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Candidates confident Kuwait is embarking on a new era

Saadoun, 22 ex-MPs among 115 hopefuls to register on first day • Public holiday on Sept 29



KUWAIT: Former speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun (left) and former minister Essa Al-Kandari speak to the media after filing their candidacies to run in the upcoming National Assembly elections. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Leading opposition figure and three-time former speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun and around 22 ex-MPs were among 115 hopefuls who filed their nomination papers on the first day of registration for the upcoming National Assembly elections. Almost all candidates agreed that Kuwait is entering a new political era and called on Kuwaiti voters to elect reformist members to the 50-seat National Assembly when the country heads to the polls on Sept 29. "These elections are different from all previous polls," said the 87-year-old Saadoun after registering to run in the third constituency. "This is an historical era," he added, calling on Kuwaiti voters to elect the best candidates. Saadoun hailed the address of HH the Amir, which was delivered on June 22 by HH the Crown Prince, describing it as historic and as having paved the way for extensive reforms.

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News in brief

Tests for new expat workers

KUWAIT: Demographics committee members and experts have formed a panel to hold professional tests of newly-recruited expatriate workers. "An agreement has been reached between the Civil Service Commission and Kuwait Society of Engineers on conducting professional tests in order to ensure the capability of workers in all specializations, as well as rejecting all workers who do not meet these requirements," affirmed the panel headed by Minister of Justice and Nazaha Jamal Al-Jalawi. "The testing will only be for new incoming workers, but in the future, tests will be held for all expats," it said.

Safran assigned as attorney general

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Mohammad Al-Fares announced on Monday the assignment of justice Saad Abdul-Karim Al-Safran as attorney general. Upon the Supreme Judicial Council's approval and a presentation by the minister of justice, the Cabinet approved a decree appointing Safran as attorney general. — KUNA

NASA scrubs Moon rocket launch

WASHINGTON: NASA scrubbed a test flight on Monday of its largest-ever rocket in a setback to the ambitious program to send humans back to the Moon and eventually to Mars. "We don't launch until it's right," NASA administrator Bill Nelson said after an engine issue forced a cancellation of the launch from the Kennedy Space Center. Alternative dates for the launch of the US space agency's uncrewed Artemis 1 mission are Friday and next Monday. — AFP

Bollywood star questioned

MUMBAI: Bollywood megastar Ranveer Singh was grilled by police on Monday on charges of "obscenity" after posting naked photos of himself. Singh, 37, posted in July on social media the racy images shot for New York-based Paper magazine, sparking a media frenzy in India and resulting in multiple complaints. Mumbai police questioned Singh for more than two hours on Monday morning on charges of "corrupting youth of society" and "embarrassing women", police said, and recorded his official statement. — AFP

Kuwaiti, Iraqi, US navies hold joint Gulf drill

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti navy has carried out a joint drill with the Iraqi naval force along with units of the US Fifth Fleet in the north of the Arabian Gulf, the Kuwaiti ministry of defense announced on Monday. The exercise was held to bolster regional

naval security cooperation among these forces, the ministry said in a statement.

The mock exercises were designed to beef up these forces' control capacities and naval security operations, as well as boost regional cooperation and unify relevant military concepts, it said, indicating that the troops used live ammunition. The exercise has been organized as part of the joint cooperation accord that affirms the regional states' commitment to safeguard regional sea security. — KUNA



Kuwaiti, Iraqi and US naval units hold joint drills in the Arabian Gulf. — KUNA

Deadly clashes, curfew as Sadr quits politics

BAGHDAD: Eight protesters were killed and Iraq declared a nationwide curfew after supporters of Moqtada Sadr stormed the government palace in Baghdad's Green Zone on Monday following the powerful Shiite leader's declaration that he was quitting politics. Shots were fired in the fortified area which houses government buildings as

well as diplomatic missions, an AFP correspondent said, as tensions soared amid an escalating political crisis that has left Iraq without a new government, prime minister or president for months.

The army announced a nationwide curfew from 7:00 pm (1600 GMT), after earlier declaring a Baghdad curfew that demonstrators ignored. Medics told AFP that eight Sadr supporters were killed and 85 others wounded after clashes broke out in the Green Zone. Witnesses said Sadr loyalists and supporters of a rival Shiite bloc, the pro-Iran Coordination Framework, had exchanged fire.

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BAGHDAD: Supporters of Iraqi Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr gather inside the Republican Palace in the capital's Green Zone on Aug 29, 2022. — AFP

Third of Pakistan under water as death toll rises

SUKKUR, Pakistan: Tens of millions of people across swathes of Pakistan were Monday battling the worst monsoon floods in a decade, with countless homes washed away, vital farmland destroyed, and the country's main river threatening to burst its banks. Climate Change Minister Sherry Rehman said a third of the country was under water, creating a "crisis of unimaginable proportions". Officials say 1,136 people have died since June when the seasonal rains began, but the final toll could be higher as hundreds of villages in the mountainous north have been cut off after flood-swollen rivers washed away roads and bridges.

The annual monsoon is essential for irrigating crops and replenishing lakes and dams across the Indian subcontinent, but it can also bring destruction. This year's flooding has affected more than 33



CHARSADDA, Pakistan: A family wades through a flood-hit area following heavy monsoon rains in this district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Aug 29, 2022. — AFP

million people - one in seven Pakistanis - said the National Disaster Management Authority. "It's all one big ocean, there's no dry land to pump the water out," Rehman told AFP, adding the economic cost would also be devastating.

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Greenland locked into sea level rise

PARIS: Even without any future global warming, Greenland's melting ice sheet will cause major sea level rise with potentially "ominous" implications over this century as temperatures continue to rise, according to a study published Monday. Rising sea levels - pushed up mainly by melting ice sheets on Greenland and Antarctica - are set to redraw the map over centuries and could eventually swamp land currently home to hundreds of millions of people, depending on humanity's efforts to halt warming.

The Greenland ice sheet is currently the main factor in swelling the Earth's oceans, according to NASA, with the Arctic region heating at a faster rate than the rest of the planet. In the new study, published in Nature Climate Change, glaciologists found that regardless of any future fossil fuel pollution, warming to date will cause

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Local

Environmental society warns beach signs are outdated as dangers lurk

KEPS investigative team surveys beaches and coastline



KUWAIT: Signboards seen at various beaches around Kuwait.

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: A team from the beach safari program of Kuwait Environment Protection Society conducted a survey of beaches and coasts to determine the readiness of beaches to receive visitors and assess the condition of the coast and the commitment of beachgoers to instructions.

Nawaf Al-Muwail, a member of the investigative team of the beach safari program, drew attention to the most prominent observations that were documented during the tour. The team found many of the signs are very old and have not been changed



Nawaf Al-Muwail

or modernized. "Despite cleaning the beaches daily by the municipality, with garbage containers placed at equal distances, the waste hidden in the sand and thrown on beaches raises questions about the culture of beachgoers and their commitment to the laws written clearly and sometimes in several languages," Muwail said.

"The responsibility for setting up directional signs for each beach is divided among the Municipality, Touristic Enterprises Co, Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources and Environment Public Authority," he added. Muwail pointed out the team found the signs did not match the general culture of the public, as some phrases are not appropriate today. In addition, some of signs are in conflict with environmental legislation and fines imposed by the environmental protection law 42 of 2014 for littering, which is not less than KD 50 and not more than KD 500," he said.

"The signs we find at Shuwaikh Beach baffle beachgoers. Also, the stench in the area may explain the reason this beach is devoid of visitors even on the most beautiful days of summer. The presence of cold water coolers is an important requirement for waterfronts, and their presence does not mean they work properly or that they are clean for users. The maintenance schedule and shelf life of the coolers is unknown," Muwail said. "There is also a need for clean public toilets, with services suitable for the public and with a capacity that suits the size of the beach and users. But this is a fantasy at public beaches," he said.

"There are many dangers that beachgoers face, including being ignorant of the dangers of stonfish hidden under and between exposed beach rocks. Signs must be placed on ways to avoid them and dealing with cases of injury. Colored flags should be placed to warn against dangerous creatures such as

vermin, jellyfish and feral animals on the rocky shores of Kuwait, such as near the Kuwait Towers and the Green Island area. Some beachgoers walk with pets, and it is always better to have clear signs for places designated for this, directions to dispose dog poo and special places to collect it," Muwail said.

"It is noticeable that the sign for the entrance to the beach car parks adjacent to Kuwait Towers, which is located in an area called Ras Agouza, indicates the possibility of swimming at this beach. But there is no sign that mentions the danger of the water there, and accidents have been repeated in this area," he said, indicating that all Kuwaiti beaches are devoid of lifeguards. Regarding security and safety measures, he said the biggest danger is the availability of jet skis for rent on some beaches, with no barriers between swimmers and jet ski riders. There is also no provision of wheelchairs or designated areas for riding sand buggies, he rued.

local spotlight

The lesson of history



By Dr Khalid Ahmad Al-Saleh

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"History teaches, but has no pupils" - Marxist Philosopher Antonio Gramsci

Because history is a teacher that does not pass its knowledge to anyone, we had to learn from it without attempting to become its students. This is a lost fact like many of life's facts, and there are some intellectuals here and there working hard to justify the lessons of history as if they inherited indulgences from it.

When Germany reached the peak of its civilization and was able to unify its nation under the banner of Nazism, it then adopted discrimination and spread strife. Leading intellectuals then thought we have reached the end of history. The dream faded in a few years and that civilization collapsed; rather its elements ended in the hands of its enemies to confirm its humiliation.

This was the largest lesson of history, and was always directed to leaders, because they are the key to victory, and failure too. You, the leader, no matter where you stand, will not succeed in managing people by force, and you will not succeed in managing them by spreading strife among them. No, you will not succeed.

All theories that were adopted and applied by leaders since Machiavelli and his ominous thoughts (a treatise was written by the Italian Niccolo Machiavelli in 1513 and published after his death in 1532, titled 'The Prince'.) All these theories proved to be a failure to lead individuals towards what is better.

If you are responsible for a group of individuals, be they many or few, do not attempt to lord over them by spreading disagreement among them. This is a major illusion, and you will only get failure from it. Even what you see as submission by those under your leadership is due to the negative spirit and carelessness, and not the success of the divide and conquer policy. Some leaders in our governments, regrettably, take it easy with the evil trifecta of injustice, discrimination and authoritarianism, and the result is increased struggle, low productivity and no creativity.

We are today in need of leaders who go forward in spreading the spirit of cooperation, equality and innovation - these are the ones who are able to fulfill the values of productive work our nation is in need of. Each failure in management is due to lack of values in the first place, and no matter how much we learn about management methods and its techniques, we will not succeed in development if we do not cease the practice of creating factions and spreading strife and discrimination.

A successful leader is one who spreads the spirit of love and only relies on the law as it is his measure, and the law is his stick with which he disciplines. The successful leader does not give a chance to strife makers and opportunists to reap the fruit of the successful. We see the successful leader loving hard workers, encouraging innovators and giving to those who deserve according to the values of successful leadership.

Some people think that who does this will be removed at the first opportunity. This may happen, but what that reformist has achieved, no matter how little, is better for the nation, more than those who spread strife and authoritarianism. Finally, leaders will go, and history remains to tell us the stories of success and failure - the story of nations whose leaders wanted to leap over the judgement of history and were crushed by the days, and leaders who understood the lessons of history and built glory for their nation that they are proud of. This is the difference.

Barjas meets Indian, Palestinian envoys

KUWAIT: Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Anwar Al-Barjas received the ambassadors of India and Palestine in his office at the headquarters of the ministry of interior on Tuesday.

Indian Ambassador Sibi George discussed bilateral relations, diaspora matters and means of further enhancing bilateral cooperation, especially in the security domain. He expressed his thanks and appreciation to Barjas for the good reception and the care and attention accorded to the Indian community in Kuwait.

Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub discussed a number of topics of common interest and the conditions of the Palestinian community in Kuwait. He thanked and appreciated the leadership, government and people of Kuwait for their continuous support to the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people.



KUWAIT: Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Anwar Al-Barjas meets Indian Ambassador Sibi George and Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub.



KUWAIT: Charge d'Affaires at US Embassy Jim Holtsnider tours an art exhibition at Boushehri Gallery. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh



Co-founder of Breathe Creativity Group Mohammad Ali poses with the artists.

US Embassy officials hail exhibition by female artists

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Charge d'Affaires at the US Embassy Jim Holtsnider visited on Sunday an art exhibition at Boushehri Gallery organized by Breathe Creativity Group titled "Art is Fine". "It's great to be at Boushehri Gallery and enjoy the art exhibition by female artists from around the region presenting terrific work, expressing their feelings, emotions and talking about how the region is changing dynamically," he said. "I

look forward to come back and see what is next for all these young female artists," he added.

Public Affairs Councilor Christy Watkins expressed her amazement over the exhibition. "I have been impressed with the art seen in Kuwait, especially in the current exhibition. I was really pleased to see female artists from around the region practice the freedom of expression; women being able to give their perspective in a variety of ways in different mediums of arts," she said.

"The US Embassy is always interested in art in Kuwait, learning about it, and perceptions and ideas from artists, in addition to sharing American art expertise. Therefore, we welcome the opportunity to be able to bring a visiting American artist and have an exhibition, so we can have a partnership with Kuwaiti artists as well," Watkins said.

Mohammad Ali, Co-founder of Breathe Creativity

Group, pointed out that the group is aiming to highlight the work of fine art artists in Kuwait. "Our purpose is to highlight fine art in Kuwait and get access to international exhibitions. We have participated in several exhibitions in Dubai, Bahrain and a sponsored exhibition with UNESCO in Greece, in addition to competitions we won with our great artists, such as Roua Al-Madani, who won first place in many competitions with more than 50 competitors every time," he said.

"This exhibition's participants were selected according to the quality of their artworks and artists who have a local imprint, due to the importance of this exhibition in Kuwait and our fine art artists, who came from several countries including Spain, Egypt, India, Lebanon and Jordan, not to mention Kuwaiti artists Amal Al-Jufairi, Rania Al-Rashid, Zahraa Al-Aradi, Mona Al-Tememi and all other great artists," Ali said.



KUWAIT: Security campaigns continue in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Mahboula, while surprise raids were held in Hawally and Farwaniya governorates to arrest residency violators and wanted persons and confront all forms of crime.

Local

PAM teams tour Mutlaa to enforce outdoor work ban

10 warnings issued to companies making laborers work during noon hours



KUWAIT: PAM inspection teams issue warnings for working during the afternoon hours in Mutlaa.

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) launched its final sudden inspection campaign on Monday at open work sites in Mutlaa to enforce the decision of prohibiting laborers from working in open areas from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. Ten warnings were issued. Hamad Al-Mekhyal, Head of the Occupational Safety Department of PAM in Jahra governorate, told Kuwait Times that based on resolution no. 535 of 2015 which stipulates that the employer is prohibited

to force laborers to work in open sites from 11 am to 4 pm from June 1 to Aug 31, the PAM team went on a sudden inspection campaign in order to protect them from working under harsh climatic conditions, which could threaten their safety.

"The National Center for Occupational Health and Safety of the Public Authority of Manpower has formed a team to examine the extent to which companies and workers are committed to implementing this decision. The team was present from the first of June until today to implement the decision and

inspect areas. We have warned more than 460 companies, including 600 workers, for violations. So far, we have not had any repeat violations, and the commitment on the part of the companies was 100 percent. Every month, the number of violations decreased," Mekhyal pointed out.

The occupational safety team held sudden visits to several worksites to give written warnings to those working there during the ban hours under the sun and dust. The workers will not be sanctioned - only the company and the contractors. If the violation persists,

legal action will be taken and fines will be imposed, ranging from KD 100 to 200 per worker, paid by the company.

From August 21 to 27, inspection teams toured 20 worksites and cited 20 laborers working during the ban hours, adding 20 companies were warned for the first time. Mekhyal said violating companies comply at a rate of 100 percent after they are warned, calling on the public to cooperate with it in reporting any laborers working during the ban period on the hotline 99523590.

Pakistani Embassy hosts diaspora for flood relief assistance

KUWAIT: A community gathering under the auspices of Pakistani Ambassador Malik Muhammad Farooq was held at the embassy on August 28, 2022. The ambassador apprised the prominent members of the Pakistani community about the latest situation of floods in the country. He underscored that not only human lives have been lost, but massive damage to livestock, infrastructure, and particularly houses has occurred.

Farooq further stated that we are in coordination

with the government of Kuwait and aid organizations, including Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), to mobilize assistance for the calamity-stricken people. The community members expressed their full support with the state and the people of Pakistan in this hour of need and disaster.

Very generous pledges for donations were made on the spot by the Pakistani diaspora, whose love for the country and the people was manifestly evident. The community leaders also promised that this is the beginning of the assistance and we shall not leave our Pakistani brethren alone in this hour of tribulation.

The ambassador noted with satisfaction that various Pakistan-based NGOs and charity organizations are in excellent coordination with the Pakistani diaspora in Kuwait to mitigate the sufferings of flood victims in Pakistan.



KUWAIT: Pakistani Ambassador Malik Muhammad Farooq meets prominent members of the Pakistani community on flood aid.



KUWAIT: Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi meets senior officials of the ministry. — KUNA

Info ministry gears up for coverage of upcoming election

KUWAIT: The information ministry has promised it would employ all potential to provide subjective, credible and highly professional coverage for the upcoming parliamentary election, slated for Sept 29. In a press statement late Sunday, ministry spokesperson Anwar Murad said Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi reviewed in a meeting with the ministry's senior officials the ministry's plan for covering the parliamentary election, starting from the

opening of candidacy until results are announced.

Murad revealed that Mutairi stressed all state TV and radio channels and social media platforms should do all that is in their power to provide the best coverage of election-related news and events. The minister underlined that the published and broadcast materials should highlight the strength of Kuwait's democracy, she said.

The spokesperson noted the minister also urged all the ministry sectors to abide by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's directives to all state bodies to contribute to "the path of correction" process to help Kuwait achieve progress, development in all domains and meet people's aspirations. For this reason, the ministry has chosen the theme "path correction" for its coverage of the upcoming 2022 National Assembly election, Murad pointed out. — KUNA



KUWAIT: There is a large presence of media personnel at the election department to cover filing of candidacies. — KUNA

Supervisory rotation in all government sectors

KUWAIT: After the transfer of the disability affairs department from the health ministry to the social affairs ministry, more transfer orders have been issued. "As soon as a decree has been finalized about the transfer, Minister of Commerce And Industry and Minister of Social Affairs and

Development Fahad Al-Shuraian will transfer the management of Kuwait Customs," sources revealed to Kuwait Times.

The transfer of the aforementioned entities along with the monetary investigation unit to the minister of finance, as well as the transfer of the supervision of the workforce commission to the minister of interior and the agriculture committee to the minister of Cabinet affairs comes within the government's plan to reshuffle the supervision of ministers over different sectors and committees.

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News in brief



Customs foils attempts to smuggle subsidized rations

KUWAIT: Kuwait Customs seized large quantities of subsidized (tamween) foodstuff being smuggled abroad. "A large amount of tamween products have been confiscated in Sulaibiya. They amounted to around 1,000 cans of milk and 400 bottles of oil among others," the customs announced. Legal measures are underway at the ministry of finance.



100 kg of hashish worth KD 250,000 seized

KUWAIT: The interior ministry announced the seizure of 100 kg of hashish that was brought from a nearby country by an expatriate. "The street value of the illegal products amounts to around KD 250,000. The contraband and the smuggler have been transferred to the drug enforcement department, where legal procedures will be taken," the public relations department of the ministry of interior announced.



Municipality shuts 18 violating basements

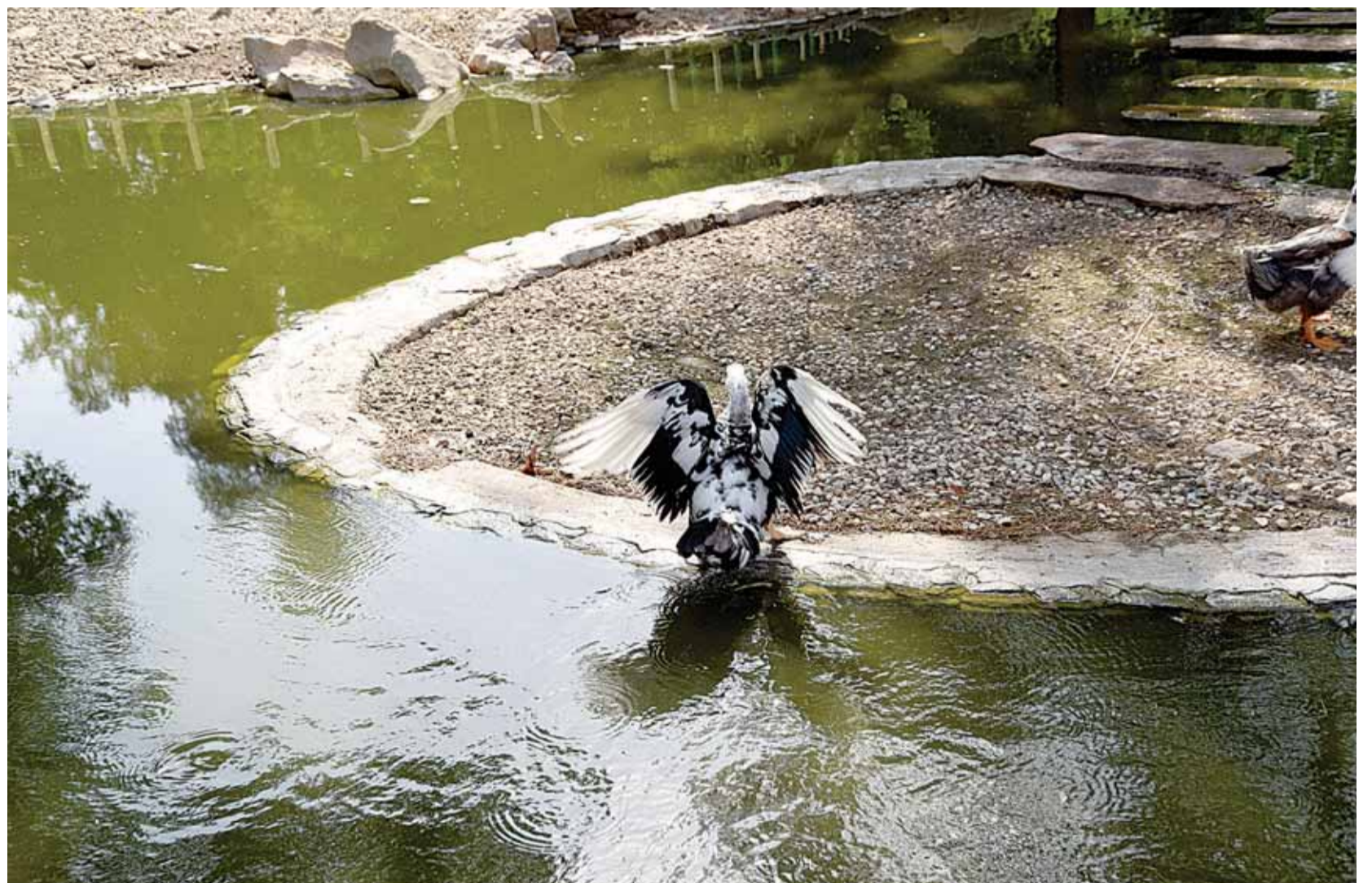
KUWAIT: A total of 91 citations have been issued to violating basements, with 18 shut down, 12 vacated and 42 blocked in the third week of a campaign by the Municipality and Kuwait Fire Force. "The campaign includes all areas of Kuwait in its third week against violating commercial buildings, from the rooftops to basements and stores that do not follow municipal regulations," the Municipality announced during a press conference. It added intensive campaigns will continue to inspect all governorates in order to ensure that regulations are being followed, and legal procedures will be taken if any violations or unlicensed activities are discovered.



Safat building fire controlled

KUWAIT: Three clothing material stores caught fire on Monday in Safat, the public relations department of Kuwait Fire Force said. "Squads from Hilali, Kuwait City and Hawally stations were dispatched. Upon arrival, they found the fire was on the second floor. It was controlled and total losses were only restricted to material goods," the department said. Investigations are underway on the cause of the fire.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: Ducks are seen at a garden in Shaab. —Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

KAC concludes summer training programs with INJAZ and LOYAC



Faisal Al-Gharib and Maen Razouqi with the INJAZ trainees.

KUWAIT: As part of its tireless efforts to encourage and promote youth, Kuwait Airways concluded its summer training programs, in cooperation and partnership with LOYAC and INJAZ, where the company hosted 44 male and female trainees consisting of university graduates and students, in an exceptional initiative to provide opportunities to train in the field of aviation.

The company organized a ceremony to honor the trainees for their efforts and for their outstanding performance during the training period. The honoring ceremony was attended by the Acting Chairman of Kuwait Airways Faisal Al-Gharib, Chief Executive Officer Maen Razouqi, CEO of the INJAZ program Laila Al-Mutairi and representative of LOYAC Sara Al-Qallaf.

Faisal Al-Gharib welcomed the attendees and trainees and said, "We at Kuwait Airways are pleased to host the talents of young men and women and are honored to sponsor and encourage them, as we place our hope and aspirations in them as the pillars for the future of Kuwait."

While addressing the attendees, Al-Gharib added: "Since its establishment in 1954, Kuwait Airways has always been a platform for creative and ambitious talents. Over the past decades, the Blue Bird has made clear and tangible achievements, accomplishments, and progress, attained through the successive generations with their efforts, determination, and dedication."

Al-Gharib continued: "The National Carrier of the State of Kuwait attaches great importance to training its national cadres to attain success that it accompanies since the previous years and as an integrated National Company is proud of its



Faisal Al-Gharib and Maen Razouqi with the LOYAC trainees.

employees in keeping pace with the developments in the world of aviation."

Al-Gharib added: "Kuwait Airways has always been and continues to support and encourage training programs, and places them among the most important priorities, not only for students, but also for its employees and related companies working in all the fields that are specialized in the aviation and air transport sector. The students and graduates from this program have been equipped in practical experience so that they are fully prepared to exercise their responsibilities and perform tasks to the fullest and with complete confidence. We have been keen on

developing the skills of trainees by providing them with the opportunity to discover the world of aviation, in an unparalleled experience with Kuwait Airways, which has had a positive impact in reaching the desired objectives."

Al-Gharib conveyed his sincere thanks and gratitude to the employees who extended their distinguished role, from the executive management to the various departments, in training and equipping the trainees and enhancing their skills. He also extended his best wishes to the trainees to devote their talents and expertise to serve the beloved country of Kuwait, the community and in the interest of the public.

ASEAN embassies to organize textile exhibition, workshops

KUWAIT: ASEAN embassies in Kuwait in collaboration with Al Sadu Weaving Cooperative Society is co-organizing "ASEAN Textile Exhibition & Craft Workshops" during September 1-6, 2022 at Sadu House. The exhibition is aimed at promoting ASEAN textiles as one of the world's textile her-

itages to the Kuwaiti public. It will spotlight the superb fabric, local garments and handmade clothes in both fashionable and national dresses.

At the exhibition, textiles and related products from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam's silk and cotton, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei's batik and the Philippines' tribal design fabrics will be beautifully presented.

Sadu House, the leading foundation of Kuwaiti textile heritage, will host the exhibition as well as the workshops during the six-day event. The daily workshops will provide fabric lesson classes on Indonesia's batik making, Thailand's silk cloth flower

creating, Philippines' bracelet weaving and Malaysia's traditional headgear folding.

ASEAN textiles are a treasury of the world and bear witness to the vast wealth of textile development from the 14th century until the present day. It is the first time in Kuwait that a splendid collection of textiles of ASEAN nations will be displayed together at the prestigious Sadu House of Kuwait.

The exhibition will be open to visitors in the first week of September from 10 am to 2 pm and 4 pm to 8 pm. Some textiles and handicrafts will also be available for sale to visitors of the event. Admission is free of charge.



IAEA chief taking team to Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuke plant

Tracy Chamoun launches bid for Lebanon presidency

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PRAGUE, Czech Republic: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (C) delivers a speech at the Charles University on August 29, 2022 in Prague, Czech Republic. —AFP

Scholz eyes 'sovereign, enlarged EU'

Germany backs 6 nations of western Balkans, Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine accede to the bloc

PRAGUE, Czech Republic: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Monday pledged emphatic backing for Ukraine and other hopefuls to join the European Union, underlining however that enlarging the bloc to "30 or 36" would require reforms.

In a speech laying out his vision for the EU during a visit to the Czech Republic, Scholz said Russia's invasion of Ukraine requires a "European answer to this watershed". The bloc needs to reduce its "one-sided dependencies", be it on the economic, energy or defence fronts, he urged, calling for a "geopolitical, sovereign and enlarged EU".

The German leader also underlined that he was "committed to" having the six nations of the western Balkans, Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine accede to the bloc. "Their EU accession is in our interest," said Scholz. But as the bloc widened, each member's veto right would have to go, he said, with a transition to a "majority voting" system so as not to slow EU decision-making down.

The Ukraine war is already putting the system of unanimity to the test, at a time when swift action is all the more necessary, Scholz said. "Let's seek compromise together," he added, suggesting that majority voting could be applied to sanctions policy for a start. Member states are also not faced with only two options of voting 'yes' or 'no', but can adopt "constructive abstention", he said.

Coordinated growth

The EU agreed candidacy status for Ukraine and Moldova in June, while Albania and North Macedonia in July joined Balkan neighbours Serbia and Montenegro in formal negotiations for membership with Brussels. But the road to accession was expected to be long, and in the meantime, Scholz said the European hopefuls should be included in a new political forum, as suggested by French President Emmanuel Macron "to discuss key issues that affect our continent as a whole".

The grouping would not however take the place of EU accession, said Scholz, stressing that promises to candidates "must be followed by deeds". The German leader also cracked open the door of Europe's borderless Schengen group to Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria, saying he will "work to see them become

full members"—something welcomed immediately by Romanian President Klaus Iohannis.

Scholz noted that the Ukraine war had also exposed the "uncoordinated shrinkage of European armed forces and defence budgets" over the last years, which had to be rectified with "coordinated growth". This meant greater cooperation between European businesses on armaments projects, joint manufacturing and procurement, he said.

Germany, he said, will be ramping up "very significantly" on its air defence system, and will design it in a way that it could also be a shield for European neighbours from the Baltics to Scandinavia. Scholz did not give details about the system but in March revealed plans to purchase an Israeli anti-missile shield system that could also offer protective cover for neighbouring EU states.

Berlin is meanwhile already coordinating with the Netherlands on a "division of labour" on arming Ukraine, said the German chancellor, as he urged other allies to join in the coordination. "I can, for example, imagine that Germany will assume special responsibility in terms of building up Ukraine's

artillery and air defence capacities," he said, vowing support for Kyiv for "as long as it takes".

Core values

Beyond defence, Scholz also eyed shedding "one-sided" reliance on energy imports but also that of other vital supplies like lithium or cobalt, for which demand from high-tech industries has boomed. While the EU should not seek to shut others out, it should work towards greater internal coordination, be it on energy supplies or simply vehicle charging points.

It should also hold fast to its founding principles for human rights and rule of law, he said. In reference to ongoing legal rows between the EU and Poland or Hungary over a slew of issues, Scholz said that in these countries, too, most people "want the EU to do more to stand up for freedom and democracy".

For Scholz, the EU commission could be given a "new way to launch infringement proceedings" on issues that breach core values of freedom, democracy or human rights. "Especially at this time, with autocracy challenging our democracies, it is more important than ever," he said. —AFP

Truss tipped to prevail as next UK leader

LONDON: The race to become Britain's next prime minister is in its final week, with Liz Truss appeared poised to secure the top job, along with daunting challenges. Foreign Secretary Truss, 47, has consistently outrun 42-year-old former finance minister Rishi Sunak by wide margins in polls of Conservative party members who will decide the contest, which started in early July.

An estimated 200,000 Tory grassroots have been able to vote since earlier this month for their preferred candidate, before postal and online ballots close on Friday. The winner will be announced next Monday and replaces outgoing leader Boris Johnson in Downing Street the following day—only to face immediate crises over the spiralling cost of living.

The unenviable job of leading Britain through its highest inflation in 40 years and warnings of an imminent recession arose after Johnson announced in early July that he would be standing down. It followed months of scandals that eventually triggered Sunak and dozens of other ministers to resign from government, forcing his departure.

However, some ministers and MPs—including Truss—remained loyal to the end, arguing Johnson deserved more time to turn around his controversy-tarred three-year tenure. Nearly 10,000 Tory mem-



PERTH, United Kingdom: File photo shows the contender to become the country's next Prime minister and leader of the Conservative party British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss is greeted by supporters as she arrives to attend a Conservative Party Hustings event in Perth. —AFP

bers are reportedly so angry at his enforced resignation they are pushing the ruling party to allow a vote over whether to accept it.

The Tory hierarchy is resisting the move while Downing Street has distanced itself from the campaign, insisting Johnson will back the winner of the leadership fight. Whoever that is may struggle to reunite the Conservatives, with the splits worsened by the bitter battle between Truss and Sunak.

Eight Conservative MPs initially qualified to run in

the race, before the party's MPs whittled that number down in five ballots. Sunak was the early frontrunner, topping all those votes of Conservative MPs while Truss repeatedly finished third.

She scraped into the final pairing on July 20 by just eight votes. However, once the run-off began she quickly became the frontrunner, winning the endorsements of big hitters in Johnson's outgoing cabinet and stealing the support of several MPs from her rival's camp. —AFP

Bolsonaro, Lula trade jabs in Brazil debate

SAO PAULO, Brazil: Sparks flew Sunday as far-right President Jair Bolsonaro accused leftist rival Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of massive corruption—and drew accusations of "destroying Brazil" in return—as they faced off in their first election debate.

The two front-runners, who waited until the last minute to confirm they would attend the first televised debate ahead of October's elections, wasted no time in attacking each other. Bolsonaro called Lula a "thief" in his opening salvo of the three-hour clash, pummeling the 76-year-old ex-president over the massive "Car Wash" corruption scandal centered on state-run oil giant Petrobras.

The investigation landed Lula in prison from 2018 to 2019 on controversial corruption charges—annulled by the Supreme Court last year. "Your government was the most corrupt in Brazilian history," said Bolsonaro, 67, rattling off figures from the scandal in a rapid-fire attack.

"It was a kleptocracy, a government based on robbery... What do you want to come back to power for? To do the same thing to Petrobras again?" Lula fired back that Bolsonaro was spreading "untruths"—one of several exchanges in which they accused each other of lying. He in turn accused the incumbent of trashing his legacy of economic growth and anti-poverty initiatives.

"This country has been destroyed," Lula said in his trademark gravelly voice, attacking Bolsonaro over increased poverty and hunger, soaring prices and a surge in the destruction of the Amazon rainforest. Dressing the part in dark suits and ties-striped blue



SAO PAULO, Brazil: Brazilian presidential candidates (L to R) Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (PT), Simone Tebet (MDB) and Jair Bolsonaro (PL) take part in the presidential debate ahead of the October 2 general election at Bandeirantes television network in Sao Paulo, Brazil. —AFP

for Bolsonaro, burgundy red for Lula—the front-runners had numerous fiery exchanges, but hewed to the rules and kept their demeanor relatively civilized.

With no audience in the studio, the tension surrounding the debate was especially palpable in the next room,

where journalists and politicians followed the debate on a screen. Pro-Lula lawmaker Andre Janones and Bolsonaro's former environment minister Ricardo Salles got into a raucous shouting match and came close to hitting each other before they were pulled away. —AFP

Swiss woman shows no remorse in 'IS' knife attack trial

BELLINZONA, Switzerland: A Swiss woman undergoing psychiatric treatment showed no remorse on Monday when she went on trial accused of trying to murder two women in the name of Islamic State.

"If I could go back, I would do it better... with accomplices," the 29-year-old Muslim told Switzerland's Federal Criminal Court. She said she had planned for "months, years" to "do something for the Islamic State (IS)" jihadist group and show that she was also "capable of carrying out a terrorist act".

The woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, is accused of committing a "terrorist act" on November 24, 2020 — a knife attack in the plush Manor department store in Lugano in southern Switzerland's Italian-speaking Ticino region. One of the two victims suffered a serious neck injury. The second sustained wounds on one hand and managed, with others, to control the assailant until the police arrived.

The woman was flanked by police officers as she appeared in court in Bellinzona, also in Ticino. A photograph of the neck injury was shown to the court, where the victim was attending the trial. "It didn't go as deeply as I thought," the accused woman observed, before repeating: "It has no effect on me."

Dressed in black, as stipulated by the court rules, the accused wore a long tunic, tights and, at the start of the hearing, a black face mask and a hoodie. She agreed to lower the hood after several minutes of discussion with her lawyer and the president of the court, the head of the three judges hearing the case. "I'm Muslim," she said, to justify her willingness to keep her head covered, before complying with the court rules.

According to the indictment issued by the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland, the accused "acted wilfully and with particular ruthlessness". It is alleged that she shouted "Allahu akbar (God is greatest)" several times and "I will avenge the Prophet Mohammed" (PBUH), and declared "I am here for IS".

During the opening hearings, the accused woman answered questions posed by the presiding judge. She appeared comfortable throughout the questioning and answered at length. The daughter of a Swiss father and a Serbian mother, the woman said she suffered epileptic seizures during her early childhood, while her adolescence was marked by anorexia. —AFP

International

Iran says nuke deal 'meaningless' without end to watchdog's probe

US adamant that Tehran cooperate with IAEA to clear up suspicions at three sites

TEHRAN, Iran: The Iranian president said Monday that reviving a 2015 atomic deal with world powers would be pointless unless the UN nuclear watchdog put an end to its probe of undeclared sites in the country.

Ebrahim Raisi's comments came as Tehran reviews the US response to its suggestions on a "final" text put forward by the EU to salvage the landmark deal. The United States had been adamant that Tehran cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to clear up suspicions about earlier work at three undeclared sites.

"In the negotiations, safeguard issues are one of the fundamental ones. All of the safeguard issues must be resolved," Raisi told reporters at a news conference in the capital Tehran. "Without resolving the safeguard issues, talking about the agreement is meaningless," he added.

The IAEA has referred to the traces of nuclear materials as a "safeguards" issue. Iran has repeatedly urged the agency to end the issue before any revived deal is implemented, but US State Department spokesman Vedant Patel on Thursday said "we do not believe there should be any conditionality" between the deal and undeclared sites.

In June, the IAEA's board of governors adopted a resolution censuring Iran for failing to adequately explain the previous discovery of traces of enriched uranium at three sites not declared by Tehran as having hosted nuclear activities.

Last week, amid rising hopes of a revived deal, IAEA chief Rafael Grossi, in an interview with CNN, rejected the idea of the agency closing its probe without receiving answers. "This idea that politically we are going to stop doing our job is unacceptable for us," he said. "So far Iran has not given us the technically credible explanations we need."

The agreement between Iran and six world pow-



"There's no benefit in a meeting"

ers-Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States-gave the Islamic republic sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program.

No plan to meet Biden

Since taking office in 2021, President Joe Biden has sought to return the US to the deal unilaterally abandoned by his predecessor Donald Trump in

2018. The Vienna talks, which began in April last year, aim to return the US to the nuclear pact, including through the lifting of sanctions on Iran, and to return Tehran to full compliance with its commitments.

The indirect negotiations between Tehran and Washington have so far been carried out through the mediation of the European Union. Asked if he will meet with Biden during the UN General Assembly next month, Raisi reiterated his position by saying "No".

"There's no benefit in a meeting between me and him... There is no plan for such a meeting and there will not be any," he added. Zionist entity, Iran's arch-enemy, has been pushing its ally, the United States, as well as other Western countries to stop the nuclear negotiations with Tehran.

Zionist Prime Minister Yair Lapid on Sunday said any new agreement with Tehran would have to include an expiration date, and tighter supervision that would also "address Iran's ballistic missile program".

"We can reach such an agreement if a credible military threat is put on the table," Lapid added. Raisi said that actions by Israel including "the assassination of (Iranian) nuclear scientists" and "acts of sabotage" against nuclear facilities could "not stop" Iran's nuclear program.

He also warned Israel that it "may not have the time to act if it decides to do something" against



TEHRAN: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi speaks during a press conference in Tehran on August 29, 2022. —AFP

Iran. The 2015 deal, known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, aimed to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon—something it has always denied wanting to do. "Nuclear weapons have no place in our defence doctrine," Raisi stressed. —AFP

Tracy Chamoun launches bid for Lebanon presidency

BEIRUT: Tracy Chamoun, an ex-ambassador and granddaughter of late president Camille Chamoun, announced Monday she will run for the presidency of crisis-hit Lebanon, in a rare such bid by a woman in the Arab state.

"I announce to the Lebanese people, and their lawmakers... my candidacy in Lebanon's upcoming presidential elections," Chamoun told a news conference marking the launch of her campaign for the post, which is reserved for Lebanon's Maronite Christians.

"I have a new vision for the republic, one that can offer solutions to the economic, political and social problems," plagues the state, she added, styling herself as a bulwark against the incumbent ruling class.

Elections are expected to be held before Michel Aoun's six-year presidential mandate expires in October, but many expect delays in light of deep political divisions. Chamoun's candidacy is a rare move in a country that saw its first female presidential candidate in 2014, when little-known lawyer Nadine Moussa decided to run.

It took Lebanon's bitterly divided political class more than two years to elect Aoun in 2016 — a delay the country can ill afford this time around in light of an unprecedented economic crisis. Despite mounting woes, parliament has rarely met since it was elected in May.

Chamoun served as Lebanon's ambassador to Jordan for three years before stepping down in



BEIRUT: Tracy Chamoun, Lebanese ex-ambassador and granddaughter of late president Camille Chamoun, holds a press conference to announce her bid for the Presidency in the upcoming vote, in the capital Beirut on August 29, 2022. —AFP

August 2020 in the wake of a monster explosion at Beirut's port that she and many others blamed on government ineptitude.

She is the founder of the Liberal Democrats Party of Lebanon—one of the first in the country to be established by a woman but which has little political sway. The former ambassador is a granddaughter of Camille Chamoun, who was Lebanon's president from 1952 to 1958. Her father Dany Chamoun was assassinated in 1990, a murder blamed on rival Christian leader Samir Geagea. Geagea, who is also expected run for president, was convicted in 1994 for Chamoun's killing—a charge he denies as politically motivated. —AFP

10 Yemen soldiers killed in 'dangerous escalation': Govt

DUBAI: Ten Yemeni soldiers were killed in an overnight rebel attack near the blockaded city of Taz, Yemen's government said on Monday, calling it a "dangerous escalation" after a months-long ceasefire. The assault, which also left several soldiers wounded, was aimed at cutting off a key route to the southwestern city of about two million, the government said. The Iran-backed Huthi rebels have blocked main roads into Taz since 2015, the same year that a Saudi-led coalition intervened in the conflict.

Detroit gunman nabbed by US police

WASHINGTON: Police in the US city of Detroit on Sunday caught a suspect believed to have shot four people at "random", killing three of them, authorities said. The Midwestern city's police chief, James White, told media that the first three victims—two women and a man—were found shot multiple times in separate locations around Detroit in the early hours of the morning.

A fourth man spotted the suspect peering into car windows and told him to stop, White said. The

Yemen's warring parties have been observing a ceasefire since April, bringing a drastic reduction in hostilities although small-scale fighting has continued. The Taz attack was a "blatant challenge to all initiatives and efforts seeking to end the war and achieve peace", Yemen's internationally recognised government said in a statement.

It was "an attempt to undermine efforts to expand and extend the humanitarian truce", it added. Military sources said the rebels, who hold much of Yemen including the capital Sanaa, were trying to cut off the road linking Taz with government-controlled Lahj. The rebels infiltrated army sites and clashed with government soldiers in a battle fought on multiple fronts, they said. No detail was available on rebel casualties. Also on Monday, 16 human rights groups made a joint appeal for the Huthis to open roads into Taz to ease growing humanitarian problems in Yemen's third-biggest city. — AFP

suspect shot him once. Three of the victims died and one survived, police told local media. The shootings appear "to be very random," White told a press conference. "One was waiting on a bus, one was walking his dog, and one was just on the street," he said. By around 9 pm local time (0100 GMT), Detroit mayor Mike Duggan announced that the suspect was found and detained.

"We got him," Duggan said in a tweet. "With the help of critical information from the community and strong support from (law enforcement), Detroit police officers took the suspect into custody today without incident." The Detroit shootings were not the only incident of deadly gun violence in the United States on Sunday. Authorities in the Texas city of Houston said that three people were shot dead there by a gunman who first set fire to their home. —AFP

Candidates confident Kuwait...

Continued from Page 1

There were eight women among the 115 candidates. Of the candidates, 27 filed in the fourth constituency, 26 in the second, 23 in the fifth, 21 in the third and 18 candidates in the first district. Among the candidates, there were 16 members of the former Assembly which was dissolved last month over political disputes. Seven former MPs from previous parliaments also filed to run in the polls. Registration will continue for 10 days, ending on Sept 7. Withdrawal from the race is open and will continue until seven days before election day.

Former opposition MP Khaled Al-Otaibi said "the next Assembly will be the most important in the entire political history of Kuwait". It will place the cornerstone for the coming era, he added. Ex-opposition MP Thamer Al-Suwai said "the Kuwaiti people want to regain the house of the people and they are optimistic". "Today, we have launched a new era which began with the historical Amiri speech," ex-MP Saifi Al-Saifi said.

Former pro-government MP Hisham Al-Saleh called for calm and political stability for the sake of development programs. Former opposition MP Muhammad Al-Sayer said the Kuwaiti people played a pivotal role in ending the previous political era, which was "the worst in the history of the country". Former MP Abdulaziz Al-Saqaabi said Kuwait is at a crucial crossroads "and we must prepare a national reforms program".

Meanwhile, the Cabinet decided Monday to suspend work at all government bodies on Thursday, Sept 29, declaring it a day off. The decision, posted to the Cabinet's Twitter account, is based on Cabinet decree 147 of 2022 published on Tuesday in the official gazette, to invite voters to elect new members of the National Assembly on Sept 29.

The Cabinet also accepted the resignation of Essa Al-Kandari, Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Urban Development and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs. It assigned Deputy Premier, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Mohammad Al-Fares as Acting Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs. The Cabinet assigned Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications and IT Affairs Rana Al-Fares as Acting Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Urban Development.

and home to an ageing colonial-era barrage on the Indus River that is vital to preventing further catastrophe, one farmer lamented the devastation wrought on his rice fields. Millions of acres of rich farmland have been flooded by weeks of non-stop rain, but now the Indus is threatening to burst its banks as torrents of water course downstream from tributaries in the north. "Our crop spanned over 5,000 acres on which the best quality rice was sown and is eaten by you and us," Khalil Ahmed, 70, told AFP. "All that is finished."

Much of Sindh is now an endless landscape of water, hampering a massive military-led relief operation. "There are no landing strips or approaches available... our pilots find it difficult to land," one senior officer told AFP. The army's helicopters were also struggling to pluck people to safety in the north, where soaring mountains and deep valleys make for treacherous flying conditions.— AFP

Deadly clashes, curfew as Sadr...

Continued from Page 1

Security forces later patrolled the capital. Calling the developments "an extremely dangerous escalation", the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) urged "all" sides to "refrain from acts that could lead to an unstoppable chain of events". "The very survival of the state is at stake," it warned. The United States also urged calm amid the "disturbing" reports of unrest in Baghdad. Protests later spread to other parts of the country, with Sadr followers storming government buildings in the southern cities of Nasiriyah and Hillah, an AFP correspondent and witnesses said, with some roads also blocked in Hillah.

Iraq has been mired in political deadlock since legislative elections in October last year, due to disagreement between Shiite factions over forming a coalition. Shortly after he made his surprise declaration, Sadr's followers burst into the Republican

Palace, where cabinet meetings are usually held. Inside the opulent palace, protesters lounged in armchairs in a meeting room, some waved Iraqi flags and took photographs of themselves, and others cooled off in a swimming pool in the garden, in scenes reminiscent of anti-government protests in Sri Lanka last month.

Sadr - a grey-bearded preacher with millions of devoted followers, who once led a militia against American and Iraqi government forces - announced earlier on Monday on Twitter he was stepping back from politics. "I've decided not to meddle in political affairs. I therefore announce now my definitive retirement," said Sadr, a longtime player in the war-torn country's political scene, though he himself has never directly been in government. He added that "all the institutions" linked to his Sadrist movement will be closed, except the mausoleum of his father, assassinated in 1999, and other heritage facilities.

His latest statement came two days after he said "all parties" including his own should give up government positions in order to help resolve the political crisis. His bloc emerged from last year's election as the biggest, with 73 seats, but short of a majority. In June, his lawmakers quit in a bid to break the logjam, which led to the Coordination Framework becoming the largest bloc in the legislature. — AFP

Third of Pakistan under water as...

Continued from Page 1

This year's floods are comparable to those of 2010 - the worst on record - when more than 2,000 people died. Flood victims have taken refuge in makeshift camps that have sprung up across the country, where desperation is setting in. "Living here is miserable. Our self-respect is at stake," said Fazal e Malik, sheltering in the grounds of a school now home to around 2,500 people in the town of Nowshera in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. "I stink but there is no place to take a shower. There are no fans."

Near Sukkur, a city in southern Sindh province

Greenland locked into sea level...

Continued from Page 1

the Greenland ice sheet to shed 3.3 percent of its volume, committing 27.4 cm to sea level rise.

While the researchers were not able to give an exact timeframe, they said most of it could happen by 2100 - meaning that current modelled projections of sea level rise could be understating the risks this century. The "shocking" results are also a lowest estimate because they do not take future warming into account, said lead author Jason Box, of the National Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland.

"It's a conservative lower bound. The climate has only to continue warming around Greenland for more commitment," he told AFP. If the high levels of melting seen in 2012 became an annual occurrence, the study estimated sea-level rise could be around 78 cm, enough to swamp vast swathes of low-lying coastlines and supercharge floods and storm surges.

This should serve "as an ominous prognosis for Greenland's trajectory through a 21st century of warming", the authors said. In a landmark report on climate science last year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said the Greenland ice sheet would contribute an estimated maximum of 18cm to sea level rise by 2100 under the highest emissions scenario.

Box, who was an author on that report, said his team's latest research suggests those estimates are "too low". — AFP

International

IAEA chief Rafael Grossi taking team to Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant

UN has called for an end to all military activity in the area surrounding the complex

KYIV: International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi said on Monday he was en route to inspect Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, which has been targeted by fresh shelling over the past day, according to its operator.

The Zaporizhzhia plant—Europe's largest atomic facility—has been occupied by Russian troops since the start of the war. Moscow and Kyiv are trading blame for shelling around the complex of six Soviet-designed nuclear reactors in the city of Enerhodar, in southern Ukraine.

Last week the plant was briefly cut off from the national grid for the first time in its four-decade history owing to Russian shelling of the last working power line, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said. Over the weekend, Ukrainian nuclear agency Energoatom, which operates the plant, warned of the risk of a radiation leak.

Nevertheless, "during the last day, the Russian military continued to fire at Enerhodar and the site of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant", the agency said on Monday morning. Ten people were injured, including four plant workers, and as of 10:00 am (0700 GMT) the plant "operates with the risk of violating radiation and fire safety standards", Energoatom said on Telegram.

"The occupiers, preparing for the arrival of the IAEA mission, increased pressure on the personnel of the plant to prevent them from disclosing evidence of the occupiers' crimes at the plant and its use as a military base," it added.

Long-awaited visit

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has for months been asking to visit the site, warning of "the very real risk of a nuclear disaster". On Monday

Grossi said "the day has come" and that an IAEA support and assistance mission is "now on its way".

On Twitter the IAEA director general said the team from the UN nuclear watchdog would arrive at the power plant "later this week". In a photograph accompanying his tweet, Grossi posed with a team of 13 people wearing caps and sleeveless jackets bearing the IAEA logo.

The United Nations has called for an end to all military activity in the area surrounding the complex. Ukraine initially feared an IAEA visit would legitimise the Russian occupation of the site before finally supporting the idea of a mission.

The G7 industrial powers on Monday demanded access "without impediment" for the IAEA team. They must be allowed to "engage directly, and without interference, with the Ukrainian personnel responsible for operating these facilities", the G7 Non-Proliferation Directors Group said in a statement. But Ukraine's foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, said in Stockholm: "This mission will be the hardest in the history of the IAEA, given the active combat activities undertaken

by the Russian federation on the ground and also the very blatant way that Russia is trying to legitimise its presence". Last week the advisor to the Ukrainian energy minister said she was sceptical the team would even reach the plant. Advisor Lana Zerkal told Ukraine's Radio NV that Russia was "artificially creating all the conditions so that the mission will not reach the site", despite formally agreeing to the inspection.

Ukraine was the site of the world's worst nuclear catastrophe in 1986, when a reactor at the northern Chernobyl plant exploded and spewed radiation into the atmosphere. Experts say any leak at Zaporizhzhia



PARIS: This picture released shows International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi (C) pose with a team of 13 people wearing caps and sleeveless jackets bearing the nuclear watchdog's logo. —AFP

would more likely be on the scale of the 2011 Fukushima disaster in Japan.

Energoatom warned on Monday that any leak would scatter radiation over swathes of southern Ukraine and south-western regions of Russia.

Counter-accusations

Kyiv suspects Moscow intends to divert power from the Zaporizhzhia plant to the Crimean Peninsula, annexed by Russia in 2014. But Russia insists Ukraine is responsible for shelling around the complex.

Russia's defence ministry said on Saturday that Ukrainian forces had "shelled the territory of the station three times" from the town of Marganets across the Dnipro River. The ministry accused Kyiv of "nuclear terrorism" and said shells had landed near areas storing fresh nuclear fuel and radioactive waste.

Radiation levels at the plant "remain normal", it said. But residents in the Ukraine-held areas around the plant are being equipped with iodine pills to reduce the medical risk of radiation in the event of a disaster. —AFP

Pope creates new cardinals who may choose successor

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis created 20 new cardinals picked from the four corners of the world, most of whom could one day end up choosing his successor. Francis has raised the possibility of retiring due to his declining health, a path taken by his predecessor Benedict XVI. If he were to do so, a conclave involving all cardinals aged under 80 would be called to pick a successor.

Sixteen of the 20 cardinals created would be eligible for that conclave based on their ages. The ceremony at St. Peter's Basilica was the 85-year-old pope's eighth since being elected in 2013 and included clergy known for their pastoral work and, in some cases, progressive views. All parts of the globe were represented in his selection, including new cardinals from Brazil and Nigeria, Singapore and East Timor, among others. They each knelt before the pontiff, who presented them with the red square cap and ring typical of their new station.

"A cardinal loves the Church... by dealing with the big issues as well as the small ones, by meeting the great people of this world as well as the smallest, who are great before God," said the pope, who arrived in a wheelchair but seemed in good shape.

All new cardinals attended the ceremony, except for Ghana's Richard Kuia Baawobr who had to be hospitalised over a cardiac issue. After this weekend, Francis will have chosen 83 out of the 132 cardinals currently qualified to elect a new pope.

That is nearly two-thirds of the total and precisely the percentage needed for any proposed name to pass. In recent months, the pope has been forced to rely on a wheelchair due to knee pain, which he has said is inoperable. He also suffers from sciatica, a chronic nerve condition that causes pain in his hip.



VATICAN CITY: This photo handout shows Pope Francis (R) and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI (C) meeting with new Cardinals following a consistory to create 20 new cardinals in The Vatican. —AFP

Future clues?

The new cardinals are always scrutinised by Vatican observers for clues as to the future direction of the Church and its 1.3 billion faithful. Experts caution, however, that cardinals named by one pope do not necessarily choose successors in their likeness.

The Argentine pontiff has this year completed a major shake-up of the Vatican's powerful governing body, the Roman Curia, which makes winning new converts a priority.

In keeping with his focus on making the Church more inclusive, transparent and responsive to the needs of the poor and marginalised, Francis has chosen two Africans and five Asians, including two cardinals who hail from India.

Vatican expert Bernard Lecomte told AFP the pope's choices are "representative of the Church today, with a

large spot for the southern hemisphere", where 80 percent of the world's Catholics live. Virgilio Do Carmo Da Silva, the archbishop of Dili, will on Saturday become the first cardinal of tiny East Timor, an overwhelmingly Catholic nation in Southeast Asia.

The pope has also felt free to bypass the archbishops of major cities to choose those from less powerful seats, such as Robert McElroy, the 68-year-old bishop of San Diego, California. McElroy has supported gay Catholics and criticised moves to deny Communion to US politicians-like President Joe Biden—who support abortion.

The pope will also create the youngest cardinal in the world, 48-year-old Italian missionary Giorgio Marengo, who works in Mongolia. The new crop of cardinals also includes Nigeria's Peter Okpaleke, the bishop of Ekwulobia, and Leonardo Ulrich Steiner, archbishop of Manaus, Brazil. —AFP

Turkey frees pop star after public outcry

ISTANBUL, Turkey: An Istanbul court Monday ordered the release pending trial of one of Turkey's biggest pop stars, after her jailing over a religious joke sparked an outcry among fans and government foes.

Singer Gulsen Bayraktar Colakoglu, 46, who uses her first name on stage, was jailed last Thursday on charges of "inciting hatred" over a quip about religious schools. Although she made the joke on stage in April, it went viral on social

media after being re-posted by a pro-government daily last week.

Top members of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Islamic-rooted party then voiced moral outrage, turning her joke into another divisive issue roiling the polarised country 10 months before Turks vote in crunch polls.

Gulsen had quipped that her guitarist's "perversion" was rooted in his upbringing in an Imam Hatip school, which specialises in religious education combined with a modern curriculum.

Erdogan himself went to such a school. Following the decision last week to jail the singer, her lawyer immediately appealed. A court on Monday ruled that Gulsen should be placed under house arrest pending trial, which could see Gulsen jailed for up to three years.

"We are very happy about the decision," Gulsen's lawyer Emek Emre said outside the courtroom, while adding that placing his client under house arrest was "incompatible with the law". Most Imam Hatip schools were closed after the 1997 ousting of an Islamic-rooted government by the military. Their number began to grow when Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002. Turkey is a predominantly Muslim but officially secular state. Erdogan has often said his goal was to raise "pious generations".

This creates enormous tensions with more liberal Turks, who fear that Erdogan's rule is undermining the republic's secular foundations. Gulsen said she was sorry that her joke was being used to stir up further divisions.



Gulsen Bayraktar Colakoglu

"I am sorry that my words gave material to malicious people who aim to polarise our country," she said on her social media accounts before being placed behind bars. Gulsen emerged in the 1990s, with her first video clip featuring her in pyjamas. —AFP

China prosecutes 28 for restaurant attack on women

BEIJING, China: Chinese prosecutors said Monday they had launched criminal proceedings against 28 people suspected of assaulting a group of women in a viral incident that sparked outrage over gender-based violence in the country.

Footage of a group of men assaulting four women at a barbecue restaurant in Tangshan, east of the capital Beijing, was shared widely online, renewing

debate about violence against women in China. The men carried out the assault after the women rejected their advances, the footage showed.

Prosecutors in Hebei province said they would begin legal proceedings against the suspects — including seven directly involved in the assault — after they obtained "reliable and sufficient" evidence. The statement, shared on China's Twitter-like Weibo service, did not specify a criminal charge.

Police identified the prime suspect in the attack as "Chen", saying he "recklessly used violence to commit evil", according to state broadcaster CCTV. Following the attack Tangshan authorities sacked the city's deputy police chief and five other police officers, and also launched a crackdown against organised crime.

Discussion of feminism has grown in the country despite pressure from its patriarchal society, widespread censorship and patchy legal support for victims. But viral online essays slamming the attack as symbolic of the country's larger problem of gender-based violence were censored.

Two women were hospitalised following the incident and two others sustained minor injuries, authorities said. Women's rights campaigners say domestic abuse remains pervasive and under-reported in China, while prominent feminists also face regular police harassment and detention.

Local journalists who travelled to Tangshan to seek information about the victims were harassed, intimidated and even detained, according to the US-based Committee to Protect Journalists. —AFP

News in brief

Protester shot by HK police convicted

HONG KONG: An unarmed Hong Kong man who was shot by police during democracy protests three years ago was convicted on Monday of multiple charges—including trying to steal the firearm that struck him. Chow Pak-kwan, 23, was shot at point-blank range by a traffic officer outside a subway station in November 2019 when protesters had called a citywide strike. The shooting was captured on a live Facebook broadcast. It showed the officer drawing his gun and pointing towards protesters blocking the road. He briefly grappled with a protester wearing white, as Chow approached. He then fired at Chow, hitting him in the stomach. Chow lost his right kidney and suffered wounds in his liver and spine. He was later charged with trying to steal the officer's firearm, obstructing police and attempting to escape custody when he momentarily freed himself and ran a few yards despite the gunshot wound. —AFP

Commando dies after US shooting

THE HAGUE, Netherlands: One of three Dutch special forces soldiers wounded in a shooting outside their hotel in the US city of Indianapolis has died, the Dutch defence ministry said on Monday. The three men, who were in the United States for training, were off duty when the incident happened in the early hours of Saturday, it said. Local US media said the shooting may have followed an earlier altercation and was not random. "The Dutch commando who was in a critical condition in a hospital in the American city of Indianapolis died of his injuries last night," a defence ministry statement said. "His family and colleagues were at his side." The two other soldiers are both conscious and able to speak, it added. All three soldiers were from the Dutch commando corps, the special forces unit of the Netherlands' armed forces. —AFP

Fire extinguished on ferry off Sweden with 300 aboard

STOCKHOLM, Sweden: A fire that broke out on a car ferry carrying 300 people off Sweden's coast on Monday has been extinguished and the ship will be towed to port, Swedish maritime authorities said.

The blaze appeared to have started on a refrigeration lorry on the car deck of the Stena Scandinica, which was sailing from Sweden to Latvia. "The fire is out," Swedish Maritime Administration spokeswoman Lisa Mjorning told AFP.

"The ferry will be towed to port in the next three to four hours", she said, adding that it would be towed to Nynashamn, south of Stockholm. The 300 people on board had remained on the vessel, she added, correcting earlier information that an evacuation had begun. "There are no injuries on board and there has been no evacuation," she said. Earlier, a spokesman for the company Stena Line operating the ferry, Stefan Elfstrom, had said it was "a limited fire ... concentrated to a cooling truck on the car deck." —AFP

Business

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022

‘Quiet quitting’ raising a din in stressful US workplaces

Americans push back against the stifling trap of constant connectivity

WASHINGTON: They are drawing a line at the 40-hour work week, limiting after-hours calls and emails and generally, if softly, saying “no” more often—some American workers are embracing the concept of “quiet quitting” as they push back against what some see as the stifling trap of constant connectivity.

Maggie Perkins—who lives in Athens, Georgia—was racking up 60-hour weeks as a matter of course in her job as a teacher, but the 30-year-old realized after her first child was born that something was wrong. “There’s pictures of me grading papers on an airplane on the way to vacation. I did not have a work-life balance,” Perkins explains in a TikTok video about how she chose—though she did not have a name for it back then—to begin “quiet quitting.”

Perkins told AFP she eventually left her job to pursue a PhD, but remains an advocate for her former colleagues—producing videos and podcasts with practical tips on making their workload fit inside their workday. “Adopting this ‘quiet quitting’ mindset really just means that you are establishing a boundary that helps you to do your job when you are paid to do it—and then you can leave that, and go home and be a human with your family,” she says.

Work-life balance or slacking?

The buzzword seems to have first surfaced in a July TikTok post. In the words of user @zaidlep-pelin, “You’re not outright quitting your job but you’re quitting the idea of going above and beyond. You’re still performing your duties but you’re no longer subscribing to the hustle culture mentality

that work has to be your life.”

That post went viral, drawing nearly a half-million likes. Responses bubbled over with a sense of shared resentment—and newspaper columnists spilled ink all summer trying to decipher the phenomenon.

For the debate soon erupted: Are “quiet quitters” merely trying to draw boundaries in pursuit of a reasonable work-life balance, more associated with a European lifestyle than with always-on US work culture? Are they slackers with a trendy new name? Or are they people at genuine risk of burnout—who would do best to quit outright?

Data suggests the need for greater balance is real. On-the-job stress rose from 38 percent of those polled in 2019 to 43 percent the following year as COVID-19 upended the world of work, Gallup found, with women in the United States and Canada facing the most pressure.

Similar dynamics helped fuel the “Great Resignation”—the surge in employees leaving or switching jobs amid pandemic-related pressures. Many “quiet quitters” say they are perfectly willing to work hard, but only for the hours the job is meant to entail. Their motto: “act your wage.”

Some observers are skeptical, of course, contending that offices have always had their share of clock-watchers and prickly workers claiming certain tasks are not their responsibility.

Going further, Arianna Huffington, founder of the Huffington Post, panned the phenomenon as “a step toward quitting on life.” But former US labor secretary Robert Reich summed up the forceful-counter-argument, saying “Workers aren’t ‘quiet quitting.’ They’re refusing to be exploited for their labor.”



NEW YORK: People walk through a busy midtown Manhattan. — AFP

A case in point: the experience of Bess, who asked not to be identified by her real name, illustrates how COVID allowed some jobs to spill far outside their normal boundaries.

She was hired shortly before the pandemic in a job originally meant to involve regular trips to Germany. But, she told AFP, COVID left her stuck in her New York apartment, having to take phone calls as early as 3:00 am due to the time difference.

Out of self-preservation, she began to dial back her efforts—which her American friends had trouble understanding.

“There is that stigma—you put your blood, sweat and tears into your job in the US, and if you don’t work, you don’t deserve to be here,” she said. “After six months of dread,” Bess explains, she simply stopped answering emails for several weeks—and ultimately parted ways with her company. —AFP

Ambani commits \$25bn to launch 5G in India

MUMBAI: Indian billionaire Mukesh Ambani on Monday announced an investment of \$25 billion to launch 5G networks in India, aiming to strengthen his grip on one of the world’s fastest-growing smartphone markets. In his annual speech delivered virtually to shareholders of Reliance Industries—India’s most valuable company—Asia’s second-richest person said he believes “digital freedom is the birthright of every Indian.”

Ambani’s multi-billion-dollar empire was built on oil and petrochemicals, but he has diversified into new areas including telecoms, retail and renewable energy in recent years.

The launch of telecom arm Jio—offering ultra-cheap data at high speeds—in 2016 sparked a brutal price war, forcing competitors into years of losses. Earlier this month, Jio swept up more than a third of the available spectrum in India’s first-ever 5G airwave auction, bidding 881 billion rupees (\$11 billion).

Announcing an investment of two trillion rupees (\$25 billion), Ambani said Jio will launch 5G service

es in major cities including Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai in time for the Indian festival of Diwali in late October. A pan-India roll-out will follow, Ambani said, with an aim to cover every district in the country by December 2023 — an area of 3.3 million square kilometers.

“We are committed to make India the largest data-powered economy in the world, even ahead of China and the United States. Jio 5G will be the world’s largest and most advanced 5G network,” Ambani said. Global tech giants such as Google, Facebook owner Meta, Intel and Qualcomm have invested billions of dollars into Reliance’s digital unit Jio Platforms in recent years.

A newly-launched collaboration between Meta and Jio will allow users to shop for groceries via instant messaging app WhatsApp, Ambani said.

“This is our first-ever end-to-end shopping experience on WhatsApp—people can now buy groceries from JioMart right in a chat,” Facebook founder and Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg said in a Facebook post. In June, Ambani’s 30-year-old son Akash was appointed chairman of Jio Infocomm, a subsidiary of Jio Platforms, sparking speculation about succession planning.

Ambani stopped short of announcing leadership changes at Monday’s AGM, instead asking shareholders to extend their blessings to his three children Isha, Akash and Anant. The 65-year-old business tycoon was until this year Asia’s richest person



GANDHINAGAR, India: In this file photo taken on August 29, 2019, chairman of Pandit Dindayal Petroleum University (PDPUI) and businessman Mukesh Ambani speaks during 7th Convocation ceremony at the PDPUI campus in Gandhinagar. — AFP

but was unseated by fellow Indian billionaire Gautam Adani.

India is home to the second-highest number of smartphone users after China. The country’s long-delayed 5G push comes as the world’s sixth-largest economy tries to bridge a technology gap with rivals such as South Korea, China and the United States. Shares in Reliance Industries closed 0.69 percent lower in Mumbai following the announcements. —AFP

Oil prices rise on possible OPEC+ cuts, Libya conflict

LONDON: Oil prices jumped on Monday amid the possibility of Saudi Arabia and its allies at Opec+ cutting output to counter market volatility, as well as fears of supply disruptions in Libya, which is facing political conflict. Brent, the benchmark for two thirds of the world’s oil, was trading 0.56 per cent higher at \$101.56 a barrel at 12.06 pm Kuwait time. West Texas Intermediate, the gauge that tracks US crude, was up 0.76 per cent at \$93.77 a barrel.

Oil prices have remained volatile, dipping in the past few weeks amid investor concern about a looming recession. US Federal Reserve chairman Jerome Powell’s comments on Friday, indicating the continuation of tighter monetary policy to tame inflation, also affected market sentiment.

Kuwait will also continue to support efforts to promote market stability through the alliance, the country’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil Mohammad Al-Faris has said.

Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said in an interview with Bloomberg last week that OPEC and its allies, including Russia, had “the commitment ... and the means” to deal with volatility in prices and “provide guidance, including cutting production at any time and in different forms”.

The OPEC+ super group, comprising 23 producers, agreed to increase output by 648,000 barrels per day in both July and August as it fully unwinds cuts of about 10 million bpd introduced in May 2020 to counter the slump in demand caused by the coronavirus pandemic.



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OPEC+ agreed earlier this month to raise production by another 100,000 bpd in September amid pressure from major consumers, including the US, to cool prices. The group will meet on September 5 to decide on its future output policy. OPEC+ will soon “start working on a new agreement beyond 2022, which will build on our previous experiences, achievements and successes,” Prince Abdulaziz said.

The continuing conflict in Opec member Libya is also supporting oil prices. The North African country’s health ministry said on Saturday that 32 people had been killed and 159 wounded during fighting between rival armed groups in the capital, Tripoli.

The clashes began on Friday night and continued into Saturday, with buildings set on fire and hospitals damaged. Libya, which has some of the cheapest oil in Northern Africa, has had much of its production disrupted during the civil war that erupted after the downfall of the country’s former leader, Muammar Gaddafi, in 2011. —Agencies

Elon Musk says the planet needs more oil and babies

OSLO: Billionaire tech entrepreneur Elon Musk, who has fathered 10 children, said on Monday the world needs to “make more babies”—and keep digging for oil. The richest man on the planet, who has repeatedly warned that low birth rates posed a “danger” to civilization, said ahead of an energy conference in Norway that the world is facing a “baby crisis”.

Asked about the greatest challenges facing the world, Musk cited the transition to renewable energies but also said the birth rate was “one of my favorite... things to be concerned about.”

“We don’t want the population to drop so low that we’ll just eventually die,” Musk, founder of American electric car manufacturer Tesla and SpaceX, told reporters in Stavanger, southwest Norway. “At least make enough babies to sustain the population,” he added.

Many Western societies and populated countries such as China are facing declining birth rates and ageing societies. “They say civilization might die with a bang or with a whimper,” added Musk. “If we don’t have enough kids, then we will die with a whimper in adult diapers. And that will be depressing.” He also said the planet still needed new fossil fuel sources.

“I think realistically we do need to use oil and gas in the short term, because otherwise civilization would crumble,” he said, adding that “some additional exploration is warranted at this time”. Musk, who has been divorced three times, is the father of 10 children, one of whom died at 10 weeks old. Earlier this year one of his children, who recently turned 18, filed a petition in a California court to change her name and gender identity to female.

Court documents said that she did not want “to be related to my biological father in any way, shape or form” as one of the reasons for the name change.

Musk also has two children with the musician Grimes, a girl they named Exa Dark SiderÉl Musk—although the parents said they will mostly call her Y—and a boy born in May 2020 called “X Δ A-12”, or more simply, X. Musk announced last fall that he was “semi-separated” from the singer.

The American press recently revealed that he also had twins in November with an executive at Neuralink, Musk’s brain-implant maker, a few weeks before the birth of Exa Dark SiderÉl Musk. —AFP



OSLO: Billionaire tech entrepreneur Elon Musk, who has fathered 10 children, said on Monday the world needs to “make more babies”—and keep digging for oil.

US stocks drop, still reeling from Powell speech

NEW YORK: Equities on Wall Street headed further into negative territory on Monday, still feeling the sting of the no-nonsense speech Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell last week. The Fed warned of “pain” ahead for Americans in the battle against inflation, with no chance interest rates would be coming down anytime soon.

Powell “didn’t splash some cold water on the stock market’s face. He dumped a whole bucket of ice water on it and the stock market wasn’t ready for the ice bucket challenge,” said Briefing.com analyst Patrick J O’Hare.

The blue-chip Dow on Friday lost more than 1,000 points, its worst single-day point loss since mid-May, while all three major indices dropped three percent or more. About 15 minutes into the trading session, the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 0.7 percent to 32,055.99.

The broad-based S&P 500 fell 0.6 percent to 4,035.3, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index shed 0.3 percent to 12,102.38. O’Hare said there might be a chance for bargain-hunters to come looking for buying opportunities, which could ease some of the losses. The week will bring key items for the Fed and markets, including the all-important August employment report on Friday. Powell and his fellow policymakers want to see signs the overly-strong labor market is cooling, which would deflate wage pressures in the economy. —AFP

Business

As crisis bites, Spain pushes to become EU energy hub

Ambitious trans-Pyrenees pipeline the way forward to the new gateway

MADRID: With Europe facing a major energy crisis, Spain wants to become the new gateway for gas through an ambitious trans-Pyrenees pipeline and is hoping supply-starved Germany will pressure a reluctant France. Madrid has long been hoping for the revival of plans to build a pipeline connecting the Iberian Peninsula via France to central Europe, which was abandoned in 2019 over regulatory and funding issues. But Russia's war on Ukraine and its reduction of gas deliveries to Europe has revived interest in the project, notably from Germany, with Chancellor Olaf Scholz saying such a pipeline could make "a massive contribution" to easing the supply crisis.

He has invited Spain's Pedro Sanchez for talks on Tuesday with energy likely to be a key issue.

Beyond the gas crisis, Spain is hoping that improving its connectivity with the rest of Europe will open the way for it to become the European Union's new hub for green hydrogen—a key energy source of the future. And for that, a pipeline across the Pyrenees would be crucial.

France obstacles

In 2013, work began on the so-called MidCat project, a pipeline linking Spain's northeastern region of Catalonia to the south of France through the Pyrenees, aimed at connecting Spain and Portugal to central Europe's gas network. Six years later it was dropped by regulators in France and Spain over its environmental impact and lack of economic viability.

And despite the current energy crisis, France has been decidedly unenthusiastic about reviving the project. But that has done little to cool the ardor of the Spanish premier, who is determined it will go ahead—even if it means resorting to "plan B": build-

ing an underwater connection to Italy, he said in Bogota last week.

Ecology Minister Teresa Ribera told Antena 3 television last week the Italian alternative was being studied, but admitted it would be best to go for "the easiest option... across the Pyrenees", saying such a pipeline "could be operational by late 2023 or early 2024". "It's not a bilateral issue between Spain and France," added Ribera in an interview published Monday in Spanish daily El Mundo.

"It's about the European project. I wonder where is France's European ideal." Germany is already onboard. "I have been very active in talks with... the French president and the president of the European Commission in advocating that we take on such a project," Scholz said on August 11.

It could make "a massive contribution" to easing the supply crisis, he added. Spain has six liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals for converting deliveries made by sea into gas, making it the country with the biggest regasification capacity in the EU.

Portugal also has a plant, meaning the Iberian peninsula has the capacity to become a hub for gas shipped in from the United States while the transition to renewable energies is being completed.

Hydrogen hub

Spain and Portugal want the EU to foot the bill for building such a connection, estimated at some 440 million euros (\$440 million). Such a pipeline could never be ready in time to ease the anticipated shortages this winter, but could be a key conduit for exporting green hydrogen, an area in which Spain is already taking a lead. Green hydrogen is produced by passing an electric current through water to split it between hydrogen and oxygen, a process called electrolysis. It is considered green because the



BARCELONA, Spain: This file photo taken on March 29, 2022 shows a general view of the Barcelona's Enagas regasification plant, the oldest in continental Europe, located at the Muelle de la Energia in the port of Barcelona, during a visit for the international press. —AFP

electricity comes from renewable energy sources that don't create harmful emissions.

When fossil fuels burn, they emit harmful greenhouse gases, but hydrogen only emits harmless water vapor. "Spain is going to become the world's leading hub for the transport of green hydrogen which is the future of the European economy," Josep Sanchez Llibre, head of Catalonia's Foment del Treball business confederation, told Spain's public television this month.

Visiting Paris last week, Felix Bolanos, a cabinet minister and close ally of the Spanish premier, said MidCat was "a long-term project".

"The idea is that over the medium- to long-term, it will be able to transport green hydrogen as well as blue hydrogen," he said. Blue hydrogen is produced by using methane in natural gas.

"Spain must take the lead in making us the great European and global gas and hydrogen interconnection," said Sanchez Llibre. —AFP

Heatwave-hit Chinese province resumes power to factories

BEIJING: The southwestern Chinese province of Sichuan downgraded emergency energy supply measures on Monday, restoring power to some factories after weeks of rolling blackouts due to a heatwave-induced shortage.

Parts of Sichuan province and neighboring Chongqing saw rainfall and lower temperatures beginning Sunday, after weeks of record temperatures higher than 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) and a crippling drought that strained hydropower generators throughout the region.

"Reservoir water levels are gradually increasing and the power supply capacity has improved," the Sichuan government announced Monday, adding that the power supply crisis had been "alleviated to a certain extent". The provincial emergency energy supply response was downgraded from the highest level starting Monday, the notice said, allowing power to be gradually restored to factories.

The region is home to major auto manufacturers, including Toyota in Sichuan and Honda in Chongqing, which said they resumed operations Monday. Apple iPhone manufacturer Foxconn also restarted work at its Sichuan plant, Nikkei reported. State broadcaster CCTV reported Sunday that the



CHENGDU, China: This file photo shows people walking past a screen which is turned off to save energy in Chengdu, in China's southwestern Sichuan province. —AFP

"general industrial and commercial power consumption in Sichuan province has been fully restored", adding that energy-intensive industries would resume production once hydropower reservoir levels rose further.

The lower temperatures have also lessened electricity demand from households, whose use of air conditioners had increased during the heatwave. Authorities have forecast intense rains in the region for the next ten days, with the China Meteorological Association on Sunday issuing an

orange alert for mountain torrents in Sichuan and Shaanxi provinces.

Southern China has recorded its longest continuous period of high temperatures since records began more than 60 years ago, forcing power cuts that have hit the agricultural sector particularly hard.

Power shortages also forced malls in parts of Sichuan and Chongqing to shorten their opening hours, while landscape and subway lighting was switched off and some households experienced rolling blackouts. —AFP

EU plans to hold emergency energy talks on Sept 9

PARIS: EU energy ministers will hold urgent talks on September 9, a Czech minister said on Monday, as prices spiral across Europe following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "I am convening an extraordinary meeting of the Energy Council. We will meet in Brussels on the 9th September," Czech Industry and Trade Minister Jozef Sikela said on Twitter.

"We must fix the energy market. Solution on the EU level is by far the best we have," said Sikela, whose country holds the EU presidency.

The move comes as the 27-nation bloc is trying to shed dependence on supplies of Russian oil and gas following Moscow's assault on Ukraine. Reduced supplies and anxiety over the future have sparked rocket growth in energy prices across Europe.

On Friday, Germany and France reported record electricity prices, with the German year-ahead contract jumping to €995 (\$995) per megawatt hours while the French equivalent soared past €1,100—compared to €85 in both countries last year. The European Commission is planning to cut EU dependency on Russian gas by two-thirds this year and end its reliance on Russian supplies of the fuel before 2030. The EU has targeted the Russian energy sector in its sanctions, banning coal imports from Russia.

Its plan to cut gas consumption across the bloc by 15 percent to cope with the energy price crisis came into effect earlier this month. The aim is for the EU to be able to bolster its reserves of gas in time for what is likely to be a very tough winter. —AFP

Struggling Uniper seeks state support as gas prices soar

BERLIN: German energy giant Uniper on Monday said more state-backed loans were needed to shore up its financial position as Russian gas supply disruptions and soaring prices put the group under increasing pressure. Uniper, which accepted a government rescue package in July, said in a statement it had asked for its credit facility with the public lender KfW to be boosted "by an additional four billion euros (\$4 billion) for further stabilization".

The Duesseldorf-based group said it had used up the nine-billion-euro line of credit agreed in the bailout as the cost for gas soared. "Reduced Russian gas deliveries and the associated significant price increases for gas and electricity" meant Uniper needed more cash to buy extra supplies of the fuel at short notice and cover trading deposits, the group said.

One of the biggest importers of Russian gas, Uniper has been squeezed as Moscow has reduced supplies to the continent over recent months. "As long as energy prices continue to rise in Europe, the need for liquid funds will also increase," said Uniper CEO Klaus-Dieter Maubach. Within a month, Uniper said gas prices had "approximately doubled from an already high level".

The German government will take a 30 percent stake in Uniper as part of the rescue package agreed in July. Uniper was in ongoing discussions with officials in Berlin and the Finnish energy group Fortum, Uniper's largest shareholder, about the "implementation of the stabilisation package", the German group said. "We are working at full speed with the German government on a permanent solution to this emergency as otherwise Uniper will no longer be able to fulfil its system-critical function for Germany and Europe." —AFP

European CO2 storage project signs major deal

PARIS: A carbon storage project owned by three major European oil firms has secured its first commercial deal in what they billed Monday as a "major milestone" in the decarbonization of heavy industry. Northern Lights—owned by France's TotalEnergies, Norway's Equinor and Anglo-Dutch giant Shell—reached an agreement to transport and store carbon dioxide captured from Yara Sluiskil, an ammonia and fertilizer plant in the Netherlands.

From early 2025, 800,000 tons of CO2 per year will be captured, compressed and liquefied in the Netherlands. It will then be transported by ship to the Northern Lights site in Norway to be buried some 2,600 meters (8,530 feet) under the seabed off the coast of Oygarden. "This agreement, the first of its kind worldwide, is a major milestone in the decarbonization of heavy industry in Europe, paving the way for international CO2 transport and storage as a service," TotalEnergies said in a statement. Northern Lights managing director Borre Jacobsen said the agreement "will establish a market for CO2 transport and storage".

The facilities for the first phase of the project are scheduled to come on stream in 2024, with the capacity to handle 1.5 million tons of CO2 per year. In its latest baseline report on climate change, the United Nations said the world will need to capture and store CO2 from the air and oceans regardless of the rate at which countries succeed at reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. Long seen as a marginal effort or an industrial ploy to avoid reducing carbon emissions, carbon dioxide removal measures are now a necessity, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

But some environmentalists see carbon capture and storage as a "false solution" that would justify maintaining dirty production, with the risk that stocked CO2 could leak.

TotalEnergies had said recently it was divesting



its stake in a Russian gas field that was reported this week to be providing fuel that ends up in Russian fighter jets. The company said that it had signed a deal on Friday with its local Russian partner Novatek to sell its 49 percent in the Termokarstovoye gas field "on economic terms enabling TotalEnergies to recover the outstanding amounts invested in the field."

It said the divestment had been agreed in July and submitted to Russian authorities in early August, with approval coming on August 25. That was the day after an article appeared in French daily Le Monde reporting the alleged refining of natural gas condensates from Termokarstovoye into jet fuel for fighter-bombers involved in Russia's assault on Ukraine since February.

TotalEnergies — formerly Total — owns 49 percent of Terneftegaz, the company that extracts gas from the Termokarstovoye field. The other 51 percent is held by Novatek, in which the French firm also holds a 19.4 percent stake. TotalEnergies initially said it had no control over the sales of its Russian partner.

On Friday, it said Novatek had denied that its condensates were being refined into Russian military jet fuel. Instead, they were sent to processing at a refinery whose products are exclusively exported outside Russia, a Novatek statement relayed by the French firm said. TotalEnergies also said it was considering legal action in a bid to end an "unfounded controversy which is damaging the reputation of the company." —AFP

S Africa arrests ex-Transnet execs in high-profile case

JOHANNESBURG: South African prosecutors said on Monday they had arrested several former executives at public logistics company Transnet, a firm at the centre of a high-profile investigation into corruption during ex-president Jacob Zuma's tenure. South Africa's National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) said Transnet's former chief executive officer Brian Molefe and finance chief Anoj Singh were among four people held in connection with a multimillion-dollar corruption case.

"Several arrests of former Transnet executives have been effected this morning, through arrangement with their legal representatives," the NPA said in a statement. The arrested appeared before a court in Johannesburg on Monday and were granted 50,000 rand (about \$3,000) bail. An NPA spokesperson confirmed to AFP the executives are facing charges of fraud and breaching public finance regulations, linked to a 93-million-rand corruption and fraud case surrounding the 2015 procurement of more than 1,000 locomotives. Transnet owns all South Africa's rail, ports and pipelines—the logistical backbone of the continent's most advanced economy.

Lawyers for Molefe and Singh said their clients intended to plead not guilty. They were ordered to return to court on October 14. A report into state graft under Zuma published earlier this year described Transnet as a "primary site" of state corruption. The investigation led by Chief Justice Raymond Zondo found billions of rands' worth of contracts had been "irregularly awarded for the benefit of entities linked to the Gupta family," a business family of Indian migrants with close ties to Zuma. —AFP

Business

From bus routes to gutters, tech savvy youth map Mali's capital

Mali's cataloguing Bamako's features in the hope to improve lives of residents

BAMAKO: Under a blazing sun in Mali's capital, Amadou Menta leant over to measure a gutter then jotted down the results on a mapping app on his smartphone.

"We're collecting data," said the 27-year-old geography student, helping to chart the roadside drains of central Bamako with two friends. Until recently Mali's capital was largely uncharted on the web.

With street names or fixed public transport routes often missing in the city of some two million, people tend to ask for directions to find their way.

But the lack of maps is a major obstacle to developing its infrastructure—whether to prevent traffic jams, collect wastewater and rubbish, or prevent flooding.

Tech savvy young Malians are striving to change this, cataloguing the city's features in the hope it will improve the lives of its residents. Armed with smartphones, dozens of volunteers have been collecting data for the local branch of OpenStreetMap, a free, online geographic database—which is then used by sites including Google Maps.

Menta and fellow mappers have been charting the channels collecting waste and rainwater in Daoudabougou, a central district often hit by floods. The gutter project is receiving financial support from the World Bank, and has been welcomed by the authorities.

But it's just one of the avenues the group is exploring—and there is plenty more work to do.

Founder Nathalie Sidibe said there was previously "no freely available data in Mali". "We saw mapping as a concrete way to contribute to developing the area," she said.

"We need to change habits here—and to do that, we need to encourage people to use digital tools."

Data to 'get ahead'

Mobile data access is still poor in Mali. Countrywide, only one in 10 women is connected to mobile broadband, compared to one in five men, a World Bank report found last year.

But the OpenStreetMap Mali team has been busy. So far, its volunteers have drawn up a map of Bamako's public minibuses routes, household waste collection points, and basic social services.

Adama Konate, deputy mayor in charge of sanitation, said the group's efforts had helped Bamako.

"We only had basic knowledge before this project," Konate said. "Now we know that this place needs drainage, and that place needs a rubbish dump." Mahamadou Wadidie, director of the Regional Development Agency in Bamako, said the youth mapping project had made his job much easier.

On the agency's website, he showed off a regularly updated map of all the health centers and schools in Bamako drawn up from OpenStreetMap data. "Instead of taking two months to find out about these things, mayors can now get this information from their computer," he said.

"Digitization is allowing us to get ahead, to



BAMAKO: The lack of maps is a major obstacle to developing Bamako's infrastructure.

lose less time." Mali—an impoverished country with severe governance challenges that has been battling a decade-long jihadist insurgency—does not have many resources to devote to digitizing

data, he said. But Menta and his young colleagues, he said, have shown it is possible to launch ambitious mapping projects "without spending a lot of money". —AFP

Germany says gas stocks rising quicker than expected

BERLIN: Germany is replenishing its gas stocks more quickly than expected despite drastic Russian supply cuts and should meet an October target early, the government said. Europe's largest economy is heavily dependent on Russian gas and has raced to bolster its reserves before winter after deliveries from Russia plummeted following the outbreak of war in Ukraine.

Last week, Germany's energy regulator the Federal Network Agency said the country was unlikely to meet its goals. But the government said energy-saving measures in recent weeks and massive purchases of gas from other suppliers saw "significant progress" made.

"Despite the difficult circumstances... the reserves are filling up more quickly than expected," Economy and Climate Minister Robert Habeck said in a statement. A target to achieve 85 percent of gas storage capacity by October "should be reached by the start of September", with current levels at 82 percent, his ministry added.

Gas flows from the main pipeline, Nord Stream, fell to 20 percent, with the European Union accusing Moscow of using energy as a weapon in its stand-off with the West over Ukraine. To avert the risk of energy shortages, Berlin in July set a series of goals so that gas stocks reached 95 percent of capacity by November. The government has introduced measures allowing more coal-based power and reducing energy consumption in public buildings.

It has also spent 1.5 billion euros (\$1.5 billion) to buy liquefied natural gas, with Qatar and the United States being major suppliers, and five new LNG terminals are planned to import it by sea.

Meanwhile, Finland's Olkiluoto 3 reactor was disconnected from the electricity grid on Monday due to a turbine issue, operator TVO said, the latest in a string of setbacks for the long-delayed plant. "The plant was disconnected from the grid unplanned around noon as a result of a fault on the turbine side," TVO spokeswoman Johanna Aho told AFP.

The issue concerns the part of the plant where steam is used to produce electricity, not the reactor side. "The plant is completely safe," Aho said. "But it is not currently generating electricity into the national grid". The issue arose a day after the plant resumed test production following the completion of automation updates.

The reactor built by the French-led Areva-Siemens consortium on Finland's southwest coast went online in March, 12 years behind schedule. The start date for OL3's normal production is being closely followed in Finland, where many hope the plant will ease the coming winter's energy challenges. TVO said it did not yet know the exact cause of the problem but said staff was investigating. "When we find out, we will know if this is a temporary problem or if something else needs to be fixed," Aho said.

She was unable to say whether the issue would affect the planned launch date. Olkiluoto 3 is currently due to enter normal operation in December 2022, after the test phase is concluded. Energy production had been expected to start this summer, with the aim of supplying about 15 percent of Finland's electricity consumption. But the start date has been pushed back multiple times this year alone. In April, it was moved to September due to repairs needed on the cooling system. And in June it was postponed to December, after "foreign material" was observed in the turbine's steam reheater. The French-developed European Pressurised Reactor model was designed to relaunch nuclear power in Europe after the 1986 Chernobyl catastrophe, and was touted as offering higher power and better safety. —AFP

PIX, the electronic payment system revolutionizing Brazil

SAO PAULO, Brazil: When Brazil's central bank announced in 2020 it was launching a free electronic payments system called PIX, many people had no idea what it was talking about.

Today, instant transfers are so ubiquitous, Brazilians use them tens of millions of times a day, for everything from paying the rent to buying groceries to giving money to beggars on the street.

Walking amid cars stopped at a red light in Sao Paulo, panhandler Robson Ferreira has been a firsthand witness to the revolution the system has wrought in Latin America's largest economy.

"I usually get more money in PIX than cash," says the 48-year-old unemployed man, carrying a hand-scrawled sign that says, "Need help. Accept PIX."

Below that is a number drivers and passersby can use to deposit money directly into his account, a process that takes seconds on a cell phone.

"People told me, 'We don't even carry money any more. Put your PIX on there,'" Ferreira says.

In under two years, PIX has become the most popular form of payment in Brazil, surpassing credit and debit cards—the first time a government-run alternative to plastic has been successfully implemented in Latin America. Analysts say that the huge number of smart phones in Brazil—more than one for each of the country's 213 million people—and government aid payments to 20.2 million beneficiaries

Honda and LG to invest \$4.4bn in US battery plant

TOKYO: Japanese auto giant Honda and South Korean battery maker LG Energy Solution announced a joint venture Monday to invest \$4.4 billion in a new US electric car battery plant.

The move comes after California last week ruled that all new cars sold in America's most populous state must be zero-emission from 2035, with other US states expected to follow suit. In a joint statement, the firms said they expected construction of the plant to begin next year, aiming for "mass production of advanced lithium-ion battery cells by the end of 2025".

The tie-up was decided "based on the shared belief that expanding local electric vehicle production and ensuring the timely supply of batteries

have fueled the system's takeoff.

PIX is so popular it has become a campaign issue in Brazil's October elections, with President Jair Bolsonaro claiming the credit for it—though in reality work on the system began under former president Michel Temer (2016-2018).

Bolsonaro's top opponent, leftist ex-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (2003-2010), has meanwhile been a target of a disinformation campaign, with false reports he plans to kill PIX to protect big banks, whose commissions on electronic transfers have evaporated since the system was launched.

Replacing cash

Available 24/7, PIX allows anyone with a bank account to send and receive money instantly. All senders need is a banking app on their smart phones and the "key" for the destination account—usually a phone number or taxpayer ID. Some cash registers and payment terminals also let users scan a QR code that makes payment even faster. For now, PIX is still used mainly for small transactions.

The total amount transferred via PIX in the first quarter of the year was around two billion reais (\$392 million), around one-fifth of other electronic transfers. "PIX mainly replaced transactions that were happening in cash before," says Leandro Vilain of the Brazilian Federation of Banks (Febraban). But the number of transfers is huge.

In the first quarter, Brazilians used PIX for 4.2 billion transactions — 22.9 percent of the total—versus 3.7 billion for credit cards (19.3 percent) and 3.5 billion for debit cards (19.8 percent), according to the central bank.

Business owners benefit, too. Other payment methods have high fees and take longer to process—up to 28 days for credit cards, the central bank says.

would put them in the best position to target the rapidly-growing North American EV market", the companies added. Last month, Japanese electronics giant and Tesla supplier Panasonic announced its own \$4 billion investment to build a new battery factory in the United States for electric vehicles.

Panasonic CEO Kazuo Tadanobu said the new plant, the company's second electric battery operation in the United States, was "critical to help meet demand". Earlier this year, Honda said it planned to invest nearly \$40 billion in electric vehicle technology over the next decade as it works towards switching all sales away from traditional fuel cars.

It wants to launch 30 EV models by 2030, with an annual production volume of more than two million units, and aim to have electric and fuel cell vehicles account for 100 percent of all sales by 2040.

The success of Elon Musk's Tesla, built solely on electric vehicles, and growing government pressure to move away from cars with combustion engines, are pushing traditional automakers to speed up the transition to electric. Washington state's governor has backed a move similar to California, while the



Kidnapping, fraud

On the beach in Rio de Janeiro, where he makes his living selling coconuts—including by PIX—Jose Jefferson sees another advantage. "PIX is a lot safer. With cash, there's more risk it gets lost or stolen," he says. The system is not immune to security threats, though.

In May, kidnappers seized Anna Novaes, a 52-year-old architect in Sao Paulo, and held her at gunpoint for eight hours, forcing her to take out loans from two banks and transfer the money to their accounts via PIX.

They stole a total of around \$8,000, Novaes told AFP. She managed to have the banks write off the loans. There were 154,972 reports of fraud by PIX in July, more than double the number from January, according to the central bank. The statistic—a tiny fraction of all transactions, the central bank underlines—hasn't doused users' enthusiasm. Not even for Novaes, who took out insurance covering e-transactions and went back to using PIX. "I don't want to give up the convenience," she says. —AFP



SEOUL, South Korea: This file photo taken on June 11, 2021 shows a visitor walking past the booth of LG Energy Solution during the InterBattery 2021 exhibition at COEX in Seoul. —AFP

European Union has taken steps to ban the sale of gas- or diesel-fuelled cars—and even hybrids—by 2035. China wants at least half of all new cars to be electric, plug-in hybrid or hydrogen-powered by that time. —AFP

Bezos tweets about first job at McDonald's

NEW YORK: Amazon founder and billionaire Jeff Bezos made reference to his first job working at McDonald's on Sunday, days after a job advert posted by him in 1994 for the "first job" at the technology company went viral, according to reports.

Bezos posted a picture on Twitter on Sunday, showing him with a meal from the fast food chain. He worked at McDonald's when he was 16, and later graduated from Princeton University.

"You can learn responsibility in any job if you take it seriously," Bezos told Cody Teets, author of Golden Opportunity: Remarkable Careers That Began at McDonald's.

"You learn a lot as a teenager working at McDonald's. It's different from what you learn in school. Don't underestimate the value of that."

Last week, an advert posted by Bezos dated August 22, 1994, and titled "Well-capitalized Seattle start-up seeks Unix developers" was posted on Twitter as Amazon's first job listing. The company, now the world's biggest online retailer, was created a month earlier as a book seller.

Bezos wrote that he wanted the developers to "help pioneer commerce on the internet", and he was not seeking average-performing workers, but exceptional candidates. "You must have experience designing and building large and complex (yet maintainable) systems, and you should be able to do so in about one-third the time that most competent people think possible," the ad said.

"You should have a BS, MS, or PhD in Computer Science or the equivalent. Top-notch communication skills are essential. Familiarity with web servers and HTML would be helpful but is not necessary."

Bezos also outlined the kind of workforce he was seeking to build. "Expect talent, motivated, intense and interesting co-workers," he wrote. The successful candidates were expected to move to the Seattle area, and compensation would include "meaningful equity ownership".

The advert noted at the foot that Amazon was "an equal opportunity employer". Amazon's market capitalization currently stands at \$1.33 trillion. Its global workforce, including part-time employees but not including contractors and temps, was 1.52 million at the end of June, according to Statista. That was 85,000 lower than at the end of 2021 as Amazon and the other big tech companies in the US, such as Apple, Meta and Google, froze hiring amid a slowdown in the US economy.



Jeff Bezos

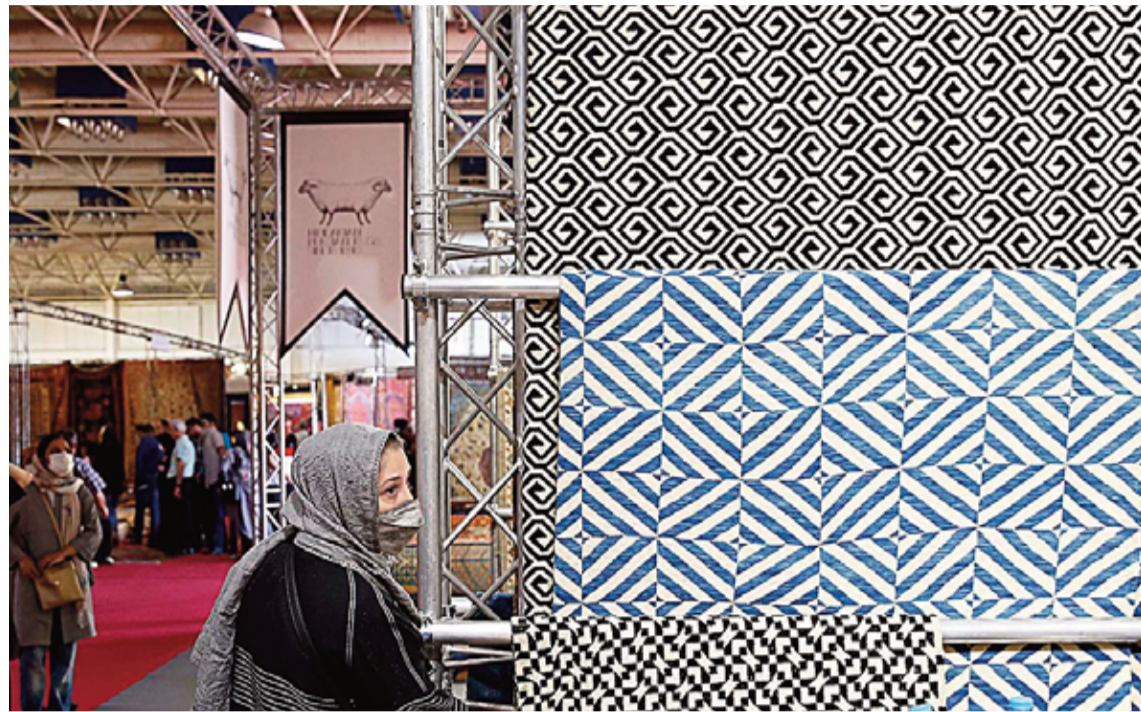
Amazon reported a second-quarter net loss of \$2 billion as the company faced an unfavorable effect from changes in foreign exchange rates throughout the April-June period. Bezos, 58, is ranked as the world's richest person behind Elon Musk, with a net worth of \$154 billion. Last year, he travelled into space on board his company Blue Origin's New Shepard rocket. —Agencies

Lifestyle | Features

Ancient Iranian rug tradition gets makeover as sales sink



A member of staff stands next to a modern Azerbaijani wool carpet depicting Qajar king Fath-Ali Shah at the 29th Handmade Carpet Exhibition in Iran's capital Tehran.



People walk past a display of modern Azerbaijan wool carpets with traditional geometric designs dating back to the 17th century at the 29th Handmade Carpet Exhibition in Iran's capital Tehran. —AFP photos



A handmade Tabriz silk on wool carpet with contemporary geometric design in gold hangs.

Striking geometric shapes that recall 20th century abstract art are not what you would expect to see adorning a handmade Iranian rug. But changing tastes and increased competition from Asia have forced some in the trade to redesign and resize a tradition dating back more than 2,000 years. "A revolution is underway," said Ahmad Azimzadeh, 65, who calls himself "the biggest exporter of Persian carpets in the world".

Rugs traditionally woven in the Islamic republic are known for dense, curving floral designs in rich colors. Their beauty and quality have long been recognized worldwide, yet sales have collapsed over the past 30 years. "In 1994 the value of Iranian carpets sold abroad reached \$1.7 billion and represented 40 percent of our non-petroleum exports," Ahmad Karimi, chief of the Handmade Carpet Manufacturers' and Exporters' Union, told AFP. By 2019-20 that figure had shrunk to \$70 million, he said. By another measure, in 2000 Iran represented 32 percent of global handmade carpet exports. This fell to 7.9 percent by 2019 as exports from China and India rose, Karimi said.

'New generations'

There was "an impact" from international sanctions that targeted Iran over its nuclear program, human rights and other issues, but he said other factors are more to blame. "Especially by the big diversity of carpets on the market and the change in the mentality and tastes of the new generations," Karimi said. Azimzadeh, the carpet exporter, said "the future is with modern handmade rugs".

He spoke at last week's handmade carpet exhibition in Tehran. The annual event, suspended for two years because of the coronavirus pandemic, features about 400 exhibitors from across Iran. "The patterns of Iranian carpets are ancient but today there is a strong demand for contemporary styles. They're more suitable for a modern house," said Azimzadeh, a big talker who started small-as a seven-year-old weaver. By 14, he had graduated to the commercial side of the trade.

Among the new styles on display at the exhibition which ended Sunday: a rug featuring small squares of hypnotic diagonal blue and white lines. Another depicts diamond and other geometric patterns in gold silk on a black background. One wool rug looks as if an ink roller has left splashes of gold on it.

"The colors are clear and the sizes smaller," which is what modern tastes demand, Azimzadeh said. As an extreme but less typical example of this "revolution", Azimzadeh stands in front of a woven rug three metres square (3.6 square yards) in size. It depicts global personalities including actor Charlie Chaplin, the physicist Albert Einstein and Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin.

From art to doormat

The new style is also cheaper. Some sell for \$3,000 or \$4,000, whereas Azimzadeh has a 2,000 square metre traditional carpet from Tabriz priced at \$120 million. His inventory also holds a 170-year-old piece from Kashan available for about \$160,000. For now, modern designs are still a minority at his stand in the exhibition, but the traditional stock will be gradually withdrawn, he said.

"Next year, 70 percent of the rugs on display will be modern," Azimzadeh predicts. Karimi, of the exporters' union, regrets that Iranian carpets are nowadays seen as "a consumer good to put in front of the door, whereas in the past it was an investment. It's lost its status as an object of art." Another trader, Abbas Arsin, was perhaps ahead of his time when he created what he calls the "transitional carpet" 25 years ago. He took traditional patterns and made the bright colors fade by rubbing them and leaving them in the sun. "My father and my older brother didn't understand why I wore myself out making the old rugs fade," said Arsin, 40, the third generation of his family in the business.

But when he exhibited his first works and customers came, his family encouraged him to "only do that", he recalls with a smile. Arsin said India, Pakistan, Turkey and China overtook Iran in the global market because "we Iranians had fewer relations with the rest of the world. We didn't see the changes that were happening." Even now, not everyone is convinced.

"A year ago we began to make carpets in modern designs but they represent only five percent of our production and I don't think we will go beyond that," said Mehdi Jamshidi, 42, director of sales for Iran Carpet company. "Modern carpets will never replace the traditional ones, which are deep-rooted in our culture and regions." Hamid Sayahfar, 54, a dealer who spends his time between Tehran and Toronto, said the new geometric styles might be suitable for an office, but not at home. It's just a fashion, he said, "and like every fashion it will disappear." —AFP



An Isfahan gray wool carpet with yellow and green silk motifs is displayed at the 29th Handmade Carpet Exhibition.



In this undated handout photograph palaeontologists work on the extraction of part of the fossilized skeleton of a large sauropod dinosaur, at the Monte Agudo paleontological site in Pombal, central Portugal. —AFP

Skeleton of huge dinosaur unearthed in Portugal

Palaeontologists in Portugal have unearthed the fossilized skeleton of what could be the largest dinosaur ever found in Europe. The remains are thought to be those of a sauropod, a herbivorous dinosaur 12 meters (39 feet) tall and 25 meters long that roamed the Earth around 150 million years ago. "It's one of the biggest specimens discovered in Europe, perhaps in the world," palaeontologist Elisabete Malafaia, from the Faculty of Sciences at Lisbon University, told AFP on Monday.

The bones were uncovered by Portuguese and Spanish scientists in the garden of a house near

Pombal in central Portugal at the beginning of August. Among the bones collected, they found the remains of a rib about three meters long, Malafaia said. Fossil fragments were first noticed at the site in 2017, when the owner was digging up his garden to make way for an extension.

He contacted palaeontologists, who unearthed part of the dinosaur skeleton earlier this month and have been examining it ever since. Sauropods have characteristically long necks and tails and are among the largest animals to have ever lived. The fossils discovered at the Monte Agudo site in Pombal are thought to be those of a brachiosaurid who lived during the Upper Jurassic period. The fact that the vertebrae and ribs were found at the same location and in the position they would have been in the dinosaur's anatomy is "relatively rare", Malafaia said. The team may conduct more digs in the coming months at the site and in the surrounding area. —AFP

'They made me feel like nothing': Britney Spears addresses conservatorship

Britney Spears on Sunday released a lengthy audio message concerning the controversial guardianship that kept her primarily under her father's control for more than 13 years. A Los Angeles judge in November 2021 dissolved the conservatorship long overseen by Spears' father—an arrangement the singer said had prevented her from having a contraceptive IUD removed despite her desire for more kids. The audio message was originally tweeted by Spears without comment but the link was then deleted. The 22 minutes of audio of Spears' voice remain available online, however. "I woke up this morning and I realized there's a lot

going on in my head that I haven't shared with anyone," Spears says in the raw, emotional recording. She then details the conservatorship, echoing what she told a California court in a bombshell hearing last summer. The now 40-year-old describes being forced to work and tour, and barred from seeing friends or driving her own car. Spears says that her phone was tapped, and she felt unsafe asking for help.

"They made me feel like nothing, and I went along with it," Spears says, describing being fat-shamed. "It was demoralizing," Spears says. "You also have to understand, it was like 15 years of touring and doing

Virtual reality revives Iraq's war-ravaged heritage

An Iraqi museum is using computer technology and virtual reality headsets to turn back time, so visitors can explore heritage sites destroyed by jihadist fighters and in battles to defeat them. Islamic State group fighters captured a third of Iraq in a lightning offensive in 2014, seizing the northern city of Mosul as their stronghold and vandalizing or destroying a swathe of cultural sites across the country. Now, using thousands of photographs, a group of local engineers have given a virtual rebirth to five historic sites in Mosul and the broader Nineveh province, including a mosque and its leaning minaret.

"It takes you to another world," said Mahiya Youssef, pulling the VR goggles off her rose-covered hijab at the Mosul Heritage House museum, after exploring the 3D images of damaged buildings. "I really wish it was the real Mosul, not just a virtual version", added Youssef, 50, who works in a food factory in the northern city. "The return to reality is painful."

The IS group's then chief, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, made his only confirmed public appearance at Mosul's Al-Nuri mosque, where he declared the establishment of a "caliphate". Mosul's Old City was reduced to rubble during the battle to retake the city, including the mosque and its adjacent leaning minaret, nicknamed Al-Hadba or the "hunchback". Iraqi authorities have accused IS of planting explosives at the site before their withdrawal. Only the minaret's base survived.

VR technology has been used before to recreate the heritage destroyed by the IS group, including a UNESCO-backed exhibit in the United States. But this museum brings sites back to life for the people who live in Mosul. "Many children have never seen the Al-Nuri mosque and its Al-Hadba minaret," 29-year-old Ayoub Younes, the museum's founder. "We try, through virtual reality, to let the person experience visiting those sites and retrieve those memories."

Five years after Iraqi forces and an international coalition routed the jihadists in mid-2017, historic sites, mosques and churches in Mosul are still being restored. But large parts of the Old City remain oceans of debris. While some residents have returned to other districts, much of the city remains a patchwork of buildings either ruined or under construction.

The private museum with a marble facade, sitting along



A visitor donning 3D goggles views reconstructed models of ancient artefacts destroyed during the occupation of Mosul by Islamic State (IS) group fighters, at the "QAF Lab" (representing the Arabic letter 'qaf') Virtual Museum in the northern Iraqi city. —AFP



Ayoub Thanoon Younes (right behind), founder of the Mosul Heritage project, instructs visitors on the 3D technology used to view reconstructed models of ancient artefacts.

the Tigris river, opened in mid-June and saw more than 4,000 visitors in its first month, Younes said. In a sombre room, curious visitors wait to use the museum's sole VR headset, a pair of large black goggles. Other sites on the virtual visit are the historic Al-Tahera church, tucked among the once meandering alleyways of the Old City, and the more than 2,000 year old Hatra archaeological site in the desert south of Mosul. The jihadists took guns and pickaxes to the once extensive remains of the ancient city, releasing video footage in 2015 of their orgy of destruction. —AFP



(From left to right) Recording Artist Britney Spears and Sir Elton John attend the 21st Annual Elton John AIDS Foundation Academy Awards. —AFP

Lifestyle | MTV Awards



US singer-songwriter Taylor Swift accepts the award for Best long form video during the MTV Video Music Awards at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey.



Bad Bunny performs at Yankee Stadium for the 2022 MTV VMAs broadcast.



US singer-songwriter Taylor Swift accepts the Video of the year award onstage during the MTV Video Music Awards at the Prudential Center in Newark. — AFP photos

Bad Bunny, Taylor Swift lead MTV Video Music Awards

Bad Bunny, the Puerto Rican Latin trap and reggaeton artist who's among the world's biggest stars, scored MTV's artist of the year award Sunday at the annual Video Music Awards. But the performer was conspicuously absent from the show: he was busy with his own blockbuster tour, playing the second night of a sold out concert at Yankee Stadium that over the weekend drew some 100,000 fans. Bad Bunny, wearing a satin pink suit and white sunglasses, accepted the award via video and also delivered a seismic performance of his smash "Titi Me Pregunto" from the baseball stadium in New York, where the song has soundtracked the streets for months.

"Thank you so much, New York," the 28-year-old said in Spanish to resounding applause. "From the beginning I always believed that I could be great, that I could be one of the biggest stars in the world, without changing my culture, my language," he said. "I'm Benito Antonio Martinez from Puerto Rico-for the whole world."

In a sure sign that pandemic-stymied touring was back in full swing, another of the year's biggest stars, Harry Styles, also couldn't make it to the VMAs-which aired from New Jersey's Prudential Center-due to his own show at Madison Square Garden. The artist who



US rock band Red Hot Chili Peppers bassist Flea accepts the Global Icon award onstage.

dropped "Harry's House" this year also accepted his award for the year's best album via video, before heading back to his own global concert run.

Swift album on the way

Taylor Swift was also among the night's big winners, turning heads on the red carpet in a dress dripping with crystals before winning the night's top prize of music video of the year for her 10-minute-long film "All Too Well." "I'm so proud of what we made," said the 32-year-old, who has been making good on her vow to re-record her first six albums so she can control the rights to them.

"We wouldn't have been able to make this short film if it weren't for you, the fans," Swift said onstage. "Because I wouldn't be able to re-record my albums if it weren't for you. You emboldened me to do that." She then gave fans a gift in return, announcing that her new album will come out October 21.

Shortly after the broadcast's end, the megastar revealed the new project's name. "Midnights, the stories of 13 sleepless nights scattered throughout my life, will be out October 21. Meet me at midnight," she wrote on social media. Hip hop superstar Nicki Minaj reigned over the evening as the 2022 recipient of the prestigious Video Vanguard Award.



LL Cool J and Nicki Minaj speak onstage at the 2022 MTV VMAs.



Cheech (right) and Chong (left) speak at the 2022 MTV VMAs.



Red Hot Chili Peppers accept the Best Rock award for 'Black Summer' at the 2022 MTV VMAs.



(From left) Eminem and Snoop Dogg perform onstage at the 2022 MTV VMAs.



Lizzo attends the 2022 MTV VMAs at Prudential Center.



Jimmy Fallon speaks onstage.

Lifestyle | MTV Awards



In this image Dove Cameron performs onstage.



US singer Fergie (left) and US rapper Jack Harlow (right) perform onstage.



Lizzo accepts the Video For Good award for 'About Damn Time' onstage.



Harry Styles accepts the Album of the Year award for 'Harry's House'.



Dove Cameron accepts the Best New Artist award onstage.



(From left to right) Anthony Kiedis, Flea, and John Frusciante of Red Hot Chili Peppers perform onstage.



US rapper Jack Harlow winner of the Song of the Summer award for "First Class" poses at the press room during the MTV Video Music Awards.



US singer/songwriter Khalid (left) and US DJ Marshmello perform onstage during the MTV Video Music Awards.



Lisa accepts the Best K-pop award for 'Lalisa'.



(From left to right) Offset and DJ Khaled speak onstage.



Lil Nas X and Jack Harlow accept an award onstage.



Johnny Depp



Anitta (left) accepts the Best Latin award for 'Envolver'.

2022 MTV VMAs winners:

GLOBAL ICON AWARD

Red Hot Chili Peppers
VIDEO VANGUARD AWARD
Nicki Minaj

VIDEO OF THE YEAR

Taylor Swift - "All Too Well" (10-minute version) (Taylor's version)

ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Bad Bunny

SONG OF THE YEAR

Billie Eilish - "Happier Than Ever"

BEST NEW ARTIST

Dove Cameron

PUSH PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR

December 2021: Seventeen - "Rock With You"

BEST COLLABORATION

Lil Nas X, Jack Harlow - "Industry Baby"

BEST POP

Harry Styles - "As It Was"

BEST HIP-HOP

Nicki Minaj ft. Lil Baby - "Do We Have a Problem?"

BEST ROCK

Red Hot Chili Peppers - "Black Summer"

BEST ALTERNATIVE

Maneskin - "I Wanna Be Your Slave"

BEST LATIN

Anitta - "Envolver"

BEST R&B

The Weeknd - "Out of Time"

BEST K-POP

Lisa - "Lalisa"

VIDEO FOR GOOD

Lizzo - "About Damn Time"

BEST METAVERSE PERFORMANCE

Blackpink The Virtual | PUBG

BEST LONGFORM VIDEO

Taylor Swift - All Too Well (10-minute version) (Taylor's version)

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY

Harry Styles - "As It Was"

BEST DIRECTION

Taylor Swift - "All Too Well" (10-minute version) (Taylor's version)

BEST ART DIRECTION

Lil Nas X, Jack Harlow - "Industry Baby"

BEST VISUAL EFFECTS

Lil Nas X, Jack Harlow - "Industry Baby"

BEST CHOREOGRAPHY

Doja Cat - "Woman"

BEST EDITING

Rosalia - "Saoko"

SOCIAL CATEGORIES

GROUP OF THE YEAR

BTS

SONG OF THE SUMMER

Jack Harlow - "First Class"

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

Harry Styles - Harry's House

Wearing her signature pink wig, the hip-hop icon from Queens delivered a medley of her hits including "Super Bass" and her most recent single "Super Freaky Girl." Brazil's Anitta also turned heads with a booty-popping performance before winning the award for best Latin video for "Envolver." "I was born and raised in the ghetto of Brazil, and for whoever was born there, we would never think this was possible," she said when accepting the trophy.

Johnny Depp appears

Iconic stoner comedy duo Cheech and Chong awarded the Red Hot Chili Peppers with the Global Icon Award, before the California rockers performed and also paid tribute to Taylor Hawkins, the late Foo Fighters drummer. Eminem and Snoop Dogg opened their performance sitting on a couch as Snoop smoked a giant-albeit fake-blunt, before the pair headed to the metaverse for a trippy, animated performance of their latest collaboration "From the D 2 the LBC." Marshmello and Khalid performed "Numb" with neon, disorienting visuals that created a brief but heady rave effect, while South Korea's Blackpink gave their first show at a US awards night ever.

Lizzo also performed before scoring the Video For Good award-which honors videos with social or political messages-for her song "About Damn Time." Wearing a cone-bra corseted dress that recalled Madonna, the superstar thanked fans for voting for her to receive the award before nodding to US politics. "Vote to change some of these laws that are oppressing us," the star urged.

And at the awards show that's historically far better known for its antics than actual prizes, Johnny Depp-fresh off his controversial defamation trial against his ex-partner Amber Heard-appeared as the MTV Moonman, his head digitally superimposed on the flying astronaut. "You know what? I needed the work," said the 59-year-old actor. —AFP

Sports

'Untouchable' Verstappen cruises in Belgium to tighten grip on 2nd title

Wolff downbeat over outclassed Mercedes

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS: World champion Max Verstappen blew away his rivals with a commanding performance at the Belgian Grand Prix on Sunday to take a significant step towards a second successive drivers' title as Red Bull celebrated a 1-2 with Sergio Perez finishing a remote runner-up.

The 24-year-old Dutchman, who started from 14th on the grid, scorched through the field with devastating pace and élan to deliver crushing proof of his and Red Bull's superiority. "It's been a weekend that I couldn't have imagined before," said Verstappen, who pulled 93 points clear of Perez in the drivers' standings. Among those blown away by Verstappen's stunning show of superiority was his teammate.

"Max was flying - he was on another planet. He was untouchable," said Perez. Verstappen has now won nine of this season's 14 races - this was the 29th of his career and completed a hat-trick of summer victories in Europe. In front of a packed crowd at the spectacular Spa-Francorchamps circuit, including many fans from the nearby Netherlands, Verstappen came home 17.841 seconds clear of the pack with race pole-sitter Carlos Sainz finishing third for Ferrari.

Charles Leclerc, Verstappen's nearest challenger going into the race, struggled in the other Ferrari after starting 15th. He was handed a five-second penalty for speeding in the pitlane and had to battle past Alpine's Fernando Alonso on the last lap to snatch sixth behind the Mercedes of George Russell and Fernando Alonso. Lewis Hamilton retired on the opening lap after his Mercedes collided with Alonso's car.

Flying Verstappen

Verstappen was one of eight drivers to be relegated down the grid after taking new power-unit or gearbox components. In spite of being quickest in qualifying he started 14th but quickly carved his way through the field to install himself in the easy chair up front. The race began in bright and dry conditions following official confirmation that Belgium's place on the calendar was secure for next year at least with a one-year contract extension.

When the lights went out, Sainz made an excellent start, while Perez was slow to move and

passed by Alonso, Hamilton and Russell. Verstappen rose smoothly from 14th on the grid to eighth. As the field climbed through Les Combes, Hamilton collided with Alonso as he attempted to complete an impetuous pass, the Mercedes rising over the Alpine and falling violently. Both men continued, but Hamilton's race was done. Alonso called Hamilton an "idiot" over the radio and the Briton later took full responsibility.

"He was in my blind spot, I didn't give him enough space. It is my fault," Hamilton said. This unscripted exit left the seven-time champion still searching for a first win of the season. Shortly after, Nicholas Latifi went wide in his Williams and spun, taking out Valtteri Bottas's Alfa Romeo. A safety car was deployed and the field settled with Sainz leading Perez, Russell and Alonso. Soon after the resumption, Verstappen cut his way through to reach third and a podium finish by lap eight.

The impatient Dutchman surged past Perez on lap 12 as Alonso pitted, leaving the two Red Bulls leading ahead of Russell and Vettel, a near-perfect scenario for the Milton Keynes-based team that made light of Verstappen's grid penalty. Perez pitted after 14 laps, re-joining third in front of Leclerc as Verstappen came in from the lead on lap 15. He came out ahead of Perez. The defending champion was in imperious mood and on lap 18, after following Sainz uphill from Eau Rouge, swept past to lead on the Kemmel straight.

Remarkably, to the delight of the orange-clad hordes packed into the circuit, Verstappen had demolished the field before half-distance. Three laps later, Perez passed Sainz for second. Further pit-stops shuffled the pack briefly, but Red Bull reigned supreme. "It was quite a hectic first lap to stay out of trouble," said a composed Verstappen. "But once we settled in after the safety car, the car was really on rails."

Gloomy but realistic Wolff

Meanwhile, a gloomy but realistic Toto Wolff on Sunday warned Mercedes again after another disappointing performance saw them outclassed by Red Bull and Max Verstappen at the Belgian Grand Prix. The Mercedes team boss said they should not be satisfied with their weekend's work and that the team had to concentrate on finding



SPA: Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen celebrates his victory during the podium ceremony of the Belgian Formula One Grand Prix at Spa-Francorchamps racetrack on August 28, 2022. —AFP

solutions to the inconsistent results of their capricious car. "I don't think we can be satisfied with this weekend - if you see Verstappen, he has leaped above us all," said Wolff.

"We really need to find out how we can improve our car because the gap is just too big. We're giving the drivers a very difficult car to drive - and it hasn't got the pace on a single lap so we need to work ourselves out of this situation." On Saturday, he said Mercedes' performance in qualifying was "unacceptable". Wolff was downbeat after seeing seven-times champion Lewis Hamilton forced to retire on the opening lap after a collision with Fernando Alonso of Alpine before George Russell drove a forceful and steady race to finish fourth.

In qualifying, Hamilton had been the fastest Mercedes driver, but was 1.8 seconds off the pace set by Verstappen who started 14th on the grid,

after taking a penalty, yet won convincingly ahead of his Red Bull team-mate Sergio Perez. "Over the next four days, we'll be putting our heads together, setting our sights on the next race and also next season," said Wolff. "It's important we stay level-headed, keep our spirits up and don't flip too much between elation and depression. This weekend is a low, but in Hungary three weeks ago, we were thinking we will absolutely win a race, so we'll never give up."

Russell admitted he had mixed feelings after missing out on claiming a podium finish. He said: "Had you told me last night we will be two seconds off the podium on merit and pure pace, I'd have said that's a good recovery. When I was closing in on Carlos Sainz at the end, a second a lap, I thought here we go - we're in for a really good shot here, but then I just had two really scrappy laps and got the tyres out of the window." —AFP

Scheffler stretches lead to six at Tour Championship

WASHINGTON: Top-ranked Scottie Scheffler, the reigning Masters champion, made four birdies in six holes to seize a six-stroke lead after Sunday's completion of the third round of the PGA's Tour Championship. Lightning halted play Saturday with 14 golfers still on the course at East Lake in Atlanta, adding to the last-day drama at the season-ending FedEx Cup playoff showdown. Scheffler made brilliant approaches to set up his sizzling effort Sunday morning to complete a four-under par 66 and stand on 23-under par.

Four-time major winner Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland made two closing birdies Sunday to shoot 63 and match Tokyo Olympic champion Xander Schauffele for second on 17-under. McIlroy put himself in the final duoduo on Sunday at the Tour Championship for a record fourth time while Schauffele shot 70 to fall back. "Shooting even par out here is never going to get it done," Schauffele said. "I just need to put my head down."

When play resumed, Scheffler led on 19-under par through 12 holes with playing partner and fellow American Schauffele on 18-under. Scheffler dropped his approach at 13 five feet from the cup and made his birdie putt to boost his lead to two strokes and Schauffele followed with a bogey at 14 after finding the right rough. At the par-3 15th, Scheffler landed his tee shot inside five feet and made the birdie putt, reaching 21-under to lead by four.

At 17, Scheffler dropped his approach just inside three feet and tapped in for birdie, lifting his lead to five. Schauffele was in the left rough at the par-5 18th and struggled to make par while Scheffler pitched his third shot inches from the hole and tapped in for another birdie. "He fights until the end. He doesn't give up on any shot," Schauffele said of Scheffler. "He's the number one player in the world for good reason."

McIlroy sank a 13-foot birdie putt at the 17th and a three-footer to birdie the par-5 18th to finish a 63, his best ever at East Lake.

"Coming out this morning, I ideally wanted to just finish 3-4 which is what I did," McIlroy said. McIlroy hopes to add to his Tour Championship titles from 2016 and 2019. "Great way to finish the round," he said. "Gets me a little closer. At least gives me a chance going into this afternoon so I'm excited for that." South Korean Im Sung-jae made four morning pars to share fourth on 16-under with defending champion Patrick Cantlay.

Scheffler began the tournament at 10-under with a two-stroke edge on the field under a staggered scoring system based on season point totals, but Schauffele had trimmed that edge to two strokes after 36 holes. —AFP

South African Reto wins in Canada for first LPGA title

OTTAWA: South Africa's Paula Reto captured the first title of her nine-year LPGA career on Sunday, holding on down the stretch to win the Canadian Women's Open by one stroke. The 32-year-old from Cape Town made five birdies on the front nine on her way to firing a four-under-par 67 and finishing on 19-under 265 for 72 holes at Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club. Reto ended her drought in her 157th career LPGA start. "Dream come true for sure," Reto said. "I'm really happy and it has been such a long time. I was like, 'I hope one day I will win,' and it came true. I'm really so excited."

Reto, who fired a course-record 62 on Thursday, only won her first pro title in February on the Sunshine Tour in her homeland. Third-ranked American Nelly Korda, who would have taken the number one spot with a victory, also shot 67 to share second with South Korea's Choi Hye-jin on 266. New Zealand's Lydia Ko closed with four consecutive birdies to shoot 63 and finish fourth on 267 with South Korea's An Na-rin fifth on 268.

LPGA rookies Choi and An shared the 54-hole

lead but Choi began with 14 pars and shot 69 while An fell back with a double bogey at the seventh and a triple bogey at the par-5 eighth on her way to firing a 72. Clinging to a one-stroke lead, Reto went over the green at the par-3 17th but chipped the ball inches from the cup and tapped in for par to stay in front heading to the par-5 18th. Reto sent her approach into the right rough on a slope, then punched out to 15 feet from the hole.

Choi then came up short on a long eagle putt over a ridge that would have given her a share of the lead, instead settling for her ninth top-10 effort of the season. Reto lipped out on her birdie putt then tapped in for the victory. "I was so nervous coming to the last hole," Reto said. "I was like, 'Just calm your nerves.' 'I kind of hit a bad 3-wood and that rough shot over there kind of saved me. I was just committing to it, trying to keep it simple.'"

Reto began one stroke off the pace but charged quickly with an opening birdie and a chip to inches from the cup to set up a birdie at the third. After a birdie at the par-5 sixth, Reto holed a six-foot birdie putt at the par-3 eighth and a long birdie putt at the par-5 ninth to seize three-stroke edge at the turn. Korda, the Tokyo Olympic champion, had charged into second place with a birdie at 11 and an eagle at the 12th. She answered a bogey at 14 with a birdie at 15 and 16 while Reto took a bogey at the 14th, trimming her lead to one stroke to set up the closing drama. —AFP



OTTAWA: Paula Reto of South Africa celebrates with the FedEx Cup trophy following the final round of the CP Women's Open at Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club on August 28, 2022. —AFP

McIlroy wins Tour Championship, secures third title

WASHINGTON: Rory McIlroy rallied from six strokes down starting the final round to overtake top-ranked Scottie Scheffler and win his record third FedEx Cup title on Sunday by capturing the PGA's Tour Championship. The 33-year-old from Northern Ireland fired a four-under-par 66 to finish on 21-under 263 at East Lake in Atlanta.

Four-time major winner McIlroy took the \$18 million top prize in the season-ending playoff showdown by one stroke over reigning Masters champion Scheffler, who fired a 73 on Sunday, and South Korean Im Sung-jae. "It's great to end the season on a high note like this," McIlroy said. "To do something no one else has done... and playing the golf when you needed to get the job done-incredibly satisfying." Scheffler, who began the week on 10-under thanks to the season points lead and a staggered scoring system, lost out because McIlroy fired the week's best 72-hole score, 17-under.

"Just little mental errors," Scheffler said. "I just wasn't swinging it well. I really fought hard. Rory just played a really good round of golf. He made some key putts there at the end and he definitely deserved to win." Scheffler, a four-time winner this season, earned McIlroy's respect. "I feel like Scottie deserves at least half of this," McIlroy said. "I feel sort of bad that I pipped him to the post."

McIlroy, who has been a major advocate for the PGA Tour in its ongoing battle with the Saudi-backed

LIV Golf Series, said victory was even sweeter given the tumult engulfing the sport this season. "It means an awful lot," McIlroy said. "This is an incredibly proud moment for me but it should also be an incredibly proud moment for the PGA Tour. They have had some hard times this year but we're getting through it."

Fourth-ranked McIlroy, who won the 2016 and 2019 Tour Championships, roared back from 11 strokes back late in the second round and six shots down after 54 holes. "I just showed so much resilience to claw my way back," McIlroy said. "I didn't really give myself much of a chance teeing off today. I thought six behind, it was really going to be tough to make up. But my good play and Scottie's not-so-great play and it was a ball game going into the back nine."

McIlroy sank a stunning birdie putt at the par-3 15th from just inside 32 feet, the ball breaking to the left and dropping into the hole, to match Scheffler for the lead on 21-under. McIlroy blasted out of a bunker way beyond the 16th green but pitched inside eight feet and made the par putt while Scheffler missed a par putt from just inside nine to hand McIlroy the lead.

Both parred 17 as the tension grew. At the par-4 18th, Scheffler found a greenside bunker while McIlroy bounced his second shot off the left grandstand and into deep rough. Scheffler went over the green out of the sand then pitched back onto the green while McIlroy chipped onto the green and two-putted for par and the victory. "If you're willing to go out and earn it, this is what can happen," McIlroy said.

Money wasn't a thought

Scheffler said the \$11.5 million difference in first and second was never on his mind. "The money definitely didn't creep into my mind. I wanted to win the season-long title," he said. "I've had a really great year and I



ATLANTA: Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland celebrates with the FedEx Cup after winning during the final round of the TOUR Championship at East Lake Golf Club on August 28, 2022. —AFP

wanted to finish it off with a win here and unfortunately I wasn't able to do that."

Scheffler birdied four of his last six holes Sunday morning to finish the lightning-halted third round and stretch his lead from one stroke to six. The big lead dwindled quickly with bogeys by Scheffler from three of the first six holes while McIlroy answered an opening bogey with a birdie at the third and made three birdies in a row starting at the fifth. "I just didn't get off to a good start early, but after that I grinded as hard as I could," said Scheffler. "My swing wasn't where it had been the first few days." —AFP

Sports

Goals not guns: In troubled DRC, football academy draws in youth

Youngsters urged to take up the Beautiful Game rather than rifle

RUMANGABO: In war-torn eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, national park authorities are hoping a football academy will persuade youngsters to take up the Beautiful Game rather than a rifle. Around 50 children aged between 10 and 16 have signed up to the Virunga youth football training scheme at a stadium in Rumangabo, a village in North Kivu province which borders a military base and the Virunga National Park. It is the oldest national park in Africa, famed for its gorillas and volcanoes. Monkeys look on intrigued as the children are put through their paces, with drills, games and advice.

An estimated 120 armed groups roam the DRC's volatile east. The resurgence in the region of the M23 (the March 23 Movement), a primarily Congolese Tutsi group, is of primary concern. After lying mostly dormant for years, the rebels resumed fighting late last year, seizing the strategic town of Bunagana on the Ugandan border in June and prompting thousands of people to flee their

homes. M23, which the DRC government accuses Rwanda of funding, is operating just six kilometres away from Rumangabo and poses a constant threat.

"They are there in the hills, yesterday they pillaged a health centre," said Gentil Karabuka, a prominent community member. Young people born in a chaotic and violent environment have proved easy pickings for rebel groups looking to recruit new members. But Dieu Boyongo, the coordinator of the football project, hopes it will be a beneficial alternative for the youngsters. "We think that this football school, situated in a conflict zone, is a positive occupation for them," Boyongo said.

Boyongo wants the young people on the project to leave violence and misery far behind them, replacing the sound of bullets with the roar of the crowd. The budding footballers are enjoying the project so far. "I would like to play for Real (Madrid) or PSG (Paris Saint-Germain)," said 13-year-old Esdras before swapping his torn

trousers for a new football strip. Gloire, also 13, dreams of having a "career like Cristiano Ronaldo," the five-time Ballon D'Or winner.

'Together in peace'

The organizers believe team sport is also a way to deliver a message about peace, and make the children aware of the park's conservation efforts. One young spectator has absorbed this idea. "I want to become a park guard, in order to protect the gorillas and other animals," nine-year-old Narcisse said. Emmanuel Bahati Lukoo, chief of the southern sector of the park, hopes others will leave with the same resolve. "When we speak of the east of the country most people only see young people who are with the armed rebels," he told AFP. "But we do not want these stories to continue." It is imperative that the young understand the park is a means for them of developing as people.

They can develop as footballers too, according to one of the coaches who oversee training. "The ambition is to produce very good young players here at Rumangabo," Prince Katsuva told AFP. "We will begin teaching them the technical fundamentals and in five to six months we will have a good team. We want to show everyone that we can live together in peace." Before the inaugural match, Katsuva told his proteges to pass on a message when they return to their communities.

He hammered home that people should stop poaching and trading in charcoal from the park. The authorities at Virunga also employ people displaced by the fighting. They live at the entrance of the headquarters in huts, which covered in either tarpaulins or banana leaves offer little protection from the cold and rain. They are employed as day workers, which guarantees them something to eat, while others have seen their children recruited by the football academy. —AFP

Barcelona's Aubameyang victim of armed robbery

BARCELONA: Barcelona striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang was the victim of a violent armed robbery at his home in the early hours of Monday, the Spanish club said. "He is ok now, scared but ok," a Barcelona source told AFP, confirming press reports. At least four men broke into his home in Castelldefels near Barcelona through the garden and threatened him and his wife with guns and iron bars, and hit him, daily El Pais reported.



Barcelona's Gabonese midfielder Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang

The thieves fled by car after forcing the Gabon international to open a safe and making off with jewels that were inside, the newspaper reported. A spokeswoman for Catalan police, the Mossos d'Esquadra, confirmed they were investigating a violent robbery in Castelldefels but refused to identify the victim, citing privacy rules.

"The investigation remains open and we are gathering information," she told AFP. The incident comes as Aubameyang is linked with a return to the Premier League after interest from Chelsea. He joined Barcelona in February from Arsenal after reportedly having fallen out with Gunners manager Mikel Arteta due to disciplinary breaches. Several high profile footballers in Spain have been subject to robberies though most of these break-ins occur while the stars are playing. In June police arrested six people in connection with the three-million-euro burglary at the house belonging to former Brazil forward

Ronaldo. Paris Saint-Germain player Marco Verratti was staying at Ronaldo's house in Ibiza but was not home when the burglars struck, taking jewelry and money. And earlier this month police recovered Barcelona striker Robert Lewandowski's watch, which was stolen as the player signed autographs before a training session. —AFP

Ghana inflict another setback on arch rivals Nigeria in CHAN

JOHANNESBURG: Ghana inflicted another setback on Nigeria with a 2-0 victory over their fierce rivals in an African Nations Championship (CHAN) second round first leg on Sunday. Nigeria suffered a shock loss to Ghana last March in a play-off to decide which country qualified for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. Outsiders, especially after being held 0-0 at home in the first leg, Ghana forced a 1-1 draw in Nigeria to win on away goals and book a fourth World Cup appearance.

least two goals to have a chance of reaching the 18-nation finals in Algeria. Ghana have a mixed CHAN record - finishing runners-up in two of the first three editions but failing to qualify for the last three tournaments. Nigeria have been equally inconsistent, qualifying only three times in six attempts and crashing 4-0 to hosts Morocco in the 2018 final.

South Africa fielded a weakened team due to club commitments and fell 2-0 to Angola in Luanda, where Augusto Carneiro scored in the first half and Jaredi Teixeira after half-time. The South Africans have a dismal CHAN record, qualifying only once, with their second finals appearance due to them being the 2014 hosts. They were eliminated by Angola in the 2016 qualifiers and a similar fate awaits them next Sunday unless they bolster a young, mainly inexperienced squad.

Travis Mutyaba netted one minute from time to give Uganda a 1-0 win over Tanzania in an east African derby in Dar es Salaam. Uganda share with the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe the record of most qualifications - five from six attempts. But the Ugandans have continually disappointed at the finals, winning only one of 15 matches and losing nine while making first round exits each time. There were several first leg surprises, including Equatorial Guinea edging visiting Cameroon 1-0 in Malabo and the Central African Republic defeating Congo 2-1 in Brazzaville. —AFP

In the Nations Championship, which is restricted to footballers playing in their country of birth, Daniel Barnieh converted a penalty to maintain a goal-a-game CHAN record. Barnieh scored in both legs of a 4-0 overall first round victory over Benin while Nigeria received a bye. Seidu Suraj, a teammate of Barnieh at famed Accra club Hearts of Oak, added a potentially crucial second goal four minutes from time in Cape Coast.

The return match is scheduled for Abuja next weekend with Nigeria needing to win the second leg by at

EPL: Things we learned

LONDON: Liverpool silenced their critics with a record-equalling rout of Bournemouth, while leaders Arsenal hold the only perfect record in the Premier League. AFP Sport looks at things we learned from the Premier League this weekend:

Virgil van Dijk expects Liverpool to use Saturday's

record-equalling 9-0 demolition of Bournemouth as fuel to erase the bitter taste of their poor start to the season. Jurgen Klopp's side failed to win any of their first three games as lacklustre draws against Fulham and Crystal Palace were followed by a limp 2-1 loss at arch rivals Manchester United.

Van Dijk admits Liverpool had a point to prove after critics questioned their hunger and they did just that by amassing a Premier League record-equalling victory over the hapless Cherries at Anfield. Dutch defender Van Dijk was on the scoresheet with a towering header against Bournemouth, but just as signifi-

Aussies capture first World Rugby Sevens season crown

LOS ANGELES: Australia captured a first-ever World Rugby Sevens Series men's season crown on Sunday with a third-place finish at the campaign-ending Los Angeles Sevens tournament. Australia defeated Samoa 21-7 in the third-place match to decide the title as a nine-month fight came down to the final day with Fiji, Argentina, South Africa and the Aussies in the hunt for the throne. The Aussies took the breakthrough crown after a best prior finish of second to New Zealand in 2000-01.

Australia became only the fifth nation to claim the title since it was first awarded in 2000, following the Kiwis, Samoa, South Africa and Fiji. "Quite surreal to be honest, I can't believe we're here," Australia men's sevens coach John Manenti said. "The boys worked hard. We've had our ups and downs. But these kids fought hard and I'm so proud of them. I'm so happy for them. We've done something they will remember forever." New Zealand defeated Fiji 28-21 in the Los Angeles final, giving the Kiwis their first tournament title of the season.

Fiji won at Singapore in April and in France in May while South Africa won four times and the Aussies won their only tournament at London in

May. Under a special points system used this season due to Covid-19, each team's total includes its best seven results from the campaign. Needing no worse than a third-place result to claim the season title, Australia routed Kenya 40-14 in the quarter-finals but lost to Fiji 29-10 in the semi-finals. That set up the all-or-nothing consolation match, in which Samoan winger Owen Niue scored the first try.

Corey Toole and Henry Paterson answered with first-half tries for Australia and Dietrich Roache added another with 4:15 remaining to secure the historic title. "We're a bunch of misfits. We're just having a crack," Manenti said. "We're working hard for each other. The boys love each other and that was a big base of it. We worked hard and our big goal was to be consistent from day one. This award is a reflection of the consistency the boys have shown. It has been a pretty amazing run." Had Australia lost the third-place match, Fiji could have taken the season crown by winning the LA final.

South Africa, which failed to reach the knockout rounds in LA, would have won the crown if Fiji and the Aussies had both lost. Fiji had to beat Australia in the semis to keep alive their season title hopes and did so while New Zealand edged Samoa 28-26 in the other semi-final. Argentina's hopes to claim the season crown ended when Samoa beat the South Americans 24-19 in extra time in the quarter-finals. In other quarter-finals, Fiji ripped the United States 28-12 and New Zealand defeated Ireland 29-12. —AFP



CALIFORNIA: New Zealand's Akulia Rokolisoa (2nd right) tackles Fiji's Jerry Tuwai (2nd left) during the rugby union final match between New Zealand and Fiji on the second day of the Los Angeles 2022 World Rugby Sevens Series event on August 28, 2022. - AFP

cantly, Liverpool's creaky defense kept their first clean sheet of the season.

Asked if they were motivated after the United defeat, Van Dijk said: "Yeah. After the game you want to get the next game coming and it was good for us that we only had to wait four days so everyone was motivated. "Lucky that we didn't have any injuries in the week before which was a nice change. Obviously great performance. "Today was a good start, a good win, something to build on but it is never guaranteed that we crack on from here. "That's what we want, that is what we work for and that is what we will try to do

and it starts on Monday."

Ben White says Arsenal's "desire" has been the key ingredient in their perfect start to the season as the leaders came from behind to beat Fulham 2-1 on Saturday. The Gunners are the only top-flight club to win their first four games this term after Martin Odegaard and Gabriel scored to cancel out Aleksandar Mitrovic's opener at the Emirates Stadium. Gabriel's late winner atoned for the error which led to Mitrovic breaking the deadlock after the Brazil defender was caught in possession. —AFP

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Adan Hospital		Abdullah Salem

Clinics

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Lewandowski, Benzema both hit doubles in contrasting victories

Barcelona crush Valladolid 4-0; Real beat Espanyol



CORNELLA DE LLOBREGAT: Real Madrid's French forward Karim Benzema (center) scores his team's second goal during the Spanish League football match between RCD Espanyol and Real Madrid CF on August 28, 2022. — AFP

MADRID: Veteran star strikers Robert Lewandowski and Karim Benzema both hit doubles on Sunday in contrasting victories for Barcelona and La Liga leaders Real Madrid. Lewandowski scored twice for the second game in a row as Jules Kounde made his debut in Barcelona's 4-0 cruise past Valladolid. Later, Real Madrid struggled for 88 minutes at Espanyol.

With the scores tied and time running out, Benzema put Real ahead before sealing a 3-1 victory after 10 eventful added minutes. Real saved their perfect start to the season and climbed back to the top of the table on nine points after three games, ahead of Real Betis on goal difference. Barcelona rose to third, two points further back.

"To have Lewandowski in your team is a blessing," said Barca coach Xavi Hernandez. "He's an extraordinary player. Spectacular. A natural leader. It's a blessing to have him with us, it's marvelous.

"He's a model, a born worker. He's humble, he works for the team, he helps the coaching staff, he makes the difference." At the Camp Nou, Xavi handed Kounde his first start after the club was finally able to register the France defender they signed from Sevilla last month for a reported 50 million euros (\$49.8 mn). Lewandowski hit the post with an early header.

Pedri then spotted the run of Raphinha in behind but the Brazilian was thwarted by goalkeeper Jordi Masip, who was well beaten moments later when Ousmane Dembele's venomous shot clipped the crossbar. Barca's pressure told after 24 minutes as Raphinha whipped in a teasing cross which a gambling Lewandowski stabbed home. A marauding Dembele tested Masip from range, and then created the second for Pedri by rolling a perfectly weighted ball for the midfielder to bury on the stroke of half time.

Lewandowski all but put the game beyond reach on 64 minutes, running onto a pass from Dembele and cleverly backheeling past Masip with the help of a deflection off Joaquin Fernandez. Valladolid nearly pulled one back but Marc-Andre ter Stegen saved well from Oscar Plano and Kounde stuck out a leg on the line to keep out the follow-up effort from Roque Mesa. Barca grabbed a fourth in stoppage time as Roberto volleyed home after Lewandowski was denied a hat-trick after Masip, a former Barcelona player, tipped his shot onto the bar.

'We were quite slow'

In the late game, Vinicius Junior ran on to a sharp diagonal pass in the 12th minute to slide the ball into the far corner and give Real Madrid the lead. Espanyol fought back. Joselu leveled after 43 minutes. He burst through and when Thibaut Courtois

saved his first thump at goal and the ball bounced off Eder Militao, the Espanyol striker beat both Real players to the ball and scuffed it in. Both teams had chances in the second half before Benzema, as so often in the last year, decided the game. After a quiet game, he found space at the far post with two minutes left, met Rodrygo's cross and volleyed home from close range.

Deep into frantic added time, Espanyol goalkeeper Benjamin Lecomte, charged out of his box to stop a Real attack and received a red card for a foul on Dani Ceballos. Benzema fired home the free-kick. "We were quite slow," said Real coach Carlo Ancelotti. "We had difficulty managing the intensity of the match." Villarreal dropped their first points of the season in a 0-0 draw at Getafe as Unai Emery's side saw the award of a penalty overturned following a VAR review in the dying stages. — AFP

PSG perfect record ended by Monaco

PARIS: Neymar scored from the penalty spot but Paris Saint-Germain's perfect start to the French campaign was ended in a 1-1 draw with Monaco on Sunday, while Alexis Sanchez scored his first goals for Marseille in a 3-0 win at Nice. In Paris, Neymar rolled in his eighth goal in five matches this season from a penalty awarded when the VAR alerted the on-pitch referee to a foul on the Brazilian by Monaco defender Guillermo Maripan midway through the second half.

Monaco had taken the lead when Kevin Volland burst forward, holding off Presnel Kimpembe, before firing past Gianluigi Donnarumma 20 minutes in at the Parc des Princes. The principality side played well, yet PSG deserved at least the draw from a game in which they hit the woodwork three times. Nevertheless, the result does slightly puncture their momentum after a start to the season in which they had won their opening three league games, scoring 17 goals in the process.

They also beat Nantes 4-0 in the season-opening Champions Trophy but Monaco were easily the most accomplished side they had faced yet. "We had difficulties in the first half against a European-level opponent but we deserved to win the game based on our second-half showing," PSG coach Christophe Galtier told broadcaster Amazon Prime.

PSG have 10 points from four games and are top of Ligue 1, but only on goal difference from Lens and Marseille. Volland silenced the home crowd when he ran through to fire Monaco in front, although that was to be his last involvement as he hurt himself while shooting. PSG were denied an equalizer right on the stroke of half-time in remarkable fashion, as Lionel Messi smashed a long-range shot off the left-hand post, before Kylian Mbappe hit the opposite upright from the rebound.

Monaco were also grateful to goalkeeper

French Ligue 1 table							
French Ligue 1 table after Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):							
Paris SG	4	3	1	0	18	4	10
Marseille	4	3	1	0	10	3	10
Lens	4	3	1	0	9	4	10
Lyon	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
Lorient	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
Lille	4	2	1	1	9	10	7
Auxerre	4	2	1	1	6	7	7
Montpellier	4	2	0	2	13	9	6
Clermont	4	2	0	2	6	9	6
Toulouse	4	1	2	1	7	6	5
Nantes	4	1	2	1	5	4	5
Monaco	4	1	2	1	5	7	5
Rennes	4	1	1	2	4	5	4
Brest	4	1	1	2	6	12	4
Troyes	4	1	0	3	6	11	3
Strasbourg	4	0	2	2	3	5	2
Angers	4	0	2	2	4	8	2
Nice	4	0	2	2	2	6	2
Reims	4	0	2	2	5	10	2
Ajaccio	4	0	1	3	3	7	1

Alexander Nuebel for saving from Neymar from point-blank range after the restart, but PSG got their equalizer with 20 minutes to go, as Mbappe left the penalty duties to his Brazilian teammate. "The order was Kylian number one and Neymar number two but I saw they had an exchange and Neymar spoke to Kylian before taking the penalty," said Galtier. PSG then had chances to win all three points, with Achraf Hakimi's fierce shot hitting the post in the 74th minute, before Nuebel denied Mbappe late on.

Sanchez netted a first-half brace as Marseille eased to victory in Nice to maintain their unbeaten start to the season. The Chilean former Arsenal star, who signed a one-year contract after leaving Inter Milan, opened the scoring in the 10th minute, firing into the roof of the net past goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel. — AFP

Napoli held to goalless draw at Fiorentina

MILAN: Napoli kept their early lead of Serie A after Sunday's goalless draw at Fiorentina, while Atalanta's 1-0 win at Verona ensured they moved level with the early pacesetters. Luciano Spalletti's Napoli were less flamboyant than in their opening two victories but had marginally the better of the opportunities in an absorbing encounter at the Stadio Artemio Franchi.

Not even the introduction in the second half of lively new signings Giacomo Raspadori, Giovanni Simeone and Tanguy Ndombele could push the away side to the win. After the match Spalletti was angry with a group of Fiorentina fans near the away dugout who he confronted after being insulted for nearly the entire match.

"They dished out insults from behind the bench from the start to the end, right near where children were sitting," he told DAZN. "They were saying 'your mum, your mum', she's 90 years old, the poor thing." The stalemate puts Napoli on seven points from their opening three matches, level with six teams including champions AC Milan and Atalanta, ahead of their match with Lecce on Wednesday as a punishing fixture pile-up looms.

Fiorentina, who are also unbeaten, sit ninth on five points. An intense contest in Florence began with the hosts on the front foot and they went closest to taking the lead midway through the first half when after Alex Meret spilled Riccardo Sottil's shot, Giacomo Bonaventura flashed a low drive just wide. Victor Osimhen had a tap-in ruled out for offside just before the break as Napoli grew into the game, and the away side should have been ahead not long after the restart.

Amir Rrahmani headed Piotr Zielinski's cross narrowly over in the 48th minute. Then, just after the hour mark, Hirving Lozano wasted a golden chance

Italian Serie A table							
Italian Serie A table after Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):							
Napoli	3	2	1	0	9	2	7
AC Milan	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
Lazio	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Atalanta	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
Torino	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Roma	3	2	1	0	3	1	7
Inter Milan	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Juventus	3	1	2	0	4	1	5
Fiorentina	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Salernitana	3	1	1	1	4	1	4
Udinese	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Sassuolo	3	1	1	1	3	5	4
Spezia	3	1	1	1	3	5	4
Empoli	3	0	2	1	1	2	2
Lecce	3	0	1	2	2	4	1
Bologna	3	0	1	2	2	5	1
Hellas Verona	3	0	1	2	3	7	1
Sampdoria	3	0	1	2	0	6	1
Cremonese	3	0	0	3	3	6	0
Monza	3	0	0	3	2	8	0

to put Napoli ahead. Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, in less eye-catching form than in his first two games, dangled the most inviting of crosses from the right which Mexico attacker Lozano somehow headed wide from close range. Raspadori came on after an hour and was denied the winner with eight minutes of his debut remaining. Pierluigi Gollini getting down well to push the Italy international's low shot wide.

Earlier Teun Koopmeiners drilled home a powerful winner four minutes after half-time at the Stadio Bentegodi to keep Atalanta unbeaten. Gian Piero Gasperini's side missed good chances to make the win more comfortable and would have taken only a point back to Bergamo had Darko Lazovic's 63rd-minute strike from distance bounced in rather than out off the bar. "We're still completing the squad as we kind of stuck between injuries and new arrivals," said Gasperini to DAZN. "We're looking for the right format which will make us most effective." — AFP