

**3** PAM continues crackdown against outdoor work ban



**5** Copenhagen shooting suspect remanded in psychiatric ward



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# Kuwait University to accept foreign students for a fee

Move aims to boost international ranking • Total of 7,953 students to be admitted

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait University will accept 7,953 students in all its colleges for the 2022-2023 academic year, including foreign students for a fee. Kuwait University Council approved the numbers proposed by the admission and registration deanship, acting Kuwait University Secretary General and official spokesman Dr Murdhi Al-Ayyash said following a meeting held Monday under the chairmanship of Rector Dr Yousuf Al-Roumi.

Ayyash said the council accepted the proposed number of students, while authorizing the rector for

any change in the numbers. He said the council also accepted a proposal of the office of the deputy rector for planning with regards to regulations for accepting foreign students in various specialties in exchange of fees.

This is one of the practical initiatives that aims at strengthening the ranking of Kuwait University, because it is one of the international ranking indicators required by higher education establishments. Ayyash said the basic rules for acceptance and transfer at Kuwait University were approved for the 2022-2023

academic year, besides amending articles 6 and 8 of its teaching faculty affairs rules.

Official sources said Kuwait University prepared a report on measures to improve its ranking among international universities, following criticism for a drop in its current ranking, which is not acceptable for a university that was established in 1966, while universities that were founded later are ahead of it. Sources said the remedial report included an item to increase the number of foreign students, as a lack of them is one of the reasons that caused the drop in the ranking.

They said Kuwait's plan to build a new government university called Abdullah Al-Salem University may ease the burden on Kuwait University in accepting students and it can expand in accepting foreign students like other regional and international universities. Sources said the university is not likely to admit foreign students for free and is expected to charge fees from them, the value of which will be determined later. Sources added admitting foreign students will not be at the expense of Kuwaiti students who meet the conditions for admittance.

## US: Akleh 'likely' shot by Zionists 'unintentionally'

**WASHINGTON:** The United States concluded Monday that Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was likely killed by Zionist gunfire and urged accountability, but said there was no reason to believe she was shot intentionally. Dashing hopes for a result that would be accepted by all sides, the United States said it could not make a "definitive conclusion" on the origin of the bullet that killed the journalist on May 11.

"Ballistic experts determined the bullet was badly damaged, which prevented a clear conclusion," State Department spokesman Ned Price said in a statement after what he called "extremely detailed forensic analysis" of the bullet reluctantly handed over by the Palestinian Authority.

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## Pilgrims arrive for biggest hajj since pandemic

**MAKKAH:** Saudi authorities have arrested and fined nearly 300 people caught trying to perform the hajj without permits, an official said Monday, as the kingdom prepares to receive 1 million people for the annual pilgrimage. Some 288 "citizens and residents were arrested for violating hajj regulations", Lieutenant General Mohammed Al-Basami, head of hajj security, told a press conference broadcast on state-run media, adding they were each fined 10,000 Saudi riyals (around \$2,600).

Officials have also imposed a security cordon around Makkah, Islam's holiest city where the Grand Mosque is located, and barred nearly 100,000 people in more than 69,000 vehicles from entering, Basami said. One million people, including 850,000 from abroad, are allowed to participate in this year's hajj - a key pillar of Islam that all able-bodied Muslims with the means are required to perform at least once - after two years of drastically curtailed numbers due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In 2019, about 2.5 million people took part in the rituals, which also include gathering at Mount Arafat and "stoning the devil" in Mina. The following year, when the pandemic took hold, foreigners were barred and worshippers were restricted to just

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MAKKAH: Pilgrims arrive at the Grand Mosque on July 4, 2022. — AFP

## News in brief

### Cabinet tackles key projects

**KUWAIT:** The Cabinet on Monday assigned the ministry of finance to take over supervision of the Entertainment City project. It also instructed relevant state authorities to coordinate on clearing the historic Shamlan Harbor within a month to turn it into a heritage site. The Cabinet also assigned the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation to continue efforts related to the executive plan of phase one of Kuwait's railway project, and assigned several ministers to put together a comprehensive vision that addresses ways of developing Failaka Island and executing projects there.

### Six killed in US shooting

**WASHINGTON:** A shooter opened fire Monday during a parade to mark US Independence Day in the state of Illinois, killing at least six people, officials said. The shooting in the city of Highland Park, located near Chicago, also left 24 people wounded, police and the local mayor said. — AFP

### Spain seizes underwater drones

**MADRID:** Spanish police said Monday they had seized three underwater drones capable of transporting large quantities of drugs from Morocco to Spain and broken up a gang suspected of manufacturing them. Officers seized three so-called "drone submarines" which were under construction and arrested eight people in Spain, a police statement said. "The three - two of which were being built and one which was practically completed - were to be delivered to French drug traffickers for transporting large quantities of cocaine," it said. — AFP

## Sandstorms hit Iraq, Iran

**BAGHDAD:** Another sandstorm has darkened Iraqi skies and it's hard to breathe, but Baghdad motorcycle delivery rider Milad Mitti doesn't have the luxury of missing a day's work. Like most people in the now blistering hot desert country, the 30-year-old battles on in frustration, wearing goggles and a grey neck warmer over his mouth and nose "so I can breathe".

Iraq, still recovering from decades of war, is now facing new environment challenges on an unprecedented scale: Since mid-April it has weathered a dozen dust storms that have often shrouded it in an otherworldly orange

glow. Thousands have been rushed to hospitals so far, and on Sunday, as has happened many times in recent weeks, airports were again forced to delay flights for hours due to the poor visibility.

Meanwhile, Iranian officials closed government offices, courts, schools and universities in Tehran on Monday after a severe sandstorm hit the capital, state media reported. "The air pollution emergency committee of Tehran province has ordered the closure of all administrative offices and public educational centers today due to the spread of dust," state news agency IRNA said. Visibility was severely limited in Tehran, a city of more than eight million people.

The neighboring province of Alborz, located west of the capital, also announced the closure of all offices, banks and scientific and educational

Continued on Page 6



KHALES, Iraq: A family rides in the back of a pickup truck during a sandstorm in this town in Diyala province on July 3, 2022. — AFP

## Protests after US police kill black man

**AKRON, Ohio:** Several hundred protesters marched Sunday in Akron, Ohio after the release of body camera footage that showed police fatally shooting a black man with several dozen rounds of bullets. As anger rose over the latest police killing of a black man in the United States, and authorities appealed for calm, a crowd marched to City Hall carrying banners with slogans such as "Justice for Jayland".

The slogan refers to Jayland Walker, 25, who was killed Monday after officers tried to stop his car over a traffic violation, police said. Sunday

marked the fourth straight day of protests in the city of 190,000 people. Demonstrations during the day were peaceful but for a tense moment in which some protesters got close to a line of police and shouted at them.

Derrick Johnson, president of the NAACP, denounced the shooting as "murder... point blank" as the civil rights group led a daytime rally. "This black man was killed... for a possible traffic violation. This doesn't happen to white people in America," he said in a statement, also slamming the police department's response. Protests continued into the evening, with a hundred-strong crowd still in the streets in front of the justice center, an AFP reporter said.

Despite calls from some protesters for calm, tensions mounted as the night wore on.

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AKRON, Ohio: A woman stands in front of troopers in riot gear during a protest on July 3, 2022 over the police killing of Jayland Walker. — AFP



## Local

# Kuwait Amir congratulates President Biden on US Independence Day

## Crown Prince receives Defense Minister



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah



US President Joe Biden

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable to the President of the United States Joseph Biden, congratulating him on his country's 246th Independence Day. In the cable, His Highness the Amir commended the historical and strategic relations linking the State of Kuwait and the United States of America, expressing both nations' keenness on continuing to pursue ventures to bolster ties and cooperation on all possible domains to meet the interest of both countries. His Highness the Amir iterated wishes of wellbeing and health to President Biden and more progress and development to the American people.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber

Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable to President Biden, congratulating him on the US Independence Day. In the cable, His



### Ghanem sends greetings to Pelosi, Harris

Highness the Crown Prince commended the historic and distinguished bilateral relations between Kuwait and the US, expressing

wishes for health and wellbeing towards President Biden. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a similar cable to President Biden.

In the meantime, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent on Monday cables of congratulations to Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, and President of the Senate Kamala David Harris on their country's Independence Day.

In other news, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Monday at Bayan Palace Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

## 'Shlonik' app wins 'best government project' award

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, took part in the annual ceremony and exhibition of HHI Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Informatics Award held at Bayan Palace, during which the Shlonik app was recognized for winning the Informatics Award at the twentieth edition back in 2020. The event was held under the patronage of HHI the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and attended by HHI the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The ceremony was attended by representatives of the three partners behind the app: Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan, Director General of the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) Haya Al-Wadani, CAIT Deputy Director General for Information Technology Dr Ameer Al-Hussaini, and Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs at the Ministry of Health Dr Buthaina Al-Mudhaf.

Zain expressed its pride in this high-level recognition. The company developed the app in 2020 in joint collaboration with the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) and the Ministry of Health (MOH), with support from Kuwaiti volunteers and government entities during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic to facilitate home quarantines.

This prestigious award has had immense patronage from HHI the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and continues to receive generous



**KUWAIT:** HHI the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah speaks with Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan, Director General of the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) Haya Al-Wadani, and Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs at the Ministry of Health Dr Buthaina Al-Mudhaf.

support from its founder HHI Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah. The fact that 'Shlonik' has received this award reflects the fruitful unified efforts of Kuwait's public and private sectors.

'Shlonik' was developed by Zain's team in joint collaboration with the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) and under direct supervision from the Ministry of Health. The app's development and launch came in a relatively short period of time that coincided with the beginning of the country's evacuation plan to return thousands of Kuwaiti citizens back home at the beginning of the pandemic.

During April 2020, specifically during the beginning of the evacuation plan's first phase, Zain devel-

oped 'Shlonik' (which translates to 'how are you' in the Kuwaiti dialect) app for smartphones to support the enormous efforts exerted by the authorities to tackle the pandemic. The app was designed with world-class standards in mind, with direct and continuous supervision from the Ministry of Health's team.

'Shlonik' utilized the latest tech solutions to monitor the compliance of citizens who returned to Kuwait as part of the government's evacuation plan in home quarantine instructions. The app was also an essential tool to pair with the smart wrist bracelet that was distributed at Kuwait International Airport to anyone who underwent home quarantine.

'Shlonik' can be downloaded from Apple's App



**Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan, Director General of the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) Haya Al-Wadani, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs at the Ministry of Health Dr Buthaina Al-Mudhaf, and CAIT Deputy Director General for Information Technology Dr Ameer Al-Hussaini.**

Store, Google's Play Store, and Huawei's App Gallery, and is available in five different languages: Arabic, English, Urdu, Tagalog, and Bengali. Users can sign up via their phone and civil ID numbers. The app features an interactive COVID-19 assessment agent to help each user know what to do next.

The Qualification Committee and Judging Panel of HHI Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Informatics Award held various virtual sessions to study a total of 308 projects from Kuwait and the Arab World. The sessions have resulted in the nomination of 25 projects to the judging panel, which consisted of many specialists and experts from eight different Arab countries to select the winners. Nine tech projects won the award for their creativity and innovation.

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**KUWAIT:** Members of the Kuwait-Saudi Joint Committee attend the meeting. — KUNA photos

## Kuwait-Saudi committee to speed up joint projects

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait-Saudi Joint Committee meeting for oil projects accessed for the divided zone to be panned out and addressed the strategic plans and tasks laying ahead in order to push for an accelerated course. Kuwait Oil Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Dr Nimir Al-Sabah had mentioned this meeting comes at a crucial time as efforts to push for the continuation of the Wafra and Khafji projects to commence. The Committee made clear that implementing terms of the memorandum signed in 2019 will be a priority and bring forth the challenging that may impede this process and other natural resource projects in the region. The supply operations for these projects will be focusing on Wafra and Al-Khafji oil fields through Nuwaseeb and Al-Khafji areas as step towards progressive means for the project engineers, paving appropriate and safe working conditions for

workers and the service companies.

The logistical matters of border crossing for workers, materials and equipment needed for such an endeavor is paved in accordance with the terms agreed upon, including safety measures and conditions needed for involved companies (Aramco, Chevron) to operate accordingly, as mentioned by Sheikh Dr Nimir. Mainly, the focus will be on the advancements in communication between all involved in the contract and the use of more recent administrative innovations, in addition to regularly scheduled committee meetings easing progress for the oil sector projects. Attending the meeting held at the Head Operating office for Wafra oil fields, was Saudi Assistant Ministry of Energy, Mohammad Al-Brahim, along with participating members from both Kuwaiti and Saudi sides.

The Agreement on the Joint Oil field operations began in 2000, succeeded by the divide of the submerged zone adjacent to the divided zone of 2000. Both sides signed a memorandum putting forth terms agreed upon for contract companies to jointly work on the fields thriving the Dec 24th's agreement of 2019, which relit production in the divided zone, all agreement are referenced to the 1965 neutral zone partition agreement. — KUNA



**Members of the Kuwait-Saudi Joint Committee pose for a group picture on the sidelines of the meeting.**



Local

# Campaign reveals 392 worked during ban hours in June

Authority inspects compliance to 11:00 am - 4:00 pm outdoor work ban



KUWAIT: Several photos taken during the Public Authority of Manpower's campaign at construction sites in Mutlaa. — Photos by Faten Omar

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) launched a sudden inspection campaign on Monday at open work sites in Mutlaa to enforce a decision prohibiting laborers from working in open areas from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm from June till August. In a press statement, Hamad Al-Mekhyal, Head of the Occupational Safety Department of PAM in Jahra governorate, told Kuwait Times the decision aims to protect laborers from working in open areas under harsh climatic conditions, which could threaten their safety.

The occupational safety team held sudden visits of several work-sites to give written warnings to those working there during the ban hours under the sun and dust. "The worker will not be sanctioned - only the company and the contractor who forced him to work. First, we give the worker a written warning that he has to deliver to the company, then we come later to check if the company is abiding by the decision. If the violation continues, legal action will be taken and the violations will result in financial fines ranging

between KD 100 to 200 per worker, paid by the company," Mekhyal said.

He said in June, inspection teams toured 295 worksites and registered 392 workers working during the ban hours, adding 250 companies were warned for the first time, with 245 complying upon reinspection to the warning. He pointed out PAM received 14 complaints by the workers themselves, saying their companies force them to work during the ban hours, stressing administrative decision number 535/2015 is in compliance with international labor standards and agreements approved by Kuwait to protect worker rights.

Mekhyal said violating companies comply at a rate of 99 percent after they are warned, expressing his optimism that the number of violations this year will be less than the previous year, praising the PAM inspection team's efforts in touring worksites in harsh weather, even during dusty days. The authority called on the public to cooperate with it in reporting any laborers working during the ban period on the hotline 99523590.



## Kuwaiti diplomat urges progress on return of looted properties

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait on Monday said it appreciated Iraq's efforts to ensure that national properties stolen from Kuwait during Iraq's 1990 invasion are inevitably returned, citing continued progress on the matter. Chief among these properties are national archives belonging to Kuwait's Amiri Diwan and foreign ministry, Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs and Minister Plenipotentiary Nasser Al-Qahtani said, pointing out that his country had reclaimed a number of properties recently. "I urge concerned bodies in Iraq to resolve pressing issues and to bring closure to the matter of stolen Kuwaiti properties," he emphasized, saying the issue is of "paramount importance" to the Kuwaiti people. Underlining Baghdad's commitment to the matter,



KUWAIT: National properties stolen from Kuwait during Iraq's 1990 invasion. — KUNA photos

Iraqi foreign ministry undersecretary for legal affairs Dr Qahtan Al-Janabi said the issue would



Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs and Minister Plenipotentiary Nasser Al-Qahtani.

ultimately be resolved, looking forward to more progress in bilateral ties. — KUNA

## KFF hosts Disaster Risk Reduction workshop

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Fire force held a workshop on reviewing the mid period of 'Sendai Framework For Disaster Risk Reduction' in coordination with the UN office in Kuwait. The workshop was opened by KFF Chief Lt Gen Khalid Al-Mikrad and UN resident representative in Kuwait Dr Tariq Al-Sheikh, as 90 participants from 40 public and private institutions took part.



In my view

### The final birth



By Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

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**T**here isn't much effect in a family's life when a woman retires in all countries of the world. The woman, by her nature, is an active human being and will find something to keep her busy and maybe more. As Kuwait's youth love to travel, the mother will care for the grandchildren. In the Eastern family, a woman is partly responsible for the children of her daughters, and this role grows larger when the woman retires. It is said children carry the names of the father's family, and embrace the attitudes of the mother's family.

The case is different with a man, as when the man retires, it will be the last important stop in the wife's life. The life of the woman, that patient human being, goes through many stormy stages. The first is when a man asks to marry her, the second when she delivers her first child, and the third when the husband lurks around after retirement.

Social science professor at Sharjah University Dr Hussein Al-Othman said: When a man retires, he feels the loss of power and a feeling of depreciated value. No one needs him anymore, and the result will be difficult for the entire family. There are retired men who create value for themselves by interfering in family and children's affairs, and even the wife's kitchen is not spared. There are men who will be frustrated and isolated to a point that their family relations deteriorate, and the wife feels that she has lost her love although he lives among them.

An encouraging matter for a man's retirement was mentioned in a study by University of Amsterdam and published by Journal of Health Economics - that retirement may be the reason for prolonging a man's life, as it found men who retired from work at 54 years were the least exposed to early death at a rate of 42 percent by five years, compared to those who continued to work.

Most men in Kuwait retire at an early age, before 65. These people's storms are less dangerous, because they will listen to the advice of their wives and children. They will find something to keep them busy, and they may become friends with a group with whom they have arguments with and stay away from family disturbances.

The real storm comes with those who are over 65. The retirement of these is compulsory. There is no chance for them to find another job, and these are the ones the wife must know how to deal with. The wife must prepare herself for a "new child" in the house. The woman marries a child, gives birth to a child and finally returns to deal with a child.

The smart woman is the one who prepares herself for the "old" child as she did for the first child. She must bear with the first months of retirement, so the man can adjust, benefit from her knowledge of her husband, so she can provide him the tools he loves. If he likes food, she creates a special place so that he can make his food creations; if he likes writing, she finds him a special place to practice his intellectual creations. Each human being has wishes that were not satisfied - retirement is the opportunity to satisfy these wishes. Ladies, you alone have the responsibility of raising this last child and make your life happier. All you have to do is prepare yourself for the final birth.



## Local

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## News in brief

## Kuwaiti doctor awarded for 'Outstanding Abstract'

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti endocrinology and diabetes specialist Dr Dalal Saadoun Ali earned the Outstanding Abstract Award during the ENDO annual conference held in Atlanta, Georgia, United States. Dr Ali is currently finishing her fellowship in metabolic bone disease studies at Canada's McMaster University.



Dr Dalal Saadoun Ali

## Council approves indoor shisha ban

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Municipal Council approved a letter from the Environment Public Authority that calls for banning shisha indoors, except for designated places. The decision must be approved by Kuwait Municipality to become effective.

## Justice ministry bonuses before Eid

**KUWAIT:** Justice Minister and State Minister for Integrity Enhancement Jamal Al-Jalawi said the ministry completed payments of excellent work bonuses for deserving employees. The administrative and financial sector prepared lists of 6,336 employees and a decision was made to process the payments, he said. The minister gave instructions to quickly transfer the money to employees' accounts before the Eid Al-Adha break.

## Kuwait condemns Copenhagen shooting

**KUWAIT:** The State of Kuwait is utterly appalled and strongly condemned the shooting incident, which occurred in the Danish capital Copenhagen resulting in several casualties. According to a statement by the Foreign Ministry, Kuwait remained steadfast in its stance against all acts of violence, expressing solidarity with the people and government of Denmark. The statement also wished for a swift recovery for those wounded in the incident.

## Kuwait Consulate working round the clock to serve pilgrims

**RIYADH:** Kuwait's Consul General to Jeddah Wael Al-Enezi affirmed Monday that the consulate and all its members are working round the clock to better serve Kuwaiti pilgrims, as per directives of Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah and his deputy Majdi Al-Dhafeeri. Consul Al-Enezi, while speaking to the press, hailed the work of the Kuwaiti Hajj Mission, saying that the consulate is working in cooperation with them to facilitate and ensure a smooth sailing process for pilgrims to perform Hajj rituals with ease and comfort. He explained that the consulate split into teams, one in the airport to receive the pilgrims, another team working with the mission, as well as an emergency team working 24/7 and can be reached at 00966535571133.

Enezi hailed the magnanimous efforts of Saudi Arabia across all fields, including health, logistics, security, and services. He pointed out the "Makkah Road" initiative, which is concerned with facilitating entry into Saudi Arabia and readying terminals to receive pilgrims exclusively, as well as the "No Luggage Hajj" initiative, which works on transporting pilgrims' luggage from airport to place of residence. The kingdom prepared 18 hospitals with a capacity of 3,700 beds and supported by 171 health centers. It also provided more than 16,000 buses transporting 790,000 pilgrims, in addition to Mashaer Train transporting 210,000 pilgrims, and prepared 35 trains transporting 417 passengers between Makkah and Jeddah, making 30 trips per day. Presidency of the two holy mosques is providing more than 8,000 regular and electric wagons for pilgrims as well as 11 robots to sanitize and disinfect the mosques. Enezi commended Saudi Arabia for its ongoing progress as it continuously works on developmental projects and infrastructure improvements. —KUNA

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Jet skis lined up on a beach in Kuwait. —Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Eid clothes' shopping a struggle in Kuwait with increasing prices

## Prices higher than pre-pandemic rates despite offers

By Majd Othman

**KUWAIT:** With Eid Al-Adha approaching and the travel season in its prime, the Kuwaiti market has witnessed a significant increase in the prices of clothing and other products amid great demand from buyers. Some sellers said the price hikes are due to a rise in shipping costs and shop rentals, as well as wages.

Margaret Gitonga told Kuwait Times prices are not like before the pandemic. "Prices are higher, in addition to a lack of products and clothes in the market, while offers and sales are fewer than before. I can handle the current rise in prices despite the pressure on me. Clothes sellers, especially of womenswear, know we will keep buying, and this encourages them to keep the high prices," she said. Gitonga believes the reason for the price hikes is a result of the closure of many businesses around the world during the pandemic, which affected the global economic situation and pushed clothes retailers to hike their prices.

Buyers told Kuwait Times prices of clothes in mid-range stores have witnessed a steep hike, and the prices do not match the quality of the fabric of clothes in the market, as the price of a shirt that was KD 15 recently went up to KD 25. A pair of women's pants that cost KD 5 has increased to KD 12. Ahmad Jamal said that despite clothing stores offering discounts, prices are still very high compared to the quality of the items. "One mid-range store offered discounts of 70 percent, but their prices after the discount still need more discount!" he exclaimed.

## Up by 40 percent

"I had to up my budget for family expenses on clothing by about 30 to 40 percent to cover their needs. The high prices of clothes do not go with fixed incomes," he added. Ahmad said he is not sure of the actual reasons for the recent rise in prices, but believes it is related to a rise in the cost of raw materials. "Nowadays they link everything to the war in Ukraine to justify increasing prices."

Rosse de Guia told Kuwait Times clothing prices have increased around by 10 percent, stressing prices in clothing stores remain high despite the discounts. Rosse said stores are trying to recover from the closures that hit them during the pandemic by increasing prices. "Till now, the rise in prices is acceptable, but I hope they will not get higher in the near future," she said.

## Kuwaiti officers complete military course in Qatar

**KUWAIT:** A Qatar-based military academy has churned out a batch of officers, 10 of whom are Kuwaitis, who have just completed a joint course on leadership and national defense, it said on Monday. The training course given by the Joaan Bin Jassim Joint Command and Staff College aimed to allow participants the chance to hone their leadership skills. Kuwait's military attache to Qatar Brigadier General Nasser Al-Hajaili said. Amid a graduation ceremony attended by Qatar's Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa Al-Thani, he said the officers experimented with a wide array of military and defense skills as part of a comprehensive training program. —KUNA



Lifans George believes prices of clothes are not high compared to other products. "Clothing prices have increased by around 5 percent compared to other products like food, which has increased between 20 and 25 percent recently. But if we compare to the period before the pandemic, prices are higher due to inflation and the financial crash due to the pandemic and recently, the war in Ukraine," she said. Due to these reasons, Lifans has cut her clothing budget by around 10 percent, expecting a further rise in clothing prices. But Lifans stressed that as long as purchasing power exists and people continue to buy, prices of clothes will keep going up.

## US sanctions

Jason Mathew agreed prices will go up shortly in the clothing sector, considering US sanctions on Russia and the war in Ukraine as the main reasons for price hikes of all kinds of products worldwide. "For us middle-class people, these price hikes prevent us from saving money. If this continues, it will be very difficult for us to survive financially," he said.

"Prices of clothes sold in popular markets have risen by more than 70 percent," Um Aisha told Kuwait Times, arguing the reasons for raising prices are not justifiable. She now needs to spend

more time and effort to find suitable clothes at reasonable prices for her daughters, adding she had doubled her budget for clothing.

Shima Al-Enezi pointed out that popular markets are no longer affordable for everyone after the huge increase in prices of clothes that are not of high quality. She stressed that the rise in prices is not justified, claiming the stores have stocks imported from before the pandemic bought at previous prices. She added she is not denying inflation and a global rise in prices due to the pandemic, but said clothing retailers are trying to recoup their losses by taking advantage of the situation and increasing prices. Enezi added clothing retailers have increased their profit margins dramatically, with discounted items still pricier than original prices, pointing out that prices have increased by more than 70 percent, especially for menswear.

Deyaa Saad said prices of clothes continue to rise every two months, which is unacceptable, especially since buyers know about materials and fabrics and these prices do not match their quality. Regarding the reasons for the current price hike, Saad agrees it is partly related to the global financial situation. However, clothing stores are taking advantage of the current situation, with discounts only offered on stock and surplus items, she said.



DOHA: Kuwait's military attache to Qatar Brigadier General Nasser Al-Hajaili with the graduated officers. —KUNA





Rising rivers force thousands to flee Sydney floods

Uzbekistan says 18 dead in unrest in autonomous region

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COPENHAGEN, Denmark: Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen lay down flowers at a makeshift memorial as she visit the site of a shooting at Fields mall, the day after the deadly shootings, in Copenhagen, Denmark, on July 4, 2022. — AFP

## Copenhagen shooting suspect in psychiatric ward

### Gunman tried to reach psychological help line shortly before the attack

**COPENHAGEN, Denmark:** The chief suspect in a Copenhagen mall shooting was Monday remanded into a psychiatric care facility, one day after three people, including two teenagers, were shot dead. "The court remands the 22-year-old in a closed psychiatric ward," Copenhagen police said in a statement, following a two-hour hearing involving the suspect.

The suspected perpetrator of the attack, which took place late on Sunday afternoon, would be kept in custody for at least 24 days, which can then be extended, according to police. The young man was brought before a judge at midday at the Copenhagen district court on Monday.

Wearing a blue T-shirt, he listened as the indictment for murder was read out, before the hearing continued behind closed doors. According to public broadcaster DR, citing several unnamed sources, the suspected gunman had tried to reach a psychological help line shortly before the attack, but authorities would not confirm this.

Copenhagen police chief Soren Thomassen had already told a morning press conference that the "suspect is also known among psychiatric services", but declined to comment further. The attack occurred on

the heels of the city playing host to the start of the Tour de France cycling competition and seeing the return of the Roskilde music festival after being cancelled due to COVID-19 curbs. "I think we have rarely experienced such a violent contrast as yesterday," Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said as she arrived to pay tribute to the victims at the scene.

#### 'Violent contrast'

"But today I think we must pay tribute to the victims, show our sympathy, our help and support, and support all those who have been affected," she told reporters. The three killed have been identified as two Danish teens, a girl and boy both aged 17, and a 47-year-old Russian living in Denmark.

Another four were injured in the shooting: Two Danish women, aged 19 and 40, and two Swedes, a 50-year-old man and a 16-year-old girl. Given the varied ages and genders among the victims, Thomassen said they appeared to have been randomly targeted and there was nothing to indicate it was an act of terror.

"Our assessment is that the victims were random, that it isn't motivated by gender or something else," Thomassen said. The police chief could not yet com-

ment on a motive, but said there seemed to have been preparation ahead of the attack and that he was not aided by anyone else. "As things stand, it seems he was acting alone," he said of the 22-year-old suspect.

#### No licence

About 20 more were lightly injured in the panicked evacuation after the shooting. Thomassen added that they believed videos of the suspect, which have circulated since late Sunday on social media, to be authentic.

In some of the images, the young man can be seen posing with weapons, mimicking suicide gestures and talking about psychiatric medication "that does not work". Three videos believed to have been posted to YouTube by the suspect were all titled "I don't care".

YouTube and Instagram accounts believed to belong to him were closed overnight, AFP noted. The shooting occurred Sunday afternoon at the busy Field's shopping mall, located between the city centre and Copenhagen airport. According to police, the shooter was armed with a rifle, a pistol and a knife, and while the guns were not believed to be illegal, the suspect did not have a licence for them.

#### 'Are you OK?'

Witnesses quoted by Danish media described how the suspect tried to trick people by saying his weapon was fake to get them to approach. "He was sufficiently psychopathic to go and hunt people, but he wasn't running," one witness told public broadcaster DR.

Other eyewitnesses told Danish media they had seen more than 100 people rush towards the mall's exit as the first shots were fired. The mall was busy because of a planned concert with British singer Harry Styles at the nearby Royal Arena that had sold 13,500 tickets but was cancelled at the last minute.

"We got dressed for the concert, we were on our way," Maria Enevoldsen, who had returned to the mall Monday to pick up her car, told AFP. "Our friend (in the mall) called, asking 'are you OK?' and then we heard gunshots over the phone," she said.

The shooting came just over a week after a gunman opened fire near a gay bar in Oslo in neighbouring Norway, killing two people and wounding 21 others, though on Monday Norwegian police said they saw no link between the events. In February 2015, two people were killed and five injured in Copenhagen in a series of Islamist-motivated shootings. — AFP



KRAMATORSK, Ukraine: Pedestrians walk past the tail section of a rocket which is embedded in the ground, in Kramatorsk on July 4, 2022, the day after a Russian rocket attack. — AFP

## Putin orders Russians to fight on

**SLOVIANSK, Ukraine:** President Vladimir Putin on Monday ordered Russian troops to press their offensive deeper into the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine after Moscow's forces seized the strategic city of Lysychansk. With the war now well into its fifth month after Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, governments and organisations gathered for a conference in Switzerland to launch a plan to rebuild the country even as the conflict shows no sign of abating. The loss of Lysychansk over the weekend prompted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to step up calls for an increased supply of weapons from the West so Kyiv can keep up the resistance and regain lost territories.

After giving up on its initial war aim of capturing Kyiv following tough Ukrainian resistance, Russia has focused its efforts on securing control of the Donetsk and Lugansk areas which make up the Donbas region. Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu told President Vladimir Putin at a meeting that Moscow's forces were now in full control of the Lugansk region.

In a sign there would be no let-up in the fighting and that Russia now had its eyes on the entire Donetsk region, Putin told Shoigu that troops stationed there must continue their operations. "Military units, including the East group and the West group, must carry out their tasks according to previously approved plans," Putin said. "I hope that everything will continue in their direction as has happened in Lugansk so far." The Ukrainian army said on Sunday it was retreating from Lysychansk to preserve the lives of its troops after finding itself outnumbered and outgunned by Russian forces there.

#### 'Most modern weapons'

But in a symbolic boost for Ukraine, the Ukrainian

flag was raised on Snake Island, an rocky outcrop in the Black Sea, after Russia withdrew from the strategically important Ukrainian territory last week. Moscow's capture of Lysychansk one week after the Ukrainian army also retreated from the neighbouring city of Severodonetsk-frees up Russian forces to advance on Kramatorsk and Sloviansk in Donetsk.

Lugansk region governor Sergiy Gayday said on Telegram that there was still fighting in the town of Bilogorivka outside Lysychansk. "We keep defending a small part of the Lugansk region so that our army could build protective redoubts," he added.

In an address late Sunday, Zelensky vowed Kyiv would fight on and ensure the military had "the most modern weapons". "Ukraine will reach the level when the fire superiority of the occupiers will be levelled."

In Sloviansk, about 75 kilometres (45 miles) west of Lysychansk, there were few people on the streets on Monday, the day after Russian strikes that left at least six dead, among them a nine-year-old girl, and 19 injured.

In the large downtown market largely ravaged by a fire caused by a Russian strike, a few vendors offered basic goods while others cleared charred debris. Vendors and residents who spoke to AFP, some still in shock, expressed concern for the days and weeks to come, as sounds of shelling were heard again.

The city of Siversk, 30 kilometres west of Lysychansk, also saw overnight shelling, residents and an official told AFP. But Zelensky's address Sunday evening was defiant, pointing to Ukrainian troops would "win back" territory in the Donbas just as they had in other regions earlier in the war. On Monday, leaders from dozens of countries and international organisations were meeting in the Swiss city of Lugano, where they aim to hash out a roadmap for Ukraine's reconstruction-expected to cost hundreds of billions of dollars. Lugano is not a pledging conference but will instead attempt to lay out the principles and priorities for a rebuilding process aimed to begin even as the war rages.—AFP

## Macron reshuffles French cabinet for tricky second term

**PARIS:** French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday reshuffled his government looking to reset a second term off to a rocky start after his failure to win a parliamentary majority. While he finally ceded to public pressure by sacking Damien Abad, the solidarity and social cohesion minister accused of rape, there was little sign of a major renewal that could turn Macron's fortunes around. Other posts in the 41-strong cabinet — exactly divided between men and women — mostly went to politicians from the different factions in Macron's camp. The foreign, finance and defence ministers all remained in place.

Abad later told reporters he had been targeted by a "sinister movement" of "despicable slanders organised around a calendar" designed to drive him out of government after just 45 days. Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, who has been accused by former patients of rape during gynaecological examinations, is staying on as state secretary for development, Francophony and international partnerships.

Monday's reshuffle brought in some new faces, including Abad's replacement, French Red Cross chief Jean-Christophe Combe, and emergency doctor Francois Braun as health minister. OECD chief economist Laurence Boone was named Europe minister, replacing Macron loyalist Clement Beaune who became notorious for verbal jousting with Brexit supporters. Beaune was moved to the transport ministry.

#### Short of majority

Christophe Bechu, mayor of the Loire city of Angers and a close ally of former prime minister Edouard Philippe, was named environment minister. Although Macron has long trailed environmental protection as a priority, Bechu has "no experience of what's at stake in the green transition and has almost never taken a stance on national or international questions of climate or the environment," Greenpeace France said.

The reshuffle was "a message to the troops: loyalty will be rewarded. Looking ahead to the coming months, when passing new laws is likely to come down to just a few votes," tweeted Frederic Sais, a political commentator for broadcaster France Culture. Far-right leader Marine Le Pen charged that "those who failed are all disappointed" to the government. Communist boss Fabien Roussel told broadcaster LCI it "feels like they're just starting over again with the same people".

A first test for the new government will come on July 6, when Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne will lay out her

policies before parliament. The government is still mum on whether it will hold a traditional high-stakes confidence vote afterwards.

Macron beat Le Pen a second time in April's presidential run-off to win a new five-year term. But a lacklustre campaign for last month's parliamentary vote saw his supporters win just 250 seats, 39 short of the absolute majority needed to push through new laws.

#### 'Ideological vagueness'

Macron was largely absent from the domestic political stage between the presidential election and the vote for the National Assembly — absorbing himself instead on the international scene with Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



PARIS: Former Government Spokesperson Olivia Gregoire (L) gives a speech during a handover ceremony with her successor Olivier Veran (R) in Paris on July 4, 2022. — AFP

But where the image of the head of state fighting France's corner abroad might once have assured presidents backing in the parliamentary poll, this time around it reinforced Macron's image as distant and arrogant.

His far-right and hard-left opponents enjoyed free rein to attack what few concrete policies the majority offered, such as an unpopular plan to push back the legal retirement age to 65. And after a first term buffeted by crises including "yellow-vest" protests against the government and the COVID-19 pandemic, Macron could point to few successes in the reform programme on which he was elected in 2017.

The once all-powerful president will now need to find allies in a parliament with large blocs from the far right and left-wing alliance NUPES — both broadly hostile to his leadership. Opposition forces have ruled out any formal coalition, leaving the government to glean support where it can as bills come up for the vote.

"Whereas yesterday he opposed 'imperfect compromises', from now on the president will have to resign himself to them," newspaper Le Monde commented this weekend, bemoaning "presidential hesitations" and "ideological vagueness" at the Elysee. — AFP



## International

# 'Slim' chance of finding survivors after Italy glacier collapse

## Ice and rock thundered down the slope at 300 kilometres an hour

**CANAZEI, Italy:** Rescuers warned on Monday that hopes of finding survivors were diminishing after an avalanche set off by the collapse of an Italian glacier during a heatwave killed at least seven people. Authorities said they did not know how many climbers were caught when the glacier gave way on Sunday on Marmolada, the highest mountain in the Italian Dolomites.

Ice and rock thundered down the slope at 300 kilometres an hour (185 miles per hour), according to the head of Trento province, Maurizio Fugatti. On Monday, rescuers armed with thermal drones searched for body heat from potential survivors trapped in ice, although hope was rapidly dwindling.

access path at a time when there were several roped parties, "some of whom were swept away". A spokesman for Trento province said people were still being reported missing.

Trento's chief prosecutor Sandro Raimondi was quoted by Corriere della Sera newspaper as saying he feared the number of dead "could double if not triple", based on the number of cars in the car park.

But Canova urged caution, saying the total number of climbers involved was "not yet known". Eight people were recovered with injuries.

### 'Heard a roar'

"I heard a roar, I turned to my left and saw a mass of ice coming down from the mountain," ski instructor Luca Medici, 54, told AFP. Bodies dug out of the ice and rock were taken to the village of Canazei, where Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi visited rescue workers on Monday.

Helicopters and sniffer dogs were called off as night fell on Sunday and amid fears the glacier may still be unstable. "It is difficult for the rescuers in (such) a dangerous situation," Canazei mayor Giovanni Bernard told AFP.

Images of the avalanche filmed from a refuge close by show snow and rock hurtling down the mountain slopes. "It's a miracle we're alive," Stefano Dal Moro, an engineer who was hiking with his Israeli partner, told Corriere della Sera. "It's useless to run. You can only pray that it doesn't come your way. We crouched down and hugged each other tightly as the ice passed".

### Heat 'beyond normal'

Massimo Frezzotti, a science professor at Roma Tre University, told AFP the collapse was caused by unusually warm weather linked to global warming. Last winter was very dry, with precipitation down 40 to 50 percent. "The current state of the glacier is something we'd expect to see in mid-

In the first of the new constitution's 388 articles, Chile is described as "a social and democratic State of law," as well as "plurinational, intercultural and ecological." "It recognizes the dignity, freedom, substantial equality of human beings and their indissoluble relationship with nature as intrinsic and inalienable values."

"I think we have met the social demands, with the desires of the citizens, which is what people hoped for and wanted of this process," Barbara Sepulveda, a draft assembly member from the communist party, told AFP.

"It is a proposal that represents a historic advance in terms of democracy and the guarantee of social rights for our country, and on top of that, it is filled with feminism from head to tail," added Alondra Carrillo, from the leftist Broad Front.

Other right-wing constituent members were less enthusiastic. For Cristian Monckeberg, this is a "missed" opportunity to "build something that unites rather than divides" the country. But with just 37 out of 154 seats in the constituent assembly, the political right was in a minority.

The process "was not as simple and friendly as many of us would have wanted and dreamed of," writer and journalist Patricio Fernandez, one of the 104 independent members of the assembly, told AFP. — AFP

State Department said, referring to the Zionist occupation forces. "The USSC found no reason to believe that this was intentional but rather the result of tragic circumstances during an IDF-led military operation against factions of Palestinian Islamic Jihad," it said. "We will remain engaged with (the Zionist entity) and the PA on next steps and urge accountability. We again offer our deepest condolences to the Abu Akleh family," said the rare July 4 statement.

Abu Akleh's family said in a statement it was "incredulous" that the examination could not determine whose gun fired the bullet that killed her. "We will continue to advocate for justice for Shireen, and to hold the (Zionist) military and government accountable, no matter the attempts to obfuscate the reality of what happened on May 11," it said. Senior Palestinian Authority official Hussein Al Sheikh condemned efforts to "conceal the truth" over Abu Akleh's death, writing on Twitter that there should not be "shy references in pointing the finger of accusation to (the Zionist entity)". The Palestinian Authority's attorney general, Akram Al-Khatib, told AFP on Saturday that the bullet was handed over to US forensic experts - and not the Zionist entity - on the condition that there would be no modifications and that it would be returned. — AFP

flocked to souvenir and barbershops in Makkah, while others shared meals under palm trees on streets close to the Grand Mosque. Many new arrivals had already begun performing the first ritual, which requires walking seven times around the Kaaba, the large black cubic structure at the center of the Grand Mosque.

Made from granite and draped in a cloth featuring verses from the Holy Quran, the Kaaba stands nearly 15 m tall. It is the structure all Muslims turn towards to pray, no matter where they are in the world. "When I first saw the Kaaba I felt something and started crying," Egyptian pilgrim Mohammed Lotfi told AFP. At least 650,000 overseas pilgrims have arrived so far in Saudi Arabia, the authorities said on Sunday.

Pilgrims this year - only those younger than 65 are allowed - will participate in the hajj under strict sanitary conditions. Masks are no longer compulsory in most enclosed spaces in Saudi Arabia but they will be mandatory at the Grand Mosque, the holiest site in Islam. Pilgrims from abroad will have to submit a negative PCR test result. — AFP



CANAZEI, Italy: This photograph taken on July 3, 2022 from Canazei, shows a UNESCO World Heritage sign of The Dolomites, near the Marmolada mountain and glacier, where the collapse of an ice serac killed six. — AFP

August, not early July," he said.

Glacier specialist Renato Colucci told AGI the phenomenon was "bound to repeat itself" because "for weeks the temperatures at altitude in the Alps have been well above normal values". The recent warm temperatures had generated a large quantity of water from the melting glacier. It had accumulated at the bottom of the block of ice and caused it to collapse, he added.

Pope Francis tweeted his prayers for the victims, saying tragedies provoked by climate change, such as this, "must push us to seek urgently new ways to

respect people and nature". The Trento public prosecutor's office has opened an investigation to determine the causes of the tragedy.

United Nations scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said in March that melting ice and snow was one of 10 major threats caused by global warming, disrupting ecosystems and infrastructure. Jonathan Bamber, director of the Glaciology Centre at Bristol University, said glacier decline was "making the high mountains of Europe an increasing dangerous and unpredictable environment to be in". — AFP



### Glacier weakened by decades of global warming

Chances of finding survivors "are slim to nothing", the region's Alpine Rescue Service head Giorgio Gajer told AGI news agency. The six bodies recovered so far were found "torn apart", rescuer Gino Comelli said.

The disaster struck one day after a record-high temperature of 10 degrees Celsius (50 degrees Fahrenheit) was recorded at the summit of the glacier, the largest in the Italian Alps. The glacier had been weakened by decades of global warming, experts said.

Alpine Rescue spokeswoman Michela Canova told AFP an "avalanche of snow, ice and rock" hit an

## Chile president to receive draft constitution

**SANTIAGO, Chile:** After being worked on for a year, Chile's new draft constitution will be officially submitted to President Gabriel Boric on Monday before eventually being put to a referendum in the deeply polarized country.

The new text, which will replace the constitution written during the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1990), aims to establish new social rights. It was drawn up by a constituent assembly of 154 citizens, most of whom were independent of political affiliation, that will be dissolved a year to the day after it began work on July 4, 2021.

The document will then be put to a referendum on September 4, with voting obligatory for 15 million Chileans, who will decide whether to accept or reject the new constitution. Rewriting the dictatorship-era constitution was a major demand of protesters who flooded onto the streets in 2019 and kept up weekly demonstrations for months before the coronavirus pandemic curtailed them.

## US: Akleh 'likely' shot by Zionists...

Continued from Page 1

Abu Akleh, who held US citizenship and was one of the best-known Palestinian journalists, was fatally shot as she covered a Zionist army operation in Jenin in the occupied West Bank despite wearing a vest that said "Press".

Her death provoked a furor, with the Palestinian Authority alleging she was shot intentionally in what amounted to a war crime - charges angrily denied by the Zionist entity, a close US ally which President Joe Biden is visiting in two weeks. The US Security Coordinator (USSC), which directs security assistance to the Palestinian Authority in coordination with Zionist entity, said that both sides granted full access to their own probes over the past several weeks.

"By summarizing both investigations, the USSC concluded that gunfire from IDF positions was likely responsible for the death of Shireen Abu Akleh," the

## Pilgrims arrive for biggest hajj...

Continued from Page 1

10,000 to stop the hajj from turning into a global super-spreader. That figure rose to 60,000 fully vaccinated Saudi citizens and residents in 2021. At least 650,000 pilgrims had arrived from overseas for the hajj as of Sunday, authorities said.

Banners welcoming the faithful, including the first international visitors since 2019, adorn squares and alleys, while armed security forces patrolled the ancient city, birthplace of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). "This is pure joy," Sudanese pilgrim Abdel Qader Kheder told AFP in Makkah. "I almost can't believe I am here. I am enjoying every moment."

On Monday afternoon, pilgrims carrying umbrellas to shield themselves from the scorching sun

## Uzbekistan says 18 dead in unrest in autonomous region

**TASHKENT, Uzbekistan:** Authorities in Uzbekistan said on Monday 18 people died in clashes in the autonomous Karakalpakstan region when mass protests erupted last week over planned constitutional changes affecting the territory's status. The unrest, pitting protesters against security forces, represented the most significant challenge yet to the rule of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev since he rose to power from the post of prime minister in 2016, when long-serving mentor Islam Karimov died.

The size of the protest on Friday was unprecedented for the Karakalpakstan region and possibly Uzbekistan. The security crackdown that ensued has drawn parallels with protests in the eastern city of Andijan in 2005, where 170 people were killed according to an official toll considered conservative at the time.

Uzbek lawmaker Bobur Bekmurodov said that analogy was "unfair" in a tweet on Monday, praising Mirziyoyev's willingness to engage in dialogue over the crisis. In the aftermath of the violence, Mirziyoyev scrapped the constitutional amendments that would

have removed the republic's constitutional right to self-determination.

Eyewitnesses told AFP of a tense calm in the region, where a state of emergency is in effect. The diplomatic reaction to events in the remote region has been muted so far. On Monday, the European Union called for an independent investigation into "the violent events in Karakalpakstan".

"We deeply regret the casualties and loss of human life and continue to follow developments closely," it said in a statement. Russia, Uzbekistan's traditional ally and top trade partner ahead of China as of last year, indicated it had no plans to intervene.

Moscow, which is pressing ahead with a military offensive in Ukraine, said the events in Uzbekistan were the country's "internal affair". "We have no doubt that with the active work of the leadership of the republic, all existing problems will be resolved," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday.

Tensions in impoverished Karakalpakstan followed the publication of draft amendments to the constitution that removed the region's right to secede via referendum — a legacy of a deal reached between Karakalpak authorities and the Uzbek government after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Abror Mamatov, an official with the state prosecutor's office, said during an online briefing on Monday that 18 people had died "as a result of serious injuries received during massive disorders" in Karakalpakstan's administrative centre, Nukus. — AFP

## Protests after US police kill...

Continued from Page 1

Some protesters set dumpsters alight and broke windows of the snowplows and other heavy equipment authorities had moved near the police department as a barrier in anticipation of unrest. Police in riot gear deployed and fired tear gas at the crowd to push it back from the justice center.

After initially providing few details of the shooting, Akron authorities released two videos Sunday: a compilation of body-camera footage, bodycam still frames and voiceover, and another of the complete body-cam footage of the entire chase and shooting. The voiceover explained that Walker did not stop and drove off. Police engaged in a car chase and said a shot had been fired from Walker's vehicle.

## Sandstorms hit Iraq, Iran...

Continued from Page 1

centers, state television said. It reported an "increase in the concentration of atmospheric pollutants and dust" in the air. Tehran's Metrological Organization warned that waves of dust clouds are expected to sweep across parts of the city for the next five days.

Most Iraqis never bothered with face masks when the COVID pandemic was in full swing, but they do now. "This is probably the first year that Iraq has had so many sandstorms," said Mitti in a busy square in the center of the sprawling capital, which was baking in 40 degrees Celsius heat. "It is very difficult to see," he said. "It's suffocating. It's hot. You have to drink juice and liquids to

After being chased for several minutes, Walker got out of his car while it was still moving and fled on foot. Officers tried to subdue him with their tasers, but he kept running. Several officers finally chased Walker to a parking lot. The bodycam footage is too blurry to see clearly what happens, but an initial police statement released after the shooting says Walker behaved in a way that caused officers to believe he posed a "deadly threat". All of the officers at the scene opened fire on Walker, shooting multiple times in rapid succession. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

The incident was the latest death of an African-American citizen at the hands of police, events that have sparked mass protests over racism and police brutality. "Many will wish to air their grievances in public, and I fully support our residents' right to peacefully assemble," Akron mayor Dan Horrigan told a press conference, saying he was "heartbroken" over the events. "But I hope the community can agree that violence and destruction are not the answer." He also said an independent investigation was being conducted. — AFP

protect yourself." A married man, he said he relies on the job which pays him about \$600 a month. "I have a family," he said. "I have responsibilities."

On the deserted terrace of a cafe in the capital, the black faux-leather chairs were once more covered with a film of dust. A waiter, with a brown apron tied around his waist, wiped them with a wet cloth, then hosed down the floor with water. In May, the sandstorms sent at least 10,000 people to hospitals with respiratory problems, claiming at least one life.

Many patients were elderly or suffering from asthma, other respiratory ailments or heart disease, the most at-risk groups. After Sunday's dust storm, more than 500 people were rushed to hospitals across the country for respiratory problems, health ministry spokesman Seif al-Badr said Monday. At his Baghdad hospital, doctor Seif Ali Abdel-Hamza saw four patients on Sunday, as this time the sandstorm in the capital lasted just hours, not days. — AFP



## International

# Rising rivers force thousands to flee 'dangerous' Sydney floods

## Army sent 100 troops to help operations in the storm-battered state

**SYDNEY:** Rapidly rising rivers swamped swathes of rain-lashed Sydney on Monday, forcing thousands to flee "dangerous" floods as the city's largest dam spilled torrents of water. On the third day of torrential east coast rains, emergency workers said they had rescued more than 140 people since the stormy weather began.

But evacuated residents in one area of western Sydney were now being allowed to return home, officials said, as weather conditions in New South Wales were forecast to ease over the next 24 hours. Many of those rescued had been trapped in their cars trying to cross flood-swept roads or were unable to leave homes surrounded by rising waters.

Australia has been at the sharp end of climate change, with droughts, deadly bushfires, bleaching events on the Great Barrier Reef and floods becoming more common and intense as global weather patterns change.

Higher temperatures mean the atmosphere holds more moisture, unleashing more rain. About 32,000 people were under orders to evacuate or be ready to flee across New South Wales, the state's emergency services said. The army sent 100 troops to help operations in the storm-battered state.

"The ground is saturated, the rivers are fast flowing, the dams are overflowing," said State Emergency Services commissioner Carlene York. "It is particularly dangerous out there." Mud-brown river waters transformed a large stretch of land into

a lake in the southwestern Sydney suburb of Camden. Roads disappeared into the waters and mobile homes stood in knee-high water, at least one toppled on its side, television images showed. Large volumes of water gushed from the Warragamba Dam, which has been spilling excess water since Sunday. The huge concrete dam lies on the western outskirts of Sydney and provides most of the city's drinking water.

### 'Becoming more common'

The wild weather whipped up drama off the Sydney coast, as the 150-metre Portland Bay cargo ship with 21 crew lost power in heavy seas. The Hong Kong-registered bulk carrier initially dropped two anchors to hold its position off the coastal cliffs, officials said. Plans for a helicopter rescue were dropped because of the conditions.

But later in the day, three tugboats managed to start towing the vessel and its crew to deeper water to undertake repairs, the state port authority said. Australia's east coast has suffered repeated flooding in the past 18 months.

More than 20 people died only in March this year as floodwaters lapped at rooftops and torrents swept cars off roads. The current weather system over Sydney is being fed by warm, wet air from near the equator, said Kimberley Reid, an atmospheric scientist at Monash University.

Rainfall in eastern Australia is highly variable,



**SYDNEY:** Flooded buildings are pictured next to the old Windsor Bridge along the overflowing Hawkesbury River in the northwestern Sydney suburb of Windsor on July 4, 2022. —AFP

making it hard to pin this event to climate change, she said. "However, our research of the March 2021 Sydney floods found that similar events over Sydney were likely to occur 80 percent more often by the end of the 21st century."

Australia must prepare for more regular flooding

events, New South Wales Premier Dominic Perrottet told a news conference. "There is no doubt these events are becoming more common," he said. "Governments need to adjust and make sure that we respond to the changing environment we find ourselves in." —AFP



More than  
140 people  
rescued

## PNG votes in heavily guarded elections

**PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea:** Voters headed to the polls Monday for heavily guarded elections in Papua New Guinea, where millions live in poverty despite vast mineral and energy riches. About 10,000 police, army and corrections services personnel have been mobilised for the vote in the Pacific island nation, which has a history of corruption and election-related killings.

Australia deployed 130 troops with transport aircraft to help secure the lengthy voting process across the rugged, densely forested country of nine million. "We want transparency, we want accountability and above all we want a safe, fair and secured polling period," Prime Minister James Marape said after casting his ballot on the first day of voting.

Marape later had to deny any connection to illegal financing after confirming his eldest son had been detained for being "in the vicinity" when police found a suitcase containing a large sum of cash. "I just want to inform the country: Nothing to do with me," he told reporters.

"My son had no input in the transportation of the money," the prime minister said, adding that the funds — 1.56 million PNG kina (\$440,000) in cash, according to police—belonged to a local construction firm.

### 'Rampant corruption'

Election rivalries can quickly spill over into bloodshed in Papua New Guinea, especially in the remote and mountainous highlands provinces. During the last vote in 2017, Australian National University monitors documented more than 200 election-related killings and widespread "serious irregularities".

This year, 15 election-related deaths have already been recorded, according to Papua New Guinea police. Marape conceded in an end-of-campaign message that there was still "rampant corruption in



**PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea:** File photo shows Papuan villager clad in traditional costume performing before the arrival of China's President Xi Jinping at the airport in Port Moresby. Women are fighting to get at least one seat in Papua New Guinea's male dominated parliament. —AFP

all strata of public service".

The prime minister, who has promised to make Papua New Guinea the "richest black Christian nation", said there had been a lack of development despite the country's "God-given" resources. "I admit there is much more to be done for our country," said Marape, who leads the Pangu party.

He faces a stiff challenge from his predecessor Peter O'Neill, who resigned as leader three years ago under pressure over endemic corruption and a perceived failure to spread mining wealth to the people.

O'Neill, of the People's National Congress party, has vowed to attract private investment and revive the resources industry. The country boasts large deposits of gas, oil, gold and copper, and is an exporter of forestry and agricultural products.

two pieces during a typhoon. "As of 3:30 pm on July 4, rescue forces found and recovered 12 bodies, suspected to be of victims who drowned, in an area around 50 nautical miles southwest of the site where the vessel sank," said the Guangdong Maritime Search and Rescue Centre.

"The relevant departments are stepping up identity confirmation work." A total of 30 crew members abandoned the vessel, Fujing 001, used for offshore wind power construction, after its anchor chain broke in the typhoon, according to Chinese state media outlet CGTN.

The floating crane of the offshore wind farm project was found to be in danger by a monitoring system on Saturday, and it later sank, state broadcaster CCTV

place Saturday at the Vatican, he repeated his oft-stated position that he might resign someday if failing health made it impossible for him to run the Church.

Asked when that might be, the 85-year old said: "We don't know. God will say." Francis said he had suffered a "small fracture" in his knee, which was treated with laser and magnet therapy. The knee pain forced him to indefinitely postpone a July trip to Africa. He denied rumours that he had been diagnosed with stomach cancer during his colon operation in July 2021, saying it was merely "court gossip". Francis will travel to Canada this month, after which he said he would like to travel to Moscow and Kyiv if possible. The pontiff has repeatedly offered to help mediate in the war, saying he was hopeful for an invitation to visit Russian President Vladimir Putin following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February. —AFP

### 'Very violent'

"There are worrying signs around our nation that the election has been very poorly prepared for and interference seems rife," O'Neill charged. "I hope the good officers of our security forces at all levels can ensure we have free, fair and safe elections."

Voting is scheduled to take up to 18 days and an outcome is not expected to be clear until August. Analysts say the new leader will have to cobble together a coalition government in the male-dominated 118-seat parliament, which has had no women members since the last election in 2017. "Elections are always messy and chaotic and they can get very violent," said Jessica Collins, Pacific researcher at the independent Sydney-based Lowy Institute think tank. —AFP

said. Three people were rescued on Saturday and one more in the early hours of Monday, according to Chinese state media, leaving 26 still unaccounted for.

Rescuers have expanded the scope of their search around the point of wreckage, with medical workers dispatched on each rescue ship to provide assistance to any crew member found as soon as possible, CCTV said.

Earlier footage provided by Hong Kong authorities showed a person being airlifted onto a helicopter while waves crashed over the deck of the semi-submerged ship below. The three survivors said that other crew members may have been swept away by waves before the first helicopter arrived, according to a Hong Kong government statement. —AFP



Pope Francis

## Chinese-Canadian tycoon's trial begins in China

**BEIJING:** Canadian-Chinese tycoon Xiao Jianhua is standing trial on Monday, Ottawa's embassy in Beijing said in a statement, after the businessman disappeared from a Hong Kong hotel five years ago. Xiao vanished from Hong Kong's Four Seasons hotel in January 2017, with local media reporting that he was snatched by mainland Chinese agents-fuelling fear at the time over Beijing's tightening influence in the financial hub.

The tycoon, one of China's richest people at the time of his disappearance, reportedly had close connections to the upper echelons of the ruling Communist Party. Nothing more had been known about Xiao, who is a Canadian citizen, since his disappearance, until the embassy confirmed Monday that he was facing trial. "Global Affairs Canada is aware that a trial in the case of Canadian citizen, Mr. Xiao Jianhua, will take place on July 4, 2022," the Canadian embassy told AFP, without specifying the location of the trial or charges against him.

"Canadian consular officials are monitoring this case closely, providing consular services to his family and continue to press for consular access." Hong Kong police said at the time that he had crossed the border into mainland China. His company Tomorrow Group also later said that he was in the mainland. But Chinese authorities have been silent about the case, reportedly linked to an anti-corruption drive championed by President Xi Jinping since he came to power.

Xiao's alleged abduction came at a time when mainland Chinese agents were not permitted to operate in Hong Kong, and it sparked fear in the city about residents being forcibly disappeared. These fears were at the heart of massive pro-democracy protests that shook Hong Kong in 2019, prompted by a government bill that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China's opaque, Communist Party-controlled judicial system. Xiao's disappearance also followed the alleged kidnapping into mainland custody of five people working for a bookstore which published salacious titles about China's leaders. The booksellers later appeared on mainland Chinese TV admitting to a variety of crimes. In response to the protests, China imposed a national security law on Hong Kong in 2020. That law allowed its security agencies to operate in the city and toppled the legal firewall between mainland and Hong Kong courts.

### Rags to riches

Xiao rose from a poor family to become one of China's richest men, founding the Beijing-based Tomorrow Group. He was head of the official student union at the prestigious Peking University in 1989 when the Chinese government used troops and tanks to crush peaceful demonstrations.

Xiao had tried and failed to defuse the protests, with his company later denying a report in The New York Times that he had been rewarded by the government for his role. After university, Xiao began selling computers and in the years that followed built an empire with diverse interests, including in banking and insurance.

According to the Hurun Report, which ranks China's wealthiest people, Xiao was worth almost \$6 billion in 2017. He had reportedly denied allegations that he fled to Hong Kong in 2014 to escape the corruption crackdown in China. Xiao is said to have acted as a broker for the Chinese leadership, including for President Xi's family. "After five years of quietly waiting, our family is still, based on my brother's strict instructions, putting faith in the Chinese government and Chinese law," Xiao's elder brother Xinhua told The Wall Street Journal last month. —AFP

## 12 bodies found after South China Sea typhoon shipwreck

**BEIJING:** Twelve bodies have been found following a shipwreck in the South China Sea over the weekend that left more than two dozen crew members missing, Chinese authorities said Monday.

The announcement came days after an engineering vessel 160 nautical miles (296 kilometres) southwest of Hong Kong suffered substantial damage and broke into

## Pope denies resignation rumours

**VATICAN CITY:** Pope Francis has rebuffed suggestions he may be readying to resign, saying in an interview published Monday that rumours he was suffering from a serious illness were "court gossip". "It never crossed my mind", Francis told Reuters news agency after weeks of speculation. Pressed on whether he might emulate his predecessor Benedict XVI, who was the first pope since the middle ages to resign, the Argentine said "for the moment, no. For the moment, no. Really!" But in the interview, which took



# Business

TUESDAY, JULY 5, 2022

## Turkish inflation hits two-decade high

Independent estimates show prices rising at more than double the rate of 78.6%

**ISTANBUL:** Inflation in Turkey in June soared to an annual rate of 78.6 percent - the highest in 24 years, according to official data released Monday - as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's unconventional economic policies continued to take their toll. But independent estimates published by Turkish economists showed prices rising at more than double that figure.

The inflation rate reported by Turkey's state statistics agency was the highest since the emerging market suffered a currency meltdown during a global financial crisis in 1998. Inflation had stood at 73.5 percent in May and at 15.0 percent at the start of last year. Economy Minister Nureddin Nebati on Friday vowed that consumer prices will start dropping in December. "I promise to you and to the president, we will see a drop in inflation starting in December," he was quoted as saying by Turkish media.

According to the official data, the surge in inflation in June was driven by a jump of 123.4 percent in the cost of transportation and a 94-percent increase in non-alcoholic drinks. Turkey's latest problems began when Erdogan forced the central bank to go through with a series of interest rate cuts last year that he said were part of his "new economic model". The policy rate went down despite rising consumer prices.

But the Turkish leader rejects conventional economics and affirms that high interest rates cause prices to rise. Economists believe his approach has exacerbated the pain felt world-wide from the jump in food

and energy prices caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

### Questions over data

However, more and more economists are starting to question Turkey's official data. A monthly report released Monday by Turkey's ENAG group of independent economists showed consumer prices rising by 175 percent in June. ENAG said prices had risen by 71.4 percent since the start of the year alone. The Istanbul chamber of commerce said inflation in Turkey's largest city has reached an annual rate of 94 percent.

"No one actually believes official Turkish data anymore," said BlueBay Asset Management economist Timothy Ash. "There is no expectation of anything like a credible policy response." Turkey's official data are turning into a hot political issue ahead of next year's general election - widely viewed as the toughest of Erdogan's two-decade rule.

Opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu accused the state statistics agency of "lying". "Stop committing crimes for the benefit of President Erdogan," Kilicdaroglu told the agency on Twitter. A survey published by the Metropoll polling agency on Friday showed 69 percent of respondents believed the unofficial ENAG figure and just 24 percent the one reported by the government.

### 'Cost-of-living problem'

Erdogan has doubled down on his economic approach and hinted that he may want the benchmark



ANKARA: People shop at a vegetable and fruit market in the historical Ulus district in this April 29, 2022 file photo. - AFP

interest rate to move even lower in the months to come. He has also tried to reverse the accompanying drop in his public approval by announcing a rapid series of wage hikes to large parts of the population. He has bumped up the minimum wage earned by roughly 40 percent of the working Turks from 2,826 liras in late December to 5,500 liras (\$325) this month. The wage is used as the benchmark for a wide range

of social benefits across the economy.

Economists warn that substantially raising the pay of so many people is an inflationary measure that should be accompanied by interest hikes or other means of limiting spending. But Erdogan rejects the very idea that Turkey is suffering from inflation. "We do not have an inflation problem. We have a cost-of-living problem," Erdogan said last month. — AFP

## Iran, Russia and Turkey mull joint car production

**TEHRAN:** Automobile industry officials from Iran, Russia and Turkey are considering joint car design and manufacture after sanctions on Moscow and Tehran put the brakes on production, Iran's state media reported. "There is a great possibility of tripartite cooperation between car manufacturers and suppliers of the three countries," said Mohammadreza Najafi-Manesh, the head of Iran's Auto Parts Manufacturers Association, the official IRNA news agency said.

"These three countries can capture a large market for their products," Najafi-Manesh said, arguing that they could target a population of "at least 800 million if neighboring regions are included". Russia, slapped with sanctions by Western nations after invading Ukraine, was reported to have already asked Iran in May to supply it with key components it could no longer access.

As sanctions bite, the proposed cooperation on automobile construction between the three nations could progress rapidly, Najafi-Manesh said. "This idea can be realized very soon," he said. "Manufacturing all the parts of this car... avoiding currency transfers to provide spare parts, and the existence of export markets are among the advantages of such a project." He added that the idea was first floated by Turkey and that Russia was "interested".

Iran has also suffered under stringent economic sanctions, reimposed by the United States in 2018 after Washington unilaterally pulled out of a deal with world powers on Iran's nuclear program. Western carmakers have ventured into Russia to assemble cars over the past two decades as the country's economy expanded. But since Moscow sent troops into Ukraine in February, numerous car makers have stopped sales of their cars or parts to Russia - including Audi, Honda, Jaguar and Porsche.

Makes that have halted Russian production include BMW, Ford, Hyundai, Mercedes, Volkswagen and Volvo. Iran and Turkey share a land border, while Russia shares a maritime border with Iran and Turkey across the Black Sea and Caspian Sea respectively. — AFP



ISMALIA, Egypt: A welcome sign is placed on the shore of the Suez Canal in this northeastern Egyptian city in this May 27, 2021 file photo. — AFP

## Suez Canal records highest ever annual revenue of \$7bn

**CAIRO:** Egypt's Suez Canal Authority announced Monday an all-time revenue record, earning \$7 billion during the last fiscal year following a series of toll hikes for vessels transiting the vital waterway. Between July 2021 and June 2022 - Egypt's fiscal year - some 1.32 billion tons of cargo were shipped through the canal, Suez Canal Authority (SCA) chief Osama Rabie said. The income is over a fifth higher than the previous fiscal year's \$5.8 billion in transit fees, and the highest figure ever recorded.

"Global crises have proven the importance of the Suez Canal to ensuring the sustainability of global supply chains," Rabie said Monday. Connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, the canal accounts for roughly 10 percent of global maritime trade. It is also a source of much-needed foreign currency for Egypt, which is battling crippling inflation and a cur-

rency devaluation triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The SCA has hiked passage tolls for transiting vessels, including fuel tankers, twice this year. In April, the waterway recorded its highest-ever monthly revenue of \$629 million, despite the rise in oil prices due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As Egypt reels under mounting economic pressures from the war, foreign currency reserves fell \$5.5 billion between March and May to stand at \$35.5 billion.

Soaring world commodity prices helped push Egyptian inflation to a three-year high of 15.3 percent in June, according to official figures. In late March, the Central Bank of Egypt allowed the Egyptian pound to depreciate against the dollar, causing it to lose around 18 percent of its value overnight. Cairo has been rushing to mitigate the economic fallout, requesting a new loan from the International Monetary Fund and rallying billions of dollars' worth of investment from Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Last week, Egypt announced it is set to receive \$500 million from the World Bank. Earlier this year, the SCA reported the canal's highest annual revenue for a calendar year, netting \$6.3 billion dollars in 2021, despite the coronavirus pandemic and a six-day blockade by giant cargo ship the Ever Given. — AFP

## Somalia issues licenses to first foreign banks

**MOGADISHU:** Somalia said on Sunday it had awarded licenses to two foreign banks as the troubled Horn of Africa nation opens up the industry to international lenders. State-owned Banque Misr of Egypt and Turkey's Ziraat Katilim will become the first international banks to operate in the country, Somalia's Central Bank said in a statement. "The application of both banks underwent months of an extensive process," it said, adding that they had the green light to establish and operate branches.

"They are both solid banks that will add value to the development of Somalia's financial sector and contribute to the growth of our economy," the statement quoted Central Bank of Somalia governor Abdurahman Mohamed Abdullahi as saying. One of the poorest countries in the world, with more than 70 percent of its population living on less than \$1.90 a day, Somalia is struggling to recover from decades of civil war.

The country of 15 million people has at least a half a dozen commercial banks, with some offering services via the hawala system, an informal network of money transfers conducted through face-to-face guarantors. Hawalas are cheap and efficient to use, allowing money to be deposited in a foreign bank and instantly credited to recipients who have to provide only basic identity details matching those provided by the sender. The announcement on Sunday comes barely six weeks after President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud took office following a long-overdue election and a political crisis that lasted well over a year. Somalia's new administration faces a raft of challenges including a looming famine and a grinding insurgency by the Al-Shabaab jihadist group. Mohamud has vowed to tackle Somalia's myriad problems including improving the economy and delivering basic services to the people.

A crippling drought across the Horn of Africa has left about 7.1 million Somalis - nearly half the population - battling hunger, with more than 200,000 on the brink of starvation, according to UN figures. Al-Shabaab also continues to flex its muscles, waging an attack last month that killed three soldiers in central Somalia, underscoring the difficult task ahead for the country's new leaders. — AFP

## Bezos slams Biden appeal for lower gasoline prices

**NEW YORK:** Amazon founder Jeff Bezos has criticized President Joe Biden for calling on oil companies to lower sky-high gasoline prices, prompting the White House to come to the US leader's defense on Sunday. "My message to the companies running gas stations and setting prices at the pump is simple: this is a time of war and global peril," Biden tweeted Saturday. "Bring down the price you are charging at the pump to reflect the cost you're paying for the product. And do it now," Biden added.

Bezos said Biden's remarks amounted to "either straight ahead misdirection or a deep misunderstanding of basic market dynamics." "Ouch. Inflation is far too important a problem for the White House to keep making statements like this," the US billionaire tweeted Saturday. Gasoline prices at the pump have become a symbol of broader price rises in the United States, and they are sapping Biden's approval rating ahead of legislative elections in November.

Biden has regularly attacked oil companies, saying they only care about profits and not the well-being of the average consumer. The companies say in turn they have increased production to try to tame prices but that these are set on the world market and are subject to dynamics that are not under the control of US oil giants. White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Twitter Sunday that oil prices have dropped about \$15 a barrel over the past month.

"But prices at the pump have barely come down. That's not 'basic market dynamics.' It's a market that is failing the American consumer," she wrote. Gasoline prices have been above \$5 a gallon since early June, which is unprecedented in the car-crazy nation. Prices have fallen slightly since, but remain far from the \$3 a gallon level of a year ago. John Kirby, White House spokesman on national security issues, also defended the president Sunday in an appearance on Fox News.

"The president is working very, very hard across many fronts... to try to bring that price down," Kirby said. He cited Biden's proposal to suspend the federal gas tax this summer - this would need congressional approval - and his decision to tap the US strategic oil reserves to put more product on the market. "He knows that it is not going to solve all the problems, but it will help if everybody cooperates on this. We could bring the price down at least by about one dollar a gallon," Kirby said. — AFP



MONTEREY PARK, California: An Arco gas station displays the price per gallon at over \$6 on June 22, 2022. — AFP



## Business

## Ukraine estimates cost of reconstruction at \$750bn

## Rebuilding Ukraine 'common task' of democratic world: Zelensky

LUGANO, Switzerland: Ukraine told an international conference Monday that it will cost an estimated \$750 billion to rebuild the war-shattered country, a task President Volodymyr Zelensky said was the shared duty of the democratic world. Speaking at the opening of the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Switzerland, Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal described the massive destruction and acknowledged the needs were towering. Ukraine's recovery, he said, "is already estimated at \$750 billion. We believe that the key source of recovery should be the confiscated assets of Russia and Russian oligarchs." "The Russian authorities unleashed this bloody war, they caused this massive destruction, and they should be held accountable for it," he said.

Speaking via video message, Zelensky stressed that "reconstruction of Ukraine is not a local task of a single nation". "It is a common task of the whole democratic world," he said, insisting that "reconstruction of Ukraine is the biggest contribution to the support of global peace." The two-day conference, held under tight security in the picturesque southern Swiss city of Lugano, had been planned well before the invasion, and had originally been slated to discuss reforms in Ukraine before being repurposed to focus on reconstruction.

As billions of dollars in aid flow into Ukraine, however, lingering concerns about widespread corruption in the country mean far-reaching reforms remain in focus and will be a condition for any recovery plan decided here.

## 'Fight against corruption'

Zelensky's Swiss counterpart and co-host of the conference, Ignazio Cassis, stressed that reforms remained front and center, with the aim of the meeting to lay "the groundwork for an effective and transparent political process". He said he was convinced that Ukraine's resilience in the face of the Russian invasion was largely due to the reforms already implemented in the country. "It is crucial that these efforts continue unwaveringly, especially in the fight against corruption, improving transparency and the independence of the judiciary, and that they are not stalled by the war."

He hailed that Ukraine had sent a large delegation of around 100 people to the conference, with Shmyhal joined by speaker of parliament Rouslan Stefanchouk and five government ministers. In all, around 1,000 people are attending the conference, including European



LUGANO, Switzerland: Swiss President Ignazio Cassis (left) introduces Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky (right) at the start of a two-day international conference on the reconstruction of Ukraine on July 4, 2022. — AFP

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who let out an enthusiastic "Slava Ukraini" (glory to Ukraine) after insisting on the importance of rebuilding a Ukraine better than before the war.

"Ukraine can emerge from this on a path towards a stronger and more modern country, with a modernized judiciary, with stronger institutions, with a solid track-record to fight against corruption, but also with a greener, more digital and more resilient economy," she said. While the EU is intent on helping Ukraine win the war, she said, "we must also make sure that Ukraine wins the peace that will come for sure."

## 'Decades'

Lugano is not a pledging conference but will instead attempt to lay out the principles and priorities for a rebuilding process aimed to begin even as the war rages. It will conclude Tuesday with a Lugano Declaration, which Cassis said would spell out the

"framework for a long-term reconstruction process." Questions have been raised about the value in discussing reconstruction when there is no end in sight to the war.

Organizers and participants stress, however, the need to lay the groundwork well in advance, as was done with the wildly successful Marshall Plan, a US initiative that pumped vast sums in foreign aid into Western Europe to help the continent rebuild and recover after World War II. The task is daunting. The Kyiv School of Economics has estimated the damage so far to buildings and infrastructure at nearly \$104 billion and that Ukraine's economy has already suffered losses of up to \$600 billion.

Simon Pidoux, the Swiss ambassador in charge of the conference, said that it was too early to try to estimate all the needs, insisting Lugano instead should provide "a compass" for the work ahead. "I think the effort will last for years, if not decades," he said. — AFP



STOCKHOLM: Passengers are silhouetted in front of SAS planes as they stand in the departure hall at Arlanda airport on July 4, 2022, after it became clear 900 pilots of SAS would strike. — AFP

## SAS says pilots to strike after negotiations fail

STOCKHOLM: Scandinavian airline SAS said Monday that negotiations between the carrier and the pilots' union had failed to reach an agreement, prompting some 900 pilots to strike. "How on earth is a strike in the busiest week of the last two-and-a-half years going to help us find and attract investors," SAS chief executive Anko van der Werff told reporters, criticizing what he called a "strike culture" among pilots.

The pilots are protesting against salary cuts demanded by management as part of a restructuring plan aimed at ensuring the survival of the company, which has suffered a string of losses since the start of the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020. "We deeply regret that our customers are affected by this strike, leading to delays and cancelled flights," van der Werff said in a statement.

The airline said that the strike "is estimated to lead to the cancellation of approximately 50 percent of all scheduled SAS flights," impacting around 30,000 passengers a day. SAS management announced in February the savings plan, dubbed "SAS Forward", which was supplemented in June by a plan to increase capital by nearly one billion euros (\$1.04 billion). Denmark and Sweden are the biggest shareholders with 21.8 percent each. Denmark said in June it was ready to increase its stake to 30 percent. Sweden has refused to provide fresh funds, but is willing to turn debt into capital. Norway, which left SAS in 2018, has said it is ready to return to the airline, but only by converting debt into equity. The strike at SAS comes as the summer is shaping up to be difficult for European airlines and airports, faced with staff shortages affecting traffic. After widespread job losses linked to Covid-19, airlines and airports are struggling to recruit new staff in many countries. — AFP

## Drivers in go-slow protest over surging fuel prices in UK

LONDON: Protesters snarled up major UK roads on Monday with a slow-moving procession of vehicles to demand government action against rocketing fuel prices. The action came as senior criminal lawyers staged a second walkout in England and Wales against years of government cuts to their fees, intensifying a "summer of discontent" as strikes sweep Britain.

Rail workers have already staged a series of stoppages to press for better pay as Britain's headline inflation reaches a 40-year high of just under 10 percent, driven in part by the war in Ukraine. On the roads, a social media campaign called Fuel Price Stand Against Tax mobilized drivers to drive deliberately slowly on motorways and other arterial routes, demanding the government slash fuel duty.

One of the motorways affected was the M4 including the Prince of Wales Bridge, which links England and Wales. Welsh police said they had arrested 12 people for driving under 48 km per hour for "a prolonged amount of time". Vicky Stamper lost her job as a truck driver last month after the company was forced to cut costs in the face of the surging fuel costs.

"I'm here because I've lost my job because of the fuel, and the greedy people at the top taking all of our money," she told AFP just over the border in England. Addressing any members of the public inconvenienced by the action, Stamper said "we're doing this for everyone". "If they want to have a whinge, instead of whinging, join us."

## 'No choice'

The government insists it has already cut fuel duty once, and is offering other financial support for the public, while blaming Russia for igniting the rapid rise in energy prices. "People's day-to-day lives should not

## 'Unprecedented' dryness in 1,200 yrs in Spain, Portugal

PARIS: Parts of Portugal and Spain are the driest they have been in a thousand years due to an atmospheric high-pressure system driven by climate change, according to research published Monday, warning of severe implications for wine and olive production. The Azores High, an area of high pressure that rotates clockwise over parts of the North Atlantic, has a major effect on weather and long-term climate trends in western Europe. But in a new modelling study published in the journal Nature Geoscience, researchers in the United States found this high-pressure system "has changed dramatically in the past century and that these changes in North Atlantic climate are unprecedented within the past millennium". Using climate model simulations over the last 1,200 years, the study found that this high-pressure system started to grow to cover a greater area around 200 years ago, as human greenhouse gas pollution began to increase.

It expanded even more dramatically in the 20th century in step with global warming. The authors then looked at evidence of rainfall levels preserved over

be disrupted," a spokesperson said. The government also says it is addressing the demands of the criminal barristers by offering a 15-percent rise in fees from the end of September. But the increase will only apply to new cases, not to tens of thousands piling up in a backlog as British courts wrestle with the fallout of the COVID pandemic. Outside the Royal Courts of Justice in central London, barristers in black gowns and wigs insisted the government significantly raise its offer as they walked out for a second week and vowed more strikes ahead.

Protesting barrister Emma Heath, 34, said defense lawyers could spend eight hours in preparation for a client receiving legal aid and get paid only £126 (\$153) by the government. "We fully appreciate the impact it's having, but until the government wake up and see what's actually happening to criminal legal aid funding, we're left with no choice," she told AFP. Justice Secretary Dominic Raab - a former lawyer - has called the strike action "regrettable" and said it would "only delay justice for victims". — AFP



LONDON: Senior criminal lawyers hold placards outside the Royal Courts of Justice on July 4, 2022 as they go on strike in a dispute over pay. — AFP

hundreds of years in Portuguese stalagmites, and found that as the Azores High has expanded, the winters in the western Mediterranean have become drier. The study cites projections that the level of precipitation could fall a further 10 to 20 percent by the end of this century, which the authors say would make Iberian agriculture "some of the most vulnerable in Europe".

They warn that the Azores High will continue to expand during the 21st century as greenhouse gas levels rise, leading to an increasing risk of drought on the Iberian Peninsula and threatening key crops. "Our findings have important implications for projected changes in western Mediterranean hydroclimate throughout the twenty-first century," the authors said.

The Azores High acts as a "gatekeeper" for rainfall into Europe, according to the study, with dry air descending in the summer months to cause hot, arid conditions in much of Portugal, Spain and the western Mediterranean. In the cool, wetter winter period, the high-pressure system swells, sending westerly winds carrying rain inland. This winter rain is "vital" for both the ecological and economic health of the region, but it has been decreasing, particularly over the second half of the 20th century. While previous research had not untangled the effects of natural variability on the Azores High, the authors said their findings show its expansion during the industrial era is linked to the rise of atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations. — AFP

## 'Marshall Plan', a byword for huge international aid

LUGANO, Switzerland: "The Marshall Plan", mentioned as a model for the ongoing Ukraine Recovery Conference in Switzerland, refers to the US-devised giant economic rescue scheme to rebuild Europe after World War II. European leaders, including German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and European Union president Charles Michel, have also recently referred to the Marshall Plan in discussing Ukraine's needs.

The term has become synonymous with pumping Western money into a country, region or sector that needs a massive bailout. It was also invoked when Washington announced a massive stimulus program to offset the economic damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## \$13 billion

The idea of the Marshall Plan was born on June 5, 1947, when then US Secretary of State George C. Marshall addressed an audience at Harvard University, announcing Europe "must have substantial help or face economic, social and political deterioration of a grave character". The plan was signed into law by President Harry Truman in April 1948, becoming official US aid policy.

The four-year European Recovery Program, ERP, was rejected by the Soviet Union and its communist satellite states. It was welcomed, however, by other European countries, namely: Austria, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. Britain's wartime leader Winston Churchill called the plan "the most unselfish act in history".

Its birth in early 1948 coincided with the blockade of Berlin, a year-long standoff between the East and West which was the first major crisis of the Cold War. West Germany, which was born in 1949, joined the beneficiaries. It involved a total of \$13.35 billion, nearly \$160 billion in today's money, which was pumped into the economies of the beneficiary countries.

Eighty-five percent took the form of a grant, with the remaining 15 percent coming as a long-term loan. The US made the plan conditional on a reduction in the trade barriers that were stifling the recovery in the European continent. Two bodies administered the plan, the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) and the Organization for European Economic Co-operation, later to become the Paris-based Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The plan quickly yielded results. Economists say that American industry benefitted from the expansion of the European market, where the dollar quickly replaced the pound sterling as the main trading currency. Over four years, European trade increased 65 percent. By 1952, Europe was back to pre-war production levels. — AFP

## ECB unveils plan to push climate friendly investments

FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank on Monday unveiled plans to make its monetary policy greener but met with criticism from environmental groups who urged the Frankfurt-based institution to go further. The steps by the ECB's governing council "aim to better take into account climate-related financial risk" and "support the green transition of the economy in line with the EU's climate neutrality objectives", the central bank said in a statement.

Under the new plans, the ECB will aim to "gradually decarbonize corporate bond holdings" from October 2022, shifting them towards issuers with better climate performance. This will be measured through indicators such as lower greenhouse gas emissions, more ambitious carbon reduction targets and better climate-related disclosures, the bank said. The ECB's portfolio of asset purchases worth around €350 billion (\$365 billion) is currently heavily weighted towards big polluters. The central bank will aim to "tilt these holdings towards issuers with better climate performance" as it reinvests around €30 billion a year. The aim is to "give companies more incentives to reduce their emissions", Isabel Schnabel, a member of the ECB's executive board, told a press briefing. However, "no company will be entirely excluded from the portfolio", she added.

The ECB has been repeatedly criticized by environmental activists for the outsized role energy companies like the oil majors Shell and TotalEnergies play in its portfolio. "The ECB must immediately exclude fossil fuel companies whose investment plans undermine the 1.5-degree target agreed in Paris (climate agreement)," Mauricio Vargas, lead economics campaigner at Greenpeace, told AFP. The "fossil-fuel driven inflation context" also called for "bolder measures" from the ECB, said Stanislas Jourdan, the director of lobby group Positive Money Europe. Inflation in the eurozone climbed to 8.6 percent in June, as the price for energy soared in the wake of the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. Investing more in renewables would "contribute to the ECB's price stability mandate" to aim for two percent inflation, Positive Money said. — AFP



## Business

# Central African Republic dives into crypto with the Sango

## Bangui announces zero-taxation 'crypto-hub', first in Africa

**BANGUI:** Undeterred by the turmoil hitting crypto, the Central African Republic (CAR) - one of the poorest and most troubled countries in the world - has unveiled plans to launch its own digital currency. President Faustin Archange Touadera, in an "online event" on Sunday, announced CAR would create the Sango Coin and a zero-taxation "crypto-hub", the first in Africa.

The currency is named after Sango, which with French is one of the two official languages in the landlocked country, rated the world's second poorest nation under the UN's Human Development Index. Through a platform called Crypto Island, the Sango will become "the catalyst for tokenizing (CAR's) vast natural resources," Touadera declared, providing no timeline or other details.

He hailed Sango and Crypto Island as "a new digital system fed by blockchain", the Internet-based ledger that underpins crypto currencies. "Sango Coin will give the whole world direct access to our resources," attracting investors and "getting the engines of the economy going," he enthused. On April 27, Touadera's office abruptly announced that the CAR had adopted bitcoin as legal tender alongside the CFA franc, a currency the country shares with five other central African economies.

It became the first country in Africa to embrace bitcoin as a national currency, and the second in the world after El Salvador last September. The April announcement sparked bemusement among analysts, given the entrenched poverty and lack of

infrastructure in the CAR, where only one person in seven has access to mains electricity. They also voiced concern about the impact of crypto volatility on savings.

Virtual currencies have gone into a tailspin as investors look to safer havens at a time of inflation and uncertainty sparked by the Ukraine war. Bitcoin has lost nearly 60 percent of its value over the past six months.

### 'Digital gold'

Touadera on Sunday said 57 percent of Africa's population does not have access to a bank. "The solution," he said, was "the smartphone, the alternative to the traditional bank, cash and financial red tape". On Twitter, he said, "gold served as the

engine of our civilization for ages! In this new age, digital gold will serve the same for the future."

The CAR's rush to crypto has been seen by some critics in the context of its closer ties with Russia. Touadera has been accused of using Russian paramilitaries to buttress his regime and offering CAR's natural resources in exchange. The country has a treasure chest of minerals, ranging from copper and gold to diamonds and uranium.

The CAR, a former French colony, plunged into a civil war along sectarian lines in 2013 after the then-president, Francois Bozize, was ousted. Touadera was first elected in 2016 after an interim period and re-elected in disputed circumstances in 2020. Violence diminished in 2018 but rebel forces remain active. —AFP

## CBK bonds and related tawarruq

**KUWAIT:** The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK bonds and related tawarruq at a total value of KD 240 million for 6 months with a rate of return of 2.250 percent.

## Palestinian farmers fear losing harvest due to bug outbreak

**RAMALLAH:** For the second year in a row, Muayyad Abbas, a local farmer from Faqu'a village northeast of West Bank city Jenin, fears he might lose the prickly pear harvest season due to the cochineal bug outbreak that is killing his produce. The 47-year-old father of three told Xinhua that he used to rely on the profits from selling those cactus fruits that grow on his four-dunam (about 0.99 acres) land, which is his main income source in summer.

In the past, the farmer says, he used to make about \$2,500 each summer after collecting at least six tons of prickly pears, which helps him to keep his family afloat. "This year, unfortunately, I will not be able to reap any profits if I lose the current season as about 80 percent of my trees were infected with the cochineal bugs," the farmer lamented.

Every year, the harvest season of prickly pears begins in early July and continues until September in the Palestinian territories. The fruit is widely popular during the summer season with its sweet taste and nutritional benefits. In an attempt to protect his harvest from perishing, Abbas spent about three months caring for the prickly pear trees by spraying natural insecticides such as vinegar and lemon, but all those attempts were unsuccessful. "I am facing a great misfortune because I do not know how to support my family in the coming months," he said.

Abbas' field is among the 5,000-dunam (about 1,235 acres) of land in Palestinian territories that produces 7,500 tons of prickly pears every year, according to Shady Saleh, director of pest control department in the General Administration of the West Bank Plant Agency. "About 70 percent of the cactus trees were infected with the cochineal pest, which caused a decline in the production of prickly pears," Saleh told Xinhua, noting that farmers may have to uproot trees to get rid of the accumulated crisis. He said now the pest has spread to all areas of the West Bank, and that his ministry may resort to uprooting all cactus trees from the West Bank and planting them again if all attempts to limit the spread of the pest fail. —Xinhua

## Tanzania farmers fall in love with Chinese soymilk

**DAR ES SALAAM:** Soymilk, a traditional Chinese drink that's rich in flavor and nutrition, is becoming an increasingly popular drink among Tanzanians in villages in the Morogoro region west of the East African nation's commercial capital Dar es Salaam. Although soybean milk is new on the menu for Tanzanians, they feel it is delicious. Tatu Seif, a 62-year-old farmer in Kitete village, said soybean milk tastes good. "I like it and hopefully my friends will like it. It's good for our health."

The growing popularity of this new healthy drink has stemmed from a bilateral cooperative project in Tanzania, led by Chinese agricultural scientist Li Xiaoyuan this year. Li and his team of experts from the China Agricultural University (CAU) had decided to cooperate with the Morogoro authorities to promote the maize and soybean inter-planting project called "Small Bean and Big Nutrition". They selected four demon-

## After Dubai, Aleid Foods in Riyadh

**KUWAIT:** Aleid Foods Company announced the establishment of Riyadh-based Company Aqtar Al Khaleej, to be the outset of the company's operational expansion within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as part of its regional expansion strategy Goals\_25.

Aleid Foods CEO Mohammed Al-Mutairi said that the establishment of Aqtar Al Khaleej Company comes within the first phase of the Goals\_25 strategy, which aims for Gulf market expansion and the presence in dynamic and influential cities, explaining that it is a vital step for the company's operational expansion inside Saudi

Arabia starting from Riyadh, the capital.

He further revealed that an advanced operational program will be developed for Aqtar Al Khaleej Company by building a new structure for its operations to diversify its product basket to include frozen food, and will be implemented by a proficient team with distinctive experiences in food trade and supply chain management according to regional and international standards.

Al-Mutairi added that Aleid's ambition for Gulf market expansion is achievable with the company's entering the Saudi market, the region's largest, most significant, and fastest-growing market, with a growth rate expected to reach 6 percent in the next five years, taking reference to statistics that indicate that the consumption of food in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia constitutes 60 percent of the total food consumption in the Gulf for several reasons,

## Jazeera Airways opens services to Abha and Hail

**KUWAIT:** Jazeera Airways today announced its continued expansion in the Middle East, adding two new routes to its network to serve the touristic cities of Abha and Hail in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The routes will be served with three flights per week. Flights to Abha will commence on July 17, while flights to Hail will start on July 21.

Offering travellers a direct gateway to discover the hidden treasures of the Kingdom, the city of Abha is the culturally rich capital of the Aseer region in the southern end of the Red Sea coast and a great base for exploring this mountainous part of Arabia. The city of Hail on the other hand is nestled between Mount Shammar to the north and Mount Salma to the south and was once the capital of all the Arabian Desert where tourists today can enjoy a holiday

through history and sand skiing.

Jazeera Airways Chief Executive Officer, Rohit Ramchandran, said: "We are very excited to be expanding our footprint in Saudi to offer our customers more routes to the Kingdom, providing access to new tourism sites and commercial centers as we now offer over 80 flights a week into KSA."

Abha has a wealth of delights to discover, from the mud-walled Shada Palace to Abha Dam Lake and the Abha Palace Theme Park. Its vibrant traditional markets offer enjoyable shopping experience while visitors can enjoy roaming the historic neighborhoods like Al Nasb and Al Basta. Abha is the place to be immersed in the unique culture of the Aseer region, exploring the Jabal Thera (Green Mountain), one of Saudi's more curious landmarks as well as Al Muftaha Village, Abha's bohemian arts quarter built around a mosque covered in calligraphy.

Hail is the capital of the north-central region of Saudi Arabia bearing the same name and a popular stop during the pilgrimage to Makkah. The city of Hail is

## Argentina names economy minister

**BUENOS AIRES:** Argentina appointed economist Silvina Batakis as its new economy minister Sunday after Martin Guzman, the architect of a debt restructuring deal with the IMF, unexpectedly resigned. President Alberto Fernandez appointed the 53-year-old Batakis, "a renowned economist" who was economy minister for Buenos Aires province from 2011 to 2015, the president's spokesperson announced on Twitter.

The center-left leader had held consultations all day Sunday to find a replacement for Guzman, who was tasked with renegotiating a \$44 billion debt with the International Monetary Fund 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 lib-

eral predecessor Mauricio Macri, who had solicited the loan - was the largest ever issued by the IMF.

Guzman was praised for having stopped Argentina, Latin America's third-largest economy, from defaulting with the deal finalized in March. But he was regularly challenged by the Peronist Justicialist Party, the major force in the Frente de Todos (Everyone's Front) ruling coalition, embodied by the still-influential Cristina Kirchner, the country's vice president and president from 2007 to 2015.

Batakis' appointment appears to be a signal of growing power of Kirchner's faction in the center-left coalition. She was economy minister for Buenos Aires province, with a 15 million-strong population, under then-governor Cristina Scioli. Scioli was vice president under president Nestor Kirchner, and close to his wife, Cristina Kirchner.

In addition to commitments to the IMF deal, which included provisions to contain inflation and reduce the budget deficit from three percent in 2021 to parity by 2025, Batakis will have to contend with chronic inflation. Agricultural powerhouse

children and women.

Rwegasira said the Morogoro authorities looked forward to strengthening ties with the CAU team of experts and rendering strong support to promoting agricultural cooperation. "Soybean milk is nice, especially for children under five, pregnant and lactating mothers to improve their health, and the project should reach as many people as possible," she said. Rwegasira added that the provision of milling machines to make soybean flours will assist farmers to make easily more soybean products and therefore it will also improve the income of farmers through sales of soybean products.

This is not the first time Li Xiaoyun and his team has conducted agricultural aid projects in Tanzania. Since 2011, CAU has cooperated with Morogoro authorities to carry out the "Big Harvest with Small Technologies" project, which focused on increasing maize production and income. From just one household in one village in 2011 to more than a thousand households in a dozen villages, participants have more than doubled their maize harvest on average, boosted incomes, and improved their families' welfare and children's education.

The CAU team, despite the COVID-19 pan-

including the fact that KSA has the largest population in the Gulf with a population of 35.84 million, representing 70 percent of the total population in GCC countries, and with 37.44 percent of them being under the age of 25.

Al-Mutairi concluded by stressing the company's consistent efforts to achieve the Goals\_25 plan and its commitment to continuous growth which supports the value of business sustainability while achieving returns for shareholders and partners.



Mohammed Al-Mutairi



also known for hosting international events, including a Desert Festival celebrating the area's culture and the Hail International Rally, where rally cars, quads and motorcycles race through the Nafud Desert and through Hail, Baqaa,

Al Ghazalah and the village of Umm Al Qulban. Hail is also a destination for dose of history, culture and adventure, including the Jubbah Rock Carvings which boast rock inscriptions dating back at least 7,000 to 9,000 years.



BUENOS AIRES: Undated handout photo released by Argentina's ministry of interior of new Economy Minister Silvina Batakis. —AFP

Argentina has been in economic crisis for years, with inflation of more than 60 percent in the last 12 months. —AFP

dem, has managed to continue promoting the project through online guidance. Participants from both sides of the project, through emails, video conferences, as well as a group chat set up on the Chinese social media platform WeChat, are able to communicate the progress of the project in real-time. Ernest Robert Mkongo, former head of Economic and Productive Sector in Morogoro region, said the China-Tanzania agricultural cooperation program is very crucial in lifting people out of poverty.

Mkongo, who has been Tanzania's coordinator for the project since 2011 and continues to work with CAU after his retirement, said there had never been scholars from any other country who were as diligent as the Chinese experts in visiting farming homes and plots of farmland. Mkongo is also confident that the local climate, soil and altitude conditions are favorable for soybean growth in Morogoro region, adding that the project will benefit more poor people in the future. In the future, Li hopes to use soybean milk to improve local nutrition and provide a nutritional alternative to more expensive animal protein, while soybean cakes and maize can be processed into feed and farmed to create a production chain. —Xinhua



## Lifestyle | Features

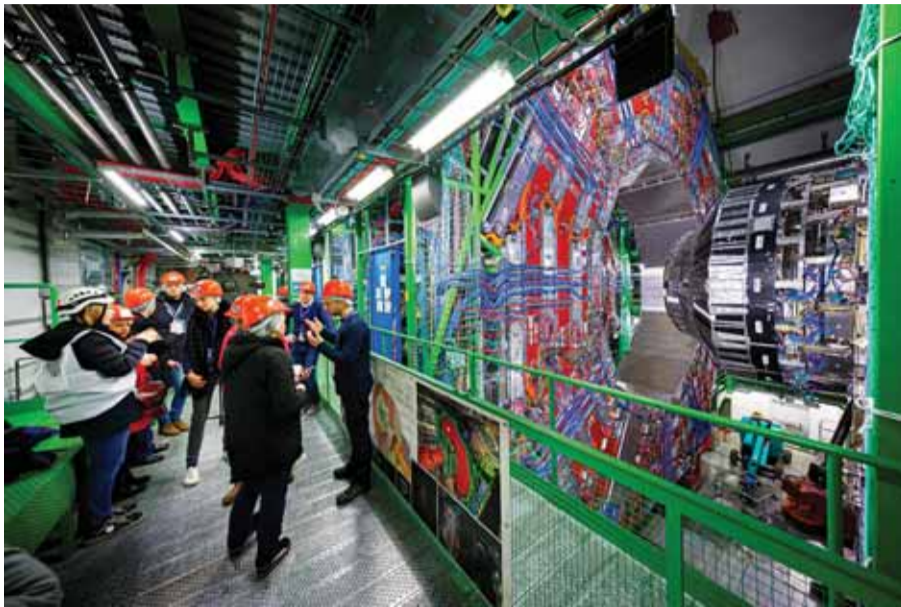
## LARGE HADRON COLLIDER REVS UP TO UNPRECEDENTED ENERGY LEVEL

Ten years after it discovered the Higgs boson, the Large Hadron Collider is about to start smashing protons together at unprecedented energy levels in its quest to reveal more secrets about how the universe works. The world's largest and most powerful particle collider started back up in April after a three-year break for upgrades in preparation for its third run. From Tuesday it will run around the clock for nearly four years at a record energy of 13.6 trillion electronvolts, the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) announced at a press briefing last week.

It will send two beams of protons-particles in the nucleus of an atom-in opposite directions at nearly the speed of light around a 27-kilometre (17-mile) ring buried 100 meters under the Swiss-French border. The resulting collisions will be recorded and analyzed by thousands of scientists as part of a raft of experiments, including ATLAS, CMS, ALICE and LHCb, which will use the enhanced power to probe dark matter, dark energy and other fundamental mysteries.

## 1.6 billion collisions a second

"We aim to be delivering 1.6 billion proton-proton collisions per second" for the ATLAS and CMS experiments, CERN's head of accelerators and technology Mike Lamont said. This time around the proton beams will be narrowed to less than 10 microns-a human hair is around 70 microns thick-to increase the collision rate, he added. The new energy rate will allow them to further investigate the Higgs boson, which the



Members of the media walk along the beam lines in a tunnel of the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), during maintenance works in Echevex, France, near Geneva. — AFP photos

Large Hadron Collider first observed on July 4, 2012. The discovery revolutionized physics in part because the boson fit within the Standard Model-the mainstream theory of all the fundamental particles that make up matter and the forces that govern them.

However several recent findings have raised questions about the Standard Model, and the newly upgraded collider will look at the Higgs boson in more depth.

"The Higgs boson is related to some of the most profound open questions in fundamental physics today," said CERN

director-general Fabiola Gianotti, who first announced the boson's discovery a decade ago.

Compared to the collider's first run that discovered the boson, this time around there will be 20 times more collisions. "This is a significant increase, paving the way for new discoveries," Lamont said. Joachim Mnich, CERN's head of research and computing, said there was still much more to learn about the boson. "Is the Higgs boson really a fundamental particle or is it a composite?" he asked. "Is it the only Higgs-like particle that exists-or are there others?"



Some of the 1232 dipole magnets that bend the path of accelerated protons are pictured in the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in a tunnel of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), during maintenance works in Echevex, France, near Geneva.

## 'New physics season'

Past experiments have determined the mass of the Higgs boson, as well as more than 60 composite particles predicted by the Standard Model, such as the tetraquark. But Gian Giudice, head of CERN's theoretical physics department, said observing particles is only part of the job. "Particle physics does not simply want to understand the how-our goal is to understand the why," he said. Among the Large Hadron Collider's nine experiments is ALICE, which probes the matter that existed in the first 10 microseconds after the Big Bang, and LHCf, which uses the

collisions to simulate cosmic rays.

After this run, the collider will come back in 2029 as the High-Luminosity LHC, increasing the number of detectable events by a factor of 10. Beyond that, the scientists are planning a Future Circular Collider-a 100-kilometre ring that aims to reach energies of a whopping 100 trillion electronvolts. But for now, physicists are keenly awaiting results from the Large Hadron Collider's third run. "A new physics season is starting," CERN said.— AFP



Geoff Schumacher, vice president of exhibits and programs of The Mob Museum, the National Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement, speaks during an interview about the museum's exhibits and history of organized crime murders and missing people in Las Vegas, Nevada.

## Drought exposes murky mob past of Las Vegas

Mobsters who end up sleeping with the fishes are usually never seen again. But climate change has a way of messing even with the mafia, and a watery grave outside Las Vegas is starting to cough up Sin City's darkest secrets. Lake Mead, which can be reached from the Las Vegas Strip by a short ride in the trunk of a car with your hands and feet bound, is drying up in a grueling decades-long drought. Its receding waters are leaving behind the usual flotsam and jetsam of a lake heavily trafficked by weekend boaters.

But also bodies. One particular find caught the attention of mob-watchers: the skeletal remains of a man who had been shot in the head, stuffed in a barrel and tossed in the lake four decades ago. "The mob had a propensity to put people in barrels, whether they're burying them in a lake, or dumping them out in the field," said Geoff Schumacher of The Mob

Museum in Las Vegas. "That's number one. Number two, the person was shot in the head, typical mob hit style. "And third, we know that this happened in the late '70s, early '80s (when) the mob was very prominent in Las Vegas."

## Oasis

An improbable oasis of hotels, casinos and vice sprouted in the baking Nevada desert in the 20th century. Las Vegas had been founded in 1905, but it wasn't until work began on the nearby Hoover Dam in the 1930s that its population swelled. The influx of construction workers - mostly single men - created a market for entertainment, which was filled by sex workers, showgirls and legalized gambling.

And where there is flesh, casinos and booze, organized crime is lurking in the background. "The mob played a pretty big role in the development of Las Vegas from the 1940s through the 1980s," said Schumacher. "There was a lot of behind-the-scenes activity where the mob was controlling the management of the casinos, but also building and expanding the casinos, using in many cases, Teamsters union money."

The city grew rich in the post-World War II boom that fueled the American dream, becoming the global capital of

gambling. And for every \$100 that a hapless tourist lost at the blackjack table in a fug of free booze, a mafia boss in Chicago or New York wanted his cut. The skimming, which doubtless cost the city millions of dollars in lost taxes, was a double-edged sword. "They also sort of created this mystique about Las Vegas," said Schumacher. "People wanted to come to Las Vegas, on the idea that 'oh, maybe when I sit down at the bar, there's going to be a mob guy sitting next to me."

## 'Cold-blooded killers'

But it wasn't all glamour. "The reality was that these guys were cold-blooded killers; they were thieves. If you were to cross the mob in some way... there definitely were consequences." Las Vegas police are still investigating the body found in the barrel at Lake Mead earlier this year, and in response to AFP inquiries would only say there is an ongoing probe.

But Schumacher has his theories about the identity of the dead man. One suggestion is that he was Jay Vandemark, who worked at the Stardust Hotel, an operation run by Frank "Lefty" Rosenthal on behalf of the Chicago Mob. Rosenthal - who was played by Robert De Niro in the movie "Casino" - was fun-

neling cash back to his bosses, until the scheme drew the attention of local authorities. Vandemark disappeared shortly thereafter.

A more likely candidate for the body in the barrel, however, is a man named Harry Pappas who was also connected to the Chicago Mob. "One of the extra perks for visitors to Las Vegas, if you were a high roller... was they would take you out on the boat at Lake Mead," Schumacher said. "The Stardust had a boat out there and Harry Pappas was in charge of that whole operation. "Right before he disappeared, he told his wife he was going to lunch with someone who was interested in buying his boat. We've never seen Harry Pappas again."

Lake Mead is a massive reservoir on the Colorado River created by the Hoover Dam. It is now just a quarter full - the result of a drought and warming temperatures fueled by man-made climate change - and shows no sign of stabilizing. As its shoreline retreats, revealing more of the lake bed, it may yield more mob secrets, said Schumacher. "I don't know if we find another body in a barrel, but I have to believe that there could very well be a second murder victim out there." — AFP



The Mob Museum - the National Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement is pictured in Las Vegas, Nevada.



## Dutch commune 'returns land to the people'

An artist's house is perched in a tree, shipping containers have been turned into homes and caravans house people who have been quicker to grow vegetables than build. Welcome to Oosterwold in the Netherlands, a commune where so long as you follow certain rules, including dedicating at least half your land to farming, you can build your home any way you chose. "You can build everything and decide everything yourself," says Barbara van Schaick, 45, on her plot where potatoes, onions and fruit trees grow near her under-construction house. The 43-square-kilometre green space in Almere, near Amsterdam, allows residents to move at their own pace and according to their means and desires.

"It's very pleasant, especially since it's combined with the promotion of urban agriculture," says Van Schaick, whose love of gardening spurred her to move from the Dutch capital to Oosterwold two years ago. This piece of land on the Dutch "polders" - areas reclaimed from the water in one of the world's lowest-lying nations - had long been used for organic farming. But in 2012 it was "returned to the people" for this scheme dreamed up by the architectural firm MVRDV and a Dutch politician.

## 'Romantic image'

The result is liberal even by Dutch standards. Once they have bought their plot, future residents have free rein to build housing without planning conditions. There are rules, but they are environmentally focused. Buildings must be sustainable - preference is given to gas insulation, heat pumps and solar panels - while half of the land must be devoted to urban agriculture, and living and open spaces must be guaranteed.

Oosterwold is "unique", locals proudly claim, although seven years after construction began, it's not all that simple. Living in an elegant building that blends into its wide green grounds, designed with the help of an architect, Nadine Alsaz says she is in "paradise". The 55-year-old, who arrived in Oosterwold in 2017, says relationships are different here compared to the city "where people barely know each other".

But outsiders often have a "romantic image" of the project, and can underestimate the flexibility and sheer determination needed to keep it running, she says. Oosterwold's 2,600 residents have, for example, had to form associations to decide on the construction of roads - a subject of heated discussion in the cycling-mad Netherlands. "You'd have thought building a road would be easier," adds Van Schaick, who is still waiting for the neighbors to agree on the development of the bumpy dirt track leading to her plot.

Urban farming remains "a challenge" for those with no experience, says Jeroen Dobber, 39, who mainly chose Oosterwold to get away from government rules. "I think we need the government (as little) as possible in what we do," he told AFP. The residents are of all ages and political opinions, but most have a high level of education, Dobber says.— AFP



Plants grow from an exposed lakebed cracking and drying out during low water levels due to the western drought on June 28, 2022 on Lake Mead along the Colorado River in Boulder City, Nevada.— AFP photos





View of an old building at risk of collapse in Havana. Collapses occur with some frequency in the Cuban capital, especially in the old part of the city, where the old buildings suffer great deterioration and overcrowding. The danger increases during the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to November 30. — AFP photos



A man shows cracks on the roof of his house in a building at risk of collapse in Havana.



A woman sweeps the floor in a building at risk of collapse in Havana.

## In Cuba: Sleeping fully clothed in case of building collapse

“When we go to sleep, it is with the fear of not waking up again,” says Elisa Bacyan, resident in one of about 700 apartment buildings deemed unsafe in the Cuban capital, where collapses are frequent. Bacyan, 51, lives alone with her daughter Lesyanis, 12 in an old-town building named “Edificio Cuba” that dates from 1940. The six-storey building belongs to the Cuban State, like most others on the communist island. It sports 114 small rooms that house 92 families rent-free.

It used to be an elegant hotel, say residents. Today, the floor planks are broken, the ceilings, columns and passageway walls reveal twisted metallic skeletons, and cracks and leaks abound. Children “cannot even play here, because every

now and again a piece (of building) comes down,” said Bacyan, with tears in her eyes. “I’ve already lost a child” to illness, Bacyan told AFP. “I do not want to lose my daughter too.”

### ‘Not recommended’

Due to a lack of oversight and maintenance, buildings collapse fully or in part in Havana with shocking frequency, even more so during the rainy and hurricane season from June to November. In 2020, a balcony gave way, killing three young girls. This year, the first rains of June caused 146 buildings in the capital to partially crumble and two to come down completely, resulting in the death of a 69-year-old man, according to official media. Nobody knows who will be next.

Official figures show that about 37 percent of 3.9 million residential buildings in the country were considered to be in an undesirable state by the end of 2020. A building specialist, who did not want to be named for fear of reprisal, told AFP that Bacyan’s home, “Edificio Cuba,” had “structural defects from floor to ceiling.” “It is not recommended that people live there.” In this building, as in many others, the makeshift addition of mezzanines, bathrooms and water tanks significantly add to the load they were built to withstand.

### ‘No response’

Cary Suarez, 57, moved into “Edificio Cuba” in 1997 after her previous apartment block became one of the collapse

statistics. She was out, bringing her children to school, but her mother, who was at home, died. “Having lived all this and being on the verge of reliving a collapse is very difficult,” she said. Francisca Pena, 54, has taken it upon herself to seek relief from the authorities on behalf of inhabitants.

“We have exhausted all avenues and we have had no response,” she told AFP. Pena said she sleeps fully dressed in case she has to “run out” in the middle of the night. It has happened several times, she recounted, that residents rush out into the street after hearing a suspicious “noise.” “I have dark circles under my eyes, I don’t sleep, I live waiting for a section (of the building) to come off,” said Luvia Diaz, a 50-year-old social worker who lives on the

top floor of “Edificio Cuba” with her partner, three daughters and a grandson.

Earlier this month, rains caused a piece of her bedroom ceiling to fall down, onto an empty bed. “If my daughter had been sleeping there, it would have been a tragedy,” she said. Another resident, who would only identify herself as “Pumpa,” was there when a part of the building came down 29 years ago, when she was just two. A piece of ceiling hit her on the head, and Pumpa had to undergo complicated cranial reconstruction surgery, she told AFP while cleaning her apartment. “I am afraid to live here... The second time I won’t be saved,” she said —AFP



Master Florist Henck Roling poses with a display of Orchids during a photocall for the Kew Orchid Festival.



Employees work on a display of orchids during a photocall for the Kew Orchid Festival. — AFP photos

## UK bird reserves closed after avian flu outbreak

Seabird reserves in northeast England and Scotland have been closed to visitors after a suspected outbreak of bird flu, officials said. The decision to close the Farne Islands, a popular draw for tourists who come to see puffins close up, was made after several hundred seabirds died on nearby Coquet Island.

Farne Islands general manager Simon Lee said seabirds that nest in dense colonies, such as Arctic terns, were vulnerable as they return to breed. “Our ranger teams work tirelessly to monitor and protect these colonies but due to finding significant numbers of dead birds, we simply have no other choice but to close the islands.” Coquet Island - home to Britain’s only breeding colony of roseate terns - is some 20 miles south of the main Farne Islands, off the coast of Northumberland, in northeast England.

Both are managed by the National Trust conservation charity. Some 45,000 people visit the islands on boat trips every year to see up to 23 species of seabirds, as well as colonies of grey seals. The windswept islands are home to some 200,000 seabirds including guillemots, kittiwakes, razorbills, and shags along with the Arctic terns and puffins. The effect of the disease on the colonies could be devastating due to many species having low reproduction rates, Lee said.

Many of the birds that nest on the islands, such as the vulnerable Atlantic puffin, are already experiencing huge pressures due to climate change with warming sea temperatures impacting food stocks. Lee said closure “will reduce the risk of disturbance on the birds, which will hopefully help at least slow down the spread of the disease during this breeding period before they leave the islands in late summer to continue their annual migratory cycle”. Visitors will no longer be permitted to land on the Farnes from Sunday, although boat trips will still be allowed.

The disease was first discovered in UK domestic bird populations last winter and is now affecting wild birds, with infection proving fatal, according to The National Trust. It is spread when birds come into direct contact with an infected bird, faeces, body fluids or indirectly via food and water. The risk to humans is considered low and people are rarely affected. —AFP

## Kew Gardens announces new giant waterlily species

Experts at London’s Kew Gardens on Monday revealed they have discovered the first new giant waterlily species since the mid-19th century-after it was initially mistaken for another. Specimens of the new species had lain undiscovered at the botanical garden for 177 years and in the National Herbarium of Bolivia for 34 years. It had been thought they were from the “Victoria amazonica”, one of the two known varieties of giant waterlilies whose genus was named after queen Victoria in 1852.

But their true identity was revealed after experts at Kew worked with a team from the Latin American country to establish they were in fact a third variety. As well as being the newest species of giant waterlily, “Victoria boliviana”, whose leaves grow as wide as three meters in the wild, is also the largest in the world. A paper detailing the years of detective work is outlined in a paper in the journal *Frontiers in Plant Sciences*, published on Monday.

Seeds from the suspected third giant waterlily species were donated by Santa Cruz de La Sierra Botanic Garden and La Rinconada Gardens in Bolivia. Botanical artist Lucy Smith said they had been growing-unlabelled-in a glasshouse at Kew for the last four years. “A few people have asked, why does this one look so different from the others? But we’ve had to say, well, we think it’s similar to this or similar to that,” she told AFP.

“So in fact, we’ve had this wonderful

secret hiding in plain sight all this time.” Carlos Magdalena, a research horticulturalist who specializes in saving plant species that are near extinction, described the plant as “one of the botanical wonders of the world”. Magdalena said some 2,000 new plant species are identified every year but he added: “What I think is very unusu-

al is a plant (this) size with this level of fame to be discovered in the year 2022.

“That is quite unusual. It also highlights how many things could be out there. “It really highlights how little we know in the end about our natural world.” Giant waterlilies bloom and turn from white to pink at night. “Victoria boliviana” is named

in honour of the Bolivian partners on the team and the plant’s natural ecosystem. Kew is the only place in the world where all three species of the Victoria genus-“amazonica”, “cruziana” and now “boliviana”-can be seen side by side. — AFP





Lifestyle | Features



Visitors pose for photographs in front of an art installation during the Ghosts and Hells exhibition at the Tainan Art Museum in Tainan.



A visitor checks her smartphone past an art installation during the Ghosts and Hells exhibition at the Tainan Art Museum in Tainan.

# Ghouls and spirits draw Taiwanese crowds to exhibition of underworld

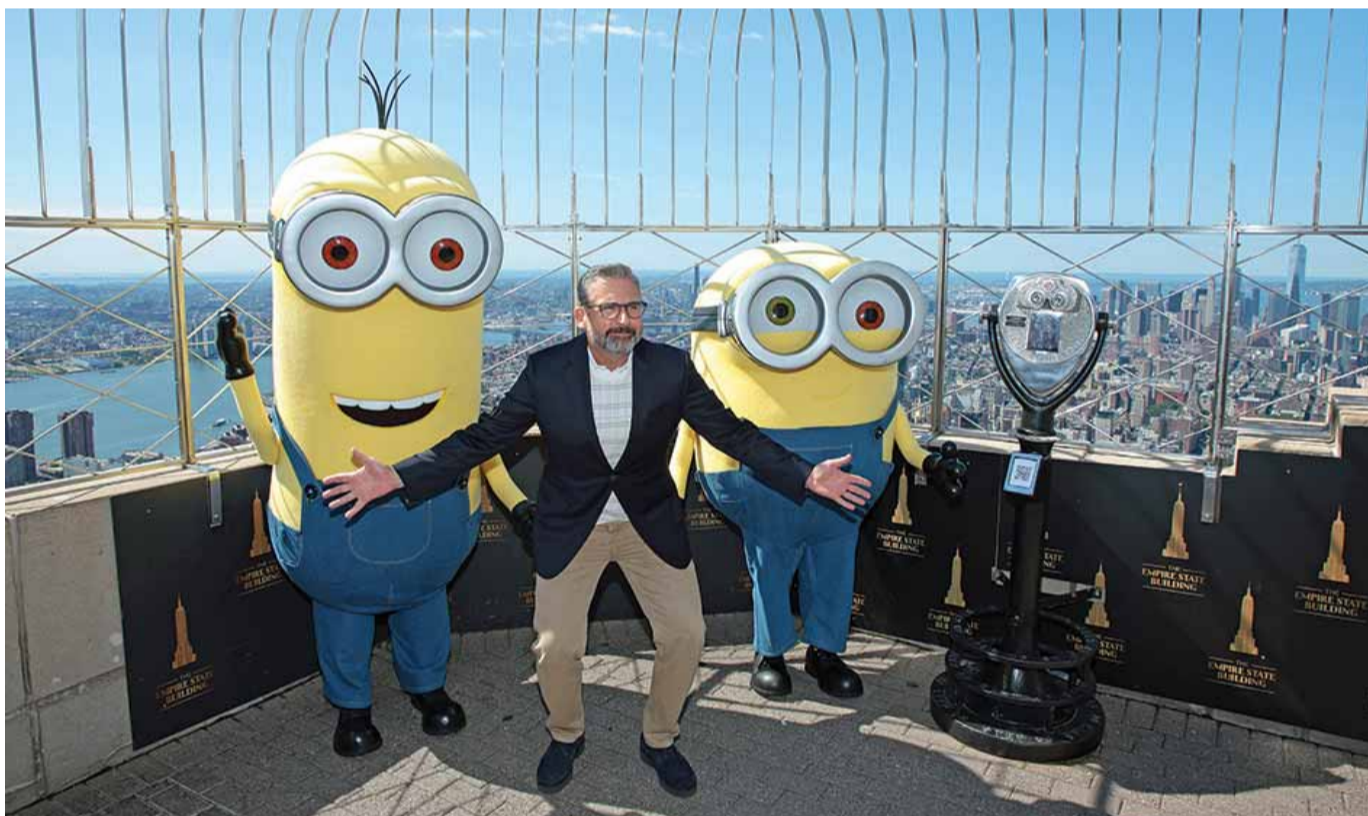
**H**opping vampires from China and disembodied flying heads and organs from Thailand have enticed hordes of people to an exhibition in Taiwan, scandalising religious groups who have called for the show's cancellation. Ticket sales had to be temporarily suspended twice on opening day to avoid overcrowding inside the Tainan Art Museum on the island's south-western coast, with thousands waiting in line for a chance to see the gory display. The show features traditional artefacts, artworks and pop culture about the afterlife in different Asian cultures, with much of the display

borrowed from a French museum. The main attraction is three lifesize depictions of Chinese hopping vampires - reanimated corpses whose stiffened limbs mean they can only move by bouncing along - with visitors lining up to imitate their grasping, outstretched hands. "I expected many people to come, but not that it would be bursting with crowds," Lin Yu-chun, the museum's director, told AFP. Lin said the Covid-19 pandemic had made discussions of mortality more prominent in Taiwanese society over the last few years, even though it is generally a taboo subject in Chinese culture.

"Many of us have been directly impacted and have had to face death," she said. "I have never seen that many people here, not since the pandemic started," said a vendor surnamed Su whose shaved ice stall is beside the museum. "The line must have been at least one kilometer long," she added. Once inside, visitors can see depictions of ghosts from Thailand - such as krasue, a bodiless female ghoulish glowing viscera hang below a floating head - as well as drawings of Japanese underworld spirits and works from Taiwanese artists. "Asian ghosts tend to be more femi-

nine, there are more ghosts which are female," Lin explained, whereas "western ghosts tend to be stern-looking such as the vampire". Though the show has fascinated swathes of the public, it has alarmed religious groups. A Christian church in northern Taiwan criticized the exhibit when it was first announced and called for it to be axed, saying online that it "defile(d) the country and people," local media reported. Other groups, including some Taoist temple ones, warned it was spreading superstition. Local media reported the museum had prepared 1,000 protective charms to give

out to show attendees to ward off bad luck. But Tony Lyu, a policeman in his twenties who visited the same day as AFP, said the show had allowed him to reflect. "I will try not to do bad things from now on because of the fear (of going to hell)," Lyu laughed. Zora Sung, 25, a hospital lab technician from capital city Taipei, said she was "moved and felt a little touched". "Hell is also a part of our culture we need to try to understand," she said. — AFP



Steve Carell and the Minions visit the Empire State Building in New York City. — AFP photos



Minions Bob, Otto and Stuart attend the Fans Premiere of Illumination and Universal Pictures' 'Minions: The Rise of Gru' in Hollywood, California.



US actress Tori Spelling (left) and family attend the Fans Premiere of Illumination and Universal Pictures' 'Minions: The Rise of Gru' in Hollywood, California.

## Ukrainians look to Kyiv's beaches as respite from war

Ivan Sukhanov and his family used to holiday by the Black Sea. This year, the family from Kyiv dreamt of travelling to Egypt. Then Russian troops invaded. Now, they're going no further than the banks of the Dnipro river in the Ukrainian capital to have as normal a holiday as they can, in very abnormal circumstances. "We wanted to show the children the pyramids, but the war ruined our plans," says the 41-year-old electrical engineer. "This year, we're enjoying what's around Kyiv, the lakes, the parks... We're relaxing as best we can". Kyiv boasts many sandy beaches, usually crowded during the hot summer months. But on the first weekend of July, despite temperatures close to 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit), no one is rushing to lay claim to a prime spot with a beach towel. The city is still living in slow motion, even though Russian troops withdrew from the outer northern and northeast suburbs three months ago to concentrate their offensive on the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine.

anxiety. She returned to the capital a week ago, having left on the first day of the war for a village in western Ukraine with her five-year-old daughter. She is already looking forward to leaving again. "In terms of morale, it's really hard," the 37-year-old says. "I worry a lot, with the warning sirens, the news. Every day I cry. I have never experienced such stress." Sapyga plans to travel again with her daughter next week, heading to London to stay with a family who has offered to support Ukrainians. She's been exiled before, back in 2014 when Russia annexed the Crimean peninsula where she and her husband then lived. If she manages to get to the British capital, she doesn't know how long she will stay. "It's very difficult to plan anything".



Women sell their cherries and raspberries in the city of Bucha, northwestern suburb of Kyiv.

### 'Used to it'

Compared to the rain of bombs in Donbas and the deadly strikes in the south of the country, Kyiv is now relatively calm. "We're getting used to it," admits Sukhanov, four months after Russian troops marched into his country on February 24. So, when air-raid warnings sound, "we don't go to the shelters, we don't follow the security rules... We live as best we can, hoping that everything will be OK".

But anxiety that worse is yet to come dominates daily life. A missile killed one person and wounded four others on June 26, in a neighborhood near the centre of Kyiv that had already been hit twice. Many also say they are affected by the air raid warnings that still sound regularly. Add to that the daily curfew, from 11:00 pm to 05:00 am, and sandbags protecting statues and official buildings, and it's hard to forget you are living in a country at war.

### 'Really hard'

Vera Sapyga is also trying to enjoy herself on a Kyiv beach but cannot hide her

### Rumors

That is an expression repeated daily in Kyiv, where no one dares predict how long the war will last. "At first the experts assured us that the war would end quickly, then they said, 'It will be over by Constitution Day' (June 28), then by Independence Day (August 24), now they say nothing," says Liudmila Iashchuk, a 55-year-old sitting with her husband at one of the few cafes open on the beach. "We hope it will be over by the end of the year, but now everyone is talking about a long conflict," says Sukhanov.

The uncertainty fuels incessant rumors of a new Russian offensive on Kyiv. First they were allegedly going to attack on June 22, the anniversary of the 1941 Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. Then word was that it would happen on Constitution Day, explains Ianna Khlinina, 33, out sunbathing with her husband. Neither she nor anyone else in the city, however, seems to doubt Ukraine's final victory over Russia. —AFP

## 'Minions' rule North American theaters on July 4th weekend

**"M**inions: The Rise of Gru," the latest installment in the animated "Despicable Me" franchise, crushed the competition at the North American box office in its opening weekend, with an expected \$127.9 million take over the four-day July 4th holiday. Universal's "Minions" far outpaced the number two film, "Top Gun: Maverick," which came in at \$32.5 million, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations said Sunday. "This is a sensational opening," said analyst David A. Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research.

"Family animation, more than any other genre, has struggled to find its footing during the pandemic," he said. "This weekend,

'Minions' is breaking through and big animation is back in business." According to Variety, if confirmed, the box office haul would make the fifth chapter in the "Despicable Me" series about reformed super-villain Gru and his yellow Minions the highest film opening over Independence Day, besting 2011's "Transformers: Dark of the Moon."

Rolling along in second place is Paramount's "Top Gun: Maverick," the crowd-pleasing sequel to the original 1986 film that once again features Tom Cruise as cocky US Navy test pilot Pete "Maverick" Mitchell. The film has raked in more than \$1.1 billion worldwide. Baz Luhrmann's music biopic "Elvis"-starring

relative newcomer Austin Butler as the King alongside Tom Hanks as his exploitative manager, Colonel Tom Parker-dropped to third place in its second weekend of release, at \$23.7 million.

Fourth place went to "Jurassic World Dominion," Universal's sixth installment in the "Jurassic Park" franchise, at \$19.2 million. The latest dinosaur frightfest stars Chris Pratt and Bryce Dallas Howard alongside franchise originals Sam Neill, Laura Dern and Jeff Goldblum. Rounding out the top five was horror film "The Black Phone" starring Ethan Hawke as a serial killer, which earned \$14.6 million in its second weekend in theaters. — AFP



People fish and swim along the Dnipro river, that runs through the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv. — AFP photos



## Sports

# New Zealand's McLaughlin wins IndyCar Mid-Ohio title

## Palou settles for runner-up finishes

WASHINGTON: New Zealand's Scott McLaughlin held off Spain's Alex Palou over the final laps to win Sunday's Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio for his second career IndyCar triumph. The 29-year-old Kiwi started on the outside of row one and dominated the final 50 laps of the 80-lap feature over the 13-turn, 2,258-mile road course at Lexington, Ohio. "Amazing," McLaughlin said. "I really wanted to get a win with mom and dad here. To have mom and dad here is pretty special." McLaughlin won his only prior IndyCar title in this year's season opener at St. Petersburg, Florida.

Palou, 25, won three races last year on his way to the season championship but has not taken the checkered flag

this year, settling for runner-up finishes at Mid-Ohio, Alabama and St. Petersburg. "We were so close," Palou said. "Our car was fast. We missed it by this much again today. Super happy to be back on the podium." Australian racer Will Power, who fell to last after a first-lap spinout, charged through the field to finish third followed in order by Dutchman Rinus VeeKay and New Zealand's Scott Dixon.

Sweden's Marcus Ericsson, the Indianapolis 500 winner, finished sixth but saw his season points lead shrink from 27 to 20 points over Power with American Josef Newgarden 34 back in third and Palou fourth at 35 adrift. Mexican pole-sitter Pato O'Ward, the Indy 500 runner-up, jumped to the lead

at the start with McLaughlin just behind him. O'Ward's teammate, Sweden's Felix Rosenqvist, went out from third place after 10 laps with a mechanical failure.

O'Ward complained over his radio about losing power just before pitting on lap 30 and when he returned after the cycle of refuel stops he was third behind McLaughlin and Palou, then quickly faded before dropping out early. McLaughlin denied Palou's pass attempt on a lap-40 restart and stayed in front after the final pit stop series with 22 laps remaining. "It was tough," McLaughlin said. "You were thinking about the fuel. I had driveability off the restarts to get ahead. I had a great car." The next race, the 10th of 17 season events, will be contested July 17 at Toronto. —AFP



Scott McLaughlin

## IOC boss Bach says Ukraine 'flag will fly high' at Olympics

KYIV: Olympics chief Thomas Bach on Sunday said the organization would ensure that Ukrainian athletes could compete at the 2024 Games despite the Russian invasion. Speaking during a visit to Kyiv to meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, Bach pledged to increase the amount of IOC funding for athletes from the war-torn nation. That will ensure that at the Olympic Games in Paris 2024 and at the Olympic Winter Games in 2026 in Cortina-Milano, "the Ukrainian flag will fly high", said Bach.

"The IOC will triple the fund we have been establishing at the very beginning of the Russian invasion in Ukraine from \$2.5 million to \$7.5 million," he added. Zelensky welcomed the additional support. "The Russian invasion has become a cruel shock for the Ukrainian sports," he said, speaking after his meeting with Bach. "A lot of Ukrainian athletes joined the Ukrainian armed forces to defend our country, to defend it on the battlefield. Eighty nine athletes and coaches died as the result of the military combat. Thirteen are captured and are in the Russian captivity."

The IOC responded to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February by recommending that international sports federations ban Russian and Belarusian athletes. Bach said that the IOC would not be changing its position. "We also reassured the president (Zelensky) we maintain the position we took at the very beginning of the war, which is very clear," he said. "Including the recommendations towards international federations not to invite Russian and Belarusian athletes to international competitions. "The time has not come to lift these recommendations."

Zelensky welcomed the news. "It cannot be allowed that a terrorist state uses sports to promote its political interests and propaganda. "While Russia is trying to destroy the Ukrainian people and conquer other European countries, its representatives have no place in the world's sports community." Among a raft of sporting sanctions, Russia has been suspended from international football tournaments, the Russian Formula One Grand Prix was cancelled and Russian and Belarusian tennis players have been banned from Wimbledon. —AFP

## Poston completes wire-to-wire win at John Deere Classic

WASHINGTON: JT Poston became the first wire-to-wire winner at the John Deere Classic in 30 years on Sunday to capture his second career US PGA Tour title and book his British Open debut. The 29-year-old American fired a two-under par 69 to finish 72 holes on 21-under 263 at TPC Deere Run in Silvis, Illinois.

That delivered Poston a three-stroke triumph over Argentina's Emiliano Grillo and South African Christian Bezuidenhout, who joined the American in booking berths at St. Andrews when the Open starts July 14. "I can't wait," Poston said. "I've always wanted to play in one of those any venue. For the first one to be at St. Andrews, I can't draw it up any better."

Poston was only the third Deere wire-to-wire winner, the first since South African David Frost in 1992, and just the second PGA wire-to-wire winner this season after Chile's Joaquin Niemann at

## Climate activists stage protest at British Grand Prix

SILVERSTONE: Climate activists invaded the circuit at Silverstone on Sunday shortly after the British Grand Prix was red-flagged following a multi-car crash at the start. The same group, Just Stop Oil, were responsible for a stunt at a London art gallery last week, when two protesters glued themselves to the frame of a Vincent van Gogh painting. And Louis McKechnie, one of those taking direct action on Sunday, tied himself to the goalpost during an Everton-Newcastle match last season.

Formula One's governing body the FIA said they had removed the group from the circuit with police announcing that "a number of arrests" had been made. "We confirm that after the red flag, several people attempted to enter the track," an FIA state-

ment reported. "These people were immediately removed and the matter is now being dealt with by the local authorities." Both Northamptonshire Police and Silverstone had warned of potential disruption in the run-up to the race after intelligence received.

F1 boss Stefano Domenicali said the protest was "irresponsible and dangerous". "Everyone has the right to speak out on issues, but no-one has the right to put lives in danger," the Italian told Sky Sports. "The actions of a small group of people today were completely irresponsible and dangerous. "We thank the police for their great work and we shouldn't be complacent about the risk this posed to the safety of the drivers, marshals, fans and the individuals themselves."

In a media statement Just Stop Oil claimed responsibility for Sunday's latest action at one of the jewels in Britain's sporting calendar. They demanded that the British government "calls an immediate halt to new oil and gas projects in the UK" and warned they would "con-



Louis McKechnie, an activist from the protest group 'Just Stop Oil' poses for a portrait, in west London. —AFP

tinue to disrupt sports, cultural events and oil until this demand is met". McKechnie said: "I'm in resistance because I cannot stand

by while our government licenses new oil and gas projects. Our addition to oil has brought us to the brink of catastrophe." —AFP

## Hamilton salutes home crowd, Mercedes team

SILVERSTONE: Lewis Hamilton saluted his home crowd and his Mercedes team on Sunday after claiming a record 13th podium finish at the British Grand Prix, an unprecedented haul by any driver at a single circuit. In front of a Silverstone record attendance of 142,000, part of a total of 401,000 spectators for the weekend, the seven-time champion finished third for Mercedes after a thrilling race won by Carlos Sainz of Ferrari.

Hamilton came home behind Red Bull's Sergio Perez to deliver a result he described as a "huge bonus" after Mercedes' bumpy start to the season. Early problems for world champion and series leader Max Verstappen, who finished seventh after a puncture, opened the way for Hamilton to chase after the Ferraris of Sainz and Charles Leclerc to the delight of the crowd. "I really have to give it up to this crowd," said Hamilton. "We've had the biggest show-up in history here, in the UK, so thanks to everybody for the incredible support."

"We don't see this anywhere else around the world. This is literally the greatest group that we get to see so I'm so grateful for that. "I gave it



SILVERSTONE: Ferrari's Monegasque driver Charles Leclerc (right) and Red Bull Racing's Mexican driver Sergio Perez (right) run wide allowing Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton to move up two places during the Formula One British Grand Prix at the Silverstone motor racing circuit in Silverstone. —AFP

everything today. I was trying to chase down those Ferraris, but congratulations to Carlos. They were just too quick today for us. "At the end, I was in amongst that battle with Checo (Perez). Those guys were just too quick on the straights for me, but I'm so grateful for the hard work all the team did to get an upgrade here."

"We've made a step closer so now we've got to keep pushing."

He added that Mercedes needed to find more pace on the straights. "We lost a little bit of time in the pit-stop and then I was like chasing, chasing and chasing, but the pace was great on both sets of tyres. "At the end, it was just a little bit difficult. Once you get a Red

Bull behind you, they're so fast on the straights. We've got some improvements to make, but this is a huge bonus for us to be on the podium." His teammate George Russell suffered his first enforced retirement of the season after a consistent points-scoring sequence when he was involved in the multi-car crash on the opening lap. —AFP

Riviera. "It is hard, wire to wire, having the lead for that long," Poston said. "It's hard not to think about it." Poston birdied the first three holes, had two bogeys, then parred 10 consecutive holes before a birdie at the par-3 17th and a closing par. "I got off to a good start, tried to give some back, but I kept my head in it and tried to stay focused," Poston said.

"I was just trying to breathe. There were a little more nerves than the first three days and I was having to battle through them. It's nice to know I can." Poston, who matched his PGA career low with a 62 on Thursday, took his only prior PGA victory at the 2019 Wyndham Championship. "You just never know if you're going to do it again and to do it this week is awesome," Poston said, his voice breaking after 72 holes with a stoic expression.

World number 99 Poston had three prior top-10 efforts this season, including a runner-up finish at last week's Travelers Championship. Poston, the solo leader since Friday's third hole, led by three when the day began and built his lead to five strokes before it shrank to one over Grillo on the back nine. But the South American missed a six-foot putt and made bogey at the par-3 12th to stumble two back while Poston hit the flagstick on a 67-foot birdie putt at 12 and tapped in for par to

stay two ahead.

Poston found a greenside bunker at the par-4 13th but sank a clutch 10-foot par putt. Moments later, Grillo missed a 10-foot par putt at the 14th for bogey. Bezuidenhout charged into the hunt late with three birdies in four holes, the last of them a tap-in at the par-5 17th. But Poston sank a birdie putt at 17 from just outside five feet—his first birdie since the third—to stretch his lead back to three. "It's nice to get it behind me," Poston said. "Sitting on a lead that long isn't easy no matter how big it is. It was definitely a grind."

### Three-birdie start

Poston opened with three straight birdies, sinking putts from about three feet at the first and par-5 second holes plus a 23-footer at the par-3 third. But Poston had back-to-back bogeys at the fifth, where he three-putted, and sixth, where he found a bunker and missed an 11-foot par putt. Grillo, ranked 151st in the world, couldn't take advantage and missed out on his second PGA title, the first coming in 2015. "I knew I needed a solid week," Grillo said. "I just needed to play well and go up the rankings and have a job for next year. That was more important for me than going to the Open. Now I get both, so that's pretty special." —AFP



ILLINOIS: JT Poston of the United States poses with the trophy after putting in to win on the 18th green during the final round of the John Deere Classic at TPC Deere Run on July 03, 2022. —AFP



## Sports

# Palermo target Serie A after joining City Football Group

## 12th club to become part of a global network of teams

**MILAN:** Palermo are gunning for a return to Serie A after being taken over on Monday by the City Football Group, the 12th club to become part of a global network of teams led by Manchester City. The Sicilian club, which was promoted to second-tier Serie B via the play-offs last season, announced that CFG had acquired a "majority stake" without specifying any further details. The deal struck is reportedly for 80 percent of Palermo, with the remaining portion staying with previous owner Dario Mirri who will continue as chairman after guiding a previously troubled club to two promotions after taking over in 2019.

Palermo's inclusion within the CFG network was

presented on Monday morning in the Sicilian capital, with Mirri and CFG CEO Ferran Soriano saying their objective was to be the island's representative in Italy's top flight. "Our idea is to create a team which is first of all stable in Serie B and can then aim for promotion," Soriano told reporters. Soriano added that CFG had not decided on any plans regarding moving from or redeveloping Palermo's Renzo Barbera stadium, which is owned by the city.

"The important thing is that the stadium is full, our job is to convince the city to come to the ground for matches... that is our first priority," he said. Mirri confirmed meanwhile that Palermo would be continuing with their plans for a new training complex in the

town of Torretta, in the mountains which overlook Palermo. "If we don't have a place where everyone can be together, from the first team to the youth teams we won't be able to work properly," said Mirri, a Palermo native and life-long supporter.

Palermo will keep coach Silvio Baldini and sporting director Renzo Castagnini, with Soriano and CFG board member Alberto Galassi saying that they would be prioritizing stability within a club which has been outside Serie A since 2017 and was for a long time an extremely volatile environment. Mirri became chairman in 2019 after being awarded control of a phoenix club which had to start from amateur league Serie D, following Palermo's exclu-

sion from professional football for financial irregularities while still in Serie B.

Baldini had briefly worked at Palermo under Maurizio Zamparini, the notorious "manager eater" who fired dozens of coaches during his 18 years as owner and sacked Baldini in January 2004 after half a season in charge. CFG are majority-owned by Sheikh Mansour's company Newton Investment and Development, and as well as owning Premier League champions Manchester City have La Liga outfit Girona and Ligue 1 team Troyes under their umbrella in Europe. The group also runs Major League Soccer team New York City, Australia's Melbourne City and Mumbai City in the Indian Super League. —AFP



Boubyan Bank officials

## Boubyan's Visa FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Prepaid Card launched

**KUWAIT:** Boubyan Bank and Visa celebrated the launch of Boubyan's Visa FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Prepaid Card in the presence of many representatives from the partners, and a group of media professionals, social media influencers, and customers of the bank. In his word at the ceremony, Abdullah Al-Mejhem, Chief Private Banking and Consumer Banking, stated: "It is no secret that Kuwait, the region and the whole world are passionate about football. The fact it will be held in a GCC country makes us at Boubyan Bank proud of how far we have come as a region and our partnership with Visa."

"We take pride in our collaboration with Visa in this special launch of Boubyan Visa Prepaid Card along with its various benefits. I would like to seize this opportunity to reiterate the importance of our special partnership with Visa that dates back to many years, and which, thank Almighty Allah, introduced outstanding services to better serve our customers of all segments," he added.

Al-Mejhem reiterated: "Boubyan Bank's goal has always been to be closer to its customers, to offer them unique experience that stand out from others, and to meet their various needs and demands, while putting them always ahead of others to ensure they enjoy top-quality customer service. At Boubyan, we will always work on offering unique services and products through collaboration with various outstanding partners such as Visa, and many other partners. We will always be coping with all the developments and transformations witnessed by the

world of banking services."

"Boubyan Bank is keen on changing traditional concepts about banking products and services out of its endeavors to become a "Way of Life" and to be always closer to customers. This can be clearly seen through our constant tracking of sports' activities, especially popular sports such as football...". Al-Mejhem pointed out. The launching event was held over 3 days, where customers enjoyed the activities organized throughout the event and many benefits such as being issued the card against no fees.

### Visa

Shashank Singh, Visa's General Manager for Kuwait and Qatar, said: "We are proud to join our longstanding partner Boubyan Bank in offering football fans in Kuwait access to the digital economy through secure and rewarding digital payment solutions. These FIFA-themed Visa prepaid cards are contactless enabled for quick and easy payments in store and backed by Visa's security technology so cardholders can pay with confidence. For travelers, they also promise the peace of mind of worldwide acceptance at our 100 million merchant partner locations. We look forward to expanding our partnership with Boubyan Bank and further collaborating with them to support the Kuwaiti government's agenda of extending the benefits of digital payments to more consumers."

### Various benefits of the card

The bank's Executive Manager - Cards Products, Youssef Al-Majed, stated: "There is no doubt that the FIFA World Cup (tm) is an international event that draws the attention of people around the world for more than one month. This time, the event enjoys a special importance since it will be held very near to us, an hour away, which gives it more focus and attention." "Boubyan Bank has had the honor to launch its

"I don't know how I got here," admitted Bouzkova after seeing off Caroline Garcia in the third round. To celebrate, she and her team celebrated with traditional strawberries and cream. "It's one of our 100 routines at Wimbledon," she said. Bouzkova is superstitious enough to rarely stray from pre-match habits. In a recent interview with the DNEs daily, she said she and her father Milan always play the board game of Sequence before going on court.

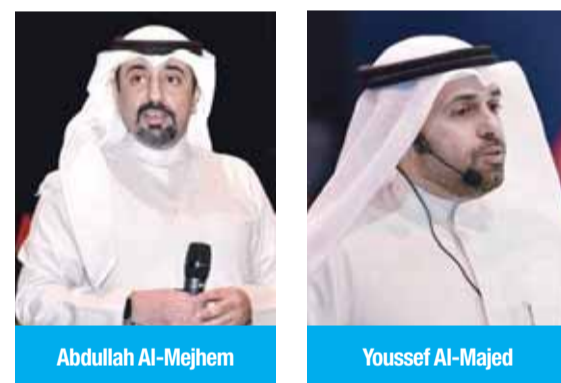
That is accompanied by tea with cups placed on the left. She will always use the first shower on her left and then always consume two bananas. Bouzkova has never faced Jabeur in singles but she did tackle her in doubles in Eastbourne last month when the Tunisian teamed-up with the returning Serena Williams. "Ons is one of the most talented on the tour. She can basically do anything, mix up the game so well. Many dropshots. Her game is really fun," said Bouzkova.

Jabeur made the last-eight in 2021 and is now looking to reach a first Grand Slam semi-final. The 27-year-old coasted through the first three rounds before digging deep to save five set points in the opening set of her last-16 clash against Elise Mertens. Now she hopes her progress at the All England Club will inspire other Arab and African players. "I want them to believe more in themselves and believe they can be here," said Jabeur. "I don't come from a rich family so you have to stop finding excuses and just go for it, enjoy it." —AFP

43 deliveries paced the home side to 193 for five batting first in ideal conditions.

Despite an unbeaten 68 from Test captain Shakib Al Hasan, the visitors lacked urgency through their innings and were limited to 158 for six in reply. Seamers Romario Shepherd and Obed McCoy claimed two wickets each while spinners Akeal Hosein and Hayden Walsh proved the most economical as their variations made it difficult for Bangladesh to develop any sort of batting rhythm.

West Indies lead the series 1-0 following the no-result in the rain-ruined opening fixture at the same venue on Saturday. Guyana National Stadium at Providence hosts the final match on Thursday with



Abdullah Al-Mejhem

Youssef Al-Majed

FIFA-themed prepaid card thanks to its partnership with Visa. The card's design is vertical and has many benefits with many surprises, events and exclusive discounts and offers for Visa cardholders thanks to Visa in addition to the ability to use it with all modern payment Apps as well as smart wearables" he added.

Al-Majed went on to point out: "The card is easily available for all Boubyan Bank's customers. It is a limited edition, which gives it more glamour and importance. Customers can get the card through Msa3ed, our digital assistant on Boubyan App, or through any of Boubyan Bank's branches, where they can apply for the card and choose whether the card be delivered to their homes within 5 business days, or to receive the card from any branch within 3 business days."

"This ceremony comes as a part of the campaign organized by the bank for this card, which started months ago, including the organization of Boubyan Football Cup during the Holy Month of Ramadan. The coming period will witness many events to be announced in due time through our social media platforms as a part of the marketing campaign for the card," Al-Majed concluded.



WIMBLEDON: Czech Republic's Marie Bouzkova serves the ball to France's Caroline Garcia 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. —AFP

Bangladesh needing to win to share the honors in the series ahead of the three-match one-day international duel at the same venue. Powell's innings, highlighted by six sixes and two fours, earned him the man-of-the-match award.

"My plan is very simple at the crease," said Powell. "I look to get a start, even if it takes a while because I know I can make up for it later on in the innings. "I've been struggling quite a bit with spin but I have to give credit to my coach (former West Indies Test opener) Robert Samuels for helping to adjust my game." Powell came to the crease on the back of a 74-run second-wicket partnership between King and captain Nicholas Pooran (34). He proceeded to dominate a 63-run fifth-wicket stand to

## Ton-up Bairstow leads England against India

**BIRMINGHAM:** Jonny Bairstow completed his third hundred in successive Tests before falling for 106 at Edgbaston on Sunday to leave England's series-decider against India intriguingly poised. Bairstow's latest century was the cornerstone of England's 284 in reply to India's 416, a deficit of 132 runs. No other England batsman made more than Sam Billings' 36, with the wicketkeeper one of four wickets for Mohammed Siraj.

But with England having chased down seemingly stiff targets of 277, 299 and 296 during a recent 3-0 whitewash of Test world champions New Zealand, there was still work for India to do with the bat. They lost Shubman Gill to just the third ball of their second innings, caught in the slips off England great James Anderson. But Cheteshwar Pujara (17 not out) and Hanuma Vihari (10 not out) took India to 37-1 at tea on the third day, a lead of 169 runs.

England had resumed in the dire position of 84-5 in a match they have to win to square this five-match series at 2-2. Against New Zealand, their first series under their new leadership duo of Stokes and red-ball coach Brendon McCullum, the team had several times hit its way out of trouble. But for all the talk of the new 'Bazball' approach, a reference to former New Zealand captain McCullum's nickname, Bairstow still played himself in against India's impressive pace attack.

Bairstow was 16 not out off 65 balls before, playing orthodox but powerfully hit strokes, he accelerated in scoring his next 84 runs off just 54 balls as the 32-year-old went to his fifth Test century of 2022. He brought up his latest hundred when a push off seamer Shardul Thakur was misfielded on the cover rope to give the Yorkshireman his 14th four in 119 balls. He also hit two sixes. This century followed Bairstow's scores against New Zealand of 136 at Trent Bridge and 162 at his Headingley home ground, where he also made an unbeaten 71 in the second innings.

But he fell to the first ball of Mohammed Shami's new spell when an edged drive flew to former India captain Virat Kohli at first slip. Kohli, who earlier Sunday had been spoken to by the umpires following a verbal altercation with Bairstow, blew a kiss to the crowd. It was no more than Shami, who bowled far better than figures of 2-78 in 22 overs, deserved. All-rounder Stokes, nought not out overnight, batted in frantic fashion for 25.

### Bumrah's brilliant catch

Already dropped on 18, when Shardul Thakur floored a routine catch at cover, Stokes was missed again on 25 when India stand-in captain Jasprit Bumrah dropped a low chance at mid-off, with Thakur the unlucky bowler on this occasion. But next ball Stokes drove harder and higher, only for Bumrah, diving to his left, to hold a brilliant catch and one far harder than the chance he had missed. That catch continued an excellent all-round match for Bumrah, leading India for the first time after regular captain Rohit Sharma was sidelined by Covid-19.

The tailender had smashed Stuart Broad for 29 in an over costing a total of 35 — the most expensive in Test history — in a flourish to a total built on hundreds from Rishabh Pant (146) and Ravindra Jadeja (104). Bumrah, in his more familiar new-ball role, then removed all of England's top three. That gave him 21 wickets in the series, the most by an Indian bowler in a series in England. 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

## 'Bouzie Bottle' makes its Wimbledon bow

**LONDON:** Marie Bouzkova could reach the Wimbledon semi-finals on Tuesday, fired up by a dedicated series of pre-match superstitions and a decade-long devotion to an eye-catching, giant water bottle. The 23-year-old US-based Czech will be the underdog when she faces world number two Ons Jabeur. Win or lose, she will certainly catch the eye. At every changeover, Bouzkova reaches for an outsized, jet-black water bottle which requires both hands to lift. The 'Bouzie Bottle' boasts a giant sticker with the words 'From Prague to Florida...to a court near you'.

"We bought it from a girl in Florida. I used the original one for three years and now I always just look at Amazon and buy a new one," said Bouzkova who has been using a giant bottle for a decade. "In fact, I can't even imagine playing without one now." Until this Wimbledon, Bouzkova had never progressed beyond the second round of a major. But after knocking out seventh seed Danielle Collins in the first round, the 66th-ranked Czech has coasted through the draw.

## West Indies ease to T20 victory over Bangladesh

**ROSEAU:** Contrasting half-centuries by Rovman Powell and Brandon King highlighted a formidable West Indies batting effort on the way to a 35-run victory over Bangladesh in the second T20 international in Dominica on Sunday. Powell's blistering 61 not out off 28 balls and opener King's more measured 57 from

ensure Bangladesh faced a daunting challenge.

They were never really in the hunt after McCoy removed openers Liton Das and Anamul Haque with his first two deliveries, although Shakib's milestone of reaching 2,000 runs, and therefore becoming the first player ever to complete the double of 2,000 runs and 100 wickets in T20Is, served as some consolation. "We bowled too many loose balls at the top which gave them the momentum in their innings and then Roy took it away from us with an incredible innings," said Bangladesh captain Mahmudullah. "We just weren't good enough with the bat either. Shakib batted really well but we needed at least one other player to stay with him to have a chance." —AFP





WIMBLEDON: Chile's Cristian Garin returns the ball to Australia's Alex De Minaur during their round of 16 men's singles tennis match on the eighth day of the 2022 Wimbledon Championships on July 4, 2022. —AFP

## Garin books Wimbledon quarters

### Kyrgios eyes Wimbledon quarters as Nadal picks up the pace

**LONDON:** Chile's Cristian Garin came back from two sets down and saved two match points to beat 19th seed Alex de Minaur and reach the Wimbledon quarter-finals on Monday. The unseeded Garin looked down and out when he was trailing by two sets but took the third set on a tie-break and went on to win 2-6, 5-7, 7-6 (7/3), 6-4, 7-6 (10/6) in four hours, 34 minutes.

De Minaur was in charge from the start after breaking in the first game, before repeating the feat later in the set. The Australian, who beat Garin on grass in Eastbourne last month, broke three times in the second set to take an iron grip on the match. But Garin, who had a 3-0 losing record against his opponent heading into the match on Court Two, came out on top in the tie-break.

The world number 43 won the fourth set to force a dramatic decider, during which he saved two match points on his own serve in the 10th game. The set went to a tie-break and Garin held his nerve to seal the win and secure a place in his first Slam quarter-final.

#### Nadal picks up

Meanwhile, Nick Kyrgios was back in action at Wimbledon on Monday after his dramatic victory against Stefanos Tsitsipas as he closes in on a mouth-

watering semi-final with Rafael Nadal. The maverick Australian toppled Tsitsipas in a heated four-set thriller on Saturday, during which he called for the fourth seed to be kicked out of the tournament for hitting a ball into the crowd.

Kyrgios called the umpire a "disgrace" as tempers frayed and the bad feeling spilled over into the post-match press conferences. The defeated Greek player said his opponent has an "evil side" and described him as a "bully", comments that Kyrgios laughed off. Kyrgios, 40th in the world, thrives on his bad-boy image and Saturday's outbursts were not even his first of the tournament. But it will be a different challenge against American Brandon Nakashima, a player he has never faced before, and he may struggle to re-create the big-match intensity on Centre Court. Kyrgios, who has only reached the quarter-finals of two Grand Slams, believes he has the firepower to win Wimbledon.

"Round by round, if I keep doing my things, I feel good. I'm all right," said the 27-year-old, who had vocal support from the crowd on Saturday despite his antics. Nadal, chasing the third leg of a calendar Grand Slam, found his rhythm in his third-round match against Italy's Lorenzo Sonego and now faces Dutch 21st seed Botic van de Zandschulp. The 22-time Grand Slam champion,

twice a winner at the All England Club, swept into the last 16 in straight sets after needing four sets to progress in his opening two matches.

"My best match, without a doubt, since the tournament started," said Nadal, the only top-10 player left in his side of the draw. "I made improvements today. Very happy for that. 'I made a lot of things much better than the previous days, the determination, the way that I manage to play more aggressive, going to the net plenty of times.'" In the other two last-16 matches, Australia's Alex De Minaur plays Cristian Garin of Chile while Australia's Jason Kubler takes on 11th-seeded American Taylor Fritz.

#### Quarters beckon for Tan

In the women's competition, Harmony Tan, who defeated Serena Williams in the first round, takes on American Amanda Anisimova. Tan needed more than three hours to see off Williams but on Saturday she hit top form, demolishing Britain's Katie Boulter 6-1, 6-1 in just 51 minutes. Tan, ranked 115 in the world, said she was enjoying Wimbledon. "I think I like grass," she said. "I never play on this court but I like to play with slice and volley and everything with my game so I'm really happy." The most eye-catching match of the day in the top half of the draw is a contest between fourth seed Paula Badosa of Spain and 2019



Spain's Rafael Nadal

champion Simona Halep, who is yet to drop a set.

Romania's Halep, who is the 16th seed this year, said becoming a champion at the All England Club gave her confidence. Badosa is the only member of the world's top 10 - along with Tunisia's Ons Jabeur - left in the women's tournament. French veteran Alize Cornet, who ended Polish top seed Iga Swiatek's 37-match winning run on Saturday, faces Australian Ajla Tomljanovic while 17th seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan goes up against unseeded Croatian Petra Martic. —AFP

## Tennis badboy Kyrgios: Controversial moments

**LONDON:** Nick Kyrgios will hope his tennis can do the talking when he faces American Brandon Nakashima for a place in the Wimbledon quarter-finals on Monday. The Australian's antics in his third-round win against Stefanos Tsitsipas on Saturday grabbed the headlines, overshadowing some brilliant tennis. AFP looks at some of the other famous antics of the 27-year-old over the years.

#### Racquet smashing

Kyrgios took out his frustration on three tennis racquets after losing the first set to Borna Coric at the 2016 Cincinnati Masters. He demolished the one he was playing with on the hard-court surface before removing two from his bag and destroying those as well. After mangling his racquets he towelled himself dry. Kyrgios leveled the match but blew an advantage in the decider, losing it on a tie-break.

#### Chair rage

One of Kyrgios's most dramatic outbursts came at the 2019 Italian Open during a match against Casper Ruud after he was given a game penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct. He threw his racquet onto the clay court in fury, kicked his water bottle and hurled a chair from the court to gasps from the crowd before shouting expletives. Kyrgios, who was disqualified and fined, shouted "I'm done".

#### Wawrinka taunt

Kyrgios drew criticism for making a

lewd sexual comment about Stan Wawrinka's then-girlfriend during a match in Montreal in 2015. The taunt was picked up by microphones. "What was said I wouldn't say to my worst enemy," tweeted Wawrinka. "To stoop so low is not only unacceptable but also beyond belief. Kyrgios later apologized for the remarks.

#### Not trying

Kyrgios was booed off court in a tanking row at the Shanghai Masters in 2016. The combustible Kyrgios argued with a fan and the chair umpire as he gave up on a string of points during his 6-3, 6-1 defeat to Germany's Mischa Zverev. Kyrgios admitted "taking the easy way out". He was fined over the incident and handed an initial eight-week ban, reduced to three after he agreed to see a sports psychologist.

#### ATP ban

Kyrgios accused the ATP men's tour of being "pretty corrupt" after being issued with a fine of \$113,000 over his behavior at the 2019 Cincinnati Masters. The Australian smashed two racquets and used a profanity in describing an umpire as a "tool" during a loss to Russia's Karen Khachanov. When subsequently it was found the fine was a concern, he said: "Not at all. ATP is pretty corrupt anyway. I'm not frustrated at all." He subsequently rowed back on his comments, saying he wanted to "clarify" what he had said. "It was not the correct choice of words and my point and inten-



WIMBLEDON: Australia's Nick Kyrgios uses a towel as he plays against US Brandon Nakashima during their round of 16 men's singles tennis match on the eighth day of the 2022 Wimbledon Championships on July 4, 2022. —AFP

tion was to address what I see as double standards rather than corruption," Kyrgios in a statement on his Twitter account. —AFP

## Premier League clubs 'can apply' for safe standing

**LONDON:** Premier League clubs have been told they can apply to use safe standing areas from the start of the 2022-23 season. Chelsea, Manchester City, Manchester United and Tottenham took part in a safe standing pilot in the second half of last season, with second-tier Cardiff also joining the experiment. The scheme proved a success and the British government has given the green light for all clubs in the Premier League and Championship to request a safe standing license if they wish.

"Thanks to a robust trial, thorough evidence and modern engineering, we are now ready to allow standing once again in our grounds," UK Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said on Monday. "We are not reintroducing terraces and only clubs which meet strict safety criteria will be permitted." Brentford, Wolves and second-tier QPR will offer designated standing areas for home and away fans in the coming season, with other clubs expected to apply.

The government confirmed Wembley would offer limited safe standing for fans at domestic matches later in the season. The English

Football Association will trial safety rails in England's Nations League match against Germany at Wembley in September, but at that stage spectators must remain seated. Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston had said in May he was "minded" to offer the option to all Premier League and Championship clubs on the back of interim findings from independent research on the pilot.

The pilot marked the end of a blanket ban on standing in the top two tiers of English football which had been in place for more than 25 years. Clubs had been required to provide all-seated accommodation since August 1994 in the wake of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster, where 97 Liverpool fans were killed in crushing on over-crowded terraces before an FA Cup semi-final against Nottingham Forest.

It is understood Liverpool are not considering introducing safe standing for next season, but may extend or increase their existing rail seating provision having run a separate club pilot last season. "Based upon what I have experienced and we have learnt through the pilot program, safe standing is set to deliver an electric atmosphere at our football stadiums," Huddleston said. "Fans have long campaigned for its introduction and we have worked carefully with supporters' groups, including the families affected by the tragic Hillsborough disaster." —AFP