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Article 18 iqamas to be canceled from Nov 1 for 6-month absence

MoI vows to deport residency violators, no grace periods to be offered

KUWAIT: The ministry of interior announced a decision to cancel the residencies of expatriates holding article 18 iqamas who left Kuwait on May 1, 2022 or earlier, from November 1 onwards, equating to six months spent outside the country. Sources told Kuwait Times that all who left from June onwards will have their iqamas revoked from December onwards, and so on.

Meanwhile, informed sources revealed the interior ministry will provide a new site to accommodate those detained at the deportation prison in preparation for their deportation from the country.

"The ministry of interior will continue its strict policy of not tolerating residency violators, and there will be no grace periods in which violators are allowed to leave with impunity, after giving many amnesties that gave permission to violators to leave, but they did not obey the instructions, which caused the number of violators to double instead of decreasing. Moreover, in the recent period, scores of foreigners entered Kuwait on visit visas, which expired, but they did not leave," the sources said.

The sources pointed out the ministry expects to arrest hundreds of thousands of violators, which

will force it to provide places of detention for these people, especially since the deportation prison will not be enough if the plan to arrest violators goes as planned. The sources stressed the deportation procedures will not be lengthy, and the ministry of interior will work in cooperation with concerned authorities to deport violators within three days of their arrest, except for those who have cases that require them to be detained to complete their trials.

The sources pointed out that instructions have been issued to the ministry of interior leadership to continue to pursue residency violators and increase

inspection campaigns, and not be affected by the preparations for the National Assembly elections, which also requires security teams of military personnel in large numbers to provide security.

The sources pointed out the instructions issued also include punishing the sponsors of those who are arrested and preventing them from sponsoring foreigners for a period of not less than two years, as well as bearing the cost of deporting the expatriate. The deported foreigners will face a permanent ban on entering Kuwait in the future, they added.

News in brief

Central Bank raises discount rate

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait raised its discount rate by 25 basis points to 2.75 percent effective from Thursday, it said in a statement on Wednesday. The decision was in response to inflationary pressures, bank Governor Basel Al-Haroon said in the statement. The bank had also increased the rate by 25 bps on July 27, after a 75-bps hike by the US Federal Reserve. All Gulf countries have their currencies pegged to the dollar except Kuwait, which pegs its dinar to a currency basket including the dollar. (See Page 8)

Drone warning for Kuwaitis in UAE

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Embassy in Abu Dhabi on Thursday warned Kuwaiti citizens traveling to the UAE against bringing in, having or using drones in this Gulf country to avert legal and judicial accountability. The embassy cautioned that rules and regulations put in place by the UAE's General Civil Aviation Authority must be observed. The UAE's ministry of interior has imposed an indefinite ban on flying or using drones and light sports aircraft nationwide in a bid to protect lives and properties. — KUNA

Iraq actress suing Economist

BAGHDAD: Iraqi actress Enas Taleb told AFP Thursday she is suing British magazine The Economist for using a photo of her to illustrate a controversial article on obesity among Arab women. The article, headlined "Why Women Are Fatter Than Men in the Arab World", was published last month with a picture of Taleb performing at Iraq's Babylon International Festival. "My photo was used in a context that was offensive to women," the popular actress and TV host said. She said she had received "numerous insulting comments" that had harmed her "psychological state" and unsettled her family. — AFP

New femicide sparks outrage

CAIRO: Egypt detained a male student Wednesday on suspicion of murdering a female student who allegedly rejected his advances, after the second such campus femicide in two months, prosecutors said. The suspect, from Zagazig, 60 km north of Cairo, stands accused of killing his victim, identified only by her first name Salma, by "repeatedly stabbing her with a knife", a prosecution statement said. There was widespread outrage on social media over the latest killing but some users suggested the victim was at fault for befriending a male student. — AFP

Kuwait Vaccination Center closes, med prescriptions online

KUWAIT: As the COVID-19 pandemic indicators are improving, the health ministry closed the Kuwait Vaccination Center in Mishref on Thursday, with vaccinations to be offered at 16 health centers in the country's governorates. The centers have started receiving individuals with prior appointments, with the service to be provided daily from Sunday to Thursday from 3 pm until 8 pm. Abdelrahman Al-Zaid Center in West Mishref will inoculate children under 18 years, while booster jabs for all age groups will be administered at the Jaber Causeway and Jleeb centers without prior appointment.

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KUWAIT: Medics pose for a photo outside the Kuwait Vaccination Center in Mishref after it was closed. (More pics on Page 2)

UN slams Palestinian kids' killings

GENEVA: The UN rights chief voiced alarm Thursday at the number of Palestinian children killed and wounded this month and demanded those responsible be brought to account. Last week saw three days of intense conflict between the Zionist entity and Islamic Jihad militants in the densely populated Palestinian enclave of Gaza.

"Inflicting hurt on any child during the course of conflict is deeply disturbing," Michelle Bachelet, the United Nations high commissioner for human rights, said in a statement. "The killing and maiming of so many children this year is unconscionable."

The Zionist air and artillery strikes targeted positions of the Iran-backed Islamic Jihad group. Her office said 19 Palestinian children had been killed in the Palestinian territories in the recent unrest, taking the total number this year to 37.

The latest child casualty was 10-year-old Liyan Al-Shaer, who died in a Jerusalem hospital Thursday from a head wound sustained in the latest round of Gaza violence. Seventeen children were killed during the Gaza hostilities from Aug 5 to 7, while two

Continued on Page 6



GAZA: Mourners carry the body of Palestinian child Liyan Al-Shaer after she succumbed to her injuries sustained in last week's Zionist air strikes in Khan Younis on Aug 11, 2022. — AFP

'Hero' Lebanon bank gunman turns self in

BEIRUT: Bystanders hailed as a hero an armed customer who held bank staff hostage for hours Thursday in Lebanon because he couldn't access funds frozen after the country's economic collapse. The suspect, identified only as Bassam, was armed with a rifle and had doused the interior of the bank with gasoline, security sources said. But after eight hours the standoff ended peacefully. "Bassam you are a hero!" cheering bystanders chanted outside the bank.

The incident was the latest involving local banks and angry depositors unable to access savings that have been locked in Lebanese banks since the country's economic crisis began in 2019. Official media said the suspect turned himself in when the bank agreed to give him \$30,000 out of his more than \$200,000 in trapped savings. "Employees tak-



BEIRUT: An armed holding hostages is seen through the door of the Federal Bank of Lebanon smoking a cigarette on Hamra street on Aug 11, 2022. — AFP

en hostage have also begun to leave the bank," Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA) said.

An AFP correspondent at the scene saw hostages and the suspect being escorted away in police cars from the Federal Bank branch where the drama unfolded, near west Beirut's commercial center of Hamra Street. Protesters at the scene had chanted "down with the rule of the banks", while others took to social media to express their support

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Taleban stronger than ever a year after takeover

BAZARAK, Afghanistan: A year since returning to power in Afghanistan, the Taleban are a stronger military force than ever, but threats to their rule do exist. To tighten their grip, the Taleban have poured thousands of fighters into the Panjshir Valley, home to the only conventional military threat the Islamists have faced since their takeover. The scenic valley, located in northeastern Afghanistan, was for decades a bastion of resistance against outside forces, and the birthplace of the National Resistance Front (NRF).

On the other side of the spectrum, the Islamic State-Khorasan group (IS-K) has planted bombs and staged multiple suicide attacks in the past 12 months. But the jihadists have focused on soft targets - chiefly Shiite mosques and Sikh temples - rather than tackle the Taleban head-on.

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Local

Youth contribute to societies' growth and development

Spotlight on successful youth projects in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Youth are a major segment in every society, contributing to its growth and development, and Kuwait has many examples of youth who are active locally and internationally. KUNA spotlights Kuwaiti youth examples on the occasion of International Youth Day, which falls on August 12. It is annually organized by the UN to recognize the input that young people make in education, community development, environmental groups and volunteering for different social projects.

Trash Hero Kuwait, a non-profit organization, is an example of social responsibility carried out by the youth in Kuwait. Established in 2020 under the umbrella of the Environmental Voluntary Foundation, Trash Hero Kuwait is the first team in the Arab region to conduct yearlong weekly cleaning campaigns as well as spread environmental awareness via social media platforms.

"The team seeks to make Kuwait a leader in envi-

ronmental field ... which required further efforts," team leader Yusuf Al-Shatti said. He lamented a lack of strict penalties against those who damage the environment, whether individuals or companies. Dr Fatma Al-Musawi, founder of Spread the Passion, said her platform aimed at organizing voluntary initiatives. She added she began with her two children and expanded to a big team consisting of more than 12,000 people with an age range of between 16 and 24 years old.

Spread the Passion, she said, gave volunteers a chance to acquire skills and develop them with the major objective of making them responsible and serving their community.



Int'l Youth Day marked on Aug 12

Spread the Passion, added Musawi, initiated partnerships with the Amiri Diwan, Public Youth Authority, Ministry of State for Youth, Kuwait-based UN House, embassies and the Gates Foundation. The NGO, she added, focused in 2022 on raising awareness on post-COVID psychological health as well as sustainability, climate change and pollution.

Maryam Al-Essa, founder of Refood that was launched in 2014, said the project aimed at preventing waste and serving the environment, and has been cooperating with different stakeholders to achieve its objectives. She said 90 percent of volunteers are youth and are

contributing three times weekly to achieve Refood's objectives. She added Refood, which was classified by Mohammad bin Rashed Foundation as of 30 hope-maker groups, succeeded in collecting information of more than 4,500 needy families and saved over 500 tons of food and consumables from being dumped into waste. Essa said the COVID-19 pandemic however affected financial resources of Refood and caused a sharp decline in the number of volunteers.

Ghala Al-Enezi, a Kuwaiti youth, has won prizes in a speech and poetry in the Arabic language, the world's best programmer award and second place in the innovation competition at Dubai Expo 2020. Engineer Jenan Al-Shehab registered a US patent in electromagnetic cells and won several accolades at Taiwan's Kaohsiung International Invention and Design EXPO (KIDE) 2020, and has opened a workshop in the industrial zone in Fahaheel. — KUNA

Kuwait Youth Council launches new platform

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Youth Council of the Public Authority for Youth on Thursday inaugurated the Kuwait Youth Council platform with the aim of delivering local and international messages through it to coincide with International Youth Day. Representative of the Director General of the Authority, Deputy Director General of the Youth and Support Services Sector Hossam Al-Saleh said in a speech during the press conference to launch the platform that the political leadership, Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi fully supports the council.

Deputy Director General of the Entrepreneurship Services Sector at the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises Fares Al-Enezi expressed his pride in the council, expressing optimism about it and its contribution to building a new approach and era. Chairman of the Kuwait Youth Council Nawaf Al-Quwaidi called on all young people to visit the platform and benefit from its services in order to work together to discuss and address youth issues



KUWAIT: Kuwait Youth Council members and guests at the event. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

to get an opportunity to qualify them through the opportunities that the council will provide.

Quwaidi explained the state presents the youth of Kuwait at all international events, pointing out that everyone is working with great efforts in order to move forward in achieving Kuwait's 2035 vision and achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which Kuwait has committed to achieve.

Head of the platform committee of Kuwaiti Youth Council Jamila Al-Otaibi said during the conference that we will work hard as a committee to coordinate with experienced persons to urge their support in order to reach the youth segment, according to the slogan of the United Nations this year - Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating a World for All Ages so that no one is left behind.

It is worth mentioning that the Kuwaiti Youth Council of the Public Authority for Youth is a youth advisory council concerned with analyzing the reality, needs and potential of young people, enhancing their community participation in expressing their issues and giving recommendations and proposals to decision makers in a smooth, organized and thoughtful manner. — KUNA

Oil ministry participates in Gulf meeting

KUWAIT: Kuwait Oil Company participated Thursday in the fourth meeting of the GCC Petroleum and Gas Committee, held virtually. The ministry took part in the meeting with a team from the technical affairs program and the public relations department, headed by the Director of Public Relations and Information at the Ministry of Oil Sheikha Tamadher Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. A statement by the ministry said the meeting was chaired by the advisor at the Saudi Ministry of Energy Farid Al-Asali, who referred to the approval of all items on the agenda, the statement added.

The meeting reviewed the proposals of Kuwait regarding the petroleum media specialists committee. During the meeting, participants agreed on forming a small working team to study the proposals of Kuwait and to discuss preparations for the Fifth Petroleum Media Forum in terms of the date of the meeting and the host country. The ministry said in its statement

that the meeting also discussed updating and reviewing the special strategy of the GCC Petroleum and Gas Committee according to what is mentioned in the five-year plan.

The meeting decided that Kuwait would update the strategy and then send it to the General Secretariat to circulate it to member states to express their opinions on the updates. The ministry stated that the meeting discussed the results of cooperation between the GCC General Secretariat and Saudi Arabia after their meeting on April 10 at the Secretariat headquarters, which stressed the importance of focusing on energy security, economic development and climate change.

The Kuwaiti oil ministry called on GCC countries to encourage their oil and gas ministries and petroleum companies to participate in the ministry's competition on digital transformation (Hackathon 2022) through presenting at least three projects for each country in the fields of digital transformation and latest industrial practices. — KUNA



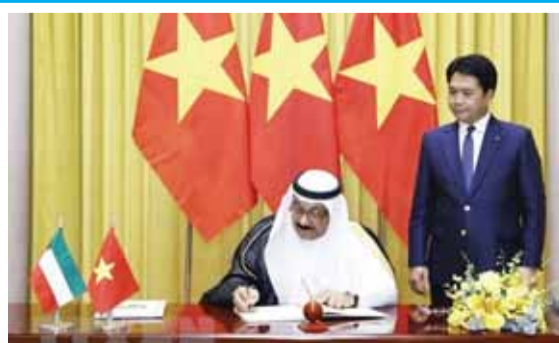
Sheikha Tamadher



HANOI: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Vietnam Yousuf Al-Sabbagh presents his credentials to Vietnamese President Nguyen Xuan Phuc. — KUNA

Kuwaiti ambassador presents credentials to Vietnam president

HANOI: New Kuwaiti Ambassador to Vietnam Yousuf Al-Sabbagh has presented his credentials to Vietnamese President Nguyen Xuan Phuc. During a reception held at the presidential palace in Hanoi, the Kuwaiti ambassador conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Vietnamese president, the Kuwaiti embassy said in a statement to KUNA. He



also discussed with the president ways of developing relations between Kuwait and Vietnam, promoting economic cooperation and boosting the number and level of official visits, it said. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The health ministry closed the Kuwait Vaccination Center in Mishref on Thursday, with vaccinations to be offered at 16 health centers in the country's governorates.

Local

Women still reluctant to report incidents of sexual harassment

Younger generations seem to be more aware and responsible

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Several campaigns have been launched by women in Kuwait to defend female victims and expose the men who harassed them. Women are now more open to sharing their experiences and testimonies about sexual harassment, but is it the same for all generations? Kuwait Times spoke with people from Generations X and Z and Millennials to learn more.

"Despite the efforts of the ministry of interior to maintain security in the country, there are some violations that are difficult for them to track, which are monitored by citizens and residents. Every woman has gone through sexual harassment in one way or another. We hope MoI launches an app to report such incidents that allow citizens or residents to send a report by uploading photos, video or audio recording of these violations," said 26-year-old Alia Hassan.

Nada Nasser, 31, was a victim of an attempted rape by an Asian in front of her house. She told Kuwait Times she still experiences emotional and psychological reactions from the incident, which happened seven years ago. "The incident affected me negatively and I have a phobia of dealing with Asians now. I don't go out late or walk the streets alone. I had anxiety for years. I didn't feel anyone would believe me or take me seriously if I reported him," she said.

"People did not believe I was a victim. I had pangs of guilt that I didn't react well. I was ashamed of seeing neighbors who came and helped me after the rapist escaped. I saw accusation in their eyes - they blamed me for coming home late, although it was only 9 pm," she added.

Her parents' reactions were confusing but understandable for her; for being afraid of the unknown and reacting as the old generation reacted, which is what parents do. "My mother ignored the incident and avoided talking about the subject. She dealt with me the next day like nothing happened, although I needed mental

support, unlike my father who tried a lot to find the perpetrator. He even offered money to several people to find him, but there was no response. My father still worries about me and my sisters and tries to protect us," Nasser said.

"My father did not report the incident because he was afraid to harm me. We learned later the man was a part of a gang in the area. My father was afraid if we reported him, he would come for me later. But he advised me to hit him and report him to the police in case he comes back again," she said.

Born in the digital age, younger generations seem to be more aware and responsible and know how to react in case of sexual abuse. Hatan Ali, 16, told Kuwait Times she has been harassed several times, but her mother did not report the matter to safeguard her reputation. "As for my generation, we talk about it on social media to expose the perpetrators to avoid the same thing happening to others. Social media is a powerful tool if we know how to use it. Silence is not the answer," she told Kuwait Times.



she reasoned.

Um Abdullah, 55, urged parents to educate their children to be aware and be honest with them. "We have to report the harassers - they have to be punished. If you know the identity of the rapist, you have to report him," she said. "We will teach our daughter how to react in the future. I do not care about the society - I know how I raised my daughter. People have to report the perpetrators to preserve the lives of these young women. Even boys and children are sexually harassed, so we should not leave them alone. Even if they are grown up, we have to follow their daily lives," she pointed out. She called on the media to stop publishing the details of how girls are raped, because future rapists may apply the same methods on others.

For Mariam Al-Sandan, 46, harassment causes severe damage to people, as she herself was sexually abused as a child. "Both the legislative and executive authorities must not tolerate the lack of application of punishment.

Officials must protect women's rights in a correct manner that secures them an ideal life."

Sandan avoided being in relationships for a while, but after she finally got married, she is now educating her children to report and fight back, and not care what society will say about them. "My mother ashamed me when I was sexually abused by our supermarket owner. As a child, I did not know what he was doing and when I asked, she blamed me for it. I still have nightmares because of her reaction; I lived in fear for years. I felt fear, confusion and sometimes anger," she recalled.

Under Kuwaiti law, according to articles 191 and 192, a harasser is liable to imprisonment for up to 15 years if the victim is related to the harasser or was being brought up by them (such as an uncle, aunt, domestic worker, teacher, etc). If the victim is under the legal age, of unstable mind and unable to know about the nature of the act, then the harasser will be punished with life imprisonment.



Most abuse cases suppressed due to societal shame

As for Aziza Ali, 63, execution or whipping in a public square is the best way to make the perpetrators an example for the public. "Parents should not tolerate sexual assaults. If their daughter was raped, eventually, things will be out in public, even if they hide it well. Why should we care about society and how people will shame my daughter, and risk the possibility of letting the guilty person remain on the streets to do the same to other girls,"



KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador Sibi George, Muzen Al-Ansari, Assistant Undersecretary, Foreign Media Relations, Ministry of Information and guests flag off the bus campaign at the Indian Embassy.

Indian embassy flags off bus promotion drive

KUWAIT: The Indian Embassy flagged off a unique bus promotion campaign throughout Kuwait on Thursday, marking two significant milestones: India-Kuwait@60 and India@75. "We are flagging off a major campaign today in a truly unique way with a 3Ts promotion program. Over the next few months, we will see glimpses of India on many buses in the streets of the friendly country of Kuwait embodying the essence of our close, strong everlasting friendship," said Indian Ambassador Sibi George flagging off the campaign at the embassy.

Muzen Al-Ansari, Assistant Undersecretary, Foreign Media Relations, Ministry of Information, diplomats from various embassies and Indian community representatives attended the event. The ambassador thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for hosting the large Indian community in Kuwait. He congratulated His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on his appointment as the Prime Minister of Kuwait.

"Today's event is a celebration of the vibrant and dynamic partnership between our two friendly countries, India and Kuwait. We are now concluding

the yearlong celebrations to mark the 60th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Kuwait which we launched in June last year during the visit of India's External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar. This year, we are also celebrating the 75th anniversary of India's Independence," George said.

"This year is special, and is observed with the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign under the aegis of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' to encourage all to bring the Tiranga home and to hoist it to mark the 75th year of India's independence," he said.

"Today we celebrate the vibrant and dynamic partnership between our two friendly countries and peoples. Our friendly bonds are historic and time-tested, and have been built upon strong foundations, by our citizens over centuries, based on mutual trust and respect," Muzen Al-Ansari said in his speech. He said over the years, these bonds have blossomed into a forward-looking dynamic partnership. "I am confident that this relationship will continue to flourish and evolve for the benefit of both countries and peoples," he said.

"The presence of about a million Indian nationals in Kuwait, the largest expatriate community here, forms an important aspect of our strong bilateral ties with India. Indians are present in all segments of society in Kuwait, happily working in almost every field, and are considered as largely disciplined, hard-working, and law-abiding," Ansari added. The Indian Embassy will conduct a flag-hoisting ceremony at the embassy premises on August 15 at 8 am to celebrate the 75th Independence Day of India. The ceremony will be held mostly as a virtual event.

On the occasion of the



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News in brief

Online transfer of rights
of vehicles temporarily

KUWAIT: Owners of a licensed Kuwaiti car can now transfer its rights through the Kuwait Mobile ID app to allow someone else to use their vehicle for travel in GCC countries through an application that can be requested online, General Manager of Kuwait Customs Sulaiman Al-Fahad announced. "The new generation, which uses cyber technology for most of their daily activities, can now swiftly check their applications through the Kuwait Mobile ID application without the need to appear physically," Fahad added. The service is now available after linking the Kuwait Mobile ID and ministry of interior applications online. "This is a priority for the customs, which can facilitate and secure the process online," he added.

12 pharmacies, food stores
sanctioned over violations

KUWAIT: Twelve violating private pharmacies and food supplement stores have been issued warnings by a panel consisting of undersecretaries of the ministry of health and the head of the pharmaceutical society. The pharmacies and food supplement stores face closure of up to four months. "Seven pharmacies have already been shut down for three months, and their licenses have been revoked," sources told Kuwait Times. Authorities have also revoked the license of a food supplement importing store, sending all violators to the public prosecutor to proceed with the necessary legal procedures. Meanwhile, the ministry of health has launched a new online service through the Sahel application which allows patients to receive their medical prescriptions online.

Kuwaitis can import
construction materials

KUWAIT: In order to boost healthy market competition, Kuwaitis can now import construction material from abroad, the ministry of commerce and industry announced. The ministry will facilitate the process for citizens by allowing them to privately import construction material to allow local market prices to go down. The necessary documentation needed include the civil ID card and construction license, while products have to conform to GCC quality requirements.

Bedoon detainee found
dead at Central Jail

KUWAIT: A stateless prisoner was found dead inside a dorm at the Central Jail. Inmates told authorities he suddenly lost consciousness, so they called for medical assistance. Legal procedures are now underway, as the deceased's body has been transferred for forensic analysis to determine the cause of death.

Kuwaitization at justice
departments reaches 80%

KUWAIT: Two new batches of prosecutors will be hired to speed up the process of Kuwaitization. "We are ready to upgrade all aspects of judicial institutions," Head of the Supreme Judicial Council Ahmad Al-Ajeel revealed. "The prosecutors will be the new blood of the system, as anyone who has exceeded 30 years in their positions has been referred to retirement," Ajeel said, as 80 percent of judicial employees are now Kuwaitis and construction of the new Palace of Justice will soon be complete. "We have reviewed everything related to electronic and smart technology and organizing virtual conference rooms, as upgrading all aspects of the judicial system is our priority," Ajeel added.

Requirements for temporary
managers and members

KUWAIT: New requirements are now implemented after a decision by Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of Social Affairs and Community Development Fahad Al-Shuraian. The new law, which concerns the hiring of temporary managers and members in any management council of a union or cooperative society, replaces the old law and stipulates four requirements for the position: Must be a Kuwaiti national over 30 years of age; have never been indicted in any crime or misdemeanor unless proven innocent; have a graduate degree; have spent at least two years as a member of the same society. "Temporarily hired managers and members must present monthly reports of all the activities in the union or society to the minister in order to review them and assess future stipulations," Shuraian clarified. Notably, new unions and cooperatives are excluded from the law.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: A man walks past a fountain during a hot day in Kuwait City recently. Kuwait witnessed very hot weather earlier this week, with temperatures exceeding 50 degrees Celsius in some areas. —Xinhua

Differences in population
figures by CSB and PACI

Reforming education, general and higher, is a first priority

KUWAIT: The Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) and the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) are two public institutions that fall under the Kuwait government. Their primary objective is to monitor and provide accurate statistical data to be used as inputs for planning public policies. The basic and very preliminary census is the population census with its detailed classifications. The indisputable hypothesis is that their data must be identical but if they differ they are supposed to communicate, being public institutions, to unify their data before issuing the data or explain the reasons for the data inconsistency.

During the first week of August 2022, the CSB issued a report on its estimates of the population statistics as of the end December 2021. The report states that the total population in Kuwait reached 4,216,900 dropping by 119,112 people from 4,336,012 people in the end of 2020. The decline was the result of a decrease by about 148,000 in expatriates and an increase of about 29,000 in the number of Kuwaitis. Until this moment, PACI has not issued demographics statistics as of the end of 2021. Its population figures in the end of June 2021 reached 4,627,674 people, a difference by 411 thousand people from the CSB figure at the end of 2021, which is an essential difference.

Fundamental differences extend to the age groups figures. While the CSB estimates those who are aged 60 years and above at 361,493 people, PACI estimated them at 122,004 at the end of June 2021. And as for the age group between 25-29 years, the CSB estimates them at 206,048 people while PACI estimates them at 512,087 people, more than double, with a difference of 306 thousand people.

Reading through the tables of the two institutions' population statistics seems as if we are reading statistics on two different countries. The relationship is almost non-existent in the totals and in its details in the numbers of expats. We don't know where the truth lies and it is not our job to find facts, what we do know is that we cannot plan any policy with such fundamental differences. If the differences in the very primary statistics are wrong, it is certainly possible that the more complex statistics on which it is built, such as economic growth, inflation rates, employment

and unemployment are also wrong.

What is required is the avoidance of these differences and the issuance of accurate and unified information. Either the two institutions meet for coordination to review the differences and their justifications before they are issued, or a single institution is assigned to issue that information. Until this is achieved, all studies and policies adopted by the state will be doubtful in achieving their goals. Accuracy and updated figures are the fuel of development.

Public education

We hope that Kuwait will start a new era that will raise the level of its public administration to what it deserves and restore its pioneer role which it has occupied till recently. This role will not be achieved without a commitment to essential priorities and a

high school graduate is below the level of an 8th grade graduate.

In an official report titled "For Kuwait's Sake Let's Teach Our Children Integrity", the average cost of a student in government schools in its four stages - kindergarten to secondary - was estimated at KD 3,800 annually. According to a survey conducted by Al-Shall, the cost of private school education is surpassed only by the average student cost in American schools at KD 3,900. The average cost of students in bilingual schools is about KD 2,900, KD 2,600 in the British schools, and average cost at KD 500 per year in Indian schools and KD 427 in Arabic schools, all of which are with better educational outcomes than government schools.

The above means that the problem is not the scarcity of money but its waste and misdistribution, in addition to numerous shortcomings such as the failure to link the cadres of teachers with the rare specialization and research, the teacher's promotion in continuing education and non-tolerance with cheating in it in addition to the inflation of the administrative system for employment purposes. All of the foregoing disabled the provision of other educational supplies such as laboratories, tools, and training courses.

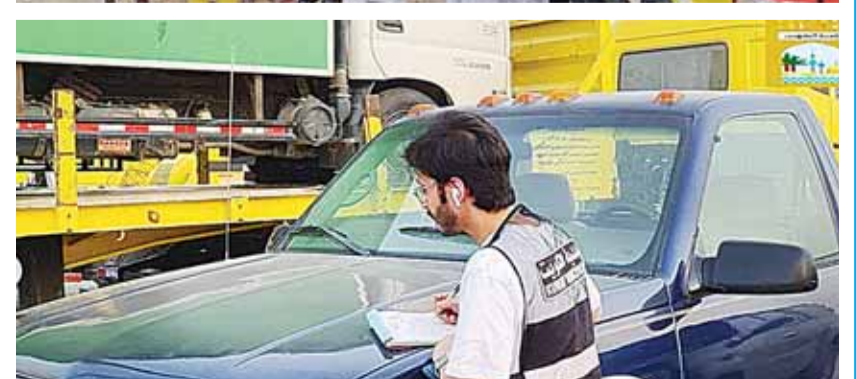
While education in the world is witnessing a revolution in its curricula because most of the traditional jobs that were consistent with such curricula are no longer needed in the future, public government education curricula remained unchanged. As the outputs of public education are the inputs of higher education, the lag in its outputs has rendered raising the level of higher education almost impossible. Therefore, the classification of higher education institutions lags behind that of neighboring countries where Kuwaiti public education curricula were taught in some of them in the past.

Kuwait needs a new administration fully aware of sabotage that struck the public education sector and believes that improving the country's level will be in vain without improving its human capital which in turn will not be achieved without a true educational revolution that includes curricula and values. We are not seeking a new invention, clear examples are available around us but we need awareness and will. —Al-Shall

Public education
curricula remain
unchanged

violent confrontation with corruption and ensuring clean and fair upcoming parliamentary elections whose output is one of the two wings of the administration. We mentioned in a former report that reforming the oil sector is a priority because it replaced most of its best administrators by less qualified ones. This disaster contributed to distributing its positions into quotas among corrupt influential people to buy their loyalties and multiply their numbers.

Reforming education, general and higher, is a first priority. The public education faced a sabotage and its level declined by about 4.6 years, according to the World Bank and the latest programs of the previous governments. This means that the educational level of a



KUWAIT: Supervisory Municipality teams in Ahmadi governorate held a field tour on Wafra Road and removed infringements on state property, in addition to removing violating mobile groceries in cooperation with the ministry of interior.



France gets boost from EU neighbors as wildfires rage

Taliban fighters swap weapons for books as hundreds return to school

Iran rejects US assassination plot claim

Washington charges Iranian with plot to kill John Bolton

TEHRAN: Iran dismissed as "fiction" Thursday US allegations it had plotted to kill former White House national security adviser John Bolton in retaliation for the assassination of one of its top commanders.

The US claim comes at a crunch moment in talks on reviving a nuclear deal between Iran and major powers that Washington had abandoned in 2018 but has said it wants to rejoin, with Iran now considering what European Union mediators have called a "final" text.

"The US Justice Department has made allegations without providing valid evidence, creating a new work of fiction," Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said.

"This time they have come up with a plot involving individuals like Bolton whose political career has failed," Kanani scoffed. "The Islamic Republic warns against any action that targets Iranian citizens by resorting to ridiculous accusations."

On Wednesday the US Justice Department announced it had stifled a plot by a member of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to kill Bolton, offering an unidentified person inside the United States \$300,000 to carry out the job. The alleged plan was likely set in retaliation for the US killing of top Guards commander Qasem Soleimani in Iraq in January 2020, the department said.

The plot, which stretched from October 2021 until April this year, never made headway because the ostensible assassin was an informant of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

But court documents show the FBI let the plotting continue to collect information on mastermind Shahram Poursafi, a member of the IRGC's elite Quds force, and on Iran's broader plans, including another plot to kill an even more prominent former US official, reported to be former secretary of state Mike Pompeo.

Poursafi, who is believed to still be in Iran, was charged by the Justice department with two counts relating to plotting a murder.

Nuclear talks at stake

In an interview Thursday with CNN, Bolton said the alleged plot reveals Iran's approach to foreign policy. "What's important to understand is just how detailed the work was to send me off to the great beyond, and really the extent to which the government of Iran had thought this through, was engaged in planning," he said.

"I think it's very clear that it's not just former government officials that Iran is after," he said. There was no indication of whether the US allegations would impact efforts to restore the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the agreement between Iran and major powers to limit its nuclear program so that Tehran does not develop atomic weapons.

In a move that had been advocated by Bolton and Pompeo, former US president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the pact in 2018, opening the way for Tehran to step up its nuclear program. President Joe Biden has sought to return the United States to the deal, offering an easing of sanctions in exchange for Iran returning to full compliance.

But a final agreement has been held up since early this year, according to officials, in part by Tehran's demand that Washington remove its formal designation of the IRGC as sponsors of terrorist activity. Brokering the Vienna negotiations, the European Union recently submitted a "final" draft agreement to both the United States and Iran for review.

"There is no more space for negotiations," a spokesman for the bloc, Peter Stano, said Tuesday.

"We have a final text. So it's the moment for a decision: yes or no," Bolton though said the assassination plot was reason to avoid any agreement with Tehran. "I think we ought to put the kibosh on these negotiations and deal with the growing threat that Iran poses and not try to appease them," he told CNN. —AFP



SHAHRAM POURSAFI

Use of Interstate Commerce Facilities in the Commission of Murder for Hire; Providing and Attempting to Provide Material Support to Terrorists



WASHINGTON: This handout image provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on August 10, 2022, shows the poster of 45-year-old Shahram Poursafi. —AFP

Several killed in Somaliland protests

MOGADISHU: Several people were killed and dozens wounded on Thursday after police opened fire on anti-government demonstrators in several towns in the breakaway Somali region of Somaliland, opposition party members and witnesses said. Hundreds of people took to the streets in the capital Hargeisa and the cities of Burao and Erigavo after negotiations between the government and opposition parties broke down, with the latter accusing the authorities of seeking to delay a presidential election due in November.

Protesters carried placards saying "Hold the election on 13th November 2022" and chanting anti-government slogans. "Peace can only prevail in Somaliland with the provision of fair and free elections, let those who defend democracy prevail," Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi, the leader of the main opposition Waddani party, told a crowd in Hargeisa. One protest organizer, Ahmed Ismail, told AFP that three people including a woman were killed in Hargeisa, and 34 others admitted to hospital.

"Several people including one of the security guards of our party leader were killed, we are still investigating the overall fatalities which can be higher," a Waddani member told AFP, requesting anonymity. One person died in Erigavo during clashes between the protesters and police, eyewitness Abdullahi Mohamad said. —AFP

Alleged British IS 'Beatle' held in jail

LONDON: A British man accused of being part of an Islamic State (IS) kidnap-and-murder cell known as the "Beatles" was remanded in custody Thursday on terrorism charges after Turkey deported him to the UK. Aine Davis, 38, was an alleged member of the IS cell that held dozens of foreign hostages in Syria between 2012 and 2015 and was known to their captives as the "Beatles" because of their British accents.

Two of the four have already been brought to justice in the United States for the gruesome beheadings and killings of several American captives, while another of the quartet died in Syria.

British police arrested Davis after he was deported by Turkish authorities and landed at Luton airport near London late Wednesday. He faces three counts under UK terrorism laws, two related to terrorism fundraising in 2014 and one related to possessing a firearm. Appearing at a London magistrates' court flanked by two suited police officers Thursday morning, Davis-sporting a short beard and grey T-shirt-spoke only to confirm his name and that he was of no fixed abode.

His lawyer confirmed he would not be entering a plea or seeking bail at this stage.

Chief magistrate Paul Goldspring said bail would in any case be refused partly due to Davis' "propensity to travel on forged documents" and ordered him held in prison. He referred the case to the crown court, which deals with serious criminal offences, with a pre-trial hearing set for September 2 at the central criminal court, known as the Old Bailey. Goldspring noted that if convicted, Davis will face "years, not months" in jail.

US trials

The four members of the "Beatles" are accused of abducting at least 27 journalists and relief workers from the United States, Britain, Europe, New Zealand, Russia and Japan. They were allegedly involved in the murders of American journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, as well as aid workers Peter Kassig and Kayla Mueller. The accused cell members, who all grew up in west London, allegedly tortured and killed the four American victims, including by beheading, and IS released videos of the murders for propaganda purposes.

Shelling at Ukraine nuclear plant as UN issues warning

KYIV: Russia and Ukraine accused each other of new shelling near the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant on Thursday ahead of a UN Security Council meeting to address concerns over the facility's security.

Both Moscow and Kyiv said there were five rocket strikes near a radioactive material storage area at the plant, Europe's biggest nuclear facility which has been a focus of renewed fighting in recent days.

Ukraine's nuclear agency Energoatom said later that there had been fresh Russian shelling near one of the plant's six reactors that had caused "extensive smoke" and "several radiation sensors are damaged". The Ukrainian plant is under the control of Russian troops and Ukraine has accused Moscow of basing hundreds of soldiers and storing arms there.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has warned that Russia could cause an incident "even more catastrophic than Chernobyl"—a reference to the nuclear disaster in then Soviet Ukraine in 1986.



Aine Davis has previously said he posed in this photo as a 'joke'

Alexandra Kotey, a 38-year-old former British national extradited from the UK to the US in 2020 to face charges there, pleaded guilty to his role in the deaths last September and was sentenced to life in prison in April. El Shafee Elsheikh, 34, another former British national also extradited to the US at the same time, was found guilty of all charges in April, and will be sentenced next week.

They were captured in January 2018 by a Kurdish militia in Syria and turned over to US forces in Iraq before being sent to Britain and then the US.

There they faced federal court charges of hostage-taking, conspiracy to murder US citizens and supporting a foreign terrorist organization. The other "Beatles" executioner, Mohamed Emwazi, was killed by a US drone in Syria in 2015.

Wife convicted

Davis was arrested in Istanbul in 2015 by Turkish authorities on suspicion of being an IS member, and was using a forged travel document, the magistrates' court heard Thursday. He was convicted in Turkey 18 months later, sentenced to seven-and-a-half years imprisonment, and released in July into an immigration detention centre where he remained until he was deported this week.

Detailing its case, CPS prosecutor Kashif Malik said Davis converted to Islam and adopted the name Hamza, visiting countries including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates between 2007 and 2012 with his wife Amal El-Wahabi. In 2014, she became the first person in Britain to be convicted of funding IS jihadists after trying to send 20,000 euros—worth \$25,000 at the time—to him in Syria. —AFP

United Nations chief Antonio Guterres also said in a statement that continued hostilities around the facility could "lead to disaster". He urged both sides "to cease immediately" all military activity near the power plant.

"State sponsor of terrorism"
The Soviet-era plant in southern Ukraine was captured by Russian troops at the beginning of March shortly after Moscow launched its invasion and has remained on the frontline since then.

"Russia has turned the nuclear station into a battlefield," Zelensky said, addressing a Ukraine donors conference in Copenhagen by video link. He called for stronger sanctions against Russia saying it was a "terrorist state"—on the same day that Latvian MPs adopted a resolution calling Russia a "state sponsor of terrorism". The statement said Russia's actions in Ukraine constituted "targeted genocide against the Ukrainian people" and said the use of violence against civilians should be considered "terrorism".

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba hailed it as a "timely move" and urged other countries to follow suit, while Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova called it "xenophobia". Latvia has also urged all EU countries to ban tourist visas for Russian citizens and said the measure should be extended to Belarusians because of the Belarusian regime's support for the invasion. —AFP

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International

France gets boost from EU neighbors as wildfires rage

A fierce blaze in southwest of France forces thousands to evacuate

HOSTENS, France: Six EU nations are sending firefighting teams and equipment to France as it battles a spate of wildfires, including a fierce blaze in the parched southwest that has forced thousands to evacuate, officials said Thursday.

Most of the country is sweltering under a summer heatwave compounded by a record drought—conditions most experts say will occur more often as a result of rapid climate change. “We must continue, more than ever, our fight against climate disruption and... adapt to this climate disruption,” Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne said after arriving at a fire command post in the village of Hostens, south of Bordeaux.



**10,000
firefighters
mobilized**

The European Commission said four firefighting planes would be sent to France from Greece and Sweden, while teams from Austria, Germany, Poland and Romania were on their way.

“Our partners are coming to France’s aid against the fires. Thank you to them. European solidarity is at work!” President Emmanuel Macron tweeted. “Across the country over 10,000 firefighters and security forces are mobilized against the flames... These soldiers of fire are our heroes,” he said.

Among eight major fires currently raging, the biggest is the Landiras fire in the southwest

Gironde department, whose forests and beaches draw huge tourist crowds each summer.

It had already burned 14,000 hectares (35,000 acres) in July—the driest month seen in France since 1961 — before being contained, but it continued to smolder in the region’s tinder-dry pine forests and peat-rich soil. Since flaring up again Tuesday, which officials suspect may have been caused by arson, it has burned 6,800 hectares, destroyed or damaged 17 homes, and forced 10,000 people to quit their homes, said Lieutenant Colonel Arnaud Mendousse of the Gironde fire and rescue service.

Borne said nine firefighting planes are already dumping water on the blaze, with two more to be in service by the weekend.

‘California’

“We battled all night to stop the fire from spreading, notably to defend the village of Belin-Beliet,” Mendousse told journalists in Hostens. On several houses nearby, people hung out white sheets saying: “Thank you for saving our homes” and other messages of support for the weary fire battalions. “You’d think we’re in California, it’s gigantic... And they’re used to forest fires here but we’re being overwhelmed on all sides—nobody could have expected this,” Remy Lahlay, a firefighter deployed near Hostens in the Landes de Gascogne natural park, told AFP.

And with temperatures in the region forecast to reach 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) Thursday and stay until at least Sunday, “there is a very serious risk of new outbreaks” for the Landiras fire, the prefecture of the Gironde department said. Reinforcements are planned for the 1,100 firefighters now trying to contain the fire. Acrid smoke has spread across much of the south-



HOSTENS, France: Firefighters work at the site of a wildfire near Belin-Beliet, southwestern France overnight on August 11, 2022. — AFP

western Atlantic coast and its beaches that draw huge crowds of tourists each summer, with the regional ARS health agency “strongly” urging people to wear protective face masks. The smoke also forced the closing of the A63 motorway, a major artery toward Spain, between Bordeaux and Bayonne.

The government has urged employers to allow

leaves of absence for volunteer firefighters to help fight the fires. In Portugal Thursday, more than 1,500 firefighters were also battling a fire that has raged for days in the mountainous Serra da Estrela natural park in the centre of the country.

It has already burned 10,000 hectares, according to the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS). — AFP

Blinken voices ‘concerns’ on rights in Rwanda

KIGALI: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he voiced “serious concerns” about human rights during talks on Thursday with Rwandan President Paul Kagame.

In particular, he said he raised the case of “Hotel Rwanda” hero Paul Rusesabagina, a fierce Kagame critic who was sentenced to a 25-year prison term last year on terrorism charges.

Blinken is in Rwanda on the final stop of a three-nation tour of Africa, as Washington seeks to counter a Kremlin charm offensive following a trip to the continent in July by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. “As I told President Kagame, we believe people in every country should be able to express their views without fear of intimidation, imprisonment, violence or any other forms of repression,” Blinken told a joint press conference with Rwandan Foreign Minister Vincent Biruta.

Blinken also said he “underscored our concerns about the lack of fair trial guarantees provided to (Rusesabagina)”. In May, the US State Department said Rusesabagina—who has US permanent residen-

cy—had been “wrongfully detained” by Kigali.

Rusesabagina, then a Kigali hotel manager, is credited with saving hundreds of lives during the 1994 genocide. His actions inspired the Hollywood film “Hotel Rwanda.”

The 68-year-old has been behind bars for more than 700 days since his arrest in August 2020 when a plane he believed was bound for Burundi landed instead in Kigali. In a statement issued to coincide with Blinken’s visit, Rusesabagina’s family said his health was deteriorating, with a weak left arm and facial paralysis indicating that he may have had one or more strokes.

“We trust that if the US relationship with Rwanda is strong enough to be deserving of financial and trusted cooperation, then it is strong enough to push for the release of our father on humanitarian grounds,” it said.

Meanwhile, Blinken said he also discussed with Kagame “credible reports” that Rwanda continues to support the M23 rebel group and has its own forces inside the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo, claims repeatedly denied by Kigali. “Any support or cooperation with any armed group in eastern DRC endangers local communities and regional stability and every country in the region must respect the territorial integrity of the others,” he added.

An unpublished independent investigation for the UN, seen by AFP last week, said Rwandan troops



KIGALI, Rwanda: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (third right) speaks with members of civil society in US Embassy in Kigali on August 11, 2022. — AFP

had attacked soldiers inside the DRC and aided M23 rebels, a primarily Tutsi Congolese rebel group.

The M23 has captured swathes of territory in eastern DRC in recent months, stoking tensions between Kigali and Kinshasa. Ties between the two nations have been strained since the mass arrival in the eastern DRC of Rwandan Hutus accused of slaughtering Tutsis during the 1994 genocide, although there was a thaw after DRC President

Felix Tshisekedi took office in 2019.

In a statement released Monday, Human Rights Watch had called on Blinken to “urgently signal that there will be consequences for the government’s repression and abuse in Rwanda and beyond its borders”. “Failing to address Rwanda’s abysmal human rights record has emboldened its officials to continue to commit abuse, even beyond its borders,” said Lewis Mudge, HRW’s Central Africa director. — AFP

Kuwait Vaccination Center closes...

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, medicine prescriptions from health centers have been linked to the unified government application Sahel on instructions of Health Minister Dr Khalid Al-Saeed and Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha. “Patients will be directly notified on their smartphone after they have received their prescription, including the prescription itself and a report of all recurring prescriptions for terminal illnesses,” MoH Spokesman Dr Abdullah Al-Sanad said.

The report will include the type of medicine they have received, its doses, the history of their prescriptions and the names of the medical center and the doctor who issued the prescription to facilitate the process. “Prescriptions of children under the age of 16 will be sent to their guardians,” Assistant Undersecretary of Online Health Affairs Ahmad Al-Ghareeb said.

The process is currently in its first phase, active specifically for health centers. “In the future, the application will be able to accommodate specialized hospitals in its second phase, while the third phase will include all hospitals in Kuwait,” Ghareeb added. On a side note, Ghareeb insisted about the importance of notifying the respective health center in case any notification is received by a person without their knowledge.

and wants to get just \$5,500 to pay hospital bills.” He said his brother had grabbed the weapon “from the bank and did not bring it with him”.

A video circulating on social media in the morning showed two people negotiating with the armed man behind the bank’s metal door. He replied angrily, wielding the rifle in one hand and a cigarette in the other. The suspect later released two hostages, AFP correspondents at the scene said. Lebanon has been mired in an economic crisis for more than two years, since the market value of the local currency began to plummet and banks started to enforce draconian restrictions on foreign and local currency withdrawals.

Lenders have also prevented transfers of money abroad. “Similar incidents keep happening. We need a radical solution,” George Al-Hajj, who heads Lebanon’s bank employees’ union, told AFP outside the bank. “Depositors want their money, and unfortunately their anger explodes in the face of bank employees because they cannot reach the management.”

The local currency has lost more than 90 percent of its value since the onset of the crisis. Inflation is rampant, electricity is scarce and, according to the United Nations, around 80 percent of Lebanese live in poverty. Many Lebanese blame the country’s political elite, wealthy and aged figures entrenched for decades. They cite corruption and also blame the banking sector for the country’s economic collapse. — AFP

UN slams Palestinian...

Continued from Page 1

more were killed on Tuesday in Zionist operations in the West Bank. The UN Human Rights Office OHCHR said that among the 48 Palestinians killed in last week’s Gaza conflict, there were at least 22 civilians. They included the 17 children. Of the 360 Palestinians reported injured, nearly two-thirds were civilians, including 151 children, OHCHR said. Three Gazan children are on life-support systems at a hospital in Zionist-annexed east Jerusalem, the official

Palestinian news agency Wafa reported Thursday.

“In a number of incidents, children were the majority of casualties,” Bachelet’s office said. “Launching an attack which may be expected to incidentally kill or injure civilians, or damage civilian objects, in disproportionate manner to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated, is prohibited,” she said. “Such attacks must stop.”

Bachelet called for investigations into all incidents where any person was killed or injured. “An almost total lack of accountability persists in the occupied Palestinian territory,” she said. “Whether for violations of international humanitarian law by all parties in hostilities in Gaza, or for recurring (Zionist) violations of international human rights law and the law of occupation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.” — AFP

‘Hero’ Lebanon bank gunman...

Continued from Page 1

for the shaggy-bearded suspect wearing shorts and flip-flops. Police could not immediately say whether the man would face charges.

Local residents said the incident began at about 10:30 am (0730 GMT). The man had “a pump-action rifle and flammable material, and threatened employees to give him his savings,” a security source told AFP, requesting anonymity. Another security source said a man in his 40s “poured gasoline all over the bank, and closed the bank’s front door, holding employees hostage”. He demanded savings worth more than \$200,000, the source said.

The man “threatened to set himself on fire and to kill everyone in the branch, pointing his weapon in the bank manager’s face”, NNA said. He said he stormed the bank because his father “was admitted to hospital some time ago for an operation and could not pay for it”, NNA reported. His brother Atif Al-Cheikh Hussein told journalists: “My brother has \$210,000 in the bank

Taleban stronger than ever a year...

Continued from Page 1

Following the chaotic exit of US-led troops on Aug 31 last year, Western threats to Taleban rule have also been crushed.

Still, the recent assassination of Al-Qaeda chief Ayman Al-Zawahiri by a US drone strike on his hideout in Kabul shows how vulnerable Taleban leaders could be to a high-tech enemy. While the Panjshir Valley is what worries the Taleban the most, analyst Michael Kugelman of the Washington-based Wilson Center think tank believes serious resistance is a long way off.

“If we start to see IS-K pick up its attacks and start carrying out more strikes... I think that the NRF could really benefit from that,” he told AFP. “If Afghans are seeing their families getting blown up by IS-K... that could, I think, deliver a major dent to the Taleban legitimacy and that could benefit the NRF, and give them a window.”

Panjshir was the last province to fall to the Taleban in their lightning takeover of the country last year — holding out until Sept 6, three weeks after the capture

of Kabul. An uneasy calm then enveloped the valley — around 80 km north of Kabul — until May, when the NRF emerged from the mountains to strike again. In response, the Taleban sent in more than 6,000 fighters in long columns of armored vehicles, striking fear into the hearts of residents.

“Since the Taleban arrived in the valley, people are in panic, they can’t talk freely,” said Amir, speaking to AFP in hushed tones in the provincial capital as a patrol passed by. “The Taleban think that if youths are sitting together, then they must be planning something against them,” he added, asking not to be identified by his real name.

In the 1980s, fighters led by Ahmad Shah Massoud — nicknamed the Lion of Panjshir — fought the Soviet forces from its rugged peaks of Panjshir. When the Red Army pulled out, Afghanistan descended into civil war and the Taleban seized control of the country. Panjshir held out, though Massoud was assassinated two days before the Sept 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.

The NRF is led by his son Ahmad Masood, who like many NRF leaders is now in undisclosed exile. Taleban forces now firmly control the main road that cuts through the valley, with checkpoints everywhere. Thousands of people have fled the valley — once home to around 170,000 — and an atmosphere of fear prevails, with residents speaking only if their real names were not revealed. — AFP

International

Taleban fighters swap weapons for books as hundreds return to school

Secondary school girls still barred from attending schools

KABUL: Gul Agha Jalali used to spend his nights planting bombs—hoping to target an Afghan government soldier or, better still, a foreign serviceman. These days, the 23-year-old Taleban member is studying English and has enrolled in a computer science course in the capital, Kabul.

"When our country was occupied by infidels, we needed bombs, mortars and guns," says Jalali, an employee at the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation. Now there is a greater need for education, he told AFP. Since the Taleban swept back to power in August last year, hundreds of fighters have returned to school—either on their own or pushed by their commanders.

The word "Taleban" actually means "students" in Arabic, and the hardline Islamist movement's name stems from the religious schools in southern Afghanistan it emerged from in the 1990s. Most Taleban fighters were educated in these madrasas, where studies are largely limited to the Koran and other Islamic themes. Many conservative Afghan clerics—particularly among the Taleban—are skeptical of more modern education, apart from subjects that can be applied practically, such as engineering or medicine.

"The world is evolving, we need technology and development," said Jalali, who planted bombs for five years but is now among a dozen Taleban studying computers at the transport ministry.

'Motivated mujahideen'

The desire of fighters like Jalali to go back to

school showed Afghans yearned for education, government spokesman Bilal Karimi said. "Many motivated mujahideen who had not completed their studies reached out to educational institutions and are now studying their favorite courses," he told AFP.

But education is a hugely problematic issue in the country, with secondary school girls barred from classes since the Taleban returned to power—and no sign of them being allowed back despite promises from some in the leadership. While the earlier curriculum largely remains the same, studies on music and sculpture have been scrapped at schools and universities, which are suffering a paucity of teachers and lecturers following an exodus of Afghanistan's educated elite.

But some Taleban students, like Jalali, have big plans. Kabul's Muslim Institute has a student body of around 3,000—half of them women—and includes some 300 Taleban fighters, many distinctive with their bushy beards and turbans.

On a recent tour, AFP saw one Taleban fighter retrieve a pistol from a locker room at the end of his lessons—an incongruous sight in a pastel-colored room adorned with posters of smiling co-ed students. "When they arrive, they hand over their weapons. They don't use force or take advantage of their position," said an institute official who asked not to be named.

Desire to study

Amanullah Mubarez was 18 when he joined the Taleban but never gave up his desire to study. "I



KABUL: In this photo taken on June 5, 2022, members of the Taleban attend a computer science class at the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation in Kabul. — AFP

applied to a university in India, but I failed my English test," said Mubarez, now 25, declining to reveal his current position in the Taleban. "That's why I enrolled here," he said, referring to the Muslim Institute. Mohammad Sabir, in contrast, is happy to admit he works for the Taleban's intelligence agency despite also being a student at the private Dawat University.

"I resumed my studies this year after the victory of the Islamic Emirate," he says, his long hair and eyes lined with traditional kohl eyeliner peeking out from beneath a white turban.

Like Jalali, he paused his education to join the Taleban and also planted bombs and carried out ambushes with his brother in Wardak province. All the Taleban students AFP spoke to said they wanted to use their education to help develop the country, so how do they feel about girls being deprived of that opportunity?

"Personally, as a young man, a student and a member of the Emirate, I think that they have the right to education," said Mubarez. "They can serve our country the way we are doing." "This country needs them as much as it needs us," added Jalali. —AFP

Five dead in rebel attack on Indian army base in Kashmir

RAJOURI, India: Suspected rebels attacked an army camp in Indian-administered Kashmir on Thursday killing three soldiers before being shot dead themselves, police said, four days ahead of the 75th anniversary of Indian independence.

Officials say at least 130 militants and scores of police and soldiers have been killed this year in battles with rebels fighting for Kashmir's independence or its merger with Pakistan. Two militants using automatic rifles and grenades "entered the army camp in the dark and there was an exchange of fire with soldiers. Army suffered three fatal casualties and the two attackers were also killed," Mukesh Singh, a top police officer, told AFP.

The incident, in the southern Rajouri area near the highly militarized unofficial border dividing Kashmir from Pakistan, also injured two other soldiers. On Wednesday hundreds of Indian soldiers on motorbikes paraded through Kashmir's main city Srinagar, waving the national flag as part of independence-day celebrations culminating on August 15.

Thursday's attack also came at the end of a two-



RAJOURI: India: Indian security personnel patrol near an army camp after an encounter with suspected rebels at Darhal area in Rajouri on August 11, 2022. — AFP

month annual pilgrimage to a cave shrine in the lower Himalayas, which was called off for two years because of the coronavirus pandemic.

India government had hoped a million people

would take part. But only around 300,000 made the arduous trek, officials said, with enthusiasm dampened by flash floods killing 17 pilgrims last month, and frequent bad weather. —AFP

Sri Lanka ex-leader leaves Singapore

SINGAPORE: Former Sri Lankan president Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Thursday left Singapore where he had taken refuge following his escape from protesters at home, after he was given a visa only for about a month in the city-state. Rajapaksa flew into Singapore from the Maldives on July 14 after fleeing a deepening economic crisis and widespread protests in Sri Lanka. He tendered his resignation shortly after his arrival.

Sri Lankans arriving in Singapore normally receive a 30-day visa, but authorities said they had initially given Rajapaksa only two weeks and later extended the visa by another two weeks.

"The Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) confirms that Mr Gotabaya Rajapaksa left Singapore on 11 August," Singapore's immigration office said in reply to an AFP query. It did not say where the former leader was headed but the Thai foreign ministry, as well as a source in Colombo, said Wednesday he was seeking a new safe haven in Thailand.

Rajapaksa fled his nation after tens of thousands of protesters overran his official residence last month angry about acute shortages of food, fuel and medicine endured by Sri Lanka's 22 million people since late last year. An international human rights group last month formally asked Singapore to indict Rajapaksa for crimes against humanity during his country's decades-long civil war that ended in 2009.

The South Africa-based International Truth and Justice Project said it had urged Singapore to exercise universal jurisdiction to arrest the former president for grave breaches of international humanitarian law. Rajapaksa helmed Sri Lanka's defense ministry while his brother Mahinda was president when the country's brutal Tamil separatist conflict came to a bloody end.

Singapore's Attorney-General's Chambers confirmed it had received a complaint from the rights group without giving details. "His Singapore visa runs out on Thursday," a close associate of Rajapaksa told AFP in Colombo on Wednesday. "He had applied for an extension, but it had not come through as of Wednesday morning." —AFP



SEOUL: Flood waters flow over a carpark (bottom back) and pedestrianized area that were submerged by the burst banks of the Han River in Seoul on August 10, 2022, after at least nine people were killed and seven others missing in South Korea after record downpours flooded major roads, metro stations and homes, officials said. —AFP

Seoul may ban basement flats after flooding deaths

SEOUL: South Korea's capital has moved to ban the cramped basement flats made famous by Oscar-winning movie "Parasite" after four people drowned in subterranean dwellings during flooding caused by record-breaking rains this week. Soldiers and relief workers were clearing debris Thursday from waterlogged, mud-covered homes in Gwanak district, an AFP reporter saw, where three tenants, including a disabled woman and a teenager, died Monday.

Their deaths—trapped by floodwater in their basement apartment—have caused public outrage, with President Yoon Suk-yeol visiting their destroyed home this week before calling on officials to do more to help the poor and vulnerable during natural disasters. The Seoul Metropolitan Government has announced they want to get rid of tiny, cramped basement flats—known as "banjiha"—which are typically cheap to rent but prone to damp and flooding.

Around 200,000 households live in such flats, which make up around five percent of housing stock in the South Korean capital, according to official figures. Seoul said in a press release Wednesday that it

will stop issuing permits to construct such homes, while pushing to gradually phase out existing basement and semi-basement flats.

The city plans to begin discussions with the national government to ban the use of basements or semi-basement spaces for residential purposes, it added.

Four out of 11 people killed in this week's record downpours drowned after their basement flats were inundated with floodwater, officials have said. Such abodes received global attention due to Bong Joon Ho's "Parasite", which won the 2020 Best Picture Oscar and features a poor family living in a dank basement home.

Activists blamed the "banjiha" deaths this week on the government's housing policies, saying they were preventable disasters. "We condemn the government's negligence regarding those marginalized people in this housing," said the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice in a statement.

"As rainfall becomes stronger and more frequent under the influence of climate change, (Seoul) must embark on a fundamental change of its approach to basement residents," it added.

Yoon has also blamed climate change for the rains and flooding, which he said were the worst since weather records began over a century ago. "Those who struggle financially or with physical difficulties are bound to be more vulnerable to natural disasters," he said. —AFP

Nigeria's Buhari under pressure amid insecurity

LAGOS: Mounting attacks from jihadists and criminal gangs, including a brazen assault close to the capital, are creating a headache for Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari as he sees out his last six months in office. Last month, the Islamic State group's Nigerian affiliate ISWAP claimed a jailbreak outside just 20 kilometers (12 miles) from Abuja's international airport, freeing hundreds of prisoners, including 64 jihadist commanders.

Located in the centre of the country, the capital is far from the jihadists' usual area of operations in the northeast—the city's last major attack was back in 2015. In the same month, a military checkpoint was attacked on the outskirts of the capital and a presidential security convoy was ambushed in the country's northwest.

At least 40 worshippers were killed in June in a Catholic church in southwestern Owo, and last week five people were killed in Kogi state, in the centre of the country, when gunmen opened fire on a bus.

Idayat Hassan, head of the Centre for Democracy and Development think tank, said security was now front and centre of public concerns. "There is growing pressure from Nigerians across all walks of life on the need to address the insecurity plaguing the country," he said. "The problem currently is nowhere is safe in the country—and nobody, irrespective of class or position in life, is safe."



Muhammadu Buhari

'Helpless' Buhari

Presidential elections are due to take place next February for a successor to Buhari. The former army general, first elected in 2015 and reelected in 2019, is scheduled to step down after two terms.

One of Buhari's big campaign promises was to end insecurity—and the relentless violence has left him politically exposed. "Most of us have been supporters of Buhari because he is a general," said a member of the ruling party, Chief Frank Kokori, a former labor leader and rights activist.

"We feel he is negligent (with) the security of the country, that is obvious, and he has to wake up because he has squandered his goodwill." A security source based in the northeast and who asked to remain anonymous, said "Buhari is in an unenviable position."

"Naturally he is to take responsibility for any security failures as the head of government, but the truth is that he is helpless." Despite hefty investments in the security apparatus, the situation has "continued to deteriorate," he said.

Opposition lawmakers threw down the gauntlet last month, threatening to impeach Buhari if he failed to stem the violence. But the announcement is widely seen as an empty threat, given the ruling party's parliamentary majority.

Udo Jude Ilo, analyst and consultant with Thoughts and Mace Advisory, said the government had manifestly failed on the security issue. He pointed to the holdup in March of a recently-inaugurated high-speed passenger train between Abuja and the northern city of Kaduna. Eight people were killed, 26 were wounded and an unknown number were taken hostage. "No-one was fired," Ilo said. "The service chiefs are still there. It is unbelievable." —AFP

Business

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, 2022

NIC holds financial analysts conference for H1 2022 results

The company generates a net profit of KD 12 million, 15 fils per share

KUWAIT: The National Investments Company held Financial Analysts Conference for its H1 2022 results on 9 August, 2022. The conference witnessed the positive participation of Girish Nair, NIC's Chief Financial Officer, Bashar Khan, Senior Vice President - Investment Banking Sector, Al-Muthana Al-Maktoum, Executive Vice President - Wealth Management Sector, who presented a brief about the company and shed light on the positive financial results achieved in H1 2022. The results reflect the company's outstanding performance and solid operational achievements that led into maintaining and strengthening its financial position, high-quality assets and its ability to achieve sustained growth. This is all due to the effective strategy and its competent and experienced team.



Girish Nair



Bashar Khan



Al-Muthana Al-Maktoum



5.6 million during the first half of this year. The growth was through brokerage income from one of our subsidiaries, Al-Waseet Financial Business, which grew by 47 percent, and management fees from funds and portfolios that grew up by 30 percent; consulting costs and other revenues grew by 306 percent.

Total investment-owned assets have witnessed a decrease of 5 percent during the first half of 2022, which amounted to KD 275.9 million, compared to KD 290.6 million during the same period by the end of 2021; this is the result of a dividend of KD 35.9 million for the year 2021 of 45 fils per share.

The assets managed on behalf of other companies have increased to KD1.13 billion as of June 30, 2022, compared to KD1.09 billion by the end of 2021, an increase of 3.7 percent.

Key events

Girish added saying: "MENA's Priced Investment Sector has benefited from capturing opportunities for company funds and customer portfolios, where the industry has developed detailed plans to take advantage of investment opportunities by transforming customer portfolios into attractive sectors across funds, portfolios, and private equity portfolios to achieve positive returns. The outstanding performance of our investment funds has enabled us to offer returns to unit owners of The Al-Wataniya Fund at 6.6 percent, Darj Investment Fund at 5.6 percent, Zajil Services and Telecommunication Fund at 0.4 percent, and Mawarid Industrial and Petroleum Services Fund at 4.6 percent, and on the other hand the Market Maker service has been expanded, by adding seven new companies, bringing the total number of companies to nine.

Girish went on to say that The National Investments Company continues to provide its advisory services, which included the completion of some significant deals. The advisory group from the banking investment sector has completed two major authorizations before the IPO: the first one was for Ali Alghanim and Sons Automotive, where NIC has played the role of the coordinator and listing consultant, in addition to acting as issue manager and IPO underwriting agent for National Consumer Holding Company (NCHC), and managing the unique offering of Rai Media Group, as well

as playing the investment consultant role for the merger between Boubyan Petrochemical Company and Education Holding Group, and as an investment advisor for the merger between Safa Investment Company and Cap Corp Investment Company.

The alternative investment management has also successfully invested in several funds, managed by leading international companies in the field of private investment and the field of financial and food and technology; the other fund invests in personal finance and private property, as well as a regional e-commerce platform, a delivery company, and an international clothing company while exploring new investment opportunities in the field of global real estate and direct investment openings while evaluating current investments for potential exits.

The real estate investment sector continued to pursue domestic and foreign real estate investments through a comprehensive study of investments and assets inside and outside Kuwait and is working on developing and improving collection rates and portfolio revenues, achieving a rental collection rate of 81 percent, and maintaining occupancy rates at 85 percent in the first half of 2022.

Considerate plans

Bashar Khan, Senior Vice President - Investment Banking Sector, said that the company's strategy focuses on building managed assets, through the development of international real estate products and the initial focus on venture capital, in addition to obtaining excellent opportunities for joint investments, including Boursa Kuwait, Kuwait Foudary, FedEx Italia and Tiger Global. With the implementation of high-quality operations with a particular focus on medium-sized customers, we have completed many key transactions, established specialized teams in the capital markets, and completed mergers, acquisitions, and venture capital that have been identified as key growth areas for the company.

Khan commended the performance of National Investments in the initial public offering of Ali Al-Ghanim Sons Automotive Company and the pioneering role of National Investments in the public offering process, in addition to the ability of the national investments to adhere to an effective schedule and the impressive results achieved by the company, which included oversubscribing more than 11 times and the volume of demand is not the precedent, which exceeded KD 1 billion, and the company completed all procedures within a week of closing the subscription.

We continue to develop digital channels for the company's customers and enhance governance.

Studies and opportunity acquisition

Studies have demonstrated the company's ability to identify opportunities in the market, including acquiring a controlling stake in Boursa Kuwait in February 2019, with a 14.4 percent share of direct national investments since the acquisition, Boursa Kuwait's shares were also made available for public offering and listing, and the market price today has been more than double the cost of purchase,

achieving more than double gross return of 11.09 times (based on market values).

In addition to Kuwait Foudary's study, which complies with acquiring an asset with discounted pricing with a substantial value much greater than the prevailing market value. The investment also provided a path to fair value, with a 20 percent stake acquired in January 2019 and actions taken to achieve fair value. Most of the equity in the transaction was restored, and the total double return based on market value was 1.27 times; as well as the study of investment in the logistics warehouse project in Italy leased to FedEx, a 15-year leasing contract was signed, and is expected to generate annual cash returns of 8 percent and a net internal return rate of 9 percent over 18 months.

Finally, investing in Pipe Technology, is a company specialized in financial technology and provides solutions to its clients who have continuous sources of income by obtaining the required capital without reducing their ownership as a result of accepting the entry of new capital into their companies or forcing them to obtain external loans.

Concluding the conference, NIC representatives confirmed that the company would communicate with its shareholders and customers, keeping them up-to-date with the latest developments NIC is witnessing through the analysts' conference, which is held quarterly.



Basel Al-Haroon

CBK raises discount rate to 2.75%, 2nd hike in a month

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Central Bank of Kuwait Governor Basel Al-Haroon stated that the Central Bank has decided to raise the discount rate by a quarter percentage point from 2.50 percent to 2.75 percent as of August 11, 2022.

The Central Bank of Kuwait has raised the discount rate for the second time in less than a month, surpassing the interest rate of the US central bank (Federal Reserve) which is currently in the range of 2.25%-2.5%.

Al-Haroon stated that the Central Bank, in addition, is making an adjustment of varying rates to the money market intervention rates that are currently applied to all the terms of the interest rate structure, including repurchases (repo), Central Bank of Kuwait bonds and securitization, the system for accepting term deposits, direct intervention instruments, in addition to public debt instruments.

The governor noted that the decision came in light of recent developments in the local and global economic conditions and geopolitical developments, and the impact of it on global inflation rates and its reflection on the consumer price index locally. He added, "the decision comes due to the latest local banking and monetary data after the recent Central Bank of Kuwait decision on July 28, 2022."

The governor pointed out that the central bank considered the nature of the Kuwaiti economy today that is open to global world. What is required today is a diligent follow-up of local and global economic and financial data and information, keeping pace with the developments in major global interest rates. This is in accordance with the gradual methodology in moving the discount rate with the aim of enhancing the environment that supports sustainable economic growth, especially the non-oil sectors, consolidating monetary and financial stability and maintaining the attractiveness of the national currency as a reliable source of domestic savings, he pointed out.

The Central Bank of Kuwait will continue its monitoring of economic and cash developments in the local and international markets in order to take any necessary additional measures to ensure maintaining monetary and financial stability in Kuwait, he added.

Ethiopia's second turbine at Nile Dam produces power

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed kickstarted electricity production from the second turbine at its controversial mega-dam on the Blue Nile on Thursday, despite continuing objections by Egypt and Sudan over the project. Abiy also confirmed that a third filling of the multi-billion dollar Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) was under way, a development that led Egypt last month to protest to the UN Security Council.

Thursday's move came even though there is still no agreement between Ethiopia and its downstream neighbors Egypt and Sudan about the GERD's operations.

Abiy insisted that the third filling of the \$4.2 billion dam-set to be the largest hydroelectric scheme in Africa-was not causing any water shortages for the two countries. "We have repeatedly told downstream countries, especially Egypt and Sudan, that by generating power we're developing our economy, as well as (our desire) to see our citizens who live in the dark see light," he said. There was "no aim to sideline and harm" those countries, he added.

Ethiopia first began generating electricity at the dam in February. Currently, the two turbines, out of a total of 13 at the dam, are generating 750



Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed pressing the start button to generate power from the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam's (GERD) second turbine during a ceremony held on Thursday.

megawatts of electricity. The GERD is ultimately expected to produce more than 5,000 megawatts, more than doubling Ethiopia's current output.

Last month, Egypt wrote to the Security Council voicing its objections to Ethiopia's plans to fill the dam for a third year without a three-way agreement. Cairo and Khartoum fear it could threaten their access to vital Nile waters and have demanded a written agreement between on the dam's filling and operation. The process of filling the GERD's

vast reservoir, which has a total capacity of 74 billion cubic meters, began in 2020.

The new US envoy for the Horn of Africa, Mike Hammer, discussed the project during visits to both Ethiopia and Egypt last month, saying Washington was "actively engaged" in supporting efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the dispute. The 145-metre (475-foot) high structure straddles the Blue Nile in the Benishangul-Gumuz region of western Ethiopia, near the border with Sudan. —AFP

Business

White residents-only town booms in 'Rainbow Nation' South Africa

Not apartheid-era nostalgics, a community pursuing 'freedom with responsibility'

ORANIA, South Africa: From a distance, Orania looks like any other small town in rural South Africa. But once inside, the visitor is struck by an obvious difference. Everyone here is white. And in a country where menial work in wealthy areas is typically done by black employees, white people here mop supermarket floors, wield leaf blowers and harvest the nuts on pecan farms. Orania residents are 100-percent white in a country that has declared an end to racial segregation. The history of this incongruity dates back to 1991, when apartheid was in its death throes. White Afrikaners—descendants of 17th-century Dutch colonizers—bought up 8,000 hectares (19,000 acres) of land on the banks of the Orange River, in the sparsely populated Karoo region.

Using an autonomous status under the post-apartheid constitution, they created a privately-owned town which has so far admitted only white inhabitants. Today, Orania's population has surged almost 10-fold, reaching around 2,500, and the economy is booming.

Old Cape Dutch-style houses hobnob with modern townhouses, separated by low or no walls, but kempt gardens. Children ride bicycles and adults jog freely on the clean streets. Small orange-white-and-blue flags—the South African colors under apartheid—flutter in the afternoon wind at construction sites.

'Not racist'

Sensitive to accusations of racism, residents insist they are not apartheid-era nostalgics but a community pursuing "freedom with responsibility". This means, in their view, a community that manages its own affairs, away from the crime, power cuts, dysfunctional local governance and other problems plaguing South Africa today. "People see Orania and maybe see there are no black workers... and their first idea is 'wow these guys must be racist', that's exactly not the case," said Wynand Boshoff, 52, a pioneer resident.

In rich suburbs elsewhere in South Africa, manual jobs are done almost exclusively by black workers.

But Orania says it has broken with colonial- and apartheid-era labour practices. "We do our own work, from gardening to cleaning our houses, our own toilets to construction, everything," said spokesman Joost Strydom. Orania, he said, is the only community that shuns "the system of cheap black labor."

Autonomy

Under South Africa's constitution, Orania has the right to self-determination and operates autonomously



ORANIA, South Africa: Ludwig Oostveen, owner and builder of his earth-ship tends to his vegetable garden at his house in Orania, on July 25, 2022. — AFP

from central government. It has its own currency, the ora, pegged one-to-one to the rand. The town is also seeking energy independence through solar, in a country largely powered by coal and deep into an energy crisis. Prospective residents are vetted and must have no criminal record. "It's like going into a marriage," said Strydom, a 28-year-old born in the southeastern province of KwaZulu-Natal. Would-be residents must "share the values and subscribe" to the town's goals, he said, insisting Orania was not "racist" or a "desperate grasp back to apartheid".

Boshoff said there was nothing stopping any non-white Afrikaners from applying—only no-one ever did. "We haven't found anybody," he said.

Boom

Orania's population has grown by up to 17 percent annually in recent years, and in 2021 new business creations were up by a quarter, said Strydom. Tourism is one of the main business activities, attracting an average 10,000 visitors annually. "Suddenly other communities are saying 'how can we learn from you?'," he said. When AFP journalists were in Orania recently, some traditional royal emissaries from the Xhosa and Tswana ethnic groups were in town on a "diplomatic" visit. "It was important for me to go... Whether right or wrong, there is a success story in there somewhere,"

said Gaboilewe Moroka, 40-year-old chief of the Barolong Boo Seleka, part of Tswana ethnic group in neighboring Free State province. "It's unfortunate these things are overly politicised," she said.

Boshoff, the grandson of the architect of apartheid Hendrik Verwoerd, argued that Afrikaners created Orania because they needed a place to call home. "Every African tribe or clan has a place of its own which they use as a reference point," said Boshoff, who is also a right-wing lawmaker in the national parliament. Orania has "become part of the South African landscape", he said, after delivering a Sunday morning sermon at a Dutch Reformed church.

Private towns such as Orania are not unusual, said municipality governance expert Sandile Swana. "You are going to see more of these," said Swana. "The only difference with Orania is that they have chosen their own ethnic background and culture" as a pre-condition. Another Afrikaner-only town, Kleinfontein, lies some 30 kilometers (18 miles) outside the capital of the "Rainbow Nation", Pretoria. South Africa's first black president, Nelson Mandela, strove relentlessly to reconcile the deeply divided country. He visited Orania in 1995 and had tea with Verwoerd's widow. A white tea set they drank from is among the memorabilia neatly arranged in an unassuming white house where Betsie Verwoerd spent her last years. —AFP

Singapore trims 2022 growth forecast

SINGAPORE: Singapore on Thursday narrowed its economic growth forecast this year after the economy contracted in the second quarter compared to the previous three months due to rising inflation and tighter monetary policies, the government said.

Moves by central banks worldwide to tighten borrowing costs in order to deal with rocketing prices have weighed down on global demand for Singapore's exports, with the government painting a grim picture for the rest of the year. Economists often see the performance of the city state's open, trade-driven economy as a barometer for global trading activity.

Singapore's economy is now projected to expand by 3.0 to 4.0 percent this year, trimmed from a 3.0 to 5.0 forecast earlier, the trade ministry said in a statement. The economy grew by 4.4 percent year-on-year in the second quarter to June, faster than the 3.8 percent growth recorded in the previous quarter, it said. But compared to the previous three months, the economy contracted by 0.2 percent, reversing the 0.8 percent expansion in the first quarter.

"Since May, the global economic environment has deteriorated further," the ministry said.

"Stronger than expected inflationary pressures and the more aggressive tightening of monetary policy in response are expected to weigh on growth in major advanced economies such as the US and Eurozone." China, a key market for global exports, "continues to grapple with a deepening property market downturn and recurring domestic COVID-19 outbreaks", it said. "Notwithstanding recent signs of a slight easing in global supply disruptions, the disruptions are likely to persist for the rest of the year as underlying factors such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict and China's zero-COVID policy remain," it added.—AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 11 AUGUST 2022

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No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance										Valuation Multiples *				
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	1,067	1,073	1,074	1,060	14	14,562,855	5	0.47%	13.00%	1,064	1,080	19.3	2.07	2.3%	0.99
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	358	361	364	355	9	32,649,814	3	0.84%	35.86%	346	364	20.4	1.69	1.8%	1.18
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	218	213	218	212	6	2,558,850	-4	-1.84%	1.61%	212	217	34.0	0.67	1.8%	1.18
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	233	229	233	226	7	26,808,869	-3	-1.29%	-4.20%	227	230	19.2	0.83	2.1%	1.33
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	884	860	885	860	25	47,534,487	-23	-2.60%	13.70%	860	890	29.5	3.72	1.3%	1.19
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	838	835	838	829	9	3,088,314	1	0.12%	17.22%	826	847	54.9	3.36	0.5%	1.08
204	National Investments	Financial Services	312	302	314	297	17	3,693,170	-8	-2.58%	37.90%	296	310	11.2	1.19	15.0%	1.76
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	158	156	164	156	8	11,478,865	-2	-1.27%	9.86%	153	161	28.5	0.82	3.2%	0.96
252	Al Imtiaz Investment	Financial Services	92	92.5	94	91.3	2.2	3,511,282	0.6	0.65%	-21.61%	90	95	NULL	0.54	9.8%	1.17
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	134	131	140	130	10	33,551,593	-3	-2.24%	-24.62%	124	132	16.1	0.97	2.2%	1.01
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	813	808	817	803	14	1,320,599	-1	-0.12%	8.01%	787	809	17.0	1.84	1.6%	1.15
501	National Industries	Financial Services	266	268	271	260	11	34,372,097	2	0.75%	11.22%	264	274	6.1	1.10	4.2%	1.43
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	1,500	1,510	1,540	1,470	70	653,074	6	0.40%	73.36%	1,490	1,513	15.1	1.22	4.0%	0.85
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	930	925	938	920	18	548,391	-5	-0.54%	8.57%	915	935	12.4	1.74	6.5%	0.92
526	Al Qurain	Basic Materials	314	319	320	310	10	1,831,960	6	1.92%	-8.07%	313	323	14.6	0.76	5.7%	1.02
603	Agility	Industrials	893	889	895	886	9	7,877,602	-4	-0.45%	12.89%	875	902	75.0	1.24	1.9%	1.44
605	Zain	Telecommunications	613	617	617	608	9	13,021,244	4	0.65%	3.70%	617	621	14.5	2.24	5.4%	0.84
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	3,273	3,360	3,420	3,260	160	793,561	80	2.44%	4.22%	3,360	3,440	7.7	3.69	12.0%	0.69
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	205	202	208	202	6	1,341,513	-1	-0.49%	-7.34%	195	203	-	0.70	0.0%	1.14
654	JAZEERA	Consumer Discretionary	2,049	1,920	2,099	1,905	194	3,433,330	-120	-5.88%	48.84%	1,880	1,939	25.5	15.64	1.7%	1.35
818	Ahli United Bank	Banking	307	307	308	303	5	102,991,470	1	0.33%	21.47%	305	314	17.7	2.01	2.8%	1.78
821	Warba Bank	Banking	248	245	248	241	7	15,874,881	-4	-1.61%	-10.58%	243	249	28.8	1.33	0.0%	1.08
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	437	429	443	429	14	3,458,418	-7	-1.61%	-25.71%	405	432	20.9	1.18	3.7%	0.45
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	414	409	419	403	16	4,360,076	-6	-1.45%	2.30%	408	415	34.9	1.63	2.5%	0.76
826	Shamal Az-Zour	Utilities	201	201	201	199	2	2,801,834	0	0.00%	-11.84%	196	201	15.4	2.51	9.0%	0.51
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	2,425	2,489	2,495	2,425	70	354,165	67	2.77%	23.22%	2,483	2,545	26.6	8.58	2.6%	0.75
830	AL GHANIM	Consumer Discretionary	848	856	859	842	17	4,243,950	6	0.71%	#DIV/0!	830	860	13.3	3.93	-	1.03

* As of end of week closing

Business

Cheaper, changing and crucial: Solar technology is evolving fast

Costs plummet for a key segment of the world's energy transition

PARIS: Generating power from sunlight bouncing off the ground, working at night, even helping to grow strawberries: solar panel technology is evolving fast as costs plummet for a key segment of the world's energy transition. The International Energy Agency says solar will have to scale up significantly this decade to meet the Paris climate target of limiting temperature rises to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The good news is that costs have fallen dramatically. In a report on solutions earlier this year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said solar unit costs had dropped 85 percent between 2010 and 2019, while wind fell 55 percent.

"There's some claim that it's the cheapest way humans have ever been able to make electricity at scale," said Gregory Nemet, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a lead author on that report. Experts hope the high fossil fuel prices and fears over energy security caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine will accelerate the uptake of renewables.

Momentum gathered pace on Sunday with the ambitious US climate bill, which earmarks \$370 billion in efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent by 2030.

An analysis by experts at Princeton University estimates the bill could see five times the rate of solar additions in 2025 as there were in 2020. Nemet said solar alone could plausibly make up half of the world's electricity system by mid-century, although he cautioned against looking for "silver bullets". "I think there really is big potential," he told AFP.

Rapid changes

The "photovoltaic effect"—the process by which solar cells convert sunlight to electrical energy—was first discovered in 1839 by the French physicist Edmond Becquerel.

After decades of innovations, silicon-based solar cells started to be developed in the United States in the 1950s, with the world's first solar-powered satellite launched in 1958. The IPCC said of all energy technologies, small-scale ones like solar and batteries have so far proved quicker to improve and be adopted

than bulkier options like nuclear. Today, almost all of the panels glimmering on rooftops and spreading across vast fields are made in China using silicon semiconductors.

But the technology is changing quickly. In a recent report, the IEA said these new solar cells have proven to be one-fifth more efficient in converting light to energy than standard modules installed just four or five years ago.

There are also a host of new materials and hybrid cells that experts predict could supercharge efficiency. These include cheap, efficient and lightweight "thin film" technologies, like those using perovskites that can be printed from inks.

Experts say they raise the prospect of dramatically expanding where solar energy can be harvested—if they can be made durable enough to withstand a couple of decades of use. Recent research has raised hopes that it could be possible.

In one study, published in the journal *Science* in April, scientists added metal-containing materials to perovskite cells, making them more stable with efficiency near traditional silicon models.

Other research mixes materials for different purposes. One study in *Nature* used "tandem" models, with perovskite semiconductors to absorb near-infrared light on the solar spectrum, while an organic carbon-based material absorbed ultraviolet and visible parts of the light.

And what happens after sunset?

Researchers from Stanford said this year they had produced a solar cell that could harvest energy overnight, using heat leaking from Earth back into space. "I think that there's a lot of creativity in this industry," said Ron Schoff, who heads the Electric Power Research Institute's Renewable Energy and Fleet Enabling Technologies research.

Location, location

Generating more energy from each panel will become increasingly crucial as solar power is rolled out at greater scale, raising concerns about land use and



harm to ecosystems.

Schoff said one efficiency-boosting design that is becoming more popular for large-scale projects is "bifacial" solar. These double-sided units absorb energy not just directly from the sun's rays, but also from light reflected off the ground beneath.

Other solutions involve using the same space for multiple purposes—like semi-transparent solar panels used as a protective roof for strawberry plants or other crops.

India pioneered the use of solar panels over canals a decade ago, reducing evaporation as they generate power. Scientists in California have said that if the drought-prone US state shaded its canals, it could save around 63 billion gallons. Construction on a pilot project is due to begin this year.

All shapes, sizes

Experts say solar will be among a mix of energy options, with different technologies more suitable for different places. Schoff said ultimately those energy grids with more than 25 percent solar and wind need ways to store energy—with batteries or large-scale facilities using things like pumped water or compressed air.

Consumers can also play their part, said Nemet, by shifting more of their energy use to daytime periods, or even hosting their own solar networks in an Airbnb-style approach. He said the modular nature of solar means it can be rolled out in developing countries with sparse access to traditional grids. "You could have solar on something as small as a watch and something as big as the biggest power plants in the world," he said. "I think that's what's making people excited about it." —AFP

UN: Global youth unemployment to slip to 73m in 2022

WASHINGTON: The total global number of unemployed youths should fall to 73 million in 2022, down by two million from the year before, the United Nations said Thursday.

However, the figure is still six million higher than the pre-pandemic level of 2019, with the recovery in youth unemployment lagging behind the bounceback in other age groups, the UN's International Labour Organization said. Between 2019 and 2020, those aged 15 to 24 experienced a much higher percentage loss in employment than the rest of the labor market, the ILO said in a report.

Their 300-page "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022" update on key youth labor market indicators and trends said the pandemic exacerbated the market challenges generally facing young people. Many dropped out of the labor force, or failed to enter it altogether, due to the difficulty of finding a job during COVID-19 lockdowns and while businesses were closing due to the pandemic.

Gender gap

"The COVID-19 crisis has revealed a number of shortcomings in the way the needs of young people are addressed, especially the more vulnerable such as first-time job-seekers, school dropouts, fresh graduates with little experience and those who remain inactive not by choice," said Martha Newton, the ILO's deputy director-general for policy.

"What young people need most is well-functioning labour markets with decent job opportunities for those already participating in the labor market, along with quality education and training opportunities for those yet to enter it." The report said that 27.4 percent of young women were projected to be in work in 2022, compared to 40.3 percent of young men.

This gender gap "has shown little sign of closing over the past two decades", the ILO said. The gap is largest in lower-middle-income countries, at 17.3 percentage points, and smallest in high-income states, at 2.3 points. The share of youth not in employment, education or training in 2020 — the latest year for which a global estimate is available—rose to 23.3 percent, up 1.5 percentage points from 2019 to a level not seen in at least 15 years.

Regional differences

The global youth unemployment rate is projected to be 14.9 percent in 2022. The report highlighted the differences in youth unemployment between the regions. In Europe and central Asia, the rate is predicted to be 16.4 percent, "but the actual and potential shocks of the war in Ukraine are highly likely to affect the results". The rate in Asia and the Pacific is set to match the global average at 14.9 percent; in Latin America, it should hit a "worrying" 20.5 percent; while in North America the figure should be 8.3 percent.

The 12.7 percent rate in Africa "masks the fact that many youths have chosen to withdraw from the labor market altogether". But the Arab states have the highest and fastest-growing unemployment rate of young people worldwide at 24.8 percent—a figure that hits 42.5 percent for young women in the region. —AFP

Kalyan Jewellers announces bumper discounts

KUWAIT: Kalyan Jewellers, one of the most trusted and leading jewelry brands, has announced bumper discounts to mark the 75th year of India's Independence. The exciting offers will allow patrons to register instant benefits on their jewelry purchases from Kalyan Jewellers.

As part of the Indian Independence Day Offer, the jewelry brand has announced up to 75 percent off on making charges for gold jewelry purchases, while patrons can avail up to 75 percent off on diamond jewelry purchases adding further delight to the shopping experience. These one-of-its-kind offers run across Kalyan Jewellers' showrooms in the region from 11th August to 15th August 2022.

Talking about the announcement, Ramesh Kalyanaraman, Executive Director, Kalyan Jewellers said, "At Kalyan Jewellers, it gives us immense pride and joy as India is about to complete 75 years of Independence on 15th August.

Economists urge US to return Afghanistan's frozen assets

KABUL: Several dozen prominent US and international economists urged the United States Wednesday to hand over to Afghanistan \$7 billion in central bank reserves frozen when the Taliban seized control of the country nearly one year ago. "We are deeply concerned by the compounding economic and humanitarian catastrophes unfolding in Afghanistan, and, in particular, by the role of US policy in driving them," 71 economists and development experts said in a letter to US President Joe Biden and US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen.

"Without access to its foreign reserves, the



central bank of Afghanistan cannot carry out its normal, essential functions," they wrote. "Without a functioning central bank, the economy of Afghanistan has, predictably, collapsed." The signatories included Nobel economics prize winner Joseph Stiglitz and Yanis Varoufakis, who served as Greece's minister of finance when the country was negotiating with creditors after the 2008 economic collapse. In the letter they argued the United States could not justify holding onto the reserves, which it froze in American banks as the prior Washington-backed government in Kabul fell to the Islamist Taliban in August 2021.

The economists said that the plunge in economic activity and the sharp cuts to foreign aid by previous supporters of the country after the US military withdrawal had sent the Afghan economy into a tailspin. "Seventy percent of Afghan households are unable to meet their basic needs,"

they wrote. "Some 22.8 million people—over half the population—face acute food insecurity, and three million children are at risk of malnutrition."

This is worsened by the refusal of the United States to return to the Afghan central bank the \$7 billion in foreign exchange reserves, as well as \$2 billion blocked by Britain, Germany, and the United Arab Emirates, they said. "These reserves were critical to the functioning of the Afghan economy, in particular, to manage money supply, to stabilize the currency and to pay for the imports — chiefly food and oil—on which Afghanistan relies," they wrote.

The economists said a recent US offer to give the Taliban access to half the money by setting up a trust with international oversight was not enough. "By all rights, the full \$7 billion belong to the Afghan people," they said. "Returning anything less than the full amount undermines the recovery of a devastated economy." —AFP

US wholesale prices slow sharply in July

WASHINGTON: A steep plunge in energy costs last month caused US wholesale prices to cool sharply in July, according to government data Thursday, a welcome sign that more relief is on the way for American families plagued by high inflation. The producer price index (PPI) fell 0.5 percent compared to June, on a 9 percent drop in energy prices, the Labor Department reported.

That contrasted sharply with the modest rise economists had expected, and was the biggest

decline since February 2015, other than the retreat seen in the early months of the pandemic in 2020. The slowdown caused the PPI for the latest 12 months to pull back sharply from the 11.8 pace in June to a still-high 9.8 percent, the report said.

The welcome news about easing price pressures in the pipeline came a day after data showing consumer price inflation also slowed last month, pulling back from a 40-year high that had left many families struggling to make ends meet. But falling oil prices in recent weeks have caused gas prices at the pump to fall to \$3.99, the first time the national average has been below \$4 in weeks and down from the record of \$5.02 hit in mid-June.

Receding inflation pressures have raised hopes in financial markets that the Federal Reserve will be able to raise borrowing costs less aggressively,

The jewelry retailed at Kalyan Jewellers go through multiple purity tests and patrons also receive the Kalyan Jewellers 4-Level Assurance Certificate which guarantees purity, free lifetime maintenance of ornaments, detailed product information and transparent exchange and buy-back policies. The certification is part of the brand's commitment towards offering the very best to its loyalists.

Kalyan Jewellers' showrooms stock popular house brands such as Tejasvi (Polki jewelry), Mudhra (handcrafted antique jewelry), Nimah (Temple jewelry) and Glo (dancing diamonds). Other sections at the showroom include Ziah (Solitaire-like diamond jewelry), Anokhi (uncut diamonds), Antara (wedding diamonds), Hera (daily wear diamonds) and Rang (precious stones jewelry).



after two consecutive three-quarter point rate hikes. However economists and Fed officials have cautioned against that view. "A potential peak in annual inflation measures is a welcome sign for consumers, businesses," and the Fed, said Mahir Rasheed of Oxford Economics. But "historically elevated price dynamics churning in the economy will likely persist through the end of the year," he said in an analysis, noting that the Fed remains "laser-focused on tightening policy to restrict inflation pressures."

As with the CPI report, the PPI data showed food prices continued their rapid ascent, increasing 1.0 percent in the month and are up 15 percent for the year. Costs of chicken eggs surged 43 percent in a single month. Excluding volatile food and energy components, PPI rose just 0.2 percent in the month. —AFP

Lifestyle | Features

Metallica, Mariah Carey to play New York show for foreign aid

Metallica, Mariah Carey and the Jonas Brothers will be among the acts performing in New York's Central Park this year at the Global Citizen Festival, the organization announced Thursday. Rosalia, Charlie Puth, Maneskin and Mickey Guyton will join them in taking the stage at the event, which is now in its 10th year and is aimed at drumming up support for preserving international aid to eradicate extreme poverty, in addition to a number of other causes.

The Central Park concert is slated for September 24 as is a sister show in

Accra, where Usher, SZA, Stormzy, H.E.R., Sarkodie, Stonebwoy and Tems are all scheduled to perform. Taking place since 2012 as world leaders gather in New York for the UN General Assembly, Global Citizen distributes tickets for free to supporters who pledge to take actions such as sending letters to their governments in support of development aid.

The 2022 event, which Priyanka Chopra Jonas will host, calls on world leaders as well as philanthropists to relieve debt, empower girls, improve food access and invest in climate solutions in countries that suffer climate change's

worst effects but whose carbon emissions pale in comparison to the globe's richest nations. "Decades of systemic and political failures have led humanity into the midst of converging and rapidly deteriorating crises—climate, hunger, health, war and conflict," Hugh Evans, Global Citizen's co-founder and CEO, said in a statement. "The most marginalized populations are paying the price of the stagnant inaction of our leaders, and now millions of lives, and the future of our planet, are at stake." —AFP



Brazilian woman arrested for stealing mother's artwork

Brazilian authorities arrested a late art collector's daughter Wednesday for allegedly orchestrating a scam in which a supposed psychic moved into her octogenarian mother's home and stole millions, police and media reports said. The woman from Rio de Janeiro is accused of deceiving and extorting her 82-year-old mother out of paintings, jewels and cash valued at a total 725 million reais (\$145 million) in a months-long scheme, police told AFP.

The 16 paintings stolen by the woman and five alleged accomplices—three of whom were also arrested—included works by Brazilian masters Tarsila do Amaral and Emiliano Di Cavalcanti, local media reports said. The arrested woman is reportedly the daughter of Jean Boghici, a famed Brazilian art collector who died in 2015. Her mother, Boghici's widow and heir to his collection, was allegedly tricked into believing her daughter was sick, and then persuaded



This handout picture released by Rio de Janeiro's Civil Police shows police officers holding the painting "Sol Poente" by Brazilian artist Tarsila do Amaral in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. — AFP

to hire a woman with supposed healing powers to administer a "spiritual treatment," according to news site G1.

The mother paid some \$970,000 from January to February 2020, but became suspicious and stopped the payments. The "psychic" and her accomplices then allegedly threatened and attacked the widow, isolating her at home for nearly a year as they stole her artworks and jewels.

The stolen paintings included "O Sono" and "Sol Poente" by Do Amaral, a

master of Brazilian Modernism. The latter, a famed 1929 oil painting, was found under one suspect's bed, according to G1. Other works had been sold to art galleries, and at least two ended up in the hands of Argentine businessman Eduardo Costantini, founder of the Museum of Latin American Art in Buenos Aires (Malba), the museum told newspaper Folha de Sao Paulo. —AFP

Michael Jordan 'Last Dance' jersey to be auctioned in September

A jersey worn by basketball legend Michael Jordan during Game 1 of the 1998 NBA Finals, his last title victory, is set to be auctioned off in September for an estimated \$3-5 million, Sotheby's announced Wednesday. The iconic red Chicago Bulls jersey, with Jordan's number 23 on the back, is only the second worn by the star during his six championships to be sold at auction. Most of Jordan's NBA Finals jerseys remain in private hands, according to Sotheby's, although he has donated one to the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Jordan, now 59, spent the bulk of his basketball career with the Bulls, with whom he won all six of his titles, but came out of retirement in 2001 to play two seasons with the Washington Wizards. His final season with the Bulls was detailed in the ESPN/Netflix documentary "The Last Dance" released in 2020.

"The 1997-1998 season is perhaps one of the most popular among Jordan

fans, as Michael was reaching the height of his abilities while simultaneously pursuing what he understood would be his last chance at an NBA Championship with the Chicago Bulls," said Brahm Wachter, head of streetwear and modern collectables at Sotheby's, in a press release. The jersey will first be publicly displayed in Monterey, California before being shipped to New York, where fans will also have the chance to view it during the online auction which runs from September 6-14.



This undated handout image provided by Sotheby's shows Michael Jordan's Game-Worn 1998 NBA Finals 'The Last Dance' Jersey, from Game 1, which is set to be auctioned in New York. — AFP

Though the estimate by Sotheby's is lower than the record set in May for the most expensive sports memorabilia ever sold — \$9.3 million for soccer star Diego Maradona's "Hand of God" jersey—it would be the highest price ever for one of Jordan's artifacts. —AFP

Olivia Newton-John to get state memorial in Australia



In this file photo taken on February 23, 2017 British-Australian singer Olivia Newton-John performs at the 58th Vina del Mar International Song Festival in Vina del Mar, Chile.

Screen legend Olivia Newton-John will be honored with a state memorial service in her adoptive homeland Australia, authorities said Thursday, touting an upbeat sendoff for the late Grammy-winning actress. The British-born, Aussie-raised star of the 1978 hit musical "Grease" died on Monday at her home in Southern California.

The cause of death was not stated,

but the 73-year-old Newton-John had spent three decades trying to—as she put it—"win over" breast cancer. Victoria state Premier Dan Andrews said Newton-John's family had accepted the offer of a state memorial that "would be much more of a concert than a funeral." "It will be an appropriate celebration of such a rich and generous life."

A date for the memorial has not yet

been set. Her widower, John Easterling, on Thursday posted a tribute to her and thanked fans for the "vast ocean of love and support" that has come with her passing. "She was the most courageous woman I've ever known," he said. "In her most difficult times she always had the spirit, the humor, and the will power to move things into the light." — AFP



Flowers and a photo are placed on the star of Australian singer and actress Olivia Newton-John on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Hollywood, California. — AFP photos



In this file photo taken 1983 US actor John Travolta and British-Australian actress and singer Olivia Newton-John shoot the film "Two of a kind" directed by John Herzfeld and released in 1983.



In this file photo taken on November 25, 1978 French singer Joe Dassin and Australian actress and singer Olivia Newton-John record a TV show at the Studio des Buttes Chaumont in Paris.

Lifestyle | Features



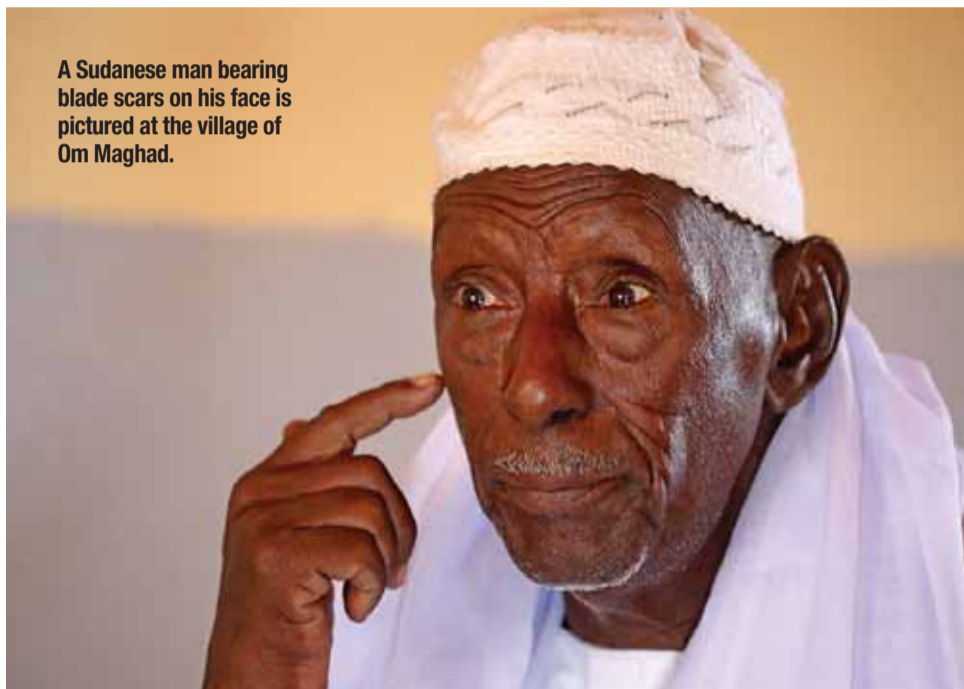
Kholoud Massaed of the Hadaria tribe in Sudan, bearing blade scars on her face, is pictured at the village of Om Maghad, some 66 kilometers (40 miles) south of Khartoum. —AFP photos



Kholoud Massaed of the Hadaria tribe in Sudan, bearing blade scars on her face, is pictured at the village of Om Maghad.



A Sudanese man bearing blade scars on his face is pictured at the village of Om Maghad.



A Sudanese man bearing blade scars on his face is pictured at the village of Om Maghad.

Scarring for life: Traditional practice fades in Sudan



A Sudanese woman bearing blade scars on her face is pictured at the village of Om Maghad.

Kholoud Massaed of the Hadaria tribe in Sudan vividly recalls the day her face was scarred with a sharp blade, an ancient practice that was once common. Now in her 80s, she still carries on each cheek the three lesion lines that have since darkened over time. "They took me to a man who was known to carry out this practice. He did it with a small knife," Massaed told AFP in her village of Om Maghad, some 66 kilometers (40 miles) south of Khartoum.

"I was seven years old and I cried. They told me I should have these facial marks as it's a sign of beauty." Tribal scarring, an ancient practice that used to be commonplace in Sudan, involves marking the skin, mainly to identify tribal affiliation or as a symbol of attractiveness.

It was also practiced in Sudan, where according to Minority Rights Group roughly 30 percent of the population is believed to belong to African minorities,

while the rest are Sudanese Arabs. The practice has greatly reduced over the years, with many now viewing it as unsanitary, archaic and obsolete. "People used to sing for it," said Massaed. "It had great value in the past." For a long time, she struggled to come to terms with her scarring, and now she is grateful that the practice has been dying out.

When her own children came of age, Massaed refused to let them endure the same agonies. "I didn't take any of my children to be marked," she said. "It's a different time now." "Only old people still bear these markings, not the younger generations."

Like Massaed, Fatma Ahmed of the Ja'aileen tribe bears similar lines on her face. "The pain lasted for weeks," she said, adding that she used many traditional healing ointments to ease her suffering. Communities in remote rural areas of Sudan have long struggled to access

proper health care because of poor facilities and infrastructure. Many men were also marked for life.

For males, these marks often varied from small vertical or horizontal lines on the cheeks to shapes resembling a "T" or "H", according to Babiker Mohammed from the Mahas tribe. "It was not a choice back then. It was inevitable," said the 72-year-old. "People just took children to the person known for marking faces, and he would mark the face according to their tribe name," he said.

Mohammed said that he too refused to mark his own children. "I'm probably from the last generation that had their faces marked" in Sudan, he said. Idris Moussa Abdelrahman, who is from the Ja'aileen tribe, hopes the practice never returns. "It's a distortion and harms people for no reason." — AFP

Ice-age footprints shed light on North America's early humans

Footprints laid down by Ice-Age hunter-gatherers and recently discovered in a US desert are shedding new light on North America's earliest human inhabitants. Dozens of fossilized prints found in dried-up riverbeds in the western state of Utah reveal more details about how the continent's original occupants lived more than 12,000 years ago—just as the frozen planet was starting to thaw.

The fossils could have remained unnoticed if not for a chance glance out of a moving car as researchers Daron Duke and Thomas Urban drove through Hill Air Force Base chatting about footprints. "We were talking about 'what would they look like?'" Duke told AFP. "And he said: Kind of like that out the window." What the two men had found turned out to be 88 distinct prints left by a mixture of adults and children.

"They vary between just looking like discolored patches on the ground and... little pop ups, little pieces of dirt around them or on them. But they look like footprints," Duke said. What came next was a painstaking few days of very careful digging—sometimes lying on his belly—to ensure that what they were looking at

was as old as it appeared.

"What I found was bare feet of people... that had stepped in what looks to be shallow water where there was a mud sub layer," Duke explained. "The minute they pulled their foot out, the sand filled that and has preserved it perfectly."



This handout image shows a footprint from the Ice Age discovered on an archaeological site in the southern Great Salt Lake Desert on the Utah Test and Training Range, about 80 miles west of Salt Lake City. — AFP

Duke, of the Nevada-based Far Western Anthropological Research Group, had been in the area looking for evidence of prehistoric campfires built by the Shoshone, a people whose descendants still live in the western United States. He had brought Urban over from Cornell University because of his expertise in uncovering evidence of ancient humans—including the discovery of human tracks in New Mexico's White Sands National Park that are thought to be up to 23,000 years old.—AFP

Norwegian woman climber on track to break 'super peaks' record

Norwegian climber Kristin Harila has just three mountains left in her bid to climb the world's 14 "super peaks" in record time after successfully summiting Pakistan's Gasherbrum I, officials said Thursday. Nepali Nirmal Purja holds the record for climbing the world's 8,000 meter-plus (26,000 feet) mountains—six months and six days—but Harila now has until early November to complete her quest and beat his time. Harila's latest successful summit was reported on her official social media pages and confirmed by Karrar Hadri, secretary of Pakistan's Alpine Club. "The second phase in Pakistan was very challenging and dangerous: ever-changing weather conditions, being hit by a rock, illness and a very tight schedule," read a message on Harila's Instagram page. "But here we are with only three peaks left."

Five of the 14 super peaks are in Pakistan—including K2, the world's second highest mountain—and the country has enjoyed a record-breaking climbing season this year. Sajid Hussain, head of the tourism department in Gilgit Baltistan, told AFP they had issued about 1,780 permits for the top peaks. "It has boosted our tourism and has increased our foreign exchange," he said. Only around 40

people in history have summited all 14 of the super peaks, but none have come close to Purja's 2019 expedition.

He demolished the previous record for accomplishing the feat with supplemental oxygen, set by Poland's Jerzy Kukuczka in the 1980s at seven years, 11 months and 14 days. In an interview with AFP earlier this year, 36-year-old Harila said she was inspired to show women were as capable as men of achieving great mountaineering feats.



"In history and until now, it has been the strong macho men going out climbing mountains," she said. "When I talk to people that are not in this sport, they believe that men are more capable than women... If we are going to change, we need to get attention and show that women are just as capable." The three remaining mountains for Harila are Cho Oyu (sixth highest, in Nepal/China), Manaslu (eighth, Nepal) and Shishapangma (14th, China). — AFP

'This freaking tower!': Tech saves potty mouthed stars in vertigo thriller 'Fall'

When you're dangling from a tower 2,000 feet above the desert floor by your fingertips, it may be difficult not to drop a couple of F-bombs—even if you're a Hollywood actor shooting a PG-13 rated movie. Fortunately, a new editing technology came to the rescue of the "potty-mouthed" stars of "Fall," out in US theaters Friday, which follows two young women who decide to scale an impossibly tall metal tower in the remote California desert.

This being a movie, the adventure doesn't go to plan, leaving Becky (Grace Caroline Currey) and Hunter (Virginia Gardner) stranded on a tiny platform where vertigo is just one of the terrifying challenges they must overcome. "I'm talking about the most intense winds I've ever experienced," Currey told AFP, of the grueling shoot.

"Gini (Gardner) and I are just holding on to that pole, sitting there, swaying, looking at each other, and it's making sounds. "We had a moment going, 'what did we get ourselves into? Also, are these our final hours? Are we gonna make it down?'" "There was definitely some swearing in the environment and in the air." Though the movie was not shot at the real B67 TV Tower, which is twice the height of the Eiffel Tower, the actors still had to perform on a terrifying set: a 60-foot tower perched atop a sheer cliff in the Mojave desert.

Using judicious angles to avoid showing the mountain, British director Scott Mann was able to retain a realistic feel for the indie thriller at the tiny budget of \$3 million. But when major Hollywood studio Lionsgate agreed to distribute the film, there was one problem. The actors were cursing throughout, using language likely to trigger a restricted "R" rating that could dampen box office receipts. "Potty mouths Virginia and Grace, is what I'd say!" joked Mann, in an interview with AFP via Zoom. "I do not blame Gini and Grace—because let's be honest, off the top of this ridiculous structure, thousands of feet up, asking to improvise out scenes, it is entirely justified they would be saying that." "Definitely my fault!" he admitted.

'Potty-mouth language'

While a giant summer superhero movie might typically reshoot certain scenes, the budget on "Fall" did not allow for that, and filmmakers were reluctant to edit out dialog. Instead they found a creative solution: a nascent technology, primarily invented for foreign-language dubbing, enabling them to seamlessly swap in more family-friendly audio.

It maps the actors' faces, learning their specific mouth movements, before manipulating these motions with 3D computer effects to sync with new dialog. "What the technology allowed was, rather than having to rebuild the tower and go up the mountain again, just to go to a sound studio," said Mann, who co-founded a start-up working on the technology.

"We rewrote those little moments, just to work around some of that potty-mouth language, and then basically inject it back into the movie." While the tool has been referred to as "deepfake," Mann said that label suggests more nefarious uses such as pornography, while in reality it is more "hands-off." "It's an interesting use, and I think it was a good solution," he said.

'Wild'

Despite being released in mid-August—typically a period with low audiences, where many weaker films are unceremoniously dumped by studios—"Fall" has received very positive reviews. The Guardian said the micro-budget movie should embarrass other giant studios who throw "a hundred times more at blockbusters with a hundred times less of a thrill factor," while Vanity Fair dubbed it "an engrossing dog-days surprise."

For Currey, who did many of her own stunts including clinging on to a plummeting ladder, making the movie was "pretty wild, not like anything I've ever done before." "And we didn't know if we were going to be R or PG-13," she added. "As far as Gini and I knew, we could say whatever we wanted!" — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



People relax on a beach on the Black Sea coast in the Sile district of Istanbul province. — AFP photos



Eren Bizmi, poses on a beach on the Black Sea coast in the Sile district of Istanbul province.



Eren Tor poses in front of the Bosphorus strait in Istanbul's Bebek district.

‘Not bad!’: Swimming between continents in Istanbul

Every morning, his skin bronzed by the sun, pensioner Metin Cakmakci rushes to grab a deckchair under a parasol on his local beach on the Asian side of Istanbul. “A sea like this for a gigantic city such as Istanbul-it’s not bad,” the 74-year-old smiles, pointing to the crystal-clear water facing the Princes’ Islands on the Sea of Marmara. Istanbul, a bustling megalopolis of 16 million people between two continents and two seas,

Burkinis and bikinis
“A lot of people can’t afford to get out of Istanbul anymore,” explains Canan Civan, a bikini-clad bather in her sixties. “But even if I had the money, I wouldn’t go anywhere else,” she adds. “Instead of spending 10 days on holiday, I’d rather come here every day for three months.” Istanbul has 85 accessible beaches or bathing spots between the Black Sea in the north, the Sea of Marmara in the south and the

the volleyball game. “If a client calls, I can go and show them a house and come back,” the 22-year-old grins. No-one mentions the two mines that washed up in this area earlier this year—a haunting reminder of the war pitting Ukraine against its Russian invaders on the far side of the Black Sea.

Bosphorus bathers

Finally, there are the bathers of the Bosphorus, who swim between Europe and Asia under the serene gaze of the city’s grand palaces. Eren Tor and his friends meet every morning in Bebek, an upmarket neighbourhood on the European side of the continental divide. “It’s a privilege to be able to swim between two seas and two continents,” the 64-year-old pensioner says. The water reaches 23 degrees Celsius (73 degrees Fahrenheit) in the summer, dropping to 11C on average in the winter.

But every day, “even in the winter, even in the snow”, Tor says he comes out for his morning Bosphorus dip. He scrolls through pictures on his phone to prove his point. “He’s the only one!” one of his friends laughs. Almost all the group have been swimming here since childhood, learning the strait’s tricky currents, which



An aerial picture shows umbrellas and deckchairs at Caddebostan beach on the Bosphorus coast on the Asian side in Istanbul.

can swiftly sweep you away.

Levent Aksut, 92, says he comes to swim “three of four times a week”. The only problem, says his son Caner, “is that the government does not want to see people in swimwear”. The bathers believe President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s Islamic-rooted party is purposely restricting bathing space in the city, layering

shores with construction and cement. But their own ritual persists. After climbing up a ladder they installed on the steep shoreline, they dry off on the quay’s benches and sip coffee. “What more could you wish for?” Tor asks.—AFP



An aerial picture shows umbrellas and deckchairs at Caddebostan beach on the Bosphorus coast on the Asian side in Istanbul.

does not immediately bring to mind images of a beach resort.

But just like the locals of New York, Beirut and a handful of other global cities, Istanbulites can swim all summer long and return home on the metro with sand trapped under their sandals and salt layering their skin. “In the old days, you could access the water anywhere,” Cakmakci reminisces. “Now, of course, you have buildings everywhere. The coastline has changed. We all now live on top of each other, in a way.”

Istanbul officials have added a hundred extra sun loungers to Cakmakci’s beach, creating room for 300 people under 170 parasols just 25 minutes’ walk from the pensioner’s home. This year, attendance has shot up, says Sezgin Kocak, who oversees maintenance at the beach. A large part of the spike stems from an economic crisis that has seen consumer prices soar by 80 percent in one year.

Bosphorus Strait in between. Public or private, some attract a more traditional clientele who cover themselves up in veils, while others come out in bikinis, merrily exposing their skin. Like Turkish society itself, the two often share the same space. At other times, an invisible demarcation line appears. One such line is in the Sile neighborhood, where the Black Sea meets the northern edge of the Bosphorus Strait—the stretch of water dividing Turkey between its European and its Asian halves.

On the bikini side, Eren Bizmi is trying to start up a volleyball game with some friends from work. “Istanbulites know you can find a beach 35, 40 minutes from the centre,” the 32-year-old real estate agent says. He declares the Black Sea is best because it is “less salty” than the Sea of Marmara.

“And I can work at the same time,” adds Sema Basaran, the only woman in



An aerial picture shows umbrellas and deckchairs at Caddebostan beach on the Bosphorus coast on the Asian side in Istanbul.

Disney+ subscribers surge as Netflix stumbles

The Disney+ streaming service saw its number of paying subscribers leap beyond expectations in the last quarter, as rival Netflix’s client count ebbed, results showed Wednesday. The number of people subscribing to Disney+ topped 152 million, up some 31 percent from the same period a year earlier, the entertainment giant said in an earnings report. Disney’s bottom line was also boosted by rising revenue from its theme parks, which showed signs of recovering from stifled attendance during the pandemic.

Better-than-expected earnings reported by Disney came as many of the tech titans that flourished during the pandemic curb costs in the face of inflation and people get back to living life in the real world instead of online. Disney shares were up more than 6 percent in after-market trades that followed release of the earnings figures.

“We had an excellent quarter, with our world-class creative and business teams powering outstanding performance at our domestic theme parks, big increases in live-sports viewership, and significant subscriber growth at our streaming services,” said Disney chief executive Bob Chapek. The 14.4 million Disney+ subscribers added in the recently ended quarter raised the overall number of subscriptions to its streaming services, which include Hulu and ESPN+, to 221 million, Chapek added. The overall number of subscribers to Disney streaming services topped those of Netflix for the first time.

“Investors will breathe a sigh of relief from Disney’s robust fiscal (quarterly) earnings,” said Insider Intelligence principal analyst Paul Verna. “The streaming figures will be seen as an indicator of the health of the market, especially after lackluster subscriber figures from Netflix and Comcast.” Disney also announced that an ad-subsidized version of its streaming television subscription service will be offered in the United States starting December 8 at a monthly price \$3 less than the ad-free offering.

K-pop and superheroes

Taking a page from Netflix’s playbook, Disney has been investing in shows created in places outside the United States.

The company plans to “step up” investments in such local original content, Chapek said, pointing out a film concert and docu-series focused on South Korean music sensation BTS. He expressed confidence in Disney theater films in the works, including an eagerly anticipated “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever” addition to its Marvel superhero line-up.

A trailer for the Black Panther film logged more than 170 million views in the

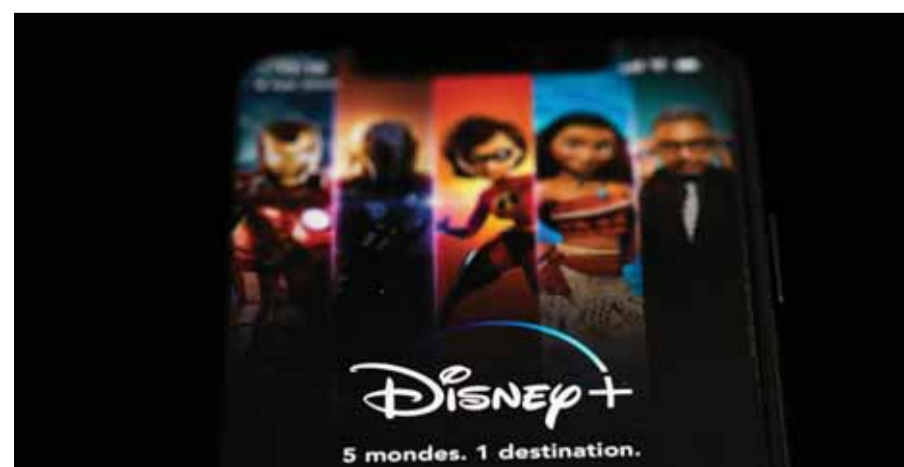
24 hours after its release, Chapek said. “Disney still faces economic uncertainty and intense competition, but performance should at least temporarily put to rest some of Wall Street’s gloomier perceptions about the company, and more broadly about the entertainment industry,” said Paul Verna, an analyst at Insider Intelligence.

Rival Netflix has reported losing subscribers for two quarters in a row, as the streaming giant battles fierce competition

and viewer belt tightening, though the firm assured investors of better days ahead. The loss of 970,000 paying customers in the most recent quarter was less than expected, leaving Netflix with just shy of 221 million subscribers.

“Our challenge and opportunity is to accelerate our revenue and membership growth... and to better monetize our big audience,” the firm said in its earnings report. After years of amassing subscribers, Netflix lost 200,000 customers worldwide in the first quarter compared to the end of 2021. Netflix said in its earnings report that it had expected to gain a million paid subscribers in the current quarter.

Netflix executives have made it clear the company will get tougher on sharing logins and passwords, which allow many to access the platform’s content without paying. In an effort to draw new subscribers, Netflix said it will work with Microsoft to launch a cheaper subscription plan that includes advertisements. The ad-supported offering will be in addition to the three account options already available, with the cheapest plan coming in at \$10 per month in the United States. — AFP



This file illustration photo shows the logo of the US video on demand application Disney+ on the screen of a phone in Paris. — AFP

Sports

Trial on Kobe Bryant death crash photos begins in US

At least 11 personnel, dozen firefighters shared photos within 24 hours of the crash

LOS ANGELES: A court case brought by Kobe Bryant's widow over graphic photographs taken by first responders at the site of the helicopter crash that killed him got under way in the United States on Wednesday.

The basketball superstar and his teenage daughter were among nine people who died when their chopper smashed into a hillside near Los Angeles in January 2020. Vanessa Bryant alleges she suffered emotional distress because personnel from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department and firefighters snapped pictures of the scene, which they later shared with friends and first responders.

"At least 11 (sheriff's) personnel and a dozen firefighters shared the photos within 24 hours of the crash," Bryant's attorneys wrote in court papers.

"In the following weeks, one (sheriff's) deputy flouted photos of remains at a bar, another texted photos to a group of video game buddies, and (county fire) personnel displayed photos at an awards gala."

Lawyers for Los Angeles County do not dispute that the photos were taken, but insist they have never been made public and have now been deleted. Mira Hashmall, representing the county in the civil litigation, said the case hinged on this issue of public dissemination.

"From the time of the crash to now, the county has worked tirelessly to prevent its crash site photos from getting into the public domain," she said. "Over two and a half years later, no county photos have appeared in the media, none can be found online, and the plaintiffs admit they've never seen them."

Vanessa Bryant's case has been combined with a similar case brought by Chris Chester, whose wife and 13-year-old daughter also died in the crash. A jury of six women and four men were selected Wednesday, CNN reported.

Relatives of several other victims were last year granted \$2.5 million in compensation over the photo-taking. An investigation into the crash found the pilot had probably become disorientated after flying the Sikorsky S-76 into fog.

Bryant is widely recognized as one of the greatest basketball players ever, a figure who became the face of his sport during a glittering two decades with the Los Angeles Lakers.

He was a five-time NBA champion in a career that began in 1996 straight out of high school and lasted until his retirement in 2016, after which he began building a lucrative business portfolio. He was also a two-time Olympic gold medalist, helping the US squad of NBA stars to titles in 2008 in Beijing and 2012 in London. — AFP



LOS ANGELES: File photo shows people gather in front of a mural of former Los Angeles Laker Kobe Bryant and his daughter Gianna, both with a set of wings, by artist sloe_motions displayed on a wall in downtown Los Angeles, California as they mark the one-year anniversary of Kobe Bryant's death. —AFP



MEMPHIS: Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland speaks with the media during the pro-am prior to the FedEx St. Jude Championship at TPC Southwind in Memphis, Tennessee. —AFP

LIV Golf lawsuit makes controversy 'personal': McIlroy

WASHINGTON: Controversy swirling over the upstart LIV Golf series got "a little more personal" when 11 LIV rebels sued the US PGA Tour this week, Northern Ireland star Rory McIlroy said Wednesday.

McIlroy and fellow US PGA Tour pro Justin Thomas both welcomed a judge's ruling that denied a request by three LIV Golf players for a temporary restraining order that would have allowed them to play in the St. Jude Championship this week, the first event of the US PGA Tour's season-ending playoffs.

The three players qualified for the playoffs were among 11 golfers who filed an anti-trust lawsuit against the US Tour challenging the indefinite suspensions imposed by PGA Tour commissioner Jay Monahan upon those who played in any of the Saudi-backed LIV tour's first three events.

McIlroy, who has been a critic of the new series offering stunning \$20 million purses for its 54-hole events as well as signing bonuses reportedly worth tens of millions for some stars, said he believed golfers had the right to choose the new tour-but the US PGA Tour also had the right to exclude those who made that decision.

"Guys are going to make their own decisions that they feel is best for them and that's totally fine," McIlroy said after playing a pro-am round at TPC Southwind in Memphis, Tennessee. "I don't begrudge anyone for going over to play LIV or taking guaranteed money."

"I think where the resentment comes from from the membership of this tour is the fact that they want to try to get their way back in here with no consequences, and anyone that's read the PGA Tour handbook or abided by the rules and regulations, that would feel very unfair to them."

As a PGA Tour board member, McIlroy has even-handedly fielded questions about LIV Golf spearheaded by Australian Greg Norman for months. But he acknowledged that the lawsuit hit close to the bone. "I certainly have a little more respect for the guys that haven't put their names to the suit," McIlroy said. "It's become a little more personal because of that."

The fact that Australian Matt Jones and Americans Talor Gooch and Hudson Swafford weren't given temporary relief from their suspensions to compete in the playoffs was, McIlroy said, "a good day for the Tour and for the majority of the membership." He noted, however, that it remained to be seen how the full lawsuit would play out. "It's like you birdied the first hole, but you've still got 17 holes to go," he said.

Thomas said he's not looking too closely at what promises to be a protracted legal battle. "The only thing I really care about is this golf tournament and trying to play well and trying to win the FedExCup," Thomas said. "And to be honest, I just don't care about all that stuff that's going on."

"However it's going to happen is going to happen. I may have an opinion here or there, but at the end of the day, once it gets to this point, it's way out of my hands in terms of getting to lawyers and judges and things of that nature. —AFP

Reed struggles as Vincent sets pace in Singapore

SINGAPORE: Zimbabwe's Scott Vincent continued his red-hot streak at the International Series events by carding a bogey-free eight-under-par 64 to grab the first-round lead in Singapore on Thursday.

The International Series Singapore offers a lucrative purse of US\$1.5 million and is part of the new International Series funded by the Saudi-backed LIV to the tune of \$400 million.

Vincent, who won the England edition in June, was in scintillating form again as he fired eight birdies — four on each side of the front and back-nine to take a one-shot advantage over Malaysia's Gavin Green at the Tanah Merah Country Club.

Vincent started well with an opening birdie on his back-nine 10.

The Zimbabwean picked up further gains on 13, 16 and 18 before marking his inward-nine with birdies on holes one, three, five and eight.

"It was a good day as a lot of things went my way. It was a good challenge, trying to stay in the present, enjoy each stage and not get too far ahead. I'm just out here trying to be a little better each day," said Vincent.

After missing the cut in six out of his previous



SINGAPORE: (L-R) Sihwan Kim of the US, Patrick Reed of the US and Scott Vincent of Zimbabwe pose next to the trophy ahead of International Series Singapore golf tournament at Tampines Golf course in Singapore. —AFP

eight starts, Green was pleased with his resurgence especially after storming home with three consecutive birdies for a flawless 65.

"The last few years have been really tough for me. But I've put in a lot of hard work and it's coming back nicely," said the Malaysian number one.

LIV golf rebel Patrick Reed, meanwhile, had a day to forget after he struggled under scorching conditions to end the day nine shots back of Vincent in 78th place. The 2018 Masters champion traded three bogeys against two birdies for a 73. — AFP



KINGSTON: Romario Shepherd of West Indies hits 6 during first T20i match between West Indies and New Zealand at Sabina Park in Kingston, Jamaica. — AFP

Santner stars as NZ beat W Indies in T20 opener

KINGSTON: West Indies' season of white ball woe continued on Wednesday when New Zealand completed a 13-run win in the first T20 International of a three-match series at Sabina Park in Jamaica. Fresh from a successful European sojourn, the Black Caps posted a formidable 185 for five batting first in a rain-interrupted innings before their premier bowlers combined to limit the Caribbean side to 172 for seven in reply.

Since getting the better of Bangladesh 2-0 in a T20I duel, the West Indies have been swept 3-0 by the Bangladeshis and India in successive One-Day International series before going down 4-1 to the Indians in another T20I campaign immediately preceding this assignment.

New Zealand almost paid for a period of complacency towards the end of the match as an explosive unbroken 58-run eighth-wicket partnership between Romario Shepherd (31 not out) and Odean Smith (27 not out) gave the hosts a glimmer of hope after they had crashed to 114 for seven in the 16th over.

But they were left with too much to do as "Man of the Match" Mitchell Santner's haul of three for 19 ripped the heart of the West Indies batting as he claimed the wickets of captain Nicholas Pooran first ball before adding Shimron Hetmyer and top-scorer Shamarh Brooks (42) to his list of victims.

"It was a bit surprising to see as much spin on this deck," said the left-arm spinner after receiving the award. "Bowling the right lengths is key against these guys because with the power they possess they can smash you away pretty easily."

New Zealand were set on their way after being put in to bat with an opening stand of 62 between Devon Conway and Martin Guppill. Skipper Kane Williamson's 47 off 33 balls kept the innings rolling along either side of the rain interruption but it was the late impetus from Jimmy Neesham, who belted an unbeaten 33 off just 15 balls with three fours and two sixes, which pushed the tourists to a target which ultimately proved to be just beyond the reach of the bludgeoning Shepherd and Smith.

For Smith the match was a personal triumph as his batting effort followed career-best T20I figures of three for 32. "Winning or losing can be contentious and the problem is we are losing at the moment," said a downbeat Pooran in reflecting on yet another setback in the countdown to the World T20 in October in Australia, where the two-time champions will have to get through a qualifying round first. — AFP

NZ cricket great Ross Taylor says he faced racism

WELLINGTON: New Zealand Cricket said on Thursday that they are looking into allegations by former skipper Ross Taylor that he suffered racism. The 38-year-old, who is of New Zealand-Samoan descent, retired from international cricket in April after a glorious career spanning 16 years.

Taylor's comments are the latest accusation of racism in cricket. In his autobiography "Black and White" released on Thursday, the legendary batsman says he endured racially barbed comments from teammates, but does not specify at what level of the game in New Zealand.

Taylor said that for most of his career he was "an anomaly, a brown face in a vanilla line-up". "In many ways, dressing-room banter is the barometer," he wrote. "A teammate used to tell me, 'You're half a good guy, Ross, but which half is good? You don't know what I'm referring to.' I was pretty sure I did."

"Other players also had to put up with comments that dwelt on their ethnicity." He represented New Zealand in 112 Tests, scoring 7,683 runs between 2006 and 2022. He was captain of the Black Caps for two years until 2012.

A spokesman for New Zealand Cricket told AFP they have contacted Taylor about the allegations. "NZC has reached out to Ross to discuss some of the comments in his book, both to better understand the details of them and to offer support. These discussions are ongoing," said the spokesman. "Ross currently sits on an NZC working group seeking to improve the game's engagement with Pasifika communities and his input is greatly valued. "We consider him an important part of our cricket family and are deeply disappointed he's been exposed to this type of behaviour. "NZC deplores racism."

Last month, an independent review into allegations of racism at Cricket Scotland found the governance and leadership practices of the organisation to be "institutionally racist". In June, Pakistan-born Azeem Rafiq said his family have been subjected to "threats, attacks and intimidation" since the former Yorkshire spinner made allegations of racism against his old club. Rafiq sent shockwaves through cricket when he said he had been subjected to racial harassment and bullying during his time as a Yorkshire player. —AFP

Sports

Serena Williams says goodbye to Canada after defeat by Bencic

Williams's farewell on-court interview threaded with emotion

TORONTO: Serena Williams, who said this week she will soon call time on her storied tennis career, departed the WTA Toronto Masters for the last time Wednesday with a 6-2, 6-4 loss to Belinda Bencic. The second-round defeat by Switzerland's reigning Olympic gold medalist was hardly unexpected, with the 40-year-old Williams competing in only her third match of 2022.

Bencic fired eight aces and broke Williams twice in the first set and once in the second, advancing on her first match point after 78 minutes. But as Bencic herself said in the post-match interview on court: "Tonight is about her." Williams's farewell on-court interview was threaded with emotion.

"I love playing here, I've always loved playing here," she said, choking up as fans who cheered her throughout the match called out their appreciation. "I wish I could have played better tonight, but Belinda was playing so well."

Williams, who turns 41 next month, had beaten Spain's Nuria Parrizas Diaz on Monday for her first singles victory since the 2021 French Open, 14 months ago. But it sent shockwaves through the sport when she revealed in an essay in Vogue magazine and an Instagram post on Tuesday that "the countdown has begun" to her retirement from the sport.

Williams didn't specify an actual retirement date but is expected to compete next week in Cincinnati before travelling to the US Open, which starts on August 29. She has lifted the US Open title six times, including her first Grand Slam triumph at the age of 17 in 1999.

"It's been a pretty interesting 24 hours," said

Williams, who remains one shy of the all-time record of 24 Grand Slam singles titles won by Margaret Court. "Like I said in my article, I'm terrible at good-byes," she said, her voice breaking.

"But, goodbye," she said, then adding with a laugh "Toronto." "A joy playing here" - "It's been a joy playing here all of those years." Bencic said the occasion was "Overwhelming." Williams's match was preceded by a video tribute played for fans. Before she left the court she was presented with jerseys from the NBA's Toronto Raptors and NHL's Toronto Maple Leafs-and with a child's version of the same for daughter Olympia.

In explaining that she was "evolving away" from tennis in the Vogue article, Williams said she wanted to focus on family life and new business ventures. Bencic said the occasion was "really overwhelming." "It definitely felt very special to be on court with her today again," she said "For me it was great, great, opportunity."

Williams's appearance highlighted a day that saw US teenager Coco Gauff—who says Williams was "the reason why I play tennis"—overcome 13 double-faults to battle past Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina and into the third round.

Gauff beat Rybakina 6-4, 6-7 (8/10), 7-6 (7/3) while world number one Iga Swiatek—who beat Gauff in the French Open final this year—sailed past Australian Ajla Tomljanovic 6-1, 6-2 in 55 minutes. Swiatek, 21, said she was "pretty sad" that she's never had a chance to play Williams, even if in the American's heyday "I would probably be the player that loses in the quarter-final against her."

The Polish player has won six titles this year,



TORONTO: Serena Williams of the United States waves to the crowd as she leaves the court after losing to Belinda Bencic of Switzerland during the National Bank Open, part of the Hologic WTA Tour, at Sobeys Stadium in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. —AFP

and when she lost in the third round at Wimbledon it ended a 37-match unbeaten run. But she's not sure she will ever scale the kind of heights reached by Williams.

"Being able to kind of do business and tennis at

the same time, but also be a mother and play well and do four Grand Slam finals, it's amazing," Swiatek said. "I think nobody is going to repeat that. I would be happy to have that belief that maybe I can do that." —AFP



MILAN: File photo shows AC Milan players parade with the Scudetto Trophy on a double-decker bus in Milan, on May 23, 2022 one day after AC Milan won the 2022 Italian Serie A "Scudetto" championship. —AFP

Rivals jostle for Milan's Serie A crown

MILAN: AC Milan have their Serie A rivals snapping at their heels ahead of their title defence, with the big boys bolstering their squads over an eventful summer which has left the league with no clear Scudetto favourite.

Stefano Pioli's side kick off the new season against Udinese at the San Siro on Saturday as teams gear up for a 15-match sprint between now and the World Cup in Qatar. Inter Milan, Juventus, Roma and Lazio have all made interesting moves, meaning that the race is likely to be as open as last year's, which went down to the wire.

Milan have lost Franck Kessie to Barcelona but brought in free-agent striker Divock Origi and spent 35 million euros (\$36 million) on promising but unproven forward Charles De Ketelaere. Inter, meanwhile, started the summer with a bang by bringing back Romelu Lukaku on loan from Chelsea but were beaten to the punch by Roma and Juve respectively for key targets Paulo Dybala and last season's best defender, Gleison Bremer.

The loss of Bremer to their biggest rivals was a blow for Inter, the inability to strike a deal with Paris Saint-Germain for the sale of Milan Skriniar holding up the purchase of the Brazilian from Torino and allowing Juve to bring in a sound replacement for Matthijs de Ligt and Giorgio Chiellini.

It dented the enthusiasm among fans who had thought Simone Inzaghi's team would strengthen to

the point of being hot favourites to retake the title but are newly worried about the financial stability of the club's Chinese owners Suning.

Pogba back at Juve

Juve have also brought in star names Paul Pogba now out until September with a knee injury—and Angel Di Maria, and are going after Leandro Paredes, Filip Kostic and mercurial attacker Memphis Depay. However, Sunday's 4-0 friendly thrashing at the hands of Atletico Madrid was exacerbated by old boy Alvaro Morata's hat-trick and has caused murmurings about the future of coach Massimiliano Allegri, who needs a big campaign after finishing 16 points behind Milan last time out.

There has been some worry among Milan fans over the low-key nature of their team's transfer moves, as well as the fact that the club didn't renew the contracts of directors Paolo Maldini and Frederic Massara—the architects of Milan's recent revival—until the last minute. Supporters are waiting for the American investment fund RedBird's purchase of the club to go through, with the closing of the 1.2 billion-euro (\$1.3 billion) deal with current owners Elliott due to be completed in late August or early September.

Meanwhile both Milan clubs are still sweating over the fate of their new San Siro stadium development, with a public debate expected in September decisive to the project's fate amid significant hostility from some local residents. A source at Inter confirmed to AFP last month that should the debate go against construction and the project be blocked, the two teams would move it to a former industrial site in working-class Milan suburb Sesto San Giovanni, where the recently re-elected mayor has repeatedly said there will be no bureaucratic hurdles put in the way of a new ground. —AFP

Kyrgios beat Medvedev

MONTREAL: Nick Kyrgios rallied to topple world number one Daniil Medvedev at the ATP Montreal Masters on Wednesday as the top three seeds tumbled in the second round. Australia's Wimbledon finalist beat Medvedev 6-7 (2/7), 6-4, 6-2 to produce his second career upset of a reigning number one after ambushing Rafael Nadal at Wimbledon in 2014.

Unseeded American Tommy Paul also came from a set down to send second-seeded Carlos Alcaraz of Spain packing 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (9/7), 6-3 while unseeded Briton Jack Draper beat third-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece 7-5, 7-6 (7/4). Kyrgios started the landslide. The mercurial Aussie produced his usual on-court antics, complaining about a high bounce, hitting a ball into the stands to draw a warning and bickering with his player box in moments of tension.

But after gathering his formidable resources, the 27-year-old ranked 37th finished off Medvedev in exactly two hours. "I don't go in looking at the rankings, just the guy in front of me," Kyrgios said. "I had a clean objective today—play a lot of serve and volley and execute better."

"Hopefully I can keep this rolling and keep on winning." Both players were coming off weekend title wins. Kyrgios at the Washington 500 on Sunday and Medvedev at Los Cabos, Mexico, on Saturday. Kyrgios has won 14 of his last 15 matches to improve to 29-7 for 2022. Medvedev lost for the 11th time in 2022, but by reaching the final at Los Cabos—where he lifted his first trophy of the season—he is assured of taking the

Vela, Ruidiaz lift MLS All-Stars to 2-1 win over Liga MX

WASHINGTON: Goals from Los Angeles FC star Carlos Vela and Seattle's Raul Ruidiaz lifted the Major League Soccer All-Stars to a 2-1 victory over their Liga MX foes for the second straight year in the MLS All-Star Game on Wednesday.

The MLS All-Stars got things going early at Allianz Field in St. Paul, Minnesota, where Vela headed home a cross from LAFC teammate Diego Palacios in the third minute. Palacios split two Liga MX defenders then arced his cross over a crowded penalty box to Vela for the goal.

Ruidiaz doubled the score from the penalty spot in the 73rd minute after New England Revolution playmaker Charles Gil drew the foul in the penalty area. Pachuca defender Kevin Alvarez pulled a goal back for the Liga MX side in the 85th, unleashing a long-range blast that eluded New York City FC keeper Sean Johnson.

But the Mexican outfit's frantic bid for an equalizer in the closing minutes came up short and MLS celebrated a win in the mid-season exhibition for the second straight year. The match featuring top players from the

number one ranking into his US Open title defense later this month.

He was barred from Wimbledon as the tournament excluded Russian and Belarusian players over Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Alcaraz, who like Medvedev enjoyed a first-round bye, fared no better in his opening match, with the teenager admitting pressure got to him.

Alcaraz came into the event with two prestige Masters 1000 titles from Miami and Madrid and holding a 42-7 record this season. "It was the first time that I couldn't handle the pressure," Alcaraz said. "I felt the pressure (of being) the number two seed and number four in the world."

"It was the first time that I felt this pressure." The youngster added: "I had chances, I was a break up in the second set, had chances to win the match. "He played really good in the tough moments. He played great, and I couldn't show my best." The 34th-ranked Paul claimed victory on a volley winner after holding off the Spaniard's charge from 5-2 down in the third set. "It was nice to finish this match at the net," said Paul, who fired 36 winners to Alcaraz's 33. "I did a lot of things well today. "I played a good level of tennis, comfortable tennis."

Tsitsipas completed the hat-trick of losses for the tournament elite. Draper, 20, earned his first career win over a top-10 opponent as he reached the third round in just over two hours with five breaks of the Tsitsipas serve.

Fourth seed Casper Ruud made it safely through, backing up his defeat earlier this season of Alex Molcan with a 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 victory over the Slovakian. The Norwegian with three trophies so far in 2022 had to work to win the opening set after dropping serve as he tried to close it out leading 5-4.

However, he sealed his third-round place in straight sets for his 36th win of the season. —AFP

neighboring leagues, played before a crowd of 19,797, boasted plenty of intensity for a mid-season friendly.

Less than three minutes had passed before the MLS side had survived a VAR review for a handball, with Walker Zimmerman cleared of the infraction. Minnesota United's Dayne St. Clair gave home fans something to cheer with a diving save of a rocket from Pumas UNAM forward Juan Dinunno, which kept the lead at 1-0 going into halftime.

St. Clair replaced Andre Blake in goal in the 32nd minute and made four saves on the way to being named Man of the Match. "I was definitely a little bit surprised," he said of receiving the accolade. "Normally it's the guys who contribute to the goals who get the award, but I'm definitely very happy."

During a halftime television interview, MLS Commissioner Don Garber hinted that the mid-season showcase's format could change again after two years of MLS v Liga MX All-Stars. He noted that 2023 will see plenty of competition between the leagues with the expanded Leagues Cup, which will feature all the clubs in both leagues with CONCACAF Champions League berths on the line.

"We'll see what next year in Washington DC looks like when DC United hosts (the All-Star Game)," Garber said. The All-Star Game, a fixture since MLS launched in 1996, has changed formats several times, sometimes featuring Eastern Conference v Western Conference All-Stars and sometimes MLS squads facing overseas clubs. —AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

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

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, 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



HELSINKI: Real Madrid players celebrate with the trophy after the UEFA Super Cup football match between Real Madrid vs Eintracht Frankfurt in Helsinki. Real Madrid won the match 2-0. — AFP

Real Madrid win fifth UEFA Super Cup

Madrid's experience and individual quality saw them through

HELSINKI, Finland: Goals from David Alaba and Karim Benzema gave Real Madrid a 2-0 victory over Eintracht Frankfurt and a fifth UEFA Super Cup on Wednesday. While Frankfurt were dangerous, particularly in the first half, Madrid's experience and individual quality saw them through, as it did so often in their victorious 2021-22 Champions League campaign.

"It wasn't an easy game, they were entrenched in their own half, but we managed to score and we controlled it well afterwards," Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti told Movistar TV. "At the start of the season, you can't expect the team to be already at 100 percent, but we won and we have started the season well. I believe it can help us achieve better results and winning helps motivate the players."

It was a particularly memorable evening for veteran French striker Benzema whose goal took him to 324 for the Spanish side, one more than Raul. Only Cristiano Ronaldo, who scored 450, has more Real goals than Benzema.

"Now he's in line for the Ballon d'Or. Is there any doubt? For me, no," added Ancelotti. Frankfurt had the best of the early stages, with Madrid keeper Thibaut Courtois forced into a stunning anticipation save when one-on-one with Daichi Kamada in the 14th minute.

Madrid almost got their first, when Benzema

released Vinicius to curl past Kevin Trapp in the penalty box, only for Tuta to clear the ball off the line. With Madrid dominating possession, Frankfurt mounted several counter-attacks until Madrid launched a counter of their own in the 37th minute.

A diving Trapp got his fingertips to a goal-bound shot by Vinicius, pushing the ball out for a corner. From the ensuing play, Benzema linked with Casemiro just next to the right post.

The Brazilian sucked in several Frankfurt defenders and a diving Trapp, before heading back to an unmarked Alaba who scored from close range. After the goal, Madrid stepped it up a gear and should have gone 2-0 up, with Benzema uncharacteristically dragging the ball wide with the goal begging in the 41st minute.

Vinicius, Benzema connect

Madrid's quality became more obvious in the second half, with Trapp saving a deflected Vinicius shot in the 54th minute and Casemiro hitting the crossbar with 61 minutes gone. Borussia Dortmund loanee Ansgar Knauff had a chance saved just minutes later, before Vinicius and Benzema combined to put Madrid 2-0 up.

Vinicius skated down the left before slicing the ball back seemingly unsighted for the Frenchman to hammer home from the edge of the box. Frankfurt

fought hard in the closing stages but Madrid were able to dominate the game to win their fifth Super Cup from eight attempts. Alaba praised his team's determination to continue their stellar form from last season. "We were here to win and to collect the next title... We want to pick up where we left off last season," Alaba told RTL.

"It's always nice to score goals - it doesn't happen so often for me." Frankfurt captain Sebastian Rode lamented his side's failures to take their opportunities. "Against the Champions League winners you have to take your chances. We didn't take ours in the decisive moments," he told broadcaster DAZN.

The clash, in Helsinki's Olympic Stadium, was the first time these two sides had met in a European decider since 1960, when Madrid dismantled Frankfurt 7-3 through four goals to Ferenc Puskas and three to Alfredo di Stefano in the European Cup final.

The match also highlighted the growing gap between the Champions League and Europa League competitions, with Madrid being the ninth Champions League team to win the competition in the past 10 years. Only city rivals Atletico Madrid have won the Super Cup when qualifying via a Europa League win in the past decade, having done so by beating Real in the 2018 edition. — AFP

Fraser-Pryce, Lyles shine in Monaco



MONACO: US Noah Lyles celebrates after winning the 200m Men event at the Wanda Diamond League athletics meeting at the Louis II Stadium. — AFP

MONACO: Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce and Noah Lyles underlined their dominant sprint seasons with victories at the Monaco Diamond League on Wednesday, as Faith Kipyegon narrowly missed a sensational world record in the 1500m.

Jamaica's Fraser-Pryce, fresh from a fifth world 100m title in Eugene last month, clocked a world leading 10.62 seconds for the win, the sixth fastest time ever run over the blue riband event. The Jamaican's victory at the Stade Louis II was her third sub-10.70 run within a week and saw her become the first woman in history to break 10.70 six times in the same season.

Her time also smashed the previous meet best of 10.72sec set by disgraced American Marion Jones in 1998. "I did what I needed to do and we had fun and let the clock do the talking," said Fraser-Pryce. Lyles, who won the world 200m title last month in a blistering 19.31sec, also set a meet record, clocking 19.46sec—the ninth fastest time ever run over the distance to improve on his own previous mark of 19.65 set back in 2018.

The American ran a powerful bend in a US cleansweep, getting the better of teenager Erriyon Knighton and world 400m champion Michael Norman. "It's my second best time ever tonight so I consider that a great race," said Lyles. "Every time I come here I expect to run very fast and, if not a personal best, something close to it."

World and Olympic 1500m champion Kipyegon arguably produced the stand-out performance of an amazing night of track and field in balmy conditions in front of a big crowd. The Kenyan ran the second fastest ever time over the distance as she won in 3:50.37, falling just half a second short of Ethiopian Genzebe Dibaba's world record set in 2015, also in Monaco.

"I have been chasing the time for quite some time but I am happy with the personal best," said Kipyegon, who was left to bolt home alone after both pacesetters had done their jobs. "I knew this was the best place to get the world record but I am so disappointed I lost it in the last metres."

The first world champions' duel of the night saw Briton Jake Wightman obliterate the meet record for a comfortable victory in the 1000m in 2:13.88. Wightman, a shock winner of the world 1500m title in Eugene, kicked with 150 metres to go to reel in Canada's world 800m bronze medalist Marco Arap.

The world 800m champion, Kenya's Emmanuel Korir, ran out of steam and eased up to cross the line in last position. "I did not really know I was in shape to do this today," said Wightman. — AFP

Kuwaiti athletes shine at Islamic Solidarity Games

KUWAIT: Kuwait shooters were at their best on Thursday at the Islamic Solidarity Games being held in Konya, Turkey. Sarah Al-Hawal won the gold medal in the trap competition, while Abdelrahman Al-Faihan gave Kuwait its second gold medal and his teammate Tala Al-Rashidi won silver. Kuwaiti national team cyclist Sayed Jaafar Al-Ali won the silver medal in the race against time team competition. Ali completed the race in 30:55:29 minutes for second place. Meanwhile, Kuwait and Gulf running champion Madawi Al-Shimmari qualified for the finals of the 200m run.

