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Workers of insolvent companies, labor contractors can benefit from new app

Second COVID booster shot available: MoH

KUWAIT: The ministry of health announced on Sunday the availability of the second booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine for all people aged 50 and above and those under 50 who are immunocompromised. This booster, which is the fourth successive COVID-19 vaccine dose, is of great importance for some segments of the society, including those suscep-

tible to severe complications in case they get infected by the COVID-19 virus, the ministry said in a statement. Those eligible can only take the second booster jab four months after the first booster shot, it added.

The health ministry called on all people aged above 50 to take the second booster, as well as people aged 12 to 50 whose immunity is compromised, like cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, organ transplant patients on immunosuppressants, or those taking high doses of cortisone, which weakens the body's immunity. The ministry also called on all individuals aged 12 and above to take the first COVID-19 booster, based on the latest scientific and international recommendations, to enhance the immunity gained from the first two COVID-19 vaccine doses. —KUNA

KUWAIT: The Public Authority of Manpower is mulling a plan to grant temporary three-month residency permits to workers of insolvent companies so they can find new sponsors. PAM is preparing a new platform (application) to register workers employed at companies facing liquidation or closure due to the repercussions of the coronavirus pandemic or other financial reasons, which means their employees will have difficulty transferring their residencies.

Official sources at PAM said the authority has completed coordination with the interior ministry on launching the new application to register employees of troubled companies that are unable to find other jobs for their workers or send them back home due to bankruptcy. Among the conditions to register workers is that they should have any criminal or administrative issues.

Sources said those who meet the conditions will be given a temporary three-month residency permit to find a new sponsor, adding the new app will reduce the number of workers brought in from abroad, particularly on government contracts that require thousands of workers. Owners of such contracts can benefit from those registered on the application and select the workers they find suitable.

The sources said contracting with these workers will be through PAM to guarantee the right contract and legal residency permit are issued. They said workers who are not accepted by any company will be considered to be in violation of residency laws and must correct their status or leave the country before the temporary permit expires, which can be renewed for three more months.

News in brief

Zionist forces kill teen

RAMALLAH: A Palestinian teenager died on Sunday after being shot by Zionist forces in the occupied West Bank a day earlier, Palestinian medical sources said. The 17-year-old was identified as Kamel Alawnah by the Palestinian health ministry, which said he "succumbed to wounds from live fire by the occupation (Zionist army) in the abdomen and hand in Jenin." —AFP

Zionists to examine bullet

JERUSALEM: The Zionist entity is to conduct a ballistics test on the bullet that killed Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, the Zionist army said Sunday, a day after the Palestinian Authority handed the bullet to US experts. Army spokesman Ran Kochav's comment on army radio came after the PA gave the green light for the Americans, but not the Zionists, to examine the bullet that killed Abu Akleh during a Zionist raid in the occupied West Bank. —AFP

Tunisia jurist disavows charter

TUNIS: The Tunisian jurist who oversaw the drafting of a new constitution submitted to President Kais Saied said Sunday it has been changed into a charter that could lead to a dictatorship. Some articles of the draft constitution published last Thursday in the official gazette could "pave the way for a dictatorial regime", warned Sadeq Belaid, who headed a committee tasked with drafting the document. —AFP (See Page 6)

Ronaldo wants to leave Man United

LONDON: Cristiano Ronaldo wants to leave Manchester United this summer if the Premier League club receive an appropriate offer, according to multiple reports. Manchester United are adamant the 37-year-old Portugal forward, who scored 24 goals in all competitions, is not for sale, according to reports, with new manager Erik ten Hag keen to work with him. —AFP (See Page 16)

Italy glacier collapse kills 6

ROME: An avalanche sparked by the collapse of the largest glacier in the Italian Alps killed at least six people and injured eight others on Sunday. The glacier collapsed on the mountain of Marmolada, the highest in the Italian Dolomites, near the hamlet of Punta Rocca, the route normally taken to reach its summit. The disaster struck one day after a record-high temperature of 10 degrees Celsius was recorded at the glacier's summit. —AFP

Ukraine retreats from key city in major Russian gain

SIVERSK, Ukraine: The Ukrainian army retreated from the strategic city of Lysychansk Sunday as Russia claimed a major victory by seizing control of the entire eastern Lugansk region. The Ukrainian withdrawal followed weeks of fierce fighting and marked a decisive breakthrough for Moscow's forces more than four months after their invasion and after turning their focus away from the capital Kyiv.

Lysychansk had been the last major city in the Lugansk area of the eastern Donbas region still in Ukrainian hands and frees up Moscow's forces to advance on Kramatorsk and Sloviansk in neighboring Donetsk. President Volodymyr Zelensky had earlier denied Russian claims of Lysychansk's fall before the Ukrainian army announced the retreat on Sunday evening. "The continuation of the defense of the city would lead to fatal consequences" in the face of

Continued on page 6

Shark kills two women in Red Sea off Egypt

CAIRO: Egypt's environment ministry said Sunday that a shark killed two women this week in the Red Sea, with Austria's foreign ministry saying one of its citizens had died in the North African country. "Two women were attacked by a shark while swimming" in the Sahl Hasheesh area south of Hurgada, the Egyptian ministry said Sunday on Facebook, reporting that both had died.

Workers strike as officials fired over Aqaba leak

AMMAN: Hundreds of port workers staged a strike in Jordan on Sunday as the prime minister announced the sacking of several officials accused of "negligence" over a deadly gas leak. A tank of chlorine gas fell as it was being loaded by crane onto a ship in Jordan's Red Sea port of Aqaba last Monday, releasing the toxic substance. At least 13 people, including five Vietnamese nationals, were killed and more than 260 others injured, according to the

latest official toll.

"The port workers are striking in protest over the weak safety measures at the port which led to the death and injury of several of their colleagues," union representative Ahmed Amayreh said. About "95 percent of the 2,300" Aqaba port workers participated in the strike, he told AFP. Prime Minister Bisher Al-Khasawneh said Sunday that an investigation showed "great deficiency and negligence in safety measures for dealing with hazardous materials in the Aqaba port".

The director and other officials from the state port operator as well as the head of the maritime authority were sacked, the premier said during a cabinet meeting. The gas canister's weight far exceeded the maximum load of the



SLOVIANSK, Ukraine: Local residents view destroyed shops of a local market after a rocket attack on July 3, 2022 amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. — AFP

Austrian news agency APA said one of the women was a 68-year-old from the country's Tyrol region who was holidaying in Egypt. Austria's foreign ministry confirmed to AFP "the death of an Austrian citizen in Egypt", without providing further details. The identity of the second victim is still unconfirmed.

Red Sea governor Amr Hanafi on Friday had ordered the closure of all beaches in the area for three days after "an Austrian tourist had her left arm torn off, seemingly in a shark attack". Social media users on Friday had shared a video - the authenticity, date and location of which AFP could not independently verify - showing a swimmer struggling before what appeared to be a pool of blood emerged around her.

A task force is working to "identify the scientific causes and circumstances of the attack" and determine "the reasons behind the shark's behavior that resulted in

the incident", the environment ministry said. The Red Sea is a popular tourist destination, where sharks are common but rarely attack people swimming within authorized limits.

In 2018, a Czech tourist was killed by a shark off a Red Sea beach. A similar attack killed a German tourist in 2015. In 2010, a spate of five attacks in five days unusually close to the shore of tourist hotspot Sharm el-Sheikh killed one German and injured four other foreign tourists. Egypt is currently struggling to overcome rising inflation and a recent currency depreciation.

The country relies heavily on tourism revenues from the Red Sea, which accounts for some 65 percent of tourists visiting the country. The tourism industry has been battered by successive blows over the past decade, including the country's 2011 uprising, ensuing unrest and the coronavirus pandemic. —AFP



AQABA, Jordan: Jordanian Prime Minister Bisher Al-Khasawneh talks to reporters as he visits the site of a toxic gas explosion in this Red Sea port on June 28, 2022. — AFP

Continued on page 6

Local

University students speak of issues faced at Kuwait educational field

Students complain of lack of hands-on projects, training

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The parliamentary education, culture and guidance committee discussed the strategies for boosting Kuwait University's ranking to improve the quality of educational output. The administration of the university presented seven initiatives for improvement, such as increasing the number of foreign students, evaluating the achievements of faculty members, unifying data for annual reports and upgrading the automated system.



Students in Kuwait need hands-on projects to gain experience and skills," he added.

Haya Al-Ali, 22, said: "My university is the only one that graduates nutrition specialists. Nutrition is taught as a clinical specialty, but unfortunately, students are graduated with the name of nutrition science. Abroad, specializing in dietetics or clinical nutrition, the student must be a registered dietitian (RD) in order to be employed in public or private hospitals or clinics. The RD exam is not available in Kuwait, and is supposed to be provided by

Registered dietitian exam not available in Kuwait

Kuwait Times spoke with students of several universities to learn about the problems they face in the educational field in Kuwait. Yousef Ahmed, 22, is studying IT. "The university lacks labs and hands-on experience. As IT programmers, we do not have the experience to work in the field, as most studies are theoretical. If we want to practice, they tell us to practice at home. There are no projects to get experience in the work market. Even exams and projects are only on paper," he complained.

"If we make a comparison with other universities, my friends in Jordan and Malaysia who are studying the same major as mine are always working on hardware and software projects for each subject.

the union or Nutrition Society. We want to be recognized as an assistant specialty for the medical profession according to the Law on Professions Allied to Medicine, article no. 3."

Unsuitable environment

Abdelwahab Hilal, 18, told Kuwait Times the environment in Kuwait is not suitable for students. "They should give the student more advantages to think about studying here and not abroad. Most universities here are far from residential areas, and there are a lot of requirements to obtain a driving license. Taking a taxi costs me at least KD 5 daily," he said.

"Two of my brothers studied in Ukraine. Life there is not luxurious, but suitable for



KUWAIT: An archive photo showing students at the Kuwait University campus. The picture is used for illustration purpose only. — KUNA

student life. Here in my university, the situation is bad, professors are unhelpful, and we are barely surviving," he added. Hilal said there is also an age difference between the students. "I am 18 years old, and there are students over 30 too. The age gap between students is huge, which makes it difficult to communicate and make friends."

Haidar Dashti, 21, claimed professors in universities in Kuwait are not qualified,

explaining that students are struggling to understand the subjects. "Also, student acceptance rates should be high, at more than 87 percent and higher. In other universities, the curriculum is constantly changed to be suitable for most students, unlike the curricula that are fixed in Kuwait for a long time," he said.

Fahad Al-Qabandi, 19, said Kuwait has the privilege of having universities close to

homes, while in other countries, universities are in different states. "But in other countries, there is a more suitable study environment for students, along with better teaching methods. In Kuwait, teaching methods are standard, but in other countries, we find more creative teaching methods during lectures or online classes, and the explanation is better. Students have fun during the learning process," he said.

Reconnaissance Research honors Australian envoy

KUWAIT: Abdulaziz Al-Anjari, Founder and CEO of Reconnaissance Research, held a farewell meeting in honor of Jonathan Gilbert, Ambassador of Australia to the State of Kuwait, on the occasion of the end of his tenure as Ambassador to his country after spending four and a half years in Kuwait. The

meeting was attended by a number of selected invitees.

"I would like to thank Reconnaissance Research and Abdulaziz for this opportunity, which marks the end of my journey in this beautiful country, Kuwait, rich in its culture, diversity and ideas," said the Australian ambassador.

The ambassador added, "I was happy with the many friendships I made in Kuwait. I was fortunate to work with Reconnaissance Research since its start in 2019 and I value the great potential at hand for more work with them. I am sure the next ambassador will also appreciate the value of Reconnaissance Research as an independent Kuwaiti think tank."

Meanwhile, Anjari said: "The Australian ambassador made strong bridges of communication with Kuwait. He worked tirelessly to advance common interests and maximize mutual benefit between Australia and Kuwait."

Anjari added: "He left a lasting positive impact on many Kuwaitis, especially the youth, whom he always welcomes participating with us in discussion sessions concerned with their affairs. Also, the ambassador has accumulated experiences from his previous work in several countries, such as Iraq and the Philippines, which formed an added value of knowledge for me outside the borders of Australia."



KUWAIT: Abdulaziz Al-Anjari presents a memento to Ambassador of Australia to Kuwait Jonathan Gilbert.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan speaks with Australian Ambassador Jonathan Gilbert.



ITALY: Italian Tourism Minister Massimo Garavaglia.

Italy working to speed up Kuwaitis' visa exemption

SORRENTO: Italian Tourism Minister Massimo Garavaglia stated on Saturday that his country works to facilitate Kuwaiti tourists' entry to Italy and to speed up their exemption from the requirement of European Schengen visa. Garavaglia made this remark in a press statement after the first "World Youth Tourism Summit" organized by the World

Tourism Organization and hosted by Italian city Sorrento. On the request to exempt Kuwaiti travelers from the Schengen visa, Garavaglia said that "as we emphasized during the summit, we seek to speed up the file of the Schengen visa, which has been slow for a while, and we are fully aware of its importance and we are looking to complete it." — KUNA

NCCAL launches program to encourage reading in Arabic

KUWAIT: The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) launched the "children's summer week" on Sunday, focusing on reading in Arabic language. In a statement to the press, head of the heritage department at Kuwait

National Library Wael Al-Roumi said that today's generations read and communicate mostly in English, due to globalization and the use of the internet. The event aims to promote reading among children, especially Arabic books, he said. He called on fami-

lies, schools and cultural organizations to encourage children to use Arabic language more in their daily life. The event is held in Kuwait National Library and includes reading sessions, handcraft, competitions and workshops. — KUNA



Local

Kuwaiti doctor explains innovative 'Method for Treating Vitiligo'

Dr Mohammad Al-Ansary's treatment under research at Durham University

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The RS Patents and Intellectual Property Office at Kuwait University registered a new patent for the academic year 2020/2021 entitled "Method for Treating Vitiligo" by Dr Mohammad Al-Ansary, a faculty member and researcher at the Faculty of Medicine at Kuwait University. Kuwait Times spoke with Ansary, who is currently doing research at Durham University in the United Kingdom to learn more about his vitiligo treatment.

Kuwait Times: Tell us more about yourself.

Dr Mohammad Al-Ansary: I'm a medical biochemist, so we do experiments to create new ways of treatments and general health research to promote life. I'm a vitiligo patient myself and that is what drives me to learn and do more research on vitiligo. I was five years old when I got diagnosed with vitiligo. I tried all sorts of treatments available, but a medical dermatologist advised me there is no treatment and I have to live with it.

My vitiligo became more progressive and my mother told me that maybe when you grow up you'll focus on that condition or maybe a treatment. Thank God it came true. I studied to be a medical doctor (MD). But later I understood that MDs are mainly trained to diagnose and advise available treatments, but are not very capable of running laboratory research to find and develop new treatments and medicine.

So, I finished my master's degree at the Faculty of Medicine in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and chose this to be the start of my career. Now I'm a PhD Researcher in omics science and recombinant biomolecular purification (genetically engineered DNA to produce proteins/biological treatments). I've concluded that understanding the engineering of God in how life evolved and varies could help us develop new avenues in research that have potential therapeutics. The secret of biology is there: we just have to discover and learn more to know what to use and how to use it. That requires a lot of dedication and collaboration.

With knowledge, my vitiligo was treated, gaining back more than 80 percent of my color.

KT: Tell us more about your discovery of vitiligo treatment. How does it work?

Dr Ansary: The question was why the current methods of treating vitiligo didn't work on me and

others? What can we do to change this? We have to define vitiligo correctly - vitiligo is a recessive multi-genetic and multifactorial disorder that leads to discoloration of the skin (pigment under the skin is not there). The condition is not genetically dominant as most are born healthy and probably may live and die without developing vitiligo (despite having vitiligo genes). It is certainly not contagious and not all white skin patches are diagnosed as vitiligo.

In vitiligo, the color is not present under the skin in some areas, causing a cosmetic issue that for some people might also be a psychological problem, causing stress. Some scientific evidence suggests that vitiligo is an autoimmune problem. Meaning that the immune system attacks melanocytes (cells that are producing the pigment). The question is, do immunosuppressants and immunomodulatory treatments work? Not with all cases but they help (mostly temporarily).

There wasn't a treatment that did less damage until we invented VT treatment - a new two-phase method as a new vitiligo treatment. VT treatment works by enhancing cell pigment with effective plant-based natural photosensitive components that are mixed with components that reduce oxidative damage and other components that help in immunomodulatory effects.

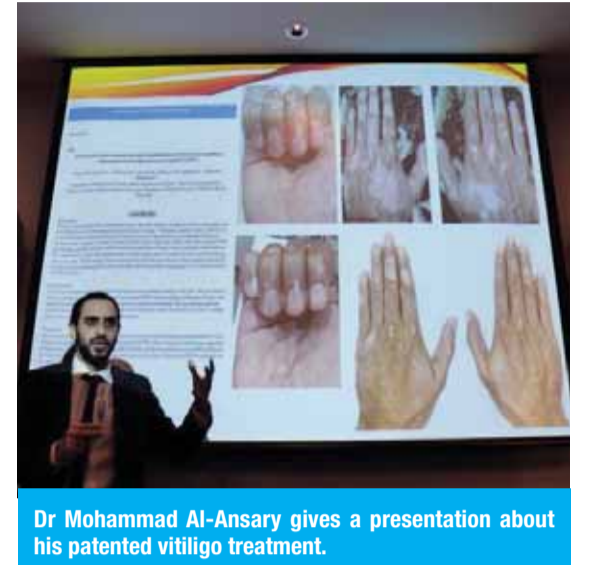
This is followed by another VT Treatment (VT2) that has a variety of specific antioxidants that was used for the first time in treating vitiligo to lower oxidative damage, natural co-factors and co-enzymes that also used for the first time in treating vitiligo to stimulate melanogenesis, tyrosinase action (enzyme producing the color), and heme-oxygenase (an anti-inflammatory enzyme) typically in the area to achieve balance after photosensitivity. Also, some components help increase the topical circulation in the area. Using VT2 alone without radiation also showed results in the trials.

KT: What is the difference between your treatment and others?

Dr Ansary: All antioxidant treatments lack the



Dr Mohammad Al-Ansary



Dr Mohammad Al-Ansary gives a presentation about his patented vitiligo treatment.

combined natural components of the VT Treatment plans. VT treatment is the only vitiligo treatment that has invented with patented two-phase method that treats by a combination of selective broadband photosensitive plant-based components with plant-based immunomodulatory components. Following that the second treatment enhances the results by reducing the radiation damaging effect. Our treatment is the only vitiligo treatment that focuses on the natural re-stabilization and normalizing effect of heme-oxygenase pathways in these two-phase separated treatments. We

More than 90 percent get positive results

believe we have the best components that enhance tyrosinase action and protect the new melanocytes to enhance re-pigmentation and achieve balance after that.

Our treatment got the trust of vitiligo research foundation in the new vitiligo treatment pipeline published by them. It is one of the first personalized plan treatments in vitiligo because it is available in different concentrations and components that are used based on patient history and treatment-

response plans of medical dermatologists. This treatment was developed by scientist academics at university with the collaboration of international medical doctors and experts in natural treatment pharmaceuticals R&D teams.

KT: What is the success rate of this treatment? How effective is it?

Dr Ansary: In generalized vitiligo, more than 90 percent get positive results. With other types of vitiligo, the response rate is more than 80 percent, except with segmental vitiligo, where half of the users show results. Acral vitiligo is challenging but at least most cases continue with VT Treatment as the most effective method.

KT: What are the alarming warning signs that people should watch out for?

Dr Ansary: Not every white spot is vitiligo, but as soon as a person notices a white spot, they should seek medical attention.

KT: How is vitiligo diagnosed?

Dr Ansary: By medical dermatologists' observation. There are some medical tools like wood light that can show white spots, even those that are not visible by the naked eye.

KT: Are you working on new treatments?

Dr Ansary: Yes, we are developing new biological treatments and other important products for dermatologists and patients.



Dr Taweel credits support at KU for FIP top honor

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: In a new achievement for Kuwaiti and Arab women, the International Pharmaceutical Federation chose the Vice Dean of Academic and Student Affairs at Kuwait University's College of Pharmacy Dr Dalal Al-Taweel among 20 rising stars in the field of pharmaceutical sciences research and education, the only representative from Kuwait and the Arab world.

"FIPWiSE is an initiative launched by the International Federation of Pharmacy (FIP) for Women in Science and Education. It launched the FIPWiSE Rising Stars program to highlight women

in pharmaceutical sciences or pharmacy education who are pathfinders in their fields and rising in their careers and who deserve to be recognized," Taweel told Kuwait Times, adding, "I am honored to have been chosen among 20 women from 14 different countries for this recognition."

Taweel said she is blessed to have a mentor and colleague who nominated her for this award, Prof Pierre Moreau, Dean at the College of Pharmacy at Kuwait University. "He has led the college through the transformation of our pharmacy education and shared his vast experience in curriculum revisions with us. I have learnt a lot from his guidance throughout the four years I have worked with him," she said.

Regarding the challenges women face, Taweel pointed out that achieving gender equity and empowering women is a challenge worldwide, adding she has been lucky to work in a team at her college that supports each other and helps each other carve their paths in pharmaceutical sciences, pharmacy practice and education.

"I got my undergraduate pharmacy degree from Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, Scotland, and MSc and PhD in Clinical Pharmacy from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. Currently, I hold the position of Vice Dean of Academic and Student Affairs at the College of Pharmacy, Kuwait University," Taweel said.

With a fulltime job as vice dean and being a mother of three children, Taweel stressed what keeps her motivated, especially with her busy day, is gaining new knowledge and skills her professional journey. "In addition to my administrative work of organizing students' affairs, I also have duties in teaching and research," she said.



Dr Dalal Al-Taweel

WHO, Health Ministry host workshop on health, air pollution

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health and World Health Organization in Kuwait hosted on Sunday a national training workshop on the health impact assessment of air pollution. The two-day workshop was inaugurated by Dr Asaad Hafeez the WHO Representative in the State of Kuwait and Dr Mohammad Al-Seaidan, Director of Public Health at the Ministry of Health. The objective of the workshop is to train national health and environment experts on measuring the level of air pollution and its health-related impacts. Hafeez, stated during his opening remarks, "Air pollution is now recognized as the single biggest environmental threat to human health. WHO data show that 99 percent of the global population breathe the air that exceeds WHO guideline limits and contains high levels of pollutants." Research has shown that there is growing evidence of the causal relationships for type II diabetes and low birth weight with exposure to air pollution. Furthermore, long-term exposure to air pollution increases the risk of diseases such as Alzheimer, respiratory infections, and lung cancer.

Dr Mazen Malkawi, Regional Adviser at the WHO Centre for Environmental Health Action, noted "Air pollution is a silent killer. What leads up to premature death is the persistent levels of air pollution. "Research from the Eastern Mediterranean region is limited in the global evidence base. "Our estimates predict that at least 3 people die every day as a result of air pollution in Kuwait. We need to spearhead more national epidemiological studies to better understand the toxicity of different types of particulate matter on human," added Dr Malkawi. Participants included health professionals from the Ministry of Health departments of public health, environmental health and occupational health as well as participants from the Kuwait Environmental Public Authority (KEPA), Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and Kuwait University (KU). WHO Kuwait office was inaugurated in June 2021 and has since then played a vital role in placing the health impacts of air pollution and climate change on the national agenda together with keen interest and leadership from the Ministry of Health. —KUNA

Training and Technical Assistance

By Jude Al-Hajeri

Described by the United Nations as a severe plague that can lead to the demise of countries, corruption is a major challenge for nations worldwide. Regardless of a nation's size and wealth, corruption is found everywhere. Due to the detrimental effects of corruption on society and its unfortunate prevalence in countries worldwide, The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) was created.

Established as an instrument for international cooperation in the fight against corruption, the UNCAC seeks to prevent and combat corruption on a global scale. The UNCAC provides a comprehensive set of standards, rules, and measures countries can implement to strengthen regulatory and legal systems to combat corruption. It proposes criminalizing corruption in the private and public sectors along with implementing preventive measures for the same. The framework encourages cooperation between states to prevent and detect corruption in order to recover stolen assets. The convention, adopted in 2003 and enforced in 2005, proposes 71 articles member states follow to create solid anti-corruption systems.

One of the key articles of the convention is Article 60 "Training and Technical Assistance". This article describes the technical assistance and information exchange aspect of fighting corruption. States should initiate, develop, and improve specific training programs for all personnel involved in combating corruption. Kuwait, through its Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), has participated in numerous local and international training programs. The training programs focus on areas such as the appropriate measures to detect, prevent, and investigate corruption, surveillance of the movement of corruption crime

proceeds, capacity building for anti-corruption policy planning and development, preventing the transfer of corruption proceeds, and methods to be used to protect witnesses and victims assisting judicial authorities. Additionally, member states are required to afford each other measures of technical assistance through material support and training in anti-corruption plans. Corruption tends to be more prevalent in developing nations, thus, there is an emphasis on developed nations assisting developing nations in creating robust anti-corruption agencies by providing the proper frameworks and funding the implementation processes.

One of the main purposes and fundamental principles of the UNCAC is asset recovery. As such, member states are expected to facilitate international cooperation in areas of extradition and mutual legal assistance. Carrying out research and evaluations on the causes, types, and effects of corruption are highly encouraged. Conducting international training programs and sharing the names of experts in the field of asset recovery with countries requiring assistance are also highly encouraged. In addition, states are expected to use international and national seminars to promote technical assistance and cooperation against corruption. Notably, states are required to establish voluntary mechanisms that contribute funds to developing countries and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as a means of fostering its programs in developing countries.

For centuries, corruption has ravaged nations worldwide. The UNCAC was established as a means to assist in tackling this problem. With aims to combat corruption through greater regulatory frameworks, Article 60 of the UNCAC provides guidance for states to strengthen anti-corruption structures through technical assistance and training programs. By way of international cooperation and the sharing of best practices through training programs, Article 60 of the UNCAC, is just one of the many tools that will aid member states in their fight against corruption.

—Jude Al-Hajeri is a Specialist Professional at the International Cooperation Department of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha)

local spotlight

Visa ban



By Fajer Ahmed

local@kuwaittimes.net

As the European Parliament sets a date this week to discuss and negotiate allowing Kuwaiti citizens to travel to Europe without the need of a Schengen Visa, Kuwait on the other hand has suspended visit visas until further notice, while news sources claim the following:

1. Visa issuance has been halted until new mechanisms are in place.

2. Possibly a decision to ban work permits for citizens of countries with large communities in Kuwait will be seriously discussed, so only technical and qualified labor can be brought in from these countries.

3. Imposing health insurance on every expat.

4. Obtaining residency in Kuwait will be toughened through increasing residency fees.

5. Only those whose salary is KD 600 or higher can bring in a parent, but that will rise to double the figure as new developments occur.

6. Not allowing the extension of the visit period, which is for 3 months.

Although I understand that laws are in place to regulate and protect the country, and that these legal decisions are made from a political and economic standpoint, we also need to discuss the effects of such laws on the social and humane aspects. Some of these proposed discussions are logical and practical, and are globally seen in other countries.

With that said, it is unclear why issuance of visas was halted until new regulations are implemented, instead of just switching implementation from one regulation to another, to prevent causing disturbance to families of expats in Kuwait.

As Kuwaitis, personally and as a government, we really need to respect the people that are coming to Kuwait to assist us with work that is needed - our doctors, teachers, cleaners, cooks and so on. They should not be treated as a threat but be respected, as they are part of our everyday life.

I wonder what the new regulations will state, and how excluding certain nationalities from entering the country will work out.

Local

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News in brief

Crown Prince receives officials

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday at Bayan Palace the National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. His Highness Sheikh Mishal also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Ministry says install latest security updates

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Cybersecurity Department released a statement strongly urging people to install Microsoft's latest security updates for its software, especially for the 'Exchange Server' e-mail service, due to LockBit ransomware security threats.

Kuwait sends 3,454 graduates on scholarships

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Education Dr Ali Al-Mudhaf approved a list of 3,454 high school graduates (classes of 2021 and 2022) to be sent on scholarships abroad, as part of the government's full scholarships' program.

Kuwait condoles with Iran on earthquake victims

KUWAIT: Kuwait Foreign Ministry, on Sunday, expressed compassion to Iran over the quake that hit the southern province of Hormozgan, leading to several people's deaths and others' injuries. The Ministry also expressed sincere condolences to the Iranian leadership, government and people, wishing the injured quick recovery. On Saturday, a series of quakes, measuring 5.9, 6.1 and 6.3 in magnitude, hit the southern province of Hormozgan, Iran, leading to the death of five people and the injury of 44 others.

Dollar at KD 0.306, Euro at KD 0.319

KUWAIT: The US Dollar stabilized on Sunday at KD 0.306, and the Euro dropped by 0.24 percent to KD 0.319 compared with Thursday's rate. The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said in its daily bulletin the British sterling pound was down by 0.29 percent to reach KD 0.370, and the Swiss franc by 0.54 to KD 0.319, as the Japanese Yen stood at KD 0.0022. The CBK publishes daily average exchange rates that do not necessarily reflect actual prices of the currencies' trade for the day.

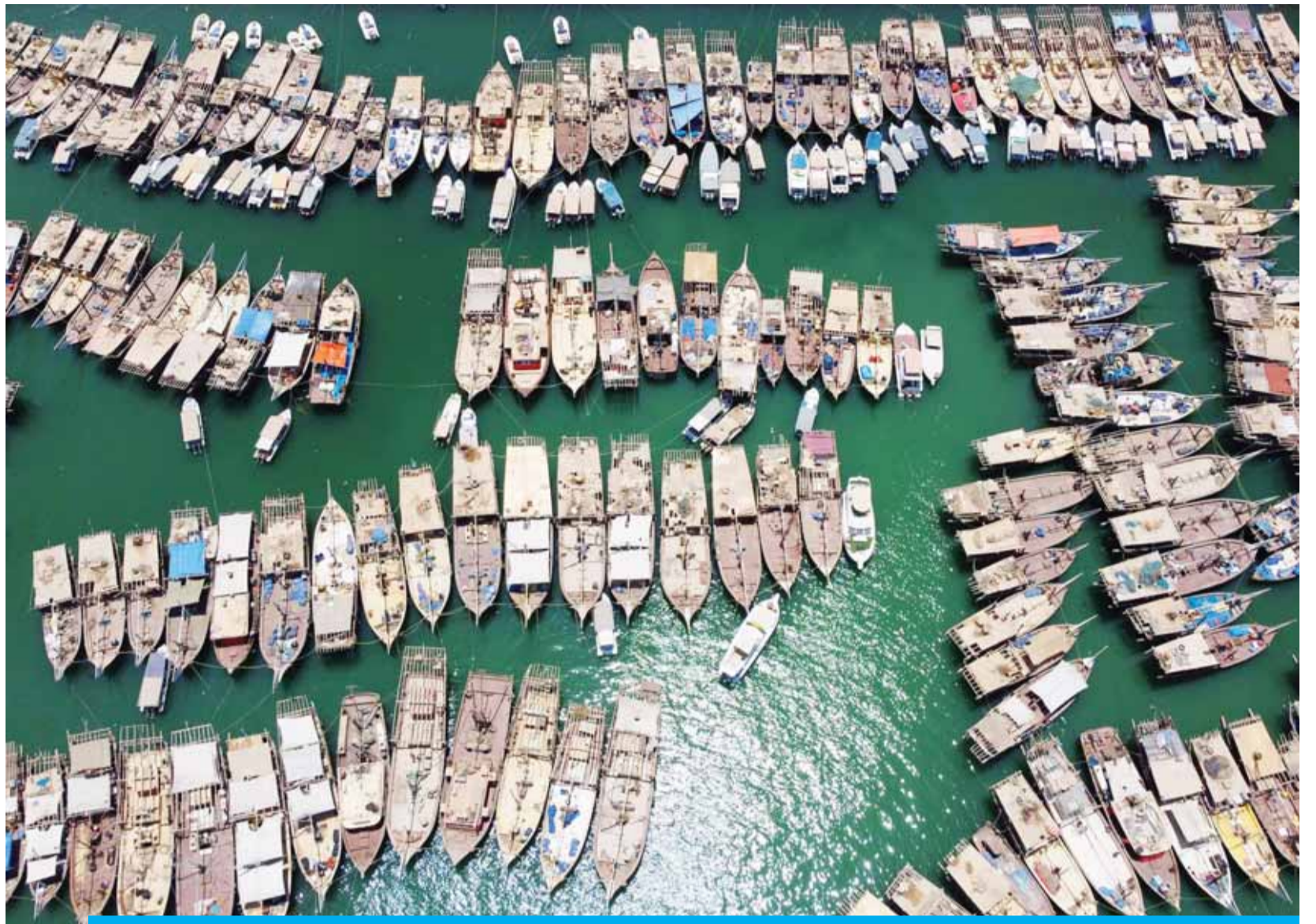


RIYADH: Chief of Kuwaiti Hajj Mission Farid Emadi meets Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah Tawfiq Al-Rabih. —KUNA

Kuwait says Saudi Hajj preparations extraordinary

RIYADH: Chief of Kuwaiti Hajj Mission Farid Emadi commended Sunday Saudi Arabia's early Hajj preparations, calling the organization extraordinary. The Kuwaiti Mission affirmed in statement that this came during meeting between Emadi and Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah Tawfiq Al-Rabih in Makkah, where the two discussed a slew of Hajj and Umrah related topics. Emadi commended their efforts in facilitating the Hajj process, enabling pilgrims to perform Hajj rituals with complete ease and no hindrances. He further commented that he hopes for this Hajj season to be as successful as previous ones and wishes for all pilgrims to return home safely after completing their rituals. —KUNA

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: An aerial view shows traditional fishing boats docked at the Souq Sharq harbor, in Kuwait City on July 3, 2022. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

One million eco-friendly bags distributed at Kuwait supermarkets

EPA, Eco sign deal to support renewable energy projects

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Environment Public Authority distributed one million eco-friendly bags at co-op societies and supermarkets as part of a campaign to encourage less use of plastic bags in the country. Each bag is biodegradable and can carry a weight of 10 kilograms, said Sheikh Al-Ibrahim, Media and Public Relations Director at EPA. The campaign was launched to coincide with the International Plastic Bag Free Day.

In other news, the EPA and ECO Incubator for Environment and Renewable Energy Projects signed on Sunday a memorandum of cooperation to support environmental and renewable energy projects that promotes the Kuwaiti environment. EPA Chairman of the Board of Directors and Director General Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said in a press statement after the signing that the memorandum will contribute

to increasing support for small and medium-sized enterprises and large environmental measures will be taken to support the benefit of the environment. He added that Kuwait's environment is integrated with these projects and needs more cooperation, indicating that the agreement with the business incubator for industrial and environmental projects will last for five years.

He pointed out that the projects are based on the country's needs, which are related to developing the coastal environment, recycling waste, increasing the green sector in the country, increasing coral colonies, preserving coasts, and raising community awareness. He stressed that with the business incubator support of the initiators will increase, pointing out that the authority will support projects that promote environmental affairs in the country.

Regarding the tire recycling factories, he stated

that they are working properly in recycling what was transferred from the south Saad Al-Abdullah area, indicating that the main goal is to carry out the appropriate method of recycling since its disposal is one of the negative effects on the environment. Meanwhile, CEO of ECO Incubator for Environmental and Renewable Energy Projects, Jassem Al-Abouh, said that the memorandum of understanding with EPA is to improve Kuwait's environment and youth projects related to the environment. —KUNA



Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah



KUWAIT: Ambassador of Somalia to Kuwait Dr Abdullah Mohamed Odowa and other dignitaries attend the ceremony.

Somalia embassy hosts Independence Day ceremony

KUWAIT: The Somali community in Kuwait held an event on Friday at Abdulaziz Hussein cultural center in Mishref to celebrate the 62nd anniversary of the Somali Independence Day and the Union of Northern and Southern Regions. The ceremony was organized by the Somali Embassy and the Somali nationals Under the auspice of Dr Abdullah Mohamed Odowa, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Somalia to the state of Kuwait. African Diplomats, friends of Somalia as well as a big number of Somali nationals took part. Patriotic songs, cultural games and speeches made by embassy leaders and leaders of the community were held.

Ambassador Dr Odowa delivered a speech focusing on the significance of Independence Day in the history of the Somali people. He talked about the development of Somalia's government, and he highlighted the challenges that the country and people faced for 62 years. He



Children perform a traditional dance at the event.

also spoke about the business development opportunities in Somalia. In his address, the ambassador thanked the leadership and government of Kuwait for the continued support in fur-

ther strengthening Somalia-Kuwait bilateral relations, for taking special care of the Somali community in Kuwait, and for the usual assistance to Somalia.



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ACCRA, Ghana: Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) heads of state and government pose for a group photo at the ECOWAS 61st Ordinary Session in Accra, Ghana, on July 3, 2022. —AFP

W African heads meet to review sanctions

Bloc committed to supporting three countries' return to democratic order

ACCRA: West African leaders met on Sunday in Ghana's capital Accra to review sanctions they have imposed on three military-ruled countries in their volatile region.

Heads of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) were gathering to assess efforts to secure timetables and other guarantees for restoring civilian rule in Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso.

Mali underwent coups in August 2020 and May 2021, followed by Guinea in September 2021 and Burkina Faso this January. Fearing contagion in a region notorious for military takeovers, ECOWAS has imposed tough trade and economic sanctions against Mali, but lesser punishments against Guinea and Burkina.

Dominating the summit will be the review of a month-long bid to push the juntas to set an early timetable for returning to barracks. ECOWAS in January imposed a trade and financial embargo on Mali after its military government unveiled a scheme to rule for five years.

At a June 4 summit, no decision was made for the three countries.

Opening Sunday's summit, Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo said the 15-member bloc was committed to supporting the three countries' return to democratic order and would take appropriate decisions after hearing reports on their progress.

The sanctions have badly hit poor and landlocked

Mali, whose economy is already under severe strain from a decade-long jihadist insurgency.

After months of bitter talks, the Malian authorities on Wednesday approved a plan to hold presidential elections in February 2024. The vote will be preceded by a referendum on a revised constitution in March 2023 and legislative elections in late 2023.

The ECOWAS mediator in Mali, former Nigerian leader Goodluck Jonathan, visited the country last week. A member of his entourage told AFP Mali had made "enormous progress".

Mali's top diplomat Abdoulaye Diop on Friday said the recent political developments were moving the country towards a lifting of the sanctions.

But a new electoral law, adopted on June 17, could be a stumbling block in the talks as it allows a military figure to contest the presidential elections.

Guinea transition 'unthinkable'

Burkina Faso—another Sahel country caught up in jihadist turmoil—and Guinea have so far only been suspended from the bodies of the 15-nation bloc but could face harsher sanctions.

Burkina's junta has proposed a constitutional referendum in December 2024 and legislative and presidential elections in February 2025. Visiting Ouagadougou for the second time in a month on Saturday, ECOWAS mediator Mahamadou Issoufou praised junta leader Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri

Sandaogo Damiba and his government for their "openness to dialogue".

The timetable to enable a return to civilian rule and the situation of deposed leader Roch Marc Christian Kabore were also discussed, said the former president of Niger. Political parties allied to Kabore denounced the junta's plans on Friday, saying they were not consulted in advance.

The situation appears more complex in Guinea, whose junta has refused an ECOWAS mediator and announced a 36-month transition—a period that African Union chairman and Senegalese President Macky Sall has described as "unthinkable".

ECOWAS avoided ruling on sanctions at a June 4 meeting and instead gave itself another month to negotiate.

Guinea this week has led a diplomatic offensive to assuage the concerns of regional leaders.

The country's post-coup prime minister Mohamed Beavogui on Saturday met the United Nations' special representative for West Africa and the Sahel, Mahamat Saleh Annadif.

The government said it wanted to reassure its ECOWAS "brothers" of its commitment to undertaking a peaceful and inclusive democratic transition.

Guinea's military regime met the main political parties on Monday, but they have made their participation in the dialogue conditional on the nomination of an ECOWAS mediator. —AFP

Profound impact of conservative US Supreme Court

WASHINGTON: Two years after President Donald Trump filled its ranks with conservatives, the US Supreme Court has engineered a sharp turn in US constitutional law that could have a profound effect on American life for decades. Key decisions that rescinded abortion rights, permit Americans to tote their guns freely in public, expand religion in schools, remove voting rights protections, and impede the government's ability to set controls on greenhouse gases, have turned long-accepted rules of justice on their heads.

With a 6-3 majority on the bench, the conservatives led by Chief Justice John Roberts represent a mighty swing of the judicial pendulum from decades of a modestly progressive course. Politically, the Roberts court is effectively payback by the Republican right, which has since the 1970s endeavored to claim control of the high court to reverse key decisions they view as excessive.

But analysts say the just-closed annual court season has revealed a set of judges more hard-line than anyone anticipated. They have bravely tossed out the decisions of their respected predecessors, including, as with abortion, rights that previous courts said were guaranteed by the constitution.

"It's not unusual to see the pendulum swinging, and to have what might be considered course-corrections," said American University constitutional law professor Stephen Wermiel. But in the term just ended, he said, the court took "a dramatic and sudden shift in a far more conservative direction."

"Two generations of Americans, maybe more, have grown up knowing certain sets of rights," Wermiel said. "This is the rare instance in which the Supreme Court has dramatically taken back constitutional rights," he said.

Political alignment

"The last time there was an ideologically cohesive court was the Warren court, and that court pursued liberal objectives" said Neal Devins, a Supreme Court expert at the William & Mary University law school. Led by Chief Justice Earl Warren, over 16 years from 1953 to 1969 that court made transformative decisions that expanded civil rights and civil liberties. It effectively ended segregation of whites and Blacks, increased the power of the federal government, curtailed official Christian prayer sessions in public schools, and laid the ground for the 1973 decision that made abortion a constitutional right.

Warren's team overturned plenty of precedents, and was viewed with as much outrage by conservatives as liberals see the Roberts court. But Devins points to stark differences. Four of the Warren court's conservative members were appointed by a Democratic president, and two liberal justices were chosen by a Republican. On many crucial decisions, justices from both sides were in the majority and the dissenting minority. Their decisions did not cleanly align with the political divide between Republicans and Democrats. Indeed, five of the seven justices who backed the 1973 abortion decision were appointed by Republicans. —AFP

Sweden refuses to deny deportations to Turkey

VISBY, Sweden: Sweden's Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson refused Sunday to deny Turkey's claim that it had promised to deport individuals sought by Ankara as part of Stockholm's efforts to join NATO.

Despite questioning by journalists and concerns among Kurdish and Turkish refugees in Sweden, Andersson would not say whether such a commitment had been given to Ankara for it to lift objections to Sweden's membership.

"I've been a minister for eight years and I never talked about what is said in the negotiation room," she said. "(That) actually puts me in a bit of a difficult situation right now," she added. In an agreement signed by Stockholm and Helsinki at a NATO summit in Madrid

on Tuesday, the two Nordic countries agreed to examine Turkish extradition requests "expeditiously and thoroughly".

No promise has been given to actually carry out the extraditions, and Finland and Sweden have since recalled that the process is in the hands of the authorities and independent courts. But Turkish President Erdogan on Thursday said at the end of the NATO summit that Sweden had made a "promise" to extradite "73 terrorists" and threatened to block NATO membership if the commitments were not met.

Andersson, who was pressed several times on Sunday to say whether such a promise had been given, simply repeated Stockholm's position. She said Sweden will continue to respect national and international laws, no Swedish nationals will be extradited, the decision will be up to independent authorities and courts.

"If you are not involved in terrorist activities, there is no need for concern," she said. The Swedish leader was holding her first press conference since returning from the summit, during a visit to the Baltic Sea island of Gotland.

Every July, it hosts a week of political meetings

women's rights activist, during an audio debate on a social media forum in April. Hashemi is reported to have said that Iran's demand for the Revolutionary Guards—the ideological arm of the country's military—to be removed from a US terror list was "damaging" to the country's "national interests," according to local media.

Removal of the terror designation of the Guards is a key sticking point in negotiations over restoring Tehran's frayed 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. Hashemi also made separate comments concerning Khadija, the wife of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

She is reported to have called Khadija a "business-woman", showing that women can also engage in economic activity, and whose money the prophet spent. She later said the comments had been a "joke... without any intention of causing insult", state news agency IRNA reported.

Hashemi's late father was a moderate who advocated improved ties with the West and the United States. In 2012, she was sentenced to six months in jail on charges of "propaganda against the Islamic republic". —AFP



VISBY, Sweden: Sweden's Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson speaks during a press conference after her visit to the Armed Forces at Gotland's regiment P18 in Visby, Sweden, on July 3, 2022. —AFP

bringing together party leaders. But it is also one of the locations due to be reinforced by the Swedish army after the Russian invasion of Ukraine and Sweden's decision to join NATO. —AFP



TEHRAN: File photo shows Faezeh Hashemi, daughter of Iran's former president Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, attending a campaign meeting for the reformists for the upcoming parliamentary elections. —AFP

Ex-Iran president's daughter charged with propaganda

TEHRAN: The daughter of Iran's former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was charged with carrying out propaganda activity against the country and blasphemy in social media comments, the judiciary said Sunday. "The indictment... has been issued and referred to the court on the charges of propaganda activity against the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran and blasphemy," Tehran's chief prosecutor Ali Salehi said, according to the judiciary's website Mizan Online.

The charges are connected to comments reportedly made by Faezeh Hashemi, 59, a former lawmaker and a

International

Author of proposed new Tunisia constitution disavows project

Published text is 'completely different' from that submitted in person to the president

TUNIS: The Tunisian jurist who oversaw the drafting of a new constitution submitted to President Kais Saied said Sunday it has been changed into a charter that could lead to a dictatorship. Some articles of the draft constitution published last Thursday in the official gazette could "pave the way for a dictatorial regime", warned Sadeq Belaid, who headed a committee tasked with drafting the document.

tial power grab moved to rule by decree and extended his powers over the judiciary and the electoral board.

Some Tunisians welcomed his moves against the sclerotic system that emerged from the revolution that toppled dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in 2011. But others have protested in the streets and warned that the president is targeting political rivals and dragging the country back towards autocracy.

'Completely different'

The constitution for a "new republic" is at the centre of Saied's programme for rebuilding Tunisia's political system. The president plans to hold a referendum on the constitution on July 25, to mark one year since his power grab. The draft constitution published last week grants the president wide powers to rule. It allows him to carry out "executive functions with the help of the government", whose chief he would appoint. The president would also head the armed forces and name judges. The draft constitution waters down the role of parliament.

Belaid warned that the published document "contains risks and considerable shortcomings". He specifically points to one article, which he said carries an "imminent danger" because it would give the president "very wide powers... that could lead to a dictatorial regime". "That is why, as head of the national constitution committee... I declare, regretfully and in true conscience... that the committee has nothing to do with the document that the president" will submit for approval in a referendum, Belaid added.

The altered draft constitution augurs a "bad future" for the country, he contended. His misgivings were ini-



TUNIS, Tunisia: File photo shows Sadok Belaid, head of Tunisia's constitution committee, submitting a draft of the new constitution to President Kais Saied (R) at the Carthage Palace in Tunis. — AFP

tially published as a letter in the Assabah newspaper, and he spoke subsequently to AFP, confirming that he was the author.

"The text that I drew up after several weeks of work with the participation of dozens of experts at all levels is completely different from the text that has been published," he told AFP. In contrast to Tunisia's past constitutions, the draft also makes no reference to Islam as a

state religion or basis of the law.

The 2014 constitution, a hard-won compromise between the Islamist-inspired Ennahdha, which was parliament's biggest party, and its secular rivals created a system where both the president and parliament had executive powers. It was adopted three years after the North African country's 2011 revolution that toppled Ben Ali. — AFP



President plans to hold a referendum

The published text is "completely different" from that submitted in person to the president late last month, the respected jurist told AFP. In July last year, Saied orchestrated a dramatic power grab, which many have denounced as a coup, sacking the government and freezing parliament.

Belaid was viewed as a pro-Saied figure even during subsequent moves by the president to further consolidate power this year. His disavowal of the altered constitution is therefore a blow for the president, just weeks before it is due to go to a referendum.

Contacted by AFP, Belaid confirmed he has withdrawn his support for the draft. Saied has since his ini-



JERUSALEM: Zionist entity's former prime minister Naftali Bennett and caretaker Prime Minister Yair Lapid attend the first cabinet meeting on July 3, 2022. — AFP

Zionist entity's PM condemns Hezb in first cabinet meeting

JERUSALEM: Zionist entity's Prime Minister Yair Lapid accused Hezbollah of undermining Lebanon's efforts to reach an agreement on their disputed energy-rich maritime border, as the new premier hosted his first cabinet meeting Sunday. Lapid, who retains his previous post as Zionist's foreign minister, took over as prime minister on Friday from Naftali Bennett, his partner in a now defunct eight-party coalition. On Saturday, Zionist's army said it had intercepted three drones launched by Hezbollah that were headed towards an offshore gas field in the Mediterranean, near a disputed area that is the subject of US-mediated maritime talks.

"Hezbollah is continuing on the path of terrorism and is hurting Lebanon's ability to reach an agreement on a maritime border," Lapid said. Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah movement confirmed it had launched drones towards the Mediterranean's Karish gas field.

Zionist entity said the drones, which were not armed, were downed by a fighter jet and missiles launched from a warship as they headed towards the offshore area. Zionist entity and previous United Nations maps put Karish within Zionist's maritime borders, and not in the disputed area subject to ongoing negotiations.

But Lebanon last month condemned Zionist entity when a vessel chartered by Zionist entity and operated by London-listed Greek energy firm Energean entered the Karish field. Hezbollah at the time warned Energean against proceeding with its activities. Lebanon and Zionist entity resumed negotiations on their maritime border in 2020, but the process was stalled by Beirut's claim that the map used by the UN in the talks needed modifying. Lebanon initially demanded 860 square kilometres (330 square miles) of waters it said were under dispute, but then asked for an additional 1,430 square kilometres (552 square miles), including part of the Karish field. — AFP

Georgians rally en masse for EU, urge govt to quit

TBILISI: Tens of thousands of people rallied in Georgia on Sunday demanding that the government resign over its failure to formally secure candidacy for membership of the European Union. The Black Sea nation has been in a grip of mass protests since EU leaders decided in late June to defer Tbilisi's application for membership, pending sweeping political reforms.

The biggest demonstrations in decades, which saw at least 120,000 take to the streets on June 20, are being organized by leading pro-democracy groups and supported by opposition parties. On Sunday evening, tens of thousands of demonstrators gathered outside Georgian parliament, blocking traffic at the main thoroughfare of the Georgian capital, Tbilisi.

Waving Georgian and EU flags, demonstrators sang the national anthem, before the EU anthem, the Ode to Joy, was performed at the rally. Many held placards that read "We are Europe". On Facebook, the rally's organizers earlier called on Bidzina Ivanishvili, founder of the country's ruling party, to "relinquish executive

power and transfer it, in a constitutional manner, to a government of national accord". A new cabinet "will carry out the reforms required by the EU, which will automatically bring us the status of an EU membership candidate," the statement said. "A next stage of our protests begins today. We will not disperse."

Ivanishvili, Georgia's richest man, is widely believed to call the shots in the country despite having no official political role. Last month, the European Parliament imposed a non-binding resolution to impose personal sanctions on Ivanishvili for his "destructive role" in Georgia's political and economic life. He insists he has retired from politics.

Georgia applied for EU membership together with Ukraine and Moldova, days after Russia on Feb 24 invaded Ukraine. On June 23, EU leaders granted formal candidate status to Kyiv and Chisinau but said Tbilisi could only become an official candidate once outstanding issues were addressed. EU leaders nonetheless "recognized Georgia's European perspective", a move that President Salome Zurbishvili hailed as "historic".

Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili has said his government is "mobilized" to meet EU requirements on time "so that we get candidate status as soon as possible". The deferral of Georgia's candidacy became a foregone conclusion after the European Commission - the EU's executive arm - said on June 20 that Tbilisi must implement a number of reforms by the end of 2022 before it is put on a formal membership path. — AFP



TBILISI: A woman waves the Georgian national flag during a rally in support of Georgia's membership to the European Union on July 3, 2022. — AFP

Workers strike as officials fired...

Continued from Page 1

crane cable bearing it, said Interior Minister Mazen al-Faraya, who headed the investigation.

"The container weighed about 28.9 tons, which is over three times more than the capacity of the cable of 8.6 tons, causing it to break," Faraya told a news conference. A total of "18 containers of chlorine gas were supposed to be loaded onto the ship," he added. "During the loading of the fifth, the cable broke and the container fell, leading to the gas leak," he added. Faraya blamed the incident on "recklessness and negligence" at several levels, saying the port company had failed to show leadership.

Union representative Amayreh said the striking port workers were demanding officials ensure the implementation of proper safety measures. Jordan's public prosecutor had on Tuesday launched an investigation into the incident, which caused the temporary closure of Aqaba's nearby beaches. Aqaba is Jordan's only maritime gateway and a transit point for the lion's share of its imports and exports. — AFP

Ukraine retreats from key city in...

Continued from Page 1

Russia's superiority in numbers and equipment, the army said in a statement. "In order to preserve the lives of Ukrainian defenders, a decision was made to withdraw. Unfortunately, steel will and patriotism are not enough for success - material and technical resources are needed."

Russian forces seized Lysychansk's twin city of Severodonetsk last week following weeks of intense fighting. The latest blow to Ukrainian resistance came after Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Sunday pledged further military support including armored vehicles and drones during a meeting with Zelensky in Kyiv.

On Sunday, Russia accused Ukraine of firing three cluster missiles at the city of Belgorod near the Ukrainian border, which came after Belarus on Saturday said it had intercepted Ukrainian missiles. In what would represent an escalation of the conflict, Moscow said its anti-aircraft defenses shot down three Tochka-U cluster missiles launched by "Ukrainian nationalists" against Belgorod, close to

the Ukrainian border. Belgorod governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said 11 residential buildings and 39 houses had been damaged.

Russia has previously accused Kyiv of conducting strikes on Russian soil, particularly in the Belgorod region. On Saturday, Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko accused Kyiv of provocation and said his army intercepted missiles fired at his country by Ukrainian forces "around three days ago".

Belarus, a Russian ally, supported the Feb 24 invasion and has been accused by Kyiv of launching its own attacks on Ukrainian territory. Lukashenko denied any involvement in a recent cross-border incident. "We do not intend to fight in Ukraine," he was quoted as saying by state news agency Belta on Saturday.

Elsewhere, the mayor of Sloviansk, 75 km west of Lysychansk, reported the heaviest Russian shelling "for a long time", saying a child had been among six people killed, with another 15 people wounded. The city of Siversk, 30 km west of Lysychansk, saw overnight shelling, residents and an official told AFP. "It was intense, and it was shooting from all sides," said a woman sheltering in a cellar.

"Fierce fighting continues along the entire frontline, in Donbas," Zelensky said in an address late Saturday, accusing "enemy activity" of "intensifying" in the wider region around Ukraine's second city of Kharkiv.

Two people were killed and three wounded - including two children - in a strike on the town of Dobropillya, local authorities in Donetsk said.

On Monday, leaders from dozens of countries and international organizations gather in the Swiss city of Lugano for a conference on Ukraine's reconstruction. The aim is to provide a roadmap for the war-ravaged country's recovery. Zelensky said "colossal investments" would be needed as 10 regions of Ukraine had been affected in the war, with many towns and villages needing to be "rebuilt from scratch".

Ukraine will also face demands for broad reforms, especially in cracking down on corruption after Brussels recently granted Kyiv candidate status in its push to join the 27-member bloc. A Ukrainian official said Sunday that his country's forces had "put out of action" a Russian military base in Melitopol, while the Ukrainian army said the air force had destroyed around 20 Russian units and two ammunition depots. "The town of Melitopol is covered in smoke," said the city's exiled mayor Ivan Fedorov.

In peacetime, Ukraine is a major agricultural exporter, but Russia's invasion has damaged farmland and seen Ukraine's ports seized, razed or blockaded - sparking concerns about food shortages, particularly in poor countries. Farmer Sergiy Lyubarsky, whose fields are close to the frontline, warned time was running out to harvest this year's crop. — AFP

Respect the international law or die

By Dr Oleksandr Balanuta,
Ambassador of Ukraine in Kuwait

There have been numerous discussions about the reasons pushing Russia to commit a genocide against Ukrainians by killing or wounding around 1,000 Ukrainian kids, destroying or damaging above 18,000 civilian infrastructure facilities in Ukraine, torturing and humiliating Ukrainian citizens, ironing entire cities with tanks, bombs, rockets etc. One of the most ridiculous justifications of Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a NATO-Russia longstanding rivalry, which has somehow unleashed the war in Ukraine, a non-NATO country. The others claim that Russia just wants to restore the former empire, that's why it deploys its traditional 'geopolitical instruments' such as massacre, bloodbath and terror.

Let's speak the language of facts. Ukraine has restored its independence in 1991. Nowadays it's a sovereign modern country in the heart of Europe, which enjoys all the rights and duties proclaimed by the well-established international order. Ukraine has neither threatened anyone nor invaded (unlike Russia). My question is: Who gave Russia the right to determine the fate of an independent state, willing to further away from Russia as far as possible?

I believe that only Ukraine and its people will decide when and how the war will end and the peace with Russia will be established. It would be our sovereign decision, based on our interests and territorial integrity, and our partners share this approach. Ukraine's victory on the battlefield is the only way to force Russia respect the international law, to ensure the right of nations to freely choose their own future, to demonstrate that authoritarian regimes are not allowed to attack their neighbours and grab their territories. A just punishment has finally befallen upon A. Hitler, S. Hussein and it will surely overtake the terrorist of the XXI century - V. Putin.

We want to liberate all the occupied territories (currently near 20%). Neither ceasefire nor disengagement would be appropriate. We do not want to establish another "frozen conflict" or give Russia a respite for preparation for the next invasion. As long as Russia remains focused on war, not diplomacy, we are ready for a long-term fight. Ukraine will never surrender.

International

Hundreds of anti-coup protesters in Sudan defy security forces

Demonstrators demand restoration of transition to civilian rule

KHARTOUM, Sudan: Hundreds of Sudanese protesters demanding an end to military rule took to the streets of the capital Khartoum and its suburbs for a fourth straight day Sunday, witnesses said.

A violent crackdown by the security forces during mass rallies on Thursday killed nine people, the deadliest day for several months in the long running protests against a military takeover last October led by army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.

Recent protests have seen crowds burn tyres and barricade roads with bricks, with security forces using live bullets, firing barrages of tear gas canisters and using powerful water cannons, according to medics and the United Nations.

Demonstrators demand a restoration of the transition to civilian rule that was launched after the 2019 ouster of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir, which the coup derailed.

"We will continue this sit-in until the coup is overturned, and we have a fully civilian government," demonstrator Muayyad Mohamed told AFP in central Khartoum.

The death toll from protest-related violence has reached 114 since last year's coup, with the latest fatality recorded Saturday when a demonstrator died from wounds sustained at a June 16 rally, according to pro-democracy medics.

'We will not compromise'

"We will not compromise until the goals of our revolution are realised," said Soha, 25, another protester, who gave only her first name.

"We are here in the street demanding freedom, peace, justice, a civil state and the return of the military to the barracks."

The coup plunged Sudan further into political and economic turmoil which has seen rising consumer prices and life-threatening food shortages.

On Sunday, witnesses reported a heavy deployment of security forces on the streets of Khartoum, including both army vehicles as well as those of the



KHARTOUM, Sudan: Anti-coup protesters take cover as riot police try to disperse them with water cannon during a demonstration against military rule in the centre of Sudan's capital Khartoum. —AFP

Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a feared paramilitary unit commanded by Burhan's deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

The RSF incorporated members of the Janjaweed militia, which was accused by rights groups of atrocities during the conflict that erupted in 2003 in the western region of Darfur.

More recently, the RSF has been accused of taking part in crack downs on protesters marching against the army.

The international community has condemned the

recent bloodshed, with the United Nations' rights chief urging an independent probe into Thursday's violence. The UN, African Union and regional bloc IGAD have tried to facilitate talks between the generals and civilians, which the main civilian factions have boycotted.

On Friday, the three bodies jointly condemned the violence and "the use of excessive force by security forces and lack of accountability for such actions, despite repeated commitments by authorities". —AFP

Hong Kong lawmaker tests COVID positive after photo with Xi

HONG KONG: A Hong Kong lawmaker who posed for a group photo with Chinese President Xi Jinping during the leader's visit to the financial hub this week confirmed Sunday he has since tested positive for coronavirus.

Xi visited Hong Kong under strict security measures to mark the 25th anniversary of the city's handover from Britain in his first trip outside mainland China since the outbreak of the pandemic. Steven Ho, a 42-year-old member of Hong Kong's largest pro-Beijing party who sits in the city's rubber stamp legislature, was one of about 100 officials granted close contact with Xi for a photo call on Thursday afternoon.

Ho was standing two rows directly behind Xi, according to the photos released by the government. The lawmaker tested negative on the first day of Xi's visit on Thursday and returned an uncertain test on Friday, he said.

He did not take part in any events on Friday after the uncertain test result, he said in a state-

ment on social media. "The sample of July 1 was one with extremely low infectivity and it was categorised as 'uncertain', but for the sake of public security, I did not participate in the events on that day," Ho wrote.

Ho was the second member of the DAB party to have tested positive around Xi's visit. Tam Yiu-chung, Hong Kong's sole representative to Beijing's top lawmaking body, tested positive on Thursday and was absent from all events.

China is the only major economy still pursuing a zero-COVID approach of eliminating outbreaks as they emerge, using snap lockdowns and mass testing.

Xi has not left China in nearly 900 days and the vast country's borders have been largely sealed to most outsiders.

Hong Kong is pursuing a lighter version of zero-COVID but has kept heavy travel and gathering restrictions in place throughout the pandemic. Extraordinarily tight rules were imposed to ensure both the coronavirus and political opposition were not in Xi's orbit during his trip to the city, where a democracy movement has been crushed since huge protests three years ago.

Hundreds of government officials, legislators and other invited guests were forced into an



HONG KONG: China's President Xi Jinping waves following his speech after a ceremony to inaugurate the city's new leader and government in Hong Kong. —AFP

anti-Covid "closed-loop" system, which included limiting their social contacts, taking daily PCR tests and checking into a quarantine hotel in the days leading up to the visit.

During the visit, parts of the city were shut down, prominent dissidents were placed under heavy police surveillance, and multiple journalists were barred from covering the official events. Nine arrests were made by the city's national security police in the week. —AFP

India landslide death toll rises to 37

GUWAHATI, India: The death toll from a massive landslide in India hit 37 on Sunday, authorities said, as rescue teams battled teeming rain to search for 25 others still missing three days later. A wall of mud and rock swamped a camp housing railway construction workers and members of the Territorial Army in remote Manipur state in the northeast after heavy rain early on Thursday.

Emergency teams rescued 18 survivors within the first few hours of the incident. But army spokesperson Angom Bobin Singh said Sunday that 28 people were still missing before an announcement later that three more

bodies had been retrieved.

The fourth day of search operations was ongoing "despite adverse weather conditions" because of "heavy rains and fresh landslides", Singh said. The remote northeast has generally poor road and railway infrastructure but India in the last few years has pushed ambitious infrastructure projects to match a Chinese build-up across the border.

The picturesque region-with mountains and dense forests-has been pummeled by heavy rainfall in recent weeks, triggering landslides and floods. Dozens were killed in the area after flooding last month, with relentless rains causing landslides and inundating homes.

Experts say climate change is increasing the number of extreme weather events around the world, with damming, deforestation and development projects in India exacerbating the human toll. —AFP



IMPHAL: In this handout photo released by the Indian Army shows, security forces and disaster relief teams search for survivors and victims after a landslide in Noney district. —AFP

Taleban still illegitimate rulers: Activists

KABUL: The Taleban remain illegitimate rulers despite a declaration by thousands of male clerics endorsing their hardline government, Afghan women activists said Sunday. The clerics pledged allegiance to the Taleban and its reclusive leader Saturday following a three-day meeting that failed to address thorny issues such as the right of teenage girls to go to school.

The Taleban—who seized power last August—have since tried to present the meeting as a vote of confidence in their vision of a pure Islamic state totally subservient to sharia law. They insisted last

week that women would be represented at the meeting—attended by over 3,500 men—but only by their sons and husbands.

"Statements released or pledging allegiance to the Taleban in any gathering or event without the presence of half of the nation's population, the women, are not acceptable," Hoda Khamosh, a rights activist currently in exile in Norway, told AFP.

"This summit... does not have legitimacy, validity, or the approval of the people." Since returning to power in August, the Taleban's harsh interpretation of sharia law has imposed severe restrictions on Afghans—particularly women.

Secondary school girls have been barred from education and women prevented from working in government jobs, forbidden from travelling alone, and ordered to dress in clothing that covers everything but their faces.

The Taleban have also outlawed playing non-

religious music, ordered TV channels to stop showing movies and soaps featuring uncovered women, and told men they should dress in traditional garb and grow their beards. In Kabul, a collective of women's groups also slammed the clerics' meeting as not representative.

"The ulema (clerics) are just one part of society, they are not the whole," organiser Ainoor Uzbik told AFP after a press conference. "The decisions they made serve only their own interests and are not in the interest of the country and its people. There was nothing for women on the agenda, nor in the communiqué."

In a statement, the collective said men like the Taleban held absolute power before in history—but usually only for a short time before being dumped. "The only thing Afghans can do is to raise their voice and demand the international community puts pressure on the Taleban," Uzbik said. —AFP

Op-ed

Moscow will have to choose either butter or guns

By Joseph Borrell

Are the sanctions against Russia useful? Yes, they are already hitting Vladimir Putin and his accomplices hard and their effects on the Russian economy will increase over time.

Since Russia deliberately violated international law by invading Ukraine, the EU has adopted six packages of sanctions against Moscow. Our measures now target nearly 1,200 individuals and 98 entities in Russia as well as a significant number of sectors of the Russian economy. These sanctions were adopted in coordination with the G7 members. Their effectiveness is enhanced by the fact that over forty other countries (including traditionally neutral countries) have adopted them or taken similar measures.

By the end of 2022, we will have reduced our Russian oil imports by 90% and we are rapidly reducing our gas imports. These decisions are gradually freeing us from a dependence that has long inhibited our political choices in the face of Vladimir Putin's aggressiveness. He probably believed that Europe would not dare to engage in sanctions because of its energy dependence. This is not the most insignificant of the Russian regime's many miscalculations during this conflict. Of course, weaning ourselves off Russian energy so rapidly also creates serious difficulties for many EU countries and for several economic sectors. But this is the price we have to pay for defending our democracies and international law, and we are taking the necessary steps to deal with these problems in full solidarity.

Some may ask these sanctions really have an impact on the Russian economy? The simple answer is yes. Although Russia exports a lot of raw materials, it also has no choice but to import many high value-added products that it does not manufacture. For all advanced technologies, it is 45% dependent on Europe and 21% on the United States, compared with only 11% on China.

In the military field, which is crucial in the context of the war in Ukraine, the sanctions limit Russia's capacity to produce precision missiles such as the Iskander or the KH 101. Almost all foreign car manufacturers have also decided to withdraw from Russia and the few cars produced by Russian manufacturers will be sold without airbags or automatic transmission.

The oil industry is suffering not only from the departure of foreign operators but also from the difficulty of accessing advanced technologies such as horizontal drilling. The ability of Russian industry to bring new wells on stream is likely to be limited. Finally, in order to maintain air traffic, Russia will have to withdraw a majority of its aircraft from circulation in order to recover the spare parts needed to allow the others to fly. Added to this there is also the loss of access to financial markets, being disconnected from major global research networks and a massive brain drain.

As for the alternative offered by China for the Russian economy, in reality it remains limited, especially for high-tech products. To date, the Chinese government, which is very dependent on its exports to developed countries, has not assisted Russia in circumventing Western sanctions. Chinese exports to Russia have fallen in line with those of Western countries.

Will these significant and growing impacts lead Vladimir Putin to modify his strategic calculations? Probably not in the immediate future: His actions are not guided primarily by economic logic. However, by forcing him to choose either butter or guns, the sanctions lock him in a vice that is gradually tightening.

Regarding the impact of these sanctions on third countries, particularly African countries, which depend on Russian and Ukrainian wheat and fertilisers, where responsibility lies in terms of the food crisis is clear. Our sanctions do not in any shape or form target Russian wheat or fertiliser exports, while Ukraine is prevented from exporting its wheat by the Black Sea blockade and destruction caused by Russian aggression. If such issues linked to our sanctions were to arise, we are ready to put in place the appropriate mechanisms to address these. I have informed my African counterparts of this and asked them not to be fooled by the Russian authorities' untruths regarding our sanctions.

The real answer to the difficulties on the world energy and food markets is an end to the war. This cannot be achieved by accepting the Russian diktat, it can only be achieved by Russia's withdrawal from Ukraine. Respect for the territorial integrity of states and the non-use of force are not Western or European principles. They are the basis of all international law. Russia is blithely trampling on them. To accept such a violation would open the door to the law of the jungle on a global scale.

Contrary to what we thought rather naively just a few years ago, economic interdependence does not automatically imply a pacification of international relations. This is why the transition to a Europe as a power, which I have been calling for since the beginning of my mandate, is imperative. Faced with the invasion of Ukraine, we have begun to move from intention to action by showing that, when provoked, Europe can respond. Since we do not want to go to war with Russia, economic sanctions are now at the core of this response. They are already beginning to have an effect and will do so even more in the coming months.

Note: Joseph Borrell is EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission

Business

MONDAY, JULY 4, 2022



COLOMBO: Auto rickshaw drivers and motorists queue along streets to buy fuel at fuel stations on July 3, 2022. — AFP

Lanka grinds to halt as fuel reserves shrink

Petrol and diesel queues snake through Colombo for kilometers

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka has less than a day's worth of fuel left, the energy minister said Sunday, with public transport grinding to a halt as the country's economic crisis deepened. Petrol and diesel queues snaked through the capital for kilometers, though most pumping stations have been without fuel for days. Energy minister Kanchana Wijesekera said petrol reserves in the country were about 4,000 tonnes, just below one day's worth of consumption.

"The next petrol shipment is expected between the 22nd and 23rd (of July)," Wijesekera told reporters in Colombo. "We have contacted other suppliers, but we

can't confirm any new supplies before the 22nd." Last week, cash-strapped Sri Lanka announced a two-week halt to all fuel sales except for essential services to save petrol and diesel for emergencies.

Most shops were closed Sunday, with the situation expected to worsen when banks and offices reopen on Monday. Desperate people were seen trying to flag down the few vehicles on the road hoping for a ride. Privately owned buses, which account for two-thirds of the country's fleet, said they operated a skeleton service on Sunday as they were badly affected by the fuel shortage.

"We operated about 1,000 busses across the country out of the 20,000 owned by our members," Private Bus Operators Association chairman Gemunu Wijeratne said. "The situation will certainly get worse tomorrow because we have no way of getting diesel." He said services would be curtailed further on Monday and saw no immediate solution.

Three-wheel taxis - a popular last-mile transport - were also off the streets, with most seen in days-long queues to get a ration of six liters of petrol. A shortage of foreign currency to finance even the most essential imports has led to the country's worst economic crisis,

with its 22 million people facing severe hardships daily. The country has also faced record-high inflation and lengthy power blackouts since late last year.

All non-essential government institutions and schools have been ordered shut until July 10 to reduce commuting and save energy. Local media reported there had been sporadic clashes outside fuel stations. Last week, troops opened fire to disperse a mob protesting against the military jumping the queue. Sri Lanka is currently in talks with the International Monetary Fund for a possible bailout after the country defaulted on its \$51 billion external debt in April. — AFP

Argentine economy minister resigns

BUENOS AIRES: Argentine economy minister Martin Guzman, who led debt renegotiations with the International Monetary Fund, announced his resignation Saturday, sparking fresh uncertainty in Latin America's third largest economy. Guzman did not say why he resigned in his statement addressing President Alberto Fernandez, but called on the center-left leader to mend internal divisions so that "the next minister does not suffer" the same difficulties he did.

"It will be essential that you work on an agreement within the ruling coalition," he added in the statement shared on Twitter. His resignation comes two weeks after Vice President Cristina Kirchner, a former president who has been a constant critic of the government, gave a speech attacking Fernandez's economic management. Political analyst Carlos Fara told AFP that Guzman's resignation was "a check mate for the president's autonomy" and had given Kirchner the upper hand in their power struggle. "The resignation will have a very bad effect in the markets. Even if the president and vice president reach a consensus on managing the economy, from now on everything will be conditioned by Cristina Kirchner's pressure." As economy minister, the 39-year-old Guzman was tasked with renegotiating a \$44 billion debt with the IMF that Argentina insisted it could not afford to repay.

The original debt of \$57 billion - the last tranche of which Fernandez declined after succeeding his liberal predecessor Mauricio Macri, who had solicited the loan - was the largest ever issued by the IMF. Despite resistance from Kirchner, Guzman managed to agree a deal and save Argentina from defaulting. But Guzman was often faced with hostility from the Peronist Justicialist Party, the major force in the Frente de Todos (Everyone's Front) ruling coalition that counts both Fernandez and Kirchner as high profile members.

Kirchner's faction has gone after Guzman ever since Everyone's Front lost control of the senate during last year's midterm legislative elections. The IMF deal was only ratified by parliament thanks to support from the center-right opposition, as a group of legislators in the ruling coalition led by the vice president's son Maximo Kirchner boycotted the vote.

Guzman said whoever replaces him will need "centralized management of the necessary macroeconomic political instruments to consolidate the progress made and face the challenges ahead". While agricultural powerhouse Argentina has the third largest economy in Latin America, it has been in economic crisis for years, with inflation of more than 60 percent in the last 12 months. The country was already struggling with rising poverty, unemployment and a depreciating currency before the coronavirus pandemic exacerbated matters. Earlier this week, Fernandez admitted the country was facing "a growth crisis" due to a shortage of foreign exchange. The IMF deal included provisions to contain inflation and reduce the budget deficit from three percent in 2021 to parity by 2025. Guzman's detractors within the ruling coalition hit out at him over perceived excessive zeal in tackling the budget deficit and his monetary policy. —AFP



BUENOS AIRES: In this photo taken on June 7, 2022, Argentina's Economy Minister Martin Guzman speaks during the annual meeting of the Argentina Business Association. — AFP



Boursa Kuwait's successful growth strategy hailed at HSBC exchange summit

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait was recognized by international investors for its successful growth strategy that saw a significant jump in net profits in the year to date, at a conference hosted by HSBC in London, earlier this month. The growth in the rest of the GCC was also credited as a strong regional economic catalyst for the region and beyond. The conference, the first pan regional exchange event hosted by HSBC Bank Middle East, connected the Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia exchanges with international investors, Middle East policymakers and stakeholders from across the public and private sectors.

"Having world class global banking and markets capabilities in the Middle East is how we helped clients in the region raise more than US\$19 billion from investors worldwide in 2021, placing us on top of Bloomberg's equity and debt rankings in 2021," said Stephen Moss, Regional Chief Executive for the

Middle East, North Africa and Turkey (MENAT). Topics on the agenda included ESG, equity capital markets, global energy demand, and economic diversification in the region.

"The private sector has contributed to the development of a reliable and sound capital market infrastructure and increased liquidity levels here in Kuwait, reinforced by best-in-class international standards and practices. HSBC plays an important role in introducing innovative products and services and attracting investors to this region from all over the world," said Samer Alabed, Chief Executive Officer of HSBC Kuwait. HSBC is the leading international investment bank in the region and launched its Securities Services in 2005. The large and experienced Securities Services team on the ground offers highly automated, safekeeping, settlement and asset servicing capability.

Microplastics in oceans, air and human body

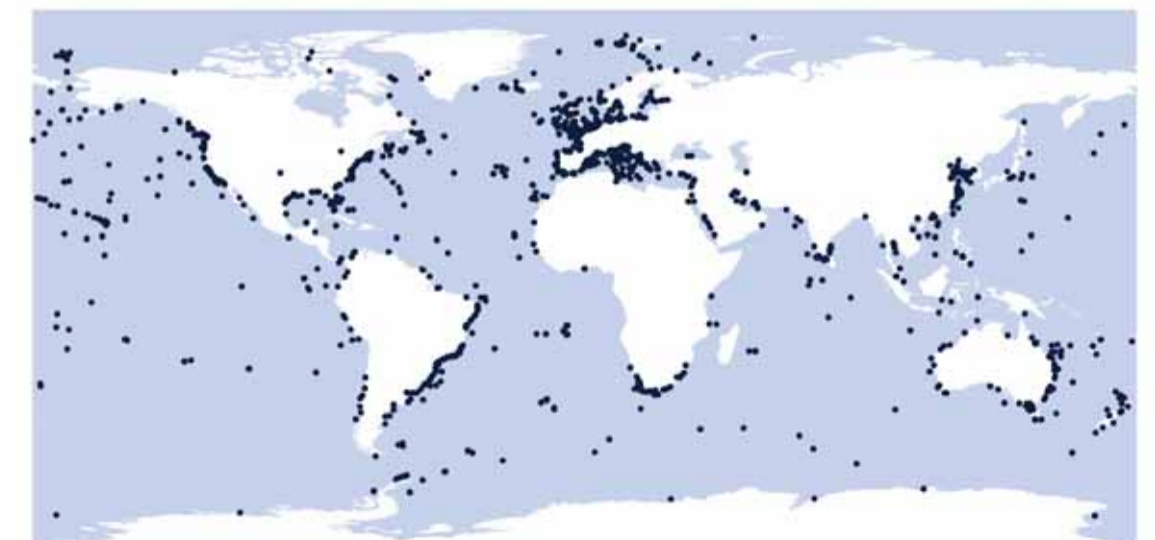
PARIS: From ocean depths to mountain peaks, humans have littered the planet with tiny shards of plastic. We have even absorbed these microplastics into our bodies - with uncertain implications. Images of plastic pollution have become familiar: A turtle suffocated by a shopping bag, water bottles washed up on beaches, or the monstrous "Great Pacific Garbage Patch" of floating detritus.

Millions of tons of plastic produced every year, largely from fossil fuels, make their way into the environment and degrade into smaller and smaller pieces. "We did not imagine 10 years ago that there could be so many small microplastics, invisible to the naked eye, and that they were everywhere around us," said Jean-Francois Ghiglione, a researcher at the Laboratory of Microbial Oceanography in France. "And we could not yet envisage finding them in the human body."

Now scientific studies are increasingly detecting microplastics in some human organs - including "the lungs, spleen, kidneys, and even the placenta," Ghiglione told AFP. It may not come as much of a shock that we breathe in these particles present in the air, in particular microfibers from synthetic clothing. "We know that there's microplastics in the air, we know it's all around us," said Laura Sadofsky, from the Hull York Medical School in the UK. Her team found polypropylene and PET (polyethylene terephthalate) in lung tissue, identifying fibers from synthetic fabrics. "The surprise for us was how deep it got into the lungs and the size of those particles," she told AFP. In March, another study reported the first traces of PET found in the blood. Given the small sample of volunteers, some scientists say it is too

Plastic in the seas and oceans

Areas where plastic has been detected in waterways, seas and oceans in scientific studies since 1960



Source: litterbase.org/AWI

AFP

early to draw conclusions, but there are concerns that if plastics are in the bloodstream they could be transported to all organs.

Breathing in plastics for years

In 2021, researchers found microplastics in both maternal and fetal placental tissue, expressing "great concern" over the possible consequences on the development of the fetus. But concern is not the same as a proven risk. "If you ask a scientist if there is a negative effect, he or she would say 'I don't know'," said Bart Koelmans, professor in Aquatic Ecology and Water Quality at Wageningen University. "It's potentially a big problem, but we don't have the scientific evidence to positively confirm what are the effects, if any."

One hypothesis is that microplastics could be responsible for certain syndromes that weaken human health. While scientists have recently identified their presence in the body, it is likely that humans have been eating, drinking and breathing in plastics for years. In 2019, a shock report by the environmental charity WWF estimated that people are ingesting and inhaling up to five grams of plastic per week - enough to make a credit card.

Koelmans, who contests the methodology and results of that study, has calculated the amount is closer to a grain of salt. "Over a lifetime, a grain of salt per week is still quite something," he told AFP. While health studies on humans have yet to be developed, toxicity in certain animals reinforces concerns. —AFP

Home developers let China farmers pay with melons

BEIJING: Struggling developers in China have started taking payment for homes in watermelons, peaches and other agricultural produce, state media reported Sunday, as they attempt to lure buyers deterred by a property market slump. China's housing market has been hit by a slowing economy and debt crisis precipitated by a government ban on builders taking deposits before construction begins on a project.

One developer in the eastern city of Nanjing said it would accept truckloads of watermelons worth up to 100,000 yuan as down payment from local farmers, state-run China News Weekly reported. In the nearby small town of Wuxi, another developer was taking peaches as payment, the magazine said. Homebuyers in Qi county, a major garlic-producing region in central China's Henan province, can exchange their produce at three times the market price to settle part of their down payment.

Accepting crops at inflated prices has allowed developers to offer steeper discounts on homes than permitted by local governments while tapping into an underserved market. "On the occasion of the new garlic season, the company has made a resolute decision to benefit garlic farmers in Qi county," homebuilder Central China Management said on social media in late May. "We are helping farmers with love, and making it easier for them to buy homes."

About 30 properties had been sold since the garlic campaign was launched, it added. Home sales in China measured by floor area have slid for 11 consecutive months and were down 31.5 percent in May compared to the same month last year, official data shows. — AFP

Business

US multinationals grapple with soaring greenback

Products sold in dollars have become more expensive for exporters

NEW YORK: The rapid rise of the US dollar since the start of the year is a double-edged sword for American multinational companies, pushing some of them to decide whether to hedge or reposition their activities abroad to avoid fallout. For an importer, the surge in the greenback against the euro, yen or British pound is a plus, because it makes the products they buy cheaper.

looking for a safe haven in uncertain times, have combined to boost the US dollar. The greenback has risen 13 percent compared to the euro over the last 12 months, approaching parity, and gained 22 percent against the yen.

"Short term, that's a good thing for the United States because it means all the imports are cheaper and it puts downward pressure on inflation," said Desmond Lachman of the American Enterprise Institute think tank. But further out, the effect on the US economy is more nuanced, because if exports fall, "the United States trade deficit widens and then we get more external debt." But multinationals "don't have control over these big items," he explained.

They can, however, mitigate the effect of fluctuations in foreign currencies in which they price and invoice goods by adopting hedging strategies - using financial instruments that provide a kind of insurance against losses caused by the changing exchange rate. Most corporations already have hedging programs in place, and they change their plans on a quarterly or even monthly basis, sometimes trying to predict currency movements, Kyriba's Bob Stark said. But it's not an exact science, he noted, especially in a time of great uncertainty about the direction of inflation, interest rates and the possibility of a recession.

Changing countries to cut costs

But "since the start of the pandemic, CFOs have gotten very good at looking at multiple scenarios and building on them," Stark said. Sporting goods giant Nike, for instance, warned Monday that currency effects would cut annual revenue by several percentage points. But the profit hit is much lower because of the hedging. The current high volatility in foreign exchange markets also means it costs more to hedge, so some firms are choosing not to use those instruments.

Among the other tools at their disposal, multinationals can reduce their exposure with other techniques, such as by paying their Japanese suppliers in dollars, by renegotiating prices, or even by buying their supplies from different countries. Or they can simply wait for the US currency to weaken before repatriating their profits.

However, once the exchange rate has strengthened, there is limited room to maneuver, according to Nikolai Roussanov, a finance professor at the University of Pennsylvania - especially when prices are also rising because of supply chain issues and energy costs. "If you try to react to something already happening, it might come to bite you later because some of these movements are quite transitory," he said. — AFP

Hundreds of flights axed as US kicks off holiday weekend

WASHINGTON: Airlines struggling to staff their planes cancelled hundreds of US flights Saturday at the start of a long and almost certainly messy holiday travel weekend. As of mid-afternoon, with Americans gearing up for July 4 Independence Day celebrations, more than 600 flights within, into, or out of the United States had been cancelled, and more than 3,300 were delayed, according to flight tracking service flightaware.com.

The numbers on Friday were grim as well, with 587 US flights scrapped among a global total of 3,061 cancellations, the site said. Sunday was also looking problematic, with more than 100 flights already cancelled. The airport chaos is prompting a record level of road travel by Americans seeking to dodge flight trouble, a travel industry group said. For days, amid a surge in travel as summer rolls in, horror stories have abounded as travelers were stranded at airports, enduring odysseys to reach their destinations.

The airline industry was devastated in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic as people stayed close to home, but air travel has rebounded as health measures were eased. And although federal Covid-19 relief spared airlines from laying off staff, tens of thousands of workers left the industry after carriers urged early retirement. Today's industry has about 15 percent less staff compared with the pre-pandemic period to handle around 90 percent of pre-2020 passenger volume, analysts at Third Bridge consultancy estimated.

'Pilots are getting fatigued'

The travel chaos has drawn scrutiny from Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and others in Washington. On Saturday, Buttigieg tweeted a series of tips on what to do if one's flight is

cancelled, such as whether to accept travel points or miles as compensation, or demand a cash refund. "You can often negotiate on this. That's between you and the airline," Buttigieg wrote.

The travel season is at full speed, with 2,490,490 people screened at airport checkpoints nationwide on Friday, the most since February 2020 right before the COVID shutdown in the US, the Transportation Security Administration said. "We are back to pre-pandemic checkpoint volume," the TSA tweeted. Delta pilots walked informational picket lines at several airports Thursday to demand a new contract and complain of overwork, among other issues.

"Quite frankly, it's irresponsible scheduling, over scheduling. Coming out of the pandemic, we're scheduling more flights than we have people to fly them," Delta pilots association union leader Jason Ambrosi told CNN on Saturday. "The pilots are getting fatigued, quite honestly," Ambrosi said. They do not want to strand travelers or crew members, he added, "but it's a safety issue."

Lack of pilots is the most acute problem in a broad airline industry labor crunch, said Third Bridge analyst Peter McNally. "There's no short-term fix," McNally told AFP. "The issue becomes most pronounced during these seasonal peaks." Airlines say they're working to address the situation, recruiting pilots and other staff and trimming summer seat capacity by 15 percent.

While acknowledging the pilot shortage, airline industry officials point to other exacerbating factors, including turbulent weather, increased staff absences due to Covid and insufficient flight traffic control personnel at some sites. For the long Independence Day weekend, a record 42 million Americans will also travel by road at least 80 km from home, despite soaring gasoline prices, the American Automobile Association said.

The travel hassles affecting the airline industry may be fueling the heavy road traffic, it noted. "Traveling by car does provide a level of comfort and flexibility that people may be looking for given the recent challenges with flying," said AAA Travel senior vice president Paula Twidale. — AFP



BUENOS AIRES: US dollar notes are photographed on June 23, 2022. — AFP

But for a US export company, products sold in dollars have become more expensive, which increases the risk of losing clients and seeing sales decline. And they also lose money when converting foreign revenue back into dollars. Many firms already revised their earnings forecasts for the year to account for the changing exchange rate, including computing giant Microsoft, which warned its quarterly sales will fall by \$460 million and its net profit by \$250 million due to the currency hit. Adobe, Salesforce, Biogen and Pfizer have all warned that the dollar's rapid rise will have a greater impact on their accounts than expected.

\$40 billion hit

Companies that generate most of their revenue outside of the United States are the most exposed, starting with tech giants, medical equipment makers and service companies, according to Kyriba, a corporate cash management platform. Kyriba estimates the currency effects could mean a \$40 billion hit to earnings of S&P 500 firms in the first half of the year.

The Federal Reserve's decision to aggressively hike interest rates to combat rampant inflation, combined with an influx of funds into the country from investors



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KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 30 JUN 2022

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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	34,474	8,243.16	2.8%	-5.0%	7.9%	471,235,192	224,871,462	33,459	27.4	2.8	78.3%
Main Market	9,530	5,680.72	0.6%	-6.4%	-3.5%	711,376,087	72,918,989	27,422	13.7	1.4	21.7%
All Share	44,005	7,408.57	2.3%	-5.3%	5.2%	1,182,611,279	297,790,452	60,881	24.6	2.4	100%

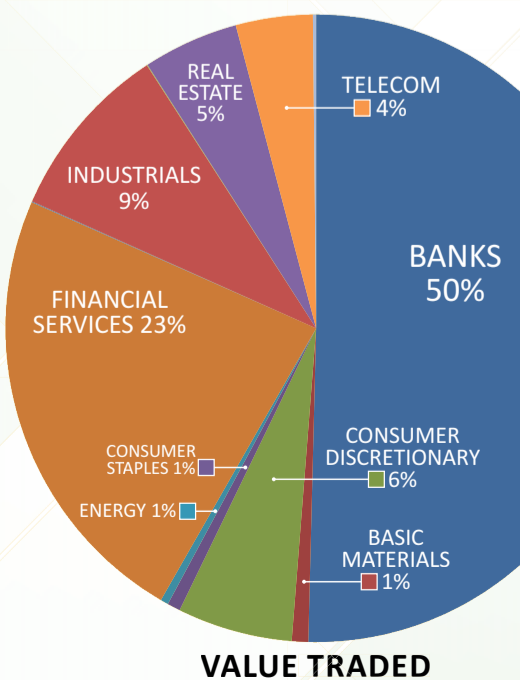
Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
BANKS	26,628	1,780.83	3.2%	-2.5%	9.7%	299,573,210	150,097,963	16,858	28.3	2.7	60.09%
BASIC MATERIALS	904	1,012.88	0.9%	-16.0%	-1.2%	5,209,897	2,536,401	933	12.6	1.3	2.04%
CONSUMER DISCRETIONARY	765	1,488.79	0.7%	-6.1%	11.4%	179,342,311	17,834,395	6,323	19.1	9.0	1.73%
CONSUMER STAPLES	161	527.38	3.2%	-19.1%	-27.9%	4,817,032	2,012,183	696	16.9	1.1	0.36%
ENERGY	243	1,168.18	1.4%	0.1%	-18.2%	21,895,327	1,221,014	842	14.9	1.2	0.55%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	4,041	1,371.77	1.9%	-10.9%	-3.6%	484,267,194	69,252,174	18,782	16.8	2.1	9.12%
HEALTH CARE	236	476.07	1.1%	-0.8%	-40.3%	232,258	131,925	54	15.6	3.3	0.53%
INDUSTRIALS	4,144	1,164.03	0.1%	-12.0%	2.0%	47,247,347	27,390,090	7,452	32.9	1.3	9.35%
INSURANCE	643	1,542.57	-0.2%	2.6%	0.6%	1,396,378	107,325	200	7.4	1.0	1.45%
REAL ESTATE	2,595	1,205.21	1.7%	-8.7%	-9.1%	116,279,897	14,789,686	5,792	13.4	1.3	5.86%
TECHNOLOGY	10	698.40	9.1%	4.3%	2.1%	68,449	6,188	17	-	0.8	0.02%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	3,713	1,209.87	0.6%	-6.5%	11.1%	19,833,514	11,912,537	2,620	15.0	2.2	8.38%
UTILITIES	228	544.74	2.5%	-3.7%	-9.2%	2,448,465	498,568	312	16.0	2.6	0.51%

Top Gainers				
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value
WETHAQ	38	34.51	1,131,204	38,814
GFC	85	22.66	214	16
LAND	70	17.85	5,483,542	359,351
TAMINV	391	16.37	81,073	27,671
GPI	17.4	16.00	12,251,904	200,070

Top Losers				
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value
JIYAD	17.9	-23.83	150,835,996	2,704,242
KHOT	115	-21.77	555	82
PAPCO	52	-13.48	54,875	2,886
KMEFIC	152	-9.52	510	82
AMAR	62.7	-9.13	13,099	839

Top Volume				
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value
JIYAD	17.9	-23.83	150,835,996	2,704,242
AUB	267	5.12	120,349,451	31,589,898
GFH	85.5	2.64	111,332,368	9,565,323
KINV	148	8.03	88,753,007	13,185,073
KFH	871	7.00	75,840,432	64,892,768

Top Value				
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value
KFH	871	7.00	75,840,432	64,892,768
AUB	267	5.12	120,349,451	31,589,898
NBK	1,043	116.00	27,469,579	28,690,043
AGLTY	813	0.12	16,488,663	13,437,226
KINV	148	8.03	88,753,007	13,185,073



Market Summary:

- Premier market volume and value increased by 9% and 5%, respectively. Main market volume increased 23% while value remained the same.
- Premier and Main indices are yet to recover from last week's drop but they are on the right track.
- Technically, the All-Share index closed at 7408, with support levels at 7379, 7318, and 7286, while resistance at 7461. Premier index closed at 8243, support levels at 8148, 7979, 8116, and 8007, while resistance at 8335. The Main index closed at 5680, with support levels at 5675, 5636, and 5616, while resistance at 5696.

Business

In mine-infested sea, Romania aims to cut Russia gas reliance

European Union scrambling to find alternative supplies

VADU, Romania: Gas now flows to Romania from a new Black Sea platform operating in waters where mines and warships have been spotted. The dangerous reminders of the war raging nearby in Ukraine underscore Romania's determination to cut its reliance on Russian natural gas imports. With fears growing across the European Union that Moscow will cut gas shipments in retaliation for EU support to Ukraine, countries are scrambling to find alternative supplies.

"Romania is taking a decisive step to ensure its energy security... at a time when international gas supplies are threatened by the war in Ukraine," Prime Minister Nicolae Ciuca said on Tuesday as he inaugurated a processing plant belonging to Black Sea Oil & Gas (BSOG) in the southeastern village of Vadu. While Romania has significant reserves on land and at sea, it still has to turn to Russia in winter to cover around 20 percent of its consumption.

Backed by American private equity firm Carlyle Group LP and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, BSOG began two weeks ago to tap into underwater deposits, becoming the first new offshore Black Sea development in the past 30 years. The \$400-million platform extracts three million cubic meters of gas per day. It is due to recover one billion cubic meters per year for 10 years, or around 10 percent of Romania's needs.

"Today we are facing an emergency in terms of energy supply. We must put our old devils in the closet... and start producing locally," said Thierry Bros, an expert on energy and the climate at Sciences Po university. "We must relaunch the projects in the Black Sea, relaunch the growth of pro-

duction in Norway, in the United Kingdom we must think of launching the production of shale gas and in France the production of mine gas" he told AFP.

Mines and warships

In Vadu, BSOG CEO Mark Beacom said he hopes that the "state-of-the-art" infrastructure put in place by his company will be used for future gas or renewable energy projects in the Black Sea. But the invasion of neighboring Ukraine by Russia has complicated the situation. "We are not in a war zone, but we are close enough and it clearly has an impact," he said. "We've had mines detected close to the platform, we've had warships that go close to our platform and we've had airplanes circling our platform," he added.

BSOG holds two concessions about 120 km from the Romanian coast, part of which, ironically, was recovered in 2009 by Bucharest from Ukraine, following a decision by the International Court of Justice in The Hague. While Romania is counting on offshore gas reserves estimated at 200 billion cubic metres of gas, investors nevertheless remain cautious. The Austrian group OMV and its Romanian partner Romgaz have yet to decide whether they will go ahead with the Neptun Deep project to tap between 42 billion and 84 billion cubic meters of gas.

End of guaranteed energy?

Bucharest hopes the two groups will launch extraction as soon as 2026, which would allow Romania to "become completely independent in terms of gas" and export the excess to its neighbors, said Energy Minister Virgil Popescu. According to a 2018 study by auditing firm



VADU, Romania: A worker does routine checks during a press tour at the opening of a gas processing plant using the rich gas resources from the Black Sea on June 28, 2022. —AFP

Deloitte, offshore gas could bring in \$26 billion in tax revenue to Romania's government over a planned 23-year period of operation.

After much delay, parliament finally amended in May a law unfavorable to offshore investments, which had notably prompted ExxonMobil to with-

draw from the Neptun Deep project at the end of 2021, after having invested around \$2 billion there jointly with OMV. "If we want to win against the Russians, we need energy," said Bros, warning that the time when "energy was guaranteed" within the EU may be over. —AFP

NBK Money Market Report

Global troubles lead to local repercussions

United States

Economy Moderates, Demand Cools

The US economy maintained its strength but has shown signs of losing steam. Business investment remains firm even in the face of rising interest rates and mounting concerns about the economy. Orders placed with US factories for durable goods rose more than expected in May. Bookings for durable goods, items meant to last at least three years, increased 0.7 percent in May after a 0.4 percent advance a month earlier and core capital goods orders, a proxy for investment in equipment (excludes aircraft and military hardware), also rose 0.7 percent after a 0.3 percent gain a month earlier. However, a measure of consumer confidence dropped more than expected in June, and a measure of expectations, which reflects Americans' six-month outlook, fell to its lowest in nearly a decade.

Europe

Inflation Unrest

Euro-area inflation data gave mixed signals earlier, with German numbers coming in lower than expected while Spain's headline print unexpectedly rose to double figures. German inflation unexpectedly eased as temporary government relief measures reduced pressure on households and businesses that have been squeezed by a record surge in prices. Lower fuel taxes and discounted public-transport costs helped slow consumer-price growth to 8.2 percent in June from 8.7 percent in May. Inflation pressure remains intense elsewhere in the 19-member euro zone: Spain earlier reported a surprise jump to an all-time high of 10.2 percent in June from 8.7 percent in May, defying politicians' efforts to curb it.

United Kingdom

Forecast: Gloomy Skies, Pessimistic Rain

The Bank of England (BoE) repeated warnings of a grimmer road ahead. Governor Andrew Bailey believes soaring inflation will hit Britain harder than any other major economy during the current energy crisis and that the economy would likely weaken earlier and be more intense than others as a result of the energy price shock that all European economies face. The

Chad unleashes major oil industry graft probe

N'DJAMENA: Investigators in Chad have swooped on senior officials in the oil and financial sectors in the past 10 days in a major anti-corruption operation, the government told AFP on Sunday. The arrested suspects are alleged to have stolen around 13 billion CFA francs (\$21 million) from the state-run oil company SHT and the country's spy agencies, according to Communications Minister Abderaman Koulamallah.

Chad is one of the least developed countries in the world according to the United Nations, and joined the ranks of African oil producers and exporters in the early 2000s. It remains a modest producer, producing 47 million barrels in 2021, according to the Chadian Observatory of Public Finance. It has been led for nearly 15 months by military officer Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno,

who proclaimed himself transitional president at the head of a junta of 15 generals a day after the death of his father, Marshal Idriss Deby Itno, who was killed in April 2021 fighting rebels. He had ruled the country with an iron fist for 30 years.

"Many people have been arrested and some have been freed in the context of the investigation into financial embezzlement of 13 billion CFA francs at SHT," Koulamallah told AFP. "The case is currently being handled by the judiciary," and some of the accused will eventually be brought before a judge at the end of the preliminary investigation, he added.

Among those arrested are the powerful former private secretary of General Mahamat Deby, Idriss Youssouf Boy, a cousin and childhood friend of the head of state who is considered one of his closest aides. Michel Boyayam and Tahir Issa Ali Souleymane were also arrested as part of the investigation and immediately dismissed from their posts as director general and deputy director of the SHT. SHT is a nationalized company set up in 2006. —AFP

DR Congo drug manufacturing plan sparks concerns

KINSHASA: Sitting at his desk overlooking a pharmaceutical factory floor on the outskirts of the Congolese capital Kinshasa, Joss Ilunga Djimba, 52, cracked a jovial smile. "It's not easy doing business in Congo," he said. His family was forced to relocate the factory in the 1990s to survive bouts of mass looting. And nowadays, there are onerous taxes, customs duties, and problems retaining talented staff.

His company, which employs about 40 people and produces generics such as paracetamol, is one of a tiny number of drug manufacturers in the Democratic Republic of Congo, an impoverished nation roughly the size of Western Europe. But a government plan to require hospitals and NGOs to buy more locally produced drugs could soon boost the fledgling pharmaceutical industry - despite fears in some quarters that safety standards are far below international norms.

Several NGOs, some of which provide

Japan: Paralyzed Economic Growth puts Monetary Policy in No Mood to Boost

Stimulating sustainable economic growth continues to be challenge in Japan. CPI in May was spot on expectations, unchanged from April. That keeps the headline rate at 2.5 percent and the core rate, which excludes fresh food, at 2.1 percent, slightly above the 2 percent target. However, the bulk of that 2.1 percent rise is attributable to energy prices. Without fresh food and energy, Japan's inflation remains at its lowest 0.8 percent. Japanese industrial output dived its deepest in two years by 7.2 percent in May, when expectations were for a dip of only 0.3 percent. Consumer confidence, an indicator of consumer spending, also tumbled down to 32.1 from 34.1 the previous month, against the expected 34.6 score. Unemployment worsened, with the rate rising to 2.6 percent from 2.5 percent.

Commodities

Oil Prices Caught in the Wildfire

Oil prices fluctuated, as the market remains structurally tight in the midst of fears of a global economic slowdown under the wave of monetary tightening, a strengthening dollar, and tugging demand and supply forces. On the demand side, forecasts have been trimmed from the Chinese economy being negatively affected by COVID lockdowns, recession risks, and the direct economic fallout from Russia-Ukraine conflict. On the supply side, OPEC+ continues to struggle in restocking market at the rate it set in its production schedule and disruptions caused by civil strife. WTI and Brent closed the week at \$108.43 and \$111.63.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30675.

US funds software for Russians to slip past censors

SAN FRANCISCO: A US-backed campaign is giving Russians access to anti-censor software to dodge Moscow's crackdown on dissent against its invasion of Ukraine, involved groups told AFP. Russia has intensified its restrictions on independent media since attacking its neighbor in February, with journalists under threat of prosecution for criticizing the invasion or for even referring to it as a war.

The US government-backed Open Technology Fund is paying out money to a handful of American firms providing virtual private networks (VPNs) free of charge to millions of Russians, who can then use them to visit websites blocked by censors. Traditional VPN software creates what is effectively a private tunnel on the internet for data, typically encrypted, to flow safeguarded from snooping - and their use has boomed in Russia since the invasion.

"Our tool is primarily used by people trying to access independent media, so that funding by the OTF has been absolutely critical," said a spokesman for Lantern, one of the involved companies. Tech firms Psiphon and ntlLink have also been providing sophisticated anti-censorship applications to people in Russia, with OTF estimating that some four million users in Russia have received VPNs from the firms.

Psiphon saw a massive surge in Russian users, with the number soaring from about 48,000 a day prior to the February 24 invasion to more than a million a day by mid-March, said a company senior advisor Dirk Rodenburg. The firm's tools in Russian now average nearly 1.5 million users daily, he added. While some, like Ukraine's leadership, have called for Russia to be cut off from the Internet, others have noted access is key for opposition groups.

"It's so very important for Russians to be connected to the whole world wide web, to keep resistance going," said Natalia Krapiva, tech legal counsel at rights group Access Now, which is not involved in the OTF effort. "All kinds of initiatives are happening and to keep them alive you need the internet because you can't gather in person, or because activists are scattered around the world," she added.

Keeping VPNs running and accessible was relatively straightforward in the early days of the war, said Lucas, the spokesman for Lantern, who spoke on condition that only his first name be used. "They weren't ready to block anything," Lucas said. "Over time, Russia learned how to block the easy stuff but Lantern and Psiphon are still up and running."

Lesson from China, Myanmar

Censors try to cut VPN software off from servers they rely on to function or stop people from getting to websites where the tools can be downloaded. As a result, crackdowns on Internet freedom typically result in people sharing VPNs through guerrilla tactics such as word-of-mouth. However, groups like Lantern have adopted methods like hiding VPN installers in online platforms too vital for the government to block, and building a network so users can share the technology with others, Lucas said.

"Lantern and Psiphon are different in that we do all sorts of much more sophisticated stuff to hide our traffic and get around our servers being detected," he said. People in Russia are benefitting from the VPN makers honing their tools while battling censorship in countries such as China and Myanmar. "There was a moment about two years ago when China really upped the level of their game, when it came to the lengths they were going to block stuff," Lucas said. "We raised the level of our game a whole lot," he added.

US government funding provided through OTF has been important to the operations since costs jumped and revenue vanished for VPN makers in Russia, as sanctions kicked in and companies pulled out of the country. OTF said it typically spends \$3-4 million annually funding VPNs, but that figure was ramped up due to censorship in Russia. —AFP

Rates - 3rd July, 2022

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0483	1.0367	1.0488	1.0430	1.0245	1.0535	1.0499
GBP	1.2179	1.1977	1.2185	1.2098	1.1880	1.2190	1.2119
JPY	135.71	134.74	135.98	135.19	134.25	137.30	134.29
CHF	0.9551	0.9540	0.9641	0.9593	0.9380	0.9780	0.9528

governor said that in the latest inflation data he had seen a shift in the causes of high inflation from high prices of goods that were in short supply after Covid-19, towards goods and services affected by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However, he noted that the BoE was ready to raise rates more aggressively, suggesting that a 50bps hike may be on the table in August. The BoE has so far raised rates five times since December 2021.

Asia Pacific

Australia: Coping Well Down Under

Australian retailers enjoyed a fifth straight month of sales gains in May, suggesting cashed-up households coped well after the first of two interest rate hikes by the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA). Sales advanced 0.9 percent in May, more than double what economists had predicted, to a fresh record A\$34.2 billion (\$23.6 billion). The jump adds weight to expectations that policymakers will continue on a path of rapid monetary tightening this year. The RBA raised borrowing costs by half a percentage point this month and has signaled further hikes to come.

China: Economic Development Tide is Slowly Rising

Economic activity picked up in June after financial hub Shanghai lifted its lockdown, allowing businesses to restart and most residents to leave their homes. A rebound in small business confidence came from a survey of more than 500 smaller firms which showed that "demand and production recovered strongly among manufacturing," but "the manufacturing recovery was more significant than services," after contracting for two months. The Caixin Manufacturing PMI improved to 51.7 from 48.1 last month.

medical care in the DRC's conflict-torn east, have requested opt-outs. At the small Pharmagros plant, behind barbed-wire walls near the Congo river, men in hairnets and white coats formulate medicines with imported precursor using lab equipment in air-conditioned rooms. "Promoting local industry's a good thing," said Djimba, a University of Texas graduate, insisting that several Congolese firms, including his, maintained high standards. "It could grow the middle class." About 73 percent of the DRC's population of 90 million lives on under \$1.9 a day, according to the World Bank. Most products in the African country are imported.

'At your own peril'

The Congolese government has designated 35 drug molecules, including paracetamol, that medical facilities will be required to purchase in locally made form. The government wants to stimulate business without banning imports, said Donatien Kabamb Kabey, the pharmaceutical director at the DRC's health ministry. He explained that all the molecules can be replaced with imported equivalents, suggesting that ibuprofen could replace paracetamol, for example. —AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Photo shows Frederik Mayet and ensemble members performing during a rehearsal at Oberammergau's Passion Play theatre in Oberammergau, southern Germany. — AFP photos



Photo shows the Passion Play theatre in Oberammergau, southern Germany. The Oberammergau Passion play, first staged in 1634 to ward off a plague epidemic, has been staged every ten years since then, with few interruptions.

France-based British theatre legend Peter Brook dies aged 97

The France-based British theatre director Peter Brook, who revolutionized the stage with radical interpretations of the classics before returning drama to its simplest roots, has died aged 97, a source said Sunday. Brook, born in the UK but resident in France for decades, died on Saturday, a source close to the director, who asked not to be named, told AFP. He also won renown for his iconic 1963 film version of the novel "Lord of the Flies" about schoolboys who are marooned on an island and descend into savagery.

Brook rose to fame in the UK as a young director who put a radical, and sometimes bloody, spin on classics including the works of Shakespeare, working with actors who would later become themselves legends. But his methods underwent a gradual transformation after moving to France in the early 1970s, reducing theatre to pure simplicity and often influenced by eastern traditions. "Peter Brook gave us the most beautiful silences in the theatre, but this last silence is infinitely sad," said French Culture Minister Rima Abdul Malak on Twitter.



In this file photo, British theatre and film director, playwright and actor Peter Brook poses during a photo session at the Bouffes du Nord theatre in Paris. — AFP

"With him, the stage was stripped back to its most alive intensity. He bequeathed so much to us," she added, saying he would remain "forever the soul" of the Bouffes du Nord theatre in northern Paris where his work was based. Simon McBurney, founder and artistic director of London's Theatre de Complicite which has been highly influenced by the methods of Brook, hailed him on Twitter as a "visionary, provocateur, prophet, trickster and friend". — AFP

German Alpine village united by 400-year-old theatre tradition

Walk around the German Alpine village of Oberammergau, and the chances are you'll run into Jesus or one of his 12 disciples. Of the 5,500 people living there, 1,400 - aged from three months to 85 - are participating this year in the once-a-decade staging of an elaborate "Passion Play" depicting the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Dating back to 1634, the tradition has persisted through four centuries of wars, religious turmoil and pandemics - including the most recent COVID-19 crisis which caused the show to be postponed by two years. "I think we're a bit stubborn," says Frederik Mayet, 42, when asked how the village has managed to hold on to the tradition.

Mayet, who is playing Jesus for the second time this year, says the Passion Play has become a big part of the town's identity. The only prerequisite for taking part in the five-hour show, whether as an actor, chorister or backstage assistant, is that you were born in Oberammergau or

have lived here for at least 20 years. "I remember that we talked about it in kindergarten. I didn't really know what it was about, but of course I wanted to take part," says Cengiz Gorur, 22, who is playing Judas.

'Hidden talent'

The tradition, which dates back to the Thirty Years' War, was born from a belief that staging the play would help keep the town safe from disease. Legend has it that, after the first performance, the plague disappeared from the town. In the picturesque Alpine village, Jesus and his disciples are everywhere - from paintings on the facades of old houses to carved wooden figures in shop windows.

You also can't help feeling that there is a higher-than-average quota of men with long hair and beards wandering the streets. An intricate image of Jesus graces the stage of the open-air Passion Play theatre, where the latest edition of the show is being held from mid-May to October 2. "What has always fascinated

me is the quality of the relationship between all the participants, young and old. It's a beautiful community, a sort of "Passion" family," says Walter Lang, 83.

He's just sad that his wife, who died in February, will not be among the participants this year. "My parents met at a Passion Play, and I also met my future wife at one," says Andreas Roedel, village mayor and choir member. Gorur, who has Turkish roots, was spotted in 2016 by Christian Stueckl, the head of the Munich People's Theatre who will direct the play for the fourth time this year. "I didn't really know what to do with my life. I probably would have ended up selling cars, the typical story," he laughs. Now, he's due to start studying drama in Munich this autumn. "I've discovered my hidden talent," he says.

Violence, poverty and sickness

Stueckl "has done a lot for the reputation of the show, which he has revolutionised" over the past 40 years, according to Barbara Schuster, 35, a human

resources manager who is playing Mary Magdalene. "Going to the Passion Play used to be like going to mass. Now it's a real theatrical show," she says. In the 1980s, Stueckl cut all the parts of the text that accused the Jews of being responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus, freeing the play from anti-Semitic connotations. "Hitler had used the Passion Play for his propaganda," Schuster points out.

The play's themes of violence, poverty and sickness are reflected in today's world through the war in Ukraine and the Covid-19 pandemic, says Mayet, the actor playing Jesus. "Apparently we have the same problems as 2,000 years ago," he says. For 83-year-old Lang, who is playing a peasant this year, the "Hallelujah" after Christ has risen for the final time in October will be a particularly moving moment. "Because we don't know if we'll be there again next time," he says, his eyes filling with tears. — AFP



German actor Frederik Mayet and ensemble members perform during a rehearsal at Oberammergau's Passion Play theatre in Oberammergau.



Mixed fortunes of celebrities who leapt on the NFT craze

Sports, film and music stars have all flocked to the NFT market to buy pictures of apes, endorse corporate partners or even launch their own art collections. Even as the crypto sector suffers a rout with sales and values plunging and scams proliferating, celebrities continue to sign up to the craze for so-called Non-Fungible Tokens.

Gone Ape

The Bored Ape Yacht Club is the

ground zero of NFT "collectables". It features cartoon images replicated thousands of times with algorithm-generated variations. The initial collection of 10,000 computer generated images has been followed by several other generations and many millions of fakes. To fans, they are a status symbol, a key to an exclusive club where ordinary folk can mix with the famous and wealthy. Brazilian footballer Neymar and tennis legend Serena Williams tweeted out their ape images on the same day in January. US talk show host Jimmy Fallon and socialite Paris Hilton showed off their apes on TV. Madonna declared on Instagram in March that she had "entered the MetaVerse" with a purchase of an ape, reportedly for more than \$500,000. She was following the likes of musicians Justin Bieber, Eminem and Snoop Dogg, basketball luminaries Shaquille O'Neal and Stephen Curry, and actors including

Gwyneth Paltrow.

To NFT critics, these apes symbolise all that is wrong in the crypto world - fundamentally worthless yet selling for vast sums with valuations based on hype. And ultimately these celebrities don't own the ape pictures in any traditional sense - anyone can download and use the images. What they own is essentially a digital receipt linked to the picture. But celebrity backing is vital. The apes, along with cartoon collections like CryptoPunks, appear to be weathering the crash better than other parts of the crypto sector.

Solo missions

Celebrity NFT enthusiasts have gone a lot deeper into the industry than just buying ape images - plenty have created their own NFT collections, with mixed results. US musician Grimes got in early, managing to bag almost \$6 million for some fantasy-

inspired art last year. However, many of these NFTs are now all but worthless, selling for fractions of their original prices - when they sell at all. Other collections have failed even to get off the ground. Wrestler John Cena sold just a handful of NFTs from a collection he put together last year with the WWE.

He admitted it was a "catastrophic failure". Skateboarder Tony Hawk has been more successful with sales, but at the cost of the admiration of some of his fans. He announced on Twitter last year he would sell versions of his famous tricks as NFTs, prompting responses ranging from "Stop this Tony" to "Tony, no, not you too". Hawk has not mentioned the project on Twitter since, though he has continued to deal in NFTs.

Just business

One of the mainstays of the celebrity-

NFT relationship is the old-fashioned brand endorsement. This week, French megastar footballer Kylian Mbappe became the latest star to sign on as an "ambassador" and invest in French start-up Sorare. The firm runs a fantasy football game where players can buy sports-card style NFTs.

Serena Williams, along with footballers Gerard Pique and Rio Ferdinand, have already invested in the game. And not to be outdone, the world's most famous footballer, Cristiano Ronaldo, last week announced a partnership with Binance, the world's biggest crypto firm. The offerings will apparently include designs created in collaboration with Ronaldo, who said in a statement he looked forward to "bringing unprecedented experiences and access through this NFT platform". — AFP



(Left-right) Joe Payne, Diana Zollicoffer, Brooke Lacey, Jordan Bayne and Manoushka Guerrier on stage during the NFT HQ Takeover event at the Bentonville Film Festival in Bentonville, Arkansas.



Musicians perform at the Lil' Heroes NFT Collection NYC Party at Soho House New York in New York City. — AFP photos



A bowl of dried Mopani worms is seen at the Hostex food Expo in Sandton. A South African start-up entrepreneur is changing the way people view and eat protein- and iron-packed mopane caterpillars. — AFP photos



An attendee reacts as she tastes mopani worm chocolate at the Hostex food Expo in Sandton.

Drought-hit Verona introduces restrictions on using water

The city of Verona, in northeast Italy, on Saturday announced restrictions on the use of drinking water, due to an ongoing drought in the Mediterranean country. "Due to the weather situation and its impact on the water supply, the mayor has signed an order restricting the use of drinking water for domestic purposes," read a message on the city's website. Under the drought order, which lasts until the end of August in the town of quarter of a million people, it will be prohibited to use drinking water to water gardens or sports fields.

The water must also not be used to wash cars or fill swimming pools, with a breach of the rules punishable with a fine of up to 500 euros (\$520) in the town famous as the home of the ill-starred lovers Romeo and Juliet. Municipalities across Italy have begun introducing some form of water rationing after an unusually hot and dry spring sparked widespread alarm. The Po river, Italy's longest river and its largest reservoir of fresh water, is suffering its worst drought in 70 years.

The Maggiore and Garda lakes are both far lower than usual for this time of year, while further south, the level of the River Tiber that runs through Rome has also dropped. Last week, the mayor of Milan announced the northern Italian city's fountains would be switched off as part of water restrictions imposed due to the drought. Italy's largest agricultural association, Coldiretti, has warned that the drought is putting over 30 percent of national agricultural production and half of livestock farming in the Po Valley at risk.

The northern region of Lombardy has called a state of emergency, directing mayors to curtail non-essential water use, such as street washing and watering parks and sportsgrounds. The weather conditions have also hit Italy's hydroelectric plants. Hydropower facilities, mostly located in the mountains in the country's north, provide almost one fifth of Italy's energy demands. —AFP

South African entrepreneur seeks to turn caterpillars into tasty snacks

A start-up entrepreneur from South Africa wants to change the way edible caterpillars popularly known as "mopane worms" are viewed and eaten. For many people, particularly from western European backgrounds, the idea of eating insects is still riddled with fear and inhibition. But they can be a valuable source of nutrition and farming them is not detrimental to the environment.

South African chemical engineer Wendy Vesela has found ways of turning the spiky green and black caterpillars—which are packed with protein and iron—into a flour that can be used in savoury biscuits, sweet chocolate protein bars, cereals or smoothies. When steamed and sliced, mopane pieces can also be used as pizza toppings. Vesela says she has found domestic and international customers for her organic products. Edible insects and worms may indeed be gaining popularity in Western cultures.

But food anthropologist Anna Trapido insists that the trend should not be seen as just another dietary fad, a "kind of adventure tourism, where you get a badge" for eating them. "Mopane needs to be treated with respect because they are part of people's emotional, spiritual, culinary genres," she said. In Vesela's home province of Limpopo, where she grew up in a town not far from the world-famous



A vendor (left) interacts with an attendee looking at a mopani worm chocolate bar at the Hostex food Expo in Sandton.

Kruger National Park, mopane is a staple food, cooked in a sauce of onions and tomatoes.

'More protein than steak'

The caterpillars are "a healthier option of protein", she said. And it's "not a worm. So people have just to get over that fear." Vesela tried to woo reluctant customers with biscuits and protein bars at a recent food fair in Johannesburg's upmarket Sandton district.

"I won't eat a worm. I'm sorry, it's dis-

gusting. But if you give it to me in the form of a chocolate... it's really delicious," said Gail Odendaal, 38, walking away with a bag of protein bars. Mopanes are environmentally friendly, too, requiring no extra water or land, as they breed and feed on mopane trees, which grow in hot and dry regions of southern Africa. They are a better source of protein than many other foods on the market, said dietitian, Mpho Tshukudu.

"It's high in protein, in essential fats and minerals, especially iron. It has more

iron than the most expensive piece of steak," she said. With demand rising since she started her venture seven months ago, Vesela plans to expand the business and have multiple harvests a year. She now hires rural women to gather mopanes when they are in season in December and April. The mopanes are gutted, boiled and dried to then be used whole or milled. — AFP

Fossil discovery solves mystery of how pandas became vegetarian

The discovery of panda fossils in China has helped researchers solve the mystery of how the giant species developed a "false thumb" and became the only dedicated vegetarian in the bear family. Fossils dating back about six million years found in southwest China's Yunnan province included a greatly enlarged wrist bone called a radial sesamoid. It is the oldest known evidence of the modern giant panda's false thumb that allows it to grip and break heavy bamboo stems, scientists wrote on a research paper published in the latest edition of the Scientific Reports.

The fossils belong to the now-extinct ancient relative of the panda called an Ailuurcto that lived in China six to eight million years ago. "The giant panda is... a rare case of a large carnivore with a short, carnivorous digestive tract... that has become a dedicated herbivore," Wang Xiaoming, curator of vertebrate palaeontology at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, said.

"The false thumb in Ailuurctos shows... for the first time, the likely timing and steps in the evolution of bamboo feeding in pandas." Researchers had known about the panda's false thumb, which works similar to a human thumb, for about a century. But the lack of fossil evidence had left unanswered questions about how and when the extra digit - not seen in any other bear - evolved.

"While the giant panda's false thumb is not the most elegant or dexterous... even a small, protruding lump at the wrist can be a modest help in preventing bamboo from slipping off bent fingers," Wang wrote. The fossils found near Zhaotong city in the north of Yunnan included a false thumb that was longer than that found in modern pandas, but without an inward hook on the end.

The hook and a fleshy pad around the based of the thumb evolved over time since it had to "bear the burden of considerable body weight", the paper said. Pandas traded the high-protein, omnivorous diet of their ancestors for bamboo, that is low in nutrients available year-round in South China millions of years ago. They eat for up to 15 hours a day and an adult panda can consume 45kg of bamboo a day. While their diet is mostly vegetarian, wild panda are known to occasionally hunt small animals. —AFP



A panda enjoys a cake made with ice during its birthday at a zoo in Nanning, in China's southern Guangxi region. — AFP

Uruguay's tango therapy a hit with dialysis patients

At the age of 85, Uruguayan Olga Diaz's kidneys are failing - she was beginning to despair at her bleak future, kept alive by 12 hours of dialysis per week. But at the clinic where she receives her treatment, Diaz has found a new "will to live" thanks to live tango and milonga performances. "This is more than medicine," Diaz told AFP from the Diaverum clinic in Montevideo.

It is 9:00 am and Diaz is one of 20 patients sitting in armchairs, all connected to the "artificial kidneys" that purify their blood. Suddenly the sound of the machines and chattering nurses are drowned out by bandoneon music and a voice singing the classic tango piece "Naranjo en flor." Smiles break out across the faces of patients, including Diaz, who visits the clinic three times a week to spend four hours connected to a machine.

"I had fallen into a routine. I did things but without my old enthusiasm," she said. "The music gave my soul life and gave me the will to live, joy, enthusiasm, those things that were fading." Other patients agree that these mini-concerts have improved their quality of life. Rafael Gutierrez, 46, says music "makes time go faster" and makes the dialysis treatment "much more bearable." The show lasts 40 minutes and every patient has a front row seat.

Hospital Tango

Scientific research shows that listening to music reduces anxiety and stress, and stabilizes the heartbeat and pulse. It also affects the areas of the brain related to pleasure by boosting dopamine. Music's therapeutic benefits have been "amply demonstrated," says nephrologist Gerardo Perez, 68, adding that the World Health Organization (WHO) has "for years" recommended incorporating art and culture into health systems.

That is why he has spent two decades playing tango on his bandoneon to dialysis patients. But last year, his personal initiative was transformed into the "Hospital Tango" project that puts on mini concerts in health centers and hospitals. The idea is

to temporarily take people away from their "worry, illness, uncertainty, suffering." "Often they don't know what their diagnosis is or what will happen in their lives," said Perez. In hospital, "they have a lot of time to be alone, often worried."

Other bandoneon players, singers and guitarists have come on board to perform throughout Montevideo. Inspired by the Spanish Musicians for Health NGO, the group is now trying to set itself up as a

Abril Farolini, 22, and Ramiro Hernandez, 35, and singer Paola Larrama, 37, put on protective gowns and facemasks. It is an unusual experience for musicians, as is the early morning hour and the audience of hospital patients connected to dialysis machines. But adapting to such a strange environment reaps dividends: namely the satisfaction of giving "much more than respite," said Hernandez, who was a founding member of Hospital Tango.



Bandoneonists Abril Farolini, 22, Ramiro Hernandez, 35, and singer Paola Larrama, 37, perform at the dialysis room in the Diaverum Center for kidney patients, as part of the Hospital Tango project, in Montevideo. — AFP

charity, widen its activities and branch out onto a national level. For now, the group focuses on tango, which Perez touts as "world cultural heritage," but its mission could expand to include other forms of music or even theater. In fact "any artistic expression," is on the table, according to Perez.

"It also generates happiness and good humor," he added. For Larrama it is a "very moving" experience, especially given the patients' "willingness to connect." "It's not the same as playing somewhere where the people came to see you," she said. "Here we are bringing something to them, while people are going through a different experience." — AFP

'Much more than respite'

In a small room, bandoneon players



The Lake Mead Marina is seen at Lake Mead National Recreation Area in Boulder City, Nevada.

MEGA DROUGHT MAKES BOATING ROUGH ON LAKE MEAD

In the 15 years since Adam Dailey began boating on Lake Mead, the shoreline has receded hundreds of meters, the result of more than two decades of punishing drought that is drying out the western United States. Launch spots that lined the edge of the lake, located outside Las Vegas, have been abandoned, and a single ramp is now the only way to get a boat in the water.

"We used to have more. So everyone's fighting to use one ramp... and still trying to figure out how to get along," said Dailey. "It's kind of sad, what's going on. But we still come out and try to enjoy it when we can." Lake Mead is the largest reservoir in the United States, a huge man-made body of water formed by the construction of the Hoover Dam in the early 1930s.

Its 247-square-mile (640-square-kilometer) surface area stores water for tens of millions of people and countless acres of farmland in the southwest. But it's shrinking at a terrifying rate and now stands at just one-quarter full. The National Park Service (NPS), which manages access to the lake, has spent more than \$40 million since 2010 trying to keep the water open to boaters.

It costs them \$2-3 million dollars to reconfigure the boat launch ramp every time the water levels fall another four feet (120 centimeters). "Declining water levels

due to climate change and 20 years of ongoing drought have reshaped the park's shorelines," the NPS says on its website. "As Lake Mead continues to recede, extending launch ramps becomes more difficult and more expensive due to the topography and projected decline in water levels."

Bathtub ring

A series of NPS signs show the shoreline at various points since 2001. The sign marking the level in 2021 is 300 paces from the water. In the mud, the receding waters leave behind bottles, cans, fire extinguishers and other detritus that somehow made its way overboard in years gone by.

The rocks that form the hard edges of the reservoir offer a stark illustration of just how far water levels have fallen. A white band of mineral deposits stains the mountainsides like the ring on a bathtub, showing where the water was at its high point after a flood in 1983. "We used to water ski race here," Jaxxon Zacher told AFP. "And the island-only the tip... was out 25 years ago. So now we can't even race here anymore. It's dropping drastically."

The growing islands in the middle of the lake point to the uneven topography of the valley that was flooded-and the hazards that await. "Every day someone's rip-



A sign indicates the Lake Mead water line in 2021 in contrast to current low water levels as construction equipment stands nearby to expand the boat launch ramp due to the western drought on June 28, 2022 on Lake Mead along the Colorado River in Boulder City, Nevada. —AFP photos

ping a drive off, because last week, where there was no rock, it's now a foot down or two feet down so things are exposed," boatseller Jason Davis said. "You've got houseboats getting beached and stuck, and people are ripping their lower units off." And with vessels that can retail at hundreds of thousands of dollars, a weekend outing can turn into a costly mistake.

A new job

For some people, the risk of an acci-

dent and the sheer hassle of having to wait so long to get a boat into the water and then out again at the end of the day means Lake Mead is no longer a viable recreation option. Below the Hoover Dam, stretches of river remain relatively unscathed by the dropping water levels. At Willow Beach, across the state line in Arizona, kayakers frolic in the shallows, unloading water pistols on each other as 104 Fahrenheit (40 Celsius) sunshine beats down. A small marina there offers

Steve McMasters a place to stage his pontoon, just a short distance from his home in Boulder City.

"It can be a four-to-five-hour wait on weekends to get your boat out of the water (at Lake Mead), so this is big to have," he said. "I waited like four months on a waiting list to get it. I got lucky here." Climatologists say two decades of drought is not unheard of in the western United States, but combined with human-caused global warming, it is transforming the region. Higher temperatures mean less moisture falls as snow on the Rocky Mountains, and what snowpack does form melts more quickly.

This leaves the Colorado River without the slow and steady feed that supplied it year-round in the centuries and millennia before the region was settled. In climatic terms, Lake Mead is a baby; in existence for less than 90 years. But in human terms, it is vanishing at a startling pace. Jason Davis, the boatseller, says more people need to witness the stark changes for themselves. "If you haven't come to see these rings, you know, you don't quite comprehend," he said. And if the water keeps dropping? "I'll need a new job." — AFP



People ride in a boat past a 'bathtub ring', a white band of mineral deposits showing previous water levels on Lake Mead along the Colorado River in Boulder City, Nevada.



A sunken World War II-Era Higgins landing craft that used to be nearly 200 feet underwater is being revealed near the Lake Mead Marina as the waterline continues to lower on July 01, 2022 in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Nevada.



A visitor launches a boat near the Lake Mead Marina at Lake Mead National Recreation Area in Boulder City, Nevada.

'It's good to move': Greenland seniors play ball

Sitting on benches in a sports hall in Greenland, 33-year-old Jenssinnguaq Lundblad and his nursery school pupils could not keep their eyes off the handball court. "It's unusual to see so many elderly people doing sports - it's funny to watch," he said of the match in Ilulissat, a town that lies north of the Arctic circle.

The Greenlandic games for the elderly each year draw teams of pensioners from across the vast Danish autonomous territory. The seasoned game-goers are as fiery on the stands as they are on the pitch, where 239 players vie for victory in handball, hockey and football. Laila Moller, 68, said she did not want to spend retirement holed up at home alone. "When you're retired, you're often at home, so it's good for me to move and to be with the others," said the competitor from Ilulissat.

"It's cool, we are lots of people" here. It's not easy getting everyone together though. Greenland is the world's largest island, mostly covered in ice, and transport costs are high when much of the terrain can only be crossed by air or sea. But the competition's 10 travelling teams have been given grants to make sure

they can all take part. Magrethe Jakobsen, 74, had come all the way from Paamiut, a town that lies some 800 kilometers away from the island's southern tip.

At home, "we play twice a week, and we go to do some fitness once a week. It means that Monday, Wednesday and Friday we are together," said the lady in a

bright purple t-shirt. "I do it to move, meet people, to socialise." Each game lasts around 20 minutes, participants taking turns to act as referee. Most players taking part in the games created in 2011 are past retirement age. Their moves are sometimes a little slow or even clumsy,

but no one seems to mind. Grete Street, 66, from Ilulissat, said the games were not about winning. "Everyone is allowed to move. Maybe some are more flexible than others," but that is not important, she said. "It's nice to play." — AFP



Uvaasoq (blue) plays a handball match at the sports hall in Ilulissat, western Greenland.



Picture shows turquoise water in a large melt hole on the top of an iceberg in the Disko Bay, Ilulissat, western Greenland. The iceberg originates from Jakobshavn glacier (Sermeq Kujalleq), the most productive glacier in the Northern Hemisphere. — AFP photos

Sports

England's Broad concedes the 'costliest over' in Test history

India's stand-in captain Bumrah stars

BIRMINGHAM: India stand-in captain Jasprit Bumrah starred with both bat and ball as England's Stuart Broad conceded the most expensive over in Test history, giving up 35 runs at Edgbaston on Saturday. India were all out for a breathtaking 416 in their first innings of the COVID-delayed fifth Test, with the tourists 2-1 up in a five-match series.

Bumrah, who hit Broad for 29 runs in an over that also featured five wides and a no-ball he struck for six, then led from the front in his primary role of strike bowler. He took the first three wickets to fall amid several rain breaks in an excellent return of 3-35 in 11 overs, with England slumping to 84-5 at stumps on the second day — a deficit of 332 runs.

When play resumed in bright sunshine, former England captain Joe Root, the world's top-ranked Test batsman, was caught behind for 31 trying to cut a Mohammad Siraj delivery that was too close to him. At 78-4, for all their aggressive play under a new leadership duo of captain Ben Stokes and red-ball coach Brendon McCullum while white-washing Test world champions New Zealand 3-0, England sent in Jack Leach as a nightwatchman.

Leach, however, was caught behind for a duck off Mohammed Siraj in a five-ball stay where he was also dropped in the slips. The in-form Jonny Bairstow was 12 not out and skipper Stokes unbeaten on nought at stumps. Broad had become just the sixth bowler to take 550 Test wickets when he lost his composure by bowling too short at Bumrah, deputizing as captain for the Covid-hit Rohit Sharma. No 10 Bumrah was anything but intimidated during eight remarkable deliveries from Broad, even though the seamer was armed with the new ball.

Bumrah 'serious' about batting

The six legitimate balls were thrashed for 23 runs, including four fours and a six. Broad, 36, also sent down a wide that sailed over the head of wicketkeeper Sam Billings for four and a no-ball Bumrah top-edged for six. "Whenever Bumrah bats in the nets he takes it seriously," India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who earlier Saturday hit his first Test century overseas, told reporters. "It is not like when he bats he has a casual approach, he puts a price on his wicket."

The previous record of 28 runs in a Test over had been achieved on three occasions in the format's 145-year history, with Broad's team-mates James Anderson and Root two of the bowlers on the receiving end. Broad was already the joint record-holder for the most expensive over in a Twenty20 international, also against India, having conceded 36 runs when Yuvraj Singh hit him for six sixes during a 2007 World Twenty20 match in Durban.

But he is unlikely to add the corresponding one-day international record to his unwanted list as well given Broad hasn't played a 50-overs per side match for England since 2016 in order to extend his Test career. India, 338-7 overnight, smashed 78 runs in 11.5 overs with Jadeja, resuming on 83 not out, completed the third century of his 60-Test career. "To do it outside India, especially in England to hit a hundred as a player is a really big thing," said Jadeja.

"I can really take some confidence in myself as a player from this, to score a hundred in England especially in swinging conditions, it feels really good." The 33-year-old had been the junior partner in a stand of 222 with Rishabh Pant, who hit a rapid 146, that rescued India from the depths of 98-5. "Huge credit to Jadeja and Pant," Anderson



BIRMINGHAM: India's Jasprit Bumrah just fails to reach a shot from England's Sam Billings during play on Day 3 of the fifth cricket Test match between England and India at Edgbaston, Birmingham in central England on July 3, 2022. —AFP

told the BBC. "Sometimes you have to take your hat off to the opposition and obviously they have bowled well." Anderson eventually bowled Jadeja for 104 and then ended the innings when Siraj holed out to finish with 5-60 in 21.5 overs.

Bumrah followed his 31 not out by removing England's top three of Alex Lees, Crawley and

Ollie Pope, who managed just 25 runs between them on Saturday. Lees was bowled between bat and pad, with Crawley and Pope caught in the slips. This decider should have been played in Manchester last September only to be postponed just hours before the start because of coronavirus concerns within the India camp. —AFP

Poston stays on top at PGA John Deere Classic

WASHINGTON: JT Poston, chasing a wire-to-wire victory, fired a four-under par 67 to hold a three-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the US PGA John Deere Classic. The 29-year-old American, who matched his career low with a 62 on Thursday, rolled in an eagle putt from just inside 14 feet at the par-5 17th and closed with a par to finish 54 holes on 19-under 194 at TPC Deere Run in Silvis, Illinois. "It was a little tougher out there," Poston said. "I didn't hit it as well off the tees. I had to earn it a bit more out there. I pulled out a 67. So I'm pretty happy with it."

American Scott Stallings, seeking his first PGA title in eight years, shot 64 to share second on 197 alongside countryman Denny McCarthy and Argentina's Emiliano Grillo, who birdied four of the last five holes to shoot 65 as he chases his first PGA victory since 2015. "I've been looking for that win for six-plus years now. I'm looking forward to tomorrow," Grillo said. "I changed putters this week. So far it's working great. I'm seeing the lines a little better."

England's Callum Tarren was fifth on 198 after a 65 with American Bo Hoag firing a 63, matching his low PGA round, to share sixth on 199 with countryman Chris Naegel. Poston, who led by four when the day began, took his only PGA victory at the 2019 Wyndham Championship. World number 99 Poston has three top-10 efforts this season, the best of them a runner-up result at last week's Travelers Championship.

"I'm just trying to play good golf," Poston said. "When you have a lead like that, the goal is to make it so guys can't catch you and I'm going to try and do that." Poston blasted out of a greenside bunker at the par-5 second hole to just inside four feet of the cup and sank the birdie putt, then dropped his approach to four feet at the fifth to set up another birdie. Poston curled in a six-foot birdie putt at the eighth and made the turn on 18-under with a four-stroke edge.

After taking only his second bogey of the week, a poor 6-iron off the tee at the par-3 12th leading to a seven-foot par putt miss, Poston answered with an uphill eight-foot birdie putt at the 14th. But Poston's tee shot at the 15th hooked way right into deep rough and he missed another seven footer to make bogey, setting the stage for his eagle on the penultimate hole. "It was just one of those where I had a good eye for it," Poston said of his eagle putt.

'Time to take it deep'

Tarren, a 31-year-old PGA rookie ranked 393rd in the world, birdied four of the first six holes in a bogey-free round to make his charge. "I knew I got to get off to a hot start, and I did," Taren said. "I'm in a good position for tomorrow. It's time to take it deep." Stallings, 37, seeks his fourth PGA title but first since 2014 at Torrey Pines. He birdied three of the first five holes, tapped in for another to open the back nine and then reeled off three in a row from 15-17 before closing with a 10-foot par putt. —AFP

Grace heats up late to win Portland LIV Golf Invitational

LOS ANGELES: Branden Grace grabbed five of his eight birdies on the back nine on Saturday to pull away for a two-shot win in the Portland LIV Golf Invitational and capture the \$4 million first prize. The 34-year-old ranked 128th in the world pulled level with Carlos Ortiz with a birdie at the 13th, then birdied the 15th, 16th and 17th to secure the win in the second event of the controversial Saudi-funded series, which has raised the hackles of the established US PGA Tour and DP World Tour and sparked criticism over Saudi Arabia's human rights record.

But controversy appeared far from Grace's mind as the celebratory champagne was sprayed on the 18th green at Pumpkin Ridge outside Portland, Oregon. "This new format, everything is amazing and everybody is having a blast," Grace said after the win in the

54-hole event in which there is no cut and all 48 entrants earn some piece of a purse of more than \$20 million.

Grace carded a final-round 65 and finished two strokes in front of Mexico's Ortiz, who closed with a three-under par 69. Two-time major-winner Dustin Johnson, at 17th in the world the highest-ranked player so far to bolt for the new series, started the day tied for the lead with Ortiz but finished tied for third with compatriot Patrick Reed on nine-under. Johnson carded a one-under par 71 while former Masters champion Reed moved up with a five-under 67 that included a chip-in eagle at the 17th.

Hours before the event tee off on Thursday, family members of people killed in the September 11, 2001 attacks held a press conference near Pumpkin Ridge to voice their outrage. Insisting that Saudi Arabia should be

held accountable in the attacks - in which 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi nationals - they joined with human rights groups who say the lucrative series is an attempt to boost the kingdom's image through sport.

The series' Saudi ties also hit close to home in Oregon, where in 2016 15-year-old Fallon Smart was killed in a hit-and-run traffic accident in which Saudi college student Brahmanda Ameer Norah faced a first-degree murder charge. He removed his monitoring device before his trial and US authorities said they believed the Saudi government had helped him leave the country.

Nevertheless, the golf event drew enthusiastic crowds, organizers saying Pumpkin Ridge was sold out on Saturday without offering an attendance figure. Grace had taken the outright lead with his birdie at 15 when his tee shot at 16 skipped through the fairway into a strip of rough alongside a cart path. His second shot went through the green, but he strengthened his grip on the lead by chipping in for birdie. The team



OREGON: Branden Grace of South Africa poses with the trophy after winning the LIV Golf Invitational - Portland at Pumpkin Ridge Golf Club on July 02, 2022. —AFP

title went to the All-American quartet of Johnson, Reed, Tolar Gooch and Pat Perez, each pocketing \$750,000 in addition to their individual earnings. —AFP

Far from war, Ukraine sumo team train for global glory in Japan

SOKA: A team of Ukrainian sumo wrestlers whose training was interrupted by Russia's invasion are aiming for global glory after a month-long camp in the home of the ancient Japanese sport. The six-strong Ukrainian amateur sumo team will fly to the US state of Alabama on Tuesday to compete in the World Games, an Olympic-like event featuring sports that are not contested at the Summer Games.

The team had just finished a training session at their base in the city of Kharkiv when Russia invaded in late February and the city came under bombardment. An acquaintance organised for them to hold a training camp in Japan and the team are now raring to go when the Games begin in Birmingham on July 7.

"Rockets are falling all over Ukraine and things are being destroyed everywhere," said Ivanna Berezovska, a silver medalist in the open-weight category at the 2017 World Games and one of two women in the team. "Competing at the World Games, first of all I want to give myself something to be happy about and then I want to give people back home something to cheer." Professional sumo is confined to Japan but the ancient sport is popular at the amateur level around the world.

There are around 3,000 people involved in sumo in Ukraine and the country has been one of the most successful nations since the sport made its official World Games debut in 2005. The Ukrainian team arrived in Japan in late May and held training camps in southern



SOKA: Ukrainian sumo wrestler Vazha Daiauri (left) and Oleksandr Veresiuk attend a training session at a gymnastics centre in Soka, Saitama prefecture on July 3, 2022. —AFP

Oita and Ehime prefectures. Their first base, in the city of Usa, is known as the birthplace of the great yokozuna Futabayama, who set a record of 69 straight wins in the 1930s that still stands to this day.

Ukraine coach Liubov Korobko said the team were now in good shape for the "very important" World Games, despite the disruption caused by the war. "It's

treacherous crossing of the 18km-long Great Belt Bridge. Dutch rider Jakobsen's win means Quick-Step have two victories in as many days, after they chose against picking the 37-year-old Cavendish, a 34-time stage winner on the race.

"Cavendish is a legend, I wish we both could have been here," Jakobsen said. "He helped me get a deal and I'm sure he enjoyed my win," he added. The 25-year-old Jakobsen suffered a life-threatening crash at the Tour of Poland in 2020, but has recovered to become one of the most feared sprinter in road cycling as he embarks on his first Tour de France. "It's been a long road for me to get here, if

a big deal when Ukrainian athletes win medals there," she said. "We have a lot of sumo wrestlers competing and I think we can make a contribution and help raise the image of our country." The World Games have been held every four years since 1981 and feature a range of non-Olympic sports from orienteering to billiards. —AFP

only you knew," said Jakobsen, who lost all his teeth and underwent five hours of surgery the day he crashed over barriers into a metal post.

"It's like a second life. "Those who know me understand the sacrifices I had to make. So today I really am very happy," he said. "The crash made me more humble, I gave a lot for this, I'm happy but above all grateful and happy for the fans here in Denmark and at home too." Jakobsen then went on to thank his family, girlfriend, team, sponsors and doctors, some of them by name in an emotional recounting of how he struggled back. "I'll remember today forever." —AFP

Sports

Carlos Sainz claims maiden F1 win in British Grand Prix

Zhou escapes serious injury after multi-car smash at Silverstone

SILVERSTONE: Carlos Sainz claimed his maiden Formula One win on his 150th start in a thrilling British Grand Prix at Silverstone on Sunday. The Ferrari driver kept his cool to beat Red Bull's Sergio Perez and Lewis Hamilton for Mercedes. World champion Max Verstappen finished out of the first five in a race marred by a multi-car pile up at the opening corner.

Meanwhile, the British Grand Prix was red-flagged after a horror opening-corner multi-car smash at Silverstone on Sunday, with Zhou Guanyu's Alfa Romeo flipped upside down and hurtling over the circuit's safety barrier. As Max Verstappen pipped pole sitter Carlos Sainz to the first corner there was "carnage" behind with marshalls rushing to Zhou trapped in his stricken car.

George Russell's Mercedes, Alpine's Esteban Ocon, Yuki Tsunoda (Alpha Tauri) and the Williams of Alex Albon were also involved. Zhou's car was catapulted upside down, the Chinese rookie's head saved by his car's roll hoop-halo as it skidded off across a gravel trap and over tyre barriers into the catch fencing, where it bounced back to finish semi-upright in a stationary position. Detailed replays of the accident were not available immediately until Zhou had been rescued from his car.

He was attended by emergency evacuation medical crews and lifted out, transferred on to a stretcher and taken by ambulance to the circuit medical centre. Albon was also taken to the med-

ical centre before being transferred to Coventry Hospital by helicopter for further precautionary tracks. The sport's ruling body the International Motoring Federation (FIA) advised that both drivers were conscious and were being checked over and evaluated.

They later announced that Zhou was "in good health and has left the medical centre". The normal speed for Formula One cars in that part of the circuit is around 240 kph. In re-runs of the start, it appeared that Russell, starting eighth, moved to his right after a poor start and collided with Zhou's Alfa Romeo as the pair strove to stay ahead of Pierre Gasly. This triggered Zhou's wild excursion off-circuit and dragged other cars into further less serious multiple collisions around them.

In a separate additional announcement, the FIA confirmed also that several protestors had tried to run on to the circuit following the red flag. "We also confirm that after the red flag, several people attempted to enter the track," said the statement. "These people were immediately removed and the matter is now being dealt with by the local authorities."

The field filed back to the pits after the collision as a specialist extraction crew attended Zhou, who remained in his car, until he was lifted clear. Other drivers including Russell climbed from their cars to assist Zhou following the collision. The teams involved were all in frantic action repairing their damaged cars after the incident in preparation for a



SILVERSTONE: Alfa Romeo's Chinese driver Zhou Guanyu (left) and Mercedes' British driver George Russell skid across the track after a collision at the start of the Formula One British Grand Prix at the Silverstone motor racing circuit in Silverstone, central England on July 3, 2022. —AFP

re-start. In a radio statement, Alfa Romeo said: "Zhou is conscious, he is talking, there are no fractures. Considering the circumstances, he is pretty good, pretty well."

This was not the first collision in which the 'halo' device was instrumental in saving a driver from serious injury - Roy Nissany survived after another car driven by Dennis Hauger landed on top his

cockpit in which he was saved by the halo. Both escaped unhurt. After a near one hour delay the race restarted in the original starting order, with the grid reduced to 17 with the retirements of Zhou, Albon and Russell. Unlike the original start Sainz managed to held off Verstappen to the first corner as the Spaniard seeks his first ever F1 win in his 150th start after securing his maiden pole. —AFP

Zion agrees to 5-year NBA extension with Pelicans

NEW YORK: Zion Williamson, who missed the past NBA season due to a broken right foot, has agreed to a five-year maximum rookie contract extension with the New Orleans Pelicans, ESPN reported Saturday. Williamson's deal is worth \$193 million but has escalator clause incentives that could bring the power forward as much as \$231 million. The extra money would be triggered if Williamson can make the All-NBA Team or win NBA Most Valuable Player or Defensive Player of the Year awards next season.

The top pick in the 2019 NBA Draft has struggled with injuries but shown moments of brilliance in his NBA start, averaging 25.7 points, 7.0 rebounds and 3.2 assists over 85 contests from 2019-2021. Williamson suffered a knee injury in his rookie season that delayed his NBA debut until January 2020. Williamson will turn 22 on Wednesday, which is the first day NBA players can sign contracts for the 2022-23 season. Until then, deals are generally released by agents or in reports with clubs unable to confirm any moves.

As a rookie, Williamson matched Shaquille O'Neal as the only teens in NBA history to average 20 points and shoot 55% from the court. The Pelicans, boosted by CJ McCollum and Brandon Ingram, went 36-46 last season and lost to Phoenix in the first round of the NBA playoffs, the first post-season trip for New Orleans since 2018. Adding a healthy Williamson to the mix could make the Pelicans yet another contender in a packed Western Conference fight next season.

Durant's cryptic tweet

Kevin Durant posted a cryptic tweet on Saturday in his first public comment since it was revealed he has asked to be traded from

the NBA's Brooklyn Nets. The two-time NBA champion and 2014 NBA Most Valuable Player sent a shockwave through free agency with reports Thursday he wanted to leave the Nets, with Phoenix and Miami his preferred trade destinations.

Durant, a 14-year NBA veteran, provided little clue about his motivations on social media even as he ended his silence on the matter. "The ones who were locked in that gym with me know what it is, they know what I'm about," Durant tweeted. "If u haven't been in there with me, ask around." Durant, who turns 34 in September, averaged 28.7 points, 7.3 rebounds and 6.1 assists in the past two seasons with the Nets after leaving Golden State and missing the entire 2019-20 campaign with a right Achilles tendon injury.

The 12-time NBA All-Star forward has helped the United States win the past three Olympic gold medals. His arrival with the Nets together with Kyrie Irving brought hopes that Brooklyn would become a powerhouse club but such lofty dreams never came to pass. The Nets lost in the second round of last year's playoffs to eventual champion Milwaukee and were swept out in the first round of this year's playoffs by Boston.

Teams will struggle to be able to make a trade for Durant that satisfies the Nets. Durant has four years and \$198 million remaining on a contract extension signed with the Nets, and multiple reports say Brooklyn has set a high trade haul for any club interested in a deal for Durant. The Athletic reported on Saturday that the Minnesota Timberwolves asked the Nets about Durant but were told the number of All-Stars and NBA Draft picks Brooklyn sought and, not wanting to part with Karl-Anthony Towns, decided to swing a deal on Friday with Utah for Rudy Gobert. —AFP

assessment on Monday to be available for Dunedin. Losing the veteran fly-half will be a heavy blow although Farrell praised the bench contribution of playmaker Joey Carbery. Farrell confirmed midweek starter Jamie Hume (groin injury) had become the second player ruled out of the tour after lock Iain Henderson, and the young centre would be replaced by six-Test back Stuart McCloskey.

'Can't keep up'

Injuries are mounting in the front row where prop Jeremy Loughman and hooker Dave Heffernan are unavailable for Dunedin with concussion while hooker Rob Herring is battling injury. Finlay Bealham was a late exclusion in Auckland with Covid and fellow prop Cian Healy wasn't risked off the bench because of an ankle problem.

Adding to Farrell's headaches, Leinster's Ed Byrne was due to arrive as front row cover on Saturday but a delayed flight resulted in a hasty call to New Zealand-based former Irish prop Michael Bent, 36, who raced to be on standby at Eden Park. "There's that much that's gone on over the last 10 days, I can't keep up with it myself," Farrell said. "But that's the game and we have to find out about ourselves." "If we come away from this tour with five gems that we know can play at this level by being good examples day in-day out... then we've won on this tour."

New Zealand fullback Jordie Barrett was relieved his team could open the year in style, seven months after heavy losses away to Ireland and France. However, he warned the Irish would come out fighting after the defeat and seek to bounce back in the second Test. "We're kidding ourselves if we think there isn't going to be a response next week. They've got a lot of quality and they're not coming over here for a holiday," he said. "They dominated a lot of that first quarter but we knew if we held onto the ball, we could punish them." —AFP

Ireland's Farrell defiant as tour headaches mount

AUCKLAND: Ireland coach Andy Farrell said on Sunday two humbling tour defeats in New Zealand and mounting injuries provided the ideal chance to assess who has World Cup credentials within his squad. Farrell was in a defiant mood after Ireland's 42-19 loss to the ruthless All Blacks in Auckland on Saturday, three days after his second-string side succumbed 32-17 to the Maori All Blacks. He acknowledged the tourists will need to dig deep to reverse those results in the two remaining Tests and a second match against the Maori.

Despite the tour falling at the end of the northern hemisphere season, he won't accept fatigue as an excuse. "We're not to see if our players have got excuses or not in regards to backing up," Farrell said. "Doing it that way, to me, makes us stronger as a group. It makes us ready for what's going to come our way over the next 18 months." "There's nothing like a tour of New Zealand to keep you on track and find out about yourselves. Who can deal with pressure like this? Staff and players."

Ireland impressed in patches and recovered in the second half after trailing 28-5 at the break on Saturday. Farrell admitted his team lacked clinical finishing but pointed to other key aspects - the scrum and breakdown - as areas where they struggled with the interpretation of English referee Karl Dickson. He said he would make a point of highlighting issues with Jaco Peyper, the South African who will control the second Test in Dunedin this week.

Captain Johnny Sexton, who was replaced in the first-half with a head knock, must pass an additional

Argentina give coach Cheika debut victory over Scotland

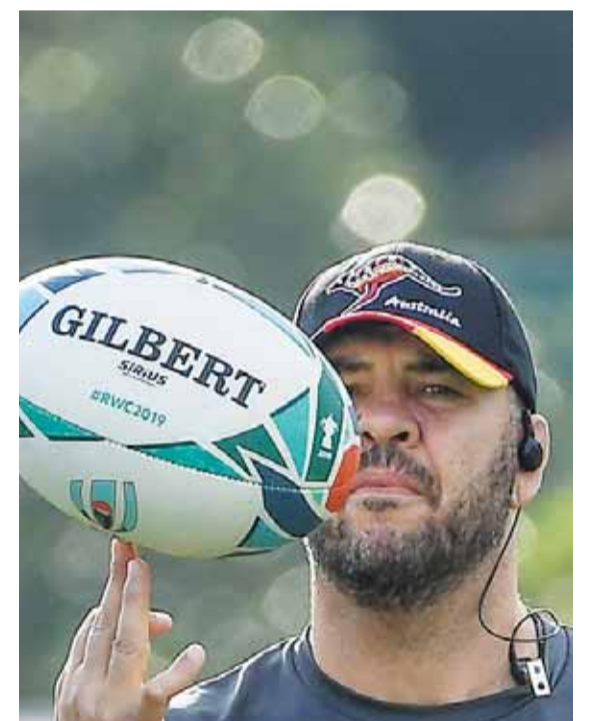
SAN SALVADOR DE JUJUY: Australian Michael Cheika's tenure as Argentina coach got off to a perfect start on Saturday as the Pumas beat Scotland 26-18 in San Salvador de Jujuy, their first home match in almost three years. Tries from Jeronimo de la Fuente and replacement Santiago Carreras in a dominant first half set the Pumas on their way.

But after Mark Bennett and Rory Hutchinson tries brought the tourists level, scrum-half Gonzalo Bertranou won it with an opportunistic effort with a quarter of the match left. "Of course, it was the first step, there were some parts of the game I liked and some that we need to work on," Cheika, 55, told ESPN.

"But like I said before the game, we need to do two jobs: work long term and try to do our best in the short term." Cheika knew he would have his work cut out with a team that had lost eight of their last nine internationals, saying in midweek: "We know that on Saturday we will not be perfect." But it was a Scotland side that had not lost to the Pumas since 2011, winning on five of their previous six visits to Argentina, who put in a poor first half showing.

"We didn't get going until the second half, and then we got into a position from which we should have kicked on, and didn't," a disappointed Scotland coach Gregor Townsend told Sky Sports. After opposing fly-halves Nicolas Sanchez and Blair Kinghorn kicked a pair of penalties each, the hosts started to take control as Scotland looked hopelessly disjointed. Center De la Fuente burrowed over from close range on the half hour mark despite scrum-half Ali Price's best efforts to hold him up over the line.

Winger Emiliano Boffelli, who took over kicking duties after Sanchez was forced off injured after 20 minutes and had already missed a penalty, dragged his conversion attempt well wide. But Argentina were over the whitewash again just three minutes later. Full-back Juan Cruz Mallia made ground to bring Argentina close to the tryline and one phase later Carreras dived over, with Boffelli this time kicking the extras. Scotland just about held out for the rest of the half to trail 18-6 at the break.



Australia's head coach Michael Cheika

Scotland comeback stalls

It was a different story after the restart as Scotland came storming back. Outside center Bennett hit a perfect line to meet Kinghorn's long, flat pass and burst through a gap to score on 57 minutes. Argentina were reeling and Scotland's forwards bundled up towards the tryline before Kinghorn took on Bertranou and slipped a reverse pass for Rory Hutchinson to dive over. Kinghorn then kicked the extras to level the scores.

Parity did not last long as Boffelli claimed the ball direct from the kick-off and Argentina rumbled down the touchline before Bertranou picked the ball up from the back of the ruck and dotted it down on the blindside. Boffelli, though, missed for the third time out of four kicks at goal. But 10 minutes from time he landed a penalty to stretch the Pumas' lead out to two scores. That came shortly after Scotland thought they had scored in the corner, only to be denied by a forward pass. Scotland were unable to exert any real pressure and fell to defeat in the first of this three-match series. —AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088

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WIMBLEDON: Germany's Tatjana Maria eyes the ball as she returns it to Latvia's Jelena Ostapenko during their round of 16 women's singles tennis match on the seventh day of the 2022 Wimbledon Championships at The All England Tennis Club in Wimbledon, southwest London, on July 3, 2022. —AFP

Mother of all wins as Maria books Wimbledon quarters

Tsitsipas says Kyrgios is 'a bully' with 'evil side'

LONDON: Germany's Tatjana Maria saved two match points to reach her first Grand Slam quarter-final at Wimbledon on Sunday. The 34-year-old mother-of-two defeated former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko 5-7, 7-5, 7-5 after battling back from 1-4 down in the second set. Maria, ranked 103, fired nine aces and exploited Ostapenko's all-or-nothing approach which resulted in 52 winners and 57 unforced errors for the Latvian.

Maria made her Wimbledon debut back in 2007, but had never previously got beyond the third round of a Grand Slam. "It makes me so proud to be a mum - that's the best thing in the world," said Maria, who only returned from a second maternity leave less than a year ago. "I love my kids. To be able to do it together, it makes this really special." Maria will face fellow German Jule Niemeier for a place in the semi-finals.

'Evil side'

Meanwhile, Stefanos Tsitsipas branded Nick Kyrgios "a bully" with an "evil side" after losing a stormy Wimbledon clash on Saturday. "It's constant bullying, that's what he does," the Greek fourth seed said in his post-match press conference after their third-round match. "He bullies the opponents. He was probably a bully at school himself. I don't like bullies. He has some good

traits in his character, as well. "But... he also has a very evil side to him, which if it's exposed, it can really do a lot of harm and bad to the people around him."

The mercurial Australian prevailed 6-7 (2/7), 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (9/7) in the match, during which both players were handed code violations by the umpire. Kyrgios even demanded the Tsitsipas be defaulted for hitting the ball into the crowd. Tsitsipas admitted he deliberately hit the ball at Kyrgios at one stage in an effort to quieten the Australian.

"I was aiming for the body of my opponent but I missed by a lot," he said. "This needs to stop. It's not okay. Someone needs to sit down with him and talk. I'm not used to play this way. "But I cannot just sit there, act like a robot and act like someone that is completely cold and ignorant. "It felt like a bit of a circus. You get tired of the constant talking, the constant complaining," he added.

Kyrgios, in his own press conference, said he understood why Tsitsipas would be upset after losing two times in recent weeks, including in Halle. "Maybe he should figure out how to beat me a couple more times first and then get to that," he said. Kyrgios claimed he had been the victim of bullying on the court. "I'm not sure how I bullied him. He was the one hitting balls at me, he was the one that hit a spectator, he was the one that smacked it out of the stadium. I didn't do anything.

'Stefanos 'soft'

"I did nothing towards Stefanos today that was disrespectful." "He's soft to come in here and say I bullied him. We're not cut from the same cloth. If he's affected by that, then that's what's holding him back," he added. After sealing his victory, the 2014 quarter-finalist said he had fancied his chances coming into the match after his recent win against the fourth seed on the grass in Germany.

"He's a hell of a player. He knows how to beat me - he's beaten me once," said the 40th-ranked Australian, who now has a 4-1 winning record against the Greek player. "It's amazing, everywhere I go I seem to have full stadiums. The media loves to say I'm bad for the sport but clearly I'm not." Kyrgios, who received an obscenity warning, did not lose his serve in the entire match, saving all five break points he faced and winning 81 percent of his first-serve points.

Drama

There was little hint of the drama to come when 23-year-old Tsitsipas edged a first-set tie-break. But the match descended into mayhem when a frustrated Tsitsipas hit the ball into the crowd after losing the second set, for which he received a warning. Kyrgios said Tsitsipas should be kicked out of Wimbledon, recalling the incident at the US Open in 2020 when Novak

Djokovic was defaulted from the tournament after hitting a line judge with a ball.

In astonishing scenes, the Australian called the umpire a "disgrace", demanding to speak to supervisors and saying he would not continue until the situation was resolved. "You can't hit a ball into the crowd and hit someone and not get defaulted," he said. At that point Tsitsipas left the court but returned to boos in an increasingly volatile atmosphere on Court One. Kyrgios, now on top against a clearly rattled Tsitsipas, broke in the fourth game of the third set. Later in the set, Tsitsipas was given a point penalty for hitting the ball in frustration towards the back of the court after a Kyrgios underarm serve. The 2019 ATP Finals champion appeared to aim shots in the direction of the Australian while Kyrgios continued to talk between points and bowed to the crowd at 5-3 following a winning drop shot. Kyrgios won the set and immediately put pressure on Tsitsipas at the beginning of the fourth set but neither player could force a break despite multiple opportunities. At 4-4 play was suspended for the roof to be closed and the match went to a nail-biting tie-break. Tsitsipas had set points to draw level in the match but it was Kyrgios who came out on top when his opponent netted after a drop shot. The Australian will play 20-year-old American Brandon Nakashima, the world number 56, in the last 16. —AFP

Ronaldo wants to leave Man United

LONDON: Cristiano Ronaldo wants to leave Manchester United this summer if the Premier League club receive an appropriate offer, according to multiple reports on Saturday. The 37-year-old Portuguese forward returned to Old Trafford from Juventus last summer but despite being United's top scorer last season, and third in the Premier League, the campaign was overall disappointing.

United finished sixth in the Premier League, missing out on Champions League qualification,

leaving the five-time Ballon d'Or winner, who has a year left on his contract plus an optional year, facing the prospect of playing in the Europa League for the first time. Manchester United are adamant Ronaldo, who scored 24 goals in all competitions, is not for sale, according to reports, with new manager Erik ten Hag keen to work with him.

Ronaldo won three Premier League titles and the Champions League during six trophy-laden years with United before leaving for Real Madrid in 2009 and Juventus in 2018, collecting more trophies at both clubs. United's international players are due to report for training in the coming days ahead of flying to Thailand on Friday for the start of their pre-season tour. —AFP



KUALA LUMPUR: Denmark's Viktor Axelsen (right) poses with his gold medal next to silver medalist Japan's Kento Momota after the men's singles final at the Malaysia Open badminton tournament in Kuala Lumpur on July 3, 2022. —AFP

expecting a tough match, but it was great to play Momota in another major final". It marked Axelsen's fifth victory of the season. The Dane had already won the All England, European Championships and two titles in Indonesia.

Momota was involved in a car crash that killed his driver on the way to the airport after winning the Malaysia Masters in January 2020. This year's edition of the Masters takes place next week. It left Momota with a fractured eye socket and double vision. When he did return after a year out of action, the Japanese star was a shadow of his former self. He flopped at his home Tokyo Olympics last year and lost in the first round in four of the five singles tournaments he had previously entered this year. —AFP

Momota thrashed by Axelsen in Open final

KUALA LUMPUR: Japan's Kento Momota suffered a heavy defeat in the Malaysia Open final Sunday against world number one Viktor Axelsen, the latest disappointing performance from the once undisputed king of badminton. The tournament marked the first time Momota has played in Malaysia since he was involved in a car crash there two years ago, which sent his career into free fall.

Denmark's Axelsen, the reigning Olympic champion, outplayed the Japanese star from start to finish, taking only 34 minutes to win 21-4, 21-7. Momota-playing in his first final of the year after a torrid run of form-received a rapturous welcome as he arrived at the arena in Kuala Lumpur. But it was a one-sided game, with Axelsen immediately taking control, racking up points with a series of explosive smashes. The first game was over quickly, and in the second Axelsen maintained the high tempo to force Momota into numerous unforced errors. After the match, world number two Momota said that Axelsen's "level was higher than I expected. "I thought I was getting better in this tournament, but it was a bit too much for me today. "But I will use the experience of playing in this big final for upcoming tournaments," the 27-year-old added.

Axelsen said he was surprised he managed to play so well. "I was surprised with my levels today especially that I managed to find explosiveness in my game," he said. "I was

Kuwait Premier League kicks off August 25th

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Football Federation announced that the Kuwait Premier League for the upcoming sports season (2022/2023) will start on the 25th of August with a new system. The First Division will begin on the 28th of the same month as the competition of His Highness the Amir's Cup will be launched on the 23rd of January while His Highness the Crown Prince Cup will kick off on October 18. The Super Cup will be on the 6th November.

The Director of the Competitions Department in the Federation, Dr Hamid Al-Shaibani, said in the press conference held by the Federation Sunday that the Premier League, which includes 10 clubs, will be held in its first phase with the two-legged system. The clubs will be divided into two groups after the end of the two sections. Al-Shaibani added that the first group will include the first six places, as they will play between them in the home and away system to determine the winner of the title. The clubs at the seventh to tenth place will compete among themselves to avoid relegation. Two of them will be relegated.

The federation has made some changes in order to increase the number of matches in the season to raise the level of competitiveness between clubs, which contribute to improving the technical level of Kuwaiti players. Al-Dihani pointed out that the Federation, as part of its keenness to support the clubs decided to give the winner of the Premier League KD100, 000. The second-place finisher will receive KD60, 000 dinars, while the third-place finisher will receive KD40,000.

The Federation also decided to award cash prizes to the clubs that will occupy the top six positions in the first phase of the league to encourage players to do their best and provide their best level - calling for cooperation of clubs with the Federation to make the



local sports season a success. The Federation seeks to discover and train a great number of talents - underlining that interest in young players as the best way to improve the national teams.

In his turn, the Assistant Secretary-General for Technical Affairs and National Teams Badr Abdul-Jalil said in a speech at the conference that the next season will witness an intensification of the establishment of tournaments for the age groups, especially from 6 years to 14 years, with the aim of discovering the largest number of athletes. —KUNA