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Kuwaitis demand speedy justice over bedoon issue

Citizens call to grant citizenship, lament crisis has not been resolved for decades

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Thousands of Kuwaitis are demanding basic rights for the country's stateless bedoon community. Under the hashtag #Kuwaitis_demand_solution_for_bedoon, more than 5,000 tweets have started to trend on Twitter. People are alarmed due to the rise of unjust actions toward bedoons in Kuwait.

Activist Khaled Al-Awadi affirmed that Kuwaiti

citizens are demanding a solution for their bedoon brethren. "It is unreasonable that a humanitarian country does not have a solution for people living with us in solidarity. They do not have another place to live in other than this country. Kuwait must find a radical approach to this humanitarian issue," he said.

Sheikh Fahad Duajj Al-Sabah said bedoons are Kuwaiti citizens. "We must be fair to them. I do not like this label, but they are citizens who have not yet

obtained citizenship due to arbitrary procedures. This situation must come to an end. Most of them are highly qualified and experienced and wish to serve the country," he noted.

Sanam Al-Majed tweeted: "Kuwait is always studying and researching the case of bedoons. Millions of dinars have been spent on authorities and departments in charge of these studies, and government has decided on more than one occasion that a number of them are entitled to naturalization.

And yet no outcome. What is next?!"

For Waleed Al-Muhaini, the bedoon case seems like an endless issue. "We hope this issue will be resolved as soon as possible. Our families, brothers, cousins and neighbors understand that many of the bedoon contributed to the liberation of Kuwait, including bedoon martyrs, families and missing persons. I am fully confident that the new era will do them justice, hopefully," he said.

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News in brief

100% tax on e-cigs from Jan 1

KUWAIT: Instructions to defer imposing taxes on electronic cigarettes for four months were issued by the Deputy Manager of Kuwait Customs Sulaiman Al-Fahad. "The 100 percent tax will not be imposed until January 1 in the coming year. Flavored and unflavored electronic cigarettes, as well as single-use nicotine cartridges, will be taxed," the instructions said.



MULTAN: Rescue workers search for victims in the burnt wreckage of a bus following an overnight collision with an oil tanker on August 16, 2022. — AFP

Pak road crash inferno kills 20

LAHORE: At least 20 people were killed when a bus caught fire after colliding with an oil tanker in Pakistan on Tuesday, police said. The passengers were a couple of hours into a long journey when their vehicle crashed on the outskirts of the central city of Multan. Photos of the scene show the burnt-out wreckage of the bus after it smashed into the back of the tanker. — AFP

Jill Biden COVID-positive

WASHINGTON: US First Lady Jill Biden has tested positive for COVID-19 and developed mild symptoms, the White House said Tuesday, two weeks after her husband Joe Biden contracted the virus for a second time. The 71-year-old tested positive while on holiday in South Carolina, where she is staying at a private residence and will return to the White House after two consecutive negative tests, her aide said. — AFP

Monkeypox name change sought

GENEVA: The World Health Organization, which is looking to rename monkeypox, called Tuesday for help from the public in coming up with a less stigmatizing designation for the fast-spreading disease. The UN health agency has for weeks voiced concern about the name of the disease that emerged onto the global stage in May. Experts warn the name can be stigmatizing to the primates it was named after, but who play little role in its spread, and to the African continent that the animals are often associated with. Recently in Brazil, for instance, there have been reported cases of people attacking monkeys over disease fears. — AFP

Saudi Crown Prince washes Holy Kaaba

RIYADH: On behalf of Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz had the honor of washing the Holy Kaaba. A number of princes, senior ulama, governors, government officials and custodians of the house also took part in the tradition, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said on Tuesday.

In a video shared by SPA on Twitter, the Crown Prince was seen carrying a cloth and cleaning the inner walls. "Following that, the Crown Prince performed two rakaas as per the tradition of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)," the statement added. Maintaining the Holy Kaaba is an important and delicate ritual and cleaning is done based on traditions.

The walls and the floors of the Kaaba are cleaned differently. A white cloth, soaked in rose and musk scents, is used for cleaning the interior walls while the floors are washed using a mixture of Zamzam water and rose perfumes. This mixture is splashed on the floors that are cleaned with the bare hands and palm leaves. — Agencies



MAKKAH: Handout picture provided on Aug 16, 2022 shows Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman leading the annual washing ceremony of the Holy Kaaba in the Grand Mosque. — AFP

Earth's water may be from asteroids

TOKYO: Water may have been brought to Earth by asteroids from the outer edges of the solar system, scientists said after analyzing rare samples collected on a six-year Japanese space mission. Researchers are scrutinizing material brought back to earth in 2020 from the asteroid Ryugu. The 5.4 gm of rocks and dust were gathered by a Japanese space probe, called Hayabusa-2, that landed on the celestial body and fired an "impactor" into its surface.

Studies on the material are beginning to be published, and in June, one group of researchers said they had found organic material which showed that some of the build-

ing blocks of life on Earth, amino acids, may have been formed in space. In a new paper published in the journal Nature Astronomy, scientists said the Ryugu samples could give clues to the mystery of how oceans appeared on Earth billions of years ago.

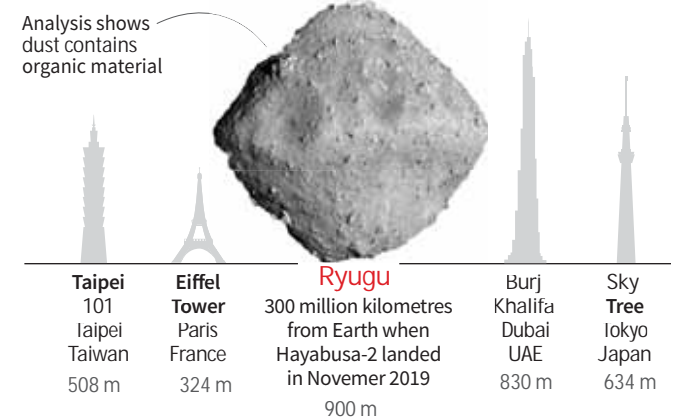
"Volatile and organic-rich C-type asteroids may have been one of the main sources of Earth's water," said the study by scientists from Japan and other countries, published Monday. "The delivery of volatiles (that is, organics and water) to the Earth is still a subject of notable debate," it said. But the organic materials found "in Ryugu particles, identified in this study, probably represent one important source of volatiles".

The scientists hypothesized that such material probably has an "outer Solar System origin", but said it was "unlikely to be the only source of volatiles delivered to the early Earth".

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It's only rock and roll: space dust examined for the building blocks of life

Japan's Hayabusa-2 probe returned to earth in 2020 after a six-year mission with samples from the 900 m long Ryugu asteroid



Source: Jaxa

AFP

'Extreme heat belt' to cover US by 2053

WASHINGTON: An area of intensely warm weather - a so-called "extreme heat belt" - with at least one day per year in which the heat index hits 52 Celsius, is expected to cover a US region home to more than 100 million people by the year 2053, according to a new study. The research, carried out by nonprofit First Street Foundation, used a peer-reviewed model built with public and third-party data to estimate heat risk at what they called a

"hyper-local" scale of 30 sq m.

First Street Foundation's mission is to make climate risk modeling accessible to the public, government and industry representatives, such as real estate investors and insurers. A key finding from the study was that heat exceeding the threshold of the National Weather Service's highest category - called "Extreme Danger," or above 52 C - was expected to impact 8.1 million people in 2023 and grow to 107 million people in 2053, a 13-fold increase.

This would encompass a geographic region stretching from northern Texas and Louisiana to Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin - inland areas far from the more temperate weather often seen near the coasts. Heat index, also known as the apparent

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HURON, California: In this file photo taken on July 23, 2021, a farmer walks back to his car between two barren fields once sown with row crops in this town in California's drought-stricken Central Valley. — AFP

'Art is Life' exhibition held at Boushehri Art Gallery

Japanese Ambassador says amazed by 'innovative' female artists' works



KUWAIT: Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait Morino Yasunari speaks to reporters during the event.



Artists pose for a group photo.

By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: Boushehri Art Gallery premiered an exhibition on Monday entitled "Art is Life". More than 14 artists participated in the exhibition from six different nationalities with more than 50 artworks. Mohammed Ali, head of 'Breathe Creativity' team, thanked Boushehri Gallery for hosting the exhibition and encouraging the team of international artists. "The 'Breathe Creativity' team started when they were conducting workshops for artists to bring different artistic cultures together. As the days went by, their workshops gained momentum and the artists were being awarded first place in the competitions they participated in," Ali said.

"The goal of the team was to develop the skills of the artists and put forth plans for the future in order to have them reach their goals and their artistic dreams. The aim was to guide our young artists so they could reach the levels of their fellow international artists," Ali added.

Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Morino Yasunari expressed his amazement over the exhibition. "I didn't really have any expectations com-

ing in, but I was really surprised and amazed to see many innovative and creative female artists in the Middle East. I am really moved by their commitment and their achievements," he said.

One of the artists, Farida Yahya from the UAE, is excited by this exhibition held in Kuwait, and looks forward to many more exhibitions in the future. "My paintings aim to display our heritage in the GCC and in the UAE, especially the painting with the falcon, which is a well-known symbol of GCC culture. My other paintings represent the history of the UAE since its inception and our devotion to our leaders and history," Yahya told Kuwait Times.

Another artist from the UAE, Alia Bin Ali, told Kuwait Times: "Our appreciation goes to Mohammed Ali, who organized the team with different artists to harness their skills from the basics, until we developed to reach our current level. My paintings are mostly done in acrylic, and I like to incorporate the colors blue and white, as they represent hope and ambition. I am passionate about horses. In my painting of horses, I could feel the horses' hooves as I was painting their picture. I am also passionate about architecture, especially Burj Khalifa, which is my



GCC artists take part



A general photo showing guests at the gallery.

favorite building, so I really took care of capturing all of its minute details," Bin Ali added.

"This is our third exhibition as 'Breathe Creativity'. Our first was in the UAE, then in Bahrain. Thankfully, the exhibition was well

received," team leader Amal Al-Mutairi told Kuwait Times. The exhibition was crowded with artists and art enthusiasts on its opening day. The exhibition will be open to the public from Aug 16 until Sept 15 at Boushehri Art Gallery.



Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait Morino Yasunari tours the gallery.



Local

Ten more people accused of participating in illegal elections

Kuwait intensifies efforts against outlawed primaries

KUWAIT: Investigations continued Tuesday on illegal primaries held in the second electoral district, where 10 people were arrested including officers and a Saudi citizen, as total charges reached 25. "The prosecution is now holding nine Kuwaiti nationals including the head of a committee that organized the illegal election in the second district," sources told Kuwait Times.

As for the 10 newly accused persons, it is reported their names were on the CID investigations list on Monday. "Six candidates accused of participating in illegal elections are still abroad, and they were notified to return as soon as possible and surrender to the ministry of interior in order to be sent to the public prosecution," the sources added.



ures against any person who hosts by-elections at his residence which include security restrictions, court cases and can go as far as "withdrawing the host's residence". These threats have so far forced some hosts to reject candidates' requests to organize tribal by-elections and refund the registration fees they had already collected from them, the sources added.

Kuwait's election law bans hosting unofficial primaries to elect a candidate to represent a tribe, religious sector, or any other social category ahead of the official election date. Nonetheless, there have been several accounts in recent years of by-elections hosted within tribes to elect a single candidate in hopes of improving a tribe's chances of representation in the National

Assembly. This practice has drawn public outcry and criticism from other candidates, who complained of authorities' alleged failure to take serious measures to stop this illegal act.

New regulations
In other news, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of Social Affairs and

Customs foil attempt to smuggle banned substance

KUWAIT: Airport customs officers foiled an attempt to smuggle 140 kg of mitragynine (kratom) into the country. The banned substance arrived from an Asian country. The suspected smugglers were arrested and referred to relative authorities, the General Administration of the Customs said in a statement.

Japanese prime minister to visit Kuwait this month

KUWAIT: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will visit Kuwait this month in a trip which includes Qatar and the UAE. "Kishida will discuss through these visits the issue of stabilizing oil prices in the global market in the aftermath of the Russia-Ukraine war. He will also be pursuing the issue of natural gas with Qatar to increase production," according to Japanese newspaper Nikkei Asia. The meeting will include issues that will be discussed at the International Tokyo Conference, which will be held on Aug 27 and 28 in Tunisia. "The prime minister, in his first visit since Shinzo Abe's visit in January 2020, might look to visit Saudi Arabia as well," Nikkei Asia added.



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida

Stores closed for forgery

KUWAIT: Commerce and Industry Ministry inspectors closed a store in Hawally for printing stickers and placing them on products to alter the country of origin, as well as stickers of counterfeit goods carrying famous trademarks. Meanwhile, ministry inspectors closed three Salmiya stores for selling counterfeit goods carrying labels of famous brands. Large quantities of clothes were confiscated in the operation, the ministry said in a statement.



KUWAIT: The National Assembly.

Development Fahad Al-Shuraian issued new organizational decisions related to cooperative societies. "Cooperatives must be wise when hiring new employees in accordance with the cooperative's needs. For executive and supervisory positions, the salary should not exceed seven percent of total sales according to the latest sales reports," the

decision said. The decision also stipulated that all cooperatives that have exceeded the limit for hiring should take the necessary procedures to fix their problems by reviewing employment contracts and informing investigating jurisdictions of all changes in order to not to exceed employment limits.



In my view

The lost seats

By Yousuf Awadh Al-Azmi
local@kuwaittimes.com

“We read to distance ourselves from the center of ignorance, not to reach the knowledge space.” - Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad

Something funny goes by many people without notice - the issue of the tribal seat, sectarian seat or family seat. The truth of the matter is no more than a scam, a tool to lure a collective feeling of fear of losing something that does not exist in reality. In societies where education and culture is low, many deceptive slogans become popular; rather many ignoramuses and the naive fight hard for it. Because of that, we find in such societies many unrealistic slogans that appear contrary to the truth, and this may be the tax on widespread ignorance on which many fraudsters are feeding!

On the contrary, we find in countries considered on top of education indicators, where political parties exist, issues that have nothing to do with the tribe or sect and other slogans that simple people are cheated with. Good education produces brains that understand, know and absorb the situation and not fall prey to the deception of this or lying of that!

Good education results in producing enlightened brains that understand the situation and not become a prey of false slogans and electoral tricks. So do you expect from those who are promoting the tribe, sect or family seat to present "tangible production" for the country?

A few years back, someone with ideological slogans was speaking about asceticism in posts, and prayed to Allah to keep him away from making this life his concern, and wished not to worry about elections. So when elections were announced, I expected him not to run, only to hear the news of the declaration of his candidacy. I did not believe it, then when I asked, the answer was he does not want to lose the tribe's seat!

True enough, the tribe's seat was not lost, but something bigger than that - principles, values and false slogans. There are many who have these in third world countries, a pity for brains that do not think and eyes that do not see!

Education has extreme importance that is not considered enough. Educated people find their life much better than ignorant ones, and here I would like to draw the attention that ignorance has many aspects. Even those who have high academic degrees, while being immersed in an ignorant mind, will not be different from those who do not have a degree. I have sat with many who do not even have an intermediate academic certificate, yet they have vast awareness and an enlightened intellect, as it seems the school of life presented them with truly distinguished education. So ignorance may be carried with one whose name is preceded with the suffix Dr! Do not be surprised!

On the occasion of the

60th

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News in brief

Owners prosecuted for turning
farmlands into warehouses

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works Ali Al-Mousa referred owners of six agricultural plots to the public prosecution for breaking the law by turning farmlands into factories and warehouses. The plots have a total area of 725,000 square meters and will be withdrawn by the government.

Apply to Schengen visa
must at official offices

KUWAIT: Kuwait's foreign ministry expressed the importance of applying for a Schengen visa through certified and official offices related to EU embassies. "A Schengen visa must be requested months before the date of travel with complete documents in hand. Visa requests should be done through official offices of the embassies," the ministry cautioned. Furthermore, adhering to the date of the appointment is important to avoid any delays concerning the issuance of visas, while making sure information is obtained from official sources by following up embassy updates.

Officer receives
death threats

KUWAIT: A police captain has received death threats from Iranian drug lords. "We will burn your car and your soul," said a text message received by the captain from one of the Iranian drug dealers. The officer filed a complaint at the public prosecution against unknown perpetrators.

Prostitution ring
busted in Salmiya

KUWAIT: In its efforts to preserve the morals and ethics of Kuwait, the ministry of interior's public relations department announced the arrest of a prostitution ring in Salmiya. "The arrestees included 19 people of Asian nationalities, 16 female and three males, for prostitution in Salmiya," sources said. They have been transferred to authorities and legal procedures are currently underway.

Blocks on real
estate violators

KUWAIT: The Municipality has issued a block on 45 investment properties during an investigation against violators in Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate, the manager of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Municipality Falah Al-Shammeri announced. "The campaign started two weeks ago in cooperation with the Kuwait Fire Force to investigate storage areas daily in all governorates," Shammeri announced at a press conference. "Today, investigative squads issued 75 structural warnings and 35 citations to various investment properties," Shammeri added. He expressed the importance of following municipal and KFF laws in order to save peoples' lives from wrongful storage of flammable substances.

Fund shored up 132
SMEs during pandemic

KUWAIT: Director-General of the National Fund for SME Development (SME Fund) Adel Al-Hasawi said the Fund helped resolve the problems of 132 small and medium-sized enterprises during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Under recent instructions of the cabinet, the Fund is working on applications from 72 SMEs for benefiting from the act on stumbling projects, he told reporters on the fringes of the signing of a cooperation deal with Kuwait Society of Engineers (KSE). Founded in April 2013 under Act 98, the government Fund approved establishing 1,422 projects and joint agreements with 992 SMEs, he said, noting that some SMEs offered essential backing to the national economy during the pandemic in such areas as medical services, logistics and foodstuff supplies.

Kuwait oil price down
\$3.77 to \$102.06 pb

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by \$3.77 to \$102.06 per barrel as opposed to \$105.83 per barrel last Friday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said on Tuesday. Globally, the prices of the Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate both went down by \$3.05 and \$2.68, settling respectively at \$95.10 pb and \$89.41 pb.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: An aerial view showing padel courts at a location in Kuwait. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

UNESCO: Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Prize Kuwaiti
contribution empowering persons with disabilities

PARIS: Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities had been contributing immensely in the past two decades to the international efforts encouraging and enabling this sector of society to create and innovate, said an official from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on Tuesday.

Speaking on the 20th anniversary of launching the prize, which will be celebrated Wednesday, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information Tawfik Jelassi said that it was important to include people with disability in societal efforts to develop and progress. The award, allocated biennially, acknowledged the contributions of persons with disabilities, making an effort to encourage their digital contributions, he added. Whether individually or within an organization, the prize is an essential tool to highlight digital technology made by people with extraordinary talents, Jelassi reiterated. He revealed that the prize was based on axis benefiting persons with disabilities via creating policy empowering such individuals, spreading awareness on their contributions, encouraging partnership, and recreating the most suitable atmosphere for sustainable digital creation.

According to estimates, there were over one billion individuals with special needs, around 15 percent of the planet's population, noted Jelassi who called for supporting legislations and regulations to protect the rights of people with disability and promote their talents. The UNESCO official commended Kuwait's relentless quest to support people with disabilities especially within the digital domain, saying that the prize was a great evidence of the country's sincere sentiment towards this



PARIS: Sheikh Mubarak Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah hands the prize to the Chinese company's representatives. —KUNA

important sector of society. Since membership in 1960, the State of Kuwait had been a great contributor to international efforts especially with integrating persons with special needs into society and the Sheikh Jaber Prize they could showcase their talents within the digital domain.

Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Dr Adam Al-Mulla affirmed that the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad prize had indeed made a difference to people with disabilities through finding digital solutions and resources improving their quality of life. The prize, named after late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, had earned recognition by the international

community and made an impact of societies worldwide, Dr Mulla added.

Changing the societal perspective on people with disabilities was important, this sector of society could and is able to excel and amaze if given the chance, he affirmed. He went on to say that, the public and private sector must benefit from the talents of people with disabilities because they have plans, ambitions, which equal, and sometimes surpassing those who were not disabled. UNESCO's Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities grants USD 40,000 biennially to individuals and institutes contributing to integrating people with special needs into society. —KUNA

Bangladesh Embassy
observes National
Mourning Day

KUWAIT: Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait observed the National Mourning Day, the 47th martyrdom Anniversary of the architect of Independent Bangladesh, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on Monday, August 15, 2022 at the Chancery with due solemnity. Presided over by Major General Md Ashikuzzaman, Ambassador of Bangladesh in Kuwait, Embassy officials, members of the Bangladesh community and representatives of the print and electronic media were present at the program.

On this day, in the early morning Major General Md Ashikuzzaman, Ambassador of Bangladesh in Kuwait hoisted the National Flag at half-mast ceremoniously in the presence of the Embassy Officials and members of Bangladesh community in Kuwait. Later on, the Ambassador along with Bangladesh Community and Embassy Official floral wreath at the portrait of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Bangabandhu Corner of the embassy, and stood in solemn silence for one minute to commemorate all the martyrs of August 15, 1975. At that time, special prayers were offered seeking divine blessings for the souls of all martyrs along with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and prosperity of the country and nation. After that, the members of various social organizations of Bangladesh Community in Kuwait paid tribute to all the martyrs including Bangabandhu by placing wreaths of flower at the portrait of Bangabandhu.

Later on, a discussion program was held on the occasion of the National Mourning Day. The discussion program began with recitation from the Holy Quran. The messages given by the Hon'ble President, the Hon'ble Prime Minister, the Hon'ble Foreign Minister and State Minister for Foreign Affairs were



read out by Officers of the Embassy. After the speech, an animated movie "Mujib Amar Pita" based on the book "Sheikh Mujib Amar Pita" written by the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and a documentary video titled "Bangabandhu, Forever in our hearts" on the struggling life and work of Bangabandhu were screened. The discussion session took place in a very lively atmosphere. Members of Bangladesh community in Kuwait including various professionals, freedom fighters, leaders of cultural organizations voluntarily took part in the discussion. They recall the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with deepest respect in their speeches.

In his speech, Major General Md Ashikuzzaman, Ambassador of Bangladesh in Kuwait recall with deep respect, the father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and all martyrs of August 15, 1975 who were brutally assassinated by a group of killers with the direct and indirect connivance of anti-liberation forces. During his speech, he highlighted the struggling life of Bangabandhu, friendly foreign policy and his sincere efforts to establish world peace and harmony. Ambassador told, Bangabandhu as a symbol of independence and ambassador of freedom for oppressed and exploited people in the world. Bangabandhu's prin-



ciples and ideals will remain an eternal source of inspiration for freedom-seeking people in worldwide and against exploitation and oppression.

He also thanked all the people who were present at the discussion session and asked Bangladesh nationals in Kuwait to abide by the rules and regulations of the State of Kuwait. He also urged all to follow the ideals of Bangabandhu sincerely and work united under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to establish happy and prosperous Bangladesh as dream by Bangabandhu.



Court rejects retrial for Malaysia Najib

Florida abortion clinics inundated as neighboring states clamp down

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HAMBANTOTA, Sri Lanka: China's research and survey vessel, the Yuan Wang 5, arrives at Hambantota port on August 16, 2022. —AFP

Chinese research vessel docks in Sri Lanka

India, US concerned about its alleged spying activities

HAMBANTOTA, Sri Lanka: A Chinese research vessel bristling with antennas and communication gear docked at Sri Lanka's Chinese-run port of Hambantota on Tuesday despite concerns from India and the United States about its alleged spying activities.

The Yuan Wang 5 entered the deep-sea port after securing permission to enter Sri Lankan waters on the condition it would not engage in research, port officials said. It was originally due to arrive last week, but Colombo asked Beijing to defer the visit following objections by India, which shares Western concerns about Chinese activities in the region. But on Saturday, after intense negotiations, Sri Lanka announced a U-turn, saying permission was restored to dock at the southern port and remain for six days for refuelling and taking in other supplies.

"We are granting the same facilities that we extend to all other countries," government spokesman Bandula Gunawardana told reporters. "All these countries are important to us." Chinese ambassador to Sri Lanka Qi Zhenhong said the visit of Yuan Wang 5 was part of "normal exchanges between the two countries".

"China and Sri Lanka enjoy outstanding friendship," Qi told reporters at a ceremony to welcome the ship. Shipping analytics websites described the Yuan Wang 5 as a research and survey vessel, but according to Indian media it is a dual-use spy ship.

There was no customary military band to welcome the vessel, but a small group of traditional Kandyan dancers and drummers performed on a

red carpet. Also dockside were several lawmakers, but there were no senior politicians or other dignitaries in attendance.

"Long live China and Sri Lanka friendship," read a red-and-white banner on an upper deck of the vessel, which had at least four satellite dish antennas pointed skywards. Men in white shirts and black trousers stood on deck waving Chinese and Sri Lankan flags as the vessel was pushed alongside the main jetty.

The Hambantota port has been run by the



"Normal exchanges between the two countries"

Chinese since 2017, when they took it on a 99-year lease for \$1.12 billion, less than the \$1.4 billion Sri Lanka paid a Chinese firm to build it. New Delhi is suspicious of Beijing's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean and influence in Sri Lanka, seeing both as firmly within its sphere of influence.

Both India and the US have raised security concerns over the ship's visit to Sri Lanka, with New Delhi lodging a complaint with Colombo. China has

said it was "completely unjustified for certain countries" to cite "security concerns" to pressure Sri Lanka, especially at a time when the island is facing an unprecedented economic crisis.

The vessel's activities were "in line with international law and international practice, and do not affect any country's security or economic interests," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters.

"They should not be interfered with by third parties." A day before the arrival of the vessel, India gifted a Dornier 228 surveillance aircraft to Sri Lanka in a bid to bolster the island's maritime surveillance capabilities. The Chinese ship was allowed into port on the condition it keeps its Automatic Identification System (AIS) switched on while in Sri Lankan waters and does not carry out scientific research. According to Indian reports, the Yuan Wang 5 could be employed for space and satellite tracking and has specific uses in intercontinental ballistic missile launches.

Sri Lanka borrowed heavily from China between 2005 and 2015, and in 2017 relinquished control of the Hambantota port, which is located on major East-West shipping lanes. Sri Lanka said it could not afford to repay China for building the port and handed over the facility on a 99-year lease.

China is Sri Lanka's biggest bilateral creditor, owning over 10 percent of the island's foreign debt.

Beijing's support is essential for Colombo to restructure its external borrowing to qualify for an International Monetary Fund bailout. —AFP



NAIROBI, Kenya: Kenya's defeated presidential candidate Raila Odinga (C) and his running mate Martha Karua (R) arrive ahead of Odinga's address at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) in Nairobi. —AFP

Kenya's Odinga vows to pursue 'legal options'

NAIROBI: Kenya's defeated presidential candidate Raila Odinga vowed Tuesday to pursue "all constitutional and legal options" after rejecting the outcome of elections that awarded victory to his rival William Ruto.

The 77-year-old veteran politician branded the result of the August 9 race a "travesty" but stopped short of explicitly announcing that he would mount a challenge at the Supreme Court. "What we saw yesterday (Monday) was a travesty and a blatant disregard of the constitution and the laws of Kenya," he told a press conference in Nairobi, blaming the head of the commission that oversaw the poll. "I do not want to fully address our strategies going forward but... we will be pursuing all constitutional and legal options available to us." Odinga narrowly lost his fifth bid for the top job to Deputy President Ruto, who was proclaimed president-elect Monday after a nail-biting wait for results.

His supporters had cried foul over the outcome, which also triggered divisions in the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), which issued the results. The poll's aftermath is being keenly watched as a test of democratic maturity in the East African powerhouse, where past elections have been tarnished by claims of rigging and bloodshed.

Odinga lost by around 230,000 votes despite the support of his old foe, the outgoing President Uhuru Kenyatta, and the weight of the ruling party machinery behind him. No presidential poll outcome has gone uncontested in Kenya since 2002, and Odinga says he was already cheated of victory in the 2007, 2013 and 2017 elections. In August 2017, the Supreme Court annulled the election after Odinga rejected a Kenyatta victory. Dozens of people were killed by police in post-poll protests. Kenya's worst electoral violence occurred after the 2007 vote, when more than 1,100 people died in bloodletting between rival tribes. On the campaign trail, both frontrunners pledged to resolve any disputes in court rather than on the streets. —AFP

Blasts at military site in Crimea 'sabotage': Russia

KYIV, Ukraine: Russia said Tuesday that massive explosions at a military facility on the Kremlin-controlled Crimean peninsula in Ukraine that also damaged electrical power infrastructure were the result of "sabotage".

Russian President Vladimir Putin meanwhile said the United States was trying to drag out the conflict, accusing Washington of putting Ukrainians in the firing line and supplying Kyiv with heavy weapons. Huge fireballs erupted at the site in Crimea early on Tuesday where ammunition was temporarily being stored and clouds of black smoke billowed into the air, images posted on social media showed.

"As a result of an act of sabotage, a military storage facility near the village of Dzhankoi was damaged," the defence ministry said in a statement carried by Russian news agencies. The blasts-caused by a fire that led ammunition to detonate-damaged civilian infrastructure, "including power lines, a power plant, a railway track" and residential buildings, the ministry said.

The explosions come one week after at least one person was killed and several more were wounded in similar explosions at a Russian military airbase in Crimea. Ukraine has not directly claimed responsibility for either of the incidents in Crimea, but senior officials and the military have implied Ukrainian involvement. Presidential aide Mykhailo Podolyak said the explosions had likely damaged infrastructure supplying power generated at the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant to Crimea.



BUCHA, Ukraine: A woman walks past a destroyed French sporting goods retailer, Intersport, at a shopping mall in Bucha, Kyiv region, on August 16, 2022. —AFP

'Catastrophe'

"What is stolen does not bring prosperity," Podolyak said on Ukrainian television. He earlier described the blasts as "demilitarisation in action"—using the same term used by Russia to justify its invasion of Ukraine.

Kyiv and Moscow have traded accusations over a series of strikes this month on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in southern Ukraine-Europe's largest. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned Monday that a "catastrophe" at the Russian-controlled facility would threaten the whole of Europe.

Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014

and has used the Black Sea region as a staging ground for its invasion. Moscow ordered the invasion of Ukraine in February, anticipating little military resistance and hoping for a lightning takeover that would topple the government in Kyiv within hours.

But after failing to capture the capital, Russia's military instead has become entrenched in a protracted bout of attrition with the sprawling front line in the east and south. "The situation in Ukraine shows that the US is trying to prolong this conflict," Putin said Tuesday, addressing the opening ceremony of a security conference in Moscow. —AFP

International

Florida abortion clinics inundated as neighboring states clamp down

Many abortion providers have received death threats

MIAMI, United States: Doctor D. has never had so much work. The abortion clinic where she practices in Jacksonville, Florida, has been overwhelmed by patients from neighboring states that have placed new restrictions on the procedure since a historic ruling in June by the US Supreme Court.

"I used to see about 25 patients on a typical clinic day, and now I see about 45," said the doctor. "There's so much demand." She asked that her name be withheld because of the sometimes violent opposition to the work she does — many abortion providers have received death threats.

While Florida has reduced its window for abortions to the 15th week of pregnancy — it was previously the 24th week — the state's laws are still among the most permissive in the southeast United States.

Other Republican-led states in the area — including Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia — have almost completely banned the practice or reduced the window to six weeks, seizing on the Supreme Court's stunning reversal of the nationwide right to abortion.

Since then, numerous women have traveled to Florida to clinics like the one where Dr. D works, which is owned by Planned Parenthood, the largest US provider of reproductive services.

"We are in dire straits right now," said Laura Goodhue, executive director of the Florida Alliance of Planned Parenthood affiliates. "I would call it a

public health emergency."

Planned Parenthood clinics in Florida have opened their doors on weekends and extended their working hours, with 12-hour days in some clinics, to handle the influx of out-of-state patients, most of them from Georgia, Alabama or Texas.

The organization is seeking to hire an additional nine doctors, some of them coming a few days a week from neighboring states where they can no longer work, Goodhue said.

In the kitchen of her Jacksonville clinic, Doctor D. takes a quick break between patients. She says her work allows her to witness first-hand the consequences of the restrictive laws in nearby states.

"It's very disheartening to see all this," said the 33-year-old doctor.

New obstacles, new bans

Out-of-state patients have to take several days off work when they come to Florida for abortions. The state's new law requires them to have two appointments, at least 24 hours apart, before undergoing the procedure, the doctor explained. Added to that are the costs of travel and accommodation, and in many cases of finding someone to care for their children.

On top of those obstacles is the new ban on abortions after 15 weeks. "Unfortunately, if by the time they come here and we do an ultrasound and see that they're more than 15 weeks, then we can't help them here and we have to give them resources

"There's so much demand"



WEST PALM BEACH: Jasmine, 23, checks in for her appointment to receive an abortion at a Planned Parenthood Abortion Clinic in West Palm Beach, Florida. —AFP

to go to other states," the doctor said. "And that just prolongs their journey." Some 280 miles (450 kilometers) south of Jacksonville, at a Planned Parenthood clinic in West Palm Beach, Jasmine is about to undergo a surgical abortion.

Jasmine, which is not the 23-year-old's real name, became pregnant after dating a man for three months. She ordered a morning-after pill, but it arrived too late. Jasmine agonized over her decision, but finally decided to have an abortion to allow her to finish her university studies. "I know it's what's best

for me, even though it's a hard decision," she said. "One night of a mistake doesn't have to lead to a permanent life change." As a Florida resident, Jasmine said she cannot imagine the difficult experience of those who have to travel from another state for an abortion. But she said the Supreme Court ruling, and the flurry of legal changes enacted since then, have brought untold stress. "In Florida, you have up to 15 weeks, and that could have been changed at any point, like the other states," she said. "It was just a lot of crying and nervousness." — AFP



AL MASTUMAH, Syria: Syrians waving opposition flags protest in the village of al-Mastumah, about seven kilometres south of the city of Idlib, following statements by the Turkish foreign minister in which he spoke about a possible rapprochement between the Syrian regime and Turkey. — AFP

Turkey reaffirms call for Syrian oppn to reconcile

ANKARA, Turkey: Turkey reaffirmed its call Tuesday for the Syrian opposition to "reconcile" with President Bashar al-Assad's government but stressed this did not represent a shift in Ankara's position on the war.

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu's comments came days after thousands of Syrians in rebel-held northern areas came out to protest Turkey's push for talks with Assad. Turkey has fervently opposed Assad throughout the 11-year conflict and backed some rebel groups in the war.

But Cavusoglu revealed last week that he had

briefly met his Syrian counterpart Faisal al-Meqdad in Belgrade last October — the first such meeting reported since 2011. "The regime and opposition need to reconcile," Cavusoglu told reporters Tuesday. "The opposition trusts Turkey. We have never let it down. But we have always said that reconciliation is essential for permanent stability and peace in Syria."

Cavusoglu stressed that his push for talks reflected the "roadmap for peace" unanimously adopted by the UN Security Council in 2015. Cavusoglu's comments had been seen as an apparent easing of Ankara's long-standing hostility towards Assad's government and enraged the Syrian opposition and rebel groups.

Syrians took to the streets after Friday prayers in major northern cities that remain under the control of Ankara's forces and their Syrian supporters near the Turkish border. Turkey's interior minister said on Saturday that security officials had detained two people accused of burning the Turkish flag. — AFP

US Justice Dept opposes release of affidavit

WASHINGTON: The US Justice Department on Monday opposed requests to unseal the affidavit used to justify last week's FBI search of Donald Trump's Florida residence. Several US media outlets and Republican members of Congress have asked a Florida judge to release the affidavit behind the raid, which ignited a political firestorm in an already bitterly divided country.

The Justice Department noted in a filing with a US District Court that the search warrant and a receipt for items seized from Trump's Mar-a-Lago home during last week's raid have already been

made public. But it argued that the affidavit, which lays out the FBI's argument for why the search warrant should be approved, presented a "very different set of considerations."

"There remain compelling reasons, including to protect the integrity of an ongoing law enforcement investigation that implicates national security, that support keeping the affidavit sealed," the department said.

It said the government had "a compelling, overriding interest in preserving the integrity of an ongoing criminal investigation," it said. The affidavit, it added, contained "critically important and detailed investigative facts" as well as "highly sensitive information about witnesses, including witnesses interviewed by the government." The Justice Department said that should the court order the release of the affidavit, the required redactions would "be so extensive as to render the remaining unsealed text devoid of meaningful content." — AFP

Mali mired in security problems

BAMAKO, Mali: On August 18, 2020, crowds in the Malian capital Bamako applauded as young colonels toppled a civilian government struggling to roll back a bloody jihadist insurgency. Today, the looming anniversary of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's ouster sees a country mired in problems.

On Monday, Mali's long-standing ally France packed its bags, withdrawing the last of its troops after falling out with the junta. Here is a snapshot of what has happened since the coup:

On taking power, the junta appointed military officers to key government jobs, installed a parliament, arrested political heavyweights under an anti-corruption probe and issued arrest warrants for those who had left the country.

The takeover was completed when strongman Colonel Assimi Goita staged a de-facto second coup in May 2021, after which he was appointed interim president. His junta's failure to hold promised elections on schedule prompted the 15-nation Economic Community of West African States

(ECOWAS) to impose sanctions, badly hitting one of the world's poorest economies.

The measures were lifted last month after ECOWAS accepted a timetable for restoring civilian rule by March 2024, although Mali remains suspended from its ranks. Keita had been facing street protests over failures to stem a jihadist campaign that erupted in northern Mali in 2012 and then spread to the centre of the country and neighbouring Niger and Burkina Faso. Since then, jihadist attacks have continued and recently accelerated. More people were killed in the Sahel in the first six months of 2022 than the whole of 2021. In Mali itself, attacks have occurred as far south as the outskirts of the capital Bamako, including the garrison town of Kati—the launch pad of the 2018 coup.

A 2015 peace agreement between Bamako and armed ex-rebel groups in the north yielded little progress. The groups remain armed and firmly established. In the rural bush, civilians are caught in the crossfire. There is a new massacre almost every month. In August, 42 Malian soldiers were killed in Tessit, near the border with Niger and Burkina Faso, in one of the deadliest attacks on the army. In June, more than 130 civilians were killed in Diallassagou, central Mali, in one night. — AFP

Kuwaitis demand speedy justice...

Continued from Page 1

Falah Al-Shammari tweeted: "Kuwaitis demand a solution to the bedoon case for the millionth time. I say all bedoons have the right to citizenship for a long time. They have the right to be compensated for all the years they have been wronged, and have the right to sue those who wronged them." Sawsan said: "The case of the bedoons has been ongoing before I was born. Now I am old, and still the issue has not been resolved after so many generations. How many more generations have to suffer?"

Noorain tweeted: "We cannot depend on racists to resolve this 70-year-old catastrophe, because the racists are the ones who caused this crisis since the early sixties. They suspended naturalization in 1960 for five years that has continued until today,

from which the catastrophe began and is still continuing today."

Jazaa Al-Qahs demanded the Kuwaiti government should abolish the Central Agency for the Remedy of the Situation of Illegal Residents. He also called for accountability against all those who forged an official report against the bedoons, and to be fair to every woman who forfeits her right to marry because of the arbitrariness of this agency. Ahmad advised Kuwait in a tweet to be just towards bedoons and their grievances for Kuwait's national security and reputation, saying this issue must be resolved.

Ali Al-Ali tweeted: "I congratulate the voice of truth of those who seek well for Kuwait, because they know that the bedoon are our brothers. I don't agree with the voice of racists that many Kuwaitis are against. The more honorable Kuwaiti citizens stand by their partners in the homeland and call to make the bedoon issue a priority. They constantly demand a just and comprehensive solution to their issue. This will effectively contribute to putting pressure on the government and resolving their issue."

returned to Earth's orbit two years ago to drop off a capsule containing the sample.

In the Nature Astronomy study, the researchers again hailed the findings made possible by the mission. "Ryugu particles are undoubtedly among the most uncontaminated Solar System materials available for laboratory study and ongoing investigations of these precious samples will certainly expand our understanding of early Solar System processes," the study said. — AFP

'Extreme heat belt' to cover...

Continued from Page 1

temperature, is what the outside temperature really feels like to the human body when relative humidity is combined with air temperature.

To create their model, the research team examined satellite-derived land surface temperatures and air temperatures between 2014 and 2020, to help understand the exact relationship between the two measurements. This information was further studied by factoring in elevation, how water is absorbed in the area, the distance to surface water and the distance to a coast.

The model was then scaled to future climate conditions, using a "middle of the road" scenario envisaged by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in which carbon dioxide levels start falling by mid-century, but do not reach net zero by 2100. Beyond "Extreme Danger" days, areas across the whole country are expected to experience hotter temperatures, with varying degrees of resilience. "These increases in local temperatures result in significant implications for communities that are not acclimated to warmer weather relative to their normal climate," the report said.

For example, a 10 percent temperature increase in the northeastern state of Maine may be as dan-

gerous as a 10 percent increase in the southwestern state of Texas, despite the higher absolute temperatures seen in Texas. The biggest predicted shift in local temperature occurred in Miami-Dade County, Florida, which currently sees seven days per year at its hottest temperature of 40 C. By 2053, that number is expected to increase to 34 days at 40 degrees. And the increase in air conditioning use that is likely to result from such temperature spikes will strain energy grids, the report warned, leading to more frequent, longer lasting brownouts. — AFP



A bird stands in the water among trash and debris as a "bathtub ring" is visible during low water levels at the Lake Mead Marina on the Colorado River. — AFP

Earth's water may be from...

Continued from Page 1

Hayabusa-2 was launched in 2014 on its mission to Ryugu, around 300 million km away, and

International

Rohingya demand security as UN rights chief visits Bangladesh camps

UN envoy makes first visit to Myanmar

KUTUPALONG, Bangladesh: Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh on Tuesday implored the United Nations rights chief for protection after recent murders that have again left members of the stateless minority fearful for their safety. Michelle Bachelet spent the day meeting with residents of the sprawling and squalid relief settlements housing nearly a million ethnic Rohingya who fled persecution in neighbouring Myanmar.

Security in the camps came back into focus this month when two refugee community leaders were shot dead, allegedly by an insurgent group active in the camps. "She wanted to know about murders in the

White House that year and addressed a UN meeting in Geneva. His murder was quickly followed by the killings of six Rohingya students and teachers at an Islamic religious school. Camp residents blamed both attacks—and the two killings earlier this month—on the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, an insurgent group that has been accused of trafficking narcotics and murdering political opponents.

Bangladesh refugee commissioner Shah Rezwan Hayat told AFP that Bachelet had asked about reports of violence in the camps but added that "all sorts of measures have been taken by the government" to improve security. He said she also asked about education and livelihood opportunities for the Rohingya people, and he replied that the government would gradually scale up schooling for all refugee children in the camps. Bachelet is on a four-day visit to Bangladesh before her term as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ends later this month. She is due to address the media in the capital Dhaka on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the UN's new special envoy for Myanmar began her first trip to the country Tuesday, a day after a junta court sentenced ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi to six more years in jail for corruption. Noeleen Heyzer "will focus on addressing the deteriorating situation and immediate concerns as well as other priority areas of her mandate," according to a UN statement issued late Monday.

It did not give details on who she would meet among the junta's top leadership or whether she would seek to meet Suu Kyi. On Monday Suu Kyi received another prison term in a secretive junta court, taking her total jail time to 17 years. Heyzer landed in the sprawling military-built capital Naypyidaw on Tuesday afternoon, said security officials who requested anonymity. A schedule for her trip has not been released but she is expected to hold meetings in Naypyidaw, according to a diplomatic source who did not give further details.

Diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis led by the UN



UKHIA, Bangladesh: United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet (C) visits a Rohingya refugee camp in Ukhia on August 16, 2022. — AFP

and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations regional bloc have made little headway, with the generals refusing to engage with opponents. The generals had "repeatedly disregarded calls by ASEAN leaders for concrete and inclusive dialogue for national reconciliation," Malaysia's foreign minister said on Tuesday.

Last month the junta stoked renewed international condemnation when it executed Phyzo Zeya Thaw, a former lawmaker from Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party, for offences under anti-terrorism laws. In response, the UN Security Council—including junta allies Russia and China—issued a rare condemnation of the junta. Singaporean sociologist Heyzer was

appointed by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres last year, replacing Swiss diplomat Christine Schraner Burgener. Schraner Burgener had called for the UN to take "very strong measures" against the military and had been the target of regular broadsides in Myanmar's state-backed media. Since the coup, the Swiss diplomat had been blocked by the generals from visiting the country, where she had hoped to meet with Suu Kyi. In December state media reported the junta had closed her office in the country "since the activities of Ms Christine Schraner Burgener have concluded". It has not yet said whether it will allow Heyzer to open an office. — AFP

Kenyan women make history with record election wins

NAIROBI, Kenya: Kenyans have elected a record number of women to positions of power in this month's polls, with the list including seven governors, three senators and 26 MPs, in a step towards gender equality. The East African nation has long struggled to get women into politics, with men accounting for the overwhelming majority of elected officials and female politicians largely consigned to serving as one of Kenya's 47 women representatives.

But the August 9 elections marked a breakthrough for female politicians. In the populous Rift Valley town of Nakuru for instance, female candidates were elected to eight positions, including governor, senator and woman representative—with Susan Kihika, Tabitha Karanja and Liza Chelule claiming those victories.

"Now sit and watch and see what women can do in office," said newly elected senator Karanja, who runs Kenya's second largest brewery Keroche Breweries Ltd. Governor-elect Kihika thanked the voters of Nakuru "for being progressive and electing three women to the leadership of this county".

'Broken barriers'

All three women belong to president-elect William Ruto's United Democratic Alliance party, with the country's incoming leader hailing their wins. "We celebrate the many women who have broken barriers to climb the political ladder. Best wishes as you embark on your new responsibilities," Ruto said on Twitter on Saturday as results trickled in.

Kenyans voted in six elections, choosing a new president as well as senators, governors, lawmakers, women representatives and some 1,500 county offi-

cials. With the exception of Ruto, all the presidential candidates had female running mates, including his main rival Raila Odinga, who picked former justice minister Martha Karua to join his ticket.

Women secured seven gubernatorial wins, more than doubling their 2017 tally. They claimed the politically influential counties of Kirinyaga and Machakos as well as Meru, where former woman's representative Kavira Mwangaza ran as an independent candidate and defeated her male competitors.

"Thank you for believing in me and in women leadership," said Mwangaza. "I am promising you that Meru will be the best county because there will be sustainable development projects," she added.

Online abuse

In addition to winning seven out of 47 gubernatorial races, female candidates claimed three out of 47 Senate seats up for grabs and 26 out of 290 MP positions. Linet Chepkorir, 24, became the youngest female parliamentarian in Kenya's history following her election as woman representative in the Rift Valley county of Bomet, barely a year after she graduated from university. The victories capped a months-long election campaign that saw female candidates subjected to a barrage of online abuse, including aggressive sexist language, gender stereotyping, and sexual overtures.

The International Federation for Human Rights and the Kenya Human Rights Commission warned ahead of the poll that such tactics were "consciously deployed to prevent women politicians or candidates from participating in active politics".

About 22.1 million voters were registered in a population of around 50 million. Nearly 40 percent of voters, or 8.8 million, are aged between 18 and 34, a drop since the last poll but still attesting to a vibrant youth contingent. But observers say the record victories will likely embolden more women to enter the political fray and strengthen the push for gender parity. According to Kenya's 2010 constitution, each gender must have at least a third of seats in parliament. — AFP



ELDOROT, Kenya: A general view of local daily newspapers with headlines reporting the election of Kenya's 5th President elect William Ruto, in Eldoret on August 16, 2022. — AFP



'We discussed camp security'

camps. We discussed it and also we discussed camp security," religious leader Maulvi Zafar told AFP by phone after meeting with the envoy.

"We talked about strengthening camp security. We demanded security." Most inhabitants of the camps fled Myanmar in 2017 after an army offensive against the mostly Muslim minority. The crackdown is now the subject of a case at the UN's highest court, with Myanmar's authorities accused of genocide. Security in the camps has been a constant issue, with scores of murders, kidnappings and police dragnets targeting drug trafficking networks. Last September saw the murder of top Rohingya leader Mohib Ullah, who had shot to prominence for organising a protest of about 100,000 refugees to mark two years since their exodus.

He also met then US president Donald Trump in the



PUTRAJAYA, Malaysia: Malaysia former prime minister Najib Razak (L) listens as his lawyer Zaid Ibrahim (R) speaks during a press conference at the federal court in Putrajaya on August 16, 2022. — AFP

Court rejects retrial for Malaysia Najib

PUTRAJAYA, Malaysia: Malaysia's highest court said Tuesday it would hear former leader Najib Razak's final bid to overturn his 12-year jail sentence for corruption, with an acquittal potentially clearing the way for his return to power.

The appeal is the last high stakes court gambit left open to Najib—but if he is unsuccessful he will have to start serving his jail sentence after years of legal wrangling. The Federal Court's decision to proceed with an appeal, which will begin Thursday, came after it rejected the former prime minister's plea for a retrial.

Najib, 69, and his ruling party were unceremoniously tossed out of office in 2018 elections following allegations of their involvement in a multi-billion dollar scandal at state fund IMDB. The former prime minister and his associates were accused of stealing billions of dollars from the country's investment vehicle and spending it on everything from high-end real estate to pricey art. Following a lengthy High Court trial, Najib was found guilty of abuse of power, money laundering and criminal breach of trust over the transfer of 42 million ringgit (\$10.1 million) from a former IMDB unit to his bank account.

He was sentenced to 12 years in jail in July 2020, and an appellate court last December rejected his appeal, prompting him to mount a final plea before the Federal Court, where any ruling will be final. Najib had been hoping the court would grant a full retrial but that request was unanimously rejected by a panel of five judges on Tuesday. "There is, to our minds, no miscarriage of justice," Chief Justice Tengku Maimun Tuan Mat said, adding Najib had "failed to cross the high threshold" of new evidence needed for a retrial.

US commander says China missile fire must be contested

SINGAPORE: China's recent decision to fire missiles over Taiwan is a "gorilla in the room" that has to be contested, a top US military commander said Tuesday. Beijing has carried out huge air and sea drills this month around Taiwan in a furious reaction to visits by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and a congressional delegation. Those exercises included firing multiple ballistic missiles into waters off Taiwan—some of the world's busiest shipping routes—and it was the first

time China has taken such a step since the mid-1990s. "It's very important that we contest this type of thing. I know that the gorilla in the room is launching missiles over Taiwan," Seventh Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Karl Thomas told reporters in Singapore.

"If we just allow that to happen, and we don't contest that, that'll be the next norm," he added. "It's irresponsible to launch missiles over Taiwan into international waters, where the shipping lanes, where free shipping operates." The Seventh Fleet is based in Japan and is a core part of Washington's navy presence in the Pacific. During this month's drills Chinese state media reported that some of the ballistic missiles fired by the People's Liberation Army followed a trajectory directly over Taiwan's capital Taipei, a new escalation that Beijing stopped short of confirming.

Thomas compared the threats against Taiwan to the South China Sea where Beijing has spent years con-

structing military bases and facilities on a series of contested atolls, while denying it was doing just that.

"If you don't challenge it... all of a sudden it can become just like the islands in the South China Sea (that) have now become military outposts," he said. "They now are full functioning military outposts that have missiles on them, large runways, hangers, radars, listening posts." China's Communist Party has never run Taiwan but it regards the island as its territory and has vowed to one day seize it, by force if necessary. Sabre rattling towards Taiwan has become more pronounced under Chinese President Xi Jinping.

New sanctions

The United States and Western allies have increased "freedom of navigation" crossings by naval vessels of both the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea to reinforce the concept that those seas are interna-

tional waterways, sparking anger from Beijing. China said it conducted new military drills on Monday as a delegation of US lawmakers visited Taipei. State media ran footage and pictures of Taiwan's Penghu islands purportedly taken from Chinese jets flying a short distance from the archipelago.

But Taiwan denied that Chinese jets came close to Penghu. "The CCP used cognitive warfare and other tricks to exaggerate and show that (its jet) was close to Penghu. This is not true," senior air force official Tung Pei-Lun told reporters on Tuesday. The Penghu islands sit in between the Chinese mainland and Taiwan. They host a major Taiwanese airbase and would be on the front line of any invasion attempt by Beijing. With China pressing on with its drills, Taiwan's army said it would stage an armed F-16 exercise on Wednesday evening in the coastal city of Hualien, in a rare display of its advanced military capabilities.—AFP

Business

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2022



KUWAIT: Kuwait recorded a 12.5 percent (\$12 million) decline in the value of projects awarded in July 2022, as the value of total project awarded reached \$84 million in the month.

Kuwait's project awards decline in July

Infrastructure projects key to transform Kuwait into a financial center: Expert

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Kuwait recorded a 12.5 percent (\$12 million) decline in the value of projects awarded in July 2022, as the value of total project awarded reached \$84 million in the month. In June, projects worth \$96 million were awarded, according to a report published by MEED Projects.

The report showed that Kuwait ranked fourth in GCC and sixth regionally in the list of signed project awards, while Qatar recorded the highest amount in July with \$1.1 billion, followed by Saudi Arabia with \$934 million. The UAE closed the top three rankings in the awarding of contracts in July, with deals worth \$819 million signed.

Speaking to Kuwait Times, Maitham Al-Shakhs, an independent economic researcher, analyzed the reasons behind the decline in Kuwait's project awards and its possible implications on the state economy. He pointed out the main reason for this decline is related to the political situation and disputes in the National Assembly.

"The political stalemate in the parliament is the main reason for the delay in awarding projects. If

deputies had turned their attention to study and pass such important files as priorities, it would have been better than the political struggle over the issue of formalities in the nomenclature between the government and the National Assembly," he argued. "The majority of the members of the parliament did not propose any new projects for the consideration of government, and whoever says the opposite, let him show them," he said.

"The absence of major infrastructure projects in the country might also lead to a flight of international companies and investments from the country. If our neighboring countries start certain key projects, naturally these investors will go to them and Kuwait will lose out in the competition. Remember, Kuwait has envisioned several important projects,



Maitham Al-Shakhs

but they ended up in drawers, while other GCC countries have begun to implement their projects," Shakhs pointed out.

"Any decline in the percentage of awards is a setback for future projects, modernization programs and our development plan. We need major infrastructure projects to catch up with global markets in the race to transform Kuwait into a financial and commercial center," he said.

Gulf experience

"The Gulf experience is the best proof. When Qatar announced hosting the World Cup, the country announced several ambitious projects with a specific blueprint such as logistics, stadiums and others associated infrastructure projects. As a result, the percentage of the country's awarded contracts increased significantly. As were the cases with the UAE (Dubai Expo) and Saudi Arabia, where infrastructure development enabled the countries to host major international events today," Shakhs explained.

"When we talk about losing out in competition to our neighbors, we must also consider the possible

future losses to the country in its efforts to transform into a commercial and financial center. It requires a lot of work and major projects, and any delay in planning and executing them will slow down the transformation process. I do not think that there are any gains from the drop in the percentage of projects awards," he said.

Disagreeing with the opinion aired by some quarters that a decline in Kuwait's project awards could help the government bring down the financial deficit, he said this is a negative thought. "For example, it is negative financial management and not a positive transformation when we say the percentage of salaries increased by one or two percent while the outlay of capital expenditure decreased," he said.

"Therefore, the process of implementing Kuwait's major infrastructure projects and transforming the state into a financial and commercial center is an important issue that largely depends on capital expenditure. The issue of the allocation of capital expenditure begins with legislation, as it is the responsibility of the deputies and ends with the government, as it is the executor of the projects," he concluded.

European gas prices surge to six-month peak

LONDON: European gas prices surged to a six-month peak on Tuesday, exacerbating recession fears as the region faces the prospect of rationing following cuts to Russia supplies amid the war in Ukraine. Oil prices, meanwhile, extended losses a day after tumbling more than five percent on fears demand will subside due to recessions or slow growth in major economies such as China. In Europe, the natural gas reference price Dutch TTF rallied more than 10 percent at one point to over 250 euros per megawatt hour — the highest level since the start of March, or not long after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"Energy prices are soaring in Europe," said market analyst Fawad Razaqzada at City Index and FOREX.com.

"Reduced Russian energy shipments of around only 20 percent of capacity through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline have increased the risk of rationing in the coming months," he added. Spiking gas prices would likely push European nations into recession, hitting demand for other goods such as oil.

"A slick of worry is growing about the darkening prospects for global growth as economies slow around the world, pushing down oil prices in expectation of lower demand," noted Susannah Streeter, senior investment and markets analyst Hargreaves Lansdown.

Signs that Iran is moving towards a nuclear deal added to the downward pressure on prices, with an agreement seen as allowing the country to restart oil sales into the world market. Analysts said Tehran could provide 2.5 million barrels a day, giving a much-needed shot in the arm to supplies, which have been hammered by sanctions on Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine.



TOKYO: A woman walks past the closing numbers on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in the business district of Tokyo. —AFP

Libya has also boosted production, helping prices drop to six-month lows and wiping out the gains seen after the Ukraine war started. But analysts warned that there might still be some way to go on an Iran agreement, owing to upcoming US elections. "A deal with Iran would likely not be popular with US voters and so is hard to envisage before the November mid-terms," said National Australia Bank's Ray Attrill. "Markets are currently prone to optimism, though, and hopes for a deal... have added to downward pressure on oil prices."

European stocks drifted higher despite dismal survey data from Germany, with the low value of the euro and pound providing a lift. Wall Street opened mixed, with the Dow edging higher after Walmart beat expectations despite having earlier issued a profit warning. Shares in the big-box retailer surged more than five percent as trading got underway. Major markets have been buoyed in recent days on bets that the Federal Reserve would not lift borrowing costs by 75 basis points for a third straight time next month after decades-high inflation eased in the United States as well as data showing the economy to be cooling. The recent drop in oil prices will help reduce inflation. —AFP

US industrial output jumps

WASHINGTON: A massive rebound in American manufacturing, especially vehicles, following two months of declines, help push overall industrial production up in July, the Federal Reserve said Tuesday. A massive 6.6 percent surge in motor vehicle and parts production was a key driver the 0.7 percent rise in manufacturing, which was the biggest gain since March, the data showed.

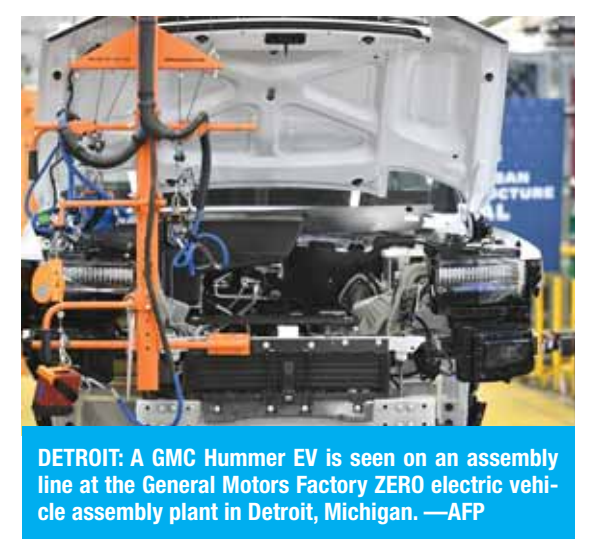
That boosted total industrial output by 0.6 percent last month, which was double the consensus forecast among economists. The gain contrasted with the massive decline in a regional survey by the New York Fed for the first week of August, which briefly spooked investors on Monday.

"Manufacturing activity is cooling, but retains some momentum; no indications of a massive pull-back," said Gregory Daco, chief economist of EY Parthenon. "I'd downplay the huge drop in the Empire State survey & focus on the ISM readings pointing to cooling activity," Daco said on Twitter, referring to a nationwide survey that showed a slowdown but continued growth last month.

UK unemployment stable, as inflation slams wages: Data

LONDON: Britain's unemployment rate remains close to 50-year lows, but wage values are falling at a record pace with inflation at the highest level in decades, official data showed Tuesday.

Unemployment stood at 3.8 percent in the three months to the end of June, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement. This was unchanged compared with the three months to the



DETROIT: A GMC Hummer EV is seen on an assembly line at the General Motors Factory ZERO electric vehicle assembly plant in Detroit, Michigan. —AFP

Mining production also rose 0.7 percent, on "gains in coal mining and in oil and gas well drilling," while utilities fell 0.8 percent, the Fed said. Overall production was 3.9 percent higher compared to July 2021, while manufacturing has risen 3.2 percent, the report said. Industrial capacity in use edged back over 80 percent, to 80.3 percent, after slipping below that threshold in June. —AFP

end of May. Darren Morgan, director of economic statistics at the ONS, said that although the latest data pointed to the number of job vacancies remaining "historically very high, it fell for the first time since the summer of 2020" when the UK briefly exited a COVID lockdown.

He added that excluding bonuses, real pay "is still dropping faster than at any time since comparable records began in 2001". It comes with UK inflation at a 40-year high of 9.4 percent on surging energy and food prices.

The Bank of England is forecasting inflation to peak at just over 13 percent in Britain this year, pushing its economy into recession. The ONS publishes its latest inflation reading on Wednesday. —AFP

Business

Net zero, Russia war driving nascent hydrogen economy

Governments seek to slash carbon emissions amid record-high temperatures

BIRMINGHAM, United Kingdom: Kevin Kendall pulls up at the only green hydrogen refueling station in Birmingham, Britain's second-biggest city, and swiftly fills his sedan with clean gas. Green hydrogen is in sharp focus as governments seek to slash carbon emissions amid record-high temperatures and to safeguard energy supplies hit by the invasion of Ukraine by oil and gas producer Russia.

But the "hydrogen economy" has not fully kicked into gear awaiting significant uptake from high-polluting sectors like steel and aviation. For Kendall, being an early user of green hydrogen means he does not have to queue during his lunchtime trip to what resembles a petrol pump. "There is very little green hydrogen being produced in Britain at the moment," the professor of chemical engineering tells AFP. "It needs now to move forward." In Birmingham, central England, it costs about £50 (\$60) to fill Kendall's Toyota Mirai with the green hydrogen that is produced at a plant next to the refueling station. That is around half the bill for a similar-sized diesel car after the Ukraine war sent fossil fuel prices rocketing.

Despite the price benefit, Britain is home to around only a dozen hydrogen refueling stations. While hydrogen is the most abundant element on Earth, it is locked in water and hydrocarbons such as natural gas, meaning "it's difficult to make", according to Kendall's daughter, Michaela Kendall. Together they founded Adelan, a small-sized business producing box-shaped fuel cells similar to the metal-encased devices used to help power the Toyota Mirai. Set up 26 years ago, Adelan is the longest-running maker of fuel cells in Britain—which work also with liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) — while the company also offers a leasing service for the Japanese automaker's hydrogen cars.



'Increasingly attractive'

"Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the economics of green hydrogen have become increasingly attractive," Minh Khoi Le, head of hydrogen research at Rystad Energy, told AFP.

"Coupled with many incentives in the second half of 2022 globally, green hydrogen looks to satisfy the trilemma of the energy system: energy security, affordability, and sustainability." Fallout from the war has caused the European Union to bolster its gas reserves by slashing consumption 15 percent.

The bloc is also seeking to significantly increase supplies of green hydrogen, which is made from water via electrolysis and with renewable energy. This is in contrast to the more available blue hydrogen, which

environmentalists oppose as it is produced from natural gas in a process that releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

£9-billion investment

At Adelan's Birmingham workshop, a quaint brick building surrounded by houses, staff are testing the company's so-called solid oxide fuel cells that are replacing diesel generators.

Overseeing the work, company chief executive Michaela Kendall says she expects "hydrogen capacity to really increase but it will take time". "Hydrocarbons will still be used for the foreseeable future," she predicts "because the hydrogen economy has not really evolved, it's just at the early stage". Britain's govern-

ment says £9 billion of investment is needed "to make hydrogen a cornerstone of the UK's greener future" as it targets net zero carbon emissions by mid-century.

In Birmingham, the plan is for about 10 hydrogen refuelling stations in the next few years following the arrival of 120 hydrogen buses to the city in 2023. Other UK cities, including Aberdeen in Scotland, are travelling the same road. However, "only Los Angeles has been reasonably successful with something like 9,000 hydrogen vehicles and 40 hydrogen stations", says Kevin. "That's what we'd like Birmingham to be."

Electric surge

The Toyota, resembling a standard vehicle inside and out, is powered by electricity. This has been produced by green hydrogen combining with oxygen in a fuel cell. The only waste emitted from the vehicle, which has a range of 400 miles (640 kilometers), is water vapor.

Adelan's solid oxide fuel cell, so-called because its electrolyte is ceramic, is described as "an electric device", generating power for batteries. "It's hydrogen-ready, but we tend to use hydrocarbon fuels because they're easier to get right now," says Michaela. "We use fuel that is sourced in a low-carbon way" such as BioLPG. A lack of hydrogen infrastructure means motorists wanting a greener alternative to petrol or diesel are expected to continue purchasing electric vehicles. Despite lengthy charge times for electric car batteries and big rises in electricity prices this year, Britons are fast ditching polluting automobiles ahead of a UK ban on sales of new diesel and petrol vehicles from 2030. It comes as oil and gas giant BP recently unveiled plans for green hydrogen production facilities in the UK. — AFP



MUSCAT: Oman's budget surpluses are forecast at 5.5 per cent and 3.4 per cent of GDP in 2022 and 2023, respectively, its first surpluses since 2013, as oil revenue growth easily outweighs additional spending.

Fitch upgrades Oman's rating

MUSCAT: Fitch Ratings upgraded Oman's issuer default rating (IDR) to "BB", with stable outlook, from "BB-", after improvements in key fiscal figures resulting in lesser external financing pressures and a sharp fall in government debt. The "BB" rating is two notches below investment grade. "Higher oil revenue will underpin budget surpluses in 2022 and 2023 and a sharp fall in government debt/gross domestic product to below the 'BB' median," Fitch said in a statement on Monday. While the rating agency expects oil prices to decline over the medium term and some dilution of fiscal reform in 2022, it forecasts that Oman's commitment to fiscal consolidation through the state's medium-term fiscal plan will be sufficient to limit renewed deterioration in public and external-finance figures.

Oman's budget surpluses are forecast at 5.5 per cent and 3.4 per cent of GDP in 2022 and 2023, respectively, its first surpluses since 2013, as oil revenue growth easily outweighs additional spending.

The rating agency said it "assumes average Brent prices of \$105 a barrel in 2022 and \$85 a barrel in 2023", and expects crude and condensate output to grow by 8.8 per cent in 2022 and 3.5 per cent in 2023. For 2024, Fitch forecast a small budget deficit as lower oil prices (assumed to average \$65 a barrel) and modest GDP growth offset gains from continuing fiscal

reforms that will boost non-oil revenue and lower overall spending.

"Oman used part of the oil revenue windfall to buy back \$0.7 billion of bonds maturing across 2025-2032; pre-pay the remainder of the \$1.3bn pre-export financing facility taken out in 2017 and repay a maturing \$3.6bn loan from China," Fitch said.

The rating agency estimates Oman's net foreign borrowing in 2022 be negative to about 4 per cent of GDP. External financing pressures on Oman have eased this year as the government has fulfilled its external financing requirement for 2022 and has reduced the size of maturities in 2023 to \$1.7 billion.

"Oman's funding position is considerably more comfortable relative to recent years", although medium-term funding requirements remain sizeable and the country's level of external indebtedness is high," Fitch said. Sovereign net foreign assets are expected to turn marginally positive in 2022, after deteriorating dramatically to minus 9 per cent of GDP in 2020 from 53 per cent in 2014.

Fitch expects the Central Bank of Oman's gross foreign reserves to strengthen in 2022-2023 on the back of current-account surpluses and average above four and a half months of current external payments. Oman's BB IDR rating is supported by an estimated real GDP growth of 4.4 per cent in 2022 from 3 per cent in 2021, driven largely by the oil sector, Fitch said. Non-oil GDP growth is expected to strengthen mildly, to about 3 per cent, after loosening pandemic-related restrictions, renewed population growth and a mild loosening of fiscal policy. — Agencies

mer company, ANI Technologies Pvt, operates the Ola ride-hailing service.

Aggarwal, whose investors include SoftBank Group Corp and Tiger Global Management, unveiled the vehicle on the same day India celebrated 75 years of freedom from British rule, and precisely a year after Ola debuted its electric two-wheel scooter. According to local media, Mahindra Electric Mobility Ltd., part of a historic Indian conglomerate, plans to introduce a series of its own EVs on the same day, indicating how congested the industry has gotten.

Before the reveal on Monday, Aggarwal has been tweeting teaser videos showing a red automobile with only its back wheels visible, as well as cheeky Bollywood movie one-liners. Ola is forging ahead with aspirations to gain "a place at the global EV table," according to Aggarwal. He launched what was described as the world's largest electric-scooter manufacturing last year, some three hours from the company's headquarters in Bangalore.

The idea was to produce around two million scooters per year, but supply delays, quality concerns, and in some cases, scooters catching fire have all hampered progress. Traditional combustion-engine scooters and motorbikes continue to be the most popular means of personal transportation in India, dominating the country's highways. However, in recent years, the government has pushed for steps to improve urban air quality and reduce reliance on oil imports by increasing EV sales through reduced taxes and duty exemptions. According to the government's India Brand Equity Foundation, 0.32 million such vehicles were sold in 2021, representing a 168 percent increase year on year. — Agencies

Spain PM hopes Europe gas link to be a reality 'soon'

MADRID: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Tuesday he hopes a gas pipeline linking the Iberian Peninsula to central Europe through France could soon become a reality. Europe is currently undergoing an energy crisis as it struggles to rapidly reduce its dependence on Russian gas following the invasion of Ukraine.

Russia has reduced deliveries and nations are scrambling for supplies to avoid a possible shortage this winter, while prices for gas and electricity have soared. "Spain has a lot to contribute to help Europe reduce its energy dependence on Russia thanks to our immense regasification capacity," Sanchez said on a visit to La Palma in the Canary Islands.

Spain currently has six liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals for processing deliveries made by huge sea tankers back into gas and injecting them into its pipeline network. But the country has only two low-

capacity links to France's gas network, limiting its current ability to act as a conduit to boost EU gas imports. Last week, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said a pipeline bringing gas from the Iberian Peninsula through France to central Europe could make "a massive contribution" to easing the supply crisis, in remarks hailed by Madrid and Lisbon. Madrid has for years championed the idea of a pipeline across the Catalan Pyrenees with France to significantly increase transfer capacity and insisted such link could be built within months.

"This is something the Spanish government has been demanding from Europe for a long time now... and we hope we can soon make this dream into a reality," Sanchez said. Spain is already showing solidarity with its European partners by exporting energy "and we will do so even more when we improve the energy interconnections", he added.

The pipeline would be similar to the defunct MidCat project, which sought to link Spain to France, but which was halted in 2019 over opposition from environmental groups and a lack of funding.

Spain's gas network operator Enagas said last week it could have the Spanish section of the pipeline ready within "eight or nine months". Sources familiar with the project said it would initially transport natural gas, but would ultimately switch to hydrogen. — AFP



SANTA CRUZ DE LA PALMA, Spain: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez (second right) holds a press conference with Spain's Minister of Health Carolina Darias (left), Canary Regional President Angel Victor Torres (right) and President of the La Palma Council Mariano Hernandez Zapata (second left) at Palacio Salazar in Santa Cruz de La Palma during his visit to the Canary island of La Palma. — AFP

Ola founder plans to produce electric car by 2024

NEW DELHI: Bhavish Aggarwal, founder of India's top ride-hailing startup and then moved into producing electric scooters, is growing his business empire once more, announcing plans to enter the electric-car market, competing with local titans like Tata Group and global automakers ranging from Hyundai Motor Co to Tesla Inc. The 36-year-old entrepreneur stated that Ola plans to debut its first electric car with a 500-kilometer range in the summer of 2024. It intends to manufacture its own lithium-ion batteries, lowering costs through local production. The objective is to develop a road toward self-sufficiency in critical technology and then produce an electric car built in India. The futuristic-looking car will be part of Aggarwal's Ola Electric Mobility Pvt. His for-



Bhavish Aggarwal

Walmart reports Q2 sales surge, partly due to inflation

NEW YORK: Walmart reported a jump in quarterly revenues Tuesday partly driven by inflation as the retail giant signaled it expects its US sales growth to moderate over the next six months. The big-box retailer, which had cut its profit forecast three weeks ago due to shifting consumer behavior, said pricing pressures on consumers boosted sales of groceries, while denting demand for other items such as apparel, electronics and home products.

Revenues for its second fiscal quarter ending July 31 were \$152.9 billion, up 8.4 percent from the year-ago period. Profits rose 20.4 percent to \$5.1 billion, with some of the increase connected to the accounting for an asset sale in Brazil. Walmart's US comparable store sales rose 6.5 percent from one year ago, but the company expects about three percent growth in the second half of 2022.

Higher gasoline prices, along with elevated prices for grocery-item staples have been prompting more consumers to "trade down" to lower-priced goods.

On the positive side, gas prices have gradually fallen during the summer, mitigating this effect somewhat. "We're pleased to see more customers choosing Walmart during this inflationary period, and we're working hard to support them as they prioritize their spending," Walmart Chief Executive Doug McMillon said in a news release. McMillon said the company made "good progress" to manage supply chain costs "and that work is ongoing." Shares of Walmart rose 3.7 percent to \$137.48 in Tuesday pre-market trading. — AFP



BURBANK, US: In this file photo taken on August 15, 2022, shopping carts with the Walmart logo are seen outside a Walmart store in Burbank, California. — AFP

Business

Alibaba, Tencent, ByteDance share algorithm details with regulator

Chinese authorities strengthen oversight of tech sector

BEIJING: Chinese tech giants including Alibaba, Tencent and ByteDance have submitted details to a state regulator of algorithms used in some of their products, in an unprecedented move as authorities strengthen oversight of the sector. The country's internet watchdog on Friday published a list of 30 algorithms that companies use to gather information on users and promote content or services.

Algorithms used by tech companies are closely guarded globally but in March China rolled out regulations obliging firms to disclose these tools as concerns grow about data misuse. Beijing has in recent years embarked on a wide-ranging clamp-down on the tech sector, which saw years of runaway growth and the emergence of supersized monopolies before regulators stepped in.

The rules issued in March require companies to ensure they will not engage in activities that may threaten national security, social stability or encourage over-indulgence, said Angela Zhang, associate professor of law at the University of Hong Kong. "It requires these service providers to conduct regular self-assessment to ensure compliance and to file their record with the relevant authority," she told AFP. Targets of the latest regulations range from China's Twitter-like platform Weibo to delivery service Meituan and ByteDance's short video app Douyin.

The March regulations say the rules apply to

domestic service providers, meaning Douyin's international cousin TikTok, which operates outside of China, would not have to share information.

The list published on Friday by the Cyberspace Administration of China briefly describes how the algorithms work and which products they are used for. Alibaba's popular e-commerce platform Taobao for example has an algorithm that recommends products based on users' browsing and search history, while Douyin makes recommendations based on factors like how long a user engages with content.

Cyberspace authorities work with public security and market supervision departments to carry out security assessments of the algorithms used for recommendation services and may ask for rectifications. The regulations also state that service providers are not to use algorithms to encourage addiction among minors or determine transaction prices based on the habits of users.

Offenders may be warned, fined or hit with other penalties.

The extent to which tech firms have disclosed their software to regulators remains unclear. "At this point, it doesn't seem that Chinese data regulators have made explicit requirements on these tech firms to change their algorithms. Rather, the regulators are probably at the information collection stage," Zhang said. —AFP



KFH announces winners of Al-Rabeh draw

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the Al-Rabeh draw with 10 customers winning cash prizes worth KD 1,500 each for the first week of August 2022, additionally, KFH announced Fajer Al-Rashidi as the monthly winner of 1 kilo Gram of KFH Gold for the month of July 2022. The winners of KD 1,500 are: Farah Al-Khaldi, Jasem Al-Osaimi, Michael Multy, Abdulaziz Al-Rahmany, Saud Al-Hashash, Muna Al-Kandari, Adlah Al-Jassar, Mohammed Al-Rashidi, Bander Al-Hajri and Sayed Al-Hanyan. The newly-designed Al-Rabeh campaign launched by KFH in 2022, provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns 536 winners throughout the year. The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional products and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the Bank's leadership in the local and global markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per the highest quality standards.

The Al-Rabeh account is a salary account available to customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Customers can open Al-Rabeh account in any of KFH branches in Kuwait, or through the Bank's online channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Salary transfer is a prerequisite for customers to enter the draw provided that the transfer of salary to Al-Rabeh account is constant. Regarding the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer is able to deposit three salaries during the three months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the three months prior to the draw. Ten draws take place on a weekly basis for amount of KD 1,500 for 10 winners each, 1 kg of KFH gold will be drawn monthly for one winner and KD 25,000 for one winner every quarter, reaching a total number of 536 winners during the year. KFH is keen to further meet customers' requirements and aspirations and their increasing needs as well as offer innovative and modern services, therefore achieving customer satisfaction, which is one of the fundamentals at KFH. The Bank has achieved a qualitative shift in the level of

UK labor shortages see mass of food go to waste

LONDON: More than £60 million (\$72 million) worth of food went to waste in Britain in the first half of the year for want of people to pick it, the National Farmers' Union said Monday. "It's nothing short of a travesty that quality, nutritious food is being wasted at a time when families across the country are already struggling to make ends meet because of soaring living costs," said NFU deputy president Tom Bradshaw. According to a union study of farmers, 40 percent complained they had suffered losses owing to a shortage of pickers with some £22 million worth of fruit and vegetables alone lost from January to June. —AFP

Cyber firm Darktrace shares surge on possible takeover

LONDON: Shares in British cyber security firm Darktrace soared almost a fifth Tuesday, reflecting a possible takeover worth several billion pounds by a US private equity firm.

Darktrace stock rallied nearly 18 percent, valuing the group at more than £3.4 billion (\$4.1 billion), after announcing it was "in the early stages of discussions with Thoma Bravo" to take it private under a cash offer. AJ Bell financial analyst Danni Hewson noted that "Darktrace is in one of the hottest areas of the tech world, with demand for cyber security increasing amid concern over Russian cyber warfare linked to the conflict in Ukraine". But Darktrace has faced a rocky time since floating on the London stock market in April last year.

"The wild swings in the share price, while linked to instability in the tech space and wider markets, do suggest that UK investors have struggled to get to grips with this complex tech story," said Hewson. "The controversy surrounding its co-founder Mike Lynch hasn't helped Darktrace, as he continues to fight extradition to the US on fraud charges," she added.

Heathrow extends passenger cap into October

LONDON: London's Heathrow airport said it was extending its capacity limit through most of October to reduce the chaos caused by a post-pandemic surge in passengers amid a lack of staff. Europe's largest airport introduced a cap of 100,000 departing passengers per day in July, which was originally slated to have expired at the end of September.

City of London loses 14% of restaurants to new lunch culture

LONDON: One in seven restaurants in the City of London has been forced to close since the start of pandemic as workers continue to shun the office in favor of working from home. The lack of commuters has resulted in lackluster weekday trade in the Square Mile as the traditional business lunch increasingly falls by the wayside. At least 14 per cent of hospitality premises have been forced to shut due to a major decline in footfall, research by AlixPartners and industry tracker CGA indicates. The drop is not restricted to the UK capital, with Birmingham also noting the number of licensed premises falling by 14 per cent and Glasgow hit by a 10 per cent reduction.

Before the pandemic, the City - London's historic commercial centre - attracted more than half a million commuters a day. But the pandemic saw a boom in working from home and many employers in the area have adapted to hybrid working, often requiring only three days in the office a week.

Footfall has dropped by a third on some days during this summer compared with pre-pandemic levels, according to data from Google. Many high-profile venues in London have been closed since 2020, including Mark Hix's Oyster and Chop House and Kym's, a venture by chef Andrew Wong.

Restaurants, bars and cafes bore the brunt of stringent COVID-19 measures and must now grapple with a soaring cost-of-living crisis in which inflation is up to nearly 10 per cent. Graeme Smith, managing director at consultancy AlixPartners, said "given the catastrophic events of the past two



Lynch has been accused of inflating the value of software group Autonomy prior to its sale to US tech giant Hewlett Packard for \$11.1 billion in 2011.

In May, Darktrace chief strategy officer Nicole Eagan was named in a British High Court ruling against Lynch. —AFP

"Since the cap was introduced, passenger journeys have improved with fewer last-minute cancellations, better punctuality and shorter wait times for bags," said Heathrow. It said the extension through October 29 "will provide passengers with confidence ahead of their half-term getaways."

Airlines scheduled thousands of flights in Europe this summer season to capture a boom in travel demand following the relaxation of COVID restrictions.

But having cut back staff drastically during the pandemic, both airlines and airports found it difficult to hire enough employees. This led to long waits to check-in, clear security and collect bags in many airports across Europe, as well as to cancellations of flights due to lack of crew.

The Heathrow cap was set at roughly 4,000 passengers per day fewer than scheduled flight capacity.

Airlines have cancelled flights in response to the cap, as well as in recognition of their staffing levels. Heathrow said it was regularly reviewing the situation and would remove the cap early if it sees an improvement. "We want to remove the cap as soon as possible, but we can only do so when we are confident that everyone operating at the airport has the resources to deliver the service our passengers deserve," Heathrow Chief Commercial Officer Ross Baker said. Amsterdam and Frankfurt airports have also instituted caps. —AFP



LONDON: The lack of commuters has resulted in lackluster weekday trade in the Square Mile as the traditional business lunch increasingly falls by the wayside.

years, numbers have held up well".

Profit has also been hit by staff shortages in the hospitality sector. Many of London's restaurant workers are from Europe but now require work visas after Brexit brought an end of freedom of movement. Recent figures by the Office for National Statistics showed only 43,000 EU citizens received visas for work, family, study or other purposes in 2021.

That figure is significantly down from the 230,000 to 430,000 EU citizens coming to the UK annually in the six years to March 2020. A report by the University of Oxford's Migration Observatory found that increased retirement among the over-50s and a tight labor market across the continent were also contributing to the problem. "While it is

clear that ending free movement has made it harder for employers in low-wage industries to recruit staff, changing immigration policy to address shortages brings its own set of challenges," said Madeleine Sumption, director of the MO.

Low-wage work visa schemes are notoriously difficult to monitor and often open workers up to exploitation and abuse, she said. She said "immigration policy is a bit of blunt instrument" when it comes to labor shortages and there was a "real trade-off between responding quickly and being evidence-based". She said: "If the government wants a system that is evidence-based, it can't be expected to respond at short notice to the latest crisis, whether the problem is airports, lorry drivers, or something else." —Agencies



Jeff Bezos, Amazon Founder & Executive Chair, and US media personality Lauren Sanchez attend the premiere of Prime Video's "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power" at Culver Studios Los Angeles, California. — AFP photos



US actress Ema Horvath attends the premiere of Prime Video's "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power" at Culver Studios.



Australian actress Markella Kavenagh attends the premiere of Prime Video's "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power" at Culver Studios.

AMAZON'S BEZOS ATTENDS PREMIERE FOR \$1BN 'LORD OF THE RINGS' PREQUEL



British actress Sophia Nomvete attends the premiere of Prime Video's "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power" at Culver Studios.

It has been dubbed the most expensive show ever made, but producers of Amazon's "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power" described its \$1 billion price tag as a "bargain" at a lavish world premiere in Los Angeles Monday. The highly anticipated TV series, launching September 2 on Amazon's streaming platform, is said to be a personal obsession of Jeff Bezos, multi-billionaire founder of the online shopping giant-turned-streamer.

Set in the world of J.R.R. Tolkien's books, thousands of years before the Oscar-winning "Lord of the Rings" film trilogy, the series is set to unfold over five, sprawling seasons, each of 10 episodes. Bezos joined the show's stars and filmmakers for a launch event at California's Culver Studios on Monday night, where the first two episodes were screened before a spectacular light show featuring dozens of illuminated drones.

Executive producer Lindsey Weber said the show's \$1 billion cost was "a very grabby headline people like to talk about," but promised that viewers would "see the money is really on the screen." Speaking to AFP on the red carpet, Weber said the eye-watering cost came from "setting up for five seasons."

"If you look at what it cost to make a feature tentpole film, by that comparison, really we're quite a bargain," she added, using a term for mega-budget blockbusters released by Hollywood's top studios. "The Rings of Power" is set 4,000 years before the film trilogy and original books, in a fictional "Second Age"—a historical period sketched out in less detail



Showrunners Patrick McKay (left) and J. D. Payne (right) and producer Lindsey Weber attend the premiere of Prime Video's "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power" at Culver Studios.

by Tolkien's writings.

The show features a large ensemble cast of actors who are not widely known to global audiences. Morfydd Clark and Robert Aramayo play younger versions of elves Galadriel and Elrond—characters already familiar to fans of the "Lord of the Rings" films.

"It's an epic adventure story, with universal themes, and a real labor of love—

we've all worked very very hard on it, and I just hope people enjoy it," said Aramayo at Monday's premiere. "They built a city, with a dock and ships floating in it—it's mind-blowing and really, really incredible to get to play on some of these sets." — AFP



US actor Michael B Jordan attends the premiere of Prime Video's "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power" at Culver Studios.



US actress Cynthia Addai-Robinson attends the premiere of Prime Video's "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power" at Culver Studios.

US rapper A\$AP Rocky charged over shooting

US rapper A\$AP Rocky was charged Monday over an alleged shooting in Hollywood last year. The 33-year-old, whose real name is Rakim Mayers, faces two counts of assault with a semi-automatic firearm, the Los Angeles District Attorney's office said. Mayers is alleged to have pointed the gun at a one-time friend during an argument in November. In a later confrontation

between the two, he is said to have drawn the weapon and fired it twice, leaving the former friend with what police described as "a minor injury."

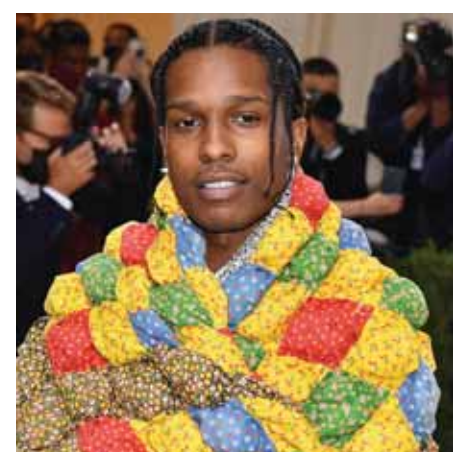
Mayers has been ordered to appear in a Los Angeles court on Wednesday. The "Praise the Lord (Da Shine)" artist was arrested over the incident at Los Angeles International Airport in April when he arrived on a private plane from Barbados.

US media outlets reported that he had been on the island with his then-pregnant girlfriend Rihanna. The entertainment and fashion mogul behind the hits "Diamonds" and "Umbrella" gave birth to a boy on May 13 in Los Angeles. In an interview with GQ magazine published in May 2021, Mayers called Rihanna the "love of my life" and "the One."

New York-born Mayers was previously

arrested in Stockholm in 2019 over a street brawl. He was held in Swedish custody for a more than a month, in an incident which drew global attention, and was handed a suspended sentence — AFP

In this file photo US rapper A\$AP Rocky arrives for the 2021 Met Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. — AFP





Employees of Khortytsia, a museum-island in Zaporizhzhia prepare artworks to take away for safekeeping in the west of the country in Zaporizhzhia.



Employees of Khortytsia, a museum-island in Zaporizhzhia prepare artworks to take away for safekeeping in the west of the country in Zaporizhzhia.



The curators saving Ukraine's heritage at all costs

When she understood Russian troops were advancing in the region of Zaporizhzhia, Natalya Chergik helped to fill a truck with a ton of paintings, antique firearms and 17th-century ceramics. "We drove 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) in five days. The trip was awful, planes were flying over us

is a curator at Khortytsia, a museum-island in the Dnipro river of around 30 square kilometers (11.6 square miles) that was a base for Ukrainian Cossacks from the 16th century.

It was the home of the first Zaporizhzhian "Sich"—a type of Cossack state ruled by direct democracy that remained in place until 1775 when Russian empress Catherine the Great destroyed it. This is a "sacred place for the history of Ukraine", said Maksym Ostapenko, the 51-year-old head of the Khortytsia reserve, an important Ukrainian cultural centre that houses, among others, dozens of historical artefacts found during archaeological excavations over the years.



Employees of Khortytsia, a museum-island in Zaporizhzhia prepare artworks to take away for safekeeping in the west of the country in Zaporizhzhia.



A picture taken in Zaporizhzhia shows old canons exhibited in Khortytsia, a museum-island.

and we did not even know if they were Ukrainian or not," she recounts.

"The hardest part for us was to convince people at checkpoints not to search the artwork and to let the truck through as quickly as possible." Chergik

'Evacuation plan'

Ostapenko and most of his colleagues joined the Ukrainian army in the early days of the invasion. But that does not mean they abandoned their museum. "To tell you the truth, we outlined an evacuation plan in 2014, after Crimea was annexed" by Russia, said Ostapenko. Curators drew up a list of "the most precious artwork, of about 100 pieces that would need to be evacuated first, in the event of danger".

"Cultural heritage cannot be rebuilt. We have to take precautions," said the director. As early as February 23, two days after Russian President Vladimir Putin gave a speech that raised fears of an invasion, the museum's team started to take down the artwork. When Moscow launched the invasion the following day, evacuation began under Russian shelling.

The Russian army was halted about 40 kilometers from Zaporizhzhia and did not take over Khortytsia. Three rockets



A picture shows a view of Khortytsia, a museum-island in Zaporizhzhia. — AFP photos

hit the island, but did not damage the museum. But Russia quickly took over the "Kamianska Sich", a similar but autonomous polity. A branch of the museum is located there. "The staff is blocked from accessing the site. And we lost contact with our colleagues a while ago," Ostapenko said.

Looting

The UN cultural organization, UNESCO, says 175 Ukrainian cultural sites have been damaged since the beginning of the invasion. The Ukrainian culture ministry estimates that about 100 museums and 17,000 cultural objects are in occupied territories. About 60 kilometers from Khortytsia is the city of

Vasylivka, which was taken over by the Russian army in the first days of the war.

The city is home to the Popov manor, an unusual 19th-century neo-gothic mansion that was damaged by shelling in early March. A part of the museum's team decided to stay. Its director, 39-year-old Anna Golovko, lives in Zaporizhzhia, but tries to stay in contact with her colleagues. "They're doing everything they can to preserve the buildings, but that remains extremely difficult. As soon as they cover up a window, it gets blown up by another shelling," she said.

The museum's team did not have time to evacuate the artwork. As early as the day following the fall of the city,

Golovko said Russian troops went to the museum to loot it. Two of her colleagues were even detained for four days earlier this month, and asked to reveal the location of the artwork, according to Golovko.

As for Chergik, she came back to Zaporizhzhia after her long journey to take away artwork for safekeeping in the west of the country. She said the fate of Ukraine's heritage, particularly in occupied areas, is a "painful and ever-present" issue for her. "If we don't save our cultural heritage, then Ukraine's victory won't be worth a thing." — AFP



A picture taken in Zaporizhzhia shows an old canon exhibited in Khortytsia, a museum-island.



Reebok-owner ABG agrees to buy fashion group Ted Baker

Authentic Brands Group, the US owner of sports clothes marque Reebok and leisure wear maker Juicy Couture, has agreed to buy struggling British fashion group Ted Baker, the pair announced Tuesday. ABG has struck a deal to buy the 35-year-old company for £211 million (\$254 million).

Like other bricks-and-mortar businesses, Ted Baker has struggled in the face of fierce online competition before and during the Covid pandemic. "Ted

Baker is a highly regarded, uniquely British brand whose strong fashion credibility resonates with consumers around the world," ABG chief executive Jamie Salter said in a statement.



"We are excited to build on the brand's global foundation through a business model focused on licensing, wholesale, retail, digital and strategic marketing partnerships." Ted Baker shares surged 17 percent in London deals in a move that reflected the offer price. — AFP

R. Kelly back in court to face further sex crimes charges

Disgraced R&B singer R. Kelly, who is serving a 30-year sentence for sex offenses, is back in court this week facing further charges. Jury selection began on Monday in the latest case, which is being tried in the 55-year-old's hometown of Chicago. Kelly, whose full name is Robert Sylvester Kelly, was convicted in New York in September of recruiting teenagers and women for sex. The "I Believe I Can Fly" artist was found guilty of eight charges of sex trafficking and one count of racketeering.

In the Chicago case, Kelly and two ex-associates are accused of rigging the singer's 2008 child pornography trial in which the jury delivered a verdict of not guilty. A minor victim, who has not been identified, declined to testify in the 2008 trial because of alleged threats and bribes, but is expected to take the witness stand this time.

Kelly, a three-time Grammy Award-winner, is charged with obstruction of justice, producing child pornography, and illegal sexual activity with a minor. Also facing charges are Kelly's former manager, Derrel McDavid, and an ex-

employee, Milton "June" Brown. The trial is expected to last around four weeks. As jury selection began, Kelly's attorney Jennifer Bonjean filed a motion asking that anyone who watched a documentary called "Surviving R. Kelly" be disqualified from service.

"Any potential juror who has watched any portion of this docuseries must be disqualified for cause," the motion said. Judge Harry Leinenweber denied the motion and proceeded to jury selection. Kelly's conviction in New York was widely seen as a milestone for the #MeToo movement: It was the first major sex abuse trial where the majority of accusers were Black women. It was also the first time Kelly faced criminal consequences for the abuse he for decades

was rumored to have inflicted on women and children.

His accusers described events that often mirrored one another: Many of the alleged victims said they had met the singer at concerts or mall performances and were then handed slips of paper with Kelly's contact details by members of his entourage. Core to the state's case was Kelly's relationship with the late singer Aaliyah, which began when she was around 13 years old. Kelly wrote and produced her first album—"Age Ain't Nothin' But A Number"—before illegally marrying her when she was just 15 because he feared he had impregnated her. Kelly also faces prosecution in two other state jurisdictions. — AFP



In this file photo a customer carries a Ted Baker-branded shopping bag after leaving a store in London.



In this file photo singer R. Kelly leaves the Leighton Criminal Court Building after a hearing on sexual abuse charges in Chicago. — AFP

Sports

Murray downs Wawrinka in Cincinnati battle of veterans

Berrettini loses his second straight match

CINCINNATI: Andy Murray won his first hardcourt match of the summer on Monday, defeating Stan Wawrinka 7-6 (7/3), 5-7, 7-5 in the opening round of the ATP/WTA Cincinnati Masters. The 35-year-old Scot was facing his 37-year-old Swiss rival for the 22nd time with both treble Grand Slam champions still coming back to full form after long-term injuries over the past few seasons. Murray lost in the first round at Washington and last week in Montreal while Wawrinka's last win came on grass two months ago at Queen's Club, London; he has not won on cement since the Australian Open last year.

Murray needed four match points to advance at a tournament he has won twice, in 2008 and 2011. The veteran was competing here for the 17th time. "We're not young anymore," Murray said. "Both of us gave our best right until the end. Matches like this are a lot tougher than when we were in our mid-20s. Both of us love this sport, we've had our issues with injuries the last few years. The sport has been a huge part of my life, I started playing when I was four." Compatriot Cameron Norrie joined Murray in the second round with his 7-6 (7/5), 4-6, 6-4 defeat of Dane Holger Rune.

The Scot began to well up as he described his love for the game. "When I was out injured and not sure if I would be able to come back, I remembered the reasons why you play the game," Murray said. "It's taken a lot of effort and struggles to get back (after two hip surgeries) and play at this level again. I want to make the most of it while I'm still able to." Murray claimed the opening set in the tiebreaker as he faced his long-time rival.

Rybakina off the mark

The Scot went down a break in the second set but got it back before finding himself at a set apiece after being broken in the final game. The third set featured another pair of early service breaks; but Murray brought an end to hostilities with a break



OHIO: Andy Murray of Great Britain plays a backhand during his match against Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland during the Western & Southern Open at the Lindner Family Tennis Center on August 15, 2022 in Mason, Ohio. — AFP

for 6-5 followed by a labored concluding hold of serve.

In the closing stages, Murray loudly chastised himself as his grip on the set threatened to slip away against the Swiss whose best showing here was a semi-final a decade ago. The contest was punctuated repeatedly by visits from the trainer for both men. Other winners on opening day included 2016 champion Marin Cilic, who defeated Spain's Jaume Munar 6-3, 6-3, and American John Isner, the 2013 finalist against Rafael Nadal, who advanced past France's Benjamin Bonzi 7-6 (13/11), 3-6, 7-6 (7/4).

Italy's 12th seeded Matteo Berrettini, the 2021 Wimbledon finalist, lost his second straight match as his return to hardcourt stalls. The 2021 Wimbledon finalist was beaten by Frances Tiafoe 7-6 (7/3), 4-6,

7-6 (7/5). In the WTA draw, Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina defeated Egyptian Mayar Sherif 6-3, 6-2. The world number 25 set up a second-round clash with eighth seed Garbine Muguruza, title-winner here in 2017.

The 23-year-old Kazakh lifted her game in the second set to end with five aces and 13 winners against Sharif. "I was slow at the beginning but I got my rhythm and served well," Rybakina said. "But my serve always helps me." The newest Grand Slam champion said she is trying to look ahead in her career as she adjusts to her status. "Wimbledon gave me confidence but now I'm focusing on my other tournaments and trying not to think of the past," she said. American Amanda Anisimova beat ninth seed Daria Kasatkina 6-4, 6-4. — AFP



FREIBURG: Dortmund's English forward Jamie Bynoe-Gittens (left) and Dortmund's German forward Youssoufa Moukoko celebrate during the German first division Bundesliga football match between SC Freiburg and Borussia Dortmund in Freiburg im Breisgau. — AFP

'Very special': Bynoe-Gittens extends deal

BERLIN: Borussia Dortmund forward Jamie Bynoe-Gittens has extended his deal until 2025, the Bundesliga club said on Tuesday. The announcement bookends an eventful week for Bynoe-Gittens, who scored a goal and set up the winner in Friday's 3-1 victory over Freiburg shortly after celebrating his 18th birthday. After the win, Dortmund coach Edin Terzic hailed the English teenager as a "game changer" and "a player who can make the difference for us." Terzic subbed Bynoe-Gittens on late in the game with his side trailing 1-0.

London-born Bynoe-Gittens, who has represented England at junior level, has drawn parallels with former Dortmund winger Jason Sancho. Like Sancho, who moved to Manchester United in 2021 for 85 million euros (\$86.1 million), Bynoe-Gittens came through the

Manchester City academy and moved to Dortmund at the age of 17. Dortmund Sporting Director Sebastian Kehl said on Tuesday the sky is the limit for the "very special" Bynoe-Gittens.

"Jamie has always been characterized by speed and creativity, with his unpredictability in one-on-ones he gives our squad a very special element even at a young age. It's fun to watch him work on himself and his game. We are far from seeing the end of this development, we will give him the necessary time for it," Kehl added. Bynoe-Gittens thanked the club for their support through challenging moments which "meant a lot to me" and said he was never in doubt that he would re-sign.

"It was always my goal to continue my path at Dortmund after getting COVID and a few injuries at the beginning." "Now I can't wait to keep working hard on myself and my game to hopefully continue to help the team in the months and years to come." After Friday's win, fellow English teenager Jude Bellingham, 19, marked himself as an elder statesman at the club, thanking "sons" Bynoe-Gittens and Youssoufa Youkoko, 17, for keeping Dortmund's unbeaten record intact in 2022-23. — AFP

Nadal missing from Davis Cup squad

PARIS: Rafael Nadal will sit out the group stage of the Davis Cup finals next month after not being named in the Spain team on Monday, while Novak Djokovic is set to lead group rivals Serbia. The 36-year-old Nadal won the Australian Open and French Open titles earlier this year to take his men's record tally of Grand Slam singles triumphs to 22. But he was forced to withdraw from Wimbledon with an abdominal injury before his scheduled semi-final against Nick Kyrgios.

Nadal is making his return this week at the Cincinnati Masters as he prepares for the US Open, but will not make a first Davis Cup appearance since winning the tournament for the fifth time with Spain in 2019. Spain will instead be looking to teenage sensation Carlos Alcaraz for inspiration. Sergi Bruguera's team will face Serbia, Canada and South Korea in Group B which is being staged in Valencia from September 13-18.

The 16-team event could mark the return to action for Djokovic, who has not played since winning a seventh Wimbledon title and 21st Grand Slam last month. The Serb missed last week's Montreal Masters over his refusal to be vaccinated against Covid-19, and has pulled out of the US Open tune-up in Cincinnati for the same reason. However, he still remains hopeful of competing in the year's final major at Flushing Meadows. Alexander Zverev will head up the Germany team as the world number two fights to be fit for the US Open starting August 29.

Zverev underwent surgery after suffering torn ankle ligaments at the French Open. He will feature on home soil in Group C matches against France, Belgium and Australia in Hamburg. Australia will be without the in-form Kyrgios, whose nine-match winning run ended in the Montreal quarter-finals. — AFP



Spain's Rafael Nadal

News in brief

Afghanistan recalls Shinwari

KABUL: All-rounder Samiullah Shinwari was on Tuesday recalled after a two-year absence from Afghanistan's cricket team, as the country announced its 17-man squad for the Asia Cup kicking off in the United Arab Emirates later this month. The 34-year-old all-rounder played the last of his 64 Twenty20 internationals in 2020 but regained his place after good performances in Afghanistan's domestic cricket league. Mohammad Nabi will lead the side in Afghanistan's third representation at the Asia Cup, which was first held in 1984. The Asia Cup will be played in the game's shortest format in order to let subcontinental teams get in tune for the Twenty20 World Cup to be held in Australia later this year. Afghanistan are in Group B, alongside Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Defending champions India and Pakistan will be joined by a qualifying team in Group A.

Racist chanting probed

ROME: The Italian football league has launched an enquiry after Napoli striker Victor Osimhen suffered racist abuse from the stands during a Serie A match at Verona on Monday. The league's disciplinary commission fined Verona 12,000 euros (\$12,200) for insulting chants directed at the Napoli supporters. Now they wish to know exactly which part of the stadium and which section of fans were involved in the racist chants. An AFP reporter at the game heard a section of the home support launch monkey chants at Osimhen, the latest episode of racist chanting at Verona who have a long history of far-right sympathies among their hardcore support. Nigerian forward Osimhen was among the scorers in a thumping 5-2 win for Napoli. Last season Verona were ordered to close a section of their stadium for one match after racist chants from a section of their supporters.

Di Maria sidelined

ROME: Argentina winger Angel Di Maria faces a spell on the sidelines after picking up a thigh injury on his Juventus debut, the Serie A club said on Tuesday. Di Maria scored the opening goal in Monday's 3-0 win over Sassuolo in his first game for his new club after his move from Paris Saint-Germain. The 34-year-old also set up Dusan Vlahovic for the second of his two goals but was substituted midway through the second half. Juventus said scans showed Di Maria had suffered a "low-grade lesion" to his left thigh, adding that the injury would be re-evaluated in 10 days. He will miss at least the next two league games against Sampdoria and Roma. Juventus were already without Paul Pogba, who hurt his knee on a pre-season trip to the US after rejoining the Turin club following six years with Manchester United. The France midfielder is undergoing a course of "conservative therapy" and could return in mid-September. — From AFP



Sergio Gomez

City sign Gomez

LONDON: Manchester City on Tuesday confirmed the signing of Spanish left-back Sergio Gomez from Anderlecht on a four-year deal for a reported fee of £11 million (\$13 million). The Under-21 international becomes the Premier League champions' fourth signing of the transfer window following the arrivals of Erling Haaland, Kalvin Phillips and Stefan Ortega Moreno.

"City are the best team in England and in Pep Guardiola I have a chance to learn and develop under the most outstanding manager in world football," said the 21-year-old, who was previously a Barcelona youth player. "To be able to be part of this club is a dream come true for me and something any young player would aspire to." City's director of football Txiki Begiristain said Gomez was an "exciting young talent". "We're sure that he will bring additional quality to our squad both in defence and going forward and that he will only continue to develop and improve playing under Pep and his coaches," he said. Guardiola last week confirmed the impending arrival of Gomez, dismissing the suggestion he would be sent out on loan this season. — AFP

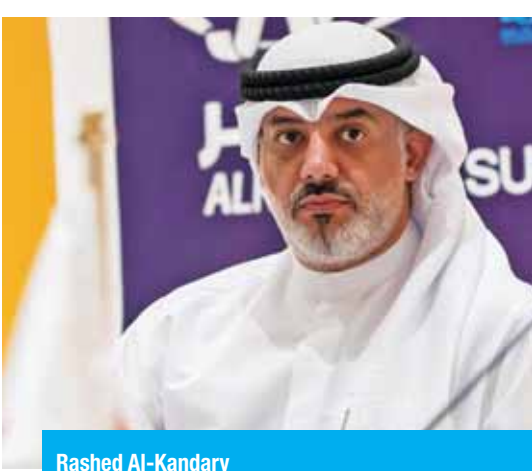
Kuwait to host World Triathlon

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The World Triathlon accepted Kuwait Triathlon Club and Association's request to host the World Triathlon under-23 Club as well as a development camp. The World Triathlon gave the opportunity to organize this event as the local club succeeded in organizing many continental and international events. This will improve Kuwait's ranking at

the World Triathlon. Chairman of Kuwait Club and Association Rashed Al-Kandary commended the approval to organize the Under-23 Cup Championship and the development camp. 25 countries will be represented by 300 athletes of both genders. Registration is open for all interested participants.

He said the race will be a sprint for all groups. The first day will start with the triathlon at the Marina Beach. Al-Kandary said the secondary stage will be the Aquathlon for the youngsters. On the third day, there will be an officiating course under the supervision of World Triathlon. The fourth day event will be concluded at the Marina beach. The organization of this event indicates the World Triathlon's confidence in Kuwait. Kuwait has all facilities needed for such a major championship.



Rashed Al-Kandary

Sports

South Africa keen to wreck England's 'Bazball' party

Proteas seek to inflict England's first Test defeat

LONDON: South Africa captain Dean Elgar says he does not fear "Bazball" as the Proteas seek to inflict England's first Test defeat of their swashbuckling new era under the leadership of Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum. After a dismal run of just one victory in 17 Tests, England have won four from four under new skipper Stokes and coach McCullum heading into their series opener against South Africa at Lord's on Wednesday. That includes a 3-0 series win over world champions New Zealand, with England hunting down challenging targets on each occasion.

Stokes's men then made light of a seemingly stiff target of 378 in the COVID-delayed fifth Test against India at Edgbaston, romping to victory by seven wickets. "Bazball" - a reference to McCullum's nickname - has revitalized England's red-ball fortunes at a time of renewed debate about the future of the five-day game. But there are questions over whether the ultra-aggressive approach can work in all circumstances, particularly against a strong South Africa pace attack.

"I've got absolutely no interest in the style that they've played," Elgar told the Guardian. "I think it can go one of two ways for them and it can go south very quickly... I'd like to see them do it against our seamers." But England bowling great James Anderson, speaking at Lord's on Monday, is confident that sticking with a positive mindset will prove the right thing for the team. "I don't think it has to come unstuck at all," he said. "We now know we've got the ability to chase anything down and we've

got the ability to take wickets in any conditions.

'Smarter' cricket

"If we keep playing with that entertaining sort of mindset and also be smart with it as well... there may be times when we can't go hell for leather with the bat and maybe we have to soak up a bit of pressure at times and just be smart about when we put pressure back on the opposition. "I think that's the biggest learning from the last four Tests we've played, that we can be smarter at times."

Both teams appear to be stronger in bowling rather than batting although, with resilient opener Elgar leading from the front, the Proteas have won seven out of nine Tests under his captaincy, while the form of Keegan Petersen has helped compensate for the red-ball retirement of gifted shotmaker Quinton de Kock.

England will hope in-form batsmen Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow maintain their eye-catching form of earlier in the season. South Africa spearhead bowler Kagiso Rabada is doubtful for the first game of the three-Test series with an ankle injury. "I'm hoping that he pulls through," said Proteas coach Mark Boucher. "Rabada is a massive player for us as we all know so for him to be part of the final XI would be very special for us."

Boucher said his men were relishing their chance to write their names into Lord's folklore. "Just watching the players' reaction walking into Lord's, there's a lot of passion and emotions are running high in a good way," he said. "They want to be a



LONDON: South Africa's captain Dean Elgar takes part in a practice session at Lord's cricket ground in London on August 15, 2022 ahead of South Africa's first Test against England. —AFP

part of hopefully creating something special and become a legend in the game like a lot of cricketers in the past have been." England's Anderson, the country's all-time leading Test wicket-taker, is also raring to go despite his veteran status. "I've been itching to get back in the dressing room to be honest," said the 40-year-old, who has played 172 Tests

since making his debut in 2003. "Those four Tests (against New Zealand and India) were incredible. Obviously what we did on the field was great, but the energy in the dressing room was brilliant. "I felt as happy as I have done in an England dressing room for a number of years so the last five weeks I've just been itching to get back in there." — AFP



BERLIN: In this file photo, Dutch cyclist Tom Dumoulin poses for photographers during the 2019 Sunweb cycling team's official presentation. Former Giro d'Italia winner and two-time Olympic silver medalist Tom Dumoulin said on August 15, 2022 that he will retire 'with immediate effect' from professional cycling. — AFP

'Tank is empty': Cycling star Dumoulin retires

THE HAGUE: Former Giro d'Italia winner and two-time Olympic silver medalist Tom Dumoulin announced his immediate retirement from cycling on Monday, saying that his "tank was empty". The 31-year-old Dutchman had previously said back in June that he would quit at the end of the 2022 season, after competing in the World Championships in Australia in September.

"I decided to quit professional cycling with immediate effect," Dumoulin said in a statement on Twitter. Dumoulin said that his "wishlist" had involved ending his career "with a bang" at the World Championships. "But I notice I can't do it anymore. The tank is empty, the legs feel heavy and the training sessions are not working out as I hoped," he said.

He added that "since my hard crash in training last September, something has broken again". "Even though the farewell didn't turn out the way I hoped,

I look back on my career with incredible pride," said Dumoulin, who cycled with the Jumbo-Visma team. Known as a proficient time-trialist and mountain climber, Dumoulin in May dropped out of the Giro - Italy's most iconic race - saying then he felt "empty and finished."

The Maastricht-born cyclist then said in June that he had decided 2022 would be his last season as a professional cyclist. Since starting to compete professionally in 2010, Dumoulin put together a string of successes including winning the Giro d'Italia in 2017 - an achievement for which he received a knighthood in the Netherlands. That same year Dumoulin also won gold in the UCI Road World Championships men's time trial and team time trial in Bergen.

The year before he won a silver medal in the individual time trial at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. One of his best performances came in 2018, when he finished runner-up to Geraint Thomas in the Tour de France two months after finishing second in the Giro. But the rider suffered a disastrous crash in the fourth stage of the 2019 Giro and eventually finished it four minutes in arrears of many of the other favorites. He said despite coming back from a burnout to win Olympic silver in July 2021 his body felt "tired". — AFP

stalemate because the England team had to leave to catch the boat home. England's fourth innings total of 654-5 remains a record for a first-class match and the "timeless" Test is the longest ever played.

1968: The D'Oliveira Affair

Basil D'Oliveira, classified as a "Cape Coloured", was unable to play cricket in his native South Africa due to the system of apartheid in the country. The batsman instead came to Britain and eventually forced his way into the England side. Despite his superb 158 against Australia at the Oval in the final Test of the 1968 Ashes, D'Oliveira was dramatically omitted from the England squad for the subsequent tour of South Africa, sparking a huge furore.

Yet when Tom Cartwright, a bowler, withdrew from the squad through injury, he was replaced by D'Oliveira, a batting all-rounder. John Vorster, South Africa's then prime minister, responded to D'Oliveira's inclusion by threatening to refuse him entry into the country, saying: "The MCC (England) team is not the team of the MCC but of the anti-apartheid movement." The MCC called off the tour because of attempts to influence the selection of the squad, sparking South Africa's isolation from international cricket that lasted for more than two decades. —AFP

England v S Africa: Three landmarks in long rivalry

LONDON: England play South Africa in the first Test of a three-match series at Lord's from Wednesday, pitting their wits against the Proteas after a stunning start to life under new captain Ben Stokes. The hosts have won all four Tests so far on home soil this season but the visitors have an impressive recent record, including a series win against India. AFP Sport looks back at three headline-grabbing incidents in a rivalry stretching back to 1889.

1939: The 'timeless' Test

Test matches were not always limited to today's standard maximum of five days-sometimes they were played to a finish, however long it took. But the last "timeless" Test took place between South Africa and England in Durban in 1939. The match was eventually declared a draw after nine days' play spread across 12 days in all. The game ended in a

Popovici clocks third fastest 200m freestyle

ROME: Romanian teenager David Popovici swam the third quickest time in history to claim the men's 200m freestyle gold at the European Championships on Monday in Rome. Popovici, who only turns 18 next month, cruised to victory in 1min 42.97sec with Switzerland's Antonio Djakovic in second place and Austria's Felix Auboeck third, both over two seconds behind.

Germany's Paul Biedermann has held the world record of 1min 42sec since 2009, which he set in the Italian capital. On Saturday, Popovici claimed the world record in the 100m freestyle after taking double gold at the World Championships in June. "It was a hard race to swim and I think my time is well-earned. This is an excellent time," Popovici said. "Finally, I could go under 1:43, which is great. The immediate plans are to relax a bit tomorrow and then test the waters in the 400m."

Popovici will swim in the preliminary heats of the 400m on Wednesday. France won the mixed 4x100m freestyle relay in 3min 22.80sec with Britain in second and Sweden in third. "After the little disappointment in the 200m events it was a great pleasure to win this medal," Maxime Grousset said after France earned bronze in the men's 4x200m and the women finished sixth. "We have a great team and we are really satisfied."

Italy were fourth despite leading at the halfway mark but there was reason to celebrate for the crowd. Home favorite Simona Quadarella added to her 800m freestyle gold by clinching the women's 1500m in 15min 54.15sec. Hungary's Viktoria



ROME: Romania's David Popovici competes in the Men's 200m freestyle final event on August 15, 2022 during the LEN European Aquatics Championships in Rome. —AFP

Mihalyvari-Farkas took second and Quadarella's compatriot Martina Rita Caramignoli came third. Sweden's Louise Hansson won the women's 100m butterfly final in 56.66sec, beating France's Marie Wattel and Bosnia and Herzegovina's Lana Pudar.

"It was a huge race, everything went as we had planned," the 25-year-old Hansson said. "This is my first individual gold, so I'm really happy to go home with this gold in my bag as I think the whole country will be proud of me." In the 200m women's breaststroke final, Switzerland's Lisa Mamie took gold ahead of Italy's Martina Carraro and Lithuania's Kotryna Teterkevova, who had led until the final 50m. Greece's Apostolos Christou pipped Italy's Thomas Ceccon by 0.04sec to take the men's 50m backstroke title, with Germany's Ole Braunschweig collecting bronze. —AFP

Turkey's Can wins second European 10,000 meters title

MUNICH: Turkey's Kenyan-born Yasemin Can won her second European 10,000m title in Munich on Monday as a trio of world-class heavyweights guaranteed their spots in respective finals. Fresh from sealing the Commonwealth title, Britain's Eilish McColgan forced the pace in the 25-lap race, but Can hit the front with just under 3km to go.

Can, who previously won the 10,000m title in Amsterdam in 2016, was merciless as she turned the screw at Munich's Olympic Stadium, clocking a winning time of 30min 32.57sec. McColgan claimed silver more than 8sec behind while a second Kenyan-born athlete, Israel's defending champion and world marathon bronze medalist Lonah Chemtai Salpeter, took bronze.

In the first field medal of the Euros, world bronze medalist Jessica Schilder of the Netherlands won the women's shot put with a best of 20.24m on the second of her six attempts. Portugal's Auriol Dongmo took silver with a national record of 19.82m, Schilder's teammate Jorinde Van Klinken claiming bronze (18.94). That was closely followed by Croatia's Filip Mihaljevic claiming victory in the men's shot with a best of 21.53m, Serbia's Armin Sinancevic taking silver with 21.39m and Czech Tomas Stanek bronze (21.24).

Test is good

Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen kept his bid for a repeat double gold on course after winning his 1,500m heat in 3:38.48. The Norwegian was one of the stars of the Berlin Euros in 2018 when he went home with golds in both the 1,500m and 5,000m. It will be a quick turnaround for Ingebrigtsen, who had to settle for silver behind surprise British winner Jake Wightman in the 1,500m at the world champs. The 5,000m final is scheduled for 1908 GMT on Tuesday, with the 1500m final to be held



MUNICH: Turkey's Yasemin Can reacts after the women's 10,000m final during the European Athletics Championships at the Olympic Stadium in Munich on August 15, 2022. —AFP

on Thursday. "Today was a first test for me and the test result is: very good," Ingebrigtsen said. "The Olympic stadium is a beautiful arena and the track is really good and fast."

Croatia's Sandra Perkovic, bidding for a record sixth continental title, also qualified for the final of the women's discus throw. "The European championships are always very special to me because my first major medal was a European gold medal in Barcelona in 2010," said the two-time Olympic and world champion. "I am proud to be the number one in Europe and to represent Europe around the world. They all know who the discus girl is, and I think I want to stay in this position for a long time."

Cuban-born Portuguese triple jumper Pedro Pichardo, the reigning world and Olympic champion, also sailed through qualifying for Wednesday's final with a best of 17.36m. "I know I am in very good shape, and my only goal today was to get the big Q to the final - it was easy and relaxed," Pichardo said. —AFP

Sports

FIFA suspends Indian football federation due to 'influence'

India will not host under-17 Women's World Cup in October

NEW DELHI: FIFA has suspended the Indian football federation meaning that the country will not currently be able to host the under-17 Women's World Cup in October. Football's world governing body said its council unanimously decided to suspend the All India Football Federation "due to undue influence from third parties, which constitutes a serious violation of the FIFA statutes". Federations must be free from legal and political interference, according to FIFA rules. The AIFF is in disarray and being run by administrators after former chief Praful Patel stayed in office beyond his term without fresh elections, which courts ruled invalid.

Fresh elections are to be held on August 28 and the poll process began last week after India's Supreme Court approved a timeline prepared by the administrators. India is due to host the U-17 tournament on October 11-30 but FIFA said on Monday that because of the suspension it "cannot currently be held in India as planned". FIFA said that it was "in constant constructive contact with the Ministry of Youth

Affairs and Sports in India and is hopeful that a positive outcome to the case may still be achieved".

Indian men's and women's national teams also cannot play junior or senior international games during the suspension. Former men's captain Bhaichung Bhutia called the suspension "very harsh". "At the same time I think it's a great opportunity to get our system right," he told Indian sports news outlet Sportstar. "And very important that all the stakeholders—the federations, state associations, sport ministry—come together to get the system right and everybody work for the betterment of the sport."

India captain Sunil Chhetri had recently advised his players "not pay too much attention" to the FIFA ban threat as the situation was out of their control. "The suspension will be lifted once an order to set up a committee of administrators to assume the powers of the AIFF Executive Committee has been repealed and the AIFF administration regains full control of the AIFF's daily affairs," FIFA said.— AFP



KOLKATA: In this file photo, FIFA President Gianni Infantino (left) and the president of the All Indian Football Federation (AIFF) Praful Patel gesture at a press conference following the FIFA Council meeting in Kolkata. — AFP

Springboks name uncapped Moodie for Australia Tests

JOHANNESBURG: Uncapped utility back Canan Moodie was included in a 34-man South Africa squad on Monday for two Rugby Championship matches in Australia. The Springboks face the Wallabies in Adelaide on August 27 and the teams meet again in Sydney on September 3. Moodie, a 19-year-old from United Rugby Championship runners-up the Bulls, joined the squad last week as cover after winger Kurt-Lee Arendse was suspended for four matches. He failed to make the matchday squad against New Zealand last Saturday, a match South Africa lost 35-23, but travels to Australia to cover the full-back and wing positions.

"We are excited to see how Canan slots in during the next few weeks and how he adapts to our structures and systems," said coach Jacques Nienaber. Right wing has been a problem position for the Rugby World Cup champions this season with first choice Cheslin Kolbe breaking his jaw against Wales last month. The Toulon speedster has been ruled out until the final match of the Rugby Championship, against Argentina in Durban on September 24.

Arendse replaced Kolbe in the first of two matches against the All Blacks and, after scoring a try in a 26-10 triumph, was sent off late in the Test and banned for four internationals. Jesse Kriel succeeded Arendse for the second clash with New Zealand, but lasted just 10 minutes before being injured and centre Lukhanyo Am moved to the wing. Nienaber has named only two specialist hookers, Malcolm Marx and Joseph Dweba, with an injury ruling out regular first or second choice Bongsi Mbonambi for four weeks.

Versatile Fourie

Nienaber has included flanker-hooker Deon Fourie among 18 forwards, stressing the versatility of the 35-year-old who last month became the oldest player to win a first Springbok cap. "Deon has been practising his lineout throws, so we are confident he will be able to fill any void that may arise in Australia," said the coach.

Scrum-half Cobus Reinach has been recalled after missing the first five matches of the season through injury. "The last time we beat the Wallabies in Australia was in 2013, so we have a big mountain to climb," said Nienaber. "We have looked at our last game against New Zealand and we know what areas we need to improve on, and we will work hard to iron out those aspects. "We know that we have to be at our best to fight back in the next four matches of the competition and remain in contention to win it." — AFP

Morata double fires Atletico to opening win at Getafe

MADRID: Alvaro Morata struck twice to secure Atletico Madrid a 3-0 victory at Getafe in their opening game of the La Liga season on Monday. Morata, who has returned to Atletico after two years on loan with Juventus, scored a goal in each half before Antoine Griezmann wrapped up the points. Joao Felix played a key role by setting up all three goals, the first of which Morata swept home from the edge of the box on 15 minutes.

Borja Mayoral grazed the crossbar for Getafe late in the first half, but Morata eased Atletico nerves with a clinical finish on the hour following an error by Stefan Mitrovic. Felix then threaded the ball through for Griezmann, who cut inside and drove low into the corner to ensure Atletico made a winning start following the departure of Luis Suarez.

The Uruguayan rejoined his boyhood club Nacional on a short-term deal in July after his contract expired at Atletico. Athletic Bilbao drew 0-0 at home to Mallorca, while Real Betis defeated 10-man Elche 3-0 to complete the opening round of fixtures in Spain.

Real beat Almeria

David Alaba scored with a stunning free-kick immediately after coming on as a substitute as reigning champions Real Madrid came from behind to beat Almeria 2-1 in their opening game of the season in La Liga on Sunday. Carlo Ancelotti's side trailed to an early goal by Largie Ramazani away against their promoted opponents, but Lucas Vazquez equalised just after the hour mark.

The winner arrived with 15 minutes remaining at



GETAFE: Getafe's Togolese defender Djene Dakonam (left) challenges Atletico Madrid's Spanish midfielder Alvaro Morata during the Spanish league football match between Getafe CF and Club Atletico de Madrid at the Alfonso Perez Coliseum stadium in Getafe on August 15, 2022. — AFP

Almeria's Power Horse Stadium, as Alaba strode onto the pitch and curled a free-kick in off the upright after Luka Modric had been fouled just outside the box. Real were made to work hard for the points against an Almeria side who won last season's second-tier title to return to La Liga after a seven-year absence. "We had lots of shots on goal but once we got the first goal it made things much easier for us," said Ancelotti.

"I am happy with the way the game went. We were not spectacular but there were lots of things

to take into account, like the game on Wednesday and the heat." At one point it looked like Madrid might suffer a defeat in their opening league game of the season for the first time since 2008, with Ancelotti's decision to rotate his squad not initially paying off. The Italian had made five changes to the line-up that started in Wednesday's 2-0 win over Eintracht Frankfurt in the UEFA Super Cup in Helsinki, when goals by Alaba and Karim Benzema gave the defending European champions the first silverware of the campaign. — AFP

International efforts needed to understand sport's dementia risk

LONDON: Coordinated international research is vital to boost understanding of the link between brain injuries in people playing sport and the development of dementia, a report said on Tuesday. It comes after a group of former rugby players decided to sue governing bodies World Rugby, the Rugby Football Union and the Welsh Rugby Union for allegedly failing to protect them from permanent injury.

The claimants include ex-Wales captain Ryan Jones and England's 2003 World Cup-winning hooker Steve Thompson, with many of the ex-players diagnosed with early-onset dementia and other irreversible neurological impairments. Multiple studies have shown a link between brain injuries and an increased risk of developing neurodegenerative disease, and that ex-professional athletes are at an increased risk of developing such conditions.

Previous research from Glasgow consultant neuropathologist Willie Stewart showed ex-professional footballers were 3.5 times more likely to die from neurodegenerative diseases than the general population. The new report from Alzheimer's Research UK and the Health Policy Partnership says there is a need for an international consortium of researchers and funding bodies to better understand the connection.

"There are many limits to existing research that make it difficult to compare data and draw overarching conclusions," states the report titled "Dementia and sport: research priorities for the future". "Studies are often not comparable, with different methodologies and definitions used for key measures. Methods of assessment and the duration of follow-ups also vary considerably.

"An international research consortium could help to coordinate research efforts and ensure consistent methodologies and definitions across different studies." The report also recommended setting up longer-term studies and to widen the focus of studies beyond elite male athletes to cover the risk factors to other groups including children, adolescents and women. Alzheimer's Research UK will invest

Football and dementia

Pro footballers have an increased chance of developing a brain disease that can lead to dementia

Collisions can also cause concussions

2,000 headers by an average pro in 20 years of play

The study

- ▶ 14 ex-footballers (13 professionals)
- ▶ All suffering from dementia
- ▶ Treated in Wales (1980 - 2010)
- ▶ Known for their heading ability
- ▶ Signs of CTE in 4 of the 6 brains examined

CTE: Chronic traumatic encephalopathy

- Brain disease caused by repeated blows to the head
- Already observed among boxers and American football players

Tau protein* aggregates in a brain with CTE

- "Potential link" between playing football and CTE

- "Extremely low" risk for casual players

© AFP Sources: UCL, Acta Neuropathologica Photo: AFP/A-C Poujulat *Implicated in neurodegenerative diseases

£500,000 (\$600,000) to develop the research priorities identified in the report.

TV presenter Hayley McQueen, whose father Gordon, a former Scotland and Manchester United defender, is living with vascular dementia, wel-

comed the report. "Witnessing first-hand the devastation that dementia poses to individuals, their families, and friends, it's about time people got around the table, and worked toward greater understanding so we can act with certainty," she said. "It is also

important that children, teenagers, other genders and people playing grassroots sports are included in research, as scientists have shown they display different risk, injury and recovery patterns to adult, male athletes." —AFP



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's English midfielder James Milner (right) tells Liverpool's Uruguayan striker Darwin Nunez to leave the field after he was sent off by the referee following a foul he committed during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Crystal Palace at Anfield stadium on August 15, 2022. — AFP

Nunez red card costs Liverpool more ground in Palace draw

Uruguayan sent off for headbutting Andersen on Anfield debut

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool fought back with 10 men to prevent a first Premier League defeat in front of fans at Anfield since 2017 as Darwin Nunez was sent off during a 1-1 draw with Crystal Palace on Monday. Luis Diaz's sensational strike salvaged a point for the Reds after Wilfried Zaha opened the scoring for Palace in the first half. Just two games into the season, Liverpool trail leaders Manchester City by four points with their new 75-million-euro (£63 million, \$77 million) striker largely to blame.

Nunez had scored in his first two appearances against City in the Community Shield and in rescuing a point as a substitute in a 2-2 draw away at Fulham last weekend. But the Uruguayan's headbutt on Joachim Andersen just before the hour mark left his side with an uphill challenge in the match and increasing ground to make up already in the title race. "He knows that now himself," said Jurgen Klopp when asked if Nunez had let his teammates down. "Of course it was a red card. He was provoked but that is not how he should behave."

Liverpool partly dug themselves out of a hole thanks to Diaz's brilliant equalizer and Klopp said he

was bursting with pride at how the 10 men reacted after a difficult week caused by an early-season injury crisis. Roberto Firmino, Thiago Alcantara, Diogo Jota, Joel Matip and Ibrahima Konate were all sidelined, while Joe Gomez was only fit enough for an appearance off the bench. Nat Phillips was forced to make his first Premier League appearance since the final day of the 2020/21 season at centre-back, while Klopp had no options to refresh his attack late in the game.

'Witch in the building'

"The real feeling I have at the moment is pride," added Klopp. "With the week's preparation we had it was unbelievable. It was like a witch was in the building, every time someone else had a problem." Klopp had lambasted his side for a slow start that cost them two points at newly-promoted Fulham on the opening weekend of the season.

This time Liverpool came flying out the traps, but failed to turn their early dominance into goals. James Milner, Nunez and Mohamed Salah were all guilty of failing to hit the target with big chances, while Harvey Elliott's goalbound shot was blocked by Andersen.

Palace had barely been in the opposition's half for the first half-hour, but Patrick Vieira's gameplan worked to perfection for the opening goal.

Eberechi Eze wriggled free from the Liverpool press to play the perfect ball in behind for Zaha to break the offside trap and curl beyond Alisson Becker into the far corner. Liverpool should still have been level before half-time as Nunez mishit a glorious chance and the ball floated back off the post. His nightmare home debut was complete on 57 minutes when he lashed out at Andersen with a headbutt that will also see him miss upcoming games against Manchester United, Bournemouth and Newcastle.

Despite their numerical disadvantage, Liverpool refused to let their proud home unbeaten record either side of the behind-closed-doors era of coronavirus restrictions go. Diaz led the fightback with a terrific individual run and arrowed finish into the far corner to level on 61 minutes. The red card did not deter Palace from their plan to sit deep and counter-attack, and it nearly worked. Zaha should have won the game when he hit the post with the goal gaping from Cheick Doucoure's cross 12 minutes from time. — AFP



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's Italian head coach Antonio Conte gestures on the touchline during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur at Stamford Bridge. — AFP

Tuchel and Conte charged after Battle of the Bridge

LONDON: Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel and Tottenham boss Antonio Conte have been charged with improper conduct after their explosive clashes in Sunday's stormy 2-2 draw. Tuchel and Conte were embroiled in two angry exchanges as tempers flared in the Premier League showdown at Stamford Bridge. Both managers were booked for the first bust-up, which was sparked after Conte celebrated Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg's equalizer close to Tuchel's technical area.

Tuchel and Conte clashed again when an aggressive handshake between the pair, who were both shown red cards, sparked further ugly scenes involving players and coaching staff from the London rivals. "Thomas Tuchel and Antonio Conte have both been charged with a breach of FA Rule E3, following the Premier League fixture between Chelsea FC and Tottenham Hotspur FC on Sunday 14 August 2022," an FA statement said on Monday.

"It is alleged that the behavior of both managers was improper following the end of the fixture. Thomas Tuchel and Antonio Conte have until Thursday 18 August 2022 to provide their respective responses." Tuchel could also face further charges from the FA, who are probing his post-match comments about referee Anthony Taylor. Tuchel said "maybe it would be better" for Taylor not to referee Chelsea again, with the German incensed about both of Tottenham's goals. — AFP

Juventus thrash Sassuolo; Osimhen racially abused

MILAN: Dusan Vlahovic fired Juventus to a comfortable 3-0 win over Sassuolo with a brace in Monday's Serie A opener while Victor Osimhen was racially abused by Verona fans in a thumping 5-2 win for Napoli. Serbia forward Vlahovic put Juve two ahead just before the break from the penalty spot after being fouled by Gian Marco Ferrari, and ended the match as a contest following a smart Angel Di Maria pass six minutes after the restart. Argentina winger Di Maria had set Juve on the road for a low-key win with his first Serie A goal, a mis-cued volley in the 26th minute of his debut after arriving as a free agent this summer.

"It's really a great feeling and a pleasure to play with such a great player," said Vlahovic of Di Maria, who was substituted with a thigh injury midway through the second half. "I should thank him for the assist he gave me. I'm very happy and hope to be on the end of others. I think we can work well together." Massimiliano Allegri's side were missing returning hero Paul Pogba, out with a knee injury until next month, and injured starting goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny.

However Allegri gave Filip Kostic his Juve debut off the bench, a new face who along with the excellent Di Maria could rejuvenate a sluggish team who came up against the weak resistance at the Allianz Stadium. Juve are also interested in Leandro Paredes and Memphis Depay as they try to make a proper title bid after finishing 16 points behind



VERONA: Napoli's Nigerian forward Victor Osimhen (right) scores a goal during the Italian Serie A football match between Hellas Verona and Napoli on August 15, 2022. — AFP

champions AC Milan last season.

Sassuolo, whose key players such as Giacomo Raspadori and Domenico Berardi are transfer targets for bigger clubs, have already suffered the ignominy of being knocked out of the Italian Cup by local rivals Modena this season and they didn't perform much better in Turin. Alessio Dionisi's side didn't wake up until they were three goals down and by then Juve were content to sit back and see out the result, a big enough cushion already established that the away side were never going to overturn.

Osimhen responds

Osimhen was among the scorers for Napoli who before kick-off honored their former goalkeeper Claudio Garella, a Serie A title winner in the 1980s with both southern Italy's biggest club and Verona.

An AFP reporter at the game heard a section of the home support launch monkey chants at the Nigeria forward midway through the first half, before he stretched to jab home Giovanni Di Lorenzo's knock-down in stoppage time to put the away side 2-1 ahead at half-time.

It was the latest episode of racist chanting at Verona who have a long history of far-right sympathies among their hardcore support. After netting his first goal of the season, Osimhen took off his protective face mask and mimicked crying into a pitch-side camera, suggesting he had heard abuse before his goal even though he did not speak about it afterwards to DAZN. "I think it's important to start well because we lost some key players, real leaders in the team. And of course it is left to us to step up," said Osimhen. — AFP