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Kuwait to recruit doctors and nurses from Turkey

More Bangladeshi, Indian nurses to arrive soon

Kuwait handled COVID skillfully

KUWAIT: The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had a great impact on the global community, leading several countries to impose strict health measures to contain the spread of the virus. The World Health Organization (WHO) had designated COVID-19 as a pandemic in 2020, calling on governments around the world to take measures such as lockdowns to help curb the spread. Kuwait imposed lockdowns and implemented steps in accordance with guidelines set by WHO and the national emergency committee to monitor COVID-19.

On February 27, 2020, Kuwaiti authorities began to medically screen those returning to Kuwait and imposed quarantine on passengers to make sure they were free of the virus. As infection raked up globally, partial lockdowns were imposed in Kuwait on March 22, 2020 from 5:00 pm until 4:00 am. — KUNA (See Page 2)



KUWAIT: A medic administers COVID-19 vaccine doses to people queuing in their cars at a drive-thru inoculation site at Jaber Causeway in this file photo. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: Procedures are currently underway to hire Turkish doctors and nurses by next year, sources revealed to Kuwait Times, following Minister of Health Khaled Al-Saeed's visit to Turkey. The medical staff will be occupying positions in the new hospitals. "Kuwait Ministry of Health is keen on hiring staff from different nationalities as long as they qualify for the positions. Turkey's level in the medical sector is well established and is noted for its high medical quality," sources said. The agreement also includes sending some Kuwaiti patients to be treated in Turkish hospitals and establishing offices in Turkish cities to cater the needs of the Kuwaiti patients.

In another development, 650 Bangladeshi nurses will be arriving in Kuwait in the coming weeks. The first batch of 50 nurses from Bangladesh arrived in Kuwait in June. Ambassador of Bangladesh to Kuwait, Major

General Md Ashikuzzaman along with officers of the Embassy and officers from the respective companies welcomed the nurses at Kuwait International Airport and congratulated them for being selected as the first batch to serve in Kuwait.

The Ambassador thanked the relevant Ministries of Kuwait and the Embassy of Kuwait in Bangladesh and related companies for recruiting Bangladeshi skilled manpower to Kuwait. He also thanked the Ministry of Health of Bangladesh, Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL) for their assistance in expediting the recruitment process of nurses in Kuwait. Also, some Indian nurses are expected to arrive in Kuwait very soon. These nurses will work in public and private hospitals.

US sanctions 'crypto mixer'



WASHINGTON: The United States placed sanctions Monday on Tornado Cash, a leading "crypto mixer" for transactions in virtual currency that US officials describe as a hub for laundering stolen funds, including by North Korean hackers. The Treasury said Tornado Cash had been used to transfer at least \$96 million of funds stolen in June from crypto exchange service Harmony Bridge, and another \$7.8 million of the nearly \$200 million in crypto currency hacked from Nomad, a similar service.

In addition, Tornado Cash was used to transfer and mask \$455 million of the more than \$600 million worth of ethereum, a leading virtual currency, stolen in April from the Axie Infinity game via the Ronin Network. That theft, which the Treasury called the largest known crypto heist to date, was carried out by North Korean state-backed hacking units known as the Lazarus Group and APT38, according to the US Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Tornado Cash is one of the leading mixers, also known as tumblers, which help people hide the movements of their crypto currencies like bitcoin and ethereum by blending them with the transfers by other users. Tornado Cash "has been used to launder more than \$7 billion worth of virtual currency since its creation in 2019," the Treasury said.

In May the Treasury sanctioned another large crypto mixer, Blender.io, which it said was also used to process crypto funds stolen by the North Korean groups. US officials say the mixer services aren't themselves illegal but are frequently used to move illicit funds, and that other mixers and anonymity-enhancing technologies in the crypto ecosystem are under scrutiny. The sanctions prohibit US individuals or firms from using Tornado Cash and would risk losing those funds if they did. — AFP

Gaza buries the dead amid truce

GAZA: Shell-shocked Gazans on Monday sifted through the rubble of three days of deadly conflict between Zionists and Islamic Jihad militants as a truce held and life slowly returned to normal. An Egypt-brokered ceasefire reached late Sunday ended the intense fighting that killed 44 people, including 15 children, and wounded 360 in the enclave according to Gaza's health ministry.

Zionists had since Friday launched a heavy aerial and artillery bombardment of Islamic Jihad positions in

Gaza, leading the militants to fire over a thousand rockets in retaliation, according to the army. As relative calm returned to Gaza Monday, and electricity was restored, Palestinians tried to salvage their belongings from the rubble of shattered homes and to start clearing the debris.

"We received the news of the ceasefire with joy and happiness and we went back to our work," said Gaza shopkeeper Hazem Douima. "We did not want more bloodshed." Bereaved families buried their dead, including at one funeral joined by hundreds of mourners in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip where a

family laid to rest four minors killed in the conflict. "Gaza is tending to its wounds," said one resident, Mohammed Alai.

Continued on Page 6



GAZA: Palestinians carry the bodies of four teenage Palestinians from the Najm family, during their funeral in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip on August 8, 2022, after they were killed during the latest three days of conflict between Zionists and Palestinian militants before a ceasefire. — AFP

Scientists urge action after US climate bill

PARIS: Scientists on Monday welcomed the passing of US President Joe Biden's "historic" climate bill while calling for other major emitters - namely the European Union - to follow suit and implement ambitious plans to slash emissions. The bill, which would see an unprecedented \$370 billion invested in cutting US emissions 40 percent by 2030, should provide a launchpad for green investment and kickstart a transition towards renewable energy in the world's largest emitter.

It passed the Senate on Sunday night after months of arduous nego-

tiations and only after a number of tax and energy provisions were tacked on to Biden's original proposal. Michael Pahle, from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, said the bill was particularly relevant to EU lawmakers, who he said were on the verge of adopting "the world's most ambitious climate policy" in the form of the bloc's "Fit for 55" plan. "The EU's policy can only succeed - economically and politically - when major emitters and trade partners take similar action," he told AFP.

"Especially in face of the changing geopolitical landscape, US-EU cooperation is key and the bill an important enabling factor." The EU initiative - which envisages a 55-percent emissions fall by 2030 - has no set budget as yet.

But a recent assessment found member states would need to spend



LES DIABLERETS, Switzerland : A sign of the Glacier 3000 is seen on the Tsanfleuron Glacier above Les Diablerets, Switzerland. Following several heatwaves blamed by scientists on climate change, Switzerland is seeing its alpine glaciers melting at an increasingly rapid rate. —AFP

an 350 billion euros more each year than they did between 2011-2020 in order to hit the climate and energy targets. Simon Lewis, professor of

global chance science at University College London, said the US bill showed how lawmakers can advance

Continued on Page 6

Six migrants die after boat sinks

ALGIERS: Six migrants were found dead at sea and others were missing after their boat sank Monday off the coast of Algeria, local television

reported, adding six survivors were rescued. "Six bodies were retrieved and six injured people, including a pregnant woman, have been transferred to hospital at Bainem" west of the capital Algiers, private television channel Ennahar said.

The boat capsized around 4:00 am local time (0300 GMT), it added. A search was ongoing for an unspecified number of missing people. The boat's

occupants originated from various sub-Saharan African countries. They were attempting to reach Europe. More than 2,350 would-be migrants have been rescued or intercepted in the first seven months of this year off Algeria, according to data provided by national authorities. Spain is a favored destination for migrants embarking from the North African nation. — AFP

Kuwait handling of COVID-19 robust, within int'l standards

Kuwait managed pandemic with high sense of professionalism: Health Ministry

KUWAIT: The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had a great impact on the global community, leading several countries to impose strict health measures to try and contain the spread of the virus. The World Health Organization (WHO) had designated COVID-19 as a pandemic in 2020, calling on governments around the world to take measures such as lockdowns to help curb the spread. The State of Kuwait imposed lockdowns and implemented steps in accordance with guidelines set by WHO and the national emergency committee to monitor COVID-19.

On February 27, 2020, Kuwaiti authorities began to medically screen those returning to Kuwait and imposed quarantine on passengers to make sure they were free of the virus. As infection tracked up globally, partial lockdowns were imposed in Kuwait on March 22, 2020 from 5:00 pm until 4:00 am. Authorities in Kuwait had to extend the lockdown and imposed a full curfew on May 10-30 of the same year all in an effort to prevent COVID-19 from spreading. Hotels and the Jaber Al-Ahmad sports stadium were converted to quarantine facilities in April of 2020 and wards were expanded in hospitals and other facilities in Kuwait to help in the COVID-19 countermeasures. On December 24, 2020, Kuwait launched its very first COVID-19 vaccination campaign throughout the country.

The State of Kuwait, thanks to its strategic medical reserves, had managed the pandemic with

a high sense of professionalism and solemn effort, said Health Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Medicine and Food Monitoring Dr Abdullah Al-Bader. Dr Bader added that Kuwaiti officials have been monitoring the global situation closely, making sure that the country had the necessary stockpiles to address this unprecedented challenge. In May of 2020, the State of Kuwait was in communication with major pharmaceutical companies in the US, the UK and China to ensure that the people in Kuwait had the chance to be vaccinated, he added. Dr Bader affirmed that Kuwait had successfully managed to curb the spread of the coronavirus and expressed confidence that state authorities were able to face any infection spike of the virus.

Repatriation

Head of the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 team Dr Hashem Al-Hashemi said meanwhile that Kuwait had taken the necessary measures to protect its citizens and residents, noting that the state first repatriated, during the pandemic, 31,000 Kuwaitis stranded abroad via 185 flights from 58 countries. He indicated that all social gatherings and public spaces were off limits during lockdown, adding that restaurants and places of leisure were closed as well as regular flights were suspended for 14 days in accordance with the state's emergency plans. Hashemi also noted that the Ministry of Information had launched a site to



Dr Abdullah Al-Bader



Dr Hashem Al-Hashemi



Dr Hamad Bastaki



Dr Mohammad Al-Suaidan

refute all rumors spread during the pandemic. The state's efforts also included the launch of the Shlonik (how are you?) application to bring back Kuwaitis from abroad and determine their identity, he said. While Kuwait took care of its own, it also extended hands during the pandemic, providing \$40 million to WHO to help in the donation of medical supplies to several countries.

Meanwhile, head of the public health department at the Health Ministry Dr Mohammad Al-Suaidan noted that social media and the internet had played a part in spreading information as well as misinformation during the pandemic. Rumors and falsehood are very dangerous during such trying times, added Dr Suaidan, affirm-

ing that the State of Kuwait had focused its efforts to refute fake news and reinforce scientifically proved data. The so-called "information pandemic" was met with documented facts to prevent people from being misled, he said, reiterating that regular media such as television and radio also aided in the fight against false information. On the subject of a possible spike in coronavirus cases, Dr Hamad Bastaki - head of the infectious diseases department — said that updating the state's emergency plan would suffice. The Ministry continues to monitor all infectious diseases including COVID-19, taking necessary steps to boost public health response in adequate manner, he affirmed. — KUNA

PAAET, MoH to provide internships for students

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training and the Ministry of Health signed an agreement which aims to encourage joint research and allow nursing students to intern at hospitals. MoH Undersecretary Dr Mustafa

Redha said, "the ministry aims to establish cooperation with specialized educational institutions in the fields of health and nursing," emphasizing the national role that the educational institution adds.

"The PAAET works to ensure the goals that serves the nation by preparing a capable national staff," said the deputy general manager Dr Jassem Al-Ansari. The agreement, adds Ansari, aims to provide field internship for students, rate the workers who have applied and provide technical training and supervision to the MoH workers.



Dr Mustafa Redha (right) and Dr Jassem Al-Ansari



MoH and PAAET officials pose for a group photo. —KUNA photos

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KISR experts farm whiteleg shrimp in Kuwait desert

KUWAIT: Marine life experts at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) managed to farm whiteleg shrimp (or vannamei) at a desert area in Kabd using low salinity water. The experimental model shrimp farm of the institute imported vannamei larvae from Thailand and has almost reached a commercial production level, KISR's Acting Director General Dr Manei Al-Siderawi said Monday. "The productivity of the experiment, the first of its kind, reached two kilograms per square meter," he said. "This species of shrimp started to dominate the global shrimp farming business due to the speed of its growth rate and high resistance to viral diseases," Dr Siderawi pointed out. He added that the vannamei farming project in Kabd falls in the framework of Kuwait Development Plan 2035 and the instructions of the cabinet to upgrade the fish and shrimp farming techniques as a means of backing the national food security. —KUNA



Local

'Shalala Thoughts' mirrors daily life situations in funny and simple way

Artist provides relatable content through digital comic art



By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Digital comic art is not only a way to comment on current issues or daily social situation, but it sometimes serves as a way for stress relief from several situations or things we don't like, whether for the artist or the person who reads it. 'Shalala Thoughts' provides cool, funny and simple content in which the artist highlights through her comics many of the issues that people face. Her style has attracted lots of readers due to her topics that are close to people's daily life situations. Kuwait Times met Shahed, the artist behind Shalala Thoughts to learn more about the project. The following are excerpts from the interview.

Kuwait Times: Why did you choose this name?

Shalala Thoughts: My name is Shahed, but my friends gave me this nickname in college after someone mistakenly called me Shalala. Since then, everyone has been calling me by that name. And it is now the name of the main character in my Shalala Thoughts comics.

KT: When did you start your comic journey?

Shalala: I started drawing when I was five years old. My mother enrolled me in an art exhibition when I was six years old, and I drew my paintings with 3D, which drew the attention of the people in the exhibition. People advised my mother to encourage me to pursue my art journey, and she did. My beginning was drawing with oil colors, and I did my first solo exhibition in Kuwait when I was 12 years old. After that, I participated in international art galleries in places like Malaysia, Dubai and Lebanon.

After that, my artistic direction was heading toward comics. I actually did my first comic book when I was 10 years old, and continued doing some comic arts during my time at university. I became the official comic artist of the university's newspaper. My first digital comic art was the day I established Shalala Thoughts in 2015. There was a lack in Arabic comics back then, and at the same time the way that cartoons were drawn then portrayed women in a very aggressive and vulgar way. Therefore, I wanted to deliver my thought in a nicer way.

KT: What are the issues that you like to highlight the most?

Shalala: I used to focus mostly on women's issues in Arab societies and their struggles in general. After I felt that I vented out my frustrations through my comics, I start focusing more on daily situations that happen with my friends and people I know, and portray them in funnier and lighter ways. Especially in Kuwait; you can find many material to build comics on. I have recently started working on funny situations that I have been through when I was young.



The Comic artist Shahed (Shalala Thoughts).

KT: Tell us more about your characters.

Shalala: Most of my contents are about girls. Beside the main character Shalala and her cat, every character represents a specific type of girls. The two characters I use the most in my comics are Shalala and the pregnant girl 'Ghaya' who represent pregnant women in general. I am surprised that every comic I do about her becomes the most viral one internationally.

There is Shalala's mother that I used her to talk more about the relationship between mothers and daughters in Arab societies, because I think there is much tension and issues between them. I also used Shalala's grandmother in my comics.

KT: Are you willing to talk about politics in your comics?

Shalala: I do not prefer heading toward politics, but everything that provokes me, I like to mention it in my comics, such as injustice, women issues, pollution, and recently I talked about the way the people treat their maids, as well as dealing with animals.

KT: Some of your comics were published using videos. Do you think that it helps getting closer to people?

Shalala: Definitely, especially with the new upgrade in social media that is trying to push the content to using videos more than pictures. For me, the problem is that videos take longer time to be ready. For a 10-second video, it can take three weeks to be ready, while the regular comic would take one to two days, not to mention that many people like comics more than videos.

KT: In your point of view, what makes your comics special?

Shalala: Reading and making the most of people's opinions helped me improve my comics. Therefore, I



started using less colors in the comics and make them more comfortable to the eye. This action has attracted more people to my comics, while the delivered message is strong and direct to the point.

KT: Was there any cooperation with third parties?

Shalala: I did several workshops about my comic journey with well-known brands such as Apple, Sephora, PotteryBarn. I published my comics in the American Buzzfeed and they were the only place that paid for my art. It is funny because I contacted the local newspapers and magazines in Kuwait and they refused to pay for my comics after publishing while they offered me to do it for free.

On other hand, I published my work through social media platforms other than Instagram, and whose audience are not Arabs, and I am always surprised with their feedback because even though the comics are in Arabic and it talk about our local issues, they were relating to it. Meanwhile, my comics were translated by individuals to different languages such as Spanish, Portuguese and other languages I don't even know.



"Reading people's opinions helped me improve my comics"

Committee to maintain Souq Mubarakia's heritage identity

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Minister of Municipal Affairs Dr Rana Al-Faris gave orders to form a consultative committee to follow up on the work of restoring the areas damaged by the Mubarakia Market fire. Historian and president of Kuwait Heritage Society, Fahad Al-Abduljalil told Kuwait Times that being part of the consultative committee will serve the purpose of the panel in preserving the heritage identity of Souq Mubarakia. "The main goal is to preserve the spirit and heritage identity of Souq Mubarakia," he said. "Forming a consultative committee by the Minister of Municipal Affairs is a positive step that counts for the government. The formation is a wise decision of the political leadership."

He noted that the incident needs specialists in all aspects, including the engineering, historical and architectural fields, pointing out that several places need the supervision of specialists to restore Mubarakia Market to what it was before the fire as a Kuwaiti heritage landmark. "We will make sure to provide the basic construction materials from which the original Mubarakia buildings were built and provide an integrated protection system to avoid



Fahad Al-Abduljalil

future similar incidents. We will go on a field visit to conduct a comprehensive study," Abduljalil said.

He affirmed that the committee would ensure the damaged parts of Souq Mubarakia are reconstructed as they were, through the assistance of heritage specialists and architects, to restore the burned shops, noting that there is interest from officials to restore the burned part in the previous heritage form, and the committee will move according to controls and standards, as all categories of the Kuwaiti people are waiting for heritage Mubarkia Market to be back. "We will not tolerate any tampering with the heritage identity, and we will do our best to preserve the heritage identity of Mubarakia in accordance with the required standards," Abduljalil added.

The working group members are Chairperson of the Voluntary Work Center Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Society for Heritage Fahad Al-Abduljalil, and Professor of Architecture at Kuwait University Dr Muhammad Al-Jassar, Vice-President of the Kuwait Heritage Society Engineer Ahmad Al-Adwani, consultant at the Kuwait Research and Studies Center Engineer Salah Al-



An archive photo shows people walking at Souq Mubarakia.

Fadil, a researcher in Kuwaiti heritage, Saleh Al-Mathn, and Director of the Department of the Office of the Minister of Municipality Engineer Abdullah Akshan, reports a local Arabic daily.

Souq Al-Mubarakia in Kuwait City is one of the oldest markets in Kuwait. The Souk was the center of trade prior to the discovery of oil, and it remained a charming place that preserves Kuwait's past and reflect the country's rich heritage and culture. It is considered one of the touristic and heritage destinations, until last April when a huge fire broke out, destroying at least 25 shops.

local spotlight

Gulf Health Group



By Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

Local@kuwaittimes.com

The "Awareness and Health without Borders Group", that belongs to the Gulf Federation for Cancer Control (gffcc.org), is a group of doctors, media men and clergy who carries a noble message across borders. This message aims at awareness, early detection, training and treatment of cancer. This chronic disease that is on the rise in most countries around the world, and awareness of its causes and means of early detection, both are the best means of fighting it. This group visited three countries so far; Yemen, Sudan and Mauritania, and stopped following the COVID-19 pandemic and now this group resumes its activity for the sake of continuing this noble work.

The visiting medical delegation to these countries includes oncologists who trained doctors and medical graduates, and examined tens of patients, operated on patients, delivered lectures, met officials and succeeded in convincing some of them to issue instructions that limit risks of smoking and risks related to cancer. The people we met there expressed in all possible means their love of this Gulf group that came only to convince its brothers to get rid of habits that cost them thousands of victims and present them with health awareness, training and treatment.

There is no doubt that doctors of those countries as well as media personalities made extreme efforts for the sake of making their people aware. They also appreciate any external effort that helps them in what they are doing. Yet, the stronger message in that visit are the beautiful feelings of patients and citizens, as they saw their brothers coming to give them advice as volunteers, not officially commissioned. These are feelings many are missing, because of that, our advices were more effective, and our doctors colleagues there were proud of us, not because we are better than them, rather because they felt we love them and distances did not prevent us from presenting what we can to them.

This gulf group against cancer will continue contacts with its Arab people and with the participation of doctors and Gulf and Arab countries as well as media men and religious scholars, will continue visiting remote areas for the sake of awareness early detection, and in each visit spreads love in its surroundings and strengthens ties between Arabs. Helping poor Arab people with money is good, but what is better is to reach them and help their ill, and rescue some of them by giving them the opportunity for early detection.

Even in rich Gulf countries, there are villages and areas where awareness does not reach, and are not given the opportunity for early detection, and people there often feel neglected. The GFFCC will be the link with those area and will strengthen brotherhood feelings among our peoples, and I hope that groups of medical awareness be varied, and early detection of other disease as it is for cancer and eyes. Groups of Gulf doctors who carry the message of love with them wherever they go, maybe, years later, the Arabs in Somalia may feel that there are Arabs in the Gulf who truly love them, and are not satisfied with money remotely, rather they come to them to get to know each other. We in our nation need today, more than any other time, actions that make us all feel that we are one nation, and no one separates us. We need to create a healthy nation, and have the best doctors to treat diseases, and the return of health to a nation that almost all diseases did it grave harm.

Local

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MOE suspensions do not include teachers

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Commission has declined to designate employment levels for expat workers in the Ministry of Education, in order to designate those positions for Kuwaiti workers so long they qualify for the role, excluding non-Kuwaitis such as, children of Kuwaiti mothers, stateless people and GCC citizens.

"These suspensions are mostly in managerial positions or in specialties where national workers are available, however, they do not include teaching positions, as new schools are being opened each year," sources told Kuwait Times. It is worth noting that 25 percent of teaching positions could not be localized, so new teachers are needed to fill them.

In addition, "specialized teaching positions such as in the fields of mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology need expatriate forces to work in them," sources added. More specifically, there are currently 88,348 teachers, of which 63,955 are Kuwaiti nationals, while 24,393 are expatriates.

On another point, the Ministry of Education will release end of service payments to a number of expatriate teachers who the ministry has terminated as part of its Kuwaitization policy. Around KD 78 million has been allocated in the budget for these rewards, the sources said, noting that the budget could increase if there more names are added to the list before the end of the year.

News in brief

Industry Authority chief to retirement

KUWAIT: The Minister of Commerce, Fahad Alshraian, has sent a memo to the Council of Ministers to send the General Manager of the Public Authority for Industry Abdulkareem Taqi into retirement, according to the required legal procedures. "Work will go on as usual until the right person is chosen for the job in the coming period," sources added

Military conscripts told to register online

KUWAIT: Military conscripts in Kuwait will have to submit their documents through an online application portal to replace in-person attendance, as the country moves to overhaul its recruitment process, the General Staff of the Army said on Monday. All persons who have reached the minimum military enlistment age (18 and above) are required to submit their data online, which will be linked to the "Kuwait Mobile ID" application as part of the verification process, according to a military statement.

Bikes can pass to Iraq without any additional fees

KUWAIT: Motorbikes, local or foreign, are now authorized to pass through the Iraqi-Kuwaiti land border with the use of an official registration (KT) without any additional fees such as motorcycle insurance, the Iraqi Embassy in Kuwait announced. The authorization is official starting from August 8 throughout all land ports between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Iraq.

800 kg rotten shrimp seized

KUWAIT: A large amount of inedible shrimp has been seized in Souq Sharq before being displayed in the market. "Daily investigations by the management in Al-Asima were successful in seizing about 800 kilograms of inedible shrimp imported from Pakistan," the Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced on Monday.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A picture showing haze in Hawally yesterday. Kuwait Meteorological Center said that humidity would drop Tuesday, while chances of strong winds and rising dust would increase. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Zain joins UN Global Compact initiative for responsible business practices

Bader Al-Kharafi: Zain committed to creating the world we all want

KUWAIT: Zain Group announced that it has joined the United Nations (UN) Global Compact initiative - a voluntary leadership platform for the development, implementation, and disclosure of responsible business practices.

With this announcement, Zain is proud to join thousands of other companies globally, and a select few telcos from the Middle East region, in making this commitment to taking responsible business action to create the world we all want.

The UN Global Compact is a call to companies everywhere to align their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption, and to take action in support of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Launched in 2000, the UN Global Compact is the largest corporate sustainability initiative in the world, with more than 15,000 companies and 3,000 non-business signatories based in over 160 countries, and more than 70 local networks.

Commenting on Zain becoming a participant of the UN Global Compact, Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO said, "Zain is committed to creating the world we all want by embedding the UN Global Compact and its 10 principles as part of the overarching strategy, culture, and day-to-day operations."



Kharafi continued, "In our own capacity to establish a 'wonderful world', through its business practices Zain is already addressing climate change; upholding human rights; protecting children in the digital and physical realms; and clamping down on corruption, which are all elements that will be further amplified through our entry into the UN Global Compact and its mission."

Through joining the UN Compact, Zain is recommitting to supporting and respecting human rights and reassuring all company stakeholders are protected. This is already reflected in Zain's code of conduct, HR policy and supplier code of conduct policy, ensuring that across Zain's value chain, the business respects its employees and treats them all equally without any form of discrimination.

The company is fully committed in playing an active role towards climate change and biodiversity loss, where it recently published its 11th annual

Sustainability Report entitled, "A Resilient Journey" disclosing its ESG indicators as well as its annual thought leadership report entitled, "The Climate Crisis - Achieving Net-Zero for a Sustainable Future" that explores various important topics related to working towards a Net-Zero economy. Climate change is a pressing global issue, and Zain is committed to bringing about systemic change by adopting energy efficient solutions and reducing its carbon footprint. Zain is committed to disclosing in a transparent manner its alignment and implementation progress of the UN Global Compact Principles across its markets. Progress on the Corporate Sustainability strategy and The Principles will be publicly available at: <https://zain.com/en/sustainability>

We encourage readers to visit the UN Global Compact website - <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/> - and learn more about the entity's sustainability efforts being undertaken.

KFH honors staff's children for academic excellence

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) honored more than 40 staff's children who scored 90% and above in high school. The honoring ceremony took place for the second year respectively in presence of KFH executive management, thus expressing KFH care about employees and their personal lives.

KFH Chief Human Resources Officer, Zeyad Al-Omar reiterated the significance of celebrating with the staff such events as members of staff are integrated element that can impact and be impacted by the surrounding family and social atmosphere. Family and children play a pivotal and significant role in motivating the employee to exert more effort and dedication in his work. He considered that KFH employees' distinction, success, stability and academic growth are the main reasons behind the success and distinction of their honored children who shall continue their success and distinction throughout all stages of education post high school.

This initiative represents the care and appreciation which Group HR extends to honor the toppers



in high school in both sections (Science/Arts). Omar extended his congratulation to the honored students for the success they have achieved by the grace of Allah and the efforts they have made during the past years. He also congratulated the parents for their outstanding contribution and support to their children by providing all appropriate conditions to achieve this outstanding performance.

In his message to the honored children, Omar said that "Success and distinction in high school is great yet it is just another stage to cross. The upcoming university studies stage comprises different challenges in all aspects, it requires dedication, hard work and knowing the right and appropriate line of study that would suite the market requirements so that they

would achieve success in their post-graduation career.

KFH has achieved remarkable success in the economic field locally, regionally, and globally. Investment in human factors and building of man is one of the greatest aspects of investment. Accordingly, KFH focuses on the development of its employees as they are considered as the main important, and feasible elements according to investment standards. KFH supports and enhances the educational sector with all its institutions and fosters distinguished students as one of the foundations of its social responsibility. KFH shall continue to support and enhance this field of responsibility which represents a real added value to Kuwait's present and future development.

Kuwait Airways launches new menus on-board

KUWAIT: As part of its objectives to provide the best options to its valued customers, Kuwait Airways announced the launch of its new food menus, which will be introduced shortly on-board Kuwait Airways, to suit the tastes and preferences of valued passengers and meet their requirements. Accordingly, Kuwait Airways held a presentation of these new menus, in the presence of various specialized chefs, culinary experts and international hotel officials, to evaluate the Company's latest launch of diverse and distinguished menus, who in turn expressed their appreciation and admiration for the menus, skillfully prepared by national cadres.

On this occasion, the Director of Customer Services Department at Kuwait Airways, Mishal Al-Mutairi stated, "Kuwait Airways' launch of new menus, arises from within the framework of the Company's keenness to provide various, diverse services to its valued customers, which is in accordance with its strategic plans towards developing and improving procedures and systems, so as to



Mishal Al-Mutairi



meet the requirements and preferences of our dear customers, as well as to achieve the desired objectives that will enable the Blue Bird to reach wider horizons."

Mutairi added, "Inviting chefs and hotel officials is a new and unique experience, as it evaluates the general preferences and aspects of the food offered to passengers included in the new menus and also provides us with the opportunity to re-introduce distinguished new products, as well as delicious food and beverages, that suit the tastes and enhances the experiences of the passengers and meets their preferences, as they enjoy a comfortable and pleasant journey on board the National Carrier's state-of-the-art fleet of aircraft."

Mutairi continued by saying, "Kuwait Airways

bestows enormous attention to every detail in the service of customers and spares no effort to provide innovative and unique facilities, as well as to attain the highest levels of service excellence for passengers, from their check-in at Terminal 4, completing their travel procedures with ease and enjoying the best services on board, which are provided by our cadres with extensive experience in the field of aviation and hospitality."

Mutairi concluded his statement by extending his sincere thanks and appreciation to the international hotel officials and specialized chefs for accepting Kuwait Airways' invitation and participating in this important event and was hopeful that the new menus would meet the expectations of the passengers and ensure an enjoyable travel experience.



Attacker injures Japanese sailor at WWII ceremony

US says new Africa strategy will engage leaders, rethink military role

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PINGTAN, China: Tourists look on as a Chinese military helicopter flies past Pingtan island, one of mainland China's closest point from Taiwan, in Fujian province, ahead of massive military drills off Taiwan. —AFP

China holds fresh drills around Taiwan

Taipei condemned Beijing for extending military drills

BEIJING: China carried out fresh military drills around Taiwan Monday, Beijing said, defying calls to end its largest-ever exercises encircling the island in the wake of a visit by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Beijing has raged at the trip by Pelosi—the highest-ranking elected US official to visit Taiwan in decades—ripping up a series of talks and cooperation agreements with Washington, most notably on climate change and defence.

It has also deployed fighter jets, warships and ballistic missiles in what analysts have described as practice for a blockade and ultimate invasion of the self-ruled democratic island that China claims as its territory.

Those drills had been expected to draw to a close on Sunday, but China said Monday they were still ongoing. “The eastern theatre of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army continued to carry out practical joint exercises and training in the sea and airspace around Taiwan island,” the military said.

The exercises, the PLA’s Eastern Command said, were “focusing on organising joint anti-submarine and sea assault operations”. Taipei condemned Beijing for extending the drills. “China’s provocation and aggres-

sion have harmed the status quo of the Taiwan Strait and raised tensions in the region,” the island’s foreign ministry said in a statement. Beijing was also set to carry out live-fire drills on Monday in parts of the South China Sea and the Yellow Sea.

Taipei defiant

Taiwan has remained defiant throughout the Chinese drills. Its military said it would hold anti-landing exercises in Taiwan’s south on Tuesday and Thursday. “We will practise counter moves against simulated enemy attacks on Taiwan,” Lou Woei-jye, spokesman for the Eighth Army Corps, told AFP. They will include the deployment of hundreds of troops and about 40 howitzer guns, the military said.

Taiwan has insisted that no Chinese planes or ships

have entered Taiwan’s territorial waters during the drills. But to show how close it came to Taiwan’s shores, the Chinese military released a video of an air force pilot filming the island’s coastline and mountains from his cockpit.

The Eastern Command also shared a photo it said was of a warship on patrol with Taiwan’s shoreline visible in the background. Ballistic missiles were fired over Taiwan’s capital during the exercises last week, according to Chinese state media.

The scale and intensity of China’s drills—as well as its withdrawal from key talks on climate and defence—have triggered outrage in the United States and other democracies. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said Washington is “determined to act responsibly” to avoid a major global crisis.



‘We will practise counter moves’

Chad military govt signs deal to launch peace talks

DOHA: Chad’s military government and more than 40 opposition groups signed a deal Monday to launch national peace talks this month, but the main rebel outfit refused to take part.

United Nations and African Union leaders urged the junta and opposition to seize the latest opportunity to stabilise a country considered key to international efforts to stamp out Islamic extremists in the Sahel region.

But after five months of mediation efforts by Qatar, the main rebel Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT) announced hours before the ceremony in Doha that it would not join.

And several other armed groups, including the Military Command Council for the Salvation of the Republic, also refused to sign the agreement.

Under the deal, Mahamat Idriss Deby’s Transitional Military Council and hundreds of opposition representatives will launch a national peace dialogue in the capital, N’Djamena, on August 20.

Deby, who was in Doha for the signing, took power after his father, long-time president Idriss Deby Itno, was killed in April last year shortly after taking personal charge of a counter-offensive against the rebels.

The dialogue aims to agree the rules for a presidential election that Deby has promised by October. Chad, one of the world’s poorest countries, has endured repeated uprisings and unrest since independence in 1960.

Deby promised a national dialogue and elections within 18 months after seizing power, but the mediation has been fraught since the first day when FACT and other groups walked out of the launch ceremony.

Ceasefire and protection

Opposition parties have demanded that Deby preclude himself from the election, but Deby has said this can only be negotiated in N’Djamena. He has also said his transitional rule could be extended by another 18 months.

In a video message, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said the signing was “a key moment for the Chadian people” but that the national dialogue had to be “inclusive” to succeed. African Union Commission chief Moussa Faki Mahamat said it would be “crucial” for both sides to keep their promises to build trust with the Chadian people.

Qatar’s Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani said the accord aimed to establish “a peace to replace the trouble and



DOHA, Qatar: A picture taken on August 8, 2022 in the Qatari capital Doha shows various representatives attending the signing ceremony between Chad’s military authority and more than 40 opposition groups to launch national peace talks later this month. —AFP

strife that the country has known for many long years”. But Jerome Tubiana, a French expert on Chadian rebel groups, struck a cautious note. “It is an agreement that will not resolve the issue of armed opposition” to the regime, he said, noting the refusal of the main armed factions to take part.

Forty-three of the 47 groups who remained at the end of the mediation signed the accord to start national talks in N’Djamena on August 20. Mahamat Zene Cherif, the interim government’s foreign minister, acknowledged that there had been “difficult talks” in Doha but said FACT had missed a “historic opportunity” to help the country.

The European Union also urged FACT to rethink. “The European Union encourages all the political-military groups that have not yet adhered to the agreement to do so. This would allow the launch of a truly inclusive national dialogue,” said a European Commission spokesperson.

The accord commits all signatories to a ceasefire, while the government has guaranteed the security of all those who return from abroad to take part in the talks. FACT had demanded increased safety guarantees and the release of more than 300 of its fighters in government prisons.

FACT leader Mahamat Mahadi Ali told AFP: “War does not resolve anything. We want a peaceful and political resolution, but when we are forced to defend ourselves, we will defend ourselves.” Among the signatories was a veteran rebel leader, Mahamat Nouri, 75, who has been signing tentative peace agreements with Chadian governments since the 1970s.

He told AFP the N’Djamena talks could work if there was “political goodwill” on all sides. Choua Dazi, another long-standing rebel, told AFP the N’Djamena talks had a “less than 50 percent chance of success” and that he did not expect an election this year. —AFP

Petro sworn in as Colombia’s first leftist president

BOGOTA: Gustavo Petro on Sunday took the oath of office as Colombia’s first-ever leftist president, before a crowd of hundreds of thousands at his inauguration in Bogota. The 62-year-old former guerrilla and one-time mayor takes over from the deeply unpopular Ivan Duque, with plans for profound reforms in a country beset by economic inequality and drug violence.

Petro’s hard-fought victory in June elections brought Colombia, long ruled by a conservative elite, into an expanding left-wing fold in Latin America. “I swear to God and promise the people that I will faithfully enforce the constitution and the laws of Colombia,” said Petro before the large crowd of supporters gathered in Bogota’s Bolivar Square.

Petro—whose government should enjoy support from a left-leaning majority in Congress—called in his inaugural address for Colombian armed groups to “lay down their arms” and accept legal benefits “in exchange for peace.”

He also took aim at decades of counter-narcotics efforts, saying: “It is time for a new international convention recognizing that the war on drugs has failed.” And he called for the creation of an international fund to help the deforestation-plagued Colombian Amazon.

On the campaign trail, Petro had promised during his four-year term to raise taxes on the rich, invest in health care and education, and reform the police after a brutal crackdown on anti-inequality protests last year that was internationally condemned.

He has vowed to suspend oil exploration, to promote clean energy and to reactivate diplomatic and commercial relations with the government of Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela, suspended since 2019. Petro starts from an “enviable position, with a large majority in Congress and, in terms of the street, with support that no government had in recent years,” analyst Jorge Restrepo of the Resource Center for Conflict Analysis (Ceraac), told AFP.

Maduro congratulated Petro on his inauguration, saying in a video: “I extend my hand to the people of Colombia, to President Gustavo Petro, to rebuild brotherhood on the basis of respect and love between peoples.”

The Venezuelan leader had not been invited to the ceremony by outgoing president Duque, whose office oversaw preparations for the event. Duque had also denied a request by Petro to have the sword of revolutionary figure Simon Bolivar present at the ceremony—a decision the new president quickly reversed right after taking his oath.



BOGOTA, Colombia: Colombia’s new President Gustavo Petro gestures after delivering a speech during his inauguration ceremony at Bolivar Square in Bogota. —AFP

The sword, which was eventually brought by ceremonial guards to Bolivar Square, was of particular significance for Petro, as it had decades ago been stolen by the M-19 guerrilla group of which he was once a member, before being returned in 1991 after a negotiated peace deal.

‘Critical’ debt burden

Petro’s presidency is historic in another sense, too: by his side will be the country’s first-ever Afro-Colombian woman vice-president, 40-year-old environmental and women’s rights activist Francia Marquez.

The pair will grapple with an economy reeling from the coronavirus pandemic, a spike in violence and deep-rooted anger at the political establishment that culminated in last year’s protests. Almost 40 percent of Colombia’s 50 million people live in poverty, while 11.7 percent are unemployed.

Inflation in July also reached 10.2 percent year-on-year. On Monday, a preparatory commission set up by Petro said he was inheriting “a level of indebtedness and fiscal deficit that... is critical.”

Thousands of Colombians descended on Bogota’s main square to celebrate Petro’s inauguration and his promise of change. “We feel very grateful... to the millions of Colombians who believed in change and today we are going to start working together hand in hand to achieve it,” said Alexandra Rojas, a supporter of the new president.

Others could not contain their excitement. “I am happy to see the inauguration of our president Gustavo Petro, what a happiness, I can’t contain it, the happiness is great, the change has happened, the change has arrived,” said Ruth Perez, wrapped in the colours of the national flag. Petro has promised to implement outstanding provisions of the 2016 peace agreement that saw the rebel FARC movement lay down arms after nearly six decades of civil conflict. The former mayor of Bogota has also vowed to pursue negotiations with the National Liberation Army (ELN) armed group. —AFP

International

US says new Africa strategy will engage leaders, rethink military role

We're incredibly concerned about the role of Russian mercenaries

WASHINGTON: The White House on Monday unveiled broad new policy goals for sub-Saharan Africa, with administration officials seeking to tie the region's democratic, economic and security progress to US national security.

Officials in President Joe Biden's administration told reporters that the new "US Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa" will actively engage the region's leaders on issues from climate change to pandemic recovery to food insecurity, while think-

continent by aggressively using diplomatic and economic tools.

In its policy paper outlining the new US strategy, the Biden administration argues that a push for greater openness and democracy in sub-Saharan Africa will help "counter harmful activities by the People's Republic of China, Russia and other actors."

The administration hopes its sharpened focus will culminate in a US-African summit in Washington this December. The new policy paper suggests that Beijing sees the region as an "arena to challenge the rules-based international order, advance its own narrow commercial and geopolitical interests... and weaken US relations with African peoples and governments."

It says Russia "views the region as a permissive environment for parastatals and private military companies, often fomenting instability for strategic and financial benefit." The administration officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, expressed considerable concern about the activities in Africa of the shadowy Russian mercenary organization known as the Wagner Group.

"We're incredibly concerned about the role of Russian mercenaries," said one official, adding that the group had committed abuses. "It's a disturbing trendline." The policy paper said that while nearly 70 percent of Africans express strong support for democracy, a string of military coups and the rise of autocrats has left the region with fewer countries classed as free-just eight-than any time in 30 years.

The updated US strategy also intends to increase efforts at fighting terrorism through non-military



PRETORIA, South Africa: South Africa's Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor (R), accompanied by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (L), speaks to members of the media after meeting together at the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation in Pretoria. — AFP

approaches, though it says the United States will continue to use its "unilateral capability"—read military—against terrorist targets, but "only where lawful and where the threat is most acute."

Supporting the region's recovery from the pan-

dem's severe health and economic impact "is a prerequisite to regaining Africa's trust in US global leadership," while increasing trade and creating jobs, the paper argues. It also promises assistance for Africa in dealing with the global climate crisis. — AFP



"It's a disturbing trendline"

ing "more holistically" about military engagement on the continent.

Their comments in a background briefing on Sunday come at the end of an extended policy review by the Biden administration, and as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken undertakes a three-nation African trip. He is set to deliver a major policy speech in Pretoria, South Africa on Monday.

The rethinking also comes as some critics say a US focus on fighting extremist groups in Africa militarily has borne little fruit, even while China and Russia have made continued inroads on the huge

Mexico president urges more effort to save miners

AGUJITA, Mexico: Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador called Sunday for intensified efforts to save 10 workers trapped in a flooded coal mine, during a visit to see firsthand the rescue operation. Relatives of the missing were becoming increasingly desperate four days after the mine flooded in the northern state of Coahuila, fearing time is running out to bring them out alive.

Nearly 400 soldiers and other personnel, including six military scuba divers, have joined the rescue effort, but so far it has been too dangerous to enter the mine, authorities said. "We have to do everything we are doing and more" to find the missing miners, Lopez Obrador told reporters during his visit to the site in Agujita.

"I want it to be as soon as possible," he added. The focus has been on pumping out water from the mine to make it safe

enough to descend into the shafts, which are 60 meters (200 feet) deep. "There is progress. Water levels continue to drop. Much larger volumes continue to be extracted," said Coahuila Governor Miguel Angel Riquelme.

Rescuers were ready to enter the mine "as soon as the levels drop," he added. Five workers managed to escape from the crudely constructed mine in the initial aftermath of the disaster, but since then, no survivors have been found.

Authorities said the miners had been carrying out excavation work when they hit an adjoining area full of water. The Attorney General's Office said on Sunday that it asked the Ministry of Labor to provide information on safety inspections carried out at mines in the area to determine the cause of the accident.

Lopez Obrador had previously declared Saturday "a decisive



AGUJITA, Mexico: Rescue personnel work in the flooded coal mine where 10 miners have been trapped since Wednesday after a landslide, in the community of Agujita, Municipality of Sabinas, Coahuila State, Mexico. — AFP

day" for the operation. But by the end of the day, the water inside the mine had receded only about 9.5 meters from the initial 34 meters, authorities told relatives.

Liliana Torres, the niece of one of the missing workers, said that she had witnessed the relentlessness of rescuers who "do not stop all day," but added that the families were increasingly "desperate." Some families joined a mass near their improvised camp in the community of

Agujita to pray for the safe return of their loved ones.

Water seen flowing from the mine through drainage channels had earlier lifted the hopes of relatives praying that the miners are alive inside a pocket of air. "We're still hoping that they're in a higher part (of the mine), although there's too much water... but we trust in God," Elva Hernandez, mother-in-law of one of the trapped workers, told AFP. — AFP

London police strip-searched hundreds of kids

LONDON: London's under-fire police force strip-searched more than 600 children over a two-year period, most of them black boys, according to new data released Monday. England's commissioner for children, Rachel de Souza, said she was "deeply shocked" by the figures after obtaining them from the Metropolitan police.

De Souza's request came after Britain's biggest police force was forced to apologise in March over the case of "Child Q", which has sparked an investigation for gross misconduct into four officers. The 15-year-old black schoolgirl was strip-searched by female officers in 2020 after being wrongly suspected of carrying cannabis, despite them being aware she was menstruating.

She was searched without an "appropriate adult" present, and neither was an adult in attendance in 23 percent of the cases unearthed by de

Souza. In total, 650 minors aged 10-17 were strip-searched by Met officers between 2018 and 2020, she found.

More than 95 percent were boys, and 58 percent of the 650 were described by the officer as being black. De Souza said she was "extremely concerned" at the ethnic imbalance, and said Child Q may be part of a bigger "systemic problem around child protection" in the Met.

The figures had gone up sharply year after year, she said, and showed that a significant number of children "are being subjected to this intrusive and traumatising practice each year". The London force has been rocked in recent years by a succession of incidents involving officers, including last year, when a diplomatic protection squad member was jailed for the kidnap, rape and murder of Sarah Everard.

A crisis of public confidence in the police saw Cressida Dick resign as Met commissioner in February. In response to de Souza's findings, the Met said it had already instituted changes "to ensure children subject to intrusive searches are dealt with appropriately and respectfully". — AFP

Gaza buries the dead...

Continued from Page 1

A senior diplomatic official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that "most of the civilians who were killed in Gaza were killed by Islamic Jihad rockets" that fell short or misfired. Gaza's sole power plant, after a two-day shutdown, "started working to generate electricity", said spokesman Mohammed Thabet, hours after fuel trucks passed the reopened good border crossing. The outage had sparked fears about the impact on hospitals overwhelmed with casualties amid Gaza's worst fighting since an 11-day war with militant movement Hamas last year.

'Right to respond'

The military said roads would gradually reopen in the border area where restrictions were imposed in the lead-up to the offensive, which Zionist entity said was launched to stop looming attacks. Three people in Zionist entity were wounded by shrapnel and 31 lightly hurt while running for safety, emergency services said. Prime Minister Yair Lapid's office late Sunday agreed to the truce but said that "if the ceasefire is violated", Zionist entity "maintains the right to respond strongly".

Islamic Jihad, an Iran-backed group designated as a terrorist organization by several Western nations, also accepted the truce but said it too "reserves the right to respond". US President Joe Biden welcomed the truce and thanked Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-

Sisi for Cairo's role in brokering it. European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned it was "crucial to work to consolidate the ceasefire".

Tehran said it will always "defend the active resistance". Islamic Jihad said 12 of its leaders and members had been killed. The group's Muhammad al-Hindi said the ceasefire deal "contains Egypt's commitment to work towards the release of two prisoners". They were named as Bassem Al-Saadi, a senior figure in the group's political wing who was recently arrested in the occupied West Bank, and Khalil Awawdeh, a militant also in detention.

North of Gaza in the city of Ashkelon where air raid silents had wailed and people fled to bunkers, beachgoers returned to the Mediterranean shore. Sitting in a cafe, Eitan Casandini said locals were feeling "very good". "After we destroy them we can sleep peacefully," he told AFP. "I don't think (Islamic) Jihad will do anything again in the next three or four years." Islamic Jihad is aligned with Gaza's rulers Hamas but often acts independently.

Hamas has fought four wars with Zionists since seizing control of the enclave in 2007, including the conflict in May last year. Zionist entity has said it was necessary to launch a "pre-emptive" operation against Islamic Jihad, while the diplomatic official said the group had been planning an attack by sniper fire or with anti-tank missiles. The army killed senior leaders of Islamic Jihad in Gaza, including Taysir al-Jabari and Khaled Mansour. The senior diplomatic official said Islamic Jihad had been dealt "a very serious blow" which had "taken them back decades". — AFP

Climate deniers use past records to sow doubt

BARCELONA: With Europe gripped by successive heatwaves, climate-change deniers are spreading skepticism by publishing data on social media on extreme temperatures allegedly recorded decades ago to imply scientists are exaggerating global warming. But experts say the figures cited from the past are often incorrect or taken out of context - and even if accurate do not change the fact that heatwaves are becoming more frequent and intense. The posts typically include heat records from almanacs or newspaper reports from the past, arguing

Scientists urge action after US...

Continued from Page 1

climate legislation while responding to voters' short-term concern over fuel price inflation.

"It's really important that the world's largest economy is investing in climate and doing it as part of a package to generate jobs and a new, cleaner, greener economy," Lewis told AFP. "Part of that is a package tackling inflation. I think that shows the world how to get climate policy passed, by hitching it to things that really matter to ordinary people, to make sure it's part of an overarching package to make life better for people."

The independent Rhodium Group think tank said the "historic and important" bill - officially the Inflation Reduction Act - would reduce US emissions by at least 31

percent by 2040, compared with 2005 levels. However it said that with favorable macroeconomic conditions including increasingly high fossil fuel prices and cheap renewables, a 44-percent emissions drop was possible. "The cost of living is here partly because we didn't get out of fossil fuels early enough," said Lewis. "This bill means is that the transition away from fossil fuels is about to speed up."

Eric Beinhocker, director of the Institute of New Economic Thinking at the Oxford Martin School, said the bill would lead to a "massive increase" in clean technology and would drive the cost of renewables down even further. "This is particularly important when the world is suffering not just from the climate effects of fossil fuels but also from their skyrocketing costs," he told AFP.

The legislation provides millions to help conserve forests and billions in tax credits to some of the country's worst-polluting industries to accelerate their transition to greener tech. It almost didn't happen, however, with the bill delayed for months after Democrat Joe Manchin blocked Biden's

base, and in fact, there is no log of a temperature above 50 degrees Celsius," he said. And "even if the figure was correct, which I stress it is not, that is not proof that climate changes does not exist", he added.

Spanish daily newspaper La Vanguardia in 1935 also reported that temperatures had hit the low 50s in Zaragoza but explained that the measurement was taken "in the sun". Scientists recommend a series of strict criteria to ensure an accurate temperature reading. "Sensors must be protected from the sun and the rain, and the temperature inside the weather station must be the same as what it is outside," said Aemet meteorologists Ricardo Torrijó. Another post that has gone viral on Facebook, Telegram and Twitter since last June shows a front page of Spanish weekly magazine El Espanol from August 1957 with the headline: "The hottest summer of the century". — AFP

more expensive Build Back Better infrastructure plan.

Pahle said that a failure by the US to agree an ambitious emissions cutting plan would have been a "major drawback on the viability of the Paris Agreement". The 2015 accord enjoins nations to work to limit global temperature rises to "well below" two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and envisages a safer 1.5C heating cap. With a little over 1.1C of warming so far, Earth is already being buffeted by extreme weather such as drought and storms supercharged by rising temperatures.

Although acknowledging that the bill represented progress, scientists were quick to stress that it was far from perfect. Michael Mann, director of Penn State's Center for Science, Sustainability and the Media, said the bill's commitment to build new gas pipelines was "a step backwards". "It's difficult to reconcile a promise to decarbonize our economy with a commitment to new fossil fuel infrastructure," he said. — AFP

International

As Beijing rages over Taiwan, mood on China's streets muted

'Many Chinese hope for reunification with Taiwan'

BEIJING: China's thunderous response to US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan visit brought cross-strait tensions to their highest level in years and sparked an outpouring of nationalist zeal online, but the mood on the streets in mainland China is a little more circumspect.

Enraged by Pelosi's trip, Beijing last week launched some of its largest-ever military drills encircling the island while suspending cooperation with the United States on issues including climate change and defence.



Enraged by Pelosi's trip

China's tight grip over the internet, with a massive system of censorship that scrubs posts casting the Communist Party's policies in a negative light, has limited public debate over just how far Beijing should go in its showdown over Taiwan.

While it is difficult to gauge Chinese public opinion, experts say the public broadly supports reunification and would not accept moves suggesting acceptance of Taiwan's independence. But beyond the calls from more extreme citizens online—with some even calling for war—Beijingers told AFP they still pinned their hopes on a peaceful process.

"I'm not too worried because I know it won't happen... whoever turns to force first (over Pelosi's visit) will be in the wrong," said Zhao, a 29-year-old Beijing resident who only gave his surname. China sees Taiwan as part of its territory and has vowed to one day take it, by force if necessary, with the self-ruled island's eventual



XIAMEN, China: People wait for a bus on a street next to a sign that reads in Chinese "one country two systems to unify China", in Xiamen, Fujian province. — AFP

reunification and absorption into the mainland an article of faith for many Chinese.

"Many Chinese hope for reunification with Taiwan. This is an idea that's been instilled since childhood and is seen as politically correct," Zhao added. "But there has been less in-depth discussion, because the Internet does not allow for diverse views and offline talks can easily land in conflict."

For China's President Xi Jinping, the timing of Pelosi's

of the servicemen loses his cap, falls over and rolls a short way down a hill as the assailant scrambles away before being trapped in a headlock and carried away by local officials.

US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman was among those attending the ceremony at Bloody Ridge near Honiara to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Guadalcanal. The injured man was a 27-year-old media spokesman on the Japanese destroyer JS Karasame, which was visiting as part of a regional training exercise, said an official at the Japanese embassy who asked not to be named.

The embassy official, who had no details of the incident itself, said the injured member of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force was given first aid by an ambulance at the scene. The ambulance rushed him to a hotel for further treatment by US medical staff who were staying there. He was then taken back to his ship, where he was confirmed to have "no problem at all", the embassy official said.

Police said the attacker, now in custody, had been receiving psychiatric treatment but had not taken his medication for several months. The Solomon Islands' culture and tourism ministry, which hosted the memorial, formally apologised to Japanese officials in a ceremony shortly after the assault.

"We know it was not targeting any particular Japanese, it could have been anyone," said Barney Sivoro, permanent secretary of the ministry. "We know it could have been worse, could have threatened his life," Sivoro said, applauding the "swift action" by those standing nearby to bring the man under control.

"I would like to say here that it is an isolated incident by somebody (who) — from information we had — is mentally affected," he added. The Solomons official said others living in the surrounding national park did not condone such an "uncivilised act of cowardice".

The man had been arrested "on the spot" by police and would be dealt with according to the law, Sivoro added. "The government and its people are really sorry for what happened today." — AFP

'Overexploitation'

Spain has built a vast network of dams to provide water for its farms and towns. During the 20th century, 1,200 large dams were built in the country, the highest number in Europe per capita. This has allowed Spain to increase the amount of irrigated land it has from 900,000 hectares (2,224,000 acres) to 3,400,000 hectares, according to the ecological transition ministry's website, which calls the country's water management system "an example of success".

But many experts say the system is now showing its limits. The dams "had their use" but they have also encouraged the "overexploitation" of water and the decline in its quality by blocking the natural course of rivers, said Julio Barea, a water expert at Greenpeace Spain. For the scientific council of the Rhone-Mediterranean Basin Committee, a French body which groups hydrology specialists, Spain is nearing the "physical limits" of its water management model. Spain's network of dams relies on sufficient rainfall to replenish its many reservoirs, it said.

But "the climate changes already under way, which will continue in the decades to come, will increase the risk of failures," the body said in a recent report. Experts say the way Spain uses water is also a major problem. "Consumption has not stopped increasing while water is becoming increasingly scarce. It's an aberration," said Barea.

Spain is the second most visited country in the world and significant amounts of water are used in tourism infrastructure like swimming pools and golf courses. But agriculture absorbs the bulk—over 80 percent—of the country's water resources.

It is sometimes used to grow crops that are not suitable for a dry climate—such as strawberries or avocados—for export to other European countries. Spain's use of irrigation "is irrational," said Julia Martinez, biologist and director of the FNCA Water Conservation Foundation.—AFP

Attacker injures Japanese sailor at WWII ceremony

HONIARA, Solomon Islands: A Solomon Islands man described as "mentally affected" attacked a Japanese sailor with scissors during a World War II memorial ceremony in the Solomon Islands Monday before bystanders, including military personnel, overpowered him.

Video of the incident showed half a dozen servicemen, including US forces, trying to control a bearded man in a yellow T-shirt struggling on the ground. One



HONIARA, Solomon Islands: This screen grab made from a video taken and released by Mannar Levo shows security officials restraining a man (yellow shirt) who attacked a Japanese sailor with scissors during a World War II memorial ceremony. — AFP

Drought forces water use rethink in Spain

MADRID: Faced with a historic drought and threatened by desertification, Spain is rethinking how it spends its water resources, which are used mainly to irrigate crops. "We must be extremely careful and responsible instead of looking the other way," Spain's Minister for the Ecological Transition Teresa Ribera said recently, about the impact of the lack of rain.

Like France and Italy, Spain has been gripped by several extreme heatwaves this summer after an unusually dry winter. That has left the country's reservoirs at 40.4 percent of their capacity in August, 20 percentage points below the average over the last decade for this time of the year.

Officials have responded by limiting water use, especially in the southern region of Andalusia, which grows much of Europe's fruits and vegetables. Reservoir water levels in the region are particularly low, just 25 percent at most of their capacity.

"The situation is dramatic," said University of Jaen hydrology professor Rosario Jimenez, adding both underground aquifers and surface bodies of water were running low. The situation is especially worrying since it is part of a long-term trend linked to climate change, she added.

Parts of Spain are the driest they have been in a thousand years due to an atmospheric high-pressure system driven by climate change, according to a study published last month in the journal, Nature Geoscience. Greenpeace estimates that 75 percent of the country is susceptible to desertification.

visit could not have been worse, David Sacks, research fellow at think-tank Council on Foreign Relations, told AFP. Beijing's leadership is keen to project stability and strength at home ahead of the Communist Party's 20th congress—at which Xi is expected to be anointed for an unprecedented third term. "Xi likely felt as though he had to act, for fear of looking weak or like somebody who's not in control of the most important relationship for China," Sacks said.

Hong Kong reduces COVID quarantine for arrivals

HONG KONG: Hong Kong will cut its hotel quarantine for international arrivals from one week to three days from Friday, leader John Lee announced, in an easing of COVID restrictions that have severely curbed travel. Once a global logistics and transportation hub, Hong Kong has been largely cut off from the world for more than two years due to its adherence to China's strict zero-COVID policy. Under some of the world's tightest pandemic rules, Hong Kong had required overseas arrivals to undergo seven days of quarantine and repeated testing while confined to a room in a designated hotel, a restriction that residents and the business community complained has deterred them from travelling.

Lee, Hong Kong's ex-security chief turned city leader, announced Monday that the quarantine period for arrivals would be shortened to three days in a hotel plus four days of health monitoring at home or in a

'They don't need people's support'

But while China's military manoeuvres have stirred pride among citizens, residents told AFP this does not always relate to support for those at the top. "People are proud, but it's mostly over China's military might," Zhao said. "They seldom mention the leaders."

Another Beijing resident who gave her name as Guo said she didn't "think this situation will change attitudes towards our top leadership" among the public. "Taking a step back, they don't need people's support either, they're not picked by votes," the 27-year-old said.

Coupled with wariness towards foreign powers, trade bans on Taiwan and military drills "will be welcomed" by the Chinese public, Jocelyn Chey, former Australian diplomat and visiting professor at the University of Sydney, told AFP.

Pelosi's visit also came in the wake of significant domestic hurdles for the ruling party—unpopular lockdowns and debate surrounding Xi's zero-Covid policy, the closure of the international borders for travel, and woes in the property market, Chey notes.

But where criticism of the leadership is taking place, said Sacks, it is more often from those who believe China has not gone far enough in its spat over Taiwan. This means officials will continue to calibrate their response and intensify it accordingly, he added.

"Unless this gets really out of control, even though there has been some pushback to Xi's response, I don't think that it will in any way threaten his position at the upcoming party congress," Sacks said.

For some however, the military escalation—blamed on Pelosi's visit—has opened new and concerning possibilities. "Before this, some people around me felt that peaceful reunification could be achieved, as it was a matter between us and Taiwan," said a Guangzhou resident surnamed Luo. "But with the US' involvement, some are starting to see it as a battle with America." — AFP

hotel of their choice.

"We hope to maintain livelihood activities and Hong Kong's competitiveness, and to give the society the best development momentum and economic vitality," Lee said. He denied the easing signalled any departure from China's policy.

"Staying in touch with the outside world and working to resume quarantine-free travel with the mainland are no contradiction," he said. Alongside the new quarantine arrangements, Hong Kong will implement a health code system similar to mainland China's on a government-developed tracking app.

Under the system, an infected person will be given a red code that prevents them from leaving quarantine. Overseas arrivals will be given a yellow code and will not be allowed in places such as restaurants, bars, gyms and cinemas during their four days of self-monitoring. "The situation may give business visitors some relief but it is still not very attractive to tourists," said Perry Yiu, a lawmaker responsible for Hong Kong's tourism sector. "I hope... we can get rid of mandatory hotel quarantine by the fourth quarter this year." But a Hong Kong IT professional working in Singapore expressed caution about returning home. "I will adopt a wait-and-see model to see if the policy is stable," said the man, who identified himself as Tom. "From the standpoint of a tourist, I will definitely not go." — AFP



SANYA, China: A medical worker speaks with a woman as residents and tourists queue to undergo nucleic acid tests for the COVID-19 coronavirus in Sanya. — AFP

S Lanka frees Stalin on bail

COLOMBO: A Sri Lankan court on Monday released on bail top leftist trade union leader Joseph Stalin, whose arrest had sparked international condemnation and widespread protests. Police have arrested scores of people on charges of damage to public property during months of protests, which peaked with the flight and resignation of president Gotabaya Rajapaksa in July.

Stalin, 57, was arrested on Thursday for contempt after he participated in an anti-government demonstration that was banned by a court in May. Stalin, named after the late Soviet leader by his staunch communist father, thanked UN Human Rights Council officials who had called for his release and fellow activists who demonstrated across Sri Lanka demanding his freedom. "The government cannot intimidate us through arrests, there are at least another 50 protesters who are held across the country," Stalin told AFP, vowing to continue agitating against the new president, Ranil Wickremesinghe.

Tens of thousands of people, incensed by the island nation's unprecedented economic crisis, stormed Rajapaksa's palace and his seafront office on July 9, blaming him for mismanaging Sri Lanka's finances. He fled the country and later resigned.

His successor has drawn a distinction between "protesters" and "rioters" and vowed tough action against "any troublemaker". Stalin, the secretary of the Sri Lanka Teachers' Union, became the senior-most activist to be arrested in the new government's crackdown. Police have also arrested another protester who had raided the liquor cabinet of the deposed leader, downed a beer and took off with a presidential mug. Another was arrested for removing two official flags from the palace and using them as a bedsheet and a sarong. Soon after protesters overran the Presidential Palace, there were social media posts of them frolicking in the pool and bouncing on four-poster beds inside the sprawling compound.

But protesters also turned over to authorities around 17.5 million rupees (\$46,000) in crisp banknotes that had been found in one of the rooms.

The military last month demolished a protest camp outside the president's office—a move that drew international condemnation over the alleged use of excessive force on unarmed demonstrators. — AFP

TUESDAY, AUGUST 9, 2022

Business

Gas crunch pushes German glassmaker to the brink

Total halt in Russian gas flows could be irreparable for many companies

KLEINTETTAU, Germany: In 400 years, Heinz-Glas, one of the world's biggest producers of glass perfume bottles, has seen off many crises—including the two World Wars and the oil shock of the 1970s in the last century alone.

But Germany's current energy emergency strikes at the heart of its very existence. "We are experiencing an exceptional situation," Murat Agac, deputy chief executive of the family-owned company founded in 1622, told AFP. "If there is a halt in gas supplies... then glass production will very likely disappear" from Germany, he said.

To make glass, sand is heated to temperatures of up to 1,600 degrees Celsius (2,912 degrees Fahrenheit) and gas is the most frequently chosen source of energy. Until recently, a glut of gas flowing to Germany via a pipeline from Russia had helped keep production costs low, allowing Heinz-Glas to book annual revenues of some 300 million euros (\$305 million).

With competitive prices, exports made up 80 percent of the glassmaker's total output. But this economic model is now being called into question after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Moscow has cut gas supplies to Germany by 80 percent, in what is believed to be a bid to weaken the resolve of Europe's biggest economy in backing Ukraine.

Berlin is scrambling for alternative energy sources to replace the resource that once made up 55 percent of its total gas imports. The consequence: soaring energy prices. For Heinz-Glas, that has meant a "ten- to 20-fold increase" in costs compared to 2019, said Agac.

'3,000 football fields of solar panels'

Not only Heinz-Glas, much of Germany's industry is buckling under the gas supply crunch. Many

companies are drawing up emergency plans as the German government has warned that Russian gas could stop flowing entirely.

With winter looming, the crisis is reaching fever pitch. Chemicals giant BASF is looking at replacing gas with fuel oil in its second-biggest German factory. Henkel, which specialises in adhesives and sealants, is considering whether its employees can work from home. But the consequences of a total halt in Russian gas flows could be irreparable for many companies. At the Heinz-Glas factory in Kleintettau, opened in 1661, around 70 tonnes of small glass bottles are produced each day, moulded by the heat of the furnaces.

The delicate vessels adorned with intricate motifs are then sent to the company's clients—including its biggest, French group L'Oreal—which fill them with perfume. At every step of the production process—from making the material with quartz sand to the final sculpting of the bottle—heat is essential. At the company's second-biggest factory in the mountain village of Piesau, a cut in gas would permanently damage its glass furnace, said Agac.

To ward off the danger in the short term, Heinz-Glas has invested in stocks of liquefied gas, which can be driven in by trucks. But that triples the energy bill, and would still not be sufficient—the two German factories need the equivalent of "3,000 football fields of solar panels" to operate.

In the long term, replacing the entire gas system with electric infrastructure would cost 50 million euros (\$51 million), Agac said, a sum which the company cannot afford. Even in the factory of Kleintettau, where furnaces are powered by electricity, around 40 percent of the industrial processes still require gas.

"We need state support," said Agac, warning



KLEINTETTAU: An exterior view shows the headquarters of German glass producer Heinz-Glas Group in Kleintettau, Germany. Over 400 years, Heinz-Glas, one of the world's biggest producers of glass perfume bottles, has seen off crises from the plague to world wars. —AFP

that the firm may otherwise be forced to shift production elsewhere, such as India or China, where it already has a factory. For the 1,500 employees of the company in Germany, the future looks cloudy.

"I've reached an age when it doesn't matter so much for me anymore. But younger people must be fearing job losses," said Michaela Trebes, 61, inspecting hundreds of little flasks emerging from

the production lines.

But for now, the management remains optimistic that Heinz-Glas can pull through. Since 1622, "there have been enough crises... in the 20th century alone, World War I, World War II, the oil crisis in the 70s, many, many critical situations. We survived them all," said Agac. "We will somehow also overcome this crisis." —AFP

Japan's SoftBank reports record quarterly net loss

TOKYO: Japan's SoftBank Group on Monday reported a record quarterly net loss of \$23.4 billion, after interest rate hikes tanked tech shares. The telecom firm-turned-investment behemoth posted a net loss of 3.16 trillion yen, nosediving from a net profit of 761.5 billion yen in the same April-June period the previous year.

"Global stock declines and the rapid depreciation of the yen" contributed to the slump, CEO Masayoshi Son told reporters. A company statement elaborated, blaming the "global downward trend in share prices due to growing concerns over economic recession driven by inflation and rising interest rates".

SoftBank's big stakes in global tech giants and volatile new ventures have made for unpredictable earnings, and it has lurched between record highs and lows in recent years. The portfolio companies that suffered large losses for the quarter included South Korean e-commerce giant Coupang and US mail delivery platform DoorDash, SoftBank Group said.

The outspoken Son said he wanted to reflect and learn from the huge losses suffered by SoftBank's technology-focused Vision Fund, which suffered even worse declines than the tech-rich Nasdaq. "All sorts of things can be used as excuses, such as the bad market environment, the war and the pandemic. But if we had been a bit more selective and made proper investments, we wouldn't have suffered so much pain," he said.

"I don't know how long this winter will continue," he added, referring to the challenging global situation for business. "It could be three months. It could be three years," Son said, joking that his "worries are reflected on his hair".

'Long-term' lens

Japanese media outlets including Kyodo News



TOKYO: The logo of Japan's SoftBank Group is displayed at an entrance of their headquarters building in Tokyo on August 8, 2022. Japanese investment giant SoftBank Group is expected to announce their first quarter earnings later in the day. —AFP

said the Q1 result was the largest quarterly loss the country has ever seen. In May, SoftBank reported its worst-ever full-year net loss—and a then-record quarterly loss for Q4 — after a bruising 2021-22 that saw its assets hit by a US tech stocks rout and a regulatory crackdown in China.

That came after logging Japan's biggest-ever annual net profit in 2020-21, when people moved their lives online during the pandemic and sent tech stocks soaring. And in 2019-20, SoftBank Group reported a then-record annual net loss of 961.6 billion yen, as the emergence of Covid-19 compounded woes caused by its investment in troubled office-sharing firm WeWork.

SoftBank "faces a very tough situation in the immediate term", Hideki Yasuda, senior analyst at Toyo Securities, told AFP before the earnings announcement. "They have to wait for the market

needs of this underserved community," Pfizer Chairman and CEO Albert Bourla said in a statement. Net sales for Oxbryta were approximately \$195 million in 2021, and Pfizer said GBT's suite of SCD treatments have the potential to generate more than \$3 billion in worldwide sales.

Bourla said the merger will help "accelerate innovation for the sickle cell disease community and bring these treatments to patients as quickly as possible." Sales of Oxbryta helped GBT generate first-quarter turnover of \$55 million (up 41 percent), while the company registered a net loss of \$81.4 million. The San Francisco-based firm is due to publish its second-quarter numbers on Monday, but will not hold a previously scheduled call to discuss the earnings report. Pfizer's second-quarter turnover jumped 47 percent—to a record \$27.74 billion—boosted by sales of its Covid vaccine and pills. Its net profit soared by 78 percent, to \$9.9 billion. Following the merger announcement, GBT shares rose 4.4 percent in early trading Monday, while Pfizer shares slipped 0.7 percent. —AFP

to rebound. You have to look at the company through the lens of long-term investment. It may experience one or two bad years, but over a decade or more, the world economy will keep growing and it could grow further."

The US Federal Reserve and many other central banks have announced aggressive rate increases aimed at battling sky-high inflation linked to the Ukraine war and COVID-related supply chain woes. But going against the grain, the Bank of Japan has stuck to its long-held monetary easing policies because it sees the latest price hikes as temporary. This has pushed Japan's currency down to 24-year lows against the dollar in recent months, driving down the yen value of SoftBank's investments. On Monday, Son also announced a new 400 billion yen share buyback, effectively extending its current trillion-yen buyback scheme. —AFP

Ryanair hit with fine over inflation tax

BUDAPEST, Hungary: Hungary slapped a fine on Irish airline Ryanair on Monday for passing on to customers the cost of a special tax that Budapest has imposed on some companies in response to surging inflation.

The Irish budget airline was fined 300 million forints (\$780,000) due to "a violation of the law as the airline misled consumers through unfair business practices," Justice Minister Judit Varga wrote on Facebook.

Varga said she wanted to "protect the Hungarian people" against the rising cost of living amid high inflation and the war in Ukraine. Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government has imposed the wind-fall tax on certain companies to finance his policy of placing a ceiling on energy and food prices.

The tax has added between 10 and 25 euros (\$10.2 and \$25.5) per ticket since July 1. Ryanair has passed the cost on to its customers. Ryanair said in a statement that it had not received official notification from Hungarian authorities but that it would immediately appeal "any baseless fine".

It said that European Union rules allow airlines to set ticket prices without any interference from national governments and would appeal to EU courts if necessary. Ryanair chief executive Michael O'Leary has derided the tax as "idiotic" and "high-way robbery", saying it will lead to a "dramatic" fall in air traffic in Hungary. —AFP

German industrial orders slide in June

FRANKFURT, Germany: German industrial orders dipped in June, official figures published showed, as Europe's largest economy faced the threat of a recession in the months to come. New orders—which usually provide a foretaste of industrial output—fell by 0.4 percent in June from the previous month, the federal statistics agency Destatis calculated.

The previous month's reading was revised to show a drop of 0.2 percent, having previously shown a small improvement. The switch meant Germany had now seen industrial orders drop for five consecutive months.

The overall drop was "mostly due" to a 4.3 percent decline in the volume of orders from outside the eurozone, Destatis said. Meanwhile, orders from within the eurozone and Germany rose by 3.4 percent and 1.1 percent respectively. Orders for capital goods used in production fell by 1.8 percent, while those of intermediate and consumer goods rose by 1.2 and 1.7 percent. The downwards turn in many economic indicators has led analysts to warn of a downturn in Germany. —AFP

Pfizer to acquire sickle cell drugmaker GBT

NEW YORK: American drugmaker Pfizer announced a deal on Monday to acquire Global Blood Therapeutics, makers of a recently approved treatment for sickle cell disease, for \$5.4 billion.

With the agreement, Pfizer, one of the top makers of Covid-19 vaccines, acquires GBT's Oxbryta to treat the potentially fatal blood disorder that primarily affects people of African, Middle Eastern or South Asian descent. The drug was authorized for those over 12 years old in 2019 but gained federal approval in December for children aged four to 11.

"We are excited to welcome GBT colleagues into Pfizer and to work together to transform the lives of patients, as we have long sought to address the



NEW YORK: File photo shows the Pfizer company's logo in front of its headquarters in New York. American drugmaker Pfizer is close to a deal to purchase Global Blood Therapeutics, which manufactures a recently approved drug against sickle-cell anemia, for \$5 billion, the Wall Street Journal has reported. —AFP

Business

EU plan to cut gas use by 15% comes into effect

European households squeezed by skyrocketing energy prices

BRUSSELS: An EU plan to cut gas consumption across the bloc by 15 percent to cope with an energy price crisis spurred by Russia's war in Ukraine comes into effect on Tuesday. The EU regulation enshrining the plan agreed two weeks ago by the 27-nation bloc was published Monday in the European Union's official administrative gazette, with the stipulation it would take force from Tuesday.

"Considering the imminent danger to the security of gas supply brought about by the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, this regulation should enter into force as a matter of urgency," it said. The aim is for the EU to be able to bolster its reserves of gas in time for what is likely to be a very tough winter. European households and businesses are being squeezed by skyrocketing energy prices and reduced Russian gas that several member states are dependent on. The regulation said that EU countries "shall use their best efforts" to cut gas consumption by "at least 15 percent" between August this year and March next year, based on how much they used on average over

the previous five years. Some EU countries, though, had carve-outs from strictly following the rule, which was in any case termed a "voluntary demand reduction". These were countries not fully connected to the European electricity grid or with gas pipelines to other parts of the EU or unable to free up enough pipeline gas to help other member states.

Hungary, which relies on gas piped in directly from Russia, had demanded the exception. Germany, the EU's economic powerhouse, took a major share of the 40 percent of EU gas imports that came from Russia last year.

Should the European Commission see a "severe gas supply shortage" or exceptionally high gas demand emerging, it can ask EU countries to declare an alert for the bloc. That would make gas cuts binding and limit exceptions. While the EU has not included Russian gas in its sanctions on Moscow for the war in Ukraine, the Kremlin has drastically cut supplies anyway in what Brussels seems as an attempt to strengthen Europe. — AFP



DURNROHR, Austria: An illustration photo taken on August 8, 2022 shows an electric power pole and cables near Durnrohr, Austria. — AFP

Swiss flavour firm Firmenich unveils record annual sales

ZURICH: Swiss group Firmenich, one of the world's major flavour and perfume manufacturers, unveiled record annual sales Friday fuelled by market share gains in fine perfumes, ahead of a merger with a Dutch company. The firm notched a 10.5 percent increase in annual turnover, in the year to June 30, to 4.7 billion Swiss francs (\$4.9 billion), it said in a statement. Excluding currency effects, its sales increased by 11.1 percent. "These are record results in the history of Firmenich," its chief executive Gilbert Ghostine told AFP. Its gross operating surplus increased by 10.9 percent compared to the previous financial year, notably due to price increases to compensate for inflation in the costs of raw materials, energy and logistics. The merger between Firmenich—which makes flavours for food products, and scents for fine perfumery, shampoos and detergents—and chemical firm DSM should be finalised in the first half of 2023. Together they should produce a giant that will turn over 11 billion euros (\$11.2 billion) a year and employ 28,000 people.

Natural, renewable focus

Firmenich, which is not listed on the stock exchange, does not publish its net profit. Perfumery division sales climbed 11.3 percent thanks to market gains in fine perfumery—sales of which jumped 32.5 percent. Its flavour branch saw sales rise 10.7 percent upon demand for sugar-reducing ingredients and plant-based proteins as alternatives to meat and dairy. The group is reaping the benefits of "investments we have made over the years", insisted its boss, citing the opening of a creation centre in Grasse—near the southeast French coastal resort of Cannes—where customers can spend the day with its perfume masters to create new fragrances. The company's top noses have played a part in fragrances such as Angel by Thierry Mugler, Acqua di Giò by Armani, Calvin Klein's CK One and Flower by Kenzo. Like its competitors, Firmenich has also invested heavily in natural and renewable ingredients. "You always have to anticipate trends. Consumers today are bio-responsible. They don't just look at naturalness, they also look at the environmental footprint," said Ghostine.

Based in Satigny, a wine-producing village outside Geneva, Swiss scientist Philippe Chuit founded the company in 1895 in Charles Firmenich's garage. Today Firmenich employs 10,000 people with sites in 83 countries. Long attached to its independence, the company sprung a surprise in May by announcing the planned merger. Ghostine said the group had "adapted" to a changing industry, choosing DSM due to the complementarity of their activities. He highlighted their future "strike force" in research and development, with 15 research centres worldwide once combined. — AFP

CBK bonds

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (160) million for three months with Rate of Return (2.375%).

Outgoing Italian PM pledges more inflation aid

ROME: Outgoing Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi announced a 17-billion-euro (\$17.4 billion) support package Thursday aimed largely at households and businesses to help mitigate the effect of rising prices.

Draghi announced the package, which comes on top of 35 billion euros of measures unveiled in the past year, two weeks after being forced to resign after his government collapsed. Elections are set for September 25 but the former European Central Bank chief is staying on in a caretaker role until a new government is formed.

Draghi said the Italian economy was performing

Stocks rise, oil falls tracking recession risks

LONDON: Stock markets largely rose and oil prices retreated Monday as investors mulled the prospect of recession in the United States and elsewhere and central banks seek to tame soaring inflation with aggressive interest rate hikes.

The dollar, which had surged on Friday on the prospect of further large increases in US borrowing costs, fell back on profit-taking at the start of the new week. Speculation is growing that the US Federal Reserve will announce a third successive rate increase of three-quarters of a percentage point following a blockbuster US jobs report last week.

This week, all eyes will turn to the release of US July inflation data, which are expected to show a slight slowdown, but still not far from the four-decade highs seen in recent months. The latest reading "seems very unlikely to offer compelling evidence of a slowdown needed for the Fed to pull away from its aggressive inflation-fighting mode", said SPI Asset Management analyst, Stephen Innes.

Oil prices retreated further on expectations of weaker demand amid a cost-of-living crisis. A rise in US crude stockpiles was partly responsible for a 10-percent drop in prices last week.

Both main oil contracts have lost all the gains seen in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which led the United States and Europe to ban imports of Russian crude, hammering already thin supplies.

The US jobs report last week "highlighted how strong the economy remains although traders are now increasingly nervous about more aggressive tightening sending the economy into a deeper recession further down the road", said Oanda analyst Craig Erlam.

"The resumption of Iran nuclear talks today is one

potential downside risk for the oil price, given the ability of the country to quickly ramp up production if a deal is struck." Iran on Sunday demanded that the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, "completely" resolve outstanding issues, as talks resume to revive a 2015 deal to rein in Tehran's nuclear ambitions. Iranian sources have suggested that one of the key sticking points is a probe by the IAEA into traces of nuclear material found at undeclared Iranian sites.

Tokyo stocks reversed earlier losses and ended higher Monday, lifted by a lower yen and bargain hunting. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index rose 0.26 percent, or 73.37 points, to end at 28,249.24, while the broader Topix index added 0.22 percent, or 4.24 points, at 1,951.41.

Strong US jobs data helped buoy the Tokyo market, with hopes rising "for a soft-landing scenario of the US economy", Daiwa Securities said. "Cyclical shares broadly gained, including stocks related to natural resources and materials, including mining, non-ferrous metal and steel," Daiwa said.

There was a healthy appetite for bargain hunting, even after recent gains, according to Okasan Online Securities. And investors cheered the dollar's climb to 135.27 yen, up from 135.00 yen on Friday in New York. A weaker yen can boost the profits of Japanese exporters.

The dollar's gain "served as a tailwind for the tech sector in Tokyo", Okasan said, with investors also focused on individual corporate earnings. SoftBank Group ended 0.74 percent up at 5,695 yen. After market close, the tech investor reported huge losses in the three months to June due to the global bear market.

Sony Group ended up 0.34 percent to 11,725 yen, and Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing added 0.31 percent to 83,860 yen. Tokyo Electron, a major producer of tools to build semiconductors, jumped 1.72 percent to 49,700 yen.

Toyota remained underwater throughout the day, ending down 0.33 percent to 2,116 yen. Nintendo also ended down 1.72 percent at 57,710 yen. — AFP



NEW YORK: A trader works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) at the opening bell at Wall Street in New York City. Stock markets slid as a much stronger-than-expected US jobs report raised the prospect that the Federal Reserve will maintain its aggressive monetary policy to combat inflation. — AFP

better than expected, citing the International Monetary Fund's estimate of three percent for 2022. "They say that in 2022, we will grow more than Germany, than France, than the average of the eurozone, more than the United States," he told a press conference.

But he noted the many problems facing Italians, "from the high cost of living, to inflation, the rise in energy prices and other materials, to supply difficulties, widespread insecurity and, of course political insecurity".

"Which is not just our political uncertainty, but geopolitical uncertainty," he added. The measures will be funded with 14.3 billion euros in higher-than-expected tax revenues this year, and the deployment of funds that have not yet been spent, Economy and Finance Minister Daniele Franco said. The measures include extending a cut in fuel duty, help for energy bills and a tax cut for the lowest-earning households. There are also measures to help agricultural firms deal with this year's severe drought. — AFP

Allianz profits drop, investors withdraw funds

FRANKFURT, Germany: German insurance giant Allianz said its profits fell in the second quarter, while it saw clients withdraw their funds from its troubled asset management operations.

Between April and June, Allianz booked a net profit of 1.7 billion euros (\$1.7 billion), down 23.3 percent on the same period last year. The setback came despite revenues climbing by 8.2 percent to 37.1 billion euros, with progress seen in all areas bar asset management.

In this division, revenues stagnated, up only 0.8 percent on a year in the second quarter to two billion euros. Allianz's asset management unit has been

News in brief

Facebook's Meta takes on bond debt

San Francisco: Facebook-owner Meta is ending a run as one of the few major firms without debt, launching its first bond sale as the company battles uncertainty and bets heavily on its metaverse vision. Worries over the social media giant's future and fierce competition from TikTok have sent its stock plummeting, while the firm spends billions on its plan for the internet's next iteration. Meta reported to the US markets watchdog that it has begun offering bonds to raise money for uses such as "capital expenditures, repurchases of outstanding shares of its common stock, acquisitions, or investments." The firm, which also owns Instagram and WhatsApp, declined to comment beyond its filing to the Securities and Exchange Commission. Its filing does not indicate the amount of funds it wants to raise, nor the term of the bonds, but Bloomberg news agency reported Meta may sell \$8-10 billion in debt.

Chair of ARD broadcaster resigns

BERLIN: A prominent German journalist on Thursday resigned as chair of the board of Germany's ARD broadcaster after being accused of awarding controversial consultancy contracts and misusing public funds. "The public discussion about decisions and procedures... that fall within my area of responsibility has now extended to ARD as a whole," Patricia Schlesinger said in a statement. Schlesinger is the head of Berlin radio station RBB, a regional member of the ARD network—one of the world's biggest TV and radio networks. The 61-year-old took up the chairmanship of the ARD network earlier this year under a rotational system. According to ARD, Schlesinger has been under fire over consultancy contracts awarded at RBB, which she has headed since 2016. Some German media have also accused her of using a company car for private trips and paying for meals at home with licence fee money.

Glencore profits soar

ZURICH: Mining and commodities trading group Glencore posted a ninefold increase in profit in a first half of the year, fuelled by soaring prices of oil, gas and coal. The Switzerland-based firm reported a net profit of \$12.1 billion in the first six months of 2022 as commodity prices have surged since Russia invaded Ukraine in February. The London-listed group said it would return \$4.5 billion to shareholders. "Notwithstanding what has clearly been a very complex environment for our markets, our operations, and the world in general, we are pleased to report an exceptional financial performance for Glencore over the period," chief executive Gary Nagle said in a statement. Glencore's trading business saw earnings double to \$3.7 billion while its industrial operations earned \$15 billion on the back of higher coal prices. Looking at the second half of the year, Nagle warned that "tightening financial conditions and a deteriorating macroeconomic environment present some uncertainty for commodity markets". Decades-high inflation and central bank moves to tighten monetary policies have raised fears that economies could fall into recession. — AFP

rocked by legal troubles in the United States, where investors have filed a complaint over heavy losses suffered during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Munich-based firm has set aside almost six billion euros since the beginning of the year to cover the costs of the lawsuits and compensate investors. The assets managed by Allianz on behalf of third parties fell by around six percent to 1.8 trillion euros between the first and second quarters, due to "strong market effect and net outflows".

Clients withdrew 5.1 billion euros of their assets from Allianz Global Investors, the unit at the centre of the legal woes, and a further 28.7 billion euros from American subsidiary Pimco.

"We are well-positioned to manage the impact of high inflation and the economic pressures that are particularly evident in Europe," Allianz CEO Oliver Baete said in a statement, highlighting the group's core insurance business.

The property-casualty division's operating—or underlying—profit climbed by 21 percent year-on-year to 1.6 billion euros in the second quarter. — AFP

Business

UK's Boris Johnson to leave 'major' fiscal decisions to next prime minister

Truss, Sunak vow to tackle Britain's spiralling inflation rate

LONDON: Prime Minister Boris Johnson will not make "major fiscal interventions" before leaving office next month, his spokesman said Monday amid calls for immediate government action to tackle Britain's cost-of-living crisis. Johnson, back at his desk after a five-day belated honeymoon with wife Carrie in Slovenia last week, has been criticised for being absent just as the Bank of England warned that a year-long recession is looming.

His trip coincided with finance minister Nadhim Zahawi also being away on holiday, as the central bank hiked interest rates by the biggest margin in nearly three decades in a bid to stem surging inflation. Johnson, who announced last month that he would step down on September 6 following a slew of scandals, is set to hand power to either Liz Truss or Rishi Sunak after a summer-long leadership battle.

"By convention, it is not for this prime minister to make major fiscal interventions during this period," Johnson's spokesman told reporters. "It will be for a future prime minister." Johnson's government had already unveiled several measures to help people with rising prices, he said, but acknowledged "some of the global pressures have increased since that was announced".

Both Truss, the frontrunner to replace him, and

Sunak have vowed to tackle Britain's spiralling inflation rate and worsening economic landscape from their first day in office. But figures from across the political spectrum have been demanding more urgent moves-including former Prime Minister Gordon Brown on Monday.

"When I say people have been asleep at the wheel, it's not true-they've not been at the wheel," Brown told LBC radio, as he toured various broadcast studios to highlight the worsening cost-of-living situation.

"That's the problem. And we've got to get them back to work to take the action that is necessary," he said, adding: "it's not good enough acting in September or October." Downing Street last week refused to confirm Johnson's honeymoon destination, but insisted he was still at the helm, rather than handing over temporarily to Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab.

Slovenian television news outlets reported he left the country Sunday evening after spending four nights at a mountain resort and visiting the capital Ljubljana, in what sounded like a work-light trip. "We climbed every available mountain, we jumped in the lakes, we (went) on bicycles and we had a wonderful time," the British leader told Slovenian TV stations as he departed. —AFP



UK's Prime Minister Boris Johnson

UK's container port set for 8-day strike

LONDON: Workers at the UK's largest container port will hold an eight-day strike at the end of August, union bosses said, in the country's latest industrial action over pay amid spiralling inflation.

"Workers at the port of Felixstowe will begin strike action later this month in a dispute over pay after peace talks... failed to produce a reasonable offer," the Unite union said in a statement.

Over 1,900 workers will hold eight days of strikes from August 21 until August 29, it added. The union said port operator, the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company, had "failed to improve on its offer of a seven per cent pay increase," with inflation predicted to hit 13 percent later this year.

"Felixstowe docks and its parent company CK Hutchison Holdings Ltd are both massively profitable and incredibly wealthy. They are fully able to pay the workforce a fair day's pay," said Unite general secretary Sharon Graham.

Felixstowe, in east England, is the UK's largest container port and handles 48 percent of containers brought into the country. "Strike action will cause huge disruption and will generate massive shockwaves throughout the UK's supply chain, but this dispute is entirely of the company's own making," said Unite's national officer for docks, Bobby Morton.

The UK is mired in disputes over pay and conditions, with economic headwinds set to strengthen later this year. Hundreds of workers at an Amazon warehouse in the UK downed tools Thursday in protest over a pay rise offer of 35 pence (41 euro cents, 42 US cents) per hour.

The GMB trade union said staff at the warehouse in Tilbury, southeast England, are seeking a £2-an-hour rise to help them deal with the cost-of-living crisis. Train workers recently brought the country's network to a virtual standstill when they held their biggest walkouts in three decades. —AFP

IBS to cooperate with Franklin Covey for leadership programs

KUWAIT: Within the framework of strengthening joint cooperation with international organizations and institutions to provide the best services to its clients, the Institute of Banking Studies (IBS) recently contracted with the Franklin Covey Middle East Foundation as a "preferred partner" for the institution in the State of Kuwait.

As Eng Suha Isaac Ameen, Head of the Training Department at the Institute, stated that this cooperation is one of the most important activities that the Institute is working to implement in the field of leadership development for this year.

Eng Suha also noted the importance of this contract as the Franklin Covey Corporation is the world's most trusted supplier of leadership solutions, which unleash the full potential of leaders and their teams. They provide educational solutions based on more than thirty years of experience and research to develop leaders professionally.

Two new leadership programs have been developed and offered with IBS recently, namely: Franklin Covey Executive Leaders Program and Franklin Covey Emerging Leaders program to be conducted over six months period for each program. These programs will teach the participants how to stop managing and start leading and, as a result, make them a vital part of their organization's future. —AFP

World's biggest chocolate plant restarts

BRUSSELS: A factory in Belgium billed as the world's biggest chocolate-making plant said it restarted operations Monday after closing for six weeks to clean up a salmonella contamination. Three of the 24 production lines at the plant in the town of Wieze resumed and the first delivery took place, said Barry Callebaut, the Swiss company that runs the factory.

The plant—which supplies industry giants such as Hershey, Nestle and Unilever but not consumers directly—was shut down at the end of June after salmonella bacteria was found in one lot. Zurich-based Barry Callebaut said it halted shipments and informed clients in time to prevent contaminated chocolate making its way to shops.

It identified lecithin, added to smooth food textures, as the source of the contamination, prompting weeks of extensive cleaning. "We remain cautious because this operation is unprecedented, the process of cleaning and disinfection takes a lot of time," a Barry Callebaut spokesman, Korneel Warlop, told AFP.

He said that while the factory was currently turning out only a "fairly low volume", it planned to reactivate more production lines "in the weeks to come". Belgium's food health agency said it was continuing to monitor production from the plant.

AI-Shall Report

Kuwait's oil revenues to reach KD 30bn

KUWAIT: By the end of July 2022, the fourth month of the current fiscal year 2022/2023 ended with the monthly average price of the Kuwaiti oil reaching \$109.3 per barrel. It is \$44.3 or 68.2% higher than the new estimated hypothetical price of \$65 for the current budget and \$64.3 higher than the average hypothetical price of US\$ 45 for the past fiscal year. The average price during 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

UAE's Ministry of Industry, EDGE sign MoU

ABU DHABI: The Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology (MoIAT) and EDGE have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish the UAE's first Industry 4.0 Enablement Centre aimed at promoting, enabling, and supporting the digital transformation and the adoption of Industry 4.0 technologies across the country's manufacturing sector.

The agreement was signed in the presence of His Excellency Dr Sultan Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, Her Excellency Sarah Al Amiri, Minister of State for Public Education and Advanced Technology, His Excellency Faisal Al Bannai, Chairman of the Board of Directors, EDGE, and Mansour AlMulla, Managing Director & CEO, EDGE. It was signed by Mohammed Al Qassim, Director of Technology Development and Adoption at Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology, Reda Nidhakou, Senior Vice President of Strategy & Portfolio Management, EDGE, at the EDGE Learning & Innovation Factory, located in Abu Dhabi.



BRUSSELS: Employees walk next to a vehicle inside the Barry Callebaut production site at Wieze, near Brussels. A factory in Belgium billed as the world's biggest chocolate-making plant said it restarted operations on August 8, 2022, after closing for six weeks to clean up a salmonella contamination. —AFP

The Barry Callebaut plant employs around 600 people and is a key unit in the company's total output, which amounted to 2.2 million tonnes in the 2020-2021 financial year, produced in more than 60 sites worldwide.

The company says its Wieze plant is "the biggest chocolate factory in the world" and it provides the cachet of being made in Belgium, which has an international reputation for top-quality chocolate. —AFP

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 figure of revenues of KD 16.741 billion for the current budget. Adding KD 2.078 billion in non-oil revenues, total 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 contributing factor with an oil market situation that is exceptional due to the Russian/Ukrainian war, a prudent fiscal policy that quantifies future risks is required, which are inevitable and substantial in anticipation of falling into the repeated pitfalls of the past. With oil revenues being the only contributing factor to the surplus, at a time where the oil market is exceptional due to the Russian/Ukrainian conflict, a prudent hedging policy is required. A discount factor that quantifies future risks should be estimated, as those risks may be substantial and inevitable in case of repeated pitfalls from the past.

His Excellency Dr Sultan Al Jaber, Her Excellency Sarah Al Amiri, and Mohammed Al Qasim were received by His Excellency Faisal Al Bannai and Mansour AlMulla, at the EDGE Learning & Innovation Factory for a comprehensive tour of the facility, where key insights were highlighted on how organisations can enhance their operations by adopting the right processes and methodologies, how they can further enhance operations by adopting the right technologies, and how they can leverage automation to ignite a data-driven organisation.

During the visit, delegates toured the EDGE LIF, an end-to-end automated and integrated factory that demonstrates digital manufacturing use cases to trainees. Each trainee will be able to participate in a simulation to explore how technology can empower production. In the simulation, trainees use an app to configure a small car, add a tagline, and track its production across the factory's 4 islands in less than 7 minutes. The Smart and Lean Production training at EDGE LIF is key to the Lean Digital curriculum. Lean Digital teaches how lead-times, quality and cost can be enhanced by the introduction of Industry 4.0 technologies.

As part of this partnership, EDGE will host a series of initiatives, training courses, and programs at the facility from September this year with the aim of accelerating technology adoption in the industrial sector, enhancing collaboration within the UAE's advanced technology ecosystem, and enabling the co-creation



and development of innovative solutions among industry players.

The Industry 4.0 Enablement Centre will comprise various activities, including raising awareness around Industry 4.0 technologies and practices, upskilling manufacturers' capabilities with specialised training curricula, demonstrating 4IR technology benefits, supporting the development of Industry 4.0 strategies, and creating a testbed and an open-access environment to pilot and co-develop innovative technologies.

Dr Sultan Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, commented: "Based on the vision of our leadership, the Ministry's strategy is committed to supporting local manufacturers to adopt advanced technologies and 4IR solutions. Advanced technologies help to enhance efficiency, productivity, safety, and quality while reducing costs, optimising supply chains, and creating jobs. The agreement signed today is of great importance as it encourages technology adoption in the sector and will empower our industrial resilience, increase competitiveness, accelerate economic diversification and nurture a knowledge-based economy supported by advanced technology. Our partnership with EDGE is a testament to MoIAT's objective to work with local industrial champions to encourage knowledge exchanges. We look forward to the continued upskilling of our national workforce and development of the national R&D ecosystem to achieve the objectives of our strategy."



(From left to right) Logan Lerman, Masi Oka, Hiroeyuki 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. — AFP

'Bullet Train' speeds to top of N America box office

Sony's "Bullet Train," the last major studio release of the summer, sped to solid ticket sales of \$30.1 million this weekend to top the North American box office, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations estimated Sunday. It was a "solid opening for an action thriller," said analyst David A. Gross, adding that the presence of lead star Brad Pitt "is going to ensure international success."

Pitt, who plays a professional assassin on a Japanese train seemingly loaded with them, heads a cast that includes Joey King, Aaron Taylor-Johnson and Latin music star Bad Bunny, as well as Sandra Bullock and Channing Tatum in bit roles. Helming "Bullet Train" is Pitt's former stunt double, David Leitch, who has earned a

name directing action films.

Last weekend's box-office leader, Warner Bros.' animated "DC League of Super-Pets," slipped a notch to second, taking in \$11.2 million for the Friday-through-Sunday period. Third place went to Universal's horror flick "Nope," at \$8.5 million. The sci-fi flick, boosted by the involvement of popular writer/director Jordan Peele, stands just shy of a \$100 million gross domestically. Daniel Kaluuya stars.

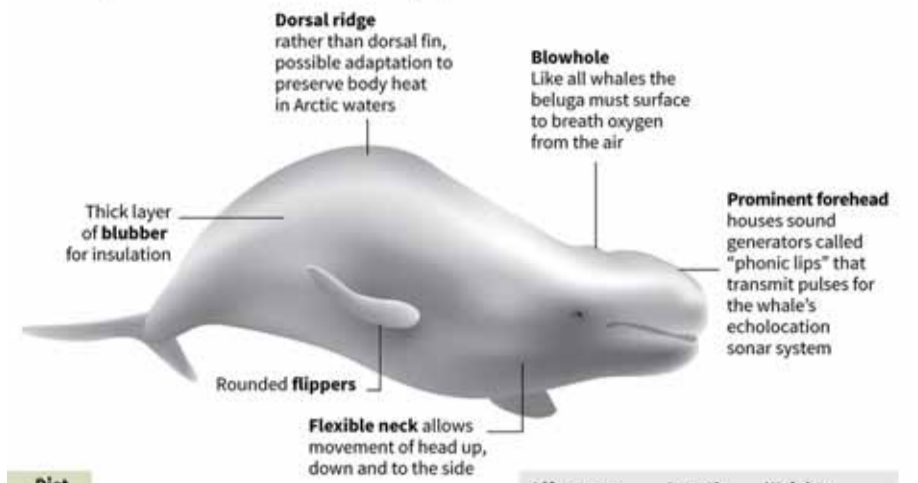
In fourth was Disney's action comedy "Thor: Love and Thunder," at \$7.6 million. Chris Hemsworth stars as the uber-muscular space Viking, who pines for his ex-girlfriend (Natalie Portman). And in fifth was Universal's family-friendly animation

"Minions: The Rise of Gru." This latest episode in the "Despicable Me" franchise took in \$7.1 million. Overall, the summer season has been good for Hollywood, Gross said. "Audiences have been doing everything they've been asked... and business has been very good for all types of films." Rounding out the weekend's top 10 were:

- "Top Gun: Maverick" (\$7 million)
- "Where the Crawdads Sing" (\$5.7 million)
- "Easter Sunday" (\$5.3 million)
- "Elvis" (\$4 million)
- "The Black Phone" (\$1.5 million) —AFP

Beluga whale

The smiley-faced Arctic whale uses sonar to navigate, hunt and survive



Diet

- Salmon, capelin, herring, shrimp, Arctic cod, crabs and molluscs
- Have been recorded to dive to more than 350 m to feed

Life span: 30 to 35 years
Length: Up to 6m
Weight: 900 to 1,300 kg

Predators

- Polar bears
- Killer whales

Conservation status

Population estimate: 136,000
IUCN status: least concern

Characteristics

- Vocal communicators using chirps, clicks, squeals and whistles; can also mimic variety of other sounds
- Sociable mammals that live, hunt and migrate together in pods
- Calves born gray or brown, fade to white as they mature

Human interest

- Hunted for skin and oil
- Among first whale species brought into captivity, first shown in New York in 1861
- Studied under the US Navy's Marine Mammal Program in the 1970s, particularly for their sonar adapted for arctic waters and depth



Source: WWF/National Geographic/Animaldiversity.com © AFP

Stranded Beluga whale is now stationary in Seine: NGO

A malnourished beluga whale that has swum up France's River Seine is no longer progressing but is still alive, environmental group Sea Shepherd said Monday. Hopes are fading to save the animal, which was first spotted on Tuesday in the river that runs through Paris to the English Channel. "It is alert but not eating," Sea Shepherd France president Lamy Essemali told AFP in a text message. There was, however, "no worsening of its condition," she said.

Since Friday the whale has been between two locks some 70 kilometers (44 miles) north of the French capital. Rescuers are considering last-ditch efforts to extract the animal from the Seine as the river's warm water is harming its health.

One alternative would be to open the locks in the hope that the beluga will swim towards the English Channel, authorities

said. Opening the locks would harbor the risk of the whale moving further upriver towards Paris, which would be even more disastrous.

Several attempts to feed the whale have failed in the past days. On Saturday, veterinarians administered "vitamins and products to stimulate its appetite," said a statement on Sunday by the police in Normandy's Eure department, which is overseeing the rescue effort. Belugas are normally found only in cold Arctic waters, and while they migrate south in the autumn to feed as ice forms, they rarely venture so far. An adult can reach up to four meters (13 feet) in length. According to France's Pelagis Observatory, specialized in sea mammals, the nearest beluga population is off the Svalbard archipelago, north of Norway, 3,000 kilometers from the Seine. — AFP



THOM BROWNE BRINGS THE DRAMA TO CLASSIC TAILORING FOR FALL 2022

Thom Browne recently debuted its Fall 2022 runway collection in New York City. The season's collection invites onlookers to embrace their inner youth and step into Thom Browne's adult toy shop, where 500 made to order teddy bears were assembled to bring to life everyone's fondest childhood memories in epic proportions.

This series continues to see the designer's playful rendition to classic suit tailoring, this time bringing forward an eclectic use of mixed materials to piece together unlikely shapes for unique silhouettes. Pops of vibrant orange, yellow, green and blue are used throughout the collection to emphasize the playful theme and handwork in each piece. Thom Browne's classic tweed tailoring is elevated with shades of grey layered with silk mogador jacquards in its collegiate, red, white and blue hues. The iconic tones are paired with bursts of gold, green and orange to bring an additional eye-catching highlight to the

collection.

Handcrafted cashmere knits continue to bridge the heritage fabrics with resonant silks. Accessories are heavily inspired by childhood toys and play off of the youthful set that saw a spiral of paper dolls, a jumbled Rubik's cube, a rocket and a cluster of puzzle pieces. The footwear took design inspiration from alphabet blocks while clutch bags came in the form of cars, patchwork lobsters and Thom Browne's iconic dachshund hector. — hypebeast

Models show designs for Thom Browne fall 2022 runway collection.



ONE-THIRD OF ALL PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES COULD BE EXTINCT IN 50 YEARS, STUDY WARNS

One-third of all animal and plant species on the planet could face extinction by 2070 due to climate change, a new study warns. Researchers studied recent extinctions from climate change to estimate how many species would be lost over the next 50 years. Specifically, scientists from the

University of Arizona studied data from 538 species at 581 sites around the world and focused on plant and animal species that were surveyed at the same sites over time, at least 10 years apart. "By analyzing the change in 19 climatic variables at each site, we could determine which variables drive local extinctions and how

much change a population can tolerate without going extinct," said Cristian Roman-Palacios, of the department of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Arizona, in a statement. "We also estimated how quickly populations can move to try and escape rising temperatures. "When we put all of these

pieces of information together for each species, we can come up with detailed estimates of global extinction rates for hundreds of plant and animal species." Globally, up to 1 million species are at risk of extinction because of human activities, according to a United Nations report released in May. Many experts say a

"mass extinction event" - only the sixth in the past half-billion years - is already underway. This study found that maximum annual temperatures - the highest daily highs in summer - are the key variable that best explains whether a species will go extinct. — USA TODAY

Species on the brink

More than 38,500 species on the IUCN Red List are threatened with extinction; here we introduce six of the lesser-known

<p>Titicaca Water Frog <i>Telmatobius culeus</i></p> 	<p>Yangtze Finless Porpoise <i>Neophocaena asiaorientalis</i></p> 	<p>Bali Myna <i>Leucopsar rothschildi</i></p> 
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<p>ENDANGERED Location: Lake Titicaca, Bolivia and Peru</p> <p>Known to weigh as much as 1 kg and sought by people as an aphrodisiac when mixed with honey and roots of a local plant</p>	<p>CRITICALLY ENDANGERED Yangtze River, China</p> <p>One of the few porpoises that live in freshwater, and China's last river-dwelling cetacean after the extinction of the baiji dolphin</p>	<p>CRITICALLY ENDANGERED Bali Island, Indonesia</p> <p>Less than 50 adults survive in the wild on Bali island and at a conservation program on Nusa Penida, Indonesia</p>
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<p>Javan Slow Loris <i>Nycticebus javanicus</i></p> 	<p>Grand Cayman Blue Iguana <i>Cyclura lewisi</i></p> 	<p>Black Crested Macaque <i>Macaca nigra</i></p> 
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<p>CRITICALLY ENDANGERED Java Island, Indonesia</p> <p>The venomous, nocturnal tree-dweller relies on canopy connectivity through vines and lianas to thrive with its unique arboreal adaptations</p>	<p>ENDANGERED Cayman Islands</p> <p>In 2002 the population was estimated to be at 25 adults. A breeding programme has helped the population grow back to over 440</p>	<p>CRITICALLY ENDANGERED Sulawesi and Pulau Bacan islands, Indonesia</p> <p>Depleted population after years of being hunted by humans for the bushmeat trade</p>
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Threatened reptiles

One in five species at risk of extinction
Including

<p>African Spurred Tortoise <i>Centrochelys sulcata</i></p> 	<p>Lesser Antillean Iguana <i>Iguana delicatissima</i></p> 	<p>Northern Bahamian Rock Iguana <i>Cyclura cyclura</i></p> 
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<p>ENDANGERED Southern Sahara</p> <p>Lives in semi-arid grasslands, scrub and savannah. Shelters in burrows in the ground during hottest part of the day. Enters a slowed metabolism phase called torpor in the hottest, driest time of year</p>	<p>CRITICALLY ENDANGERED Northern Lesser Antilles, Caribbean</p> <p>In addition to threats from habitat destruction and introduced predators, the species is vulnerable to competition and hybridization with invasive common green iguanas</p>	<p>VULNERABLE Bahamas</p> <p>Endemic to the Bahamas, where at least 16 subpopulations are known to exist in a fragmented habitat. Hunted locally for food and for the international pet trade</p>
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Endangered pangolins

The world's most heavily trafficked mammal

Behaviour

- Solitary, nocturnal
- Digs long burrows to hunt termites and for shelter
- Can climb trees
- Good swimmer

Diet: ants, termites

Eight species of pangolin worldwide

<p>Four Asian species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chinese Malayan Philippine 	<p>Four African species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giant ground African white-bellied
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Critically endangered

- Chinese
- Malayan
- Philippine

Endangered

- Indian

Endangered

- Giant ground
- African white-bellied

Vulnerable

- Temminck's ground
- Black-bellied

Trafficking

- Demand for their meat and body parts is fuelling illegal hunting
- More than 1 million pangolins believed to have been poached from the wild in the past decade

CITES* in September 2016 banned all international trade

*Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

Scales

- Made from keratin, the substance that also forms human hair and nails
- Sought for supposed medicinal benefits

Defence

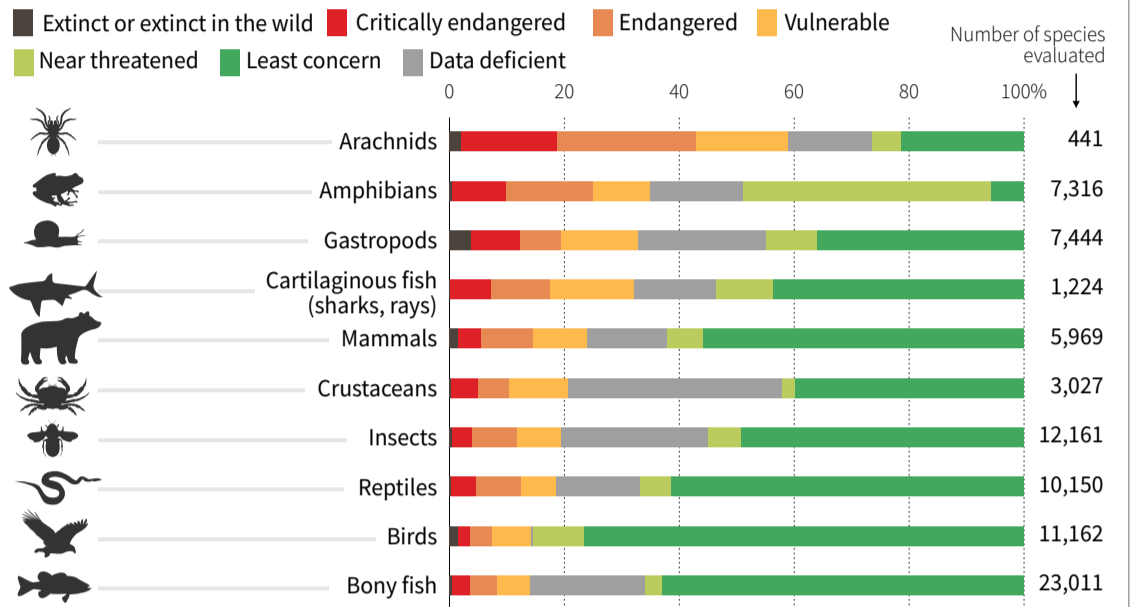
- Rolls into a ball
- Easy for poachers to catch

Young travel on mother's tail

Source: CITES/savepangolins.org/IUCN/pangolins.org

Species threatened with extinction

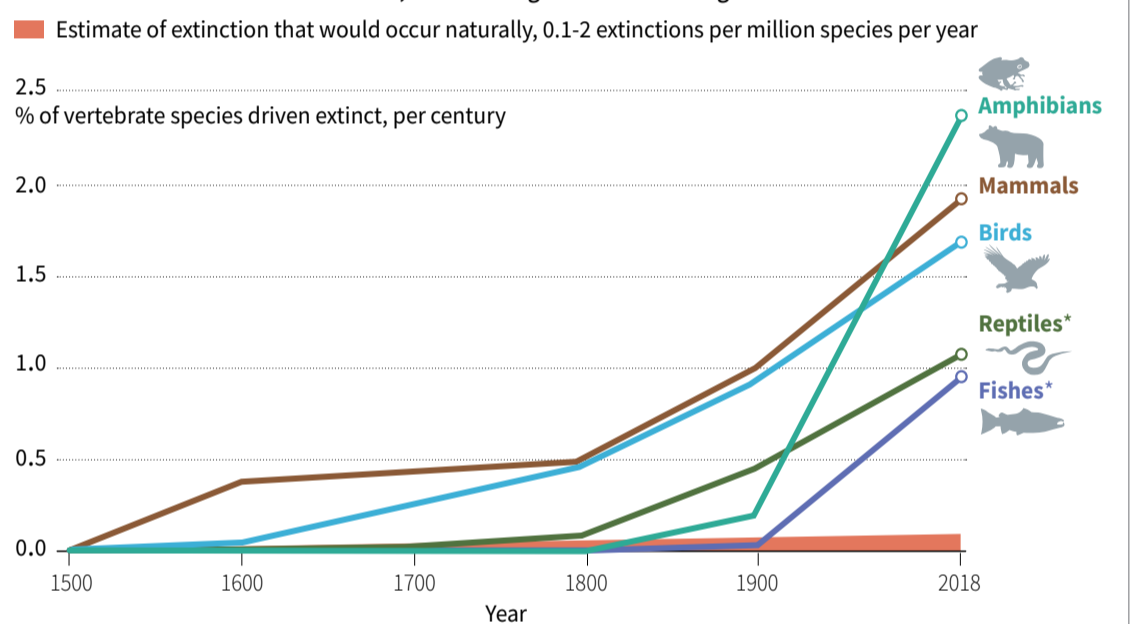
For selected animal classes, proportion of species



Source: IUCN, study of 80% of vertebrate species and 2% of documented invertebrate species

The 6th mass extinction?

Current rates of extinction are 100 to 1,000 times higher than the background rate

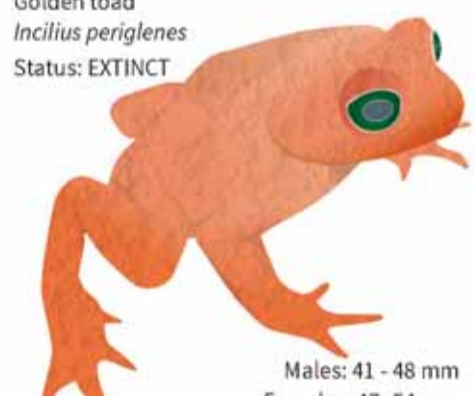


Source: IPBES/IUCN, last available data

Global warming extinction

Amphibian whose disappearance has been blamed on global warming

Golden toad
Iniculus periglenes
Status: EXTINCT



Not to scale
Males: 41 - 48 mm
Females: 47 - 54 mm

Breeding
Temporary pools at start of rainy season
Sexually dichromatic: females look completely different from males
Female colouring
Males outnumbered females 8:1

Characteristics
"Fossorial species" hidden underground most of the year
Emerge April - June for mating when males fight each other for females

Climate change
Extinct by 1990, driven by successive extreme droughts, in local environment of the species' last known habitat

Other threats faced
Restricted range, disease and pollution also contributed to the demise of the species

Map source: maps4news.com

The polar bear: apex predator of the Arctic

Facing extinction as its sea ice habitat retreats due to climate change



Ursus maritimus

<p>Length Males: 3-3.5 m Females: 2.1 m</p>	<p>Weight Males: 410 kg Females: 320 kg</p>	<p>Habitat range Mostly on the sea ice of the Arctic Ocean. Depends on sea ice to hunt its main prey - seals</p>	<p>Conservation status Listed "vulnerable" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)</p>	<p>Population 20,000-25,000</p> <p>Lifespan 25-30 years</p>
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Sources: IUCN, WWF, CITES, NWF

AFP Photo/KT MILLER

AFP

Sports

Buhai seals 'life-changing' British Open in play-off

South African survives a disastrous 15th hole



GULLANE: South Africa's Ashleigh Buhai kisses the trophy after her playoff win over South Korea's Chun In-gee on day 4 of the 2022 Women's British Open Golf Championship at Muirfield golf course in Gullane, Scotland, on August 7, 2022. — AFP

MUIRFIELD: South Africa's Ashleigh Buhai survived a disastrous 15th hole to claim a "life-changing" victory in a marathon play-off against Chun In-gee in the Women's British Open at Muirfield on Sunday. Both players tied on 10 under par after 72 holes, and, in near total darkness, it was Buhai who eventually secured the final major of the season with a par four at the fourth extra hole, the 18th. Chun bunkered her drive and took five, while Buhai got up and down from a greenside bunker, holing out from two feet for victory.

She was close to tears as husband David rushed onto the green and gave her a kiss and a loving hug. "It's been a lot of hard work over many years," said the 33-year-old, who won the first of three South African Amateur titles when she was just 14. Her professional career has never quite hit the same heights with three wins in Europe and two South African Opens. But she had never won an LPGA title until now, and a major at that to make it even more special.

Five ahead overnight, she had to survive a triple-bogey seven at the 15th - that dragged her back into a tie with Chun - before snatching the dramatic play-off win. "I'm very proud of myself," she continued. "I had to dig deep. But I was surprisingly calm in the play-off. Just tried to stay in the moment. Before I hit the bunker shot in the play-off, my

caddie (Tanya Paterson) said 'show them why you are ranked No.1 in bunkers this year'. It was great to do it." Gary Player (1959) and Ernie Els (2002), Buhai's hero growing up, are South African winners of the Open Championship at Muirfield.

Magnanimous Chun

"I am so proud to join them as major winners at Muirfield," Buhai continued. "It really is going to be life-changing." Chun was magnanimous in defeat. The winner of three majors, including this year's Women's PGA Championship, said: "I never gave up, and gave it my all." The 27-year-old Korean added: "Ashleigh played a brilliant bunker shot and she deserved it. I am very happy for her." Buhai had looked in total control when she led by three shots with just four to play.

But she drove into a bunker at the 15th, hit out sideways into rough and then moved the ball just a few yards with her third shot on the way to a triple-bogey seven. Now tied for the lead, she did well to par the final three holes for a 75 that matched Chun's 10-under par total. The Korean closed with a round of 70. Japan's Hinako Shibuno, the 2019 winner, finished third on nine under after a final round 71. American teenager Rose Zhang won the Smyth Salver for the leading amateur. She closed with a 73 for one over par. — AFP

Dixon secures IndyCar Music City Grand Prix

WASHINGTON: New Zealand's Scott Dixon outraced countryman Scott McLaughlin to the checkered flag Sunday to win the Music City Grand Prix for his 53rd career IndyCar triumph. Dixon, who jumped into second place in the hunt for his seventh career season title, edged McLaughlin by a car length after 80 laps over a 2.1-mile, 11-turn temporary street course in Nashville, Tennessee. "Oh man, Nashville is so awesome," Dixon said.

"He was super fast and he had fresh tires, too. Was a bit of a sitting duck. If there was a lap or two more it would have been really tough to do."

Instead, the 42-year-old Kiwi broke his tie for second on the all-time IndyCar win list with Mario Andretti and now trails only the record 67 career wins of AJ Foyt. Dixon, who won his only other race this season last month in Toronto, started 14th and persevered despite damage from one of a host of crashes. "We had a big crash. It took half the floor off the car," Dixon said. "We had to take four turns of front wing out so we had no grip and I think we did about 45 or 50 laps on that last set of tires." Pole-sitter McLaughlin said he felt he could have taken racing idol Dixon had there been another lap.

"We were alongside crossing the finish line. Just fell short at the end," McLaughlin said. "Always

dreamed of racing him to the finish. That was a proper duel." Spaniard Alex Palou was third followed by Americans Alexander Rossi and Colton Herta. Australian Will Power kept the season lead with 450 points after the 14th of 17 races, but Dixon jumped from fourth to second, only six adrift with Indianapolis 500 winner Marcus Ericsson of Sweden only 12 back and American Josef Newgarden 22 off the pace in fourth.

"There was going to be a lot of mayhem (at Nashville) and if you survive it somewhat, which we did, still in a great place," Power said. "Still digging deep and see what we can do in the last three." Dixon is one shy of matching Foyt's record of seven IndyCar season titles, having taken points crowns in 2003, 2008, 2013, 2015, 2018 and 2020. IndyCar's next green flag flies on August 20 on an oval course in suburban St Louis. — AFP



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE: Gasgas Aspar Team's British rider Jake Dixon (right) and Gasgas Aspar Team's Spanish rider Albert Arenas compete in the Moto2 race of the British Grand Prix at Silverstone circuit in Northamptonshire, central England, on August 7, 2022. — AFP

South Korean Kim wins Wyndham Championship

WASHINGTON: South Korean Kim Joo-hyung fired a stunning nine-under par 61 on Sunday to win the Wyndham Championship, his first US PGA Tour title, and secure his spot in the season-ending playoffs. Kim's outstanding effort at Sedgefield Country Club, where the 20-year-old played the first nine holes of the final round in eight-under, capped a remarkable week that opened with his quadruple bogey eight at the first hole on Thursday.

"It's definitely a week I'll remember forever," Kim said after his 20-under total of 260 gave him a five-stroke victory over fellow South Korean Im Sung-jae and American John Huh. "I can't believe it—I'm speechless right now," Kim said, his emotions finally showing after a round in which he looked in supreme control. "I've worked really hard to get to this point," he said, his voice cracking. "Just walking off that 18th

green, just thinking about the behind the scenes work.

"It was a hard day. I didn't know golf was this stressful," added the player who goes by the nickname Tom in a nod to his childhood love of Thomas the Tank Engine. Kim roared through the front nine like a locomotive. His opening par was his lone four to go with seven threes and a birdie two. He hit seven of nine fairways and holed a total of 112 feet of putts in the first nine holes, rolling in a 20-footer at the second and a 24-footer at the par-three third.

He rapped in a 12-foot birdie at the fourth, and gave himself a seven and a half-foot eagle at the par-five fifth. At the sixth, he rolled in an 18-footer-over his playing partner's ball marker—then closed the front nine with a seven-foot birdie at the eighth and a 10-footer at nine. He was in real trouble for the first time at the par-four 10th, where he was in the deep right rough off the tee. His second shot left him short of the green and his third came up 50 feet short of the pin.

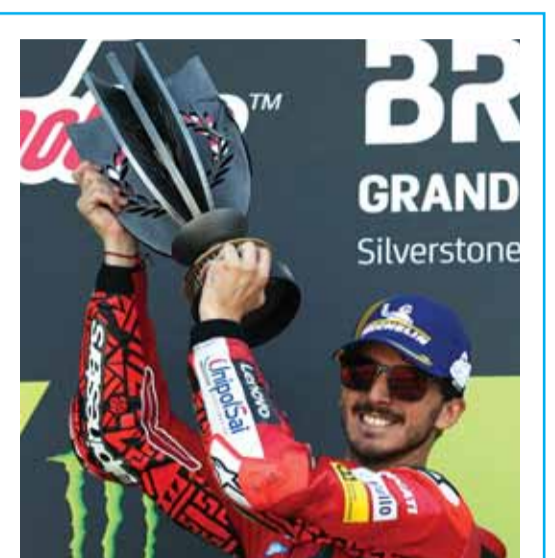
He couldn't convert, finally making a two-footer for his first bogey of the day. The birdies didn't come so thick and fast on the back nine, where a testing downhill six-footer at the 12th missed left and a 21-foot birdie attempt at the tough 14th lipped out. Back to back birdies at par-five 15th and par-three 16th—

where he landed his tee shot less than three feet from the pin—boosted his lead back to four strokes and again raised the tantalizing possibility of a sub-60 round.

Rising star

That failed to materialize as he closed with two pars to add a US title to his two precocious Asia Tour trophies. Given special temporary PGA Tour membership last month, Kim finished tied for third at the co-sanctioned Scottish Open then secured his US PGA Tour card for next year with a seventh-place finish in Detroit last week. Now he's headed to the FedEx Cup playoffs, which start on Thursday with the St. Jude Championship in Memphis, Tennessee, his points total putting him in the top 35 in the standings that decide the 125 players eligible for the playoffs.

It wasn't something that seemed likely after his disastrous start to the tournament. "Yeah, I can't believe I won with a quadruple bogey on the first hole," he said with a laugh. "Hopefully that doesn't happen again." Kim had started the final round two shots behind leader Im Sung-jae after the weather-disrupted third round concluded on Sunday morning. Im carded a final-round 68 and Huh posted a 67 to share second on 265. — AFP



SILVERSTONE: Ducati Lenovo's Italian rider Francesco Bagnaia holds the trophy during the podium ceremony as he celebrates his victory in the MotoGP race of the British Grand Prix at Silverstone circuit in Northamptonshire, central England, on August 7, 2022. — AFP

Bagnaia wins in British MotoGP

SILVERSTONE: Italian rider Francesco Bagnaia won the British MotoGP on Sunday after pole-sitter Johann Zarco crashed out while Fabio Quartararo retained the championship lead despite finishing out of the top five. Ducati rider Bagnaia moves up to third in the world championship after his second Grand Prix victory in a row following the Dutch MotoGP before the five-week summer recess.

Spaniard Maverick Vinales was second on an Aprilia and Bagnaia's Australian teammate Jack Miller third. Pole man Zarco was the big loser as the French rider hit the deck on his satellite Ducati bike on the fifth lap while leading as he chased his first victory in the top category.

After 12 of 20 races this season Yamaha's Quartararo, who came in eighth, has 180 points, 22 clear of Spaniard Aleix Espargaro, the Aprilia rider who was ninth, and 49 on Bagnaia. Zarco, 32, dropped two places after the latest of a series of mishaps this season and is now fifth overall behind Italian Enea Bastianini. Upset at his misfortune he watched from the pits as Bagnaia took a victory he had so fervently hoped would be his. "I had no luck," shrugged the disconsolate two-time Moto2 world champion.

"The high temperatures forced me to race with a medium front tyre. It was a good choice as 'Pecco' won with it but it seems it was the reason for my crash, it had less grip," the 32-year-old reported. "You can go from hero to zero in no time at all. But I don't want to get down, I've had an interesting time and it's good to continue to aim high," added Zarco, who had claimed the prime grid position after a new track record in qualifying on Saturday.

Misfortune

To win, Bagnaia played a game of patience, sure of the strength of his factory Ducati. After a good start from the second row, he benefitted from Zarco's misfortune to position himself behind Spaniard Alex Rins, who led briefly. On his first attempt, the Italian was able to overtake Suzuki rider Rins and took off. He held off Aprilia's Vinales who overtook him before regaining his lead to seal his eighth win in the premier category. For defending champion Quartararo the race was made more complicated by a 'long lap' penalty for a collision with Espargaro at Assen last time out.

While he was in second place behind Zarco, this handicap made him drop to fifth. "After the 'long lap' I rejoined behind several riders and couldn't do anything about it," said France's defending world champion "I don't know whether I would have won but I certainly could have finished higher without the penalty. — AFP



Kim Joo-hyung

Sports

Medvedev retains the top spot; Kyrgios climbs to 37

Kasatkina breaks into top 10; Swiatek dominates WTA rankings

PARIS: Daniil Medvedev, who won his first tournament of the year at the weekend, retained his position at the top of the ATP rankings published on Monday while Nick Kyrgios climbed to his highest rank in two and half years. Medvedev, who is over 1,000 points clear of the injured Alexander Zverev, won his first title since claiming the US Open almost a year ago, when he roared past defending champion Cameron Norrie in the final of the hardcourt tournament in Los Cabos, Mexico.

Medvedev snapped a five-match losing streak in finals-a stretch that included his agonising five-set loss to Rafael Nadal in the Australian Open final in February. He also came up short this year in 's-Hertogenbosch and Halle. He did not get a chance at Wimbledon, where Russian and Belarussian players were banned because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

In spite of losing his title Norrie still moved up a place to 11 with the Pole Hubert Hurkacz nudging up to 10. The man on the slide, down two places, is Jannik Sinner, who chose to skip the event in Washington, losing the points he gained last year when he won it. Sinner's absence left the door open for Australian Nick

Kyrgios who followed his journey to the Wimbledon final with his first title in three years. The Australian climbs 26 places to 37th, his best ranking since February 2020.

Swiatek dominates

Meanwhile, Daria Kasatkina was rewarded for her victory in San Jose at the weekend with a return to the top 10 for the first time since 2019, when the WTA rankings were released on Monday. The Russian, who climbed three places to ninth, beat Shelby Rogers in three sets on Sunday to claim her fifth WTA title on the hard courts in California.

It is her highest-ever ranking and marks her first showing in the top 10 since January 14, 2019 after which she slipped to number 75 in October 2020, a period affected badly by the coronavirus. Iga Swiatek retains the number one spot with almost twice as many points as number two Anett Kontaveit. Paula Badosa leapfrogs Maria Sakkari into third. American Danielle Collins fell eight places to 17th position while Liudmila Samsonova, who beat Kaia Kanepi in the women's final at the Washington Open at the weekend, climbed 18 places to number 42. —AFP



LOS CABOS: Russia's Daniil Medvedev returns the ball to Britain's Cameron Norrie during their Mexico ATP Open 250 men's singles final tennis match at the Cabo Sports Complex in Los Cabos, Mexico. —AFP

How Czech football hooligan became a UFC champion

HONG KONG: Jiri Prochazka was a football hooligan in his native Czech Republic until martial arts and an ancient Japanese text inspired him to turn from street fighting to cage fighting - and become a UFC world champion. "The Book of Five Rings" was written in 1645 by the master Japanese swordsman Miyamoto Musashi, and when Prochazka was handed a copy about eight years ago he finally found the focus to "become a warrior" after a wildly mispent youth.

"You have to look into yourself, and you have to follow the rules - be honest, be brave, be calm in hard situations," said the 29-year-old Prochazka, of what he has learned from the book and from the "Bushido" Samurai code of discipline that it encourages. Prochazka became the UFC's first Czech world champion after a thrilling back-and-forth battle with Brazilian light heavy-weight Glover Teixeira that went deep into the fifth and final round in Singapore in June.

A battered Prochazka seemed on the verge of defeat to Teixeira, but somehow drew on reserves of strength to apply a choke hold and force the Brazilian veteran into submission. "Some people say my style is unpredictable," Prochazka told AFP. "But I'm not doing unpredictable things. I am calm and I just look for the space for attack - where is the weak point of my opponent - and I attack."

Spartan surroundings

Prochazka was speaking via video phone call from a remote cottage in a forest retreat 30 minutes drive away from his birthplace in the southern Czech city of Brno. His spartan surroundings, Prochazka explained, are so he can be alone with his training. The cottage has electricity but no running water, forcing Prochazka to take daily trips to a well.

Prochazka pointed his phone outside the cottage to show the Dojo, or fight ring, he has carved out of the forest floor and the gym equipment frames he has fashioned from local timber. "You have to find the way that is best for you and this is what's best for me," said Prochazka, whose hair is styled in the "chonmage" top-knot favored by Japan's ancient Samurai warriors. "I meditate, and I train, and I live the life I want to be living."

'Never stop learning'

The sense of calm and purpose wasn't always with Prochazka. As a teenager he fell in with the local Ultras - football hooligan gangs - supporting FC Zbrojovka Brno and fought in more than 100 street battles with rival fans. "It was a part of my life and without that there would be no me like I am today," said Prochazka of his youth. "I had to be that guy to become the guy I am now."

At 17, Prochazka discovered Muay Thai kickboxing at a local gym and that he could fight legally. After winning a national title at 19 he turned to MMA as the sport began to grow in global popularity. Prochazka's talent led him to Japan with the Rizin Fighting Federation where he was advised by a coach to read Musashi and the history of the ways of the Samurai. Prochazka started winning in Japan and his life turned around. A Rizin MMA title was followed by a call from the Las Vegas-based Ultimate Fighting Championship in 2020.

Two straight knockout wins gave him the chance to face the 42-year-old Teixeira for the world title at UFC 275 in Singapore and Prochazka grabbed it. Back in his cottage, recovering from a knuckle break suffered against Teixeira, Prochazka was plotting the next phase of his career and a possible rematch with the Brazilian. "I am still going forward," said Prochazka. —AFP

Kuwait shooters win 17 medals

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Shooting continued its winning ways in the 10th Asian Shooting Championship and the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Grand Prix that were held from July 28th until August 8th. Kuwait National Skeeet team won 5 gold, one silver and two bronze medals - grabbing a total number of 17 medals in the trap and skeet events (7 gold, 6 silver and 4 bronze).

Shooter Abdelaziz Al-Saad won the gold medal in the men's skeet event at the 10th Asian Championship, while the team (Abdallah Al-Rashidi, Mansour Al-

Rashidi and Abdelaziz Al-Saad) won silver in the same championship. The mixed team of Abdallah Al-Rashidi and Iman Al-Shamma won the bronze medal.

Meanwhile, in the ISSF Grand Prix that was held on the sidelines of the Asian Championship, the skeet team (Abdallah Al-Torqi Al-Rashidi, Mansour Uqla Al-Rashidi and Abdelaziz Al-Saad) won gold medal - defeating the Chinese team who took second. Kazakh team grabbed the bronze medal. The mixed team of Abdallah Al-Rashidi and Iman Al-Shamma won the bronze medal.

Head of the delegations President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng Duajir Khalaf Al-Otaibi said he, as well as board members are happy with the performance of Kuwait champions. Al-Otaibi dedicated the win to HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber, Al-Sabah HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber, Al-Sabah the government and Kuwait people.



Zimbabwe win ODI series as Raza stars

HARARE: Sikandar Raza scored an unbeaten 117 as Zimbabwe staged a great run chase for the second time in three days to beat Bangladesh by five wickets on Sunday and take a winning 2-0 lead in a three-match one-day international series. The Pakistan-born batsman hit four sixes and eight fours off 127 deliveries and his 201-run fifth-wicket partnership with captain Regis Chakabva turned the tide after Bangladesh posted 290-9 in Harare.

Chakabva played a wonderful supporting role to Raza, who has been consistently outstanding for his adopted country, smashing 102 runs off 75 balls, including two sixes and 10 fours. Zimbabwe reached 291-5 with 15 balls to spare after the early loss of wickets and a slow scoring rate suggested they had little chance of success at Harare Sports Club.

"Since (coach) Dave (Houghton) came back, we have put a lot of emphasis on a lot of good things and to be able to achieve that, it is such a humbling feeling," said Raza. "I know I am grabbing the

(individual) trophy but Reggie (Chakabva) and Tony (Muyonga) did well. The bowlers also did an amazing job. So, as much as it is me, it is really all of us. "It is good that I am doing my job, but to have 100s from me and Reggie, that little cameo from Tony, and Luke (Jongwe) the other day, tells you the depth of the squad. I am very pleased for the boys."

Bangladesh skipper Tamim said: "We put up a decent total. During the first game, we had an opportunity to score 20 more runs. Today, I thought our batting was good but we did not execute our bowling well. "The wicket was good from the beginning but when the spinners came on, it was not as easy as in the first game. All credit must go to Zimbabwe. They were the better team in this series."

Remarkable transformation

Zimbabwe also won the first ODI match on Friday by five wickets against opponents ranked eight places higher and continued a remarkable transformation under recently hired Houghton. The former national team batting star took over in June with Zimbabwe in the doldrums after 3-0 ODI and Twenty20 whitewashes by visiting Afghanistan.

Houghton told his squad to express themselves, not be afraid of making mistakes and not to be intimidated by opponents, however strong they appeared on paper. The triumph on Sunday was

my side. I'm really happy with myself." Kyrgios improved to 4-0 against Nishioka, the most recent prior win coming in the third round of his 2019 Washington title run.

In the women's final, Liudmila Samsonova won her second career WTA title by beating Estonia's Kaia Kanepi 4-6, 6-3, 6-3. Her first title came at last year's German Open on Berlin grass. "It's like a dream," Samsonova said. "It's unbelievable." Kyrgios became the first man to sweep singles and doubles titles in the event's 53-year history-a feat he called "super special"-by joining American Jack Sock to beat Croatian Ivan Dodig and American Austin Krajicek 7-5, 6-4 in the final.

Nishioka netted a backhand to surrender a break in the opening game and Kyrgios denied the Asian southpaw's lone break chance with a backhand winner in the sixth game, holding out to claim the first set with his seventh ace. Kyrgios broke in the first game of the second set when Nishioka sent a forehand long and again in the final game when Nishioka netted a backhand on the Aussie's third match point.

Nishioka, who captured his only ATP crown in 2018 at Shenzhen, hadn't won a tour-level match since March until this week, when he upset eighth-ranked Andrey Rublev in the semi-finals. He will jump to 54th in Monday's world rankings, six off his career best. "At the beginning of the year I had a nightmare," Nishioka said. "I thought if I can't make the top 50 again I will retire. Now I think maybe I can play a few more years." Kyrgios will leap to 37th in the world rankings. He would have been 15th had world ranking points been awarded at Wimbledon.

the ninth in 10 ODI and T20 matches under Houghton as Zimbabwe prepare for the T20 World Cup in Australia from October. As on Friday, Zimbabwe won the toss and opted to field, and once again the Bangladesh batsmen did well, led by an unbeaten 80 from Mahmudullah Riyad and a 50 from Tamim.

Mahmudullah hit three sixes and three fours in a 126-minute stand while Iqbal needed just 45 balls to claim his half century, which included a six and 10 fours. Afif Hossain (41) and Najmul Hossain (38) also made significant contributions against a Zimbabwe attack in which the spin of Raza proved most effective as he captured three wickets. In reply, Zimbabwe lost their first wicket with just one run on the board and when they found themselves at 49-4, even supreme optimist Houghton could hardly have visualized what was about to occur.

Raza and Chakabva — standing in as series skipper for injured Craig Ervine - took the fight to the Bangladeshi attack and slowly but surely lifted the total and raised hopes of an unlikely victory. With 40 overs gone, Zimbabwe were 220-4 and needed 71 runs from 60 balls to win both the match and the series. The loss of Chakabva, caught by Tamim at midwicket after miscuing a Mehidy Hasan delivery, did not stop the run surge and an unbeaten 30 from ODI debutant Tony Munyonga took Zimbabwe over the line. —AFP



WASHINGTON: Nick Kyrgios of Australia serves a shot to Yoshihito Nishioka of Japan in their Men's Singles Final match during Day 9 of the Citi Open at Rock Creek Tennis Center on August 7, 2022. —AFP

Kanepi drought extended

World number 60 Samsonova fired 10 aces and 27 winners to beat Kanepi. The 23-year-old Russian came off a six-week layoff after Russian and Belarussian players were not allowed at Wimbledon due to the invasion of Ukraine. "I think we are all very angry about the situation. It was a really tough month," said Samsonova, who only got her US visa two weeks ago. Kanepi, ranked 37th at age 37, was foiled in her bid to end a nine-year WTA title drought. She last won a WTA crown at the 2013 Brussels Open. "Overall the week was very good," Kanepi said. "She served better than me and maybe that was the key." Samsonova dispatched three of the top six seeds, ousting reigning US Open champion Emma Raducanu, fifth seed Elise Mertens and sixth seed Kanepi. —AFP

Sports

Marseille overwhelm Reims as Ramsey scores on Nice debut

Montpellier beat Troyes 3-2

PARIS: Marseille started their Ligue 1 campaign Sunday by defeating Reims 4-1 in Igor Tudor's first match as coach, while Aaron Ramsey struck on his Nice debut to salvage a point in Toulouse. After a troubled summer during which Jorge Sampaoli walked out over his unhappiness at the club's transfer approach, it was a welcome win for Tudor following a turbulent pre-season. "I'm clearly very happy, it's a clear and deserved victory," said Tudor.

The former Croatia international was jeered by home fans ahead of kick-off, but an own goal by Wout Faes and debut goals for Nuno Tavares and Luis Suarez lifted spirits at the Velodrome. Folarin Balogun, like Tavares an Arsenal loanee, replied late on for Reims before Suarez grabbed his second of the evening. "The whistles towards me? I was inside, I didn't hear them," said Tudor. "The supporters are always right. We play for them and they do what they want. Football doesn't exist without them."

Tudor dropped captain Dimitri Payet to the bench, handing debuts to five players including Tavares and Jonathan Clauss, who earned a France call-up with Lens last season. Clauss was soon involved as Reims defender Faes turned the right-back's cross into his own net under pressure from Arkadiusz Milik on 13 minutes.

Marseille were unlucky not to add to their lead with Cengiz Under and Valentin Rongier hitting the woodwork, but Tavares made it 2-0 with a fine low strike just before half-time. Colombian forward Suarez, signed from Granada in July, needed just 13 minutes to open his Ligue 1 account, steering home after the ball bounced around the Reims penalty area. England Under-21 international Balogun head-

ed in to cut the deficit, but Suarez ensured it was Marseille's night by tapping home Cedric Bakambu's pass deep into stoppage time.

Ramsey rides to rescue

Aaron Ramsey scored a minute into his Nice debut after coming on as a second-half substitute to rescue a 1-1 draw away to promoted Toulouse. The Wales international curled in an equalizer on 78 minutes to cancel out a first-half goal by new Toulouse signing Thijs Dallinga, the top scorer last season in the Dutch second division. Ramsey, 31, left Juventus when his contract was terminated at the end of July, and swiftly reappeared just across the border at Nice after penning a one-year deal. Denmark goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel was named on the bench by Nice coach Lucien Favre following his arrival this week from Leicester City, the club he won the Premier League title with in 2016.

Jonathan David scored twice as Portuguese coach Paulo Fonseca began his reign at Lille with a 4-1 home victory over Auxerre, who are back in the top flight for the first time in a decade. Benjamin Andre put Lille ahead inside the opening minute before Canada star David doubled the lead with just three minutes played. David added a third before half-time and Akim Zedadka made it 4-0 just past the hour. Gaetan Charbonnier grabbed a consolation for Auxerre.

Belgium defender Arthur Theate had a debut to forget for Rennes, putting an own goal past fellow newcomer Steve Mandanda in a 1-0 home defeat by Lorient. Theate, signed from Bologna in July, shanked a cross past Mandanda, the 37-year-old World Cup winner who left Marseille last month



MARSEILLE: Marseille's Portuguese midfielder Nuno Tavares (center) heads the ball during the French L1 football match between Olympique de Marseille (OM) and Stade de Reims at the Stade Velodrome in Marseille on August 7, 2022. —AFP

after making a record 613 appearances for the club. Wales centre-back Joe Rodon also made his Rennes debut alongside Theate after signing on a season-long loan from Tottenham Hotspur.

Florian Sotoca bagged a hat-trick despite missing a penalty to earn Lens a 3-2 win against Brest, while Montpellier beat Troyes by the same scoreline. Last

season's French Cup winners Nantes, who were thrashed by Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions Trophy in Zionist entity a week ago, drew 0-0 at Angers. PSG kicked off their bid for a record 11th French league crown with a 5-0 demolition of Clermont on Saturday, as Lionel Messi scored twice, including with a stunning overhead kick. —AFP



MANCHESTER: Former Manchester United star and Wales manager Ryan Giggs (center) arrives with his legal team at Manchester Minshull Street Crown Court in Manchester on August 8, 2022 at the start of his trial for assaulting his ex-girlfriend. —AFP

Former Man Utd star Giggs goes on trial for assault

MANCHESTER: Former Manchester United star Ryan Giggs went on trial Monday on charges of attacking and coercively controlling his ex-girlfriend in a case that has upended his managerial career. The 48-year-old, who until recently served as coach of the Wales national team, has pleaded not guilty to the charges, which carry a maximum jail term of five years. The jury trial at a crown court in Manchester opened around 11:00 am, presided over by judge Hilary Manley. She said the trial is expected to last two weeks but could overrun.

Giggs entered the court building looking grave-faced, flanked by his legal team. Inside he sat upright in the dock as lawyers discussed the course of the trial with the judge. The first day was to decide the final jury selection and hear the opening speech by prosecution lawyer Peter Wright. Wright told the judge the trial would include a compilation of CCTV footage and body cam videos.

Giggs is charged with assaulting his former girlfriend, PR executive Kate Greville, causing her actual bodily harm on November 1, 2020, when police were called to his home in the Manchester area. The Welshman is further charged with common assault of her younger sister, Emma Greville, on the same day. He also faces a charge of controlling and coercive behavior towards Kate Greville throughout their relationship, which began in 2017 and ended with the alleged assault.

The charge specifies that his behavior towards

Greville, 36, included the use of "isolation, belittling, humiliation, harassment, degradation and abuse". Giggs was arrested by police at his home in November 2020 and released on bail. He has denied the allegations and pleaded not guilty at an initial court appearance in April last year. His trial was due to be heard in January but it was delayed due to a backlog of court cases caused by the COVID pandemic.

Giggs's lawyer, Chris Daw, has acted for high-profile sports figures including former England and Chelsea football captain John Terry, who was found not guilty of racially abusing fellow player Anton Ferdinand in 2012. Giggs resigned as the Wales manager in June, after being on leave since his arrest. He said he did not want "continued interest around this case" to affect the team as it prepares for this year's World Cup in Qatar. He remains on conditional bail, and has said he looks forward to "clearing my name".

A dazzling teenage talent, Giggs ended his career at Old Trafford as the most-decorated player in English football history. As a player, Giggs made a club-record 963 appearances over 23 years for Manchester United, winning 13 Premier League titles and two Champions League trophies. He then began his coaching career at Old Trafford, taking temporary charge at the end of the 2013/14 season after David Moyes was sacked before working as an assistant to Louis van Gaal for two years.

Giggs was appointed Wales boss in January 2018 and helped them secure qualification for Euro 2020, just their second major tournament appearance since the 1958 World Cup. His trial opens shortly before another court case involving a star footballer, Manchester City defender Benjamin Mendy. The Frenchman is set to go on trial on Wednesday in Chester, northwest England, accused of rape and assault in a case involving seven women. Mendy, who has been suspended by City, denies the allegations. —AFP

Talking points from the Premier League opening

MANCHESTER: Manchester City took an early lead in the expected fight for the Premier League title with Liverpool after the first weekend of the season as Erling Haaland's debut double gave the champions a 2-0 win at West Ham. Liverpool were held 2-2 by newly-promoted Fulham a day earlier, but could also take comfort in the impact of their new striker Darwin Nunez, who came off the bench to rescue his side a point. Arsenal, Chelsea and Tottenham were all victorious in the early running for the top four, but Manchester United started as they ended last season in a dispiriting 2-1 home defeat to Brighton in Erik ten Hag's first match in charge. AFP Sport looks at talking points from the opening games of the Premier League season.

Haaland worth the hype

Manchester City took their time after missing out on Harry Kane as the successor to Sergio Aguero last summer and were rewarded by beating off the competition around Europe to sign Haaland from Borussia Dortmund for a bargain £51 million (\$63 million). Adding one of the world's most feared strikers to a side that have won back-to-back titles without a natural goalscorer proved as fearsome a prospect as it promised on the opening weekend. At a ground where City nearly threw the title away in the penultimate game of last season, West Ham barely got a kick for the first-half. Haaland's arrival is designed to eradicate the days when City fail to make their dominance show on the scoreboard and he delivered straight away as his acceleration lured Alphonse Areola into committing a penalty for the opening goal. Scoring spot-kicks is another problem the Norwegian wonderkid could solve for his new club as he slotted away the penalty and showed his pace again to race onto Kevin De Bruyne's pass to kill the game after the break. "It could have been more," Haaland warned ominously for the other title contenders.

Ten Hag's troubled start

Any hope that a new manager would immediately herald a turnaround in Manchester United's fortunes were washed away with 45 minutes of the Ten Hag era at Old Trafford. Brighton did not manage the humiliation they inflicted on the Red Devils towards the end of Ralf Rangnick's ill-fated caretaker spell with a 4-0 win towards the end of last season. But the Seagulls did leave



LONDON: Manchester City's Norwegian striker Erling Haaland (center) wins a header during the English Premier League football match between West Ham United and Manchester City at the London Stadium, on August 7, 2022. —AFP

Manchester with their first ever win at Old Trafford thanks to a double from Pascal Gross.

After the promise of some pre-season performances, there was little to distinguish United under the Dutchman from the shambles that finished sixth in the Premier League last season. A disorganized defense were not helped by United's wide open midfield, while they were blunt up front without a natural striker. Cristiano Ronaldo started on the bench due to his lack of pre-season training as the five-time Ballon d'Or winner tries to engineer an exit out of Old Trafford. "The way they played today, sixth is the highest they can finish this season," said former United midfielder Paul Scholes.

Jurgen Klopp did not try to sugarcoat Liverpool's unexpectedly poor start as Fulham were well worthy of at least a point on their return to the Premier League. The Reds had the same verve and hunger of the side that came so close to winning an unprecedented quadruple last season in beating City 3-1 to lift the Community Shield a week before. Fast-forward seven days and there was a complacency to Liverpool that was punished by Aleksandar Mitrovic's double for the hosts.

Twice in the past four seasons, Liverpool have lost the league title by a single point to City and Klopp knows his side can ill-afford to take time to find top form if they are to keep pace with the champions. "I am happy for the punishment we got with losing two points," said Klopp. "I would love to get three points, but I would have loved much more to play really good, to be honest, and we didn't do that." The performance was a defeat - the result is not a defeat but the performance was a defeat and that's why we have to figure out what happened." —AFP

Lewandowski scores first Barcelona goal in Pumas rout

BARCELONA: Robert Lewandowski scored his first Barcelona goal in a 6-0 rout of Mexican side Pumas in the Joan Gamper Trophy pre-season clash on Sunday. On his Camp Nou bow, the Polish inter-

national, who switched from Bayern Munich in the summer, scored after three minutes from a particularly tight angle.

Pedri added the second and fourth goals in the fifth and 19th minutes, sandwiching a strike from Ousmane Dembele. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Frenkie de Jong completed the rout in the second half. Lewandowski also played a key part in Pedri's second goal with an inspired pass to set up the midfielder. Barcelona begin their La Liga season at home to Rayo Vallecano on Saturday. —AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Maternity Hospital	24843100	Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700	Clinics	
Chest Hospital	24849400	Kaizen center	25716707
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010	Rawda	22517733
Adan Hospital	23940620	Adaliya	22517144

Khalidiya	24848075	Dasmah	22532265
Kaifan	24849807	Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shamiya	24848913	Shaab	22518752
Shuwaikh	24814507	Qibla	22459381
Abdullah Salem	22549134	Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Nuzha	22526804	Mirqab	22456536
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764	Sharq	22465401
Qadsiya	22515088	Salmiya	25746401

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Rahamathulla Fairoz S/o. Rahamathulla R/o No 22 10th Cross Padarayanapura Hosahalli Main Road Bangalore 560026 have changed my name to Shaik Fairoz Pasha for all purposes. (C# 2035) 08/08/2022



BIRMINGHAM: England's Matthew Lee and England's Noah Williams compete to win and take the gold medal in the men's synchronized 10m platform diving final on day eight of the Commonwealth Games at Sandwell Aquatics Centre in Birmingham, central England. —AFP

Australia win historic cricket gold at Commonwealth; Athletics wraps up

Scotland's Muir captures 1500 meters title

BIRMINGHAM: Australia won the first women's cricket gold medal in Commonwealth Games history on Sunday as Scotland's Laura Muir captured the 1500m title on the final night of athletics. On the penultimate day of competition in Birmingham, England's women won hockey gold and Australia beat Jamaica in the netball final.

With just a few events to go on Monday, Australia lead the way with 66 golds, 11 ahead of hosts England. Hot favorites Australia held their nerve to beat India by nine runs in a Twenty20 thriller in front of a big Edgbaston crowd. Opener Beth Mooney top-scored with 61 as Australia made 161-8 in their 20 overs in the warm sunshine. India appeared to be on course for a shock win when they were cruising at 118-2. But the dismissals of Jemimah Rodrigues (33) and captain Harmanpreet Kaur (65) sapped their momentum and they fell frustratingly short. Australia partied on the pitch as the lights went out around the stadium.

"It's absolutely huge," said left-arm spinner Jess Jonassen. "We are blessed enough to be part of some winning World Cup teams but to win the first gold medal for women's cricket in the Commonwealth Games, you're only ever going to do that once." Victory underlines the dominance of Australia's women, who are also world champions in the 20-over and 50-over formats. In the bronze medal match earlier on Sunday, New Zealand

coasted to an eight-wicket win over England.

Muir gold

Muir ended her Commonwealth Games campaign with a flourish by winning gold in the 1500m at the Alexander Stadium. The 29-year-old's team-mate, 10,000m champion Eilish McColgan, just failed in her bid for memorable double, finishing second behind Kenya's impressive world silver medalist Beatrice Chebet in the women's 5,000m.

Muir, who won bronze in the 800m on Saturday, kicked for glory before the bell and ran a fairly moderate field-lacking two-time Olympic champion Faith Kipyegon-ragged, timing 4min 02.75sec. The Olympic silver medalist was overjoyed, having failed to medal in 2014 and missing the 2018 Games due to veterinary exams. "You learn from it and your time will come," said Muir. "It sounds cheesy but it's true. Eight years of Commonwealths and it's been bugging me so this means a lot."

Wyclife Kinyamal defended his men's 800m crown in a time of 1:47.52. It was an impressive turnaround for the 25-year-old, who finished last in the final of the world championships in July. "Eugene (the world final) was disappointing but it is just like any race," he said. "Because if today you win, tomorrow you lose. I guess because I failed there, I looked forward to coming here to defend my title."

New Zealand cyclist Aaron Gate won the men's road race to collect his fourth gold medal of the Commonwealth Games. "Three felt great and I was super happy with that," said Gate, who won three track events earlier in the Games. "I came here today and managed to help the team, and if the opportunity arose to go for a fourth one I just had to grab it with both hands." In the women's race, Australia's Georgia Baker won her third gold of the games.

England won hockey gold for the first time after holding off a fightback from Australia to win 2-1. Second-quarter goals from Holly Hunt and Tess Howard ultimately provided decisive 24 hours after the men's team had suffered semi-final despair at the hands of Australia. Australia's men, who are six-time defending champions, take on India in the final on Monday. There was more joy for Australia in the netball competition, with a 55-51 over Jamaica in the final.

Australia also shone at the Sandwell Aquatics Centre, wrapping up the diving competition in style. Cassiel Rousseau took the men's 10m platform title and Maddison Keeney won her second gold of the games in the women's 3m springboard. England's Delicious Orié won super heavyweight gold on a busy night of boxing, beating India's Sagar Ahlawat. India won three other golds in boxing but Northern Ireland took five, including a special double for Aidan Walsh and his sister Michaela. —AFP

Commonwealth Gold is Delicious for rising England boxing star

BIRMINGHAM: England's Delicious Orié was crowned the Commonwealth Games super-heavyweight champion on Sunday, as the Northern Ireland brother and sister duo of Aidan and Michaela Walsh also won boxing gold medals. The 25-year-old Orié, born in Russia to a Nigerian father and a Russian mother, defeated India's Sagar Ahlawat by a unanimous points decision despite losing the first round.

"I am so proud to be English and British," Orié, brought to England aged seven after his father suffered racist abuse, told the BBC. "I knew I had two rounds to prove myself and I was not going to let anyone else win. I was determined. You were going to have to kill me in there for me to lose."

Now Orié wants to emulate compatriot and occasional training partner Anthony Joshua, who won the 2012 Olympic super-heavyweight gold medal before becoming a professional world heavyweight champion. "My inspiration has always been Anthony Joshua, and what he has achieved is the bare minimum," he said. "I am the next generation and we are going to excel."

Orié and heavyweight Lewis Williams were the only boxing gold medalists for hosts England on a day when 16 titles were decided in the ring. Williams beat Samoa's 2018 silver medalist Ato Plodzicki-Faoagali, with his victory made more special by the fact that several family members from nearby Leamington Spa were ringside - including his father, who first took him to a boxing club when he was a boy. "My dad has been ill in hospital recently," said Williams. "He came out and was at ringside, which gave me a big lift." Two of India's three boxing gold medals came at the expense of English opponents. Amit Panghal went one better than his 2018 silver by beating Kieran MacDonald in the flyweight final. Nitu Ghanghas won the women's minimum weight title on a unanimous decision over Demie-Jade Reszlan. Ghanghas's team-mate, world champion Zareen Nikhat, also won gold by beating Northern Ireland's Carly McNaul in the women's light flyweight final.

"It's a good day for Indian boxing," said Nikhat. "Women's boxing is growing in India since Mary Kom won a medal at the (2012) Olympics. She has been a great inspiration for every boxer in India." Northern Ireland enjoyed even more boxing success in Birmingham, with five gold medals, as Michaela Walsh finally became a champion, winning the featherweight title after two successive Commonwealth silvers. But the 29-year-old was more delighted by younger brother Aidan, 25, taking the men's light middleweight title.

"Seeing him win his gold is more special than me winning mine," she said. "He's my baby brother and to see him achieve his dream is what I have dreamt of myself. It's phenomenal." Earlier, Amy Broadhurst overcame England's Gemma Richardson on points in the light-weight final. "I've made history as the first woman from Northern Ireland to win a (boxing) gold medal at the Commonwealth Games," said Broadhurst. "It is an honor that will always be there in the record books. —AFP"

Women cricket stars eye Olympic chance

BIRMINGHAM: Women cricketers say they would "love to go to LA" to chase Olympic glory after a strikingly successful debut at the Commonwealth Games. Australia beat India by nine runs in Sunday's final in front of a big, noisy crowd at Edgbaston to underline their status as the world's best team. New Zealand earlier hammered host nation England by eight wickets to take the bronze medal. Women's cricket was on the Commonwealth Games program for the first time in Birmingham and had the spotlight to itself, with no matching men's tournament.

It is no secret that cricket chiefs want to get the Twenty20 game-the version played in Birmingham-on the list of Olympic sports, even as early as the Los Angeles Games in 2028, although that is a long shot. International Cricket Council chief executive Geoff Allardice said the Commonwealths had been a "fantastic 10 days of competition" in front of packed-out crowds, describing it as a "superb advert for the women's game".

England captain Nat Sciver agreed that the tournament in Birmingham had been a huge shot in the arm for the women's game. "This Commonwealth Games has been an incredible experience and I think the crowds have shown that people really love coming to watch whatever team it is," she said. "Having that new audience from the Commonwealth Games where everyone's happy to go and watch any sport is something really special and something that can only help women's cricket."

"I'd love for cricket to be in an Olympics." Australia's Ash Gardner, who took three wickets in Sunday's final, would also relish the chance to play on the biggest



BIRMINGHAM: Gold medalists Australia stand on the podium during the medal ceremony for the women's Twenty20 Cricket on day ten of the Commonwealth Games at Edgbaston in Birmingham, central England. —AFP

sporting stage. "Being involved in a few world cups myself and now the Commonwealth Games, it was something that us cricketers probably never thought that we'd ever be involved in but we're certainly pretty pleased coming away with a gold medal," she said.

Big crowds

Gardner was struck by the impact the tournament made in Birmingham. "You just have to look at how many people came out and watched it, every single game, even when England wasn't playing," she said. "It's amazing to see that people are just supporting women's cricket and the best thing about this whole event is that it's growing the game globally and that's what us as cricketers want to do." New Zealand

captain Sophie Devine said the women's cricketers had put on a "hell of a show". "Having played in a lot of world events, this was certainly something really different and really special," she said.

"Fingers crossed, we've got our foot in the door and there's a few more Commonwealth Games and the Olympics too." She said women's sport was riding the crest of a wave-a week after England's women footballers won the European Championship in front of a huge crowd at Wembley. "It's been built on years and years of female players doing the hard yards with full-time jobs," she said. "We wouldn't be where we are today, reaping the rewards, without those females laying the platform, the foundation for us to be here." —AFP