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# Nod to voting with civil IDs as constituencies expanded

## Cabinet passes two emergency decrees to fight corruption in elections

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** The Cabinet on Wednesday approved an emergency decree, for the first time requiring voters to use their civil IDs to prove their residential addresses as a way to combat suspected corruption in elections, Minister of Justice Jamal Al-Jalawi announced. In a second decree, the Cabinet added new residential areas to the existing five electoral districts to allow eligible voters in those areas to participate in the polls.

The requirement to use only civil IDs for voters to prove their place of residence is a major change

in Kuwaiti elections, which in the past depended on electoral rolls prepared by the interior ministry and updated every year in February. The use of electoral rolls had allegedly allowed candidates to illegally move voters from one district to another to dramatically boost their chances of winning a seat in the National Assembly.

Such allegations were widely made in the local media and on social media, where the names of the alleged culprits were published without evidence. According to the new method, voters can cast their votes in the Assembly elections only in the constituencies where they live based on the address

stated on the civil ID. The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) will issue new electoral rolls based on the voters' addresses.

This measure will prevent corrupt candidates from moving voters from one constituency to another, depriving them of means to boost their chances to win seats in the Assembly. Two weeks ago, the National Assembly was dissolved by an Amiri decree, which also called for holding snap elections to elect a new parliament. The decree cited continued political disputes between the government and opposition MPs as the cause of dissolving the house.

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## Joint panel says Kuwaitization process very slow

**KUWAIT:** A committee comprising of representatives from the government and private sectors is aiming to rectify the lopsided expat-citizen composition in the private sector. "Kuwaitization in private companies is moving slower than expected. A committee of experts and financial consultants has been formed in order to put forward practical solutions for the needs of the Kuwaiti market. Our aim is a ratio of 70 percent citizens compared to 30 percent expatriates by letting go of workers who are not

Continued on Page 6

## Abbas slams Holocaust by Zionist entity

**JERUSALEM:** Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas compared the Holocaust to the Zionist entity's killings of Palestinians in Berlin. Abbas, standing beside Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Tuesday, was asked if he would apologize on behalf of the Palestinian militants who carried out the 1972 Munich Olympics hostage-taking in which 11 Zionists were killed.

Abbas did not give a direct reply

but instead spoke of the situation faced by Palestinians, accusing the Zionist entity of committing "50 massacres, 50 Holocausts" against Palestinians since 1947. "Our demand is to say: Enough... I don't want more than peace. Please come to peace, come to security, let's build trust between us and you," added the 87-year-old.

Scholz did not immediately challenge Abbas on his Holocaust comments but, following widespread criticism, tweeted on Wednesday that he was "disgusted by the outrageous remarks" made by the Palestinian leader. "For us Germans in particular, any relativization of the singularity of

Continued on Page 6



BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas shake hands after a press conference following talks at the Chancellery on Aug 16, 2022. — AFP

### News in brief

#### IMF sees Saudi growth soaring 7.6%

**RIYADH:** The Saudi economy is expected to grow 7.6 percent this year, up from 3.2 percent in 2021, on the back of soaring oil revenues, the International Monetary Fund said Wednesday. The government's Vision 2030 reform program, designed to reduce the kingdom's dependence on oil, has also given the economy a boost as more Saudis join the workforce, particularly women, the IMF said. — AFP (See Page 8)

#### Turkey vows to back Palestinians

**ANKARA:** Turkey said on Wednesday that its decision to restore diplomatic relations with the Zionist entity after a decade of tensions did not mean that it would abandon its support for Palestinians. Cavusoglu said the decision will allow mostly Muslim, but officially secular Turkey, to lobby for Palestinian interests in Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem. Turkey does not recognize Jerusalem as the Zionist entity's capital and its embassy is located in Tel Aviv. — AFP

#### 15 dead in Morocco bus crash

**RABAT:** A bus crash east of Morocco's economic capital Casablanca left 15 people dead and 37 injured Wednesday, according to an initial toll from local authorities. The bus overturned on a bend of a motorway in Khouribja province in the morning, the authorities said. It was travelling between Casablanca and the rural region of Ait Attab, near the town of Beni Mellal at the foot of the High Atlas mountains. — AFP

#### Musk says Man Utd tweet a joke

**WASHINGTON:** Elon Musk tweeted on Tuesday that "I'm not buying any sports teams", calling a viral post about him purchasing Manchester United a joke. The world's richest man has a habit of posting provocative statements on Twitter for fun and Musk was at it again when he told his more than 103 million followers: "Also, I'm buying Manchester United ur welcome." — AFP



Elon Musk

## Top Trump critic Cheney loses seat

**JACKSON, Wyoming:** Republican rebel Liz Cheney lost her seat in Congress Tuesday to an election conspiracy theorist, but vowed to fight on and do "whatever it takes" to ensure that former president Donald Trump is never returned to power. Once considered Republican royalty, the lawmaker from Wyoming has become a pariah in the party over her membership on the congressional panel investigating the January 6 assault on the US Capitol and Trump's role in fanning the flames.

"I have said since January 6 that I will do whatever it takes to ensure Donald Trump is never again anywhere near the Oval Office, and I mean it," the Wyoming congresswoman said in a concession speech after losing her bid at reelection. Defeat for the 56-year-old daughter of former vice president

Continued on Page 6

## Blaze highlights problem of unsafe Egypt churches

**CAIRO:** An electrical fire that turned a crowded Cairo church into a deathtrap highlights a persistent problem, say Coptic Christians in majority-Muslim Egypt - a struggle to build or renovate their places of worship. The residential-style multistorey building housing the Abu Sifin Church where 41 worshippers died had only one exit and, like most structures in Egypt, lacked smoke detectors and alarms or fire escapes.

Its location in a maze of alleyways in the working-class district of Imbaba was part of the reason firefighters reportedly took more than an hour to arrive, during which dozens died of smoke inhalation. Unable to escape the flames down the narrow stair-

case from the upper floors, some of the about 200 worshippers "threw themselves out of the windows," one witness told AFP.

Christian leaders say policy changes since 2016 have facilitated obtaining building permits - but also that many churches remain located in dangerous makeshift locations unsuitable for large congregations. "As we've seen, these are life and death matters and disproportionately affect churches in poorer areas," historian Amy Fallas, who has studied the issue, told AFP.

Since Sunday's disaster, two more churches have caught fire, both blazes also blamed on "power surges", though they were quickly contained and caused no casualties, according to church and official sources. Copts are the Middle East's largest Christian community but are a minority in Egypt, the Arab world's most populous country, where they account for 10 to 15 percent of the country's 103 million people. Christians have in the past been targeted in deadly attacks by Islamist militants, particularly after the 2013 overthrow of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, with churches, schools and homes burnt down.

### Church fire in Cairo



Map data: OSM

AFP

Such violence has eased, and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, the first to attend Christmas mass every year, was quick to offer his condolences Sunday to Pope Tawadros II, head of the Coptic Orthodox Church. With world attention on the

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## Local

# Kuwait Cabinet holds weekly meeting, announces elections' law-decrees

## Cabinet stands with Saudi Arabia in efforts to maintain security

**KUWAIT:** The Cabinet held on Wednesday its weekly meeting at Seif Palace and announced two law-decrees of necessity concerning the parliamentary elections. After the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil, and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Fares said that the meeting approved an amendment to law 35/1962 concerning the elections, enabling now voters to use their civil ID cards to cast their ballots. Another amendment was for law 42/2006, adding new areas to the first, second, fourth and fifth constituencies, indicated the minister. Anjifa will be added to the first constituency. Shuwaikh Industrial Area, Shuwaikh Health Zone, Nahdha, northwest Sulaibikhat and Jaber Al-Ahmad City were added to second constituency. Meanwhile, West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, South Abdullah Al-Mubarak, Al-Oyoun, Al-Naeem, Al-Naseem, Al-Qasr, Taima and Al-Waha will be added to the fourth constituency. Abu Fatira, Al-Masayel, Abu Alhasani, Sabah Al-Ahmad City and Al-Khairan will be under the fifth constituency. The decrees will be forwarded to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf

Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for approval.

Minister Fares said that the Cabinet moved to discuss recent developments in the region and the world. The Cabinet expressed solidarity with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its efforts to maintain security and peace within its lands. This support came on the background of the recent security operation in Jeddah city to apprehend a wanted individual. The suspect blew himself up during the operation leading to the injury of three officers. The Minister also expressed the State of Kuwait's sorrow over a fire, which erupted in a Church in Egypt, leading to several casualties.

Kuwait offered condolences over those who died in the incident and wished for the swift recovery for those wounded, affirmed Fares. He also noted that the State of Kuwait stood in solidarity with Burkina Faso against the terror attack that occurred in the northern Yatenga province, leaving several dead and injured. The State of Kuwait offered condolences for the families of the victims and wished for the swift recovery for those affected by the heinous attack. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's meeting on Wednesday. — KUNA photo

## Kuwait Prime Minister receives Interior Minister, top officials

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace on Wednesday, the Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister, and Acting Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, accompanied with Undersecretary of the Interior Ministry Lieutenant-General Anwar Abdullatif Al-Barjas, Head of Kuwait's State Security Apparatus Lieutenant-General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and Director General of the General Department of Investigations Major General Fahd Ibrahim Al-Dosari.

His Highness the Prime Minister also received Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic and Operations Affairs Major General Jamal Hatem Al-Sayegh, Assistant Undersecretary for Ports

Security, Major General Mansour Mahmoud Al-Awadi, Assistant Undersecretary for Nationality and Passports Affairs Fawaz Suleiman Al-Mashaan, Assistant Undersecretary for Financial Affairs and Support Services Sheikh Hamoud Mubarak Al-Sabah, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Security Affairs Major General Abdullah Issa Al-Rajeeb, Assistant Undersecretary for Special Security Affairs Major General Abdullah Saffah Al-Mulla, Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Security Affairs Major General Hamed Manahi Al-Mutairi, Assistant Undersecretary for the Office of the Minister of Interior Major General Hamid Ahmad Al-Baloul, and Assistant Undersecretary for Education and Training Affairs Major General Badr Mohammad Al-Baloul. His Highness the Prime Minister expressed his sincere congratulations to the leaders who assumed their new positions, wishing them success. The meeting was attended by the Director of the Office of His Highness the Prime Minister Hamad Badr Al-Amer.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received newly appointed leaders of the National



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister, and Acting Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and senior Interior Ministry officials. — KUNA photos

Guard at Seif Palace on Wednesday. During the reception, they conveyed the greetings and congratulations of His Highness Chief of the National

Guard Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah to Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf on having been chosen as prime minister and forming a new government. — KUNA

## On the occasion of the



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**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah meets Egyptian forces' communication department Brigadier General Hassan Al-Shadhli.

## Army Chief of Staff meets US, Egyptian officials

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah received Lieutenant General Alexis Grynkeiwich, the commander of Air Forces in the US Central Command, along with his delegation. "The meeting discussed the most important military issues that Kuwait and the US have in common, as well as the best ways to develop them," said a statement by the Kuwait Armed Forces Headquarters.

Meanwhile, Lt Gen Khaled Al-Sabah met head of the Egyptian forces' communication department Brigadier General Al-Shadhli on the end of his term and appointment of his replacement Brigadier General Mohammed Rajab. "The lieutenant general expressed his happiness and appreciation to Brigadier General Al-Shadhli for all his efforts during his tenure, and wished success to Brigadier General Mohammed Rajab in his new job, in the



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah meets Lieutenant General Alexis Grynkeiwich, the commander of Air Forces in the US Central Command. — Defense Ministry photos

hope of boosting military cooperation between the two countries," a statement by the KAF headquarters said. Deputy Chief of Staff of KAF Intelligence Brigadier General Najeeb Al-Saqer was also in attendance.

## Kuwait's July trade surplus with Japan jumps 102.3 pct

**TOKYO:** Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan soared 102.3 percent from a year earlier to JPY 101.2 billion (\$754 million) in July, up for the 16th consecutive month, thanks to high export bills, government data showed Wednesday. Kuwait posted black ink with Japan for 14 years and six months, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary report. Kuwait's overall exports to Japan swelled 91.9 percent year-on-year to JPY 121.2 billion (\$902 million) for the 16th straight month of increase. Imports from Japan gained 52.4 percent to JPY 20.0 billion (\$149 million), up for the third month in a row. Middle East's trade surplus with Japan surged 130.2 percent to JPY 1.1 trillion (\$8.0 billion) last month, with Japan-

bound exports from the region jumping 98.0 percent from a year earlier. Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other natural resources, which accounted for 95.6 percent of the region's total export bills to Japan, inflated 100.0 percent. The region's overall imports from Japan grew 20.4 percent on demand for automobiles, machinery and manufactured goods. The world's third-biggest economy logged a global trade deficit of JPY 1.4 trillion (\$10.7 billion) in July for the 12th straight month, as surging energy bills and a weaker yen continued to push up the value of its imports. The deficit hit the highest level for July since the ministry began compiling data in 1979. Exports increased 19.0 percent from the year before, buoyed by sales of cars, mineral fuels and semiconductor production equipment. Imports jumped 47.2 percent on higher energy prices, such as crude oil, coal and LNG. China remained Japan's biggest trade partner, followed by the US. The trade data are measured on a customs-cleared basis before adjustment for seasonal factors. — KUNA



## Local

# Teens in Kuwait speak about social media advantages, disadvantages on their lives

## Social media content set unrealistic expectations for some teens

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** To conceptualize social media's effects is to break down its good and bad sides. Social media offers a unique way for human beings to connect. Kuwait Times spoke with teenagers to learn more about the advantages and disadvantages of social media on youth in the society.

Hatan Fatafta, 16, told Kuwait Times she first experienced social media in 2017 at a very young age. "I was 11 when I first downloaded social media apps. Social media platforms were not as popular as they are now. I was amazed at how the technology was developing so quickly. It had a positive effect, where the youth started to meet new people from around the globe, get jobs, trade on the stock market and make extra money, use walking apps to lose weight, and even students had access to online information that helped them in their homework," she said.

But all social media applications were not as useful, according to Hatan. "TikTok is one of the worst apps - there are hugely inappropriate videos that children shouldn't see. It affects our health too; it was found that using the phone for more than 14 hours can cause high blood pressure. It is an addiction. I barely sleep and have constant headaches. It has affected my studies. I cannot focus, got depression and lost vitamins from my body for being online 24/7. I tried to stop this addiction, but even therapy does not work," Hatan rued.

As for the advantages, she noted: "I was able to learn Turkish and mastered it. I was talking to Turkish media through social media apps. Also, I was able to learn approximately 45-50 percent of Hindi. I got to know many people from all around the world, who turned out to be good humans."

### Be up to date

Salma El-Nabawy, 17, told Kuwait Times: "For

me, the only advantage of social media is that it allowed me to be up to date about what is happening around the country. But it made me an addict and wasted a lot of my time. It made me stay up late until 7 in the morning, while my eyesight deteriorated. Also, my expectations are high now on where to go on vacation and what to wear or do. I also see many dirty videos of brainless people."

She added: "Twitter scares me, as people there are shallow and scary. It is a male-dominated com-



Hassan Al-Mosawi



### Psychologist says social media dominates teens' lives

munity. You can see how many men threaten women with killings, the way the murderer killed Egyptian student Naira Ashraf. You will also find tweets about gay rights or why men are cheating. This generation is getting worse because of social media, in addition to nonsense relationships by teenagers. Many underage people meet online and talk about inappropriate topics. Ironically, this relation is

strong as long as the Wi-Fi signal is strong!"

For Maiar Hamed, 15, socialization, increase in knowledge about technology and less boredom are the top reasons for being on social media. "When you spend time on social media, distance does not matter. I can talk with my friends even when I'm on vacation and stay connected from anywhere," she said. As for the disadvantages, Maiar said that sometimes the images and stories on Instagram lower her self-esteem. "I'm not satisfied with the way I look and dress. Many pictures promote a certain beauty type that I do not match. I also get anxious around people because I spend more time indoors and have difficulty spending time without my phone," she added.

Ahmad Al-Abdullah, 17, said social media platforms help in connecting people and spreading noble causes. "I believe there are a lot of people on social media who spread awareness about noble causes that are worth being educated about. Some outlets also offer the latest information and updates about Kuwait, and I think it is good to know what is going on in the world we live in," he told Kuwait Times.

As for the cons, Abdullah believes that some accounts, especially on Snapchat, influence teenagers in a bad way, in addition to causing security issues, lack of face-to-face communication skills, and cyberbullying that make teenagers feel bad that can sometimes lead to suicides. Social media also affects family relationships, he added.

### Social media addiction

Psychological and social consultant Hassan Al-Mosawi told Kuwait Times that social media dominates teenagers' lives and makes it difficult for them to escape it. "They cannot even distinguish what is good or bad for them. Rather, they are looking for suspenseful and abnormal topics, as they have



become prisoners of these applications and the ideas they transmit. Social media has changed their behavior," he said.

He pointed out that teenagers can escape the addiction of social media. "It is possible to get out of the addiction cycle if the teenager tries to focus their energy on positive things and change their lifestyle to useful activities. But the process of recovery from social media addiction may need a long time and is not an easy process," he cautioned. "Unfortunately, teens trust information posted on social media more than they trust information from teachers and parents. It has been scientifically proven that teens become depressed as a result of continuous follow-up of apps, and it is difficult to get out of this bubble," Mosawi noted.

In 2020, Kuwaiti Government Communication Center revealed that the number of social media users in Kuwait increased, especially on Facebook, which had 3 million users and Instagram with 1.80 million users, in addition to 1.68 million on Twitter and 1.65 million Snapchat users.

## Educator says Kuwait needs major change in education quality

By Majd Othman

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Public Relations Association hosted on Tuesday a seminar that discussed the quality of education in Kuwait and methods to improve the education system. The seminar was held under the theme "National Forum for Quality Education in Kuwait" in the presence of specialists and a number of people interested in the field of education.

Abdulwahab Al-Hajji, head of the Kuwaiti project for youth rehabilitation and moderator of the seminar, told Kuwait Times the association aims to transfer experiences to the younger generation, the government, schools in the private and government sectors, and all those interested in raising the educational level in Kuwait through constructive criticism of current errors and highlighting previous experiences, whether local or external.

The seminar saw participation by Bader bin Ghaith, activist in the field of education, Nawaf Al-Kandari, activist in the field of training, Bader Al-Yaqoot, community entrepreneur, Bedour Al-Sumait, President of the Business Women Network in Kuwait, and Mershed Al-Mershed, CEO of Arab Al-Jazeera General Contracting Company.

Bin Ghaith said: "We need a major change in the concept of quality education, which is not limited only to schools. It should start from nurseries to any entity that provides education, in which education must be controlled in order to obtain distinctive outcomes that contribute to improving the labor market."

Yaqoot pointed out: "The quality of education in Kuwait must be developed in order to redevelop its methodology to keep pace with the modern era of

technology, in addition to the importance of integration in the educational process between teachers, students and the curriculum. We need to develop legislation related to the educational process and apply it on the ground, and not only laws that are enacted without taking them into account. If modern legislation is applied in the educational process, there will be a great development in educational outcomes."

Sumait said it has taken a long time to develop the education system, especially in the governmental sector. "We hope there will be a bigger move and a radical change in educational methods that differ with the entry of online education into the teaching system, which led to a big gap between us and developed countries in relying more on online education. Therefore, we must reduce this difference to be able to keep pace with the world," she said.

Sumait said the current market needs educated people and degree-holders to achieve success in the business field. "Everything today is related to education, and our role is to educate young people about the importance of education and its use in practical life, in addition to the need to direct students towards the needs of the labor market to contribute in several

aspects, whether to develop the student's professional side and achieve success or to the growth and development of the country," she added.

Kandari stressed the curriculum in Kuwait is outdated and needs to be revised, elaborating that the educational system is suffering from unqualified teachers. "We need to face the traditional methods of traditional teachers, in addition to the big void between families, students and teachers," he said. "There is a battle with legislation to be an ally of the student and not against them, and the reasons are very clear with the un-upgraded educational system we have, in addition that the teacher does not have any authority over the student anymore, which decreases the discipline of students to make an effort," he added.

Mershed addressed the audience on the importance of holding degrees. "Competition today in the market is very big and needs skills that keep pace with what is in the market. Through my practical experience at work, I advise young people to develop their skills by taking training courses that contribute to developing their skills, especially since most workers in the market have high degrees, which creates intense competition in the market," he said.



KUWAIT: (From left) Nawaf Al-Kandari, Bader Al-Yaqoot, Abdulwahab Al-Hajji, Bader bin Ghaith, Mershed Al-Mershed, and Bedour Al-Sumait.

## Workshop raises awareness of skin cancer

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Cancer Aware Nation (C.A.N) organized a virtual workshop on skin cancer themed "your summer is safe." The workshop dealt with risk factors and treatment. Chairman of the Board of C.A.N Dr Khalid Ahmad Al-Saleh moderated. He said the C.A.N campaign took the responsibility since its founding in 2006 to raise the awareness rate about cancers in general, through several programs and initiatives that aim at informing the public about the risk factors, causes and treatment, and to discover cancer diseases early to increase recovery rates, and hope to get them to 70 percent through early detection.

Dermatologist Jihan Raji, who gave the first lecture, spoke about the various types of skin cancer, adding that despite its various types, not all changes on the skin are cancerous, and the only way to determine that is a doctor's examination. She said the doctor should be consulted when new spots appear on the skin, or suspicious changes or appearance, as well as if a wound does not heal within two weeks. She said the most common skin cancer in Kuwait is the squamous cell carcinoma, which is caused by a lengthy exposure to ultraviolet rays.

Dermatologist and cosmetic dermatology surgeon Ibrahim Al-Arabi presented a study he conducted at Asaad Al-Hamad center on Kuwaitis in 2002 and 2003. The study found out that non-Kuwaitis are more at risk of getting cancer, particularly those from the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula, adding that the age range of those getting cancer vary between 40-70 years. He said light skinned persons are more likely to get skin cancer.

Consultant dermatologist at Jahra Hospital Shireen Helmi spoke about the importance of preventive health awareness and facing skin cancer. She said awareness is very important in prevention and to combat skin cancer. She said that among other things, immune suppressant drugs, those with transplanted organs, and AIDS patients are at risk of getting skin cancer. She added that exposure to chemicals, insecticides, arsenic, selenium, chronic blisters, smoking, alcohol, vitamin D deficiency are all risk factors of getting skin cancer. She also advised those with light skin, and the red haired to avoid long exposure to sun rays because they are more prone to skin cancer than others.



Dr. Khalid Al-Saleh

## Customs seize 41 kg of Lyrica

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's air customs confiscated 41 kg of powdered Lyrica. "The confiscated material weighed around 41 kilograms, hidden inside food supplement boxes in five shipments," interim Manager of Kuwait Customs Sulaiman Al-Fahad announced. "There will be no laxity by Kuwait Customs at any of our borders, and our focus will remain on all exported and imported shipments in order to maintain the security of the country," he said, insisting that cooperation across all departments continues and is vital in confiscating smuggled materials.



## Jaber Causeway Vaccination Center closes Thursday

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Health Ministry announced Wednesday that the Jaber Causeway Vaccination Center will be closed permanently on Thursday August 18, 2022. Last Thursday, the health min-

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

## Kratom now banned in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Interior has announced the prohibition of Kratom (*Mitragyna speciosa*) for having "opioid-like features". "All who possess, smuggle or distribute Kratom will be legally prosecuted," the Public Relations department in the Ministry of Interior announced in a press conference. "Kratom intake could cause a rise in blood pressure, increased heart rate, liver poisoning, drowsiness and it could have negative consequences on the respiratory system," the statement included. The ministry called all parents to pay attention to their children and report any incidents of intake so they can be rehabilitated. Moreover, it said the emergency number 112 is available 24/7 for support and to combat crime, while the hotline for Anti-drug department is 1884141. — KUNA



## Local

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## News in brief

## Kuwait denies rumors of abolishing bedoons' agency

**KUWAIT:** The Center for Government Communication on Wednesday denied rumors that Kuwait has abolished the Central Agency for the Remedy of Situations of Illegal Residents; the main state department responsible for bedoons' affairs.

## Legal procedures against 20 private pharmacies

**KUWAIT:** More than 20 citations have been issued against private pharmacies by the medicinal inspection teams on the directions of Health Minister Dr Khaled Al-Saeed. "Violations include incomplete prescriptions, lack of licensing, as well as improper storage and not following hygienic standards," sources told Kuwait Times. This investigative campaign is part of daily inspections in all Kuwait's governorates to limit violations at private pharmacies. All violators have been referred to the public prosecutors to follow up on legal procedures.

## Kuwait oil price down \$2.71 to \$99.35 pb

**KUWAIT:** The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by \$2.71 to \$99.35 per barrel on Tuesday, as opposed to \$102.06 per barrel the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said on Wednesday. Globally, the prices of the Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate both went down by \$2.76 and \$2.88, settling respectively at \$92.34 pb and \$86.53 pb.

## Kuwait keen on bolstering Arab industrial integration

**CAIRO:** The State of Kuwait is keen on Arab economic integration through initializing the cumulation of Arab goods as part of the grand Arab free trade zone, said an official on Wednesday. Speaking after the conclusion of the ninth meeting for the Arab cumulation committee, director of development and industrial support at Kuwait's Public Authority for Industry (PAI) Dr Abdullah Al-Hajri said that the cumulation process ensured that any given material was produced within the Arab world and benefiting Arab countries mainly. He indicated that raw materials from a certain Arab nation would be exported to a fellow Arab country in which the latter could use the country of origin for the product. This, by itself, ensures the most sought Arab economic integration and prosperity, he affirmed. On the ninth meeting, Hajri said that it focused on revising rules and regulations for the origin of Arab products data approved in 2007. He stressed that the State of Kuwait was keen on bolstering inter-Arab economic cooperation to build a solid economic and financial future for the people in the region. The meeting touched on regional and international accords concerning cumulations and how Arabs would benefit from such agreements to devise their own plans, he added. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Fire Force's backup fire department men provided heavy equipment to help Kuwait Municipality personnel remove encroachments on state property in Ahmadi governorate. The operation was done at the request of Kuwait Municipality, KFF said.

## Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** Vehicles drive on a road in Kuwait during dusty weather on August 17, 2022. —Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Zain hosts student debate of 'Kuwait Codes'

At its main HQ, in strategic partnership with CODED



**KUWAIT:** Zain officials with the students.

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, hosted a special student debate of 'Kuwait Codes', the educational coding program for high school students, at its main headquarters in Shuwaikh. The event came as part of Zain's strategic partnership with the program, launched by CODED Academy for the second time with the aim of empowering the next generation of young Kuwaiti programmers.

Many of Zain's corporate sustainability strategy initiatives center around youth and education development, and as digital skills are gaining accelerating importance in the future of education and the economy, the company has put the development of programming and digital competencies of the youth at the forefront of its priorities. Zain is keen on contributing to preparing the next generation of local talents with the skills required by modern markets.

The event, hosted by Zain at its main HQ, featured the participation of some of the best students from 'Kuwait Codes'. The students were split into teams, and they each presented various coding principals and approaches to the crowd. The teams were given enough time to research and prepare their debates to try and get the favor of the crowd against other teams.

Zain is proud to be one of the main strategic partners of CODED throughout the years, which has contributed to empowering hundreds of young programmers and developers into the local market. The company is keen on playing its part in empowering and creating the next generation of Kuwaiti programmers.

CODED launched 'Kuwait Codes' for the second time, and the initiative is considered the first of its kind in Kuwait. The program aims at creating a

technically advanced generation by offering the opportunity for high school students to learn and develop programming skills at four main streams: developing iPhone and Android apps, designing websites, and building video games.

'Kuwait Codes' welcomes high school students of 14-17 years from across public and private schools in Kuwait. The free program continues for 6 weeks, where students learn the most basic skills that can empower them to build their own projects.

Zain is keen on playing a vital role as an integrated digital service provider in light of the rapid digital changes witnessed by the modern world. The company always seeks to reach new levels of excellence with its customers through offering the best innovative services, meeting their needs and aspirations, as well as supporting programs and initiatives that embrace tech innovation and aim at developing it.

## Kuwait hands out 200 tillers to Yemeni farmers

**ADEN:** The Kuwait-based Humanitarian Relief Society dispensed Tuesday 200 tillers to farmers in four Yemeni governorates, namely Al-Hodeida, Lahj, Taiz and Abyan. The support is part of "Kuwait for your side" campaign that has been in Yemen for the 8th year in a row. Deputy director of the society in Yemen Adel Baashan said it is one of the projects funded by the society that contributes to upgrading the agricultural sector in the four governorates. The society is keen on paying much attention to projects aiming to improve living conditions of Yemenis mainly the agricultural sector, he noted. Meanwhile, head of the Aden-based Altwasul for Human Development Raid Ibrahim said the tillers aim at increasing production by helping those families work and use their land in a good way. — KUNA







UN rights chief says Rohingya refugees unable to return home

## Zionist entity, Turkey to restore full diplomatic ties



KYIV, Ukraine: Combination of pictures shows (L-R) Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and UN chief Antonio Guterres will meet in Ukraine, the United Nations announced. —AFP

# UN chief to meet Ukraine, Turkey leaders

## Ukraine's nuclear agency Energoatom reported major cyberattack on its website

KYIV: UN chief Antonio Guterres will meet with the leaders of Ukraine and Turkey this week, officials announced Tuesday, as Kyiv reported an "unprecedented" cyberattack on its nuclear energy agency's website. A deal brokered by the United Nations and Turkey last month has allowed a tentative restart of grain exports from Ukraine after Russia's invasion blocked essential global supplies.

Guterres will hold talks in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv with President Volodymyr Zelensky and Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday. They will discuss "the need for a political solution to this conflict," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

Guterres will then visit the Ukrainian port city of Odessa on Friday—one of three ports being used in the deal to export grain—before heading to Turkey. As the diplomatic efforts to end the war continue, Ukraine's nuclear agency Energoatom reported a major cyberattack on its website, but said its operations had not been disrupted.

"The most powerful cyberattack since the start of the Russian invasion occurred against Energoatom's website," the agency said on Telegram, adding that it "was attacked from Russian territory".

### Crimea blasts

Also Tuesday, Russia claimed explosions at a military facility on the Kremlin-controlled Crimean peninsula that damaged power infrastructure were the result of "sabotage". Fire erupted at a military site where ammunition was being stored and black smoke billowed into the air, images on social media showed.

"As a result of an act of sabotage, a military storage

facility near the village of Dzhankoi was damaged," Russian news agencies reported the defence ministry as saying. The blasts—caused by the fire, which led ammunition to detonate—damaged civilian infrastructure, "including power lines, a power plant, a railway track" and residential buildings, the ministry said.

The explosions came one week after at least one person was killed in similar explosions at a Russian airbase in Crimea. Ukraine has not directly claimed responsibility for either incident, but senior officials and the military have implied Ukrainian involvement.

Ukrainian presidential aide Mykhailo Podolyak said the blasts had likely damaged infrastructure supplying power from the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant to Crimea. Kyiv and Moscow have traded accusations over a series of strikes this month on Zaporizhzhia—Europe's largest nuclear power plant. UN spokesman Dujarric said he had "no doubt that the issue of the nuclear power plant" would be raised at Thursday's meeting in Lviv.

Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and has used the Black Sea region as a staging ground for its 2022 invasion, which has killed thousands, displaced millions and ravaged swathes of the country.

Moscow launched the offensive 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, its forces have become entrenched in a war of attrition along a sprawling front line in the east and south.

### US precision artillery

"The situation in Ukraine shows that the US is trying

to prolong this conflict," Russian President Vladimir Putin said. The United States is "using the people of Ukraine as cannon fodder", he added. Washington has provided key backing to Kyiv, in particular supplying long-range, precision artillery that has allowed Ukraine to strike Russian supply facilities deep inside Moscow-controlled territory.

Meanwhile, in the eastern Donbas region, which has seen most of the fighting, Ukraine said Russia had launched an offensive from an oil refinery in the recently captured city of Lysychansk in Lugansk province.

Ukraine's presidency said one woman was killed in Donetsk province, which together with Lugansk makes up the industrial Donbas region now mostly controlled by Russian forces. As the grain deal comes into force, the first UN-chartered vessel departed on Tuesday from the Ukrainian port of Pivdennyi heading to Ethiopia, Ukraine's infrastructure ministry said.

The MV Brave Commander, carrying 23,000 tonnes of wheat, was able to leave after the deal established safe corridors through the naval mines laid by Kyiv. Ukraine has said it is hoping two or three similar shipments will follow soon.

Russia's invasion has driven an economic, political and cultural wedge between Moscow and European capitals. The prime minister of former Soviet satellite Estonia said Tuesday her government had decided to remove all Soviet-era monuments from public spaces in the country.

Finland, meanwhile, announced plans to limit Russian tourist visas to 10 percent of current volumes beginning in September, due to rising discontent over Russian tourism as the war rages on. —AFP

## Former Australian PM defends secret power grab

SYDNEY: Australia's ex-prime minister on Wednesday defended secretly appointing himself to several key ministries during the COVID-19 pandemic, rejecting accusations he created a "shadow government" and undermined the country's democracy.

Refusing bipartisan calls to apologise and resign from parliament, Scott Morrison insisted he was right to take "emergency powers" over the health, treasury, finance, resources and home affairs departments, without telling the public or his cabinet colleagues.

"I was steering the ship in the middle of the tempest," the former conservative leader said in a defiant first public appearance since the scandal broke, dismissing critics who were "standing on the shore after the fact".

"Only I could really understand the weight of responsibility that was on my shoulders, and on no-one else," Morrison said, describing his moves as "break-glass-in-case-of-emergency" safeguards. Morrison's tenure in office, from 2018 to 2022, was a period of crisis for Australia with record bushfires, floods and drought as well as the pandemic and a first-in-a-generation recession.

But revelations that any prime minister could make such an extraordinary power grab without parliamentary or public oversight have left some questioning whether the country's democracy is also in crisis. Australia's new prime minister, Anthony Albanese, has asked the solicitor-general to present advice on whether his predecessor acted legally. "This is fundamentally a trashing of our democratic system. A trashing of the convention and rules that have operated in Australia for 121 years," Albanese said Wednesday. "This is unprecedented."

The Labor leader tied Morrison's actions to a worldwide "retreat" of democracy. "There's people fighting now in Ukraine to protect democracy and a sovereign nation. You have a rise of undemocratic regimes."

"Our democracy is precious. We need to defend it and strengthen it, not undermine it, which is what the former government has done," Morrison's home affairs minister Karen Andrews said her former leader "needs to resign and he needs to leave Parliament".

Morrison said he intended to represent his south Sydney constituency "to the best of my ability" until at least the next election in just under three years' time. A devout Christian, he has previously described his election as prime minister as a "miracle". —AFP

## Taiwan shows off most advanced fighter jet

HUALIEN, Taiwan: Taiwan displayed on Wednesday its most advanced fighter jet, the missile-equipped F-16V, in a rare nighttime demonstration in the wake of China's unprecedented military drills around the island.

Beijing staged days of air and sea drills in the Taiwan Strait this month after visits by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and a congressional delegation to the self-ruled island territory. Taipei has carried out its own drills to simulate defence against invasion by China and on Wednesday air force personnel loaded an F-16V fighter with a US-made anti-ship missile in a "combat readiness" exercise at an airbase in eastern Hualien county.

Six F-16Vs later took off for night reconnaissance and training missions, including two armed with missiles, according to Taiwan's air force. "In the face of the threat from Chinese communist forces' recent military exercises, we have stayed vigilant while establishing the concept of 'battlefields everywhere and training anytime'... to ensure national security," it said in a statement.

Taiwan lives under constant threat of an invasion by China, which claims the democratically-ruled island as



HUALIEN, Taiwan: Air Force staffs inspect a F-16V fighter jet (R) during a drill at Hualien Air Force base on August 17, 2022. —AFP

part of its territory to be seized one day, by force if necessary. Taipei has accused Beijing of using the trip by Pelosi—the highest-ranking elected US official to visit in decades—as an excuse to kickstart drills that would allow it to rehearse for an invasion.

Taiwan has been upgrading its ageing fleet of fighters in recent years, as fear of military action by Beijing rises and as its air force is kept under constant pressure by more frequent Chinese incursions

into its air defence zone.

In November, the island deployed its first squadron of US-made F-16Vs—an upgraded and much more sophisticated version of its other F-16 fighters, which date back to the 1990s. The F-16V deal was approved by the administration of then US President Donald Trump as he feuded with China on a host of issues, but his successor Joe Biden has maintained similar support for Taipei. —AFP

## Gloves off in Brazil, Bolsonaro, Lula launch campaigns

SAO BERNARDO DO CAMPO, Brazil: Ex-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and incumbent Jair Bolsonaro traded insults Tuesday as they launched their campaigns for Brazil's October elections in dueling rallies highlighting the South American giant's deep divisions.

The two front-runners, who have in reality been campaigning for months, made it official on opening day with events that also showcased their polar-opposite styles. Bolsonaro, 67, launched his campaign with a rally in Juiz de Fora, the small southeastern city where an attacker stabbed and nearly killed him during his 2018 campaign—cementing his image in the minds of die-hard supporters as their "Messiah," or Messiah, his middle name.

"This is where I was reborn... This is where the creator saved my life so I could give my best for our nation as president," an emotional Bolsonaro

told cheering supporters packed into the street where he was stabbed by a man later deemed mentally unfit to stand trial.

Hitting hard on the themes of Christianity and family values, Bolsonaro acknowledged Brazil's "serious problems." But the ex-army captain called himself the best candidate to lead the country, warning his opponent's return would be a "step backwards" and usher in "communism" and "gender ideology."

Bolsonaro's image as a savior swooping in to rough up the political establishment has suffered as he has lurched through a series of crises, from the coronavirus pandemic—which he insistently downplayed, even as Brazil's death toll surged—to soaring inflation that is hurting Brazilian families.

The president drew his loudest cheers when he handed the mic to beaming, telegenic First Lady Michelle Bolsonaro, a devout Evangelical Christian who led the crowd in prayer and took her own digs at Lula.

"Our enemy just wants to steal, deceive and destroy," she said, to chants of "Lula, thief, you belong in jail!" Draped in the Brazilian flag, 50-year-old teacher Jaqueline Lopes said she was voting for Bolsonaro to "continue the clean-up that started four years ago."

"I want the left to be eradicated from this coun-

try," said Lopes, who made the three-hour drive from Rio de Janeiro to attend the rally.

### 'Bogus, genocidal president'

Lula meanwhile launched his campaign with a visit to a Volkswagen plant in Sao Bernardo do Campo, the industrial heartland of Sao Paulo state where the 76-year-old launched his political career as a union leader in the 1970s.

"I'm returning so we can take our country back," he said in his trademark gravelly voice, riling up the crowd with a fiery speech. Slamming Bolsonaro as a "bogus, genocidal president," he condemned the "lies" he said the incumbent's camp was spreading about him in a bid to win the powerful Evangelical vote—an estimated 31 percent of Brazil's 213 million people. "If anyone is possessed by the devil, it's Bolsonaro," he said. Lula currently leads with 44 percent of the vote to 32 percent for Bolsonaro, according to the latest poll from the Ipec institute, published Monday. If no candidate wins more than 50 percent of valid votes in the October 2 election, a runoff will be held on October 30.

Brazil has been torn in a two-way race since March last year, when the Supreme Court annulled a controversial corruption conviction that had sent Lula to jail and sidelined him from politics.



SAO BERNARDO DO CAMPO: Brazilian presidential candidate for the leftist Workers Party (PT) and former President (2003-2010), Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, takes a selfie with a supporter during the launching of his campaign for the upcoming national elections in October. —AFP

The ex-president (2003-2010) left office as the most popular leader in Brazilian history, after presiding over an economic boom that helped lift some 30 million people from poverty. But he fell spectacularly from grace when he was convicted in Brazil's sprawling "Car Wash" scandal. —AFP



## International

# Seoul defence ministry says North Korea fires two cruise missiles

## Pyongyang has conducted a blitz of sanctions-busting tests this year

SEOUL: North Korea fired two cruise missiles Wednesday, Seoul's defence ministry said, ending a month-long lull in Pyongyang's record-breaking spate of weapons tests this year. The isolated nation has not tested a cruise missile—which are not banned under United Nations sanctions on Pyongyang—since January, the Yonhap News Agency reported.

The last time North Korea conducted a weapons test was July 10, when they fired what appeared to be multiple rocket launchers. "Early this morning, we detected that North Korea fired two cruise missiles into the West Sea from Onchon, South Pyongan province," a ministry official told AFP, using an alternative name for the Yellow Sea.

"The US and South Korean military authorities are analysing detailed specifications such as flight distance," North Korea has conducted a blitz of sanctions-busting tests this year, including firing an intercontinental ballistic missile at full range for the first time since 2017.

Washington and Seoul officials have also warned that the isolated regime is preparing to carry out what would be its seventh nuclear test. The cruise missile launch came as South Korea's President Yoon Suk-yeol marked 100 days in office Wednesday, telling reporters at a press conference that he did not support regime change by force in North Korea.

Yoon, who took office vowing to get tough on

Pyongyang, earlier this week laid out details of his "audacious plan" to offer massive aid to Pyongyang—if Kim Jong Un will give up his nuclear weapons. Analysts say the chances of Pyongyang accepting such an offer are vanishingly slim, as North Korea, which invests a vast chunk of its GDP in weapons programmes, has long made clear it will not barter its missiles away.

### Joint drills

Pyongyang's latest test also comes after South Korean and American military troops kicked off preliminary drills this week ahead of the start of their annual combined Ulchi Freedom Shield (UFS) exercise. The two militaries have been holding talks in Seoul, and issued a joint statement saying they had discussed North Korea, "particularly the increased volume and scale of DPRK missile tests over the course of the last year", they said, using the country's official name.

"With this in mind, and considering the evolving threat posed by the DPRK, both leaders committed to expanding the scope and scale of combined military exercises and training." This will start "with Ulchi Freedom Shield next week... to bolster combined readiness," they added.

For the last few years such joint military exercises had been scaled back due to COVID-19 and during a bout of failed diplomacy with the North.

Bilateral relations began to fray in 2008, following a Zionist entity military operation in Gaza. Relations then froze in 2010 after the deaths of 10 civilians following a Zionist raid on the Turkish Mavi Marmara ship, part of a flotilla trying to breach a blockade by carrying aid into Gaza.

A brief reconciliation lasted from 2016 until 2018, when Turkey withdrew its ambassador and expelled Zionist entity's over the killing of Palestinians. More than 200 Gazans were shot dead by Zionist forces during border protests from 2018 to 2019.

### Turkey's economic woes

Reconciliation publicly got underway after Herzog took office in July 2021. The Zionist president on Wednesday said the full renewal of ties "will encourage greater economic relations, mutual tourism, and friendship between the Zionist and Turkish peoples".

Despite the diplomatic differences in recent years, trade had continued and Turkey has remained a popular destination for Zionist tourists.

Zionist entity however warned its citizens to return home in June, citing an Iranian assassination plot against its nationals in Istanbul.

Lapid then thanked Ankara for its cooperation on the issue and Zionist entity swiftly resumed their Turkish holidays. Zionist entity has been wary of upsetting regional allies over its decision to strengthen ties with Turkey, with Herzog dispatched to Cyprus and Greece ahead of his Ankara trip. Gallia Lindenstrauss, a senior research fellow

pledged the government will not interfere in the election of the Assembly speaker. Adopting civil IDs to vote was one of the major demands by opposition MPs to ensure free and fair elections.

No date has been decided yet for the snap polls, but under Kuwait's constitution, the new elections must be held within two months of dissolving the Assembly - before October 1 in this case. A decree setting the election date and inviting voters to elect a new 50-member Assembly is expected to be issued next week.

forgive him."

Abbas' office on Wednesday issued a statement saying that "the Holocaust is the most heinous crime in modern human history". Abbas' "answer was not intended to deny the singularity of the Holocaust that occurred in the last century," said a statement published by the official Palestinian news agency Wafa, adding that he condemns the mass murder "in the strongest terms".

The German chancellor had drawn heavy fire for failing to immediately condemn Abbas while standing alongside him. "One would have liked (Scholz's) clarification to be more immediate," wrote Spiegel magazine. Christoph Heubner, executive vice president of the International Auschwitz Committee, said he found it "astonishing and disconcerting that the German side was not prepared for Abbas' provocations, and that his statements on the Holocaust were left unchallenged at the press conference". — AFP

120 square meters". The pope said Copts had often faced bureaucratic hurdles in obtaining permits to build and repair churches, "a very cumbersome process", but he was careful to clarify this had been the case until "over a decade ago".

A 2016 law to improve the process has been lauded as a breakthrough by authorities. By last year, 1,077 churches had been recognized as legal places of worship, according to a cabinet statement that hailed Egypt's "unique model of interfaith coexistence and national unity". Father Yohanna, of Cairo's Great Saint Anthony's Church, told AFP that the process to build and renovate churches, once difficult, had indeed "become smooth" since 2016. — AFP



SEOUL: People sit near a screen showing a news broadcast with file footage of a North Korean missile test, at a railway station in Seoul on August 17, 2022, after North Korea fired two cruise missiles, Seoul's defence ministry said. — AFP

But Yoon has vowed to ramp up the drills, which infuriate Pyongyang as it views them as a rehearsal for invasion.

Last week, North Korea threatened "deadly" retaliation against the South, which it blames for a recent outbreak of COVID-19 in the isolated nuclear-armed country. Kim's regime—which continued to conduct missile tests as it battled an outbreak of Omicron—recently declared a "shining victory" over the disease and eased virus restrictions. — AFP

at Zionist entity's Institute for National Security Studies, said Turkey's financial crisis is likely behind the renewed relations.

"Turkey needs to improve its economic standing to attract foreign direct investment," she told journalists, pointing to Ankara's efforts to boost ties elsewhere in the Middle East. "This normalisation attempt is basically to make the diplomatic standing (of Turkey) better, to attract foreign direct investment," she added.

### 'Defend' Palestinians

Turkey has meanwhile been keen to stress that its normalisation with Zionist entity could yield benefits for the Palestinians. "As we have always said, we will continue to defend the rights of Palestinians," Cavusoglu said on Wednesday.

As well as its relations with the Palestinian leadership based in the West Bank, Turkey has also maintained ties with the Islamist group Hamas that rules Gaza.

Basem Naim, a member of Hamas's political leadership, said the group expressed "condemnation" of any efforts to strengthen ties with Zionist entity. "We expect all Arab, Muslim and friendly countries to move towards isolating this occupation (Zionist), and to pressure it to respond to our legitimate Palestinian rights and aspirations," he told AFP. Efraim Inbar, president of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, said observers should be "under no illusion" that Zionist entity-Turkish ties will be as good as they were during the 1990s. — AFP

## Syria denies holding US journalist captive

DAMASCUS: The Syrian government on Wednesday denied holding American nationals captive, including journalist Austin Tice who was abducted a decade ago in Damascus. It issued a statement in response to US President Joe Biden saying last week that he knows "with certainty" that Tice "has been held by the Syrian regime", and calling on Damascus to help bring him home.

The foreign ministry denied the accusation in a statement carried by the official SANA news agency. "The Syrian Arab Republic denies that it has kidnapped or forcibly disappeared any American citizen who entered its territory or resided in areas under its authority," the statement said.

It said it would only accept "official dialogue or communication with the American administration if the talks are public and premised on a respect for Syria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity".

Tice was a freelance photojournalist working for Agence France-Presse, McClatchy News, The Washington Post, CBS and other news organizations when he disappeared after being detained at a checkpoint near Damascus on August 14, 2012.

Thirty-one years old at the time he went missing, Tice appeared blindfolded in the custody of an unidentified group of armed men in a video a month later, but there has been little news of him since. Biden's statement came on the tenth anniversary of Tice's disappearance.

"There is no higher priority in my administration than the recovery and return of Americans held hostage or wrongfully detained abroad," Biden said. — AFP

## Zionist entity, Turkey to restore full diplomatic ties

JERUSALEM: Zionist entity and Turkey announced the resumption of full diplomatic ties on Wednesday, following years of strained relations between the Mediterranean nations.

Zionist Prime Minister Yair Lapid hailed the diplomatic breakthrough as an "important asset for regional stability and very important economic news for the citizens of Zionist entity".

Lapid's office said the diplomatic development will see ambassadors and consuls general posted to the two countries once more. The announcement follows months of bilateral efforts to mend ties, with reciprocal visits by top officials.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said the return of ambassadors "is important to improve bilateral ties", while still vowing to "defend" Palestinian rights.

Cavusoglu in May became the first Turkish foreign minister to visit Zionist entity in 15 years, during a trip which also saw him meet the Palestinian leadership in the occupied West Bank.

During a landmark visit by Zionist President Isaac Herzog to Ankara two months earlier, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan proclaimed their meeting marked "a turning point in our relations".

## Nod to voting with civil IDs...

Continued from Page 1

In a televised speech delivered by HH the Crown Prince two months ago, HH the Amir vowed to prevent corruption in the forthcoming elections and

## Abbas slams Holocaust by...

Continued from Page 1

the Holocaust is intolerable and unacceptable," Scholz wrote. "I condemn any attempt to deny the crimes of the Holocaust."

In the Zionist entity, Abbas' remarks drew a hail of condemnation from Prime Minister Yair Lapid and others. "Mahmoud Abbas accusing (the Zionist entity) of having committed '50 Holocausts' while standing on German soil is not only a moral disgrace, but a monstrous lie," Lapid wrote on Twitter. "Six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, including one and a half million Jewish children. History will never

## Blaze highlights problem of unsafe...

Continued from Page 1

tragedy, a presidential decree was issued for the Armed Forces Engineering Authority to renovate the church.

In the aftermath of the disaster, Tawadros II said on national TV that Copts often pray in "small, inadequate churches", and that the Abu Sifin Church measured "only

## Top Trump critic Cheney...

Continued from Page 1

Dick Cheney in the Wyoming Republican primary marks the end of the family's four-decade political association with one of America's most conservative states.

The Republican nomination to contest November's midterms instead goes to 59-year-old lawyer Harriet Hageman - Trump's hand-picked candidate who has amplified his false claims of a "rigged" 2020 election. In her speech Tuesday night, Cheney delivered a stark warning about the danger of Trump's election fraud conspiracy theories, urging politicians on both sides of the aisle to join her fight to protect US democracy.

Speaking at a cattle ranch near Jackson, Cheney sought to move quickly beyond her defeat, setting out what she said was "real work" of her effort to ensure Trump never regains the White House. She blamed the former president, who is embroiled in numerous criminal and civil investigations over alleged misconduct in office,

for sending the deeply-divided United States towards "crisis, lawlessness and violence" with his inflammatory rhetoric. "No American should support election deniers, for any position of genuine responsibility, (because) their refusal to follow the rule of law will corrupt our future," she warned.

There is already speculation that Cheney may challenge Trump for the Republican presidential nomination in 2024 - or even run as an independent - and supporters were hoping her concession speech would double up as a blueprint for her political future. She pointedly avoided addressing the issue, but had earlier told CBS that the primary - regardless of the result - would be "the beginning of a battle that is going to continue". "We are facing a moment where our democracy really is under attack and under threat," she said.

Cheney had framed her campaign as a battle for the soul of a party she is trying to save from the anti-constitutional forces of Trumpism. She was the last of 10 Republicans in the House of Representatives who backed Trump's second impeachment to face primary voters. Four retired rather than seek reelection, three lost to Trump-backed opponents, and only two - California's David Valadao and Dan Newhouse of Washington state - have made it through to November's midterm elections. — AFP

## Joint panel says Kuwaitization...

Continued from Page 1

needed in the Kuwaiti marketplace," government sources told Kuwait Times.

The committee representing the government and the private sector from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry will put forward a plan to fix the situation in both sectors by combining sectors of similar work and through the privatization of government entities, including the ministries of electricity, information, communication and health.

"Kuwaiti private companies are very slow in localizing their companies, so the main objective is to put forth a combined plan to improve the Kuwaitization process. These solutions include reducing employee

benefits in the public sector and hiring Kuwaitis in jobs where there is actual need, such as the health sector and some teaching specializations such as mathematics, physics and chemistry," the sources added.

The panel will start its work after the National Assembly elections and in time for the new government's formation. The sources added the government can let go of around 50,000 expatriate workers in Kuwaiti companies within three years, specifically in construction companies, which lack Kuwaiti workers.

"The committee is an important and serious step to unify the vision of the future between the private sector and the government, in hopes to deter abusive iqama traders, who have flooded Kuwait with workers who are not able to find jobs, and allow for more opportunities where there is need," the sources added. Notably, the process will include a system where expatriates without a needed job will be forced to leave by limiting work permits and hiking fees under strict new regulations.



## International

# UN rights chief says Rohingya refugees unable to return home

## 'Repatriation must always be conducted in a voluntary, dignified manner'

DHAKA: UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet said Wednesday that it remained unsafe for Rohingya refugees to return to their homes in Myanmar, nearly five years after a crackdown there sparked an exodus to neighbouring Bangladesh.

Nearly a million members of the mostly Muslim minority live in a sprawling and squalid patchwork of refugee settlements near Bangladesh's southern coast. Most fled their homes after a 2017 Myanmar army offensive that is now subject to a landmark genocide case at the UN's top court.



### Bachelet meet Rohingya community members

Five years later, the refugees refuse to go back without guarantees for their safety and rights in Myanmar, which is now ruled by a military junta after the ouster of its civilian government last year.

Bachelet met with Rohingya community members during a tour of the camps on Tuesday and said they had expressed "resounding hope" that they would be able to go back to their homes. "Unfortunately the current situation across the border means that the conditions are not right for returns," Bachelet told reporters in the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka.

"Repatriation must always be conducted in a voluntary and dignified manner, only when safe and sustainable conditions exist in Myanmar." Bangladesh has become increasingly impatient with the presence of its huge refugee population, and Bachelet said she was concerned about "increasing anti-Rohingya rhetoric" and scapegoating of the community.

She added that many refugees were fearful for their safety due to the activity of armed groups and criminal gangs. Security has been a constant issue in the camps,



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

with scores of killings, kidnappings and police dragnets targeting drug trafficking networks.

Two Rohingya community leaders were shot dead earlier this month, allegedly by an insurgent group active in the camps that has been accused of murdering political opponents. Bachelet was on a four-day visit to Bangladesh before her term as UN high commissioner for human rights ends later this month.

While touring the camps on Tuesday, she urged the international community to continue to support the Rohingya despite heightened global focus on more recent crises. She added that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was being keenly felt among the Rohingya, with global food prices soaring and driving up the costs of supporting a population dependent on humanitarian aid.

"I would insist that the international community don't abandon the Rohingyas and continue supporting and even looking at if they can scale up and support, because of the consequences of the war," she said.

Bachelet is the first UN rights chief to visit Bangladesh and her trip included meetings with local activists to discuss accusations of gross abuses by security forces, including extrajudicial killings. Campaigners say that under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the country's security forces have killed thousands of people in staged shootouts, while hundreds of others have disappeared. "I raised my deep concern about these serious allegations with government ministers and highlighted the need for an impartial, independent and transparent investigation into these allegations," Bachelet told reporters. In December, the United States imposed sanctions on the country's elite Rapid Action Battalion police force as well as seven top security officers, including the national police chief, over allegations of gross human rights violations. The government denies the accusations of disappearances and extrajudicial killings, with one minister saying that some of those who went missing had in fact fled Bangladesh. — AFP

## It takes a village to help community in crisis

By Martin Griffiths

When the merchant vessel Razoni sailed from Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odesa earlier this month with more than 26,000 tons of corn for global markets, she was rightly the subject of intense attention.

Her passage was the result of months of negotiations between Russia, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Nations, including UN humanitarian staff, logisticians and legal experts. For the first time since the war in Ukraine began five months earlier, sea exports of Ukrainian crops were to resume, giving much-needed hope to millions of people beaten down by rising food prices and declining supplies, pushing many into hunger and even famine conditions.

Conflicts. Hunger. The climate crisis. Droughts. Poverty. A pandemic. In more than 40 years of aid work, I don't remember the world being so overwhelmed with problems and in such urgent need of action to solve them. Right now, a record 303 million need humanitarian aid. But despite this grim picture, I still hold onto hope. Why? Because over the years, I have seen that while conflicts and other crises bring out the worst, they also inspire the very best in humanity. Even in the depths of despair and division, there are glimmers of hope - from new solutions to seemingly intractable problems, to acts of generosity and kindness that bring solace to the suffering.

Delivering hope and standing in solidarity are at the very heart of humanitarian action. Today, on World Humanitarian Day, we want to celebrate this spirit, for in some of the bleakest situations it may be all that people have.

There is a phrase "It takes a village to raise a child." Likewise, it takes a village to help a community in crisis. This village is made up of affected communities themselves, who are always first to respond when crisis strikes, backed up by a support system of national emergency services, local businesses and civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent family. Many are international aid workers, but the vast majority of humanitarians are from the crisis-affected countries themselves.

Every hour of every day, this humanitarian 'village' steps up to organize relief deliveries, distribute cash, set up mobile health clinics and schools, build water pumps, airlift nutrition supplies, provide counselling support and so much more, supporting millions of people balancing on the edge of survival.

This village is populated by aid workers like Zuhra Wardak, a champion of girls' education and gender issues, who was one of the first to return to work in Afghanistan following the Taliban's takeover. And Andrii, a driver with Ukrainian NGO Proliska, who risks his life to evacuate people from areas under bombardment.

And Amina Haji Elmi, a women's rights champion in Somalia, who realized helping women was her mission after she and her family were displaced by conflict in that country. There are also glimmers of hope at the wider level.

For instance, amid the relentless violence in Ukraine, we have seen thousands of volunteers assisting people trapped in warzones, and the generosity of communities that have welcomed Ukrainian refugees, echoing a long tradition of neighbourly support that is evident from Bangladesh to Colombia, from Jordan to Uganda.

We can draw inspiration from political progress made in brutal and bloody crises like Yemen, where the truce has held, dissipating some of the constant fear of violence. From improved access to people in need in Ethiopia's Tigray Region, which, thanks to persistent and painstaking negotiations, has enabled aid convoys to reach people who desperately need food.

From the passing of Security Council resolution 2642 allowing cross-border aid to continue into north-west Syria, extending a lifeline for millions of people at least for the next few months. And from the Navi Star, Polar net, Razoni, Rojen and many other ships that carried Ukrainian crops to the rest of the world, offering a grain of hope to some of the 345 million people suffering from food shortages.

On World Humanitarian Day, let us take a moment to recognize all those who work tirelessly, day and night, to enact solidarity often at great personal sacrifice. They save lives in places that the world too often chooses to forget and where the risks are real: 461 aid workers were attacked last year while responding to humanitarian crises - 141 of them were killed, all but a few of them national staff.

The courage and conviction of these aid workers, always pushing for ways to reach people even in the worst of the worst of crises, inspire us to never give up hope. As we mark this year's World Humanitarian Day we commemorate those we have lost. And we celebrate all humanitarians who carry on this noble mission together.

After all, it takes a village.  
NOTE: Martin Griffiths is the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. This column marks this year's World Humanitarian Day (WHDD).



YANGON, Myanmar: Photo from Myanmar's military information team shows United Nations Special Envoy to Myanmar Noeleen Heyzer (C) walking with high-level officials following her arrival at the airport in Yangon. — AFP

## UN Myanmar envoy begins talks with junta chief

NAYPYIDAW, Myanmar: The UN's new special envoy for Myanmar began meetings with top junta officials on Wednesday but did not respond to questions about whether she would seek to meet ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Noeleen Heyzer's visit to the crisis-wracked country, which began on Tuesday, "will focus on addressing the deteriorating situation and immediate concerns as well as other priority areas of her mandate," the UN has said.

Heyzer did not respond to AFP questions on whether she would meet Suu Kyi on Wednesday as she left her hotel in a motorcade escorted by police and plainclothes security forces. Suu Kyi, 77, has been detained since the military's coup and on Monday received another prison term in a secretive junta court-raising her total sentence to 17 years.

Heyzer was set to meet the junta's foreign affairs minister and chief Min Aung Hlaing later on Wednesday, spokesman Zaw Min Tun told a press conference. "We are hoping to get good results (from the meeting)" he said.

Myanmar has been embroiled in turmoil since the military seized power in February 2021, prompting fierce resistance and spawning informal militias. Over

2,200 people have been killed and over 15,000 arrested in the military's crackdown on dissent, according to a local monitoring group.

Diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis led by the UN and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations regional bloc have made little headway, with the generals refusing to engage with opponents. Last month the junta triggered renewed international condemnation when it executed Phyo Zeya Thaw, a former lawmaker from Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party, for offences under anti-terrorism laws.

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 was the target of regular broadsides in Myanmar's state-backed media.

Military leaders blocked her from visiting the country, where she had hoped to meet with Suu Kyi. In December state media reported the junta had closed her Myanmar office, saying her work in Myanmar had "concluded". There have been no reports in state media about whether Heyzer will be allowed to open an office in the country. Rights groups said they had little optimism her visit would persuade the military to end its bloody crackdown and engage in dialogue with opponents of its coup.

"UN envoys have visited when the military told them to, stayed where the military told them to, met who the military arranged for them to meet and then left when the military told them to," tweeted Mark Farmaner, director of the Burma Campaign UK. — AFP

## Indonesia celebrates first independence day at future capital

SEPAKU, Indonesia: Indonesia celebrated its first independence day at its future capital in the ancient rainforests of eastern Borneo on Wednesday as the nation plans a move away from slowly sinking, traffic-clogged Jakarta. Nusantara, which is 2,000 kilometres (1,200 miles) from Jakarta, is set to become the new political centre of the world's fourth-largest country.

It is a legacy project of President Joko Widodo but environmentalists have warned it could accelerate the destruction of tropical jungles home to long-nosed monkeys and orangutans. The government is preparing to ramp up infrastructure projects to open the doors to the city — which will cover about 56,180 hectares (216 square miles) on Borneo island — by the time Widodo leaves office in 2024.

"The main point (of the ceremony) is to take the spirit of the 77th Independence Day to strengthen our resolve and spirit to build the new capital," said State Capital Authority head Bambang Susantono, who will govern the new city.

After the national flag was hoisted by officials to mark the occasion, workers at the site cheered in unison that they were "ready to develop Nusantara", which means archipelago in Indonesian. Jakarta is home to 30 million people in its greater metro area and it has long been plagued by serious infrastructure problems and flooding exacerbated by climate change.—AFP



JAKARTA, Indonesia: Indonesian President Joko Widodo (R) and First Lady Iriana (L) attend a flag raising ceremony for Indonesia's 77th Independence Day at the Merdeka Palace in Jakarta on August 17, 2022. — AFP

## Dead Indian soldier found after 38 years

NEW DELHI: The body of an Indian soldier who went missing 38 years ago on a glacier on the disputed border with Pakistan has been found. A unit of the Indian Army tweeted pictures of the coffin of Chander Shekhar wrapped in an Indian flag early Wednesday, two days after India celebrated the 75th anniversary of independence.

The Army said Shekhar was deployed for Operation Meghdoot in 1984 when India and Pakistan fought a brief battle to assert control over the Siachen Glacier, reputed to be the world's highest battlefield. At over 18,000 feet (5,486 metres) with temperatures that can plunge to minus 50 degrees Celsius (minus 58

Fahrenheit), Siachen is one of the toughest military deployments in the world.

Located in the Himalayan region of Ladakh, it has long been contested between the nuclear-armed neighbours. Local media reported that Shekhar was part of a 20-member group that got caught in an ice storm during a patrol.

Fifteen bodies were recovered at the time but the other five could not be found, among them Shekhar, the reports said. His last rites will now be performed with full military honours in the state of Uttarakhand, where his family lives.

His daughter, who was four years old when he went missing, said the family would now get closure. "He has been long gone... Papa has come but I wish he was alive," the Hindustan Times newspaper quoted her saying. Decades after the first battle for Siachen, both India and Pakistan continue to maintain a military presence in the extremely remote area. — AFP



LEH, India: Indian soldiers seen carrying a coffin with the remains of Indian soldier Chander Shekhar, who went missing 38 years ago on a glacier on the disputed border with Pakistan, in Leh. — AFP



# Business

THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 2022

## IMF sees Saudi growth soaring 7.6% this year on oil revenues

### Kingdom's 'Vision 2030' reform program gives the economy a boost

RIYADH: The Saudi economy is expected to grow 7.6 percent this year, up from 3.2 percent in 2021, on the back of soaring oil revenues, the International Monetary Fund said Wednesday. The government's Vision 2030 reform program, designed to reduce the kingdom's dependence on oil, has also given the economy a boost as more Saudis join the workforce, particularly women, the IMF said.

"Liquidity and fiscal support, reform momentum under Vision 2030 and high oil prices and production helped the economy recover with a robust growth, contained inflation and a resilient financial sector," it said. "Overall growth was robust at 3.2 percent in 2021, in particular driven by a rebounding non-oil sector-supported by higher employment for Saudi nationals, particularly women."

Gross domestic product was "expected to increase significantly to 7.6 percent in 2022 despite monetary policy tightening and fiscal consolidation, and a, thus far, limited fall-out from the war in Ukraine," the IMF said, while projecting GDP growth of 3.7 percent in 2023.

The kingdom managed to contain inflation at 3.1 percent in 2021, and the IMF predicted it would remain little changed this year at 2.8 percent, even as rates soar in much of the developed world.

The fund said that was largely due to "low passthrough" of the double-digit wholesale price

inflation and increasing shipping costs battering the world economy. Bumper oil revenues and increased tax revenues from the non-oil economy saw the overall fiscal balance improve by almost nine percentage points to a deficit of 2.3 percent of GDP last year, the IMF said.

"Higher oil prices and stepped-up oil production improved the current account by 8.5 percentage points in 2021, registering a surplus of 5.3 percent of GDP as strong oil-driven exports surpassed growing imports and large remittance outflows." Russia's war in Ukraine and a post-pandemic surge in demand have sent crude prices soaring. They have dropped by \$30 per barrel from a peak in June, but remain close to \$100.

The high oil price has been a major factor in the inflationary pain suffered by consumers worldwide but have led to windfall profits for oil majors and producer countries. Oil giant Saudi Aramco on Sunday unveiled record profits of \$48.4 billion in the second quarter of 2022, the biggest quarterly adjusted profit of any listed company worldwide, according to Bloomberg news agency.

Net income leapt 90 percent year-on-year for the world's biggest oil producer, which clocked its second straight quarterly record after announcing \$39.5 billion for the year's first three-month period.

Saudi Arabia has sought to open up and diversify its oil-reliant economy, especially since Mohammed



RIYADH: Record profits for oil giant Saudi Aramco on the back of high oil prices and output are set to help the kingdom's economy achieve growth of 7.6 percent this year, the IMF says. —AFP

bin Salman's appointment as crown prince and de facto ruler in 2017. Abu Dhabi-based energy expert Ibrahim Elghitany said the oil bonanza was a "gold-

en opportunity" for the kingdom, creating the large surpluses that would be needed to finance its non-oil development plans. —AFP

## UK inflation hits new 40-year high

LONDON: British inflation surged to a new 40-year high in July on soaring food prices, official data showed Wednesday, adding to a cost-of-living crisis as the country faces the prospect of recession.

The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) accelerated to 10.1 percent last month from 9.4 percent in June itself a four-decade high—the Office for National Statistics said.

The Bank of England warned earlier this month that UK inflation would climb to just above 13 percent this year, which would be the highest level since 1980. It also projected that the country would enter a recession near the end of the year that the BoE expects to last until late 2023.

Official data last week showed Britain's economy shrank in the second quarter. "I understand that times are tough, and people are worried about increases in prices that countries around the world are facing," finance minister Nadhim Zahawi said following the latest data. "Getting inflation under control is my top priority," he said, as Britons face also rocketing energy bills.

While the government of outgoing Prime Minister Boris Johnson has pledged to help reduce fuel costs for millions of Britons this coming winter, consumer groups are demanding far more state support. It comes as Britain endures a cost-of-living crisis, with wage values falling at a record pace. The deteriorating economy will be inherited by Johnson's successor after he leaves office next month, with Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and former finance minister Rishi Sunak vying to take the reins of the Conservatives.

### Rate hikes

In a bid to bring down inflation, the Bank of



LONDON: British inflation surged to a new 40-year high in July on soaring food prices, official data showed Wednesday. — AFP

England has hiked its key interest rate several times since the end of last year. The most recent increase was by 0.5 percentage points, the biggest hike since 1995 and which leaves borrowing costs at 1.75 percent—driving up mortgage repayments for households but boosting savers. "Today's data leaves the Bank of England stuck in a bit of a quandary, with multi-decade high inflation accompanied by an economy expected to enter into a deep recession in 2023," noted Matthew Ryan, head of market strategy at global financial services firm Ebury.

He added that "another 50 basis-point interest rate hike is effectively guaranteed at the bank's next meeting in September". The BoE's recent moves mirror aggressive monetary policy from the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank, as the world races to cool red-hot inflation that has been fuelled by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

### Bread, cereal, toilet paper

The UK statistics office said the "largest movements" in July's CPI came from food. Bread and cereals were the largest contributors to the jump in food prices, followed by milk, cheese and eggs. The increases were reflected in higher prices for take-away food, said ONS chief economist Grant Fitzner. "Price rises in other staple items, such as pet food, toilet rolls, toothbrushes and deodorants also pushed up inflation in July," he added.

Package holiday costs and air fares also increased on higher demand, Fitzner said, while the cost of raw materials and good leaving factories continued to rise. "The eye-watering increase in the price of food in July will be a dismal reading for many families already struggling to pay for their supermarket shop," said Laura Suter, head of personal finance at AJ Bell. "Food inflation reached 12.7 percent in July, having seen the highest monthly growth in more than 20 years." —AFP

## Egypt central bank chief quits amid deepening crisis

CAIRO: The governor of Egypt's central bank, Tareq Amer, resigned on Wednesday, state media reported, with the Arab world's most populous country in the grip of a deepening economic crisis.

President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi accepted the resignation of Amer, who took up his post in 2015 and had been due to stay on until next year, the state-owned newspaper Al-Ahram reported. Sisi named Amer a presidential adviser but there was no immediate word on who would replace him at the central bank.

He leaves with the Egyptian pound changing hands at 19.1 to the US dollar, its second lowest exchange rate on record, exceeded only during the currency's brutal devaluation in winter 2016.

Egypt devalued its currency again in March in the face of soaring inflation. The world's largest importer of wheat, Egypt has been badly hit by the war between its two main suppliers—Russia and Ukraine—which has sent world prices soaring. The cost of some foodstuffs has risen by as much as 66 percent, helping push inflation to a headline rate of 15 percent.

Thirty million of Egypt's 103 million people now live below the poverty line, with as many more living precariously, according to World Bank figures. Ratings agency Moody's downgraded Egypt's outlook from stable to negative, citing a growing risk of social unrest triggered by plummeting living standards. —AFP

## Tech stocks sink world's biggest sovereign fund

OSLO: Norway's sovereign wealth fund, the world's largest, shrank by some 1.68 trillion kroner (\$173.2 billion) in the first half of the year, weighed down by tech stocks, the Norwegian central bank said Wednesday. The fund, in which the state places its oil revenues, posted a negative return of 14.4 percent in the first six months of the year, with its total value dropping to 11.65 trillion kroner (\$120 trillion) at the end of June.

"Percentage-wise, it's the second-biggest decline for a half-year result" since the fund was created in 1996 "and the biggest decline in kroner", the head of the fund, Nicolai Tangen, said in a presentation. Since the start of the year, markets have been rocked by rising interest rates and high inflation due in particular to soaring energy prices and the war in Ukraine, all of which are fuelling fears of a recession.

The fund was weighed down primarily by its equity holdings, which declined by 17 percent. Technology stocks performed particularly poorly during the period, registering a 28-percent fall as the end of restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic dragged down giants such as Meta, the parent company of Facebook, Amazon, Apple and Microsoft.

Energy was the only sector where the fund saw a positive development, with those shares up by 13 percent. Stocks accounted for 68.5 percent of the portfolio at the end of June. —AFP

## Damaged freighter blocks traffic at drought-hit Rhine

OBERWESEL, Germany: A stranded cargo ship caused traffic to be halted Wednesday at the Rhine river in western Germany after suffering a technical fault, authorities said, at a time when water transport was already ailing from a drought.

The vessel is stuck at St Goar and Oberwesel, in between the cities of Mainz and Koblenz, water police said, adding that they were expecting to clear the stricken ship within the day.

The machine damage came as water levels in the Rhine had dropped to critical points at several locations, including at nearby Kaub — a known bottleneck for shipping where the river runs narrow and shallow. The gauge at Kaub stood at 34 cm (13 inches) on Wednesday, well below the 40-cm reference point.

While vessels are still able to navigate at low water levels, they are forced to reduce their loads to avoid the risk of running aground.

About four percent of freight is transported on waterways in Germany, including on the Rhine, which originates in Switzerland and runs through several countries including France and Germany



ST GOAR, Germany: A damaged cargo ship makes its way on the river Rhine in Kaub near Sankt Goar, western Germany, as it is towed away after suffering a technical fault, authorities said, at a time when water transport was already ailing from a drought, on August 17, 2022. — AFP

before flowing into the sea in the Netherlands.

Transport on the Rhine has gained significance in recent months because among cargo moved on the river is coal, now all the more necessary as Germany seeks to wean itself off Russian gas.

Germany's biggest companies have already warned that major disruptions to river traffic could

deal another blow to an economy already beset by logistical difficulties.

The 2018 drought, which saw the benchmark depth of the Rhine in Kaub drop to 25 cm in October, shrank German GDP by 0.2 percent that year, according to Deutsche Bank Research. — AFP



## Business

# Lebanon may record second highest inflation rate globally in 2022: Fitch

## Country faces its worst economic crisis in more than three decades

BEIRUT: Lebanon is expected to post the second-highest inflation rate in the world this year, trailing only Sudan, according to Fitch Solutions. Inflation in the country, which faces its worst economic crisis in more than three decades, will average 178 per cent in 2022, up from about 155 per cent last year, Fitch said. This is an upward revision from Fitch's previous forecast of about 156 per cent for this year due to stronger inflationary pressures from the adjustment of telecommunications, port and customs tariffs, it said.

Inflation in the country will drop to 60 per cent in 2023 as the effects from the removal of subsidies will fade, Fitch said. Runaway inflation in Lebanon rose to 210 per cent in June from the same month a year earlier, marking the 24th consecutive triple-digit increase of the Central Administration of Statistics' Consumer Price Index since July 2020. The index increased 9.23 per cent from May 2022.

While inflation in the country continues unabated, it remains far from its peak of 741 per cent towards the end of 1987, during the civil war in the country from 1975 to 1990. Inflation will be fuelled by high global commodities and oil prices, the continued depreciation of the Lebanese pound on the parallel market and on Sayrafa, the electronic trading platform regulated by Banque du Liban (BDL).

"We believe that the gradual adoption of the Sayrafa exchange rate that BDL sets daily, which currently stands at



BEIRUT: Lebanon's economy contracted about 58 per cent between 2019 and 2021, with GDP falling to \$21.8bn in 2021.

26,100 Lebanese pounds to the US dollar, instead of the official exchange rate of 1,507.5 pounds to the dollar, across several sectors will feed through higher inflationary pressures," Fitch said. The Sayrafa exchange rate, which was adopted for telecommunications tariffs from July 1 and for port fees from August 1, 2022 will lead to "a significant increase" in phone and internet bills as well as in the cost of imported goods through the port, it said.

Fitch expects Lebanon's parliament to approve an adjustment to customs tariffs, which will push up the cost of imported non-essential goods, such as tobacco and

alcohol, contributing to higher inflation.

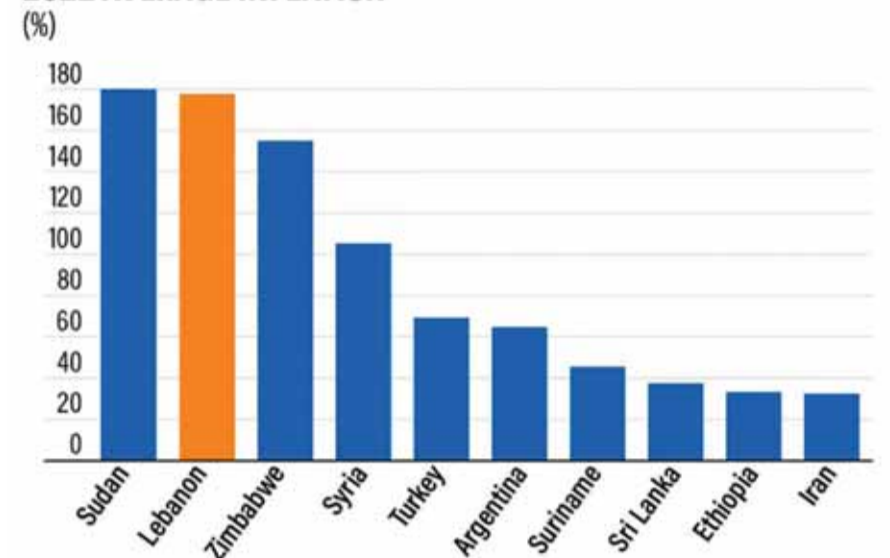
It also expects Lebanese authorities to start reducing bread subsidies after the removal of the majority of subsidies on basic goods in 2021, which will lead to higher prices.

"The surge in wheat prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine along with BDL's eroding foreign currency reserves will make it more challenging for the government to subsidise bread prices," Fitch said. "In fact, the gradual increase in subsidised bread prices, which accelerated due to the supply tightness in the global and domestic wheat market since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, led to the increase in bread prices to more than 30,000 Lebanese pounds in August from around 14,000 Lebanese pounds in March 2022. We foresee the upward trend in bread prices will continue, adding to the inflationary pressures." Lebanon's economy collapsed after it defaulted on about \$31 billion of Eurobonds in March 2020, with its currency sinking more than 90 per cent against the dollar on the black market.

The country's public debt ballooned to more than \$100bn, or about 212 per cent of gross domestic product, in 2021. Lebanon has the fourth-highest debt-to-GDP ratio in the world, surpassed only by Japan, Sudan and Greece, according to the World Bank.

The country's economy contracted about 58 per cent between 2019 and 2021,

### 2022 AVERAGE INFLATION (%)



Source: Fitch Solutions Forecast

with GDP falling to \$21.8bn in 2021, from about \$52bn in 2019, according to the World Bank - the largest contraction on a list of 193 countries.

Fitch also warned that "a sharp spike in political risk due to heightened tensions with Zionist entity over maritime borders dispute and/or in the run-up to the presidential elections could lead to more pronounced depreciation of the Lebanese pound on the parallel market".

Lebanon's political elite must agree on a new president by October 31, when Michel Aoun's six-year term expires. Lebanon has historically been marred by political impasses that have created political vacuums. Politicians have yet to form a government three months after parliamentary elections were held, delaying the implementation of reforms that are a prerequisite to securing \$3 billion from the International Monetary Fund. —Agencies



## Cuba okays foreign investment in wholesale, retail

HAVANA: The Cuban government has announced it will allow foreign investment in domestic wholesale and retail trade for the first time in 60 years, in a move aimed at addressing critical shortages of goods. The decision could also give a boost to local industry, all without relinquishing state control over foreign trade.

"Foreign investment in wholesale and retail trade, with state regulation, will allow the expansion and diversification of supply to the population and will contribute to the recovery of domestic industry," Economy Minister Alejandro Gil tweeted Tuesday, expanding on an announcement made late the previous night. Foreign investors would be allowed to fully own Cuban wholesalers for the first time since Fidel Castro's 1959 revolution, while retailers could enter into public-private ventures, according to deputy trade minister Ana Gonzalez Fraga.

Until now, foreign investment has been allowed only in the domestic production of goods and in the services sector. The move to open up a sector hitherto controlled by the communist government is indicative of the difficulty state companies face in accessing foreign currency and raw materials.

This has aggravated severe shortages in basic goods such as food, medicine and fuel, and triggered

rising discontent with the government that has prompted repeated protests in recent months. There has also been rapid growth of informal trade in essential products, triggering consumer inflation which closed some 70 percent higher at the end of last year.

### Raw materials needed

According to Cuban economist Mauricio Miranda Parrondo, "the state monopoly on foreign trade and retail is responsible for the shortage of consumer goods in the domestic market." Gonzalez Fraga told state TV late Monday that the latest measure sought to ensure investment in "raw materials, inputs, equipment and other goods that can contribute to the development of domestic production."

Under US sanctions since 1962, Cuba began timidly opening up to private capital in the 1990s before fuller authorization in 2010 followed by a boom after a warming of ties with Washington under then-president Barack Obama. In August last year, Havana gave the green light for small and medium enterprises to start operating on the island.

Months earlier, it had authorized private enterprise for the first time—though that was limited to individual entrepreneurs, not businesses. The reforms represent a major ideological shift in a country where the government and its affiliate companies have monopolized most of the economy for decades.

The country is battling its worst economic crisis in 30 years, fueled by toughened sanctions under the administration of Donald Trump and the fallout from the coronavirus crisis, which has hit Cuba's crucial tourism sector hard. —AFP

almost a decade. The PIF's most recent buying spree echoes the fund's strategy in early 2020 when it spent billions snapping up stakes in US firms whose valuations had been battered by the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. It then sold many of those stakes when markets rebounded. The S&P 500 index sank 16 per cent during the second quarter, while the Nasdaq 100 dropped about 22 per cent over concerns that rate hikes by the Federal Reserve risked tipping the US economy into recession. Since then, the S&P index has gained about 14 per cent.

In total, the value of the PIF's disclosed portfolio in the US fell by about \$3bn in the second quarter to roughly \$40bn, according to information from the filing that was compiled by Bloomberg. Much of the drop was due to an \$8.3bn decline in the value of the PIF's stake in electric car-maker Lucid Motors, which slumped after it cut production targets. As well as buying about \$482m of shares in Starbucks and roughly \$496m in Costco Wholesale, the PIF also pushed deeper into tech stocks, joining Abu Dhabi wealth fund Mubadala Investment Co. to become a go-to investor in the sector. The PIF invested about \$522m in Datadog and roughly \$2bn in Electronic Arts during the second quarter, according to the filing. — Agencies

## UK's largest water provider calls for hose bans

LONDON: Britain's largest water provider on Wednesday became the latest UK supplier to announce restrictions on usage as swathes of England grapple with a punishing drought.

Thames Water, which supplies 15 million people in London and some surrounding counties, said the ban on hoses would begin on August 24.

It asked domestic customers not to use hoses for cleaning cars, watering gardens, filling paddling pools and swimming pools and cleaning windows.

Those flouting the rules could face fines. It is reportedly the first such restriction imposed on the British capital in a decade. The action comes after water providers in most of Wales, southern and south-east England imposed bans of their own, while suppliers in parts of southwest and northern England have announced imminent restrictions.

The measures take the total number of customers

set to be under such bans by the end of next week to nearly 30 million. It comes after a drought was officially declared across most of England last week following the driest July since 1935. The country also saw its all-time temperature record smashed, surpassing 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) for the first time in July.

Experts overwhelmingly agree that climate change caused by humans is driving extreme weather events like heatwaves and droughts, which are happening more frequently and are more severe.

Thames Water said last month was the driest July in its area since 1885, and that the River Thames had reached its lowest level in 17 years, starving reservoirs in the Thames Valley and London.

The source of the river in western England has shifted several miles downstream due to the arid conditions. Multiple heatwaves over the summer have led to the highest demand for water in over 25 years, with spikes in some areas of 50 percent, the firm said.

Thames Water CEO Sarah Bentley said implementing the ban had been "a very difficult decision". "Water resources in our region are depleted," she said. "We now have to move into the next phase of our drought plan to conserve water, mitigate further risk and future-proof supplies." — AFP



PAGE, United States: In this file photo, the Colorado River wraps around Horseshoe Bend in the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area in Page, Arizona. — AFP

## US cuts water supply for some states as drought bites

WASHINGTON: Water supplies to some US states and Mexico will be cut to avoid "catastrophic collapse" of the Colorado River, Washington officials said Tuesday, as a historic drought bites.

More than two decades of well below average rainfall have left the river—the lifeblood of the western United States—at critical levels, as human-caused climate change worsens the natural drought cycle.

Despite years of warnings and a deadline imposed by Washington, states that depend on the river have not managed to agree on a plan to cut their usage, and on Tuesday, the federal government said it was stepping in. "In order to avoid a catastrophic collapse of the Colorado River System and a future of uncertainty and conflict, water use in the Basin must be reduced," said Tanya Trujillo, assistant secretary for water and science at the US Interior Department.

Arizona's allocation from the river will fall by 21 percent in 2023, while Nevada will get eight percent less. Mexico's allotment will drop by seven percent.

California, the biggest user of the river's water and the most populous of the western states, will not be affected next year. The Colorado River rises in the Rocky Mountains and snakes its way through Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, California and north-

ern Mexico, where it empties into the Gulf of California. It is fed chiefly by snowpack at high altitudes, which melts slowly throughout the warmer months.

But reduced precipitation and the higher temperatures caused by humanity's unchecked burning of fossil fuels means less snow is falling, and what snow exists, is melting faster.

As a consequence, there is not as much water in the river that supplies tens of millions of people and countless acres of farmland. The states that use the water have been locked in negotiations over how to slash usage, but missed a Monday deadline to cut a deal, so Washington stepped in.

Officials in upstream states hit out Tuesday at what they saw as an unfair settlement, with California exempted from any cuts. "It is unacceptable for Arizona to continue to carry a disproportionate burden of reductions for the benefit of others who have not contributed," said a statement by Tom Buschatzke, director of the state's Department of Water Resources and Ted Cooke, general manager of the Central Arizona Project.

Deputy Interior Secretary Tommy Beaudreau said his department—which oversees US water supplies—was "using every resource available to conserve water and ensure that irrigators, Tribes and adjoining communities receive adequate assistance." "The worsening drought crisis impacting the Colorado River Basin is driven by the effects of climate change, including extreme heat and low precipitation," he said. "In turn, severe drought conditions exacerbate wildfire risk and ecosystems disruption, increasing the stress on communities and our landscapes." —AFP

## Saudi wealth fund buys \$7bn US stocks amid recession fears

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund invested more than \$7bn to build new positions in US stocks including Amazon.com, Alphabet, BlackRock and JPMorgan Chase & Co as markets were battered by recession fears. The \$620bn Public Investment Fund also added to positions it held in Facebook owner Meta Platforms, PayPal Holdings and Electronic Arts in the second quarter, according to a 13F filing. The acquisitions show that the PIF, as the fund is known, is doubling down on its bet on technology investments despite a rout in valuations.

Chaired by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the PIF is plowing deeper into public markets as it pursues the goal of more than doubling its assets by 2025. The wealth fund is boosting its investments in equities as Saudi Arabia's income from oil almost doubled in the second quarter. Soaring crude prices are set to give the kingdom its first budget surplus in



## Business

# Germany's Russian gas crisis sparks coal rush

## Coal remains cheaper than wood despite 30% spike in prices

**BERLIN:** "A rush like this in the summertime, it's unheard-of-everybody wants coal," says Frithjof Engelke, a supplier of the briquettes which have become a hot commodity in the German capital.

A looming shortage of Russian gas in the wake of the Ukraine war has reignited enthusiasm for this method of heating private homes despite its sooty residue and heavy carbon footprint.

Engelke, 46, head of the century-old Berlin business Hans Engelke Energie, says it's brought a bonanza for his family business: "My holidays will have to wait." He and his team are frenziedly taking orders, organizing deliveries by truck—now booked out until October, and getting supplies ready for those who come directly to pick up coal from his warehouse.

On a hot summer's day, he weighs and bags loose coal amid the dust and din of his filling machine, then arranges the bags on pallets, awaiting customers. In Berlin, 5-6,000 homes still heat with coal—only a fraction of the city's 1.9 million homes, say municipal authorities.

Engelke's customers are often elderly people, sometimes entirely dependent on coal and living in old dwellings that have never been renovated. Others are lovers of the "cosy" heat emanating from often ornate old ceramic stoves. But this year, new customers have arrived "en masse", says Engelke, whose medium-sized company has also diversified into wood pellets and fuel oil.

"Those who heat with gas but who still have a stove at home now all want to have coal," he said, citing a phenomenon seen throughout Germany as winter approaches.

### 'Better than being cold'

Jean Blum is one of the new converts. The 55-year-old man with tousled hair and a bushy white

beard loads 25-kilogram (55-pound) bags filled with precious black briquettes in his trailer.

"I'm buying coal for the first time in years," he tells AFP. Since his home is equipped with gas heating, he sometimes lights his stove, but only with wood. With the jump in gas prices, which will be exacerbated this autumn when operators will be able to pass on the increase in energy levies to the consumer, Blum wants to make sure he has a safety net.

"Even if it's bad for your health, it's still better than being cold," he says.

Although coal prices have soared 30 percent this season, it remains cheaper than wood, whose price has more than doubled. "I worry when I wonder if there will be enough gas for everyone," he adds, noting that Russian President Vladimir Putin has already partially closed the gas tap on Germany after Western nations imposed new sanctions on Moscow.

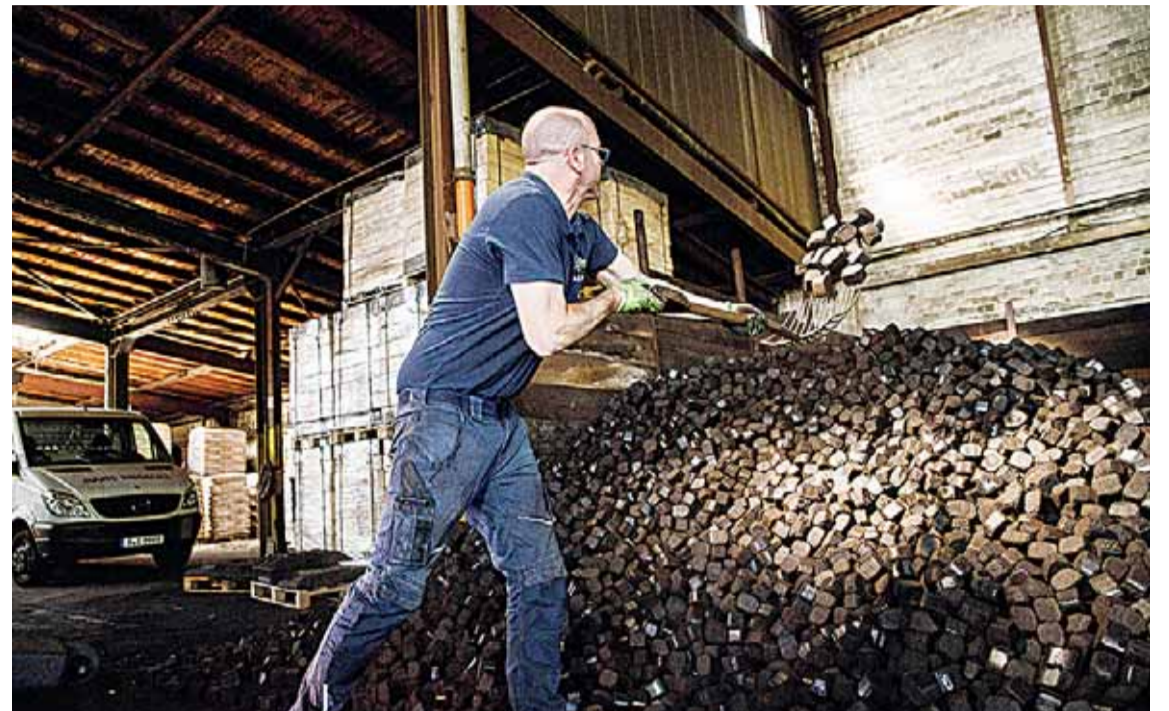
### 'Renaissance'

The black fuel is experiencing a comeback on several fronts in Europe's top economy. The German government had already resolved to increase the use of coal-fuelled power plants to satisfy the enormous appetites of several industries.

However Berlin insists it will keep its pledge to phase out the heavily polluting energy source by 2030 and rules out a "renaissance of fossil fuels, in particular coal," as Chancellor Olaf Scholz recently vowed.

However with new private customers coming out of the woodwork, production has a hard time keeping up, and many small coal merchants in the capital are running out of supplies.

"We produce at full capacity during the summer,



BERLIN, Germany: A worker loads briquettes of coal in the storage of the "Hans Engelke Energie" heating products business in Berlin. —AFP

with three shifts, seven days a week," Thoralf Schirmer, spokesman for LEAG, a mining site in the Lusatia basin, told AFP.

The company supplies DIY stores and fuel sellers with coal briquettes. Production has jumped 40 percent since January, he said, but demand is strong everywhere and the situation is expected to remain tense at least until this winter.

Adding to the pressure is the fact that the oth-

er factory supplying the market in Germany, based in the Rhine valley, will cease production at the end of the year, reducing supply. "I dread the winter a bit," Engelke, the coal seller, admits. Currently, people are relatively relaxed when they learn that they will have to wait at least two months before getting deliveries, he says. "Things will be radically different when it starts to get cold outside." —AFP

## German gas giant reports steep losses

**BERLIN:** German energy giant Uniper on Wednesday reported heavy first-half losses which it blamed on Russia squeezing gas deliveries in the wake of the Ukraine war.

The company, which accepted a government rescue package last month, said that it had recorded a net loss in the first six months of the year of euro 12.3 billion (\$12.5 billion).

"Uniper has for months been playing a crucial role in stabilizing Germany's gas supply at the cost of billions in losses resulting from the sharp drop in gas deliveries from Russia," CEO Klaus-Dieter Maubach said in a statement. The German government agreed in late July to take an around 30-percent stake in Uniper, which was threatened with bankruptcy as a result of the crisis.

Maubach said on Wednesday that the bailout would "prevent a chain reaction that would do much more damage". "Our top priority now is to swiftly implement the stabilization package," he added.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz interrupted his summer holiday to announce the rescue plan, calling Uniper a "company of vital importance for the economic development of our country and for the energy supply of our citizens". Uniper said the "volatile environment" meant that it could not provide an earnings forecast for the current financial year.

But it expected "to record negative earnings owing to the significant reduction in Russian gas deliveries". Russia's war in Ukraine has caused turmoil in European energy markets, especially in Germany, which is heavily dependent on Russian gas. EU states have accused Russia of choking supplies in retaliation for Western sanctions over the war, with Germany charging that Moscow is using energy as a "weapon".

Russia in July restored critical gas supplies to Europe through Germany via the Nord Stream pipeline after 10 days of maintenance, but at low volumes, and suspicions linger that the Kremlin may trigger an energy crisis on the continent this winter.—AFP

## China heat wave pushes up prices as hens lay fewer eggs

**BEIJING:** Scorching temperatures in eastern China have pushed up egg prices because hens are laying fewer in a hotter-than-usual summer, local media reported. Extreme weather has become more frequent owing to climate change, scientists say, and this will likely grow more intense as temperatures rise, impacting economies and societies around the world.

Multiple major cities in China have recorded their hottest days ever this year, and the country's national observatory issued a red alert on Monday. And the heat wave is putting not only humans, but animals under stress too. In Hefei city, farmers reported a drop in egg production because of the heat, according to a Jianghuai Morning News report last week, adding that some facilities have installed cooling systems for their hens.

## Tencent revenue falls for first time since going public

**BEIJING:** Chinese tech giant Tencent on Wednesday posted its first drop in quarterly revenue since going public, as the company grapples with China's economic downturn, pandemic disruptions and ongoing scrutiny from regulators. Revenue in the second quarter fell three percent to 134 billion yuan (\$19.8 billion) compared to the year before, while profits plunged by 56 percent to 18.6 billion yuan, an earnings statement said.

Tencent also cut around 5,500 jobs down to 110,715 employees by the end of June, the first quarterly decline in workforce since 2014. "We actively exited non-core businesses, tightened our marketing spending, and trimmed operating expenses, enabling us to sequentially increase our non-IFRS earnings, despite difficult revenue conditions," the company said in the statement.

Around half of Tencent's revenues came from fintech and business services as well as online advertising, which would position the company for growth when China's economy expands, the company added.

China has spent months cracking down on the video game industry to fight addiction among children, cutting into profits of giants like Tencent and

## S Korean founder of failed Terra coin admits he was 'wrong'

**SEOUL:** The co-founder of the failed Terra cryptocurrency, which collapsed and wiped out about \$40 billion of investors' money in May, has admitted he was "wrong", but said that he was not talking to South Korean investigators. The dramatic disintegration of stablecoin TerraUSD and its sister token Luna—which both dropped to nearly zero in value—hit the wider crypto market, sparking over \$500 billion in losses.

Stablecoins are designed to have a relatively stable price and are usually pegged to a real world commodity or currency. Many retail investors lost their life savings when Luna and Terra entered a "death spiral" and collapsed, and South Korean authorities have opened multiple criminal probes into the crash. In his first public comments since, Do Kwon, the 31-year-old South Korean founder of Terraform Labs, spoke to crypto media start-up Coinage from Singapore, saying the collapse had been "brutal".

"I think in terms of healing wounds, the best that I can do

is to just be upfront with everything that happened. You know, just admit that I was wrong," Kwon said.

Beijing started approving new video games again in April after a hiatus, but no Tencent games were on the list, meaning it must rely on older titles like "Honor of Kings" for revenue.

Tencent said China's domestic gaming market was facing "transitional challenges", while the international market was in a "post-pandemic digestion period" as people resumed spending on other entertainment avenues. Online advertising revenue fell a record 18 percent in the second quarter year-on-year, which reflected "notable weakness in the Internet services, education and finance sectors", the firm added. "Tencent has tightened its belt as the Chinese tech industry embraces a downturn," Analyst Willer Chen at Forsyth Barr Asia told Bloomberg News.

"The company's performance now largely depends on its progress on cost control and operational optimization."

### Tech sector reeling

Tencent is among the biggest names in China's tech industry that is still reeling from Beijing's regulatory crackdown, which began in late 2020 to target anti-competitive practices and put an end to a decade of freewheeling growth. The regulatory actions have wiped more than \$1 trillion off the combined market value of the country's tech giants in 2021, according to Bloomberg News estimates—though Tencent has retained the crown as China's most valuable company.

The latest economic slump has further damaged



its rival NetEase.

bottom lines for the sector's biggest firms, with Alibaba Group earlier this month reporting flat quarterly revenue growth for the first time.

Shares in Tencent rose less than 0.1 percent in Hong Kong before the Wednesday results announcement. The announcement came a day after news broke that Tencent plans to sell all or much of its \$24 billion stake in Chinese food delivery giant Meituan.

The Hong Kong-listed shares of Meituan fell more than 10 percent on Tuesday following the news, while Tencent dipped slightly before recovering.

Tencent went public in Hong Kong in 2004 and enjoyed double-digit growth for much of China's decades-long internet boom, dominating the market with instant messaging app WeChat and its roster of games. Earnings data on the company's performance before its listing on the stock exchange is not publicly available.—AFP

Terra, Terraform Labs started offering eye-watering interest rates, which many critics derided as a Ponzi scheme.

When the TerraUSD crashed, investors panicked and tried to pull out their money, causing a vicious, self-perpetuating bank run. Many experts had predicted precisely this eventuality, saying the model was fundamentally flawed. "If demand falls away, then the price will go to zero," Hilary Allen, a professor of financial regulation at the US-based American University, told AFP. "This is a characteristic of almost all cryptoassets, and so Terra/Luna should be seen as a cautionary tale for all crypto investors."

Prior to the May crisis, Kwon had two starkly different reputations, depending on who you asked: he was either a genius mastermind, or the head of a Ponzi scheme. A Stanford graduate from South Korea who had done stints at Microsoft and Apple, Kwon frequently belittled critics online who expressed doubt over his algorithmic stablecoin model.—AFP



Do Kwon



Farmers in Hefei have reported a drop in egg production because of the heat.—AFP



Lifestyle | Features



Eduardo Espinal, a 12-year-old child, cuts the hair of a client at his barbershop in Comayagua, Honduras. — AFP photos



Eduardo Espinal, a 12-year-old child, shows a client his haircut at his barbershop.



Eduardo Espinal, a 12-year-old child, rides on a bike to his barbershop in Comayagua, Honduras.



Eduardo Espinal, a 12-year-old child, receives 100 Lempiras (4 USD) after cutting the hair and beard of a client at his barbershop in Comayagua.— AFP photos

'The Flash' star Ezra Miller seeking treatment for mental health

Ezra Miller, the troubled star of Warner Bros' major upcoming superhero movie "The Flash," is seeking treatment for mental health issues after a string of high-profile controversies, the actor said. The 29-year-old, who has already appeared as the key DC Comics character in several blockbuster films including "Justice League," was charged this month with felony burglary in Vermont, and earlier this year was charged with disorderly conduct following two arrests in Hawaii.

Those incidents—and further allegations of choking a woman in an Icelandic bar, which did not result in charges—have raised questions in Hollywood over the future of "The Flash" and Miller's career more broadly. "Having recently gone through a time of intense crisis, I now understand that I am suffering complex mental health issues and have begun ongoing treatment," Miller, who identifies as non-binary, said in a statement sent to AFP by their representative on Tuesday.

"I want to apologize to everyone that I have alarmed and upset with my past behavior. I am committed to doing the necessary work to get back to a healthy, safe and productive stage in my life." Despite the controversies, Warner Bros earlier this month signaled it intends to go ahead with releasing "The Flash," which is due in theaters next summer.



Filming has already been completed on the movie, which has a reported \$200 million budget. It is the first standalone movie for Miller's character in the "DC Extended Universe" of inter-connected movies owned by Warner, a rival franchise to the Disney-owned and record-breaking Marvel superhero films.

Miller shot to early success with lead roles in acclaimed dramas "Afterschool," "We Need to Talk About Kevin" and "The Perks of Being a Wallflower." They were first cast as Barry Allen, aka The Flash, in 2016's "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice," reprising the role in "Suicide Squad" (2016) and "Justice League" (2017). On an earnings call with investors this month, David Zaslav, CEO of parent company Warner Bros Discovery, appeared to confirm "The Flash" will still be released, along with two other superhero titles. "We have seen 'The Flash,' 'Black Adam' and 'Shazam 2.' We are very excited about them," he said. "We've seen them. We think they are terrific, and we think we can make them even better."—AFP

Childhood cut short: Honduran boy, 12, wielding barber's shears

Eduardo Espinal runs his own barber shop from a small zinc-roofed building in Honduras, opening the doors at 8:00 am for a 12-hour workday. He is 12 years old. When it's quiet, he plays hide-and-seek or football with his friends. He has not been to school since last year. Though it is illegal in Honduras for children under 14 to work, Eduardo is one of tens of thousands who do so in the poverty- and crime-plagued Central American country.

In 2021, more than one in 10 Honduran children aged five to 18 were working, according to Horacio Lovo of the INE national statistics institute. Half a million of the country's 2.3 million children neither worked nor went to school.

"I really like the barbershop and to study too," Eduardo told AFP outside his "Eduar Barber Shop," which he opened last month on the outskirts of Comayagua in central Honduras. He charges between \$2 and \$3 per cut, depending on the style. On his best day to date, he earned \$45 — a small fortune in a country where a third of the

population of nearly 10 million people live on less than a dollar a day.

'Daddy, I can cut'

Eduardo's father Wilfredo Espinal, 50, makes a meager living collecting river sand to sell to builders. His mother, Merlin Carranza, does not work. Wanting to help his family, the boy said, he started working as an apprentice last year, aged just 11, at the barbershop where he and his father had their hair cut. His father bought him a set of shears, with which he practiced at home.

A month ago, Eduardo told his father: "Daddy, I can cut, I want you to buy me a (barber's) chair," Wilfredo Espinal told AFP. The father obliged, taking out a loan to purchase the chair as well as the scissors, razor and other equipment needed, and helped the boy set up shop in a small building that used to belong to Eduardo's grandmother.

On a normal day, "I get up, I bathe, I get dressed, I eat and I come here" to the shop, the boy told AFP. "I play when I don't have customers," he added.

According to Lovo, Eduardo's example is a "serious case of those (children) who leave school in order to work." "Children should be in school," he



Eduardo Espinal, a 12-year-old child, cuts the hair of a client at his barbershop in Comayagua.

stressed. Eduardo finished primary school in 2021, and hopes to start high school next year.

According to a UNICEF report in 2020, some 55 percent of Honduran children access lower secondary schooling, and just over a third reach the upper secondary level. Schooling is mandatory for the first nine grades. Dropouts skyrocketed after Covid-related school closures and the devastation wreaked by tropical storms Eta and Iota in November 2020, said the UNICEF report. Eduardo dreams of becoming a "professional barber," to build a home for his mother and help his little sister, now eight, open a beauty salon. High poverty and unemployment, mixed with gang and drug violence, forces nearly 800 Hondurans to leave the country every day, mainly headed for the United States, where more than a million already live, most of them undocumented. — AFP



A primate suspect: US monkey dials 911

California cops rushed to a zoo after a 911 call-only to find it had been placed by a mischievous monkey. Dispatchers sent officers to investigate a possible emergency after receiving a call Saturday night that had disconnected. Sheriff's deputies in San Luis Obispo County traced the call to the offices of Zoo to You, a conservation park 200 miles (320 kilometers) north of Los Angeles, but couldn't find any humans in trouble.

Undeterred, and determined to get to the bottom of the mystery, they began to investigate. "Then they all realized... it must have been Route the Capuchin monkey," said a social media post by the sheriff's office.

"Apparently, Route had picked up the zoo's cell phone... which was in the zoo's golf cart... which is used to travel around the zoo's 40 acre site." Capuchins are particularly inquisitive creatures, who enjoy poking and pressing objects they pick up. "And that's what Route did... just so happened it was in the right combination of numbers to call us."— AFP

Boy loses part of leg to shark bite off Florida coast

A 10-year-old boy had part of his leg amputated after being bitten by a shark while snorkeling on vacation in the Florida Keys, his family has said. Jameson Reeder Jr. was attacked on Saturday at Looe Key Reef, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission said in a statement. A Facebook post by his uncle Joshua Reeder said

Jameson had gone on a boat trip with his parents and three other siblings and was snorkeling in a shallow reef when he "took a crushing blow below his knee," by what they believed was an eight-foot-long bull shark. Jameson was able to hold on to a noodle float and was rescued by his father, who applied a tourniquet to the leg and flagged down another, faster boat that raced the family ashore. The boy was then airlifted to the Miami Children's Hospital where a medical team saved his life but was forced to amputate the leg below the knee.

"He is now out of surgery and resting," wrote Joshua Reeder, crediting Jameson's strong religious faith for helping him to survive the ordeal. A GiveSendGo appeal by the family for financial assistance had surpassed its target of \$50,000 as of Tuesday afternoon.

While a higher than normal number of shark encounters off the coast of New York this summer have attracted attention, the overall risk of being bitten by a shark remains low. Global trends are now roughly stable after rising slightly over the past 30 years, partly due to increased recreational activity by humans, and recovery of vulnerable shark populations.

Last year, there were 73 unprovoked attacks globally, according to the Florida Museum. Nearly every attack is a result of mistaken identity as sharks do not intentionally target humans. Most attacks in the United States occur off the Atlantic coast of Florida, home to choppy waters and bait fish that several shark species feed on. — AFP



In this file photo Bull sharks swims off the coast of Jupiter, Florida. — AFP





In this file photo a young woman from the Uru Eu Wau Wau tribe gets out from a straw-thatched hut in the tribe's reserve in the Amazon, south of Porto Velho, Brazil.



In this file photo a member of Uru Eu Wau Wau tribe holds up a rifle in the tribe's reserve in the Amazon, south of Porto Velho, Brazil.



In this file photo a member of Uru Eu Wau Wau tribe poses in the tribe's reserve in the Amazon, south of Porto Velho, Brazil. — AFP photos

## AMAZON TRIBE GO BEHIND THE CAMERA IN NAT GEO FILM 'THE TERRITORY'

When Covid-19 reached Brazil's Amazon, and an indigenous tribe sealed off its borders, director Alex Pritz found an innovative way to finish his documentary—he handed the cameras over to the Uru-eu-wau-wau themselves. "The Territory," to be released by National Geographic on Friday, follows the plight of some 200 hunter-gatherers who live in a protected area of rainforest, surrounded and encroached upon by aggressive and illegal settlers, farmers and loggers.

While shown in the movie dressed in traditional garb and honoring ancient customs, the Uru-eu-wau-wau and their young leader Bitate—the film's main subject—were more than happy to use modern technology to fight back. "When Covid happened, Bitate made the really bold decision to say 'Okay, no more journalists coming into our territory, no more filmmakers, no more Alex, no more documentary crew, nobody,'" said Pritz.

"We had to have a conversation with him like, 'Okay, are we done with the film? Do we have everything we need? Is there more? Should we start editing?' Bitate was really clear: 'No, we're not done. We still have a lot left to do. You guys weren't done before, why should you be done now?' 'Just send us better cameras, send us audio equipment, and we'll shoot and produce the last part of the movie.'"

The result was a "co-production model" in which an Uru-eu-wau-wau filmmaker is credited as cinematographer, and the community more broadly acted as producers with a share of profits and a say in business decisions about the film's distribution.

Besides enabling filming to continue into the pandemic, Pritz believes the decision to provide equipment and train-



(From left) Alex Pritz, Gabriel Uchida, Chief Dwaine Perry, Txai Surui, Neidinha Bandeira and Bitate Uru Eu Wau Wau attend National Geographic Documentary Films' New York Premiere Screening of THE TERRITORY at the CPC Summer Film Festival.

ing directly to the Uru-eu-wau-wau benefited the film by adding a "firsthand perspective" on the group's activities, which include patrolling the land to arrest interlopers. "I shot a bunch of surveillance missions myself. None of them made the cut!" said Pritz. "Not because we wanted to transfer the filmmaking... it was more raw, it was more urgent."

### 'Digital children'

Even before Pritz's crew arrived, the Uru-eu-wau-wau had become adept at using the power of modern technology and media to champion their cause, positioning themselves on the global stage as guardians of a forest whose survival is bound up in issues of climate

change and biodiversity.

"Bitate and this younger generation within the Uru-eu-wau-wau are digital children. He's born in the late 90s. He's on Instagram. And that's part of how he engages with the world," said Pritz. When drones capturing stunning and harrowing footage of vast deforestation appear early in the documentary, many audiences assume they belong to the filmmakers, said Pritz.

But in fact, the flying cameras were bought and are operated by the Uru-eu-wau-wau themselves. "Whereas it would have taken four days to walk over a mountain range of thick, dense, old-growth rainforest... with the drone, you're there in 30 minutes, you have



(From left) Lizzie Gillett, Chief Dwaine Perry, Will N. Miller, Alex Pritz, Neidinha Bandeira, Bitate Uru Eu Wau Wau, Txai Surui, Brendan Naylor, Sigrid Dyekjer, and Gabriel Uchida attend National Geographic Documentary Films' New York Premiere Screening of THE TERRITORY.

images tagged with metadata," said Pritz. "People can't argue with that."

It is a stark contrast to the farmers and settlers, who are also central subjects of the film. In astonishing footage, the documentary follows one group as they brazenly chainsaw and set ablaze protected forest, illegally clearing space for roads to territory they one day wish to settle and claim as their own.

Access was possible because many settlers see themselves as heroic pioneers, speaking in interviews to Pritz about opening up the rainforest for the good of their nation—a heady mix of "Wild West" cowboy culture borrowed from American movies, and nationalist propaganda stoked by Brazilian President Jair

Bolsonaro. "The settlers were these naive people who had no understanding of the historical context of their actions, the ecological consequences, what they were doing for the rest of the planet," said Pritz.

For the settlers, many of whom lack education or any other economic opportunities, "it was just about 'me and mine,' 'just this one little plot,' 'if only I can get this.'" "Whereas Bitate has this expansive outlook. He's thinking about climate change. He's thinking about the planet. He's politically savvy, media-oriented." — AFP

## Online campaign raises \$20,000 for Freya walrus statue in Norway

An online campaign has raised over \$20,000 to build a statue in Norway for Freya, a beloved walrus that was euthanized by officials at the weekend. The walrus gained global attention after she was spotted basking in the Oslo fjord, attracting large crowds keen to spot the 600-kilogram (1,300-pound) marine mammal. She was put down on Sunday after officials said she was showing signs of stress and feared she was a threat to the public, who did not keep their distance as requested.

On Wednesday, an online campaign had so far raised 210,000 Norwegian kroner (\$21,600) to build a statue in the young walrus's honor. The campaign's organizer said the statue should serve as a reminder for future generations to protect animals. "The culling of Freya sends the extremely negative message that Norway, and in particular Oslo, is not able to make room for wild animals," Erik Holm said on the fundraising website Spleis.no.



This file photo shows a female walrus named Freya at the waterfront at Frognerstranda in Oslo, Norway.

"By erecting a statue of the symbol that Freya has become in such a short time, we will remind ourselves (and generations to come) that we cannot and should not kill or erase nature when it is in our path." Freya, estimated to be around five years old, had already been sighted in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden and chose to spend part of the summer in Norway. She had made headlines since July 17 when she was first spotted in the waters of the Norwegian capital.

The walrus is a protected species that normally lives in the even more northerly latitudes of the Arctic. Between long naps in the sun—a walrus can sleep up to 20 hours a day—Freya had been filmed chasing a duck, attacking a swan and dozing on boats struggling to support her bulk.

Despite repeated appeals, curious onlookers continued to approach the mammal, sometimes with children in tow, to take photographs. Walruses do not normally behave aggressively towards humans, but they can feel threatened by intruders and attack. Critics said the decision to put the animal down was rushed and did not take her well-being into account. Officials said sedating Freya and moving her to a less populated area would be too complex an operation. — AFP



Veterinarians' team from Four Paws International treats the elephant Madhu Bala's swollen tusk at Karachi Zoological Garden.



Veterinarians' team from Four Paws International treats the elephant Madhu Bala's swollen tusk at Karachi Zoological Garden.

## Vets tackle jumbo tusk task on Pakistan zoo elephants

A team of international vets armed with specially-designed dentist drills began operating Wednesday on a pair of elephants "in incredible pain" at a colonial-era zoo in Pakistan. The Austria-based Four Paws organization was asked by the Sindh High Court to step in to treat the animals after activists reported their miserable condition.

Sixteen-year-old Madhu Bala—named after a Bollywood actress—underwent surgery for an infection on a broken tusk after being given a delicate standing sedation because the zoo in the southern city of Karachi lacks the facilities and space for full anesthesia. "She is in the worst pain," Four Paws vet Frank Gortiz told AFP. "On the right side there is an abscess. The root of her tusk is sticking into her skull and the distance to her eyes is very close."

She had her eyes covered and was fastened with thick rope and propped up with steel bars to prevent her from falling during the standing sedation, which required specially-adapted equipment.

"We developed very long tools to be able to clean the wound," vet Marina Ivanova said.

During the hours-long operation, Madhu Bala occasionally snorted as the team of vets in blood-stained clothes jostled to remove the remains of the broken tusk. Noor Jehan—named after the wife of Mughal emperor Jahangir—is suffering a similar broken tusk infection and will be operated on later in the week. Two elephants at another nearby zoo in the port city will also be treated for abscesses. Pakistani zoos come under frequent criticism for disregarding animal welfare.

In April 2020, a court ordered the only

zoo in the country's capital Islamabad to shut after poor facilities and mistreatment of the animals there were revealed. The facility had drawn international condemnation for its treatment of an Asian elephant named Kaavan, who was later airlifted to retirement in Cambodia in a project spearheaded by US popstar and actor Cher, and carried out by Four Paws. Earlier this month, a zoo in the eastern city of Lahore called off plans to auction 12 lions to private individuals after overbreeding, saying it would instead create new enclosures for the big cats. — AFP



A veterinarian from Four Paws International shoots a tranquilizer to the elephant Madhu Bala before they began her treatment at Karachi Zoological Garden.



## Sports

# Dutch Vuelta a Espana debut as Roglic targets fourth title

## Quick Step starlet Evenepoel targets first Grand Tour at 22

UTRECHT: Cycling's Vuelta a Espana embarks Friday with defending champion Primoz Roglic chasing an unprecedented fourth straight victory over a mountainous 3,280km route that begins, however, on the flatlands of the Netherlands. After the Giro d'Italia started in Budapest and the Tour de France in Copenhagen, both to rousing support from roadside fans, the final grand tour of the season begins its 21-day odyssey with a 23km team time-trial around Utrecht.

It is home terrain for Slovenian Roglic's Jumbo team. They are Dutch-based and include three Dutch riders in Sam Oomen, Robert Gesink and Mike Teunissen. "We have a nice and balanced team at the start that can optimally support Primoz in all areas," Jumbo director Merijn Zeeman said. The flat Dutch terrain means stages two and three are likely to culminate in mass sprints, so Jumbo's best chance on home soil is the opening day team race.

The 23 teams, which start with 184 riders, transfer to Spain on Monday, and start climbing at once with all six stages before the next rest day in medium or high mountains. The race winds through the rugged terrain of the Basque Country and Asturias, where plenty of travelling Dutch fan are expected. Stage five ends in Bilbao, near Frank Gehry's landmark Guggenheim museum, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Stage eight and nine in Asturias offer climbers the chance to gain serious time.

After a second rest day, the race swoops south

where the kind of sizzling temperatures that effected the Tour de France could play a roll. An individual time-trial on stage 10 should provide a minor shake up while the cliff-perched city of Ronda hosts the start of stage 13. A mountaintop finish, more than 2,500m high in the Andalusian Sierra Nevada may provide some drama on stage 15. The race might only be settled on stage 20 with a series of climbs designed to produce a final showdown on the road towards Madrid.

### Open field

Quick Step starlet Remco Evenepoel targets his first Grand Tour at 22 and was the bookies tip for triumph before Roglic was declared fit on Monday. The rigors of a 21-day Tour will test Evenepoel, who has won several shorter tours, but he will be chaperoned by the world champion Julian Alaphilippe, as co-leader. "He doesn't start as a favourite, and we will just take it day by day," said Quick Step sports director Klaas Lodewyck.

"It's a whole new adventure for him," Lodewyck said of the rider with 11 wins this season, including a resounding triumph at Liege-Bastogne-Liege. Former Giro champion Richard Carapaz leads a youthful Ineos line up and, after a narrow miss at the Giro in May, the reigning Olympic champion cannot be ignored. Ineos director Rod Ellingworth expects "an exciting edition of the Vuelta" with some "outstanding racing".

Powerful roller Dylan van Baarle and the climbers



BUNNIK: Dutch Minister for Housing and Spatial Planning Hogo de Jonge (left) rides while cycling the touring version of the Vuelta a Espana, in Bunnik. The Vuelta a Espana (Tour of Spain) starts on August 19, 2022 in Utrecht. — AFP

Pavel Sivakov and Tao Geoghegan Hart provide ample back up in an otherwise youthful Ineos line up. Giro champion Australia's Jai Hindley and British climber Simon Yates both appear to have the creden-

tials to target at least a podium shot. But several of cycling's hottest riders are missing with Egan Bernal, Jonas Vingegaard and Tadej Pogacar all sitting out this Vuelta.—AFP



Afghanistan's Kimia Yousofi

## Afghan Olympic flag-bearer makes Australia home

SYDNEY: Afghanistan's Olympic flag-bearer Kimia Yousofi has resettled in Australia after fleeing Taliban persecution. Games officials in Sydney said Wednesday, and the sprinter has already set her sights on Paris 2024. The Australian Olympic Committee said the relocation of Yousofi and dozens of others was the culmination of a year's work trying to help Afghans with ties to the Olympic movement.

Asian Games taekwondo medalist Ahmad Abasy was also part of the 31 people from five families who began arriving in Australia from early June, with the most recent arrivals landing last week. Olympic officials said they would have faced significant risks had they remained in Afghanistan due to their support for women in sport and education. "For the families involved, the stress and uncertainty over this time has been enormous," Australian Olympic Committee chief executive Matt Carroll said in a statement.

"These brave people have endured significant hardship and we are so pleased that our efforts have been successful. Many have spent time in locations outside Afghanistan and it's wonderful to now have them on Australian soil." Yousofi, who competed in the women's 100m at Tokyo 2020, said she still intends to compete in the next Olympics. "It's been a journey for me but I am very happy to be here. I am essentially starting a new life here. I am going to be training very hard and it would be exciting to go to Paris-I am definitely going to be competing," she said.

Many family members travelled to Australia separately after first securing safe passage to countries neighboring Afghanistan. Olympic officials said they were organizing employment and educational opportunities for the families, with sponsors providing shopping vouchers, clothing and other assistance. Earlier this year Afghanistan's women's football team played their first match since fleeing to Australia.—AFP

## Woods huddling with PGA players over LIV split

NEW YORK: Tiger Woods was reportedly huddling with the PGA Tour's top professionals on Tuesday to discuss the ongoing battle with the Saudi Arabia-backed LIV golf circuit. Woods and fellow professional Rickie Fowler jetted into Philadelphia from Florida before meeting players on the sidelines of the BMW Championship in Delaware.

Multiple US reports said Woods and around 20 of the top players on the PGA Tour were set to discuss strategies aimed at tackling LIV, which has been steadily luring players away from the tour with lucrative multi-million-dollar contracts. Golf has been in turmoil since the launch of LIV this year, with Australia's newly minted British Open champion Cam Smith reported to be the next big name to join the upstart circuit. Woods, who is reported to have turned down between \$700-800 million to join LIV, has been one of the new circuit's most trenchant critics.

At St. Andrews last month, Woods said he "disagreed" with players who had signed with the series.



LIMERICK: US golfer Tiger Woods arrives to speak at a press conference on the second day of the JP McManus Pro-Am golf tournament at The Golf Course in this file photo.— AFP

were expected to burst the bubble, but suffered shock 2-1 losses in both T20 and ODI series. Pakistan-born batsman Sikandar Raza, whose childhood dream to be a fighter pilot was dashed by an eyesight glitch, played a key role in the ODI series with successive centuries.

"He is a very good player who has been representing Zimbabwe with distinction for a long time," said India vice-captain and opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan. "Sikandar is a quality cricketer with bat and ball. I am sure our bowlers will come up with nice plans against him." Houghton said the unbeaten innings of 135 and 117 by the 36-year-old had a knock-on effect as they instilled confidence in his teammates. "Playing alongside Sikandar, Innocent Kaia hit a century in his first ODI, then Regis Chakabva scored his first ODI ton with some brilliant shots."

### 'Deserve wider recognition'

Former West Indies fast bowler Ian Bishop hailed the Raza tons, tweeting "The things that Sikandar Raza has been doing in recent weeks with the bat deserve wider recognition". Although missing Kohli and Sharma, Houghton says there is no such thing as a weak India cricket team. "They could pick four teams and then occupy the first four places in an internation-

"I think that what they've done is they've turned their back on what has allowed them to get to this position," Woods said, adding that younger players joining LIV may "never, ever get a chance to play in a major championship." "That, to me, I just don't understand it," he said. The BMW Championship is the second leg of the PGA Tour's lucrative season-ending FedEx Cup Playoffs.

Several players who would normally be expected to challenge in the playoffs—such as Dustin Johnson, Brooks Koepka and Bryson DeChambeau—have joined LIV and been barred from playing. Tuesday's player meeting in Delaware comes after three LIV defectors lost a bid to force their way into the field for last week's St Jude Championship in Memphis. "I think it could have made things a little bit awkward, yeah," Spanish star Jon Rahm told reporters on Tuesday.

"They chose to leave the PGA Tour, they chose to go join another tour knowing the consequences; and then try to come back and get, you know. It wouldn't have, I would say, sit extremely well with me." Patrick Cantlay meanwhile joked about Woods's role in Tuesday's talks. "Well, I've heard Tiger is the new commissioner, right?" Cantlay quipped before the meeting got under way. "That's what everyone has been saying. I'm going to go to the meeting, I'm going to listen to what it's all about, and I'll probably have more for you after."—AFP

## Pakistan beat Netherlands by 16 runs

ROTTERDAM: Opener Fakhar Zaman hit his seventh one-day international century to steer Pakistan to a 16-run victory in the first of a three-match series Tuesday against the Netherlands in Rotterdam. Pakistan won the toss and elected to bat in warm and humid conditions on a day where big scores were expected on a sluggish pitch at the VOC Cricket Club outside the Dutch harbor city.

The tourists however got off to a slow start before posting a commanding 314-6 after 50 overs. Despite a valiant run chase, the Dutch finished on 298-8 against a spirited Pakistani team, backed by a myriad of vocal supporters. Pakistan captain Babar Azam afterwards admitted being concerned at times during the match in what he described as "tricky conditions". Zaman's innings however "gave a solid partnership on which we could build", he said.

Zaman carved out a run-a-ball 109 while Azam hit 74 before being caught after mistiming a delivery from Dutch paceman Logan van Beek. The home bowlers initially contained Pakistan's batting, with the visitors losing their first wicket, that of danger-man Imam-ul-Haq, lbw to paceman Vivian Kingma in the sixth over for a painstaking two off 19 balls. But Zaman and Azam eventually let loose and put on a partnership of 168 off 170 balls before Azam was caught in a soft dismissal when he mistimed a shot into the waiting hands of Tom Cooper at mid-off.

Zaman was dismissed two overs later when he was brilliantly run out by Dutch captain and wicket-keeper Scott Edwards off a pin-point accurate throw by Bas de Leede at deep mid-wicket. Pakistan looked set for a larger total but the Dutch bowlers did well to restrict them, with the spin bowling of youngsters Aryan Dutt and Tim Pringle causing problems. The Dutch let themselves though down in the field and dropped several catches, Kingma notably fumbling a crucial high ball to hand Zaman a lifeline when he was on 43. Batting second, the Dutch lost hard-hitting Max O'Dowd in the second over lbw to ODI debutant Naseem Shah (3-51), with a fast ball nipping back onto his pads. Shah struck again later in the innings, dismissing Teja Nidamanuru, who dragged a delivery onto his stumps, and then trapping Pringle leg before for a golden duck. Fellow quick Haris Rauf (3-67) claimed the important scalp of the veteran Cooper, who made 65 off 54 deliveries. Cooper and 19-year-old Vikramjit Singh (65) put together a 97-run stand to steady the Dutch innings. Edwards then took bat to ball and with three overs left, the Dutch required 48 runs off 24 deliveries.—AFP

## India present huge ODI challenge for Zimbabwe

HARARE: Transformed Zimbabwe face their biggest challenge since Dave Houghton became coach two months ago when they host India in a series of three one-day internationals, starting on Thursday. Although several stars, including batters Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, are being rested ahead of the Asia Cup in the UAE this month, the tourists are expected to win all three matches in Harare. India are placed third behind leaders New Zealand and England in the ODI rankings, 10 places above Zimbabwe. Under the guidance of 64-year-old former batting star Houghton, the southern Africa nation have won nine of 11 ODI and Twenty20 internationals.

With Houghton in charge, hosts Zimbabwe beat non-Test teams Jersey, Singapore, the United States, Papua New Guinea and the Netherlands to qualify for the 2022 T20 World Cup. Higher-ranked Bangladesh

al tournament. That is how good they are. "However, I told my boys that we dare not become mere spectators in this series while India play all the cricket. We must believe we can win.

"The boys know they are far from invincible despite nine victories - we were 90-9 in our last ODI against Bangladesh before the tail-enders added 61 runs. "But if we continue to play without fear and express ourselves, we will succeed far more than we fail." Houghton pinpointed poor batting starts as a concern, and vowed to "try and get higher scores from our top order". Opening batsman and wicketkeeper Chakabva skippers Zimbabwe in place of injured Craig Ervine on Thursday as the home team seek only a fifth ODI victory over India at home in 24 matches.

Injuries have also ruled out Blessing Muzarabani (thigh), Tendai Chatara (collarbone) and Wellington Masakadza (shoulder) while former captain Sean Williams is unavailable. India had to make a late change to a 16-strong squad with all-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed coming in for Washington Sundar, who was injured playing English county cricket. Opening batsman KL Rahul, a late inclusion after recovering from a hernia injury and testing positive for coronavirus, leads the tourists.—AFP



India's Virat Kohli



## Sports

# Venus, Naomi Osaka exit Cincinnati in first round

## Serena Williams trounced by Raducanu in Cincinnati opener

**CINCINNATI:** Venus Williams and Naomi Osaka both exited the ATP/WTA Cincinnati Masters on Tuesday with straight-set, opening-round losses. Williams, 42, who won her last match at the Midwestern pre-US Open event in 2019, lost to 2016 champion Karolina Pliskova 7-5, 6-1. Osaka's summer form slump deepened meanwhile as the four-time Grand Slam winner was defeated 6-4, 7-5 by China's Zhang Shuai.

Pliskova, one of the game's biggest servers, struck eight aces and broke four times in a win over Williams lasting for nearly one and three-quarter hours. Williams, semi-finalist from a decade ago, has gone winless in her last five matches, last earning a victory in the Wimbledon first round. Pliskova said she had to lift her level to run away with the second set.

"Venus is a great champion, she's a fighter with a big game and big serve," the Czech said. "She played well at certain points in the first set, I'm feeling physically strong so I was able to up my game in the second set." Osaka's first-round defeat was the second in as many weeks for Japan's former world number one, now ranked 39th.

The 24-year-old was eliminated in the Toronto first round and has won just a single match out of four on cement-at the WTA Silicon Valley in July. World number 44 Zhang moved into the second round in 75 minutes as she won her first main draw match here since 2014. The Chinese player was on the winning Cincinnati doubles team in 2021 and claimed US Open doubles honors in 2021 with Australian Sam Stosur.

The 33-year-old Zhang was broken while serving for the match as Osaka pulled to five-all; a subsequent break of the crowd favorite and a hold to love by Zhang concluded the vic-

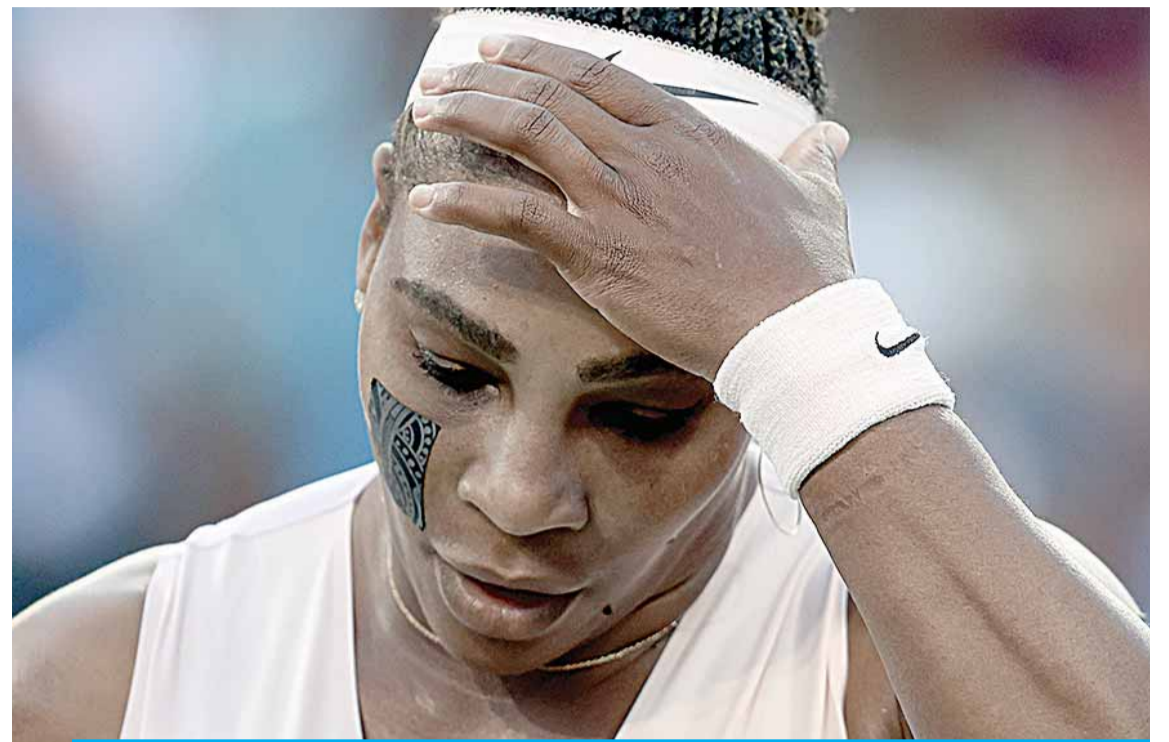
tory. "It was a really good win for me," Zhang said. "At the start I was not feeling my serve but at the baseline I played very well. "I tried to focus on myself today. "It's always tough to pay a really good friend. Naomi is amazing but she didn't have the best day today." The win brings Zhang level at 3-3 in her series with Osaka.

### Serena trounced

Meanwhile, Serena Williams bowed out of the WTA/ATP Cincinnati Masters at the first hurdle on Tuesday, losing in straight sets to US Open champion Emma Raducanu as the end of her glittering career looms ever closer. Williams, who last week indicated that she is planning to retire after this month's US Open, was no match for British teenager Raducanu, who romped to a 6-4, 6-0 win.

The 40-year-old Williams left the court swiftly after the defeat without speaking to television reporters and did not hold a press conference. Raducanu broke Williams at the start of both sets to claim victory in what was her first and likely last meeting with the 23-time Grand Slam singles champion. "I was nervous from the first point to the last," Raducanu said. "Serena is dangerous and can come back from any situation. "I had to stay focused. I'm so pleased I managed to keep my composure."

Williams, winner of titles here in 2014 and 2015, was competing in only her fourth match of 2022 after starting her season at Wimbledon due to injury. Raducanu announced her intentions from the start with a break to love of Williams and never let up. The young Briton improved to 14 wins, 17 defeats since winning the Open last September from a qualifying start. Raducanu meanwhile said she was honored to be part of the spectacle on Tuesday in what was



OHIO: Serena Williams plays Emma Raducanu of Great Britain during the Western & Southern Open at Lindner Family Tennis Center on August 16, 2022. —AFP

one of Williams' final games as a professional.

### 'Honour Serena'

"We all need to honour Serena and her amazing career," she said. "I'm so grateful for the experience of playing her and for the fact that our careers have crossed. "All she has achieved is inspirational. It's a true honor to share the court with her." Raducanu never let Williams

into the match. The young Londoner seeded 10th took a 4-1 lead in the opening set and completely swept the second, advancing on her first match point, an unreturnable serve. Raducanu committed a single unforced error in the opening set compared to a dozen for Williams. Williams' elder sister Venus took a 7-5, 6-1 loss earlier in the day, losing to 2016 champion Karolina Pliskova. —AFP

## Romanchuk grabs 1500m swim gold

**ROME:** As a string of world champions added European titles on Tuesday, Ukrainian Mykhailo Romanchuk provided an upset in Rome by toppling Gregorio Paltrinieri in the men's 1500m. The Italian set out quickly, as he did on his way to the world title in Budapest in June, building a lead of more than a second by halfway, but Romanchuk, the reigning European champion, surged past in the 19th of the 30 lengths and pulled away.

He beat Paltrinieri by 3.69sec and, as the Italian crowd, which had fallen silent, applauded a Ukrainian victory, the winner balanced on the lane rope at the Foro Italico pool and beat his chest with his fist. It was Ukraine's first medal in the swimming in Rome. "These are hard times for me, especially mentally," said Romanchuk, adding that he had been disappointed with his world championship and earlier 800m races in Rome.

"I was mad at myself." On the eve of her 29th birthday, Swede Sarah Sjoestroem won the 50m freestyle for her 45th major championship gold medal. Sjoestroem cruised to her second gold of the championships in 23.91sec. Pole Katarzyna Wasick was second at 0.29sec. Sjoestroem won both events at the world championships in Budapest in June.

It was her 27th European long-course medal, breaking a tie with Russian Alexander Popov for most by a single swimmer. "I think my number of medals continue going up and I'm really enjoying myself here," said the Swede. "Now when I look up the stands and I feel the support and energy, I know why I'm doing this and why I want to go on." Hungarian Kristof Milak also duplicated his double at the worlds when he opened the evening by winning the 200m butterfly. He had already collected the 100m butterfly gold in Rome.

### 'Who cares?'

The 22-year-old Milak won in 1min 52.01sec, 1.67sec outside the world record he set in Budapest but good enough to leave compatriot Richard Marton trailing in his wake, 2.77sec behind. "My swim? Who cares?" said Milak. "The big story here is Richard's silver. That's something I'm really crazy about. We've been training together for years, before Tokyo he almost quit and stayed only to support my preps for the Games. But we convinced him he had a lot more in him." Italian Nicolo Martinenghi improved on his world championship performance as he won the men's breaststroke sprint in 26.33 ahead of compatriot Simone Cerasuolo with German Lucas Matzerath third.

"It was a great race, it felt fantastic to be able to offer this race and this win to the best crowd in the world," he said. Martinenghi was only second in the 50m in Budapest where he won the 100m, a feat he has already repeated in Rome. Zionist teenager Anastasia Gorbenko retained her 200m individual medley title in 2min 10.92sec. "I'm happy that I could close this extremely long season with a result like this," she said.

Italian Margherita Panziera won the 100m backstroke by 0.06sec from Medi Harris of Britain. Kira Toussaint was at 0.13sec in third. Another Italian Sivia Scalia was fifth. "I heard the crowd but I thought Scalia won. So I couldn't believe it when I heard my name," said the winner. —AFP

## Kyrgios overcomes tricky Davidovich

**CINCINNATI:** Nick Kyrgios began the last major US Open tune-up with a 7-5, 6-4 win over Alejandro Davidovich Fokina on Tuesday at the ATP/WTA Cincinnati Masters. The Australian marched through with 29 winners - including 10 aces - and three breaks of the Spaniard's serve to reach the second round. The 28th-ranked Kyrgios has won all 11 of his first-round matches this season and won his 22nd match since returning to the ATP in June after skipping the clay season.

He now faces good friend Taylor Fritz after the American crushed Sebastian Baez 6-1, 6-1. "Physically, I didn't feel the best, but you have to keep pushing, keep trying," Kyrgios said. "Alejandro's a hell of a player, he's got a lot of shots at his disposal. I had to serve well and dictate," the

Montreal quarter-finalist added. "It was tricky conditions out there, the courts are a lot more lively than Montreal, it was harder to control the ball." Kyrgios took 50 minutes to secure the first set, wrapping it up after a break in the penultimate game with back-to-back serve winners.

He went up an early break to start the second set but lost it three games later as the dissatisfied Australian kept up a frustrated gripe session with his three-strong support box as Davidovich Fokina made it 2-2. Kyrgios struck straight back with a love break to regain control 3-2 and ran out the winner in 91 minutes on his second match point. It marked a happy return to Cincinnati for Kyrgios, who was fined a record \$113,000 during a spectacular meltdown at the tournament in 2019 when he smashed two racquets in the locker room in a loss to Karen Khachanov.

Kyrgios acknowledged his turbulent history at the tournament after Tuesday's win. "I've played some amazing tennis here and had some crazy outbursts," he said. "It's a flip of



OHIO: Nick Kyrgios of Australia plays a backhand during his match against Alejandro Davidovich Fokina of Spain during the Western & Southern Open on August 16, 2022. —AFP

the coin as to which Kyrgios shows up here. "Hopefully this time around it's just a calm, collected-I just want to have a good week before I continue on the good habits and give myself all the best for preparation for the US Open. "I have been an emotional kind

of tennis player my entire career. Ever since I picked up a racquet, my mum used to watch me throw tantrums and cry on the court and be emotional when I lost. "That's just me showing that I do care about the result - I think that's important. —AFP



## Special Olympics tests for athletes

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Special Olympics carried out medical tests for the athletes as part of health promotion in Kuwait. 80 athletes of both genders participated under the supervision of Yousuf Abdelredha and specialist Dalal Buhamdi - both from the health promotion program of Special Olympics. The event was carried out in the presence of Tomroh Club Chairwoman and National Director of Kuwait Special Olympics Rihab Buresli, Sheikhha Sheikhha Al-Abdallah Al-Sabah, the Honorary

President of the Disabled Club and representatives from World Health Organization (WHO) and American Embassy.

The testing included weight and height compared with muscle and fat mass, blood pressure and physical activity. Buresli said the program's implementation is a quality move to carry out the health program for Special Olympics which includes eight steps that care for all physical and psychological health, eyes, hearing, teeth, foot and nutrition. She said the program is important to support the players as it prepares them ahead of the World Games to be held in Berlin next year. Kuwait will participate with 53 players in 10 games.

She lauded all efforts that made the program a success. She also thanked Public Authority for Sport, Health Ministry, WHO and the regional "Special Olympics MENA", volunteers and Tomroh



Club coaches. Athletes' parents commended the Special Olympics initiative and its continued efforts in presenting various activities and programs.

## 'Higuita's Rule' cut time wasting and is still changing football

**BOGOTA:** Sweeper-keepers such as Manchester City's Ederson, his Brazilian compatriot Alisson

Becker at Liverpool and Bayern Munich's Manuel Neuer are all the rage in modern football. But until FIFA changed the back pass rule 30 years ago, goalkeepers were rarely expected to use their feet to take part in the team's build-up play other than to punt the ball upfield. They could take their time and throw the ball.

Former Colombia international goalkeeper Rene Higuita - famed for his outrageous overhead scorpion kick - claims he was responsible for the rule change.

"Football greats like Pele and (Diego) Maradona ... (were) very good players, but they didn't change a rule at FIFA," Higuita told AFP by video call. In Colombia, the decision to ban goalkeepers picking up a back pass with their hands is known as the "Higuita Rule." World football's governing body FIFA decided to act after the 1990 World Cup in Italy came in for huge criticism for dull matches that produced a record low 2.2 goals per game. Higuita argues that in that tournament, he showed the way forward. —AFP



Sports

# Jacobs storms to Euro 100m crown as Ingebrigtsen and Perkovic shine

## Defending champion Zharnel Hughes claims silver

MUNICH: Olympic champion Marcell Jacobs put an injury-ravaged season behind him to storm to gold in the 100m final during the European Athletics Championships in Munich on Tuesday. Jacobs, who was world indoor 60m champion in Belgrade in March, but withdrew before the semi-finals of the 100m at last month's world championships in Oregon, clocked a championship record-equaling time of 9.95 seconds.

Defending champion Zharnel Hughes claimed silver in 9.99sec with another Briton, Jeremiah Azu, taking bronze in 10.13. "This was a difficult season with problems, with injury," said the 27-year-old Italian, who has been beset by leg injuries and who competed with a heavily-strapped left calf in Munich.

"My leg is not good and I am not happy about how the race went technically, there were some problems. "But I am over the moon with the gold medal. After Olympic gold, I've now got the European gold. I've got to get the world championship gold now." In a heady night of track and field at a packed Olympic Stadium, the raucous crowd went wild as unheralded home favourite Gina Lueckenemper pulled off a shock by winning the women's blue riband sprint.

The 25-year-old, who won 100m silver in the last European champs in Berlin in 2018 and 200m bronze in 2016, threw herself at the line to clock 10.99sec for a photo-finish victory over Switzerland's Mujinga Kambundji. Britain's Daryll Neita took bronze with 11.00sec, while her teammate, defending champion Dina Asher-Smith, pulled up with injury halfway through the race and finished last.

### Proven trio produce goods

A trio of proven performers had earlier showed off their prowess in perfect, balmy conditions, retaining their titles in no little style. First up was Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen, who dominated the 5,000m to keep a repeat double bid on track. The 21-year-old, crowned world champion over the distance at last month's worlds in Eugene, timed 13min 21.13sec. "I believe in myself and I believe in the things I have done before. It was amazing here today, it was a great race to be a part of," said Ingebrigtsen.

"It feels great to be back and win, it is special." Greece's defending long jump champion Miltiadis Tentoglou, the reigning Olympic and world indoor champion who won world silver in Eugene, then set a championship record to retain his Euro title. The Greek soared out to 8.52m on his fourth attempt, bettering the previous best of 8.47m set by Germany's Christian Reif in Barcelona in 2010. Then came the turn of the doyenne of the women's discus, Croatia's Sandra Perkovic.

The 32-year-old Croat left it late, going out to a winning 67.95 metres on her fifth attempt for gold. It was a record sixth successive European title, the two-time Olympic and world champion having first won the continental competition in Barcelona in 2010. "I just won my sixth European title here at this beautiful stadium in front of this amazing crowds, so I am so happy and proud tonight," said Perkovic. "I knew I was ready to do it and I think the fight was nice."

There was also drama in the decathlon as Germany's Niklas Kaul snatched gold from Swiss



MUNICH: Italy's Lamont Marcell Jacobs (center) wins the men's 100m final during the European Athletics Championships at the Olympic Stadium in Munich, southern Germany on August 16, 2022. —AFP

rival Simon Ehammer on the back of a monstrous 76.05m in the javelin and a personal best of 4:10.04 in the strength-sapping final 1500m. After also registering 11.16sec in the 100m, 7.10m in the long jump, 14.90m in the shot put, 2.02m in the

high jump, 47.87sec in the 400m, 14.45sec in the 110m hurdles and 41.80m in the discus, Kaul was left with 8,545 points. Ehammer had to be happy with silver, just 77pts behind, while Estonia's Janek Oiglane claimed bronze (8,346). —AFP

## Norwich sink Huddersfield to end winless start

LONDON: Norwich secured their first Championship win of the season as goals from Josh Sargent and Danel Sinani secured a 2-1 success against 10-man Huddersfield on Tuesday. After three games without a win following their relegation from the Premier League last season, Dean Smith's side are finally off the mark.

Sargent headed home with just six minutes gone at Carrow Road before Sinani netted after 16 minutes against the team he played for on loan last term. Huddersfield had Tom Lees sent off early in the second half for a professional foul. Danny Schofield's side still reduced the deficit with a late strike from substitute Pat Jones, but Norwich held on to climb off the bottom of the table. Millwall staged a remarkable revival to draw 2-2 at Swansea thanks to a pair own goals from the hosts in second half stoppage-time.

Gary Rowett's side had already erased a two-goal deficit to beat Coventry 3-2 on Saturday and once again they proved expert escapologists. Ryan Manning scored the first goal for Swansea in the first minute and Michael

Obafemi doubled their lead after 12 minutes. But Millwall refused to surrender. They plundered a point through own goals from Swansea defenders Harry Darling and Nathan Wood in the third and fifth minutes of stoppage-time.

Unbeaten Hull remain second after holding Burnley to a 1-1 draw at Turf Moor. Jay Rodriguez's first-half equalizer earned a point for Burnley following Ozan Tufan's 25th-minute opener. Watford drew 1-1 at Birmingham as Ken Sema's second-half equaliser cancelled out George Hall's first senior goal for the hosts. Bristol City beat Luton 2-0 for their first win of the season, while Josh Bowler's goal against his former club gave Blackpool a 1-0 victory at QPR. Preston and Rotherham both maintained their unbeaten starts in a 0-0 draw. —AFP

## Tokyo Olympics exec arrested over bribery allegations

TOKYO: A board member for the Tokyo Olympics was arrested Wednesday on suspicion of taking bribes, prosecutors said, along with three other men connected to the scandal. Haruyuki Takahashi allegedly received \$380,000 from high-street business-suit retailer Aoki Holdings, an official partner of last year's pandemic-delayed 2020 Games.

The 78-year-old was arrested along with Aoki chairman Hironori Aoki, 83, and two other executives from the retailer, according to Tokyo Prosecutors Office documents seen by AFP. They accuse Takahashi of accepting bribes "with the understanding they were meant as thank-you money for the beneficial and preferential treatment" he bestowed on Aoki. According to the prosecutors, Takahashi had a total of 51 million yen (\$380,000 at today's rates) transferred to the bank account of a company he runs, in more than 50 transactions between October 2017 and March 2022. Later in the day, Aoki Holdings issued a statement apologizing for the "enormous trouble" caused by the arrests and saying the firm "takes the matter seriously". "We will continue to cooperate fully with investigations by authorities," it said.

The arrests came after Takahashi's Tokyo home was raided last month by investigators, according to Japanese media, with searches also conducted at the Aoki chairman's home and the disbanded Tokyo 2020 organizing committee office. Takahashi, a former executive at Japan's biggest advertising agency, Dentsu, served on the Tokyo 2020 board from June 2014. During that time he was reportedly considered a quasi-civil servant who was not permitted to accept money or gifts related to his position.

The Tokyo 2020 organizing committee wound down operations last month, but it maintains a presence to deal with assets and liabilities. The Tokyo Olympics were held in 2021 after an unprecedented one-year delay because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Stadiums were largely empty with fans banned over surging virus infections in Japan. Aoki became a Tokyo Games sponsor in October 2018, allowing it to use the event's logo and sell officially licensed products.

The case is not the first time questions have been raised about alleged impropriety around the Games. French prosecutors launched an investigation into allegations of corruption linked to Tokyo's bid for the Games in 2016. The former head of Japan's Olympic Committee, Tsunekazu Takeda, stepped down in 2019 as French authorities probed his involvement in payments made before Tokyo was awarded the event. —AFP

## Former Man United star Giggs admits to lifelong infidelity

LONDON: Former footballer Ryan Giggs admitted Tuesday to being unfaithful in all his past romantic relationships but denied ever being violent towards partners, as he gave evidence over charges of assault and coercive control of an ex-girlfriend. Taking the stand for the first time in his week-old trial, the Manchester United legend denied physically assaulting former partner, PR agent Kate Greville, nearly two years ago or controlling her during their rocky years-long relationship.

But under questioning from his own lawyer, the 48-year-old admitted to a lifetime of infidelity, agreeing that he was "a flirt by nature" and unable to "resist" pursuing attractive women despite being married or in a relationship. Giggs is on trial at Manchester Crown Court over claims he subjected 36-year-old Greville to a "litany of abuse, both physical and psychological" which included headbutting her in the face as she tried to end their relationship. The former coach of the Wales national team, whose career has been upended by the charges, faces a five-year jail term if convicted.

As the prosecution rested its case Tuesday morning, jurors heard details from a hand-written prepared statement he gave to police after he was arrested on suspicion of assaulting Greville and her sister, Emma, in November 2020. In it, he described a tussle between the trio over a mobile phone during which Giggs said he "may have caught her and her sister". "But at no time was there any attempt to harm either of them," the statement added.

### 'Rollercoaster-type relationship'

Giggs said the pair's more than four-year relationship - which began while he was mar-



MANCHESTER: Wales' Manager and Former Manchester United footballer Ryan Giggs arrives at Manchester Magistrates Court in Manchester, northern England. —AFP

ried to the mother of his two children - had its "ups and downs". "Despite allegations of violence, I often walk away from incidents," the former footballer insisted in the police statement, adding: "I would never react with violence". He also told officers in another later statement, which was also read in court: "I will not accept that my behavior towards my former partner has been in any way controlling or coercive".

During several hours of afternoon testimony from the witness box which charted the course of their "rollercoaster-type relationship", Giggs denied threatening to release certain images or video of Greville in a bid to emotionally blackmail her. He told the court he had "never" shared any private photos or videos, insisting

that he would never share such material. The trial continues Wednesday. A dazzling teenage talent, Giggs ended his career at Old Trafford as the most-decorated player in English football history.

As a player, he made a club-record 963 appearances over 23 years for Manchester United, winning 13 Premier League titles and two Champions League trophies. He then began his coaching career at Old Trafford, taking temporary charge at the end of the 2013/14 season after David Moyes was sacked, before working as an assistant to Louis van Gaal for two years. Giggs was appointed Wales boss in January 2018 and helped them secure qualification for Euro 2020, just their second major tournament appearance since the 1958 World Cup. —AFP

# Classifieds

### Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Al-Razi Hospital	24846000	Kaifan	24849807
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9	Shamiya	24848913
Maternity Hospital	24843100			Shuwaikh	24814507
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700			Abdullah Salem	22549134
Chest Hospital	24849400	Kaizen center	25716707	Nuzha	22526804
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010	Rawda	22517733	Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Adan Hospital	23940620	Adaliya	22517144	Qadsiya	22515088
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300	Khaldiya	24848075	Dasmah	22532265
				Bneid Al-Gar	22531908

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ranjit Khiva, holder of Passport No. L1435090 do hereby change my fathers name from Nachhatar Khiva to Nachhatar Singh. He will henceforth be known in the name of Nachhatar

Singh. And I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (C# 2037)

I, MOHAMMED RAIS MOHAMMAD holder of passport No. V6052629 do hereby change my

name to TOSIF MOHAMMAD RAISE MOHAMMAD for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name TOSIF MOHAMMAD RAISE MOHAMMAD and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (C# 2038) — 18-08-2022





COPENHAGEN: Trabzonspor's Greek forward Anastasios Bakasetas (right) fights for the ball with Copenhagen's Danish midfielder Rasmus Falk during the play off Champions League football match FC Copenhagen vs Trabzonspor, in Copenhagen on August 16, 2022. —AFP

## PSV rescue Rangers 2-2 draw Copenhagen stun Trabzonspor

### Obispo spares Benitez's blushes in Champions League play-offs

GLASGOW: Armando Obispo spared Walter Benitez's blushes as PSV Eindhoven rescued a 2-2 draw against Rangers in the Champions League play-off first leg on Tuesday. PSV goalkeeper Benitez looked to have gifted Rangers the advantage when he allowed Tom Lawrence's free-kick to squirm through his hands in the second half at Ibrox. Benitez's howler put Rangers 2-1 ahead after Antonio Colak had cancelled out Ibrahim Sangare's opener for PSV. But Obispo bailed out his team-mate with a priceless late leveler that leaves the tie on a knife-edge heading into next week's second leg in Eindhoven.

Although PSV will be favorites on home turf, Rangers should still fancy their chances after staging a rousing comeback from 2-0 down to defeat Union Saint-Gilloise 3-0 in the third qualifying round. Following on from that dramatic comeback, this was another tense European night for Rangers in their bid to return to the Champions League group stage. Rangers last played in that round of the competition in 2010-11 before financial problems saw them drop into Scottish football's bottom tier, from where they eventually returned to the top-flight.

They were knocked out of the Champions League qualifiers by Malmo last season, then enjoyed a memorable run to the Europa League final, only to lose to Eintracht Frankfurt in the final. In a nod to Rangers' European heritage, Ibrox legend John Greig was

watching from the stands alongside former Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson. But Giovanni van Bronckhorst's team initially struggled to rise to the occasion on a rainy night in Glasgow.

"It was very close. The tie is open. PSV are an excellent team and they showed that. We still have the chance to go through," Van Bronckhorst said. Netherlands striker Luuk de Jong was inches away from giving PSV an early lead when he fired over from close-range. Unable to shake off their lethargy, Rangers paid the price for some woeful defending in the 37th minute. James Tavernier and Connor Goldson failed to clear a PSV corner, allowing Sangare to scoop his shot past Rangers keeper Jon McLaughlin from six yards.

#### Wake-up call

Sangare's goal served as a much-needed wake-up call for Rangers, who responded with an incisive raid to equalise just three minutes later. Lawrence and Steven Davis ignited the move with one-touch passes to Tavernier on the right flank. Croatia striker Colak had scored in his previous three Rangers appearances and the close-season signing was on target again as he met Tavernier's cross with a clinical finish into the far corner. Finally showing the same energy levels as their raucous fans, Rangers nearly took the lead just before half-time when Tavernier's header forced a save from Benitez.

Van Bronckhorst was up against his former Netherlands team-mate Ruud van Nistelrooy, the former Manchester United striker in his first managerial role with PSV this season. Van Nistelrooy's men remained a threat and Ismael Saibari poked narrowly wide after Rangers made a hash of dealing with De Jong's header. Benitez made a complete mess of handling Lawrence's 70th minute free-kick, which bounced out of his grasp and trickled over the line despite his desperate attempt to claw it back.

But Obispo silenced Ibrox in the 78th minute as he rose above Goldson to meet a corner with a towering header that flashed past McLaughlin. "The better chances were for us in the second half but 2-2 is a fair result. Both teams are so balanced," Van Nistelrooy said. FC Copenhagen held off a fightback from visiting Trabzonspor to win their first leg 2-1. Viktor Claesson gave the home team a first half lead. Lukas Lerager added a second three minutes after half time, smashing the ball in from close range after a corner.

The Turkish champions responded by penning the Danes back, but struggled to break through. Their only goal was a 25-yard shot from Tasos Bakasetas that took a deflection off centre back David Khocholava with 11 minutes left. In Norway, hosts Bodo/Glimt edged Dinamo Zagreb 1-0. Norwegian veteran Amahl Pellegrino headed in the only goal in the 37th minute. —AFP



Cristiano Ronaldo

### Ronaldo blasts 'lies' over United future

LONDON: Cristiano Ronaldo has hit out at the "lies" surrounding reports about his future at Manchester United. The Portugal forward missed United's pre-season tour to Thailand and Australia due to personal reasons as speculation swirled over whether he would be leaving Old Trafford. It has been reported Ronaldo wants to play Champions League football, but United maintain the 37-year-old is not for sale and remains an integral part of the plans of new boss Erik ten Hag. The former Real Madrid star played the full 90 minutes of United's 4-0 defeat at Brentford on Saturday, which left them bottom of the Premier League.

In a reply to a fan account on Instagram that referred to a report linking the United frontman to Atletico Madrid, Ronaldo said fans would "know the truth" in a couple of weeks, adding: "The media is telling lies." "I have a notebook and in the last few months of the 100 news I made, only five were right. Imagine how it is. Stick with that tip." Manchester United will seek to kickstart their Premier League campaign when they host fierce rivals Liverpool on Monday. United's owners, the Glazer family, have come under fire following the team's terrible start.

Former United defender Gary Neville has warned the club could finish in the bottom half of the Premier League if they do not address their "horror story" recruitment strategy. Manchester United supporters' group The 1958 is planning a protest march outside Old Trafford against the club's owners ahead of the Liverpool match. In a statement the group said the ownership was "systematically starving and killing the greatest football institution in world football, for greed". —AFP

### Dubai airport gears up to handle World Cup supporters

DUBAI: Dubai International Airport, a major aviation hub, is gearing up to help ease transit travel for World Cup supporters ahead of the tournament starting in November, its director said Wednesday. The first World Cup ever held in a Middle Eastern country is set to kick off in Qatar on November 20, and will last until December 18.

Gulf states have agreed to ease administrative procedures for fans in transit, in particular through the United Arab Emirates. "We are actually putting together some immigration procedures which actually should make that transition between the two countries a lot easier," Dubai Airports chief Paul Griffiths told AFP. He said online check-in will mean normal procedures can be bypassed "and then you can get in and out very quickly". Pre-pandemic, Dubai was the world's busiest airport for international passengers.

Without specifying figures, Griffiths said there would be "quite a number of flights every day during the World Cup, ferrying fans to and from Doha", the Qatari capital, following requests by several airlines. He said he also expected many people to "be going



DOHA: A general view shows the Lusail Stadium, the 80,000-capacity venue which will host the FIFA World Cup final in December, on the outskirts of Qatar's capital Doha. —AFP

back and forth and enjoy their leisure time in Dubai and going back and forth just for the matches". Flights between the UAE and Qatar resumed in January last year after a diplomatic reconciliation ended a more than three-year boycott.

In 2017, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt severed relations with Qatar, accusing it of backing Islamist extremism. Griffiths also said he

was optimistic about Dubai airport's prospects. In the first half of the year, it handled 27.8 million passengers - a rise of more than 160 percent on the same period in 2021, a statement published on Wednesday said. It said the latest figures showed traffic during the first half of the year at 67.5 percent of that pre-pandemic, during the same period in 2019. —AFP