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12 Indonesian teens take to the catwalk at Jakarta crosswalk



16 Birmingham parties; Osbourne closes Commonwealth Games



Many arrested for taking part in banned tribal primary elections

Police seizes ballot boxes, hunt for other suspects

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry said yesterday that police have arrested "several people" for taking part in tribal primary elections banned under Kuwait law, and that they are still searching for other suspects. The ministry said in a statement that ballot boxes and instruments used in the outlawed elections were seized in a raid by detectives on several sites. The statement did not name the areas where the elections were held.

Under Kuwait law, tribal primary elections are banned and participants could face a jail term of up to five years and fines. But although such primaries had been banned more than 15 years ago, tribes and other sections of the society held them regularly and even results of the secret polls were announced on social media. Courts have heard dozens of cases of tribal primaries filed by authorities, but rarely suspects were convicted for a lack of evidence.

But the Criminal Court has recently sentenced an MP and a former MP from Shemmari tribe in Jahra to two years in jail after convicting them of holding the primaries. The Court of Appeals upheld the sentence and the case is now before the Court of Cassation, whose ruling is final. Local media reported that the primary elections were held in Sulaibikhat area and some reports mentioned that scores of participants had been arrested.

The ministry statement said that all people arrested had been referred to the Public Prosecution for further investigation. This is the first case of tribal primary elections the Interior Ministry has dealt with ahead of the forthcoming parliamentary polls after the National Assembly had been dissolved over political disputes. Under the Kuwait law, the snap polls must be held before October 2. A decree is expected to be issued within the coming days inviting Kuwaiti voters to elect a new 50-member national assembly.



KUWAIT: Husseinyas in Kuwait mark Ashoura, a 10-day mourning period commemorating the seventh century killing of Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) grandson Imam Hussein on August 9, 2022. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Kurdish Iraqi farmer sprouts online advice



HALABJA: Iraqi Kurdish farmer Azad Muhamad, known as the Halabja model farmer, displays organic fresh produce at his farm near the Kurdish Iraqi town of Halabja. — AFP

HALABJA: Kurdish Iraqi farmer Azad Muhamad has become a social media star by sharing tips on growing fresh fruit and vegetables in the sun-parched country that is highly vulnerable to climate change. The mustachioed 50-year-old with almost half a million Facebook followers posts weekly videos on topics such as protecting fruit trees, dealing with insects and helping people get more from their farms and gardens.

"They should make you agriculture minister," one of his fans, Ahmed Hassan, commented on a recent video. Muhamad also uses his popular online platform to raise awareness about protecting the environment and the need to support local farmers, in his native Kurdistan region and beyond. "Developed-country farmers have government support and harvesting machines," said Muhamad.

"Our farmers do everything themselves with their own sweat - and when they lose money at the end of the year, they start over with the same passion and energy." He also has a message for authorities in Iraq, which the UN classifies as the world's fifth most vulnerable country to climate change and where many are mired in poverty despite Iraq's oil wealth. "Our land is fertile, and our earth is like gold," Muhamad told AFP.

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Projects aimed at boosting economy

KUWAIT: Kuwait is enlisting large development projects to international investment companies, which aims to reinvigorate the Kuwait economy, encourage the local private sector and

improve the nation's infrastructure. "The ministerial economic committee has prepared a list for these projects, and coordinated with other ministries in order to assign the budget and provide the regulations necessary for government tender to reach agreement with the Audit Bureau and the Central Agency for Public Tenders to resist any waste of public money or any legal violations," sources told Kuwait Times.

Trump's home 'raided' by FBI

PALM BEACH: Former US president Donald Trump said Monday that his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida was being "raided" by FBI agents in what he called an act of "prosecutorial misconduct." The FBI declined to comment on whether the search was happening or what it might be for, nor did Trump give any indication of why federal agents were at his home - a situation that adds to the legal pressures on the ex-president.

Multiple US media outlets cited

sources close to the investigation as saying that agents were conducting a court-authorized search related to the potential mishandling of classified documents that had been sent to Mar-a-Lago. In a statement posted on his Truth Social network, Trump said his "beautiful home, Mar-A-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida, is currently under siege, raided, and occupied by a large group of FBI agents."

Aerial footage of Mar-a-Lago showed police cars outside the property. Supporters of the ex-US leader also gathered outside, waving banners with Trump's name or American flags emblazoned with his face. "It is prosecutorial misconduct, the

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3 Palestinians die, 69 shot in West Bank raid

NABLUS: Three people were killed and dozens wounded Tuesday, the Palestinian health ministry said, as Zionist forces raided the occupied West Bank city of Nablus. The military said a senior militant commander was among the dead. The latest violence comes two days after deadly fighting between Zionists and Islamic Jihad militants in the coastal enclave of Gaza was halted by a truce.

In the old city of Nablus, an AFP cor-

respondent reported Palestinians trading gunfire with security forces. The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said its medics treated 69 people for gunshot wounds across the Nablus area, at least four of them in critical condition. "The terrorist Ibrahim Al-Nabulsi was killed in the city of Nablus," the army said in a statement, adding that "another terrorist who was staying in the house" also died.

Zionist forces said they launched a shoulder-fired missile at the house and detained four suspects in the raid. Nabulsi was a commander of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, one of the main militant groups present in the West Bank operating under the ruling Fatah party. Following the deadly raid, the militant group said "the response will fit the crime".

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The budget is expected to be more than \$3 billion, which is less than the \$4.5 billion budgeted for projects enlisted in 2016, and less than the \$7 billion budgeted for projects in 2013. So far this year, enlisted projects have not exceeded \$750 million due to efforts by Kuwait to spend carefully. This is to avoid previous spending plans which did not generate high revenues, which

prompted the Kuwait government to conduct a total review on required projects which have high returns.

"Procedures for rapid development of Failaka Island among other islands, as well as, the construction of entertainment complexes are only a part of the projects enlisted. However, technical and bureaucratic procedures have delayed these projects especially since

Continued on Page 6



FLORIDA: Photo shows President Donald Trump's beach front Mar-a-Lago resort. — AFP



NABLUS: Palestinians search a house to evacuate the bodies of three Palestinians killed in a Zionist raid, in the West Bank city of Nablus on August 9, 2022. — AFP

Local

Officials: Kuwaiti students heading to US must follow rules, guidelines

Students must be in constant communication with academic advisor

KUWAIT: Thousands of Kuwaiti students will soon be embarking on their educational journey abroad, traveling to many destinations, including the United States, to seek knowledge and academia. As the students open a new chapter in their lives, they have to be acquainted with rules, regulations and guidelines of their host countries during their stay. Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) interviewed Kuwait's Cultural Office director in Washington DC Dr Adel Malallah, Cultural Attache at the American Embassy in Kuwait Katherine Garry and Education Advisor at the American Embassy in Kuwait Carine Nassrallah to demystify and answer most of the questions connected with the students' upcoming venture.

All three emphasized that students must be in constant communication with the academic advisor at the Cultural Office, the International Office advisor at the university and the academic advisor at the school attended. Dr Malallah stressed that a student "shouldn't make a move," without the knowledge of academic advisors, explaining that whether it is a change in majors, universities, or future plans and even change of address, the Cultural Office and the allocated academic advisor should be informed directly and immediately.

Students should be extremely careful when it came to abiding by the law, as something as trivial as lending a car to a roommate could risk putting one in great legal capacity, Dr Malallah said. He reiterated the importance to familiarize with the scholarship bylaws and degree requirements available at the official website of the Ministry of Higher Education to avoid prolonging the scholarship and other complications. He also advised new scholarship applicants to immediately apply for the American visa through its embassy in Kuwait as soon as they received their letter of admission (I-20) to the school they were interested in before finalizing the scholarship process.

Measures for "no-shows"

Dr Malallah urged new students to be at their new schools in the US on or before the start of their respective programs, as some universities could take measures for "no-shows". About undertaking the English as a Second Language (ESL) semester(s) before jumping straight into the academic curriculum, Dr Malallah said that it might not be required for all students to take the optional ESL courses, especially students that graduated from American private schools. He still recommended going through ESL programs for students unfamiliar with the various aspects of living abroad. These courses were tailored to assist new and international students to cope with their new environment, adjust to the culture and prepare them to tackle their curriculum without having to worry about accommodation, transit or where everything is, he added.

ESL might not be required for all students

Kuwait's Ministry of Higher Education allowed for up to a year of the optional ESL courses for new bachelor's degree students heading to the US, said Malallah, noting that such option was not allocated for medical scholarships. Universities for medical scholarships require a minimum score of 6.5 in International English Language Testing System (IELTS) based on an agreement the Kuwaiti Cultural Division made with the various institutes, he revealed. On the new students' salaries, Dr Malallah said the pre-scholarship financial support would be deposited into the students' Kuwaiti bank account whereas the actual monthly salary in the US, requires a US bank account, urging new students to initiate a new one and inform the cultural office as soon as they can when they arrive in the US.

Ask questions

Meanwhile, Cultural Attache at the American Embassy Katherine Garry advised new students to ask questions, referring to the advisors in the

Kuwaiti mission in the US, the universities students are attending, and the American Embassy in Kuwait in regards to immigration and visa issuing. She added that it was crucial to understand the rules of the program the student was enrolled in from both the university and the scholarship represented by the Kuwaiti Cultural Office. Garry also advised students to familiarize themselves with common laws that differ from one state to another. She said that it was always best to read the "fine prints" in contracts, tickets or other contractual based services as to understand one's rights, how to claim them or avoid implied penalties such as accumulating interest on over-drafted bank accounts and credit cards.

On the subject of bank accounts and transactions, Garry advised students to speak to their international student office at the university before opening an account and while it was a simple straightforward process, some guidelines should be followed. She advised against opening multiple accounts and overdrafting, as all US bank accounts were monitored on the federal level and were linked directly to the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) status of students and any unpaid dues will reflect and affect it. Garry added that students should apply for the student visa (F-1) on the embassy's website as soon as they get their letter of admission from the chosen academic institution or as called (I-20) to avoid delays even though immigration and visa process at the embassy in Kuwait is working smoothly.

Direct contact

Expanding on the general guidelines for new students going to the US, Education Advisor at the American Embassy in Kuwait Carine Nassrallah reiterated the importance to be in consistent and direct contact with the international student's



Dr Adel Malallah



Katherine Garry



Carine Nassrallah

office at each school. "Their main job is to ensure the immigration status of each student remain valid," Nassrallah said. She explained that universities and through their required usage of SEVIS, which is a system established by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), keep students' information updated in regard to their academic status as there are minimum required credits students must take for their visa to continue its validity. She compared the SEVIS to the Kuwaiti civil ID, where all information was compiled under one number or ID.

She then emphasized the importance of attending the first week of orientation that each university usually holds, especially for international students, where they would discuss and disclose the various issues a student would want to know to settle and adapt to new environment and was a great chance to mingle, socialize and create new friendships. She reiterated the importance of abiding by the laws, from the federal, to the state laws and even building/accommodation laws as any violations and if not dealt with probably could snowball into a bigger problem regarding their SEVIS status. She said if a speeding ticket went unpaid, it could escalate to a court appearance. If a student did not attend, it could lead to an arrest and revoke of the visa status, she said, reiterating the importance of keeping all advisors and international student office updated in regards to any change of the current address, change of university or state. —KUNA

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KUWAIT: Al-Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawwaz Al-Sabah meets members of the Kuwaiti Youth Council.

Youth council website online in time for Youth Day

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti youth are the future of this nation and its hope to insure its development, Al-Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawwaz Al-Sabah stressed. "It is important to encourage our boys and girls to be an active part of our society," he added in encouragement for the youth to participate in events organized by the governorate.

Sheikh Fawwaz made that statement marking

the International Youth Day as he met the Head of the Kuwaiti Youth Council, Nawaf Al-Azmi, member Wael Al-Enezi and the head of the committee of the council's website Jamilah Al-Otaibi, as they discussed all council activities during the past period, in order to insure cooperation with the hope that the council reaches its goals and success.

Meanwhile, Azmi expressed his pleasure of the meeting "which supports the youth by discussing their interests," pointing to the website which will be a great addition. "The website is a cyber gateway which includes three sectors, initiators, volunteers and assistants which clarifies all information on the council's vision and its missions including its events and faculty," Otaibi said.

Education Ministry accepts retirees as teachers, professionals

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Education now accepts retired citizens in the field to assist with their educational experience in order to occupy vacant positions in managerial, technical and professional positions in accordance with the Civil Service Commissions' requirements.

"The agreement came after the request to acquire experienced retirees to solve educational

issues in cooperation between the ministry and the Kuwait Teachers Society (KTS), as well as to prepare for the upcoming 2022/2023 academic year," said the head of Kuwait Teachers Society (KTS), Hamad Al-Houli.

The agreement came after the MoE's official request that it doesn't mind the help of retirees' expertise in the field. The head of KTS also expressed gratitude to the undersecretary of MoE Dr Ali Al-Yaqoub, on his cooperation and swift response to the important issues facing the educational field before the start of the academic year. "The KTS will follow closely the issues concerning teachers and their rights in cooperation with the MoE," Houli added.

Rotations at National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters

KUWAIT: Official positions in the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters have been rotated by the Minister of Information, Minister of Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi on Tuesday. Decisions included the transfer of Dr Eisa Al-Ansari from the position of Undersecretary General of the Cultural Department to the position

of Undersecretary of Antiquities and Museums. Moreover, the manager of the Cultural Department, Aisha Al-Humoud, has been assigned to also take the role of Undersecretary General of the Cultural Sector.

Also, Dalal Al-Fadhli will be Undersecretary of Islamic antiquities, in addition to her role as the manager of the Cultural and Scientific Sources department. The manager of Al-Arabi magazine Editorial Department, Ibrahim Al-Mulaifi, has been assigned also as Undersecretary of the Managerial, Finance and Services Department. The Minister has also combined the role of the manager of the Theater Department, Faleh Al-Mutairi, to also be assigned as Undersecretary to the Arts Department.

Local

Consultant explains what makes children reject certain foods

Effects include several psychological and physical factors

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Many parents struggle to convince their young kids to consume healthy foods or specific kind of products they believe are necessary for their growth. The daily battle to force children to eat healthy often includes fights and yelling as parents deal with what many of them describe as 'unjustified stubbornness' of their kids.

But Consultant and Lecturer in Mental Health and Educational Family Huda Al-Jaser thinks that stubbornness is not the main reason that makes kids refuse healthy or any specific types of food, as she told Kuwait Times that there are several psychological and physical factors that affect their choices, in addition to the actions of the parents that could further drive children away from eating a specific type of food. The consultant mentioned that the physical reasons are considered a serious factor that most parents don't pay attention to, stressing that some kids are allergic to specific types of food that their bodies would not accept, as it makes them feel unwell if they were forced to eat it. Such foods may include meats, dairies or legumes.

"If kids were refusing to eat all kind of healthy food at an important age of their nourishment and the growth of their bodies such as fruits, vegetables or food full of vitamins, parents must start worrying due to its affect to their immunity," Jaser said.

"Despite that, the actions or methods that most of the parents use to urge their kids to eat, such as forcing them, using verbal abuse or asking the house helper to chase the kids at home, is not probably the best way to convince them," she added.

"Therefore, parents must use the dialogue method with their kids, while using a lower voice tone that is free from verbal abuse. Explaining the benefits of the specific food they refuse to eat and the damage it may cause to their bodies if they would not eat it helps way more than the current methods used by the parents," Jaser pointed out.

The consultant mentioned that there are many kids who grew up hating specific types of food because their parents forced them to eat them when they were children, relating the psychological state of mind of the kid with the food they were forced to eat back then.

Regarding the physical part, Jaser said that not all the reasons for children refusing to eat specific types of food is related to psychological aspect. "Parents should do medical examinations for their child if they noticed constant rejection for specific types of food to make sure they do not have a health problem such as being allergic to certain types of food," she said.

The consultant stressed that forcing children to eat is strictly prohibited and parents need to explain for the kids the importance of eating healthy food, adding that "When the parent succeeds to convince their child

to eat the food they refuse, then the child returns to the old behavior afterward and says they can't eat this type of food, it should be an alarm for the parent that there are serious signs in the child's body that requires medical examinations, which could explain the problem if any, and helps the parent to provide their child with the right food."

Regarding the effect of online videos and social media on children's eating habits, Jaser agrees that more children are recently picking specific types of food as a result of what they see through online videos or media platforms. "With the spread of Korean series, many children recently prefer eating noodles because they watch it in shows where kids in come back from their schools and eat this type of food for their lunch," the consultant explained. "All social media platforms have content that encourage kids to imitate behavior they see, including the great spread of children videos that are full of unhealthy food content," she added.

"One of the cases that I worked with was a kid who



Huda Al-Jaser



refused to eat meat due to the scenes of blood and sacrifices that he saw online, which affected his appetite to eat it, and as a result of his young age, it did not help him to properly understand the idea of eating meat," she further noted.

"The effect of social media may reach teenagers as well," she pointed out. "Many mothers complain that their teenaged kids prefer eating at restaurants and order food at home, and refuse eating healthy food due the huge amounts of food advertisements that they see everywhere on social media, in addition to competition and imitation among teenagers which was created by the influence of social media."

Manpower authority sets conditions for juveniles' work permits

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) announced, on Tuesday, that juvenile work permits must include the age, type, and timing of the work they will be doing, while work should not exceed six hours per day.

The authority set conditions for applying for juveniles' permits, saying that the juvenile should not be working for more than four consecutive hours. A juvenile can work for four hours, after that they must take a rest period of no less than an hour before resuming work during the day. The authority prohibited the employment of juveniles for extra

hours or working on weekends and holidays, in addition to prohibiting employers from making juveniles work between 7:00 pm and 6:00 am.

Last month, PAM announced as part of the 'Towards a Safe Childhood' campaign that business owners who employ juveniles between the ages of 15 and 18 will be obliged to issue a work permit for them. The issued permit is required to include the following data: The name of the juvenile, the name of the guardian, place of residence, age, medical certificate, and the type of work.

It is prohibited to employ juveniles of both sexes in all types of construction work, work with radiation exposure, oil and natural gas industry, petroleum and petrochemical factories, trade factories, organic fertilizer industry, slaughterhouses, and painting work.

It is also prohibited for them to work on any type of machines or their maintenance, and all work that requires the handling or use of lead, benzene, arsenic, phosphorous, or one of the substances listed in the table of occupational diseases, as well as

cement factories, welding works, electricity, blacksmithing, and works that require carrying or pushing weights.

If an employer fails to issue work permits to workers in this category, and if any worker is caught violating the law, PAM inspectors will issue a notification requesting that the violation be avoided and visit the facility again to ensure compliance.

Violators will be punished with the penalties stipulated in Article 97 of the Labor Law, which states that if the employer does not remedy the violation within the specified period, he will be punished with a fine of no less than KD 100 and not more than 200 for each worker. The penalty will be doubled if the violation is repeated within a period of three years.

This decision aims to protect the rights of juvenile workers and provide their necessary needs to complete their assigned work in an appropriate working environment. It is noteworthy that a 'juvenile' is defined according to Kuwaiti law as every person under the age of 18 years.

the application of human rights in various institutions and to suggest suitable systems to support and develop government institutions to work according to the general principles of human rights, based on the role of the National Diwan for Human Rights for which it was established.

The visit is based on what was stated in the Legislation No 67 of year 2015 for the establishment of the National Diwan for Human Rights in accordance with Article No 6 regarding the follow-up of correctional institutions, detention centers and various care homes through unannounced visits and issuing reports on their conditions, and in accordance with what was stated in the internal regulation of the Complaints and Grievances Committee, which is one of the permanent committees in the National Diwan for Human Rights, in Article 20 which instructs "the competence of the Complaints and Grievances Committee to carry out periodic and unannounced visits to monitor the human rights situation in correctional institutions, detention centers, various care homes, or any other public place where a human rights violation may occur." —National Diwan for Human Rights

social, psychological and legal fields to deal with cases and social issues related to women and the provision of rehabilitation, support and psychological support that abused women may need, and provide the necessary security protection for both the staff and the women who are accommodated according to a strict protection system to ensure safety and security for all. The center also needs to provide the necessary equipment and supplies to work properly, and the Committee was looked up on a system for receiving the abused women and their children, and how the staff deal with the cases socially and psychologically.

The Complaints and Grievances Committee, after this visit, submitted a detailed report in which it emphasized a set of recommendations necessary to support the Fenar Center, most importantly is to cooperate with the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice and social development office in order to provide support and social guarantees for abused women, taking into consideration the circumstances of them and their children. The Complaints and Grievances Committee in this work aims to monitor, follow-up and evaluate standards for

in my view

Is Hamlet a coward?

By Ali Alhamadani

local@kuwaittimes.com

Is Hamlet a coward? Robert Icke, an English director, also known as "the great hope for British theatre," raises the question in his play Hamlet. In a time of the war in Ukraine, the economic crisis in Lebanon, and the missile attacks on Gaza, we watch millions of innocent people suffer against injustice. Performed in the Park Avenue Armory Theatre, Hamlet asks if he is a coward until one of the audience members shouts "yes."

While this particular audience member was brave enough to shout the answer, most of the audience was silent - which was odd, considering how the director was trying to involve the audience. Icke used character placement and stage lighting to immerse us, the audience, emotionally with the characters. In the play within a play scene, the main characters are placed in the front row with us when Hamlet directs a performance imitating the King's crime. By doing so, Hamlet and his family became spectators just like us, shifting our focus toward the performed play. The character's position creates an illusion tricking the mind into believing the King is a real person, which blurs the line between imagination and reality.

Rather than taking us deep into the story, Icke brought fiction into our world. The lights are turned on in every Hamlet monologue, breaking the play's illusion. Being under the spotlight makes us feel pressured to act, which imitates Hamlet's hesitation. Hamlet goes further in his last monologue, accusing us of being mute throughout the play and redirecting the opening question toward us.

Human Rights Diwan panel visits social care center

By Farah Al-Falah

KUWAIT: The Head and members of the Complaints and Grievances Committee at the National Diwan for Human Rights paid an unannounced visit to the Fenar Center in order to see the extent of the application of human rights standards and social guarantees available to abused women who are checked in the center, which has been working since January 2022 under the supervision of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs. Fenar Center is dedicated to accommodating abused women over the age of 16, where it was noted that there are some challenges and difficulties that must be taken into consideration, the most important of which is having professional staff specialized in the



KUWAIT: Husseiniyas in Kuwait on Tuesday marked Ashoura during the Islamic month of Muharram, commemorating the seventh century killing of Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) grandson Imam Hussein. —Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

News in brief

Man arrested
for hate crime

KUWAIT: A man was arrested after a video went viral on social media in which he incited to kill and spread racist sentiments through his private account, said the Public Relations Department in the Ministry of Interior. Legal procedures have been taken against the perpetrator as soon as the video was found. The department insisted that the security of the nation and its ethnic cohesion is not to be trifled with.

Students accepted
in private universities

KUWAIT: A total of 6,376 Bachelor and Diploma applicants have been accepted for the academic year 2022/23, announced the Secretary General of the Private University Council, Omar Al-Kandari. The Secretary General urged students to check the list regarding announced dates in order to continue the admission procedures and admit an original High School Diploma certificate. Moreover, Kandari emphasized the importance of following interior scholarship regulations in order that their academic career may continue smoothly, wishing them the best in their career and development.

Kuwait Fire Force
urges vigilance

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) called on citizens and residents on Tuesday to remain cautious due to the unstable weather in the country and the presence of dusty winds, which may last for a few days. In a statement, the Department of Public Relations and Media at KFF said that no one should hesitate to contact the emergency phone number 112 in case of danger.

Kuwait crude oil
up to \$101.45 pb

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti crude oil gained 23 cents during Monday's trading sessions to hit \$101.45 per barrel (pb) compared with \$101.22 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Tuesday. Brent futures also rose by \$1.73 to \$96.65 pb and West Texas Intermediate hiked by \$1.75 to \$90.76 pb.

Subsidized food
smugglers arrested

KUWAIT: Land Border Customs have seized a large amount of subsidized food products that are illegal to export at Sulabiya. This came after the instruction of the head of the vehicle search division, which asked customs to intensify search of outgoing trucks after a series of similar incidents were reported. Legal procedures are now underway after a custom's arrest report had been sent to the Ministry of Commerce. Kuwait Customs warns anyone who smuggles illegal products which will be followed with legal procedures.



Photo of the day



KUWAIT: An aerial view of Kuwait Towers with the Arabian Gulf waters seen in the background. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Cabinet follows up with Failaka
Tourist Park Development Project

Cabinet strongly denounces latest assault on Gaza

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Cabinet held its weekly meeting under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Seif Palace on Monday. Emerging from the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil, and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Mohammad Al-Fares said that the Cabinet touched on the proposal submitted by His Highness the Prime Minister to establish a memorial containing the names of the Kuwaiti martyrs. The Cabinet also discussed the recommendation of the ministerial committee supervising the follow-up to the implementation of



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (center) chairs the Cabinet's meeting. —KUNA photos

Proposal to
establish
martyrs'
memorial

major development projects headed by Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on the Failaka Tourist Park Development Project and the Fast Track for its implementation by the Private Sector.

Moreover, the Cabinet discussed the committee's

recommendation regarding the air cargo city project at Kuwait International Airport and its latest developments until April of 2022. The Cabinet decided to assign the General Administration of Civil Aviation in coordination with the Ministry of Finance and the concerned authorities to take the necessary measures regarding the project. The Cabinet expressed its appreciation for the efforts made by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah regarding the major development projects.

Moreover, the Cabinet touched on the recommendation of the Committee to Strengthen the Food Security System headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Fares regarding the final report of the Committee to strengthen the

food security system. Kuwait's Cabinet also discussed the latest global and Arab political developments, denouncing in the strongest terms the deadly air attacks launched by the Zionist occupation forces lately against Gaza Strip in sisterly Palestine.

The Cabinet strongly condemned the recent huge bombings that hit Kabul city, capital of Afghanistan, and resulted in many casualties, reaffirming Kuwait's principled stance against violence and terrorism, expressing sincere condolences to the families of the victims and wished the wounded a quick recovery. Furthermore, the Kuwaiti Cabinet welcomed the agreement between Yemen's warring parties to extend a United Nations (UN) brokered truce for another two months, hoping the step would lead to a definitive political solution to the conflict. —KUNA



Ministers attend the Cabinet's meeting.



Cabinet members attend the weekly meeting.

Customs seize
shipments containing
banned substances

KUWAIT: The General Air Customs seized three different shipments containing illegal substances. One shipment contained over 3 kg of powdered Lyrica, a banned substance, which was hidden inside food supplements. The other two shipments contained 280 grams of marijuana plants, and about 200 grams of marijuana wax, respectively.

"A specialized squad has been designated 24/7,

and was successful within a short period of operation to spot illegal substances," said the manager of Air Cargo Customs, Mutlaq Al-Enzi. These efforts come after direct direction from the Deputy General Manager of the General Administration of Customs, Sulaiman Al-Fahad, to pay close attention to incoming shipments, in order to improve Customs operation.

Legal procedures have been taken towards these shipments and their owners, and they were transferred to the Drug Control General Directorate. The General Administration of Customs warned against trafficking in illegal substances, as legal procedures will be taken against perpetrators.





Hero's burial for former Philippine leader Fidel Ramos

Hope for change, prayers for peace as Kenya votes

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PINGTUNG, Taiwan: Taiwan military soldiers fire the 155 mm Howitzer during a live fire anti-landing drill in the Pingtung county, southern Taiwan on August 9, 2022. —AFP

China preparing invasion: Taiwan

'China's real intention is to alter the status quo in Taiwan Strait, entire region'

FENGGANG TOWNSHIP: Taiwan held an artillery drill Tuesday simulating defence against an attack as its top diplomat accused Beijing of preparing to invade the island after days of massive Chinese war games. China launched its largest-ever air and sea exercises around Taiwan last week in a furious response to a tour by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the highest-ranking American official to visit the self-ruled island in decades.

Taiwan lives under the constant threat of invasion by China, which views its neighbour as part of Chinese territory to be seized one day-by force if necessary. "China has used the drills in its military playbook to prepare for the invasion of Taiwan," foreign minister Joseph Wu told a press conference in Taipei on Tuesday, accusing Beijing of using Pelosi's visit as a pretext for military action.

"China's real intention is to alter the status quo in the Taiwan Strait and entire region." The Chinese military said its Taiwan drills continued Tuesday and involved air and sea units. The Eastern Theater Command of the People's Liberation Army said in a statement that it was conducting training exercises around the island, "focusing on joint blockade and joint support operations".

Taiwan's military said it detected 45 Chinese planes

and 10 ships operating in the Taiwan Strait on Tuesday, with 16 planes crossing the median line — an unofficial demarcation between China and Taiwan that Beijing does not recognise.

Lasting just under an hour, Taiwan's drill in the southern county of Pingtung included the firing of target flares and artillery, lasting just under an hour, said Lou Woei-ye, spokesman for Taiwan's Eighth Army Corps.

Soldiers fired from howitzers tucked into the coast, hidden from view of the road that leads to popular beach destination Kenting. The drills, which will also take place Thursday, included the deployment of hundreds of troops and about 40 howitzers, the army said.

Tuesday's exercise attracted a crowd of onlookers. "We need to have some countermeasures against mainland China's blockade," said one of the spectators, who only gave his surname Chen. "Conducting military drills will also let them know Taiwan is prepared. I hope both sides can have some restraint."

On Monday, spokesman Lou told AFP the drills were previously scheduled and were not in response to China's exercises. The island routinely stages military drills simulating defence against a Chinese invasion.

But the latest drill prompted an ominous warning from Beijing, which regularly unleashes fiery rhetoric

against Taiwan's independence hopes. "Any conspiracy to go against the trend of history and resist reunification through arms... will end in failure like a mantis trying to stop a chariot," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a regular briefing Tuesday.

'Not worried'

The anti-landing exercise took place after China extended its own joint sea and air drills around Taiwan on Monday, but Washington said it did not expect an escalation from Beijing. "I'm not worried, but I'm concerned they're moving as much as they are. But I don't think they're going to do anything more than they are," US President Joe Biden told reporters at Dover Air Force Base.

Taiwan's Wu on Tuesday condemned Beijing for pressing on with military exercises around the island, accusing them of trying to control the Taiwan Strait and waters in the wider Asia-Pacific region. "It is conducting large-scale military exercises and missile launches, as well as cyber-attacks, a disinformation campaign and economic coercion in order to weaken public morale in Taiwan," he said.

Wu went on to thank Western allies, including the US, for standing up to China. "It also sends a clear message to the world that democracy will not bow to

the intimidation of authoritarianism," he said. Taiwan has insisted that no Chinese warplanes or ships entered its territorial waters-within 12 nautical miles of land-during Beijing's drills.

But its defence ministry said Tuesday the extension of the drills showed China's "threat of force has not diminished" around the island and all of its units would "maintain combat readiness". The Chinese military released a video last week of an air force pilot filming the island's coastline from his cockpit, showing how close it came to Taiwan's shores.

On Tuesday, the Chinese military released more details about the anti-submarine drills it had conducted a day earlier around the island. The Eastern Theater Command said the exercises were aimed at enhancing the ability of air and sea units to work together while hunting submarines.

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. But foreign ministry spokesman Wang on Monday defended Beijing's behaviour as "firm, forceful and appropriate" to American provocation.

"We urge the US to do some earnest reflection, and immediately correct its mistakes," he told a regular briefing. —AFP

Biden tries to heal Kentucky flood victims

LOST CREEK, United States: In Lost Creek, Kentucky, Joe Biden promised flood victims Monday that their shattered lives will be restored-a message of optimism he hopes to beam right through a divided America three months before elections that will decide the fate of his presidency.

A disaster zone, where floods have killed at least 37 people, might seem an odd place for optimism. The presidential motorcade rolled past scenes of savage natural violence-trees torn to pieces, yellow school buses tossed like toys, and fragments of people's houses and belongings festooning the banks of a minor creek that had transformed into a sort of tsunami.

But after visiting victims, including one family whose mobile home had floated clean off its foundations before being wrecked up the street, the Democrat said the natural calamity was a moment to recall deep bonds.

"Everyone has an obligation to help," Biden said. "I promise you, we're staying, the federal government, along with the state and county and the city, we're staying until everybody's back to where they were. Not a joke."

Championing unity in an era when Democrats and Republicans are barely able to talk might also seem like fantasy. But Biden is on a roll. If he was being written off as a lame duck only a few weeks ago, the 79-year-old is now celebrating a string of successes, including likely passage of the biggest climate change bill in US history and an extraordinary intelligence operation culminating in the killing of the last top Al-Qaeda leader involved in 9/11.

His administration has even delivered several landmark bills, including on infrastructure spending and gun ownership reforms, that won Republican support-something earlier considered all but impossible.

And the Democrat is clearly bursting to get back into the country after spending nearly two weeks in isolation due to COVID-19 and a rebound infection. With November midterms rapidly approaching and Republicans, who are threatening to scuttle what's left of Biden's first term, forecast to take control of Congress, the sense of urgency is growing.

Empathy, unity

So in Lost Creek, Biden did one thing he has long been known for doing well: he comforted the grieving. A man with a long history of his own family tragedies, Biden rarely seems more at ease than with fellow sufferers.

He hugged adults, high-fived a toddler, and joked with a small boy whose home had been smashed that he would become president himself one day. Then in a speech delivered in searing heat, with sweat gathering through his blue shirt, Biden broadened to a political message he wants the entire angry-many say broken-country to hear. Recounting how one of the survivors had modestly told him that "Kentuckians don't want to ask for too much," he insisted that Americans across the 50 states should not even wait to be asked.

"They're Americans," he said of the stricken locals. "This happened in America, it's an American problem. We're all Americans." "So, I don't want any Kentuckian telling me, 'You don't have to do this for me,'" he said. "Oh yeah we do. You're an American citizen. We never give up, we never stop, we never bow, we never bend-we just go forward."

This was the centrist, unity platform that got Biden elected to replace Donald Trump after just one term. It's a message he hopes voters will embrace again in the midterms, maybe even saving Democrats' control of Congress. —AFP

Mounting proof of crimes against humanity in Myanmar

GENEVA: UN investigators on Tuesday reported mounting evidence of crimes against humanity, including murder, torture and sexual violence, committed in Myanmar since last year's military coup. The United Nations' Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) said women and children were particularly being targeted.

"There are ample indications that since the military takeover in February 2021, crimes have been committed in Myanmar on a scale and in a manner that constitutes a widespread and systematic attack against a civilian population," the investigators said in a statement.

Myanmar's military seized power on February 1 last year, ousting the civilian government and arresting de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi. The junta has waged a bloody crackdown on dissent, with the violence leaving more than 2,100 civilians dead and nearly 15,000 arrested, according to a

local monitoring group.

The investigation team warned in its annual report that over the 12 months to the end of June, "the scope of potential international crimes taking place in Myanmar has broadened dramatically". The IIMM was established by the UN Human Rights Council in September 2018 to collect evidence of the most serious international crimes and prepare files for criminal prosecution. It cooperates with the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court among others.

Sexual crimes

"Perpetrators of these crimes need to know that they cannot continue to act with impunity," said IIMM chief Nicholas Koumjian. The report said that according to the evidence collected, "Sexual and gender-based crimes, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, and crimes against children have been perpetrated by members of the security forces and armed groups."

Koumjian said the investigators were focusing in particular on crimes committed against women and children, which are "amongst the gravest international crimes, but they are also historically under-reported and under-investigated." —AFP

10 AUGUST - 16 AUGUST 2022
Unit Stock Last

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- Tilda Basmati Rice 5kg: ~~3.430~~ **2.690**
- Best Mix Minis 25's x 2 (500gm/2's): ~~4.180~~ **2.990**
- Lay's Potato Chips Assorted 160gm 3's: **1.000**
- Kellogg's Chocos / Coco Pops 375gm 2's: **2.000**
- Indian Chilled Mutton /kg: ~~3.190~~ **3.490**
- Local Kuwaiti Veal Bone-in /kg: ~~2.990~~ **2.990**
- Sea Prawns (Saudi) /kg: ~~2.390~~ **1.790**
- Black Seabream /kg: ~~3.290~~ **2.890**
- Seabass (Small) /kg: ~~3.690~~ **3.290**
- Mandarin Sunset (South Africa) per kg: ~~0.695~~ **0.545**
- Kiri 24 Portion Cheese 432 gm 2's: ~~2.245~~ **0.245**
- Onion per kg: ~~0.175~~ **0.175**
- Dr. Oetker Tradizionale Pizza Margherita 345gm / Spinachi 405gm: **2.000**
- Ariel Washing Powder 1.5 kg: ~~0.900~~ **0.900**
- Samsung 58" 4K UHD Smart TV UA58AU7000UXZN: ~~269.900~~ **179.900**
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International

Hope for change, prayers for peace as Kenya votes

'This election is different from the others, it's way more calm'

KISUMU, Kenya: From Nairobi slums to Rift Valley towns, Kenyans voiced cautious hope for change and a peaceful future, flocking to polling stations well before voting opened across the nation on Tuesday. None were in any doubt about the high stakes involved in this year's presidential poll as the East African country of 50 million people struggles with inflation, corruption and an unemployment crisis.

In Kibera, one of the largest slums in Kenya's capital Nairobi, thousands lined up to cast their ballot, trying to shrug off memories of past disappoint-

In every competition, there is a winner and a loser

ments in the hope that this vote would prove lucky for them and ease their hardship.

"All along we have been doing elections, getting promises but we see no change. I hope this time it will be better," George Otieno Henry, a 56-year-old artisan, told AFP. Around 270 kilometres (170 miles) northwest, the mood in the lakeside city of Kisumu—the stronghold of presidential candidate Raila Odinga—was festive, with voters loudly proclaiming their support for the former prime minister and motorcyclists honking and blowing whistles.

Clara Otieno Opiyo, a 35-year-old vegetable seller, told AFP she left home before dawn to vote, travelling with her five-year-old boy strapped to her back. "I came here at 4am to vote, having a lot of hope and faith, but if my presidential candidate succeeds, my children's schooling will be free, I will find work, and my life will change."

Others even flew in from abroad, eager to ensure they have a say in choosing Kenya's next leader as well as governors, senators, MPs and other representatives. Daniel Ouko, a 30-year-old sociology graduate who works in a restaurant in Qatar, flew to his hometown Kisumu from Doha, telling AFP: "It is worth the money. I couldn't miss the vote."

'Calm and peaceful'

In the Rift Valley town of Eldoret—the stomping ground of Deputy President William Ruto, who is locked in a tight race with Odinga—voters patiently waited in line, swapping colourful "shuka" blankets for umbrellas as the sun emerged.

Despite an ugly campaign rife with mudslinging and rigging claims, calm has largely prevailed, including in Kisumu and Eldoret, which saw a horrific eruption of politically motivated inter-ethnic violence after the 2007 elections.

"This election is different from the others, it's way (more) calm and peaceful. This one is really good," Joyce Kosgei, a 52-year-old mother of five, told AFP in the village of Kosachei, where Ruto cast his ballot. Hussein Kassim, a 35-year-old businessman, shuddered as he recalled witnessing the 2007-2008 clashes in Eldoret as a young man. "It is high time Kenya should realise voting is just like any other exercise," he told AFP.

"In every competition, there is a winner and a loser. If your candidate loses, fight another day." Even as many sought to cast off the shadow of past violence, rigging fears made a troubling appearance in at least one constituency, where the MP vote was suspended because of incorrect ballot papers.

Around 500 demonstrators protested the suspension in western Kenya's Rongai constituency, blocking a road with burning tyres as police responded with tear gas. "There is mischief in all this," said tomato seller Peninah Tanui, criticising the "incompetent" election commission for the mix-up, in which the names of some candidates were missing



NAIROBI, Kenya: A Kenya Police Officer pushes a man trying to gain access to a polling station while monitoring the entrance following some tensions between voters and police officers during Kenya's general election at Huruma Lions in the informal settlement of Huruma in Nairobi, Kenya. — AFP

from ballot papers. The election commission earlier cancelled several local polls, including in the port city of Mombasa, due to erroneous ballot papers.

'Vote, go home, relax'

But voting largely passed off peacefully elsewhere, with young and old alike turning up to make their voice heard. In the town of Kiambu, on the outskirts of Nairobi, a beaming Hellena Nyokabi said she wanted "to vote for leaders who will protect and support this generation and generations to come".

As onlookers helped the frail 88-year-old walk out of the polling station, she said: "I feel good that I have voted. I have never missed (a) vote all my life." And in a race that has struggled to attract interest from Kenyans aged under 35, some first-time voters said they were optimistic the process would conclude peacefully. "We want to see a new change for the new generation," said Ibrahim Ahmed Hussein, a 23-year-old student in Kibera—an Odinga bastion. "I expect people to vote wisely and go back home so as to maintain peace and order," he told AFP. "Vote, go home and relax." — AFP

Hezbollah vows to 'sever' hands of Zionists

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah warned Zionists on Tuesday against reaching for offshore gas reserves at a time US-mediated talks are aiming to settle a maritime border dispute. "The hand that reaches for any of this wealth will be severed," Nasrallah, head of the Iran-backed Shiite Muslim political and military movement, told supporters in southern Beirut, a Hezbollah stronghold.

"Lebanon's oil, gas and water resources must remain under its control and no one should be allowed to rob the country," he said in his televised speech marking the Shiite mourning ritual of Ashoura. The dispute escalated in early June after Zionist entity moved a production vessel near the Karish offshore field, which is partly claimed by Lebanon.

This prompted Beirut to call for the resumption of US-mediated negotiations, while Nasrallah has responded by repeatedly launching threats. On July 2, Zionist entity said it had downed three drones launched by Hezbollah that were headed towards Karish. That same month, the movement released a video it said showed surveillance of several Zionist-chartered ships, including the production vessel sent to Karish.

Nasrallah's comments on Tuesday came as Lebanon awaits a response from Zionist entity to an offer on the border dispute it submitted to US mediator Amos



BEIRUT: Supporters of Lebanon's Hezbollah react as the group's leader Hassan Nasrallah addresses them through a giant screen, during an event to mark Ashoura. — AFP

Hochstein last month. Nasrallah said that "we are waiting for a response to the demands of the Lebanese state, and we will respond accordingly, but I tell you ... we must be ready and prepared for all possibilities. "We will go all the way, so no one should try us."

Lebanon and Zionist entity, which fought their last war in 2006, had resumed maritime border negotiations in 2020 but the process had been stalled until the latest developments revived negotiations in June. Hochstein told a Lebanon broadcaster this month that he is working towards a solution that would allow Zionists to continue operations in Karish while also allowing Lebanon to enter the energy market. An official last month said Zionist's offer would allow Lebanon to develop the so-called Sidon reservoir, also known as the Qana field, which is located in the disputed zone. — AFP

Projects aimed at boosting...

Continued from Page 1

budgets have already been agreed on," the source added.

It is worth noting that projects such as Metro Kuwait, have been delayed due to changes in its proposed routes, as well as objections from several other parties. The metro and the railway planned to connect Kuwait to other countries of the GCC, should be dis-

cussed and agreed upon, in order to follow up with the projects. Other islands under government plans for development include the islands along Sheikh Jaber Causeway - which is an attractive investment that will have a positive impact on the economy.

However, until now, it has not been developed efficiently and has not been equipped to allow an economic center in Subiya to develop, especially since, Kuwait has signed an understanding memo with China that costs more than \$85 million. "The government will propose these large development projects to the upcoming National Assembly, in order to start their executive procedures in April, just in time with the new budget allocation," sources informed Kuwait Times.

"Look at these tomatoes," he added, gesturing at a group of plants. "Because they are in the shade, they are juicy and perfect - whereas these that are in the direct sun have been burned." Iraq's northern Kurdistan region has been spared the worst effects of desertification, water scarcity and drought that have ravaged other parts of the country. "The region has high rainfall precipitation compared to the rest of Iraq," said a 2019 study involving United Nations agencies and the autonomous Kurdistan regional government.

But the report warned that "local agricultural production is in severe competition with foreign goods with largely lower prices" ... "mainly from Turkey and Iran, whose products have flooded Iraqi markets". It urged "more investments" to improve irrigation, along with water management to promote sustainability, to ensure the efficient use of resources and "mitigate the effects of climate change".

Hamid Ismail Abdulrahman, a fellow farmer in Halabja, said low water levels in wells had impacted agricultural development. Twice a week, the 47-year-old opens his farm to families who can buy "fresh and organic products", from tomatoes to corn and eggplant. He said climate change had greatly affected agriculture all over Iraq, though "southern Iraq has the lion's share of this impact, while in the north the effect is less". — AFP

Trump's home 'raided' by...

Continued from Page 1

weaponization of the Justice System, and an attack by Radical Left Democrats who desperately don't want me to run for President in 2024," said Trump, who was not present during the raid, according to The New York Times.

"Such an assault could only take place in broken, Third-World Countries. Sadly, America has now become one of those Countries," he said, adding: "They even broke into my safe!" Some senior Republicans also took to social media to criticize the raid and accuse the Justice Department of overreach. The National Archives said in February it had recovered 15 boxes of documents from Trump's Florida estate, which The Washington Post reported included highly classified

texts, taken with him when he left Washington following his reelection defeat.

The documents and mementos - which also included correspondence from ex-US president Barack Obama - should by law have been turned over at the end of Trump's presidency but instead ended up at his Mar-a-Lago resort. The recovery of the boxes raised questions about Trump's adherence to presidential records laws enacted after the 1970s Watergate scandal that require Oval Office occupants to preserve records related to administration activity. The Archives had requested then that the Justice Department open a probe into Trump's practices.

White House staff also regularly discovered wads of paper clogging toilets, leading them to believe Trump was trying to get rid of certain documents, according to a forthcoming book by New York Times reporter Maggie Haberman. Since taking his last Air Force One flight from Washington to Florida on January 20 last year, Trump has remained the country's most polarizing figure, continuing his unprecedented campaign to sow falsehoods that he actually won the 2020 election. — AFP

Kurdish Iraqi farmer sprouts...

Continued from Page 1

Therefore, he said, the government should "focus on agriculture rather than oil, for a sustainable economy".

From his farm near Halabja, Muhammad squats among grape vines and other plants, wearing traditional Kurdish clothing as a friend uses a mobile phone to film him. Many of his followers, he said, are not farmers but people who "have transformed their roof into gardens - and that's a way to better preserve the environment".

He invites his Facebook followers to post their questions, and says some farmers have sent him videos of their crops, thanking him for his help. "That makes me very happy," he said. In one video, he advises farmers to space their trees out by just two meters instead of four to keep the soil shady and damp, protecting it from the scorching summer heat. "With desertification, and low rainfall, we must change how we plant trees," he said.

3 Palestinians die, 69 shot in...

Continued from Page 1

Hundreds of people gathered outside the Nablus hospital where Nabulsi was brought by a dozen gunmen, an AFP correspondent reported.

The Palestinian health ministry named those killed as Nabulsi, Islam Sabbouh and Hussein Taha. Jamal Taha said his 16-year-old son was killed while they were walking to work. "The army was in the old city. My son went ahead of me to the market, he was carrying his food. There was shooting and four of us were injured," he told AFP. Heavy gunfire was heard as dozens of military vehicles brought traffic in one of the West Bank's largest cities to a standstill. Clashes with

the army also broke out in other parts of the city, as Palestinians hurled stones at the troops.

"A violent clash developed with dozens of rioters who threw stones and threw explosives at the forces, who responded by means of crowd dispersal and shooting. Several injuries were confirmed," the army said. "All the forces have left the city, there are no casualties to our forces," it added. Zionist security forces have conducted near-daily and often deadly operations in the West Bank in recent months, focusing on militants from the Islamic Jihad group.

On Friday, Zionist entity launched what it called a "pre-emptive" aerial and artillery bombardment of Islamic Jihad positions in the Gaza Strip, leading militants in the coastal enclave to fire more than a thousand rockets in retaliation, according to the army. An Egypt-brokered ceasefire reached Sunday ended three days of intense fighting that killed 46 Palestinians, 16 of them children, and wounded 360, according to Gaza's health ministry. — AFP

International

Record-breaking rainfall, flooding in Seoul kill seven, many missing

Emergency workers struggled to clear hulks of flooded cars

SEOUL: Subway stations and major roads were underwater in the South Korean capital Seoul after record-breaking rains caused severe flooding, with at least seven people dead and seven more missing, officials said Tuesday.

Authorities warned there was more rain to come even as emergency workers struggled to clear the hulks of flooded cars, which AFP reporters saw strewn across major intersections throughout the city.

Dramatic images shared on social media late Monday showed people wading through waist-deep water, metro stations overflowing, and cars half-submerged in Seoul's posh Gangnam district, which was particularly hard-hit when torrential rain battered the city.

The downpour that began Monday is the heaviest rainfall in South Korea in 80 years, according to Seoul's Yonhap News Agency.

"At least seven people died in the Seoul metropolitan area, while seven others are missing, due to heavy rain," an official at Seoul's interior ministry told AFP.

Local reports said three people living in a banjiha — cramped basement flats of the kind made famous in Bong Joon-ho's Oscar-winning "Parasite" — including a teenager, died as their apartment was inundated by floodwaters.



'I am shocked by the damage'

becoming a part of everyday life," he said.

"We should respond all out until the situation is over in order to protect the precious people's lives and property and take steps until the end, until the people feel that they are enough."

But Yoon, who has seen his approval rating plummet to just 24 percent since taking office in May, according to the latest Gallup Korea poll, was facing online criticism for failing to go to the government's emergency control center late Monday.

Local media reported his absence was due to flooding in his area, but Yoon's office denied that was a factor, saying he had decided to stay home as his team, including the prime minister, already had the response in hand.

Yoon still lives in his pre-election accommodation, having declined to move into the presidential Blue House, which he has decried as "imperial" and opened to the public as a park.

"Why did you leave the Blue House" became a trending topic online, as netizens shared videos purportedly showing flooding at his residence alongside mocking comments.

Gangnam floods

Gangnam, a wealthy district in southern Seoul — featured in Psy's 2012 K-pop hit "Gangnam Style" — received 326.5 millimetres of rainfall on Monday, data from the Korea Meteorological Administration showed.

"Gangnam is said to be the centre of the economy and well developed, but it is ironic that it is so vulnerable to natural disasters," 45-year-old office worker Moon Yong-chun told AFP as he tried to rescue his



SEOUL, South Korea: Pedestrians walk past debris outside shops at the historic Namseong Market in the Gangnam district of Seoul on August 9, 2022, after record-breaking rains caused severe flooding, with at least seven people dead. —AFP

car from a flooded car park.

"I am shocked by the damage. The same thing happened around 11 years ago, and it is sad that the government has not taken any measures," he added.

The Korea Meteorological Administration warned South Koreans to "be careful of the heavy rain, gusts, as well as thunder and lightning in the central region" for the next few days.

The KMA also said that up to 300 more millimetres of rain was forecast for the central region that includes Seoul through Thursday.

Transportation in South Korea remained highly disrupted Tuesday, with many roads and tunnels closed for safety reasons, Yonhap reported.

Power outages were also reported across the capital late Monday, while some operation of the Seoul metro and railway services was temporarily disrupted by the heavy rain.

Hiking trails at many of the country's national parks were closed and passenger ferry routes, including from Incheon port, were suspended. —AFP

Hero's burial for former Philippine leader Fidel Ramos

MANILA: Former Philippine president Fidel Ramos, a soldier regarded as one of the country's most effective leaders ever, was interred at the National Heroes Cemetery on Tuesday in a sombre state burial. A low-flying military helicopter dropped flowers as a wagon bearing the flag-draped coffin containing an urn with his ashes rolled through the leafy cemetery grounds, lined with white crosses marking the tombs of dead soldiers also buried at the site.

Incumbent President Ferdinand Marcos Jr joined the ex-leader's widow and relatives as the silver urn with the cremated remains was lowered into the ground after a military parade and a 21-gun salute.

A career soldier who oversaw a rare period of steady growth and peace in the turbulent years that followed the dictatorship of Marcos Jr's father and namesake, Ramos died late last month aged 94. The cause of death was not specified.

Known as "Steady Eddie" for his unflappable demeanour during the country's regular moments of upheaval, he was frequently pictured chewing unlit cigars as he guided the Philippines with a sure hand from 1992-1998.

His widow Amelita Ramos thanked Filipinos in a brief address at the end of the state burial, saying soldiers like him lived a "hard life". "It entailed difficult adjustments. He would be at home for two years and in the province two years after that," she said, apart from overseas deployments in the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

A graduate of the prestigious West Point military academy in the United States, Ramos also saw combat against communist guerrillas back at home. He was later commander of the paramilitary Philippine Constabulary—the key institution that enforced the brutal repression of dissent after Marcos Sr declared martial law in 1972.

Ramos broke from Marcos Sr in February 1986, throwing his support behind a group of young military officers who holed up in a Manila military camp after their plot to topple the leader in a coup was discovered.

Coming amid popular outrage over



MANILA: The grandchild of former Philippine president Fidel Ramos carries his urn during the state funeral at the Heroes Cemetery in Taguig, metro Manila August 9, 2022. —AFP

the 1983 murder of opposition leader Benigno Aquino and massive regime cheating in a snap election, the events led to a peaceful "People Power" revolt that sent the dictator into exile.

An endorsement from Corazon Aquino, the assassinated politician's widow and the first post-Marcos president,

Despite the Taliban's claim to have ended their repressive ways, the signs are inauspicious. A new interim government is unveiled in September, with hardliners in all key posts and no women. The Taliban also bring back the feared Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, enforcing the group's austere interpretation of Islam. The actions spark protests in Kabul and Herat, where two people are shot dead.

IS attacks mosques

In October, blasts tear through a Shiite mosque in Kandahar during Friday prayers, killing 60 people in the deadliest attack since the departure of US troops. The attack claimed by Afghanistan's IS chapter comes a week after a suicide attack at another Shiite mosque in the northern city of Kunduz claimed by the jihadists in which dozens were killed.

Oslo hosts talks with Taliban

Deprived of aid, Afghanistan is

helped Ramos score a narrow presidential victory in 1992. As president, he solved a crippling power crisis caused by years of under-investment in energy, and broke up cartels in telecommunications, aviation and shipping—boosting a moribund economy that reaped a period of renewed growth. —AFP

plunged into a deep economic and humanitarian crisis. Norway invites the Taliban to talks with members of Afghanistan's civil society and Western diplomats in Oslo.

An all-male Taliban delegation travels to the meeting, during which officials from the United States and Europe explore the possibility of providing aid directly to the Afghan people.

Girls barred from school

In March, the Taliban block secondary school girls from returning to class, hours after schools reopen. The Islamists also instruct that government employees must grow beards.

Women ordered to cover up

In May, women and girls are ordered to wear the hijab and cover their faces when in public, with the religious police saying they prefer women to stay at home. Women TV presenters are among those targeted by the measure, sparking an international outcry. —AFP

Afghanistan: One year since the Taliban takeover

KABUL: The Taliban stormed back to power a year ago as US-led forces withdrew from the country, two decades after first ousting the hardline Islamist regime. Here are the key events of the past 12 months:

Taliban take Kabul

As the United States and its allies begin withdrawing their forces from Afghanistan, the Taliban launch a final offensive to win back control of the country they ran between 1996 and 2001. In August, the Islamists accelerate their campaign, seizing a string of cities in a lightning 10-day sweep across the country that culminates with the fall of the capital, Kabul, on August 15, 2021.

President Ashraf Ghani flees to Abu Dhabi, admitting the "Taliban have won". Thousands of terrified Afghans and foreigners rush to Kabul airport in a frenzied scramble to board the last flights out of the country. Washington freezes some \$7 billion in Afghan reserves in US banks, and donors suspend or dramatically reduce their aid to the country.

US completes chaotic exit

Chaos reigns at the airport, where several people are crushed to death while trying to get onto the tarmac as the United States and its allies hastily evacuate their citizens and Afghan nationals who aided the ousted government.

On August 26, a suicide bomb rips through the crowds, killing more than 100 people, including 13 US service members. The Islamic State group's chapter in Afghanistan and Pakistan, rivals of the Taliban, claims responsibility. Four days later, the Taliban celebrate as the last American forces and their allies leave on August 30.

Solomons PM moves to delay election

HONIARA, Solomon Islands: Solomon Islands' pro-Beijing prime minister has proposed changing the constitution to delay scheduled elections, officials confirmed Tuesday, fuelling concerns for the future of democracy in the Pacific nation.

After months of speculation, Manasseh Sogavare has formally put a Constitution Amendment Bill to parliament that would delay next year's election—citing the burden of hosting the Pacific Games, a sporting event, in the same year.

The proposal, obtained by AFP, seeks to suspend the dissolution of "the eleventh Parliament on December 31", meaning the general election would not happen until 2024 at the earliest.

The Solomon Islands parliament is expected to discuss the constitutional changes on September 5, a parlia-

mentary official told AFP.

Sogavare, a four-time prime minister who has twice been ousted by votes of no confidence, is facing another challenge to his premiership, this time over his increasingly close ties with China. After widespread rioting in the capital Honiara demanding his ouster late last year, Sogavare signed a secretive security pact with Beijing that — according to a leaked draft—would allow him to call in Chinese security forces to quell further unrest.

Western powers are wary that, in return, Sogavare could provide China with a military foothold in a strategically important part of the world. Senior US diplomat Wendy Sherman this week visited the nation of 800,000 people to mark the 80th anniversary of World War II's Battle of Guadalcanal.

During the visit she pointedly warned her hosts about a new struggle against "leaders who believe that coercion, pressure, and violence are tools to be used with impunity". "It is up to us to decide if we want to continue having societies where people are free to speak their minds," she said. —AFP



HONIARA, Solomon Islands: Picture shows US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman posing for pictures with the Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare (R) after a ceremony to mark the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Guadalcanal at Skyline Ridge in Honiara, Solomon Islands. —AFP

US commits serious crimes of violating human rights in ME

BEIJING: The United States has committed a series of crimes that seriously violate international law, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, arbitrary detention, abuse of torture, torture of prisoners, and indiscriminate unilateral sanctions in the Middle East and surrounding areas, constituting systematic violations of human rights with lasting and far-reaching harm.

The US crimes have not only led to frequent and repeated wars in the Middle East and other places, plunging them into the quagmire of conflicts and security dilemmas and seriously undermining local people's rights to life, health, personal dignity, freedom of religious belief, survival and development.

1. Launching wars, massacring civilians, and damaging the right to life and survival

American historian Paul Atwood, in his book titled War and Empire: The American Way of Life that came out in 2010, pointed out that "war is the American way of life." Since the founding of the United States, there were less than 20 years in which it has not participated in a war, making it a veritable "war empire."

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has been involved in almost all major conflicts and wars in the Middle East and surrounding regions, which have become the area hardest hit by the external wars launched by the United States.

Statistics from the US Smithsonian Institution Magazine has shown that since 2001, wars and military operations launched by the United States in the name of "anti-terrorism" covered "about 40% of the countries on the planet."

The United States not only rallied its allies to launch the Gulf War (1990-1991), the Afghanistan War (2001-2021), the Iraq War (2003-2011), and so on, but also was deeply involved in the Libyan War and the Syrian War, creating a humanitarian disaster rarely seen throughout the world. The warmongering United States has caused direct, serious and lasting damage to local people's right to life and survival.

First, want only waging wars in violation of international law. The Afghanistan War and the Iraq War are the two largest wars launched by the United States in the Middle East and surrounding regions, spelling dreadful disasters to the lives and living condition of the people of the two countries.

The Brown University's Costs of War Project pointed out that more than 174,000 people died directly in the war in Afghanistan, of whom more than 47,000 were civilians.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the nearly 20-year war in Afghanistan forced 2.6 million Afghans to flee abroad and displaced 3.5 million others.

In 2003, the United States bypassed the United Nations and violated the basic international law principle of the prohibition of the use of force to launch the Iraq War with excuses fabricated out of thin air, constituting aggression against Iraq.

According to Statista, a global statistical database, from 2003 to 2021, about 209,000 Iraqi civilians died in wars and violent conflicts, and about 9.2 million Iraqis became refugees or were forced to leave their homeland. The United States launched wars in the Middle East and other places, seriously undermining the right to life and survival of the people in the region.

Second, trampling on international law and killing innocent civilians indiscriminately. In order to achieve its own military goals, the United States disregards the lives of civilians in other countries. —AFP

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2022

Business

NY renters desperate as soaring rents exacerbate housing crisis

Finding a home increasingly takes longer, with long lines of applicants vying for space

NEW YORK: In mid-May, Paula Sevilla and her roommates joined the many New Yorkers suffering under the city's crushing housing crisis, which has seen rents soar in the pandemic's wake. The tenants argued their landlord had violated rules requiring sufficient notice but ultimately were told if they would have to pay an additional \$800 per month if they wanted to stay at their Brooklyn rental. Sevilla and one roommate began a grueling search for new housing in a market that over the past year has spawned countless apartment search horror stories. After two months of searching, some 30 apartment visits and constant stress, they finally found a two-bedroom spot for \$3,000 dollars per month.

Renting in New York has long been a struggle, but recently costs have skyrocketed, jumping an average 20.4 percent in the second quarter of this year alone, according to the housing search website StreetEasy.

And finding a home increasingly takes longer, with long lines of applicants vying for space. "One time we lost an apartment because we turned in an application four minutes too late," recounted Sevilla, a 26-year-old originally from Spain.

Boiling point

Draconian prerequisites to rent in New York aren't new: earn income 40 times the monthly rent, have perfect credit history, present the last two years of tax returns and current bank balances. And the city's housing crisis has been simmering for years, with construction of units lagging behind a growing population.

Now, as hundreds of thousands of people who fled the city during the pandemic's early days return—along with the normal flow of transplants to America's cultural and economic nexus—the situation is growing untenable.

There are "too many clients and not enough apartments," said Miguel Urbina, a real estate agent. In some cases, it's not even enough to arrive first or offer more

than the asking price to owners, which are often large firms or investment funds, especially in Manhattan.

Sevilla makes \$75,000 annually, slightly more than the average salary in New York—but it's not enough to rent on her own. In New York, renters must often also pay significant broker fees to rental agents, generally at least between one month and 15 percent of the annual rental cost. Many people who stayed in the city in 2020 and 2021 signed leases at a discount, but now many landlords are bumping those prices back up—pushing out more than a third of tenants who can't afford the increases, according to StreetEasy.

Even New Yorkers lucky enough to live in rent-stabilized apartments—approximately one million units and two million tenants, according to city data—are not immune to the increases. Those rents can only be raised based on a vote by the city's rent guidelines board, whose members are appointed by the mayor. For eight years under Bill de Blasio, the highest increases were 1.5 percent for one-year leases—but under the board appointed by new mayor Eric Adams, rents are set to see their sharpest rise in nearly a decade. In June, the board approved a 3.25 percent increase for one-year contracts and five percent for two years, which will affect many of the city's residents with limited means and triggered outrage among housing rights advocates.

'Staggering financial burden'

Manhattan families spend some 55 percent of their income on rent, a figure that is 43 percent in Queens and 60 percent in Brooklyn, according to StreetEasy data. "Rent is becoming a staggering financial burden," read a recent report from the online real estate portal.

Gia Elika, the owner of a real estate agency, says average rent in Manhattan is some \$5,000 a month—but in a city of stark class division, some agencies are offering monthly rents of \$140,000 on Fifth Avenue.



NEW YORK: A sign advertises an apartment for rent along a row of brownstone townhouses in the Fort Greene neighborhood in the Brooklyn borough of New York City. — AFP

The shocking price tags are driving more middle-class families and young people like Sevilla to seek housing in neighborhoods historically occupied by immigrants, Latinos and African Americans, fostering relentless gentrification. Elika told AFP that while "there is always a shortage of housing" in New York, "now it's magnifying" with unprecedented prices. According to the Washington-based policy research group Up For Growth, in 2019, the New York metropolitan area needed some 340,000 more units.

Rising interest rates in the face of rampant inflation has aggravated the crisis by pushing would-be buyers

to rent, in a market "hampered by historically low inventory," according to Lee's report.

Decades-old zoning restrictions limit building size in some areas is one barrier, along with construction costs, limited public housing and legislative foot-dragging that has seen state and local politicians largely put off solving an increasingly pressing problem.

And the outlook is grim: much of the skyscraper boom in Manhattan has been for luxury and commercial purposes, and despite high-rise construction in Brooklyn, Queens and New Jersey, agents don't foresee prices to quit rising any time soon. — AFP

Investors should be protected from illegal competition

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Kuwait's economic expert, Jamal AbdulRahim in an interview with Kuwait Times said that foreign investments in Kuwait, if they occur, will be limited to either speculation in the stock exchanges and the establishment of funds and portfolios for the clients of these companies, or investment through petroleum companies.

Other types of investments will be very limited as a result of the local monopoly policy and the unwillingness of competitors to enter the markets because of the high operational costs for investors, in addition to the weakness of the state's local legislation that should protect investors from illegal competition.

AbdulRahim explained that the policies of the GCC countries encourage foreign investments. "During my period of work in Saudi Arabia, the government worked very hard to encourage foreign investors. Saudi Arabia provided some facilities to investors. In Kuwait, foreign investors don't pay taxes, so enacting legislation to encourage investments will not benefit the state financially.



Jamal AbdulRahim

As for the UAE, it adopted the approach of encouraging foreign investors after investors abandoned Lebanon during the Lebanese civil war. Bahrain and UAE took various initiatives to lure foreign investments. UAE passed laws that protect these investments and provided facilities for them," he added.

AbdulRahim said that attracting foreign investment projects to Kuwait requires the enactment of clear laws that will protect these companies, especially since Kuwait's financial returns in the current situation are very weak compared to other GCC countries.

He said that the repercussions of the decline in foreign investments on Kuwait will leave a strong and clear effect on Kuwaiti public funds, because the government is the one who will ensure the employment of its citizens and thus will spend large amounts of money. In addition, it will lead to a decline in the economic activities in Kuwait.

Regarding the contribution of foreign investment projects in providing job opportunities, AbdulRahim disagreed and explained that bureaucratic processes are discouraging investors. "As a realistic example, one of the international companies was established in Saudi Arabia in 2006, and there was a desire to establish an office in Kuwait, but the establishment of this office took nearly two years due to bureaucracy. And when the economic crisis occurred in 2008, the project organizers withdrew from Kuwait."

Biden signs major semiconductor investment bill

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden signed into law Tuesday a multibillion dollar bill boosting domestic semiconductor and other high-tech manufacturing sectors that US leaders fear risk being dominated by rival China. The Chips and Science Act includes around \$52 billion to promote production of microchips, the tiny but powerful and relatively hard-to-make components at the heart of almost every modern piece of machinery. Tens of billions of dollars more are allocated for scientific research and development.

The White House says the government commitment to bolstering high-tech industries is already drawing in large-scale private investors, with some \$50 billion in new semiconductor investment alone. The lion's share of that is a plan announced by US firm Micron to put \$40 billion into domestic expansion by 2030.

Biden said at a White House speech that the cash injection from the Chips Act will help "win the economic competition in the 21st century." Entrepreneurs are "the reason why I'm so optimistic about the future



WASHINGTON: H.R. 4346, the Chips and Science Act of 2022, is displayed after it was signed by US President Joe Biden on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, DC on August 9, 2022. The Chips and Science Act aims to support domestic semiconductor production, new high-tech jobs and scientific research. — AFP

of our country," he said, and "the Chips and Science Act supercharges our efforts to make semiconductors here in America." One of the Democrat's key themes since he took office has been the need to revamp US leadership in cutting-edge innovation and rebuild the homegrown industrial base in the face of China's mammoth state-backed investments.

Semiconductors are of particular concern because

and business decisions, Cox said in a release. "With so much happening in the world, Axios plays a critical role in delivering balanced, trusted news that people need," said Cox chief executive Alex Taylor.

Cox Enterprises was founded as a family business in 1898 and is now based in Atlanta in the US state of Georgia. Cox subsidiaries range from media outlets such as the Atlanta Journal-Constitution to internet-service provider Cox Communications and an eponymous automotive sales division.

Axios was launched by three former Politico journalists as an online media outlet known for short, snappy articles along with podcasts and newsletters. "Our shared ambitions should be clear: to spread clinical, nonpartisan, trusted journalism to as many cities and as many topics as fast as possible," Axios chief executive Jim VandeHei said in a release. An Axios communications software unit will become an independent entity with co-founders Mike Allen, Roy Schwartz, and VandeHei owning the majority of that company with Cox holding a minor stake, the release stated. — AFP

they are vital to everything from washing machines to sophisticated weapons and nearly all are made abroad.

Although the semiconductor was invented in the United States, the country only produces around 10 percent of global supply, according to the White House, with some 75 percent of US supplies coming from east Asia. Biden is also counting on the Chips Act to generate enthusiasm among voters, as his Democratic party tries to defend a thin congressional majority from a Republican takeover in this November's midterm elections.

He told Americans that studies show the expansion of factories will create around a million construction jobs over the next six years—and these will be "union jobs" that pay "the prevailing wage."

On Wednesday, Biden will sign another bill increasing funding for military veterans exposed to toxins. Like the Chips bill, this won bipartisan support in the usually bitterly divided Congress.

Shortly, Biden is also expected to be signing an enormous domestic investment bill-backed only by Democrats—aimed at fighting climate change and reducing health care costs. Reflecting on the string of successes in Congress and the sudden momentum for his long stalled agenda, Biden predicted that "people will look back at this week and all we passed, and all we moved on, that we met the moment at this inflection point in history." "We bet on ourselves, believed in ourselves and recaptured the story, the spirit and the soul of this nation," he said. — AFP

US news site Axios agrees to \$525m buyout

WASHINGTON: US news website Axios, which has shot to prominence since its 2016 founding, has agreed to a \$525 million deal to sell itself to US telecom group Cox Enterprises, the firms said Monday. The site, built by long-time Washington journalists, quickly built a brand during the turbulent and news-filled presidency of Donald Trump. Since Axios's launch as a news source specializing in technology and politics it has expanded into local news—and the buyout investment will help grow that expansion.

The founders of Axios will keep stakes in the company and continue to lead day-to-day editorial

Google outage hits thousands

SAN FRANCISCO: Tens of thousands of users reported being unable to access various Google services on Monday night, according to outage monitor Downdetector. "User reports indicate Google Maps is having problems since 9:36 PM EDT," Downdetector tweeted. More than 40,000 users, including in New York City and Denver, Colorado, reported disruptions when trying to use Google's services, particularly the

maps and search engine. After around two hours, reports of the outage began tapering, but a small number of users continued to report trouble accessing Google's cloud and calendar functions, according to Downdetector.

"We're aware of a software update issue that occurred late this afternoon Pacific Time and briefly affected availability of Google Search and Maps, and we apologize for the inconvenience," a Google spokesperson said. "We worked to quickly address the issue and our services are now back online." On Twitter, some users posted screenshots of the 500 error message they received while trying to use Google, which said the server had "encountered an error and could not complete your request." — AFP



CALIFORNIA: A worker walks along a path at Google's Bay View campus in Mountain View, California. — AFP



BEVERLY HILLS: Jim VandeHei, Co-Founder and CEO, Axios, speaks during the Milken Institute Global Conference in Beverly Hills, California. — AFP

Business

Stock markets mostly drop on eve of US inflation data

Recent drop in energy and commodity prices should have a cooling effect on inflation

LONDON: Stock markets mostly retreated and the dollar dropped Tuesday on the eve of key US inflation data. Investors are on edge ahead of Wednesday's figures, with some observers warning that an above-estimate reading on inflation, which is already at a four-decade high, could spur another sharp market sell-off.

There is a growing expectation also that central bank interest rate hikes aimed at curbing soaring prices will go too far and tip the global economy into recession. Swissquote Bank analyst Ipek Ozkardeskaya said the recent drop in energy and commodity prices "should have a cooling effect on inflation, yet, higher labour costs could keep inflation sticky at undesirably high levels".

Oil prices rose but remain around six-month lows as recession fears mount and traders fret over the impact on demand. They are keeping tabs also on Iran nuclear talks after the European Union submitted a "final text" at negotiations to salvage a 2015 deal.

An agreement could open the way for Tehran to resume sales of crude on international markets, partly helping to plug a hole

left by the ban on Russian exports following the invasion of Ukraine. Edward Moya, analyst at OANDA trading group, said "it seems unlikely a breakthrough will happen anytime soon."

"Tehran seems like they are willing to negotiate, but an imminent decision to agree to the EU's proposal seems unlikely", he added. European and Asian stock markets mainly retreated after Wall Street provided a glum lead overnight.

Tech firms took a hit following a disappointing earnings report from chip giant Nvidia, seen as a warning that the end of the downturn was still some way off. "While it's tempting to buy into the narrative that we've seen the lows of the year, none of the price action thus far serves to support that conclusion," said CMC Markets analyst Michael Hewson.

"Nvidia's profit warning merely serves to underline the challenges facing, not only the tech sector, but the wider global economy." Hong Kong reversed a morning rally after its government denied claims it was considering removing an extra stamp duty for mainland Chinese buying property in the city.



NEW YORK: Traders work 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

No recession in Switzerland this year

GENEVA: Switzerland does not expect to dip into recession this year despite the threat of an energy supply squeeze, the government's chief economist said Sunday.

The Swiss economy is "doing well" despite the impact of the war in Ukraine on energy prices, Eric Scheidegger told the SonntagsZeitung newspaper. He said it was down to companies to steel themselves for the possibility of power shortages in the winter months.

"We may have to revise our economic forecast downwards for next year. The revised forecast will be published on September 20. However, we do not expect a recession for this year," Scheidegger said.

"Companies can, and must, take this operational risk into account... it is up to companies to prepare for foreseeable events." As for inflation, he said Switzerland was "an island of bliss" compared to the United States, and inflation was likely to fall before the end of the year.

"At 3.4 percent, inflation is much lower here than in other countries. Core inflation-inflation excluding fresh food, energy and fuel-is at two percent," he said. —AFP

"At present, the economy is still doing well. Current indicators show that the economy in this country also developed well in the second quarter-after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine," he said. "Economic support measures such as general perks or tax relief are currently therefore neither necessary nor helpful," he added.

'Foreseeable events'

Scheidegger said the Swiss economy was less susceptible to high energy prices than other European countries as gas accounted for only five percent of its total energy consumption. He said the government would discuss possible measures to curb high energy prices in the coming weeks, which could involve reducing health insurance premiums for low-income households.

The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs official said the help for businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic could not become the norm during economic downturns. "It's been known since spring that there can be a power shortage in winter. Companies have time to prepare for this," he said.

"Companies can, and must, take this operational risk into account... it is up to companies to prepare for foreseeable events." As for inflation, he said Switzerland was "an island of bliss" compared to the United States, and inflation was likely to fall before the end of the year.

"At 3.4 percent, inflation is much lower here than in other countries. Core inflation-inflation excluding fresh food, energy and fuel-is at two percent," he said. —AFP

Philippines sustains growth but inflation a threat

MANILA: The Philippines' economic growth slowed in the second quarter, officials said Tuesday, as they warned that surging inflation and the coronavirus pandemic would weigh on the outlook for the rest of the year.

Gross domestic product rose 7.4 percent, slightly weaker than the 7.5 percent expected and down from 8.2 percent in the previous three months, Economic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan told reporters.

"We're likely to face challenges indeed in sustaining that growth," he said, with the pace seen easing further in the second half. However, the economy should still hit the official target of 6.5-7.5 percent

expansion for the year, Balisacan added.

Covid-19 remains a threat following the lifting of most restrictions on movement and economic activity, he said, while surging food and fuel costs partly sparked by the Russian invasion of Ukraine were also causing downside risks.

Inflation spiked to a near-four-year high of 6.4 percent in June, and the central bank has raised interest rates for three straight months to temper prices. Michael Ricafort of RCBC Securities told AFP the latest expansion data was "decent".

"Philippine GDP could grow by an average of at least 6.5-7.0 percent for 2022, but with some potential upside surprises, even above seven percent... as the economy further re-opened," Ricafort added.

Hit hard during long lockdowns over the past two years, the services sector drove growth as mobility crept back towards pre-pandemic levels. "Given this evidence, we are committed to pursuing the country's full reopening, including the return of face-to-face schooling to address the learning losses and increase domestic activities," Balisacan said. —AFP

KFH announces 20 winners of Hesabi second draw

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced Rasha Al-Shammari as the winner of KD 5,000, in addition to 20 winners of KD 500 each in the second monthly draw of (Your Student Allowance with Us) campaign for Hesabi youth customers. The campaign provides the largest exclusive draw for Hesabi youth customers totaling KD 100,000 throughout the campaign until year end, in addition to a chance for 4 Hesabi customers to win the grand prize totaling KD 5,000 throughout the campaign.

The draw was held in KFH Headquarters under the supervision of MOCI representative.

The winners are Fatima Al-Anezi, Hamad Abdulwahab, Asmaa Al-Mutairi, Humoud Al-Gawai, Dana Al-Tubeikh, Yousef Al-Ramadan, Mariam Boushehri, Asma Al-Otaibi, Hamad Al-Dufairi, Ghaya Al-Ajmi, Wadha Al-Mutairi, Fay Al-Muwaizri, Mariam Abdulsalam, Shaikha Al-Subaie, Fouz Al-Adwani, Ghadeer Al-Otaibi, Samia Al-Otaibi, Abdulaziz Yousef, Lulwa Mubarak, Abdulaziz Al-Hailan.

The launch of the campaign with its additional benefits is part of KFH's strategy that focuses on its young customers. The Bank offers different benefits for Hesabi account holders including special campaigns, exclusive discounts and rewards.

In addition to the largest exclusive draw totaling KD 100,000, (Your Student Allowance with Us) campaign provides other advantages and offers including free prepaid card for the first year, subscription in Baitak Rewards Points and earning 1K points upon activation, distinguished offers, weekend offers, and banking services round the clock.

Customers who obtain their student allowance via their KFH account will have a chance to win prizes in the monthly draw, or at the end of the campaign as soon as they transfer their student allowance through their KFH account. They will have the chance to win and enter the draw one month after allowance transfer to their KFH account. Upon winning, the prize value will be credited in the winner's account directly.

Through this campaign, KFH extends its care and appreciation to Hesabi customers and youth segment. It also confirms the Banks' endeavor towards achieving financial inclusivity and customer motivation to perform more banking and



financial transactions under unified framework, therefore achieving service excellence and understanding of customers' requirements and needs. The Bank is also keen to promote positive values among all its customers' segments such as the value of saving while offering the appropriate benefits and motivating offers.

KFH offers qualitative benefits for young Hesabi customers as part of the constant care provided by the Bank to different customers' segments. Hesabi is also an opportunity to innovate new products and services with which the Bank is able to meet the needs of each segment and age group to receive an outstanding service equivalent to the global criteria and practices in terms of quality, accuracy and speed.

The major benefits offered under Hesabi for youth customers includes obtaining an ATM Hesabi card with a distinguished modern design, a Hesabi Prepaid card which will enable young customers to use it in online hotel and flight bookings in accordance with KFH's credit regulations, as well as paying through (P.O.S) in commercial stores. In addition to many offers provided constantly and in different areas and major discounts in a selection of famous stores and brands for youngsters.

KFH continues to launch marketing campaigns to reward its young customers holding Hesabi accounts, most notably the (Put it on My Account) campaign which was largely praised and welcomed by customers for providing exclusive and distinguished offers.

Hesabi meets the aspirations of this young segment and corresponds to KFH's direction to attract the largest number of young customers, in which they make a large percentage of the Kuwaiti society. Hesabi is also an initiative by KFH to diversify the banking products and services.

بيت التمويل الكويتي
Kuwait Finance House



Kuwait Finance House, KSCP Notice of Timeline

In accordance with the laws, regulations, and instructions of the regulatory authorities in the Kingdom of Bahrain, KFH announces the "Key Events Timeline" of the acquisition offer to acquire up to 100% of the shares of Ahli United Bank B.S.C. (AUB - Bahrain), which is included under section (3) of the Acquisition Offer Document.

Reference to the Firm Intention and Acquisition Offer Document, both dated and disclosed on 25 July 2022, as well as section 3 of the Acquisition Offer Document, we are pleased to announce the following timeline for the Acquisition Offer.

Capitalized terms not defined herein shall have the meaning set for them in KFH's Offer Document which can be downloaded from www.sicobank.com and www.kfh.com

Event	Time and/or Date
Last Trading Date Pertaining to AUB's Shares	Wednesday, August 17, 2022
Suspension of Trading Date Pertaining to AUB's Shares	Thursday, August 18, 2022
Record Date for AUB Shares Trading on the Bahrain Bourse	Sunday, August 21, 2022
Record Date for AUB Shares Trading on the Boursa Kuwait	Monday, August 22, 2022
Offer Opening Date	Wednesday, August 24, 2022
Initial Offer Closing Date	Wednesday, September 7, 2022

Kindly note that the above-mentioned dates are subject to change, and any change shall be announced in timely manner.

Further, other dates related to the offer events shall be announced in due course.

AUB Shareholders are encouraged to update their information (including their registered address) with the Central Registry of Boursa Kuwait and Bahrain Bourse as soon as possible and prior to the Initial Offer Closing Date.

KFH emphasizes that AUB-Bahrain's shareholders and/or potential investors should review the "Conditions Precedent to the Offer" under section (5.7) of the Acquisition Offer Document.

Sincerely,

Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq
Chairman

Business

US regulators clear aviation giant Boeing to resume 787 deliveries

Boeing makes necessary changes to ensure that 787 Dreamliner meets all certification standards

WASHINGTON: After more than a year, aviation giant Boeing will be allowed to resume deliveries of its 787 Dreamliner aircraft "in the coming days," after the company made changes to its manufacturing process, US air safety regulators announced Monday.

Deliveries of the top-selling widebody plane have been halted since spring 2021, so the news will be welcomed by US airlines and travelers who have suffered from massive delays and canceled flights in recent weeks, partly due to the shortage of aircraft.

"Boeing has made the necessary changes to ensure that the 787 Dreamliner meets all certification standards," the Federal Aviation Administration said in a statement. The plane's travels date to late summer 2020, when the company uncovered manufacturing flaws with some jets. Boeing subsequently identified additional issues, including with the horizontal stabilizer.

The difficulties curtailed deliveries between

November 2020 and March 2021. Boeing suspended deliveries later in spring 2021 after more problems surfaced. Acting FAA Administrator Billy Nolen met with safety inspectors in South Carolina last week to confirm they were satisfied with the company's improvements, which were made to ensure they comply with standards and to identify potential risks after defects were uncovered on the plane.

"The FAA will inspect each aircraft before an airworthiness certificate is issued and cleared for delivery," the statement said. "We expect deliveries to resume in the coming days."

Cleared for takeoff

A company spokesman told AFP that Boeing will "continue to work transparently with the FAA and our customers toward resuming 787 deliveries," but did not confirm the firm had received final FAA approval.

During a July 27 earnings conference call,

Chief Executive Dave Calhoun described the company was "on the verge" of garnering approval, though he declined to give a precise target date. At the end of June, Boeing had 120 Dreamliner planes in inventory and was producing the jet "at very low rates," the company said in a filing.

The company's stock price gained ground on the news, closing 0.5 percent higher. Inability to deliver the Dreamliner has dragged down Boeing's profits, which plunged 67 percent in the second quarter. And the manufacturing changes have led to billions in additional costs for the company.

The firm has delivered just over 1,000 of the planes since it was first introduced in 2004. The enhanced regulatory scrutiny of the 787 and other Boeing planes comes on the heels of a pair of crashes in 2018 and 2019 on the 737 MAX, which led to aircraft being banned from the skies globally for more than a year.



Boeing's 787 Dreamliner aircraft.

But the MAX has since returned to service, enabling Boeing to ramp up production of the planes, collect meaningful revenues and announce significant new orders at the Farnborough Airshow earlier this month. Even so, Boeing's backlog of orders in the pipeline lags behind that of archrival Airbus. —AFP

Sri Lanka raises electricity tariffs by up to 264%

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's state-run electricity monopoly will raise tariffs by a stinging 264 percent for people consuming the least, it announced Tuesday, while higher users will face a smaller increase. The loss-making Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) said the regulator had allowed it to carry out the sharp increases, the first in nine years, from Wednesday to recoup part of its accumulated losses of \$616 million.

The CEB had asked for a bigger tariff increase of over 800 percent, but the regulator capped it at a maximum of 264 percent, officials said. Two-thirds of the 7.8 million households using less than 90 kilowatts a month will be affected by the highest increases, while bigger consumers will pay about 80 percent more, according to official records.

The smallest consumers, currently charged 2.50 rupees a unit, will be charged 8.0 rupees. Bigger consumers, being charged 45 rupees a unit, will have to pay 75 rupees (\$0.20). Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis after running out of foreign exchange reserves to finance even its most essential imports such as food, fuel and medicine.

The country is also facing hyperinflation and lengthy electricity blackouts after the CEB was unable to buy oil for its thermal generators. Unable to repay its \$51 billion foreign debt, the government declared it was defaulting in April and is negotiating with the International Monetary Fund for a possible bailout. —AFP

Jazeera Airways announces KD7.8m profit in H1 of 2022

KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways on Tuesday announced strong results with a net profit of KD 7.8 million for the first half (H1) of 2022, compared to a net loss of KD 11.7 million in the first half of 2021. Total revenue for the period reached KD 77.6 million, up four times from the comparable period, while operating profit stood at KD 9.8 million, up 187%.

These solid financial results were driven by active operations that saw the company carry its highest ever number of passengers in the second quarter of

One millionth export MG rolls off production line

MG Motor has celebrated a major milestone, with the one millionth vehicle destined for international export rolling off the production line. The historic model was a new MG ZS, a symbol of the impressive achievements of the British-born car brand.

MG now sells its cars in 84 countries around the world, and the Middle East is one of its key markets. In just eight years, since the brand was officially launched at the Dubai International Motor Show, MG has sold over 120,000 cars across the region. As a result of its remarkable growth in popularity, the company is now ranked sixth in the Middle East table of manufacturers.

This success is replicated in numerous other global markets with customers from across the world enjoying the high-quality driving experi-

ence offered by MG cars. The brand is now ranked among the top 10 brands in 18 countries, including Australia, New Zealand and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

MG owners benefit from the work of the company's highly qualified specialists at its Research and Development centres, with the models renowned for their stylish looks, great value for money, and for being equipped with the latest technologies. One example of MG's success is the MG ZS, which is now the biggest-selling SUV in Australia and Chile among other countries. In the Middle East, recently launched models such as the ZST, RX8 Black Edition and GT have all made their mark by expanding the reach and appeal of the MG line-up.

Tom Lee, Managing Director of MG, said: "This latest milestone is a further confirmation of the remarkable rise of the MG brand across the world. It illustrates the commitment MG has to its customers, both globally and regionally, ranging from the support provided by our Advanced Design Studio in London, our extended support team in Head Quarters to that delivered by our dedicated partners across the Middle East."

out the coming quarters."

During H1 2019, the last full comparable period before COVID-19, Jazeera carried 1.1 million passengers and reported a net profit of KD 6.2 million. The board of the company recommended an interim cash dividend of KD 6.6 million or 30% of share capital, marking the first time in the history of the company to make an interim cash distribution, which reflects the strong cash position of Jazeera Airways and its positive views on recovery post the pandemic.



Marwan Boodai



PROCAPITA announces second semi-annual report for 2022

KUWAIT: As part of its commitment to its partners in success, PROCAPITA Management Consulting announced its second semi-annual report for 2022, in which the Research and Development Department continued its focus on the latest human resources practices and the global challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the war between Russia and Ukraine and its impact on the Kuwaiti labor market, manpower planning, and employment, as well as the latest trends in talent management in the State of Kuwait.

PROCAPITA launched its second bi-annual survey, which targeted business leaders and human resource experts from various sectors in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, where more than 300 companies participated, including 84 listed companies, and 216 unlisted companies covering various economic sectors.

This report resulted from analyzing the database of PROCAPITA and its strategic partners, ZENTHR, which specializes in HR Intelligence Solutions, and Thomas International, which specializes in behavioral and professional employee assessment tools, following the leading global practices in this field. The report provides an analysis of the latest human resources indicators and employment trends for the first half of 2022 within the Kuwaiti labor market, in addition to a demographic analysis of job seekers' data and coverage of the latest developments and challenges they face.

On this occasion, the CEO of PROCAPITA Management Consulting and founder of ZENTHR, Mohammad Abu Al-Rob, said: "The report included the most fundamental changes in human resources practices and trends, which witnessed a remarkable recovery in the first half of 2022, as well as other indicators that have not recovered yet, which indicates the instability of the business environment and calls for organizational restructuring for business sustainability and continuity. In addition, the report also presented the primary indicators for businesses, talent management, and employee assessment."

Abu Al-Rob added: "The report included shedding light on a global phenomenon, The Great Resignation, which has spread in USA and the Europe since mid-2021, and its impact began in some Asian countries and the GCC countries, noting that PROCAPITA's previous reports indicated that the voluntary turnover rate has been increasing since June 2021 and the extent to which the business environment and structural imbalances in the labor market are affected, and the repercussions of the brain drain and scarcity."

He explained that the results of the survey were collected,

analyzed and compared with the results of the last year (2020) and the results of the semi-annual report for the year (2021) on scientific and accurate grounds, in addition to comparing them with international practices.

Abu Al-Rob said that the main observations of the report showed the following:

Global changes Challenges in the work environment

Based on the results of the survey, 64.3% of the respondents believe that the main challenge in the business environment that affects the growth of businesses is the lack of the required expertise and competencies, as the repercussions of the pandemic have greatly affected them, which in turn led to the structural imbalance in the Kuwaiti labor market.

The persistent increase in the inflation rate and the global supply chain crisis ranked second and third in challenges most affected by 65.3% and 59.7%, respectively.

Global changes and tensions

73.6% of the participants believe that the cost of living and inflation will be most affected in the coming period due to the global economic and political changes and crises that the global economy is currently witnessing. In comparison, business stability was the second most affected factor in the coming period at 58.9% because consumer and corporate confidence may decrease due to fluctuation and global economic and political tension.

International trade has been significantly negatively affected in the past two years due to the repercussions of the pandemic and the current global tensions, especially in the European continent and the Russian and Ukrainian conflicts. In addition, inflation rates have continuously increased since the last quarter of 2021, as the prices of many essential commodities have risen. Participants believe that the current compensation and benefits packages are not commensurate with the existing price levels and that the annual salary increases do not keep pace or cover the rising cost of living, leading to insufficient employee wages.

Business sustainability in an unstable environment

Digital transformation has proven its importance for organizations in avoiding many potential risks, and its effectiveness and necessity during the pandemic to ensure stable business continuity has been proven.

In addition to improving procedures, raising efficiency and productivity, and helping to reduce operational costs.

To ensure the stability and sustainability of organizations in light of a volatile, unstable, complex and unclear work environment (VUCA Business Environment), 71.4% of respondents relied on organizational restructuring of their facilities, while 42.9% directed towards digital transformation for its effectiveness in reducing the impact of an unstable work environment, and ensuring business continuity.

Manpower and Recruitment Planning

It was noted that the percentage of males looking for job opportunities in the private sector in the Kuwaiti market constituted 77.5%, compared to a difference of approximately 3.5 times that of females, at 22.5%.

Reasons for rejecting job offers

Given the intensity of competition between establishments to attract and retain employees, the retention offer was the most frequent reason at 29%, which indicates the size of the structural imbalance resulting from the gap between supply and demand in the Kuwaiti labor market.

Employment growth rates

The Kuwaiti labor market is expected to complete its recovery further during the second half of 2022 by achieving an employment growth rate of 7.1%, in line with what was published in PROCAPITA's annual report in 2021.

Employment trends in the Kuwaiti market by sectors

Based on the results previously mentioned in this report, and in addition to the indicators provided by the Procacita recruitment consulting team, the recruitment rates this year varied according to the nature of the companies' economic activity, as some sectors witnessed a recovery and a rise in employment rates in the first half of 2022, while others experienced a stagnation.

Talents in the local market

71.4% of the respondents believe that training programs should be established within organizations to develop competencies in the Kuwaiti labor market. The benefits of training programs are not limited to developing skills only but also help organizations find a less costly alternative to regular employment, as both the supply and demand sides of the Kuwaiti labor market benefit. In addition, 56.7% of the respondents believe that the employment of self-employed and part-time workers should be encouraged as it would raise competencies in the local market.

Opening new fully funded vocational and training centers or in partnership with competent government agencies is considered the third most crucial methodology, as 42.9% of business leaders mentioned.

Attracting talent to work in the local market

38.5% of the respondents believe that the procedures and laws related to recruiting talents and competencies from abroad should be developed and updated.

Kuwaitisation rate in departments

64.3% of the respondents indicated that the percentage of Kuwaitisation is high for the senior management and the executive management roles in most sectors, in addition to some other departments such as human resources, public

affairs, labor development, marketing and e-commerce, and a low percentage of Kuwaitization has been observed in other departments such as legal affairs, accounting, finance, and procurement, and logistics management.

Resignation rate

35.7% of respondents indicated that their organizations witnessed a rise in the rate of resignations during the first half of 2022 compared to the same period in 2021.

Where 7.8% of them witnessed a rise of more than 5%, 14.2% witnessed a rise of more than 10%, and 13.7% witnessed a rise of more than 15%.

While 50% of the participants expressed that the percentage of resignations was similar to the same period in 2021, while 14.3% indicated a decrease in the percentage of resignations.

Talent Management Trends

The importance of human resources departments
86.3% of human resources specialists indicated that the importance and appreciation of human resources departments have increased after the pandemic. This is due to their pivotal role in supporting the facility during economic closures, managing remote work, and continuous cooperation to cover all employee needs during critical times.

Based on the survey results, increasing job integration was the most sought-after goal by human resources departments by 64.3%. This indicates the increased awareness by establishments of the importance of the benefits of integrating employees within the work environment.

Training and Development

The most popular training programs for participants were specialized certificates with 72.9% and leadership skills and strategic planning programs with 52.8%.

Automation of departments and sections

The awareness of establishments on the importance and role of automation in improving overall efficiency and productivity, and processes has increased, as 78.6% of respondents have automated at least one activity, 65.3% have automated at least two activities, and 41.2% have succeeded in automating at least three activities.

Automating employee management programs was the most common among participating establishments with 58.5%, followed by daily communication channels with 54.3%.



Mohammad Abu Al-Rob

Lifestyle | Features



Princia Flora Plisson (right), also known as Cool Fawa, a rap artist and the most popular Central African woman on Instagram visits her mother, Cecile Yohoram, and her brother, Bachir Plisson in Bangui. — AFP photos



Princia Flora Plisson, also known as Cool Fawa, a rap artist and the most popular Central African woman on Instagram, reads the bible as her way to 'meditate' as she said, in her room in Bangui, Central African Republic.



Princia Flora Plisson

War, poverty, no internet: The trials of a CAR rapper



Princia Flora Plisson, also known as Cool Fawa shows her account from her room in Bangui.

Clad in a fluorescent jumpsuit and high-top sneakers, Cool Fawa grabs the microphone and fires up the audience. The rapper and hip-hop singer launches confidently into her best-known song, "Valide" ("Validated"), and the swaying crowd sings to the chorus. Her gig is a bar in Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic — arguably one of the toughest countries in the world for a female rapper to seek stardom.

In the music business, talent is drawn to mega-cities in wealthy countries and would-be stars use the internet to pitch their songs and videos. By that metric, the CAR does not even register on the scale. Remote and landlocked, the country has been torn by civil war for more than nine years. Its people are among the poorest on the planet. Only 10 percent of the population of some five million have access to the internet.

Radical rap
Such problems do not deter Cool Fawa, meaning "Cool Girl". A music pro-

fessional since 2012 and aged 27 today, she has more than 4,500 followers on Instagram and notched up more than 50,000 views on YouTube for her 2018 hit "On va se marier" ("We're Gonna Get Married"). Such figures are of course tiny compared with the followings of Adele, Beyonce or Taylor Swift - but in the context of the CAR, they amount to big recognition. "I love her music. It gives me hope of succeeding one day," said a 16-year-old girl at the bar in Bangui.

"Cool Fawa, she rocks," exclaimed a young man. Cool Fawa - real name Princia Plisson - sings mainly in the former colonial tongue French, with touches of national language Sango and English. When she first envisaged a musical future in 2010, the CAR was devoid of local women stars. "I was a fan of Diam's," said Cool Fawa, referring to a French rapper, Melanie Georgiades, who shot to fame with a debut album, "Brut de Femme", that ventured boldly into male territory.

Determined to follow suit, the teenager became the only woman in an all-male

revolutionary rap group, MC Fonctionnaire, whose songs attacked poverty and inequality. "At first they didn't take me seriously but they ended up accepting me," she said. But, she said, "My music was frowned upon - there were parents who no longer wanted their daughters to associate with me."

Always hustle
Within a couple of years, her fledgling career went up in smoke. Civil war erupted along sectarian lines, triggered by the overthrow of president Francois Bozize by mainly Muslim rebels. "We couldn't go out anymore, we were afraid of taking a bullet or being kidnapped," she said. After violence de-escalated, Cool Fawa revived her career, focusing more on male-female relationships with a "zouk-love" rhythm - a lyrical genre from distant Haiti that spread from the Caribbean.

"That's what sells," she said, with a touch of regret. "For most people in the CAR, rap is a music for losers." Surviving means having to hustle, for money is a

constant struggle. She has received some support from her relatives, although she comes from a modest background, and has received some backing from the ministry of arts and culture. "Sponsors too often try things on sexually," she said. "I quickly realized that I had to fund my music myself."

Cool Fawa has a small business that she manages with her sister. "We buy wigs, shoes, bags... abroad to resell them here. This enables me to pay for the recording of my songs in (neighboring) Cameroon." Her goal is to release her first album. Cool Fawa earns a living from concerts, but not yet with revenue from songs and videos on YouTube, given the public's lack of access to the internet. "People around me always comment negatively on what my daughter is doing," said her mother Cecile Yohoram, a high-school English teacher. "But as soon as I hear her sing, I feel proud." — AFP

Tourists trapped in 'China's Hawaii' to start leaving

Tens of thousands of tourists stranded in a COVID-hit resort city in southern China due to travel curbs can begin leaving in batches, authorities said Tuesday, but many remain trapped. More than 80,000 holidaymakers in Sanya on the island of Hainan - often called "China's Hawaii" - saw their vacations turn into a nightmare when officials declared a COVID emergency and cancelled flights and train ticket sales over the weekend.

Sanya, home to more than a million people, is battling its worst outbreak in two years with more than 1,500 cases reported between August 1 and 9, according to official data. China is the only major economy still sticking to a zero-COVID strategy that uses snap lockdowns and long quarantine periods to contain outbreaks before they spread.

The local health bureau on Tuesday announced that some tourists would be permitted to depart Sanya, saying "tour

groups in areas without any infections... will be allowed to leave after testing negative for the virus twice over a 48-hour period". Other travelers in areas with infections but deemed "low-risk" will be allowed to go if they have not displayed COVID symptoms in the past three days and test negative three times in 72 hours.

But those stuck in places labeled medium or high-risk will have to wait until the situation improves. All entertainment venues including spas, karaoke bars and pubs have been closed in the city since last week. Hotels in Sanya were ordered on Saturday to offer rooms to stranded visitors at half price until the travel restrictions are lifted. China's borders have remained largely closed since early 2020, vastly curtailing international tourism.

The latest COVID outbreak comes during peak travel season in Sanya, a popular surfing spot. A number of Chinese Super League football matches were scheduled to be played in Haikou, the capital of Hainan, in the coming days, but have been postponed indefinitely, organizers said in a statement Monday. "Due to the impact of the epidemic in Haikou, some games in the 12th round of the 2022 CSL cannot be played normally," the country's Football Association said on China's Twitter-like Weibo platform. — AFP



Residents and tourists queue to undergo nucleic acid tests for the COVID-19 coronavirus in Sanya in China's southern Hainan province. — AFP

Su-bear-ru: Bear spends night in US couple's car

A bear that let itself into a US couple's car had to spend the night there after shutting itself in. The ursine intruder successfully navigated the handle on the outside of the door-possibly in a hunt for food-but seemingly couldn't work out how to open it again from the inside. "It was there from a little after eleven at night to almost seven in the morning," Mike Pilati told KTVQ in Red Lodge, Montana. "Every once in a while you'd hear a crunch. I thought it had a garbage can it was chomping on or something. But it was my car it was crunching up," Pilati said.

Pilati and his wife, Maria, called the local sheriff to report the bear break-in, and were told that wildlife officials would

be out the following day. But Pilati needed to get things moving a bit quicker, so early the next morning he gingerly opened the car door with a stick from the safety of a building. "I reached through that side door there and reached out and popped the door of the car, and the bear came roaring out," he said. Footage shows the black bear jumping out of the car before scampering off to find her young cubs, who were nearby.

Having got rid of their unwanted guest, the Pilatis went to inspect the damage-a shattered windshield, a chewed dashboard, a mangled passenger door and a whole lot of smell. "Bears are stinky creatures," Mike Pilati told the broadcaster. While the Subaru car-a brand favored by outdoorsy types-is no longer in pristine condition, Maria Pilati says the couple have still found reason to smile. "Now we call a Su-bear-ru," she said. — AFP

France gears for 'exceptional' rescue of beluga astray in Seine

French officials are moving ahead with a delicate plan to transport a beluga whale back to the ocean after it swam far up the Seine river toward Paris, putting its life in danger, a marine expert said Tuesday. The four-metre (13-foot) cetacean was discovered a week ago and appears sick and underweight but its condition is "satisfactory," Isabelle Brasseur of the Marineland sea animal park in southern France, Europe's biggest, told AFP. "As of this morning we have an idea of something that could work, we're going to explain and refine it with the people who are going to help us," she said. Belugas are a protected species that cannot survive long in fresh water.

This one is currently around 130 kilometers (80 miles) inland from the English Channel at Saint-Pierre-La-Garenne in Normandy. "What's exceptional is that here the banks of the Seine are not accessible for vehicles... everything is going to have to be done by hand," Brasseur said. It is stuck behind a lock and unable to move further inland - it's now some 80 kilometers from the French capital - but is not turning around, and officials warn that attempts to "nudge" the beluga back toward the sea are not viable.

The idea is to take the beluga by road to an undisclosed seawater basin where it can be treated before being released. But the challenges are considerable and the journey is likely to further stress an animal weighing 800 kilograms (nearly 1,800 pounds). The Sea Shepherd France NGO, which is assisting the operation, said in a statement Tuesday that tranquilization was not an option, since belugas are so-called "voluntary breathers" that need to be awake to inhale air.

Appeal for donations
"In any case, we have to get it out of there... and try to figure out what is wrong," Brasseur said. Veterinarians will keep constant surveillance during the move. "There may be internal problems that we can't see," she said despite the fact that belugas are "extremely hardy" as a species.

Sea Shepherd has issued an appeal for donations of heavy-duty ropes, nets, mattresses and other equipment. 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. According to France's Pelagis Observatory, specialized



A beluga whale is seen swimming up France's Seine river, near a lock in Courcelles-sur-Seine, western France. — AFP

in sea mammals, the nearest beluga population is off the Svalbard archipelago, north of Norway, 3,000 kilometers from the Seine. — AFP

US returns 30 stolen antique artworks to Cambodia

The United States on Monday returned 30 stolen works of art and antiquities to Cambodia that had been looted from the southeast Asian nation, including from an ancient Khmer city, and illegally trafficked around the world for decades. Manhattan federal prosecutor Damian Williams officially handed over the looted antiquities to Cambodia's ambassador to the United States, Keo Chhea, in front of press. "We celebrate the return of Cambodia's cultural heritage to the Cambodian people, and reaffirm our commitment to reducing the illicit trafficking of art and antiquities," Williams said.

Among the 30 works was a 10th-century sculpture of the Hindu deity Skanda, seated on a peacock, as well as a 10th-century sculpture of the Hindu god Ganesha. Both were stolen from Koh Ker, the ancient Khmer capital located 80 kilometers (50 miles) from the renowned temples of Angkor, Williams's office said in a statement. The antiquities, which range from the Bronze Age to the 12th century,

had been stolen along with thousands of others during the wars in Cambodia in the 1970s and when the country reopened in the 1990s.

The federal prosecutor's office said that thousands of Khmer statues and sculptures that were trafficked out of Cambodia over the course of decades to antique dealers in Bangkok, before being illegally exported to collectors, businessmen and even museums in Asia, Europe and the United States. One of the dealers, American Douglas Latchford, was charged

in 2019 with art trafficking, but the case was tabled after his death.

The New York prosecutor's office is involved in the restitution of a vast array of works. From the summer of 2020 to the end of 2021, at least 700 pieces have been returned to 14 different countries, including Cambodia, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Iraq, Greece and Italy. In 2021, American collector Michael Steinhardt returned about 180 antiquities stolen from around the world in recent decades as part of a deal with the government.

The pieces had a total value of \$70 million. The agreement between the US judicial system and Steinhardt, 80, allowed him to escape an indictment but prohibits him from acquiring works on the legal art market for the rest of his life. Angkor, which at 400 square kilometers (154 square miles) is the largest archaeological site in the world, was the capital of the Khmer empire, which lasted from the ninth to 14th centuries. The site, which recently reopened to tourists after a two-year pandemic-induced closure, was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1992. — AFP



Photo shows 'Skanda on a Peacock' - a 10th century Cambodian statue. US authorities on August 8, 2022 returned to Cambodia 30 Khmer works of art stolen near the famous temples of Angkor, among them the sandstone statue 'Skanda on a Peacock'. — AFP



Indonesian youths present self-styled fashion creations at a pedestrian crossing turned catwalk, part of a gathering in recent weeks dubbed 'Citayam Fashion Week' in Jakarta. — AFP photos

Japan fashion designer Issey Miyake dies at 84

Japanese fashion designer Issey Miyake, whose global career spanned more than half a century, has died aged 84, an employee at his office in Tokyo told AFP on Tuesday. "He died on the evening of August 5," she said over the telephone, without giving further details of his death and declining to be named. Miyake's funeral had already taken place, with "only relatives participating" in line with his wishes, and there were no plans for a public ceremony, she said.

Public broadcaster NHK and other Japanese media reported the news of his passing, with the Asahi Shimbun newspaper and other outlets saying he had died of liver cancer. Miyake - who pioneered high-tech, comfortable clothing - was part of a wave of young Japanese designers who made their mark in Paris from the mid-1970s. His fashion house nurtured many talented young designers, and was known for innovative and dazzling catwalk shows.



Japanese fashion designer Issey Miyake

After two years of showcasing collections online or with installations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the brand made its live comeback at Paris Fashion Week in June with a men's show featuring models, dancers and acrobats. Born in Hiroshima in 1938, he was seven years old when the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the city in August 1945. He survived the blast, which killed an estimated 140,000 people on impact and led to the end of World War II after the bombing of Nagasaki three days later.

"I have never chosen to share my memories or thoughts of that day," Miyake wrote in the New York Times in 2009. "I have tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to put them behind me, preferring to think of things that can be created, not destroyed, and that bring beauty and joy." The designer studied at an art school in Tokyo, and moved to Paris in 1965, where he studied at the elite Ecole de la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne. He established the Miyake Design Studio in Tokyo in 1970, and soon afterwards opened his first Paris boutique. By the 1980s, his career was in full swing as he experimented with materials from plastic to metal wire and even artisanal Japanese paper. — AFP

Miyake: Seamless innovator of highly avant-garde style

Fashion innovator Issey Miyake shook up Parisian style with his highly wearable avant-garde designs, saying he was driven to create clothes that "bring beauty and joy" after witnessing the horrors of Hiroshima. Alongside Rei Kawakubo and Yohji Yamamoto, Miyake was part of a wave of young Japanese designers who made their mark in the French capital from the mid-1970s, following the lead of fashion greats Kenzo Takada and Hanae Mori.

Throughout his global career spanning more than half a century, he pioneered high-tech, comfortable clothing - side-stepping the grandiosity of haute couture in favor of what he called simply "making things". Among his inventions were the "Pleats Please" line, permanently pleated items which do not crease, refreshing an old-fashioned concept to exude fluidity and comfort. The much-copied futuristic triangles of Miyake's geometric "Bao Bao" bag complemented countless chic outfits, and he made more than 100 black turtle-necks for Apple co-founder Steve Jobs.

Miyake also wowed runway audiences with his "A-POC (A Piece Of Cloth)" concept, using computer programming to cut whole garments with no seams. "When I grow weary with where I'm going, or when I stumble, I'll return to the theme of 'A Piece of Cloth'," Miyake said in 2006 after winning the prestigious Kyoto Prize. "From ancient times, in Greece or Africa, every culture has started (making clothes) from a single piece of cloth, or skin," he explained.

Hiroshima survivor

Born in Hiroshima in 1938, Miyake was just seven years old when the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the city in August 1945, obliterating everything he knew. He survived the blast, which killed an estimated 140,000 people on impact and led to the end of World War II after the bombing of Nagasaki three days later. Although the bombing left him with a lifelong limp, he rarely spoke of his trauma, once breaking his silence in a 2009 New York Times article calling for nuclear disarmament. "When I close my eyes, I still see things no one should ever experience: a bright red light, the black cloud soon after, people running in every direction trying desperately to escape," he wrote.

"I remember it all. Within three years, my mother died from radiation exposure." In the article, he urged Barack Obama to visit Hiroshima, a wish realized in 2016 when the then US president made a historic trip to the city. "I have never chosen to share my memories or thoughts of that day. I have tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to put them behind me, preferring to think of things that can be created, not destroyed, and that bring beauty and joy," Miyake wrote.

Indonesian teens take to the catwalk at Jakarta crosswalk

A pedestrian crossing turned viral catwalk has become a site for Jakarta's young fashionistas to express themselves, while attracting the disapproval of police in the traffic-clogged Indonesian capital. The informal downtown gathering has drawn sartorial adventurers from across the suburbs of the metropolis, including from Citayam, leading it to be dubbed "Citayam Fashion Week". And with their poses and struts all being shared on TikTok and Instagram, some Citayam pioneers have found instant fame, earning modeling jobs, endorsements and an army of adoring fans.

"I feel like this is the place where I can express my style and create content. It is so much fun because there are so many people and I can meet new friends here. I don't even want to go home," 18-year-old student Ricat Al Fendri told AFP. He and some friends had taken a morning train to the central meeting spot, tucked between sleek skyscrapers and trendy cafes, to flaunt their outfits for the day. Police, who previously moved to ban the use of the crosswalk as a runway, now regularly shout through a loudspeaker to ward the crowd off the street.

But that does not deter girls who don wide-legged jeans and colorful sunglasses - and boys in leather jackets, stylish sneakers and faux-fur coats - from filming their struts for social media. Some of the more enthusiastic teenagers have been caught sleeping on the area's sidewalks at night after missing the last train home. "We have the right to hang out here. It's a public space and for me, it's a great stress reliever from school exams," said Al Fendri.

Copycat crowds

The outfits on display have begun to draw crowds, with news of the phenomenon spreading by word of mouth in the megacity of 30 million people. Saera Wulan Sari, a 15-year-old school dropout from North Jakarta who makes a living

advertising their products and endorsing the "stars" of the movement, providing free clothes, shoes, and publicity. "Teenagers are searching for their identity and they need recognition and validation. These teens saw that the quick and easy way to earn them is through likes and shares,"



selling clams, comes to watch the crowds with her friends. "I am always amazed by other people's outfits, they are so much cooler than me and their clothes are very stylish," Sari said.

The gathering has been likened to a smaller version of Tokyo's famed Harajuku fashion district. The movement has become so popular that copycat gatherings have spread elsewhere in Java - Indonesia's most populous island - in cities such as Semarang and Bandung. And its viral fame has attracted attention from celebrities and influencers, as well as public officials including President Joko Widodo, who said young people should be able to express themselves creatively.

'It's beautiful'

Local brands are now starting to take note and capitalize on the momentum by

'Open to everything'

Having graduated from Tama Art University in Tokyo, Miyake moved to Paris in 1965, where he studied at the elite Ecole de la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne. As a cub designer he worked under Guy Laroche and Givenchy, but his outlook was also influenced by the huge student-led uprising of May 1968. Seeing protests engulf the French capital made him realise "the world was moving beyond the needs of haute couture for the few and towards simple more universal elements such as jeans and T-shirts," Miyake told CNN in 2016.

He established the Miyake Design Studio in Tokyo in 1970, and soon after-

"You always see things in a different way when you allow others to become part of a creative process," he told the New York Times. He pulled back from designing his Paris collections at the turn of the century and has since given a series of talented young designers their big break. But he continued to oversee the brand, and his obsession with technology endured - with everything from fabrics to stitching explained in minute detail in the notes of every catwalk show.

Miyake is perhaps especially revered in France, whose former culture minister Jack Lang came to Tokyo in 2016 to award him the Legion of Honour at a major retrospective. Lang, who still wears Miyake pieces he bought many years



In this file photo, models present creations by Issey Miyake during the Women's Fall-Winter 2020-2021 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show in Paris.

wards opened his first Paris boutique. By the 1980s, his career was in full swing as he experimented with materials from plastic to metal wire and even artisanal Japanese paper. Teamwork was essential to Miyake, who preferred the anonymity of his research and development lab full of textile scientists and engineers to the bright lights of the catwalk.

ago, described the designer in October 2021 as a "man of a deep humanity, open to everything". "Issey Miyake is a researcher, a discoverer, a real inventor who conceived of and used new materials and textures the world had never seen," he said. — AFP



In this file photo, models present creations during the Issey Miyake Menswear Spring/Summer 2023 show, as part of Paris Fashion Week, in Paris. Japanese fashion designer Issey Miyake, whose global career spanned more than half a century, has died, aged 84. — AFP photos

Devie Rahmawati, a social affairs expert from the University of Indonesia told AFP. "Marginalized teenagers used to resort to violence or illegal racing, now they choose fashion instead. This is a positive thing and I think it's beautiful."

For many, the booming street fashion scene has also become an affordable arena for fashionable experimentation, set against the backdrop of the city's most affluent district. Teenagers from poor households who cannot afford designer outfits can join the gathering without judgment, Khairul Badmi, a 22-year-old aspiring actor, told AFP. "To be a part of Citayam Fashion Week, you don't have to wear certain outfits or brands that empty your wallet," he said. — AFP



Beyoncé's new album 'Renaissance' is seen on a music streaming app on a smartphone with a picture of the singer in the background. — AFP

Beyoncé tops US songs chart for first time in over a decade

After releasing her much-anticipated album "Renaissance," Beyoncé has scored the number one spot on the top US songs chart for the first time in well over a decade. Her lead single "Break My Soul" is the 40-year-old's first solo song to hit the top of Billboard's Hot 100 since 2008's "Single Ladies," the industry tracker said Monday.

Her seventh solo studio album also opened at number one on Billboard's top albums chart, the entertainment outlet said. It's the second-highest debut of the year, following Harry Styles' "Harry's House." "Renaissance" also unseated Latin trap global sensation Bad Bunny from the top of the Billboard 200 albums chart, where his "Un Verano Sin Ti" had held the top spot for five straight weeks, along with two peaks when it first came out in May for a total of seven weeks at number one.

Eminently danceable and rife with nods to disco and EDM history, Beyoncé's latest album burst onto the summer scene primed for its needle drop at the club. Beyoncé's soaring vocals have their place on "Renaissance," but it's the rhythmic, urgent call to the dance floor that stands out, with a tapestry of influences paying homage to pioneers of funk, soul, rap, house and disco.

In the weeks preceding the album's release, Beyoncé teased it with a steady stream of the glossy, curated portraits of herself that over the past decade have become her signature. But though she's received wide praise for keeping the world of music videos on the cutting edge, Beyoncé put out her latest record sans visuals (they're promised at a later date.) For all her cultural clout and an indisputable throne in music's pantheon, Beyoncé's songs historically have not seen the same commercial dominance as other contemporary global stars. That was poised to change with "Renaissance" - and Queen Bey made good on her chances. — AFP

Lifestyle | Feature

Nafeesa has discovered a great place to hide her schoolbooks from the prying eyes of her disapproving Taleban brother - the kitchen, where Afghan men rarely venture. Hundreds of thousands of girls and young women like Nafeesa have been deprived of the chance of education since the Taleban returned to power a year ago, but their thirst for learning has not lessened.

"Boys have nothing to do in the kitchen, so I keep my books there," said Nafeesa, who attends a secret school in a village in rural eastern Afghanistan. "If my brother comes to know about this, he will beat me." Since seizing power a year ago, the Taleban have imposed harsh restrictions on girls and women to comply with their austere vision of Islam - effectively squeezing them out of public life. Women can no longer travel on long trips without a male relative to escort them.

They have also been told to cover up with the hijab or preferably with an all-encompassing burqa - although the Taleban's stated preference is for them to only leave home if absolutely necessary. And, in the cruelest deprivation, secondary schools for girls in many parts of Afghanistan have not been allowed to reopen. But secret schools have sprung up in rooms of ordinary houses across the country. A team of AFP journalists visited three of these schools, interviewing students and teachers whose real names have been withheld for their safety. This is their story.

'We want freedom'

Decades of turmoil have played havoc with Afghanistan's education system, so Nafeesa is still studying secondary school subjects even though she is already 20. Only her mother and older sister know about it. Her brother fought for years with the Taleban against the former gov-



Inside Afghan secret schools, where girls defy the Taleban

Girls arrive in a secret school at an undisclosed location in Afghanistan. Hundreds of thousands of girls and young women have been deprived of the chance of education since the Taleban returned to power a year ago, but their thirst for learning has not lessened. Since seizing power a year ago, the Taleban have imposed harsh restrictions on girls and women to comply with their austere vision of Islam—effectively squeezing them out of public life. — AFP photos

ernment and US-led forces in the mountains, returning home after their victory imbued with the hard-line doctrine that says a woman's place is the home.

He allows her to attend a madrassa to study the Koran in the morning, but in the afternoon she sneaks out to a clandestine classroom organized by the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). "We have accepted this risk, otherwise we will remain uneducated," Nafeesa said. "I want to be a doctor... We want to do something for ourselves, we want to have freedom, serve society and build our future." When AFP visited her school, Nafeesa and nine other

girls were discussing freedom of speech with their female teacher, sitting side-by-side on a carpet and taking turns reading out loud from a textbook.

To get to class, they frequently leave home hours earlier, taking different routes to avoid being noticed in an area made up mostly of mem-

bers of the Pashtun ethnic group, who form the bulk of the Taleban and are known for their conservative ways. If a Taleban fighter asks, the girls say they are enrolled in a tailoring workshop, and hide their schoolbooks in shopping bags or under their abaya and burqa overgarments. They not only take risks, but also make sacrifices - Nafeesa's sister dropped out of school to limit any suspicions her brother might have.

the Taleban still insist classes will be allowed to resume. But the issue has split the movement, with several sources telling AFP a hardline faction that advises supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada opposed any girls' schooling - or at best, wanted it limited to religious studies and practical classes such as cooking and needlework.

The official line, however, remains that it is just a "technical issue" and classes will resume once a curriculum based on Islamic rules is defined. Primary girls still go to school and, for now at least, young women can attend university - although lectures are segregated and some subjects cut because of a shortage of female teachers. Without a secondary school certificate, however, teenage girls will not be able to sit university entrance exams, so this current crop of tertiary female students could be the country's last for the foreseeable future. "Education is an inalienable right in Islam for both men and women," scholar Abdul Bari Madani told AFP. "If this ban continues, Afghanistan will return to the medieval age... an entire generation of girls will be buried."

Lost generation

It is this fear of a lost generation that spurred teacher Tamkin to convert her home in Kabul into a school. The 40-year-old was almost lost herself, having been forced to stop studying during the Taleban's first stint in power, from 1996 to 2001, when all girls' schooling was banned. It took years of self-study for Tamkin to qualify as a teacher, only for her to lose her job at the education ministry when the Taleban returned last year. "I didn't want these girls to be like me," she told AFP, tears rolling down her cheeks. "They should have a better future."

With the support of her husband, Tamkin first turned a storeroom into a class. Then she sold a family cow to raise funds for textbooks, as most of her girls came from poor families and couldn't afford their own. Today, she teaches English and science to

about 25 eager students. On a rainy day recently, the girls trickled into her classroom for a biology lesson. "I just want to study. It doesn't matter what the place is like," said Narwan, who should be in grade 12, sitting in a room packed with girls of all ages.

Behind her, a poster on a wall

other parents must also be crying," the 38-year-old said.

About a dozen girls gather two days a week at Laila's house, which has a courtyard and a garden where she grows vegetables and fruit. The classroom has a wide window opening to the garden, and girls with textbooks kept in blue

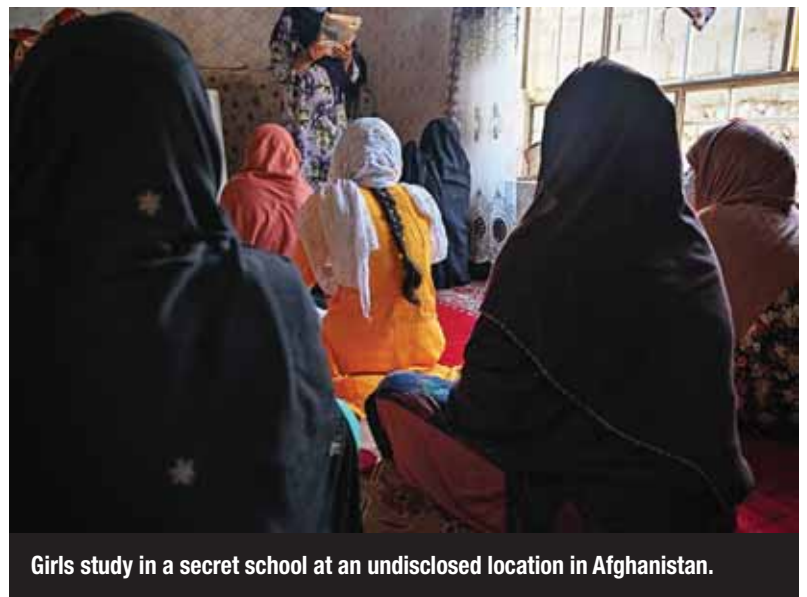


plastic folders sit on a carpet - happy and cheerful, studying together. As the class begins, one by one they read out the answers to their homework. "We are not afraid of the Taleban," said student Kawsar, 18. "If they say anything, we will fight it out but continue to study."

But the right to study is not the only aim for some Afghan girls and women - who are all too frequently married off into abusive or restrictive relationships. Zahra, who attends a secret school in eastern Afghanistan, was married at 14 and now lives with in-laws who oppose the idea of her attending classes. She takes sleeping pills to fight her anxiety - worried her husband's family will force him to make her stay home. "I tell them I'm going to the local bazaar and come here," said Zahra of her secret school. For her, she says, it is the only way to make friends. — AFP

No justification in Islam

Religious scholars say there is no justification in Islam for the ban on girls' secondary school education and, a year since taking power,



Girls study in a secret school at an undisclosed location in Afghanistan.

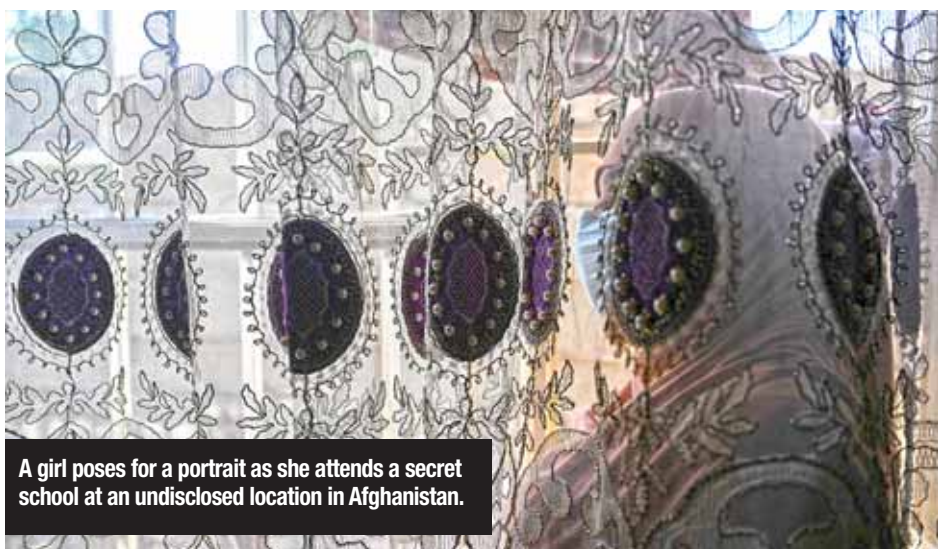
urges students to be considerate: "Tongue has no bones, but it is so strong that it can break the heart, so be careful of your words." Such consideration by her neighbors has helped Tamkin keep the school's real purpose hidden. "The Taleban have asked several times 'what's going on here?' I have told the neighbors to say it's a madrassa," Tamkin said. Seventeen-year-old Maliha believes firmly the day will come when the Taleban will no longer be in power. "Then we will put our knowledge to good use," she said.

'Not afraid of Taleban'

On the outskirts of Kabul, in a maze of mud houses, Laila is another teacher running underground classes. Looking at her daughter's face after the planned reopening of secondary schools was cancelled, she knew she had to do something. "If my daughter was crying, then the daughters of

plastic folders sit on a carpet - happy and cheerful, studying together. As the class begins, one by one they read out the answers to their homework. "We are not afraid of the Taleban," said student Kawsar, 18. "If they say anything, we will fight it out but continue to study."

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A girl poses for a portrait as she attends a secret school at an undisclosed location in Afghanistan.



Sports

Real Madrid motivated ahead of Frankfurt Super Cup clash

Ancelotti says Frankfurt has advantage of starting season early

HELSINKI: Real Madrid are determined not to be knocked off their perch at the summit of European football this season as they prepare to start their campaign against Eintracht Frankfurt in the UEFA Super Cup in Helsinki on Wednesday.

Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, who is the only manager to win the Champions League four times, said his side's 1-0 victory over Liverpool in last season's final made him "feel like no one should ever take your place".

"And that's a pretty strong motivation to keep win-

was aware not to take last season's Europa League winners lightly. "Last year, Eintracht achieved something special because they weren't among the favorites," added Ancelotti, whose side recently returned from a pre-season tour to the United States.

Wednesday's game will be played at the Olympic Stadium in Helsinki, where Frankfurt will make their Super Cup debut in their first competitive meeting with Madrid since the legendary 1960 European Cup final which the Spanish giants won 7-3. Real will be making their eighth Super Cup appearance, having lifted the trophy four times. Ancelotti himself is unbeaten in Super Cup finals. He won two with AC Milan in 2003 and 2007, as well as with Real in 2014.

'More disadvantages' for Real

While Real will take on a side which qualified for the final on the back of winning their first European trophy in 42 years, Ancelotti said Frankfurt had the advantage going into Wednesday's clash in Helsinki. "We have a few more disadvantages than Eintracht, who start their season earlier, but we'll play to win," he said.

Although Madrid's La Liga campaign will not start until Sunday when they take on newly-promoted Almeria, Frankfurt fans may question how much of an advantage they have in the wake of Friday's 6-1 thrashing at the hands of Bayern Munich in their Bundesliga season opener. Frankfurt goalkeeper Kevin Trapp said his side would not be overawed against Madrid and were relishing the experience ahead of what will be their maiden Champions League campaign this year. They knocked out Barcelona on the way to winning last season's Europa League, defeating Rangers on penalties in the final in Seville.

"We want to be a team who are awkward to play against, who fight and never give up. Of course, we have



PASADENA: Real Madrid's players pose ahead of their international friendly football match against Juventus at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, on July 30, 2022. — AFP

respect, but not fear," the former PSG goalkeeper told the Eintracht Frankfurt website in an interview published Sunday.

Trapp, who alongside former Bayern and Borussia Dortmund midfielder Mario Goetze is one of only a handful of players with Champions League experience

in the Eintracht ranks, said his side deserved their place in the season-opening showpiece. "Playing in the Super Cup means you've been successful, earned it and done a good job. To have the opportunity at this stage of the season to win a trophy against this club (Madrid) — it doesn't get better." — AFP



Madrid opens La Liga campaign Sunday

ning," he said in an interview with UEFA.com. Ancelotti returned for a second spell in charge of Real ahead of last season and led them to their 35th Spanish title. However, it was in Europe where Real really impressed, pulling off comeback victories over Paris Saint-Germain, Chelsea and Manchester City before beating the heavily favored Reds in the final.

"All the comebacks we made were achieved in our stadium, thanks to that boost which came from the stands. Always believe, never give up. After all, we played against very strong teams. It was inevitable that we would suffer," he said.

The Italian coach said he saw echoes of Real's fighting spirit in their underdog opponents Frankfurt, and

Cash-strapped African clubs eagerly await Super League riches

JOHANNESBURG: African football supremo Patrice Motsepe will launch in Tanzania on Wednesday a CAF Super League, with promises of a \$100 million (98 million euros) prize fund for cash-strapped clubs. Team owners have complained for decades about the costs of competing in the current marquee competition, the CAF Champions League, which offers a \$2.5 million first prize from a \$12.5 million pot.

"There are some African clubs with literally millions of supporters and the owners have to pay money in order to compete in CAF competitions," FIFA president Gianni Infantino said. Billionaire South African businessman and Confederation of African Football (CAF) president Motsepe admitted after his club, Mamelodi Sundowns, won the 2016 Champions League that the prize money did not cover all the expenses.

Hamdi Meddeb, chairman of four-time Champions League winners Esperance Tunis, says "if we think of what we spend on the Champions League, compared to what we earn, it would be better not to play in it. Africa is a huge continent and sometimes we have to charter flights at a cost of more than \$100,000 each. When we won the Champions League (in 2018 and 2019), more than half the prize money was spent on bonuses and allowances for the squad and the technical staff. Those are contractual obligations."

Champions League prize money kicks in only at the group stage, meaning 42 of the 58 entrants for the 2023 edition will incur travel, accommodation and other costs but not receive a cent from CAF. Motsepe has said more profitable times lie ahead, however, and will reveal details of the Super League in the Tanzanian city of Arusha at 1300 local time (1000 GMT) during a gathering of top CAF officials. He previously said there will \$100 million in prize money and hinted that the winners will be at least \$10 million richer.

'Rival best in the world'

"We want the Super League to be a world-class competition and to rival the best in the world in terms of quality of football, resources, infrastructure, pitches, referees and ticketing," the 60-year-old said. "The Super League will be organized in partnership with FIFA, who bring a wealth of experience in terms of running the best competition in the world — the World Cup."

Infantino said "the Super League is an exciting and unique project and FIFA is happy to assist and share some of the experience we have accumulated". While no details about the Super League have been officially released, it is believed 24 clubs will take part in the maiden edition. Eight will come from the north, the dominant region in African club football, eight from the west-center and eight from the south-east.

Invitations to compete will be based on results in the two annual CAF competitions — the Champions League and the second-tier Confederation Cup. Champions League title-holders Wydad Casablanca, fellow Moroccan club Raja Casablanca, Al-Ahly and Zamalek from Egypt and Esperance seem certain to be among the eight competitors from the north. Five-time African champions TP Mazembe from the Democratic Republic of Congo are sure to be among the west-center selections. Sundowns, a Pretoria club owned by Motsepe and run by his son Tlopane, will be certain to be among the south-east list having consistently reached the Champions League knockout stages since 2016.

A CAF official suggested that after the three regional groups, there would be three knockout rounds leading to the final, and record riches for the winners. But not everyone is excited about the Super League with Cape Town City FC owner John Comitis calling it a "super silly idea". "The Super League will kill African club football," he warned. "You can switch off the lights on the domestic leagues." — AFP



MANCHESTER: Former Manchester United star and Wales manager Ryan Giggs leaves the Manchester Minshull Street Crown Court, in Manchester, on August 8, 2022 after attending his trial for assaulting his ex-girlfriend. — AFP

Giggs accused of 'litany of abuse' at assault trial

MANCHESTER: Former Manchester United star Ryan Giggs went on trial Monday accused of submitting his former girlfriend to a "litany of abuse" during a coercive and "toxic" relationship, 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 opened at a crown court in Manchester on Monday morning, presided over by judge Hilary Manley. She said it is expected to last two weeks.

Giggs entered the court building looking grave-faced, flanked by his legal team. Inside he sat upright in the dock, frequently sipped water and appeared to follow the proceedings closely. Giggs is charged with assaulting his former girlfriend, 36-year-old 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 throughout their relationship, which began in 2017 and ended with the alleged assault.

'Damaging relationship'

Prosecution lawyer Peter Wright told the jury that Giggs carried out "a litany of abuse — both psychological and physical — of a woman he professed to love" during a "manipulative, toxic, damaging relationship". "The defendant's behavior became increasingly obsessive" in the relationship, Wright said, and was "calculated to erode any sense of self-worth".

By the date of the alleged assault, Kate "had determined she needed to terminate their relationship" and knew Giggs "had yet again been cheating on her", Wright said. Her sister Emma had been looking after the couple's house while Giggs and Kate had gone out with friends.

Back at home, Giggs argued with Kate and pushed her to the ground, causing her to bruise her

arm, he said. At this point, Emma intervened and "the defendant — we say deliberately — elbowed Emma in the jaw, causing her discomfort". Giggs later "deliberately headbutted Kate, thereby causing swelling to her lips that were bruised and bleeding. Shortly after this, Emma called the police," the prosecution lawyer said.

Giggs was arrested by police at his home and released on bail. He has denied the allegations and pleaded not guilty at an initial court appearance last year. Giggs "was idolized — still is — by his adoring fans," Wright said, but treated Kate "in a way that cannot be excused or overlooked by either an adoring public or the law".

The judge told jurors they may have formed opinions from media stories, but "must put those opinions aside" and must not "reach for Google". Kate was set to appear in court Tuesday, speaking behind a screen. The court was also to watch a videoed police interview.

First of two trials

Giggs's lawyer, Chris Daw, insisted his client "used no unlawful violence" against Kate or her sister, and that he "fully accepts that his behavior on a moral level was far from perfect". Daw said there was "some minor accidental contact" between them on the night of the alleged assault.

Giggs resigned as the Wales manager in June, after being on leave since his arrest. 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

News in brief

Sassuolo out of Italian Cup

MILAN: Sassuolo were knocked out of the Italian Cup on Monday after falling to a 3-2 second round defeat at local rivals Modena. Nicola Mosti scored once in each half in a deserved victory for Serie B side Modena, who took the lead in the 11th minute thanks to Diego Falcinelli's deflected strike from the edge of the area. Domenico Berardi netted for Sassuolo from the penalty spot in the second minute of first half stoppage time. Although Kaan Ayhan pulled another one back with three minutes remaining Sassuolo were unable to find the leveller which would have taken the match into extra-time and became the fifth Serie A team to exit the cup. Bologna and Cremonese made sure the top flight did not lose any further teams thanks to respective late wins over Cosenza and Ternana, 1-0 and 3-2.

Sanchez leaves Inter

MILAN: Alexis Sanchez is no longer an Inter Milan player after the Serie A club announced on Monday an agreement to terminate the Chile forward's contract. In a statement Inter said that they had "reached an agreement for the consensual termination" of Sanchez's contract, opening the door to a potential move to Marseille. According to Italian media Inter will pay Sanchez five million euros (\$5.1 million) to end his time at the San Siro. In return Inter get Sanchez's seven million euro salary, one of the highest at the club, off their books as they try to cut their wage bill. The 33-year-old, who signed for Inter in 2019 but never established himself as a starter, was not part of Simone Inzaghi's plans after the return of Romelu Lukaku this summer.

Galatasaray add Mertens, Torreira

ISTANBUL: Struggling Turkish giants Galatasaray announced they had signed Belgium's Dries Mertens and Uruguay midfielder Lucas Torreira on Monday. Saddled with heavy debts and a tight budget Galatasaray struggled to 13th in the league last season. Fans of the record 22-times Turkish champions welcomed the two players at an airport on Sunday as they arrived for final medical checks. Mertens is 35-year-old but joins after nine influential seasons with Napoli, where the versatile winger became the club's record goalscorer. "It was an honor to get an offer from Galatasaray," Mertens said in a Twitter post. "I'm happy and excited." Torreira, 26, won an FA Cup with Arsenal and then La Liga on loan with Atletico Madrid.

Watford, West Brom draw

LONDON: Watford's Ismaila Sarr scored from 60 yards in an early contender for goal of the season before seeing his penalty saved in a 1-1 draw with West Bromwich Albion in English football's second-tier Championship on Monday. The 24-year-old Senegal forward opened the scoring for the visitors in the 12th minute with a goal reminiscent of David Beckham's celebrated strike for Manchester United at Wimbledon in 1996 when, from well inside his own half, as he produced a stunning chip. Karlan Grant, however, equalized in first-half stoppage-time at the Hawthorns. But in a match where Albion spurned several chances, Sarr missed a chance to win the game for Watford 17 minutes from time when he could not convert a penalty.

Sports

After Durant ultimatum, NBA Nets owner backs Nash, Marks

Celtics, Raptors, Heat top candidates to add disgruntled star

NEW YORK: Brooklyn Nets owner Joe Tsai backed head coach Steve Nash and general manager Sean Marks on Monday after reports of a them-or-me ultimatum from NBA superstar Kevin Durant. After a report from The Athletic detailed Durant meeting Tsai in London and saying he won't stay with the team as long as Nash and Marks remain in their jobs, Tsai made his position clear in a Twitter posting. "Our front office and coaching staff have my support," Tsai tweeted. "We will make decisions in the best interest of the Brooklyn Nets."

the Nets. Durant's ultimatum came after the Nets struggled to a 44-38 record last season, when they traded James Harden to Philadelphia and watched Kyrie Irving miss most of the season with COVID-19 vaccination issues.

Nash, a 48-year-old Canadian and two-time NBA MVP as a guard, got his first coaching job with the Nets in 2020 and has gone 92-62 in two seasons guiding Brooklyn. Marks, 46, was the first player from New Zealand in the NBA and won two league titles, one as a forward with the San Antonio Spurs in 2005 and the other as an assistant coach with the Spurs in 2014.

He spent most of the next two seasons as the Spurs' assistant general manager before being hired to oversee the rebuilding Nets. The team's best record in his six full seasons with Brooklyn was 48-24 in 2020-21, Nash's first season as coach.

Tsai has said it will take a king's ransom to pry loose Durant from the Nets, a price tag of players and NBA Draft picks that leaves most of the NBA unable to contend without complex multi-team swaps. Irving has opted into a \$36.5 million option to stay with the Nets next season but the club's long-term future depends upon Durant's fate.

The Nets also hope that Australian guard Ben Simmons will recover from back surgery and provide a backcourt lift after coming over from Philadelphia in the Harden deal. The Boston Celtics, Miami Heat and Toronto Raptors are considered top candidates to obtain Durant. — AFP



NEW YORK: In this file photo taken on April 25, 2022, Kevin Durant, #7 of the Brooklyn Nets, reacts during Game Four of the Eastern Conference First Round Playoffs against the Boston Celtics at Barclays Center in the Brooklyn borough of New York City. — AFP



Durant says "lacks faith" in the team's direction

The decision likely burns the last bridge between the Nets and their top scorer, who asked for a trade in June. Durant indicated that he lacks faith in the team's direction after the Nets were swept out of the playoffs by Boston in the first round last season. The 33-year-old forward, a two-time NBA champion and 2014 NBA Most Valuable Player, is entering the first season of a four-year contract extension worth \$198 million that he signed a year ago with



KOC board member Sheikh Jaber Thamer Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

Kuwait participates in Solidarity Games

KUWAIT: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, headed Tuesday to Turkey to attend the opening of the fifth edition of the Islamic Solidarity Games. Kuwait is participating in the tournament in the Turkish city of Konya, which continues until August 18 with players who will participate in the competitions through games such as swimming, judo, karate, taekwondo, archery, and table tennis. The tournament, held under the umbrella of the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation hosted by Turkey for the first time, involves players representing over 50 Islamic countries. Last year, the tournament was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Islamic Solidarity Games is an event that always focuses on bolstering ties, making it a vital function for people in the Muslim world, said a Kuwaiti official on Tuesday. Speaking prior to the opening ceremony of the fifth edition of the games held in Konya, Turkey, member of the board for the Kuwait Olympic Committee (KOC) Sheikh Jaber Thamer Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah revealed that senior figures such as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan would be attending the event. He added that Kuwait Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi would be present as a representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Sheikh Jaber expressed Kuwait's keenness on partaking in the prestigious games, featuring around 6,000 athletes from 56 countries. Kuwaiti athletes are ready to put on a show and win competition during the games, he affirmed. Meanwhile, head of the Kuwaiti delegation Fatimah Hayat revealed that runners Mudhawi Al-Shimmari and Ibrahim Al-Dhafiri had qualified to the final of their respective competitions, which were the 100 and 800 meters race. Kuwait has 58 athletes partaking in the event. — KUNA

Optimistic Serena emerging from her tennis 'tunnel'

TORONTO: Serena Williams stepped onto a hard-court for the first time in a year and a half on Monday and fought through for a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Spain's Nuria Parrizas Diaz. The 40-year-old American was competing in only her second match this season in defeating the 57th-ranked lucky loser to reach the second round.

Williams earned her first victory since last season at Roland Garros, some 14 months ago. The relieved 23-time Grand Slam winner said the victory boosted what had been fragile confidence after her long periods of recent competitive inactivity.

"I guess there's just a light at the end of the tunnel. I'm getting closer to the light," she said. "I can't wait to get to that light. I love playing though, it's amazing but I can't do this forever. Sometimes you just want to try your best to enjoy the moments and do the best that you can."

The opening match took two hours, with the veteran winning a 25-minute game to level 4-4 in the second set. She then served out for victory as she plays the event for a 10th time. Williams earned her first title in Canada in 2001 and her third and most recent nine years ago. She defeated Diaz with seven aces and saved seven of the eight break points she faced.

Williams last played in Toronto in 2019, when she had to retire injured after four games to hand over the

final to local Bianca Andreescu. "It's great to be back in Toronto, I didn't know if I would be able to play here again," she said. "This being one of my favorite stops on Tour, I was really happy to be here again."

Another multiple Grand Slam champion also advanced on opening day, with Simona Halep sweeping the opening seven games on her way to a 6-0, 6-2 victory over Donna Vekic to also reach the second round.

Romania's former number one and two-time Canadian champion lost no time in collecting her triumph over the number 82 qualifier in 62 minutes on a day where rain threatened.

Halep, ranked 15th, handed Vekic a 10th defeat in her last 11 matches against a top-20 opponent. The Croat last defeated a member of the ranking elite at the Olympics last summer when she put out No. 3 Aryna Sabalenka.

Halep added a 33rd match victory to her 2022 total as she advanced at one of the five WTA events she has won twice (2016, 2018). The 15th seed leads the WTA with the most career wins at 1000-level tournaments on 180, ahead of Victoria Azarenka and now-retired Caroline Wozniacki on 177.

Reigning Wimbledon winner Elena Rybakina, playing only her second Canadian match, defeated Czech Marie Bouzkova 7-5, 6-7(3/7), 6-1. Roland Garros 2017 titleholder Jelena Ostapenko advanced past Anhelina Kalinina, overcoming 11 double faults in a 6-4, 6-2 decision.

Canada's US Open finalist Leylah Fernandez, out injured since Roland Garros in May, made a winning return with an opening defeat of Australian Storm Sanders 6-4, 6-7 (2/7), 6-3 after two hours and 41 minutes. Czech Karolina Pliskova put out 2021 Paris champion Barbora Krejickova 6-3, 6-4. — AFP

Medvedev not bothered by rivals' absence

MONTREAL: World number one Daniil Medvedev said Monday he will carry on as usual at this week's ATP Montreal Masters despite the absence of his major rivals. The weekend champion at Los Cabos flew to French-speaking Canada to defend his title from last August.

But the top seed will not have to face Novak Djokovic due to the Serb's refusal to take the Covid-19 vaccination. And Rafael Nadal dropped out before the start as his abdominal injury from Wimbledon flared up during training in Spain.

Roger Federer's presence has never even figured in the calculation as the Swiss, who turned 41 on Monday, puts finishing touches on his knee surgery recovery. For Medvedev, it will just be business as usual on court.

"If the Big Three are in the tournament, they are the favorites straightaway," he said. "They win a lot of tournaments — almost every tournament they play — so there is no surprise when we make them favorites. For me, it doesn't change much if they're here or not — my goal is to win the tournament. No matter who I play, I just want to win the match."

The Russian does not automatically fancy his chances when it comes to facing the game's trio of household names. "I've never beaten Roger, I beat Rafa one time (2020 ATP Finals) and I beat Novak a few times," he said. "It's a special sensation, brings you a lot of confidence. It's just a good feeling."

Medvedev earned his first title of the season in Mexico on Sunday as he defeated Britain's Cameron Norrie 7-5, 6-0. He begins in Montreal in the second round after a bye against the winner from weekend Washington champion Nick Kyrgios and Argentine Sebastian Baez.

Wawrinka falls to Finn

Monday's opening day started four hours late due to rain with three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka leading off the program. But the 37-year-old Swiss, whose best Canadian showing was a 2016 semi-final, came up short with Finn Emil Ruusuvuori producing a 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 victory.

The world number 44 set up a repeat match from last week in Washington as he again faces Polish eighth seed Hubert Hurkacz. Defeating Wawrinka in a first-time meeting produced a thrill for the Nordic youngster, who finished with 20 winners.

"I'd rate this win very high," he said. "I grew up watching Stan play. He's still bringing it. I have huge respect, he's a tough competitor. I enjoyed this match. It was a dream come true for sure. I was able to pick up my serve in the third set and that made the difference, you don't want Stan becoming the aggressor."

The Finn said that facing Hurkacz twice in two weeks will be a tough ask. "I had a good match last week, it was not the best one for him," he said. "But I know he will come in hot after losing. I need to bring my absolute best tennis to beat him." — AFP



TORONTO: Serena Williams of the United States serves against Nuria Parrizas Diaz of Spain during the National Bank Open, part of the Hologic WTA Tour, at Sobeys Stadium on August 8, 2022 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. — AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

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

Ibn Sina Hospital 24840300
Al-Razi Hospital 24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital 24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center 25716707
Rawda 22517733
Adaliya 22517144

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

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

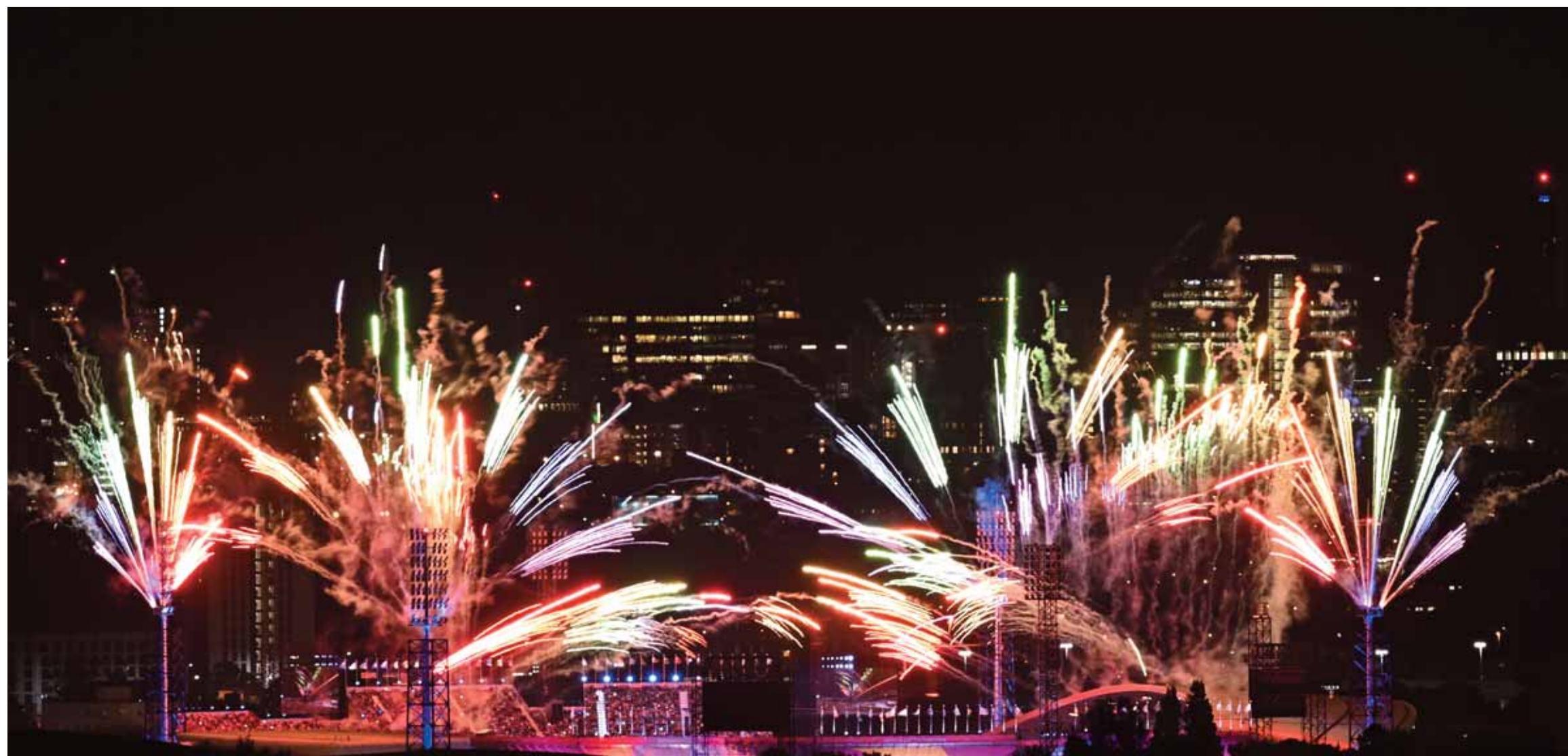
CHANGE OF NAME

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

I, Saleem Ahmed, S/o Haseenuddin, Vill-Mirampur Bega PO/PS - Mandawli, Tehseel - Najibabad, Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, India, Passport No. P9486722, have changed my name to Mohd Saleem for all purposes. (C# 2036) 10-08-2022

Ozzy Osbourne closes Commonwealth Games

Australia celebrates finishing top of medals table at end of tournament



BIRMINGHAM: Fireworks erupt over the Alexander Stadium during the closing ceremony for the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, central England, on August 8, 2022. — AFP photos

BIRMINGHAM: Legendary Black Sabbath frontman Ozzy Osbourne brought the curtain down on the Commonwealth Games in spectacular style on Monday as dominant Australia celebrated finishing top of the medals table yet again. Athletes swarmed Birmingham's Alexander Stadium for a closing party that also featured UB40, Dexys and a tribute to Peaky Blinders, the global hit TV show about the city's most notorious gang.

Birmingham-born Osbourne, known as the "Prince of Darkness", brought the ceremony to a climax after emerging as the surprise act. The show, celebrating Birmingham's rise from the wreckage of World War II and its emergence as a diverse and vibrant modern city, brought 11 days of sporting action to a close.

Earlier, six-time defending champions Australia wrapped up their campaign in style, hammering India 7-0 in the men's hockey final to end up with 67 golds overall. Hosts England ended in second place with 57 golds, ahead of Canada on 26 and India on 22, with para sports included in the medal tally.

Sporting powerhouse Australia have topped the table at every Games since 1990 except in 2014, when England finished in first place in Glasgow. Australia hockey captain Aran Zalewski said winning the Commonwealth Games title is "harder than you think".

"We have won seven, but it's not as simple as coming out here and winning," he said. "There are so many challenges that go into winning a tournament of hockey. "To finish off with a special performance like that, really clinical, was very nice."

Elsewhere on Monday, Scotland's James Healy and Grace Reid won the mixed synchronized 3m springboard final, with England pair Noah Williams and Andrea Spendolini-Sirieix taking gold in the 10m event. India celebrated a golden



Games "a huge boost" for Birmingham

double in badminton.

World number seven PV Sindhu won the women's singles, overcoming Canada's Michelle Li, while Lakshya Sen beat Malaysia's Ng Tze Yong to win the men's gold. India's Sharath Kamal Achanta beat England's Liam Pitchford 4-1 in the men's singles table tennis gold-medal match. "The best two weeks of my 40 years of life," said the winner, who won three golds and a silver in Birmingham. "It can't get better."

Birmingham on the map

Birmingham 2022 CEO Ian Reid told a briefing earlier that the Games had been a huge boost for the city and the surrounding area. He said more than 1.5

million tickets had been sold, with most venues above 90 percent capacity.

"One of the goals at the outset was to put the city on the world map and instill that huge pride across everyone that lives in the region and I think we've achieved that," he said. "I think that can lead to much bigger and greater things."

Commonwealth Games Federation CEO Katie Sadleir said there had been "huge engagement" with the Games globally. She added a number of countries had expressed an interest in staging future Commonwealth Games, including African nations.

She said Birmingham, which already had many facilities in place, could be a blueprint for the future. "It is definitely not something we want people to spend huge amounts of money and capital investment if it is not needed and desired by the long-term plans for the country," she said.

The Birmingham Games made history in being the first to award more medals to women than men. Australian swimming great Emma McKeon became the most decorated athlete in Commonwealth Games history, with 20 medals — including six golds in Birmingham.

And the tiny island of Niue won its first ever Commonwealth Games medal, a boxing bronze for Duken Tutakitoa-Williams. Commonwealth Games Federation president Louise Martin handed the flag to Linda Dessau, the governor of the Australian state of Victoria, which will host the 2026 Games. Martin said Birmingham had put on an event "unlike any we've seen before".

"We are emerging from one of the most challeng-



British singer Ozzy Osbourne performs during the closing ceremony for the Commonwealth Games.

ing periods in modern history, where the COVID-19 pandemic has kept us apart," she said. "Birmingham 2022 proved to be a special moment when we reunited, when the power of sport to connect us came into sharp focus." — AFP

Commonwealth Games chief looks to bright, 'edgy' future

BIRMINGHAM: The Commonwealth Games must be "modern and edgy" to stay relevant to a young audience, according to federation chief Katie Sadleir, who praised 2022 host city Birmingham for an "outstanding job".

The 57-year-old former synchronized swimmer said the Games must show how "they are different and individual" from other events in a cluttered sporting calendar. The 2022 Games, featuring competitors from 72 nations and territories, many of which are former British colonies, came to an end on Monday, with Australia top of the medals table.

Sadleir, the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) chief executive, said ticket sales in the Midlands city were close to matching those of Melbourne in 2006 and the Games had run smoothly despite numerous obstacles. Birmingham stepped in to organize the Games at relatively short notice after Durban, in South Africa, was forced to pull out due to a number of issues including financial problems. The city also faced the huge hurdle of coronavirus but succeeded in putting on an event that created a real buzz.

The 2026 Games, to be held in the Australian state of Victoria, will be spread over four hubs — Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Gippsland — rather than centered on one city. Sadleir hopes that will serve as a model for future events, offering potential bidders more flexibility.

A CGF "roadmap" for the future was rolled out in October, a month before Sadleir took up her role after five years as general manager of women's rugby at World Rugby. In future, hosts will be able to feature sports that are relevant to their country, with swimming and athletics the only mandatory events. "A flexible sports program brings in sports that are important to you (the host)," said Sadleir. "Lets look at them being modern and edgy rather than the traditional ones and strike a good balance for the future."

'Relevant'

Sadleir said part of her probation period was "to get 2026 over the line", which was a huge relief. "Victoria is a kind of model that works for regions or countries. That is kind of exciting." The Australian state has made it clear it wants more than a sporting legacy from the Games. "Victoria believes in how sport can transform the social and economic issues they are facing," she said. "The Victoria government has made a huge commitment to investing in a social housing program. That will be the legacy."

Such a model could open the way for African nations to co-host the Games, perhaps as early as 2034. Canada's Hamilton is in the running for the centenary Games in 2030, along with two or three other interested parties.

"At a sports ministers' conference pre-Games lots of African countries were saying 'When is it our turn?'" said Sadleir. "In terms of a regional-based Games I think we can sit down with African countries who are really keen to explore that and set up a feasibility study. We could see which countries — say two or three together — are best placed to host one and that is really exciting. We could sit down with development banks and talk



BIRMINGHAM: Australian athlete Barrie Lester hands the games' flag to Governor of Victoria Linda Dessau (R) during the Flag Handover Ceremony, signifying the official handover of the Commonwealth Games from Birmingham to Victoria, Australia, during the closing ceremony of the 2022 Commonwealth Games, at the Alexander Stadium in Birmingham, central England, on August 8, 2022. — AFP

about government structure and think long term about their sports policy. An African Games could be in play for 2034 or 2038, why not?"

Scotland-born Sadleir, who competed for New Zealand at the 1984 Olympics and won a bronze medal at the 1986 Commonwealth Games, said it was crucial to avoid "going stale". "We need to move with the times and look at the fact that 60 percent of the 2.5 billion people in the Commonwealth are 29 or under," she said. "We have got to be open to innovation and change and

make things attractive to young people. "We do want to be edgy and open to test stuff."

But she is adamant the Games are in a healthy state despite the frequent charge that the event is a quirky sporting relic. "People ask, 'Is the Commonwealth movement dead?'" she said. "Well, to me it does not seem to be. Look at ticket sales, look who is showing up here, Victoria came on board very quickly for 2026. It is very much relevant, absolutely. As one says, it is never over until it is over." — AFP