the Italian with too much ground to make up in the title race. At the moment, he is 66 points off the lead. Quartararo said the five-week break had done him good, although he made clear he had not just been relaxing. "I'm happy to start riding again," he said. "I used the summer break to get some rest, but I also put in a lot of hours of training. My mind was always still on returning to action in the best shape possible." —AFP



Fabio Quartararo

## NFL appeals six-game suspension of Watson

NEW YORK: The NFL has appealed the six-game suspension meted out to Cleveland Browns quarterback Deshaun Watson for violating the league's personal conduct policy. The NFL had argued for an indefinite suspension lasting at least one full season for Watson, who was accused of sexual assault and misconduct during massage sessions in civil lawsuits filed by 25 women. No criminal charges were brought against Watson, who has denied wrongdoing.

NFL disciplinary officer Sue L. Robinson, who was appointed by both the league and the NFL Players' Association, found after an investigation that the six-game penalty was appropriate. Robinson issued a 15-page finding on Monday after hearing arguments in June from the league, the union and Watson's lawyers on five specific cases presented by the NFL. The incidents took place between March 2020 and March 2021 while Watson was with the Houston Texans.

Robinson found that Watson's "pattern of behavior was egregious," but that the cases presented for her review involved "nonviolent sexual conduct" and didn't merit a harsher penalty than a six-game ban. In a statement on Wednesday, the league said it had notified the NFLPA that it would appeal and then filed its brief on Wednesday afternoon. NFL commissioner Roger Goodell will determine who will hear the appeal. "Under the 2020 NFL-NFLPA collective bargaining agreement (CBA), the factual findings of the Disciplinary Officer are binding and may not be appealed," the league noted in a statement. —AFP



LOS CABOS: Russia's Daniil Medvedev serves against Australia's Rinky Hijikata during their Mexico ATP Open 250 men's singles tennis match at the Cabo Sports Complex in Los Cabos, Mexico, on August 3, 2022. —AFP

## Medvedev makes triumphant return

LOS CABOS: World number one Daniil Medvedev, playing his first match in six weeks, beat Australian qualifier Rinky Hijikata 6-4, 6-3 on Wednesday at the ATP hard court tournament in Los Cabos, Mexico. It was a milestone 250th match win of the reigning US Open champion's career. "Someone told me this a few days ago," Medvedev said after the match. "Otherwise I would not have known. That's nice, a milestone in a way. I want more victories, but that's nice to have 250. We'll try to get more."

Medvedev is playing his first tournament since bowing out of the quarter-finals at Mallorca on June 23. He missed Wimbledon because of its ban of

Russian and Belarussian players in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Medvedev gained the first break of the match to claim the opening set. He saved the first break point he faced in the opening game of the second, and gained the break he needed for a 4-2 lead against Hijikata. The 21-year-old Australian world number 224 put up a fight, fending off a stream of break points before Medvedev closed it out after 90 minutes.

"It's definitely not that easy to play after you stop for a while, especially (playing my) first match on hard courts since a long, long time-since Miami," Medvedev said. "Sensations were not bad. I could have just broke a little bit more, but when you win everything is fine." Medvedev next faces Ricardas Berankis of Lithuania, who beat Argentina's Facundo Bagnis 7-6 (7/4), 6-3. Second-seeded Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime also advanced, beating Mexico's Alex Hernandez 6-3, 7-5. —AFP

Sports

# Haaland embracing life out of his 'comfort zone' in Premier League

## Norwegian prepares for debut away to West Ham

**MANCHESTER:** Erling Haaland has warned the contenders to Manchester City's title that he will only improve in the competitive environment of English football as the Norwegian prepares for his Premier League debut away to West Ham on Sunday. Haaland is the marquee arrival to the Premier League from over £1 billion (\$1.2 billion) spent by the 20 top-flight English clubs so far this summer. The 22-year-old had his pick of top clubs after scoring 86 goals in 89 games for Borussia Dortmund, but said the demands of playing under Pep Guardiola was behind his reason for choosing City.

"As a young player, playing for Pep Guardiola, playing for the best club in England, I have to keep developing and get better at a lot of things," Haaland told Sky Sports. "That's what I like a lot about football, you can always develop, you can always get better at the game." The English champions are already Haaland's fifth club after spells at Bryne, Molde and Red Bull Salzburg before joining Dortmund.

"Part of the game is to get out of your comfort

zone which is something I've been doing and something I like because then you develop more as a human being as well," he added. "I'm a player that's hungry for goals, that gives 100 per cent, that wants to win every single game. They are simple things but also really important things." After the hype around his arrival, Haaland had a debut to forget, missing a glorious chance towards the end of City's 3-1 defeat to Liverpool in the Community Shield on Saturday.

However, he said he will not let that affect him as he prepares to make his first Premier League appearance this weekend. "You are a kind of entertainer. You get judged every single week for what you do on the pitch and you have to deliver and do your best," he said. "For me as a striker, this is something I cannot stress about because if you think too much, you might end up doing things you don't want to do. "It's going to be tough and this is the charming thing about the Premier League. It's a beautiful, hard competition, that's why it's the most popular league in the world." —AFP



**GREEN BAY:** Erling Haaland of Manchester City throws his shirt into the crowd after the pre-season friendly match between Bayern Munich and Manchester City at Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wisconsin. —AFP



**INGLEWOOD:** Julian Araujo #2 of Los Angeles Galaxy defends a corner kick against Omar Mireles #42 of Guadalajara Chivas in the second half during the Leagues Cup Showcase 2022 at SoFi Stadium on August 03, 2022 in Inglewood, California. —AFP

## Galaxy and Club America triumph

**LOS ANGELES:** Honors were even between the United States and Mexico on Wednesday with Los Angeles Galaxy and Club America coming away with victories in the Leagues Cup Showcase friendly double-header at SoFi Stadium. The glitzy \$5 billion home of the NFL's Los Angeles Rams, named in June as one of the venues for the 2026 World Cup, hosted soccer matches for the first time, drawing a sellout crowd of 71,189.

Major League Soccer's Galaxy opened the evening with a 2-0 victory over Liga MX outfit Chivas Guadalajara. Then Club America edged Los Angeles FC 6-5 on penalties after their match ended 0-0. The friendlies, with more matches to be played in Nashville, Salt Lake City and Cincinnati, are a preview of next year's Leagues Cup tournament, a month-long event featuring all 47 Liga MX and MLS teams with CONCACAF Champions League berths on the line.

The stadium needs some changes to be capable of hosting World Cup matches. Wednesday's games were played on a grass pitch temporarily laid on top of the stadium's usual artificial turf. And the pitch was less than

63m wide - at least five meters narrower than FIFA prefers - but will be reconfigured for the World Cup with the removal of some seating. Dejan Joveljic and 19-year-old Jonathan Perez scored for the Galaxy to lift the MLS club to victory in the opener. Joveljic continued a strong run of form, racing onto a corner kick from Efrain Alvarez and firing into the net.

Perez sealed the win with a spectacular goal in the 62nd minute, gathering a pass from Samuel Grandsir outside the penalty area and unleashing a long-range blast that beat Chivas goalkeeper Jose Rangel. Galaxy's former Manchester United striker Javier "Chicharito" Hernandez, who began his professional career at Chivas, played the first 45 minutes before he was substituted in a stream of changes by both clubs. The second match was a lively affair with Club America forcing LAFC goalkeeper John McCarthy into a couple of diving saves and Los Angeles attackers Latif Blessing and Kwadwo Opoku threatening.

LAFC nearly went down a man late in the first half when defender Mamadou Fall was shown a straight red card after a tackle only for it to be rescinded after video review. In the shootout, each keeper made one save before, at 5-5, Club America's Emilio Lara fired his attempt past McCarthy and LAFC midfielder Jose Cifuentes blazed over the bar. LAFC star Carlos Vela entered after half-time and recent acquisition from Real Madrid, Gareth Bale, came on in the 62nd minute. —AFP

## 5 Premier League signings to watch

**MANCHESTER:** Premier League clubs have flexed their financial muscle once more in the race for the world's best talent ahead of Friday's kick-off to the 2022/23 season. AFP Sport looks at five of the biggest signings of the summer looking to make an impact.

### Erling Haaland (Man City)

City have addressed their need for a central striker, and got one of the most highly sought after players in the world to do so, after beating off competition from around Europe for Haaland. The Norwegian's buyout clause from Borussia Dortmund was a bargain at £51 million (\$63 million) but the reported signing-on fee, agents fees and wages over the course of a five-year contract will reportedly set City back £190 million.

Haaland may have had a debut to forget as he missed practically an open goal in City's 3-1 defeat to Liverpool in the Community Shield on Saturday. But Pep Guardiola warned his side's challengers for the title "the goals will come". Haaland scored 86 goals in 89 games for Dortmund and although he has been signed as the final piece to get Guardiola's men over the line in the Champions League, his arrival makes the champions favorites for a fifth league title in six years.

### Darwin Nunez (Liverpool)

In contrast to Haaland, Nunez had the perfect start to his Liverpool career by scoring and winning a penalty against City in the Community Shield. The Reds have banked on the Uruguayan to evolve their attacking options after the departure of Sadio Mane to Bayern Munich. Nunez cost an initial 75-million euros from Benfica (\$77 million), but that fee could rise to 100 million euros depending on his success at Anfield. Luis Diaz is expected to take the place of Mane on the left of Liverpool's front three with Nunez phasing out Roberto Firmino. His aerial presence offers Jurgen Klopp's men a different focal point in attack, but it could take some time for the Reds to adjust.

### Lisandro Martinez (Man Utd)

Much of the debate over United's only big money signing has surrounded how his diminutive 5ft 9in (1.8m) presence will cope with the rigours of the Premier League. The Argentine is well-known to new United manager Erik ten Hag, who signed Martinez for Ajax. A £57 million transfer fee suggests Ten Hag sees Martinez as a regular starter at Old Trafford, but it remains to be seen in what position. Martinez played at centre-back, left-back and centre midfield during his time with the Dutch champions. Ten Hag used him most commonly at the heart of his defence, which would put United captain Harry Maguire's position under threat with French World Cup winner Raphael Varane also competing to start at centre-back.

### Raheem Sterling (Chelsea)

A key player in City's first two Premier League title triumphs under Pep Guardiola, Sterling found himself slowly edged out at the Etihad by the arrival of Jack Grealish and the emergence of Phil Foden. Still a vital part of England manager Gareth Southgate's plans in a World Cup year, Sterling has moved south to become the face of Chelsea's new era. The 27-year-old was the Blues' first signing since Todd Boehly's consortium bought the club from Roman Abramovich. Chelsea badly need a goalscorer if they are to compete with City and Liverpool for the title and Sterling is the most likely member of Thomas Tuchel's squad to get 20 goals. He hit that mark three seasons in a row between 2017 and 2020 and will have the guaranteed minutes he did not get under Guardiola in the past two years to reach that tally once more.

### Gabriel Jesus (Arsenal)

Jesus was another victim of the wealth of attacking talent at City as the Brazilian hopes to relaunch his career at the Emirates ahead of the World Cup. Despite winning seven major trophies at the Etihad, Jesus never became the successor to Sergio Aguero City hoped they were buying six years ago. Arsenal badly needed a striker after the departures of Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Alexandre Lacazette. Jesus already has the Gunners fans excited after scoring seven times in pre-season, including in the thrashing of Chelsea and Sevilla. —AFP

## UEFA to use semi-automated offside technology

**PARIS:** UEFA announced Wednesday that "semi-automated offside technology" will be used from the group stage of this season's Champions League as well as in next week's Super Cup. The optical tracking system was trialed at the FIFA Club World Cup in Abu Dhabi in February and last year's Arab Cup. FIFA have confirmed it will be in place for the World Cup in Qatar.

The data-driven, limb-tracking technology uti-

lizes both dedicated and broadcast cameras around the stadium to give the exact position of players on the pitch, offering match officials precise information within seconds. "This innovative system will allow VAR teams to determine offside situations quickly and more accurately, enhancing the flow of the game and the consistency of the decisions", said UEFA chief refereeing officer Roberto Rosetti.

Specialized cameras enable the system to generate 29 body points per player. UEFA said that 188 tests have been conducted since 2020. "The system is ready to be used in official matches and implemented at each Champions League venue," added Rosetti. It will be introduced in Europe for the first time in the UEFA Super Cup between Real Madrid and Eintracht Frankfurt in Helsinki on August 10. —AFP

# Classifieds

**CHANGE OF NAME**

Abdul Rahim Abdul Aziz Khan (C# 2030)

I, Abdul Rahim Abdul Aziz holder of Passport No. T5332471. Do hereby inform you to add my surname Khan. I will henceforth be known as Abdul Rahim Abdul Aziz Khan. Old Name - Abdul Rahim Abdul Aziz, New Name -

I, Joyce Piedade (Civil ID No. 281070408072 / Passport No. R8665839), would like to correct my name, Old Name: Joyce Anthony Piedade, New Name: Joyce Fernandes. (C# 2033)

**EMERGENCY**  
☎ 112

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

**For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSALHOTLINE 128**

### Vacancies in a Luxury Wellness Resort in Kuwait

Scheduled to open in 2022, the resort will be an ultra-luxury urban retreat targeting high profile individuals. It will offer unique and state of the art facilities and services to its members like ample spa facilities, private beach, indoor and outdoor pools, selected restaurant concepts, racket sports academy, comprehensive fitness facilities and unique fashion and sports retail. Currently, we are hiring exceptional talents in Kuwait in the following positions with minimum 3 years of experience in a 5-star luxury Hospitality:

- Food and Beverage
- Culinary
- Housekeeping

**We Offer A Competitive Compensation Package**

If you want to be a part of our pre-opening team creating memorable guest experience, send your CV to: [resortkwt@gmail.com](mailto:resortkwt@gmail.com)

### Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300

Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9
Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144

### Clinics

Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088

Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401



**BIRMINGHAM:** Ghana's Abigail Kwarteng competes in the women's high jump qualifying rounds athletics event at the Alexander Stadium, in Birmingham on day seven of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, central England, on August 4, 2022. —AFP

## Thompson-Herah and Wightman sprinkle Commonwealth stardust

### Australia's Titmus stars in pool

**BIRMINGHAM:** Double Olympic sprint champion Elaine Thompson-Herah and men's 1500 meters world champion Jake Wightman both sailed through their heats at the Commonwealth Games on Thursday. Thompson-Herah's hopes of adding 200m gold to the 100m title she won on Wednesday will partly rest on whether Namibia's Olympic silver medalist Christine Mboma shakes off rustiness due to a lack of training.

Both came through their heats without a hitch in front of another sizeable crowd at Alexander Stadium in Birmingham. The women's 200m is one of the standout events at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, featuring the two first home in the Olympic final. Thompson-Herah and Mboma. Thompson-Herah had a quick turnaround from winning the 100m but she barely broke sweat in winning her heat in 22.80sec.

The 30-year-old is on the first step of what she says is her bid to return to the top after a disappointing world championships last month. Thompson-Herah topped the podium at last year's Tokyo Olympics in both the 100m and 200m, retaining the titles she had won in Rio. But she only took bronze in the 100m behind compatriots Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce and Shericka Jackson at this year's worlds in Eugene, Oregon, and finished seventh in the 200m final. Fraser-Pryce and Jackson opted to skip the Commonwealths, although Fraser-Pryce is in Birmingham as she trains with the team ahead of next week's Monaco Diamond League meeting.

#### 'Hype'

Mboma has been restricted to the 200m since World Athletics, the sport's governing body, ruled she cannot run distances from 400m up to 1600m because of her

naturally high testosterone levels. The 19-year-old - Namibia's first-ever female Olympic athletics medalist - eased into the second round, timing 23.20sec. They go again on Friday in the semi-finals, with the final scheduled for Saturday.

Wightman qualified for Saturday's men's 1500m final, where he will be in the unusual position of being the hunted and not the hunter after his stunning success in the world championships. "That was the bit I was most looking forward to," said the Scottish runner, referring to the enormous roar that swept around the stadium when his name was announced. The men's 1500m should be a face-off between Scotland and Kenya.

In the Kenyan corner is 2019 world champion and Olympic silver medalist Timothy Cheruiyot and Abel Kipsang, who was fourth at last year's Tokyo Games. In the blue corner for Scotland are Wightman and Olympic bronze medalist Josh Kerr. Wightman, 28, said he did not care that he now has a target on his back. "I don't feel any more pressure but a bit more hype around it, for sure," he told the BBC. Canada's Camryn Rogers set a new Games record throw of 74.68 metres in the women's hammer throw.

#### Titmus stars in pool

Meanwhile, Australia's Ariarne Titmus completed a stunning individual freestyle treble on the last night of swimming action. Kenya's Ferdinand Omanyala won the men's 100m in a time of 10.02 while Scotland's Eilish McColgan emulated her mother Liz McColgan in winning the women's 10,000m. On the final night of action at the Sandwell Aquatics Centre, 400m world record holder Titmus beat a high-class field after her earlier triumphs

in the 200m and 800m freestyle. The 21-year-old dominated the race, touching in 3min 58.06sec to see off the challenge of Canada's 15-year-old Summer McIntosh.

The Olympic 200m and 400m champion skipped the world championships in Budapest in June, where she would have faced US star Katie Ledecky, to focus on the Commonwealths. She leaves Birmingham with four golds in total after being part of Australia's winning team in the women's 4x200m freestyle relay. "I came here with the goal to win all four. I believed I had the capacity to do that and I'm happy I did," she said. Titmus said it was crucial to have race practice in a high-pressure situation. "I think that, back home, Australia really prides itself on success in the pool at the Comm Games," she said.

"Potentially there's more pressure here to win than at the Olympics sometimes because we are so dominant. Performing under that pressure is tough." England's Ben Proud won his third straight Commonwealth men's 50m freestyle title, dominating the field to win in 21.36sec. "It's a year ago since I was giving my interviews and burst into tears because of a bad swim at the Olympics," said the world champion, who also won the 50m butterfly in Birmingham. "So much has changed. This is really my redemption year. Something has clicked."

Emma McKeon won a record-extending 20th Commonwealth medal as Australia brought the swimming events to a close by winning the women's 4x100m medley relay. The 28-year-old has won six gold medals in Birmingham to take her overall tally of golds to 14. England's Olympic 200m freestyle champion Tom Dean finally got his hands on a gold medal after six silvers, touching 0.08sec ahead of Australia's Kyle Chalmers in the men's 4x100m medley relay. Australia finished with



**BIRMINGHAM:** Gold medalist Jamaica's Elaine Thompson-Herah celebrates after the Women's 100m final athletics event at the Alexander Stadium. —AFP

25 swimming gold medals out of a total of 52, with the overall tally including swimming and para-swimming events.

Elsewhere on day six of the Games, England's Georgina Kennedy beat Canada's Hollie Naughton in four games to win the women's squash final. New Zealand's Paul Coll won the men's event, beating Joel Makin of Wales in a five-game nail-biter. New Zealand also took gold and silver in the men's cross-country mountain biking, with Samuel Gaze just edging out Ben Oliver while England's Evie Richards won the women's event. Australia lead the way in the overall medals tally with 46 golds, seven ahead of England, with Canada in third place on 16. —AFP

## Mbappe effect keeps PSG out of reach as Ligue 1 woos investors

**PARIS:** Kylian Mbappe's decision to stay at Paris Saint-Germain was hailed as a boon for French football but it surely rules out any slim chance of a title race as the new Ligue 1 season kicks off this weekend. France coach Didier Deschamps said Mbappe was "shining a positive light on the championship abroad" by choosing to sign a new three-year contract to stay in his home country, a decision which President Emmanuel Macron admitted he advised the striker to take.

French league president Vincent Labrune insisted Mbappe's new deal had sent "a strong message for the present and future of our league". In reality, a move abroad will still probably happen before long for a player who looks certain to one day win the Ballon d'Or. Yet the possibility of leading Qatar-owned PSG to Champions League glory will motivate Mbappe this season, alongside defending the World Cup with France in Qatar in November and December.

Mbappe is the dominant figure in Paris despite the presence of Lionel Messi and Neymar and the arrival of a new coach at a club whose title triumph last season was overshadowed by their Champions League last-16 exit against Real Madrid. Coach Mauricio Pochettino and sporting director Leonardo have been replaced by Christophe Galtier and Luis Campos respectively.

Portuguese super scout Campos was named in the post of football advisor. He built the last two sides to deny PSG the domestic title: Monaco in 2017 and Lille in 2021. Galtier, the finest French manager of the last decade, was the coach of that Lille side and spent last season in charge of Nice, but he knows the pressures in Paris will be altogether greater.

#### 'Win everything'

"When you come to PSG you have an obligation to get results," he told sports daily L'Equipe. "We need to break records. In all modesty, I have come to Paris to win everything." For PSG's domestic rivals, the reality is that second-and



**TOKYO:** Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe greets a Japanese fan during a press conference in Tokyo. —AFP

automatic Champions League qualification-is the best they can hope for in Ligue 1. Marseille were runners-up last season but it has been a tumultuous summer for the club owned by American tycoon Frank McCourt.

Fiery Argentine coach Jorge Sampaoli has left and been replaced by former Croatian international Igor Tudor. Key men in Boubacar Kamara, William Saliba and Steve Mandanda have departed and pre-season results have not been encouraging. Monaco had to settle for third last season and must come through Champions League qualifying as a result. If they can safely negotiate that they will be well placed for a successful campaign, despite losing outstanding midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni to Real Madrid.

The sides who completed last season's top five have big ambitions again. Rennes, owned by billionaire Francois Pinault, should be competitive, while Nice's British owners Ineos will hope to push for a Champions League place under Swiss coach Lucien Favre, who has returned for a second spell in charge. Meanwhile, Lyon are bidding to break back into the top three after finishing eighth in the last campaign.

They have brought back two former stars in Alexandre Lacazette and Corentin Tolisso, and it has also been a busy summer in the boardroom. American businessman John Textor, who owns Brazilian club Botafogo and has a stake in Crystal Palace, agreed a deal to become Lyon's majority shareholder. —AFP

## LIV Golf players file anti-trust lawsuit against PGA Tour

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Eleven LIV Golf players, including Phil Mickelson and Bryson DeChambeau, filed an anti-trust lawsuit on Wednesday against the US PGA Tour, some seeking a restraining order to compete in next week's playoffs. The lawsuit, filed in federal court in the Northern District of California, challenges the indefinite suspensions imposed by PGA commissioner Jay Monahan upon those who played in any of the Saudi-backed upstart tour's first three events.

The lawsuit begins a legal showdown between the rebel series and the established PGA Tour and whether the golfers are free agents or as tour members are subject to rules and punishments of the PGA Tour. With LIV Golf events offering record \$25 million purses and some players reportedly offered fat signing bonuses as well, some top names joined the circuit despite criticism over Saudi human rights abuses.

"As the tour's monopoly power has grown, it has employed its dominance to craft anti-competitive restraints to protect its long-standing monopoly," the lawsuit claimed. "Threatened by the entry of LIV Golf and diametrically opposed to its founding mission, the tour has ventured to harm the careers and livelihoods of any golfers... who have the temerity to defy the tour and play in tournaments sponsored by the new entrant."

"The tour has done so in an intentional and relentless effort to crush nascent competition before it threatens the tour's monopoly." Australian Matt Jones and Americans Talor Gooch and Hudson Swafford want a temporary restraining order to be able to compete in next week's first PGA Tour FedEx Cup playoff event at Memphis. They qualified based on season points before joining LIV Golf and being banished.

Other players filing the lawsuit include Mexico's Abraham Ancer and Carlos Ortiz, England's Ian Poulter and Americans Jason Kokrak, Pat Perez and Peter Uihlein. A memo from PGA commissioner Jay Monahan to players obtained by The Golf Channel said the tour

was confident in its legal position regarding the suspensions. "We have been preparing to protect our membership and contest this latest attempt to disrupt our tour and you should be confident in the legal merits of our position," the memo stated.

"These suspended players, who are now Saudi Golf League employees, have walked away from the tour and now want back in. "With the Saudi Golf League on hiatus, they are trying to use lawyers to force their way into competition alongside our members in good standing. It's an attempt to use the tour platform to promote themselves and to free ride on your benefits and efforts."

"To allow entry into our events compromises the tour and the competition to the detriment of our organization, our players, our partners and our fans." LIV Golf backed the lawsuit in a statement to The Golf Channel. "The players are right to have brought this action to challenge the PGA Tour's anti-competitive rules and to vindicate their rights as independent contractors to play where and when they choose," the LIV Golf Series statement said. "Despite the PGA Tour's efforts to stifle competition, we think golfers should be allowed to play golf."

#### 'It's frustrating'

The move came on the eve of the PGA's Wyndham Championship at Greensboro, North Carolina, and sparked emotional reactions. "It just feels like a quick cash grab for those guys," said American J.T. Poston. "The money that's being used to fight those lawsuits are coming out of our pockets." As for LIV Golf players possibly in the PGA playoffs, Poston added, "I don't know if there will be hostility but I know there are some bridges that have been broken. Some guys will not appreciate that."

US 2023 Ryder Cup captain Zach Johnson called the lawsuit "extremely unfortunate," adding, "it's sad it has come to this. You should pick one and that's the route you should have to go." "You can't have it both ways," said American Will Zalatoris. "We've been grinding all year and they are doing something detrimental. I think a lot of guys would be pretty frustrated if they are allowed to do both. Deep down all of us share the same feelings." "It's frustrating," said American Billy Horschel. "They made a decision to leave the PGA Tour. They should follow their employer. A lot of guys are not very happy." —AFP