

7 India's 'bulldozer justice' flattens Muslim dissent



8 Bader Al-Kharafi leads Kuwait's CEOs on Forbes Middle East list



8 Boursa Kuwait recognized by Pan Finance for sustainability efforts



16 Tunisia's 'Federer': How Ons Jabeur became a star



Maskless pilgrims launch largest hajj of COVID era

Pilgrimage restricted to a million vaccinated Muslims under the age of 65

MAKKAH: The biggest hajj pilgrimage since the COVID pandemic began kicked off Wednesday, with hundreds of thousands of mostly maskless worshippers expected to circle Islam's holiest site in Makkah. One million fully vaccinated Muslims, including 850,000 from abroad, are allowed at this year's hajj, a major break from two years of drastically curtailed numbers due to the pandemic.

At Makkah's Grand Mosque, pilgrims performed the "tawaf", the circumambulation of the Kaaba, the large cubic structure draped in golden-embroidered black cloth that Muslims around the world turn towards to pray. Authorities said last month that masks would be required at the site, but that has been largely ignored

so far this week.

Many pilgrims held umbrellas to block the hot sun as the temperature climbed to 42 degrees Celsius. The Saudi health ministry has prepared 23 hospitals and 147 health centers in Makkah and Madinah, the second-holiest city in Islam, to accommodate pilgrims, state media reported this week. That includes allocating more than 1,000 beds for patients requiring intensive care and more than 200 specifically for heatstroke patients, while dispatching more than 25,000 health workers to respond to cases as they arise.

The pilgrimage consists of a series of religious rites which are completed over five days in Islam's holiest city and its surroundings in western Saudi Arabia. On

Thursday, the pilgrims will move to Mina, around five kilometers away from the Grand Mosque, ahead of the main rite at Mount Arafat, where Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) delivered his final sermon. Four hospitals and 26 health centers are ready to treat pilgrims in Mina, state media said.

This year's hajj is restricted to vaccinated Muslims under the age of 65 chosen from millions of applicants through an online lottery system. Those coming from outside Saudi Arabia were required to submit a negative COVID-19 PCR result from a test taken within 72 hours of travel. Since the start of the pandemic, Saudi Arabia has registered more than 795,000 coronavirus cases, more than 9,000 of them fatal. — AFP





SVN

WHERE LIFESTYLE MEETS
WELLNESS, FITNESS AND SERENITY.

 SVN_KW
SVNKW.COM

Local

Japan's Ambassador visits Kuwait Times



KUWAIT: (From left) Kuwait Times Deputy Editor-in-Chief Dr Ziad Al-Alyan, Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait Morino Yasunari and Kuwait Times Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain.



(From left) Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait Morino Yasunari speaks with Kuwait Times Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain and Kuwait Times Deputy Editor-in-Chief Dr Ziad Al-Alyan.

KUWAIT: Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait Morino Yasunari paid a visit Wednesday to Kuwait Times, where he was received by Deputy Editor-in-Chief Dr Ziad Al-Alyan and Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Boftain. The meeting tackled various topics, including business opportunities, tourism and other issues of mutual interest. During the meeting, Ambassador Yasunari said that April and October were the most favorable months for tourism in Japan, noting that January is a favorite for skiing enthusiasts. Later, Dr Alyan and Boftain took the ambassador on a tour where he was acquainted with Kuwait Times' and Kuwait News' various departments.



Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait Morino Yasunari is taken on a tour of Kuwait Times.



Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait Morino Yasunari in a group picture at Kuwait Times' printing press.

Zain platinum sponsor of Engineering Design Exhibition

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its platinum sponsorship of the 41st Engineering Design Exhibition and the annual Zain Award for Innovation and Excellence. The event, organized by Kuwait University's College of Engineering and Petroleum (CEP), is held under official support from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) at Sabah Al-Salem University City in Shadadiya under the patronage of Kuwait University Director Dr Yousef Al-Roumi.

Zain took part in the event's opening ceremony at the Cultural Center, attended by Kuwait University Director Dr Yousef Al-Roumi, CEP Acting Dean Dr Ayed Salman, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, KFAS Deputy General Manager for Strategic Programs Dr Khawla Al-Shayji, CEP Director of the Engineering Training Center and Graduates Dr Duaij Al-Rukaibi, as well as Kuwait University officials and faculty, private sector engineering firms, and engineering heads of government institutions.

Zain continues to strategically sup-

port this exhibition and sponsor the annual award as part of its commitment towards developing and nurturing innovation in the nation. The company is keen on supporting and encouraging various student activities under its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy, which closely focuses on contributing to the development of the education sector by partnering with many academic organizations to invest in education, which the company considers an essential element of the further progress of national economy.

The Engineering Design Exhibition is the nation's top engineering gathering, featuring engineering design projects from across CEP's scientific majors. The event creates an inclusive ecosystem that encourages students to research, develop, and innovate, ultimately aiming at opening new horizons for a sustainable future in Kuwait.

The event is considered the biggest since the College of Engineering and Petroleum's inception in 1975. The exhibition witnesses the participation of hundreds of projects from across the college's departments, as well as the presence of hundreds of students, who showcase their final projects to



KUWAIT: Kuwait University Director Dr Yousef Al-Roumi honors Waleed Al-Khashti for Zain's support in the presence of CEP Acting Dean Dr Ayed Salman and KFAS Deputy General Manager for Strategic Programs Dr Khawla Al-Shayji.

visitors. The Zain-sponsored annual Innovation and Excellence Award highlights the most creative and innovative projects as per the standards outlined by the College of Engineering and Petroleum.

Zain's support to the event springs from the company's core Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy. Zain believes that supporting the various educational programs and initiatives pro-

vides young people with skills and tools necessary to help them highlight and develop their potential, ultimately contributing to Kuwait's progress.

As a leading national company, Zain firmly believes in the importance of contributing to the progress of the education sector and looks to empower and prepare the nation's youth for the important roles they will play in the further progress of the country.

Mexican Ambassador sends Eid Al-Adha greetings

KUWAIT: The Embassy of Mexico to the State of Kuwait released a statement expressing greetings on the advent of Eid Al-Adha. "Ambassador of Mexico to Kuwait Miguel Angel Isidro has the honor to extend his sincere congratulations and best wishes to His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Crown Prince, the Government and people of the State of Kuwait, on the occasion of the advent of 'Eid-al-Adha', wishing the friendly people of Kuwait further prosperity and stability," reads a statement released by the embassy on Wednesday.



Mexican Ambassador Miguel Angel Isidro

"It is with great pleasure I look forward to working alongside the State of Kuwait to write a new chapter of bilateral relations and cooperation and bring more prosperity to both countries and people," Ambassador Isidro added. "In recent years, our two countries have enjoyed deepening collaboration and exchanges in the commercial and cultural fields, and we are excited to grow that relationship in the years ahead. Once again, I wish the people of Kuwait and everyone a safe and blessed Eid with happiness and health."

Kuwaiti researcher sheds light on Palestinian cause

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: As global campaigns are attempting to impose normalization of ties with the Zionist entity that is occupying Palestine and killing and displacing millions of Palestinians over the years, Kuwaiti researcher on the Palestinian cause Abdullah Al-Mosawi has been working on boosting awareness for the Palestinian cause through media platforms. Mosawi is a researcher and political analyst specialized on the establishment of the Zionist entity, international law and the Palestinian cause. Kuwait Times spoke to him to learn more about his work.

Kuwait Times: Can you tell us about the reasons for your interest in the Palestinian cause?

Abdullah Al-Mosawi: I have been interested in the Palestinian cause since I joined college in 1997. Attention towards the Palestinian cause is waning locally, while it was a central and humanitarian cause before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. I delved deeper into this topic, which pushed me to have an interest in all its aspects.

KT: Can you tell us about the research that you have published regarding the Palestinian cause?

Mosawi: I have 43 research papers published in local and international newspapers and discussed in several international conferences on various aspects of the Palestine cause, whether in the emergence of the Zionist entity, Palestinian refugees, international law, humanitarian issues related to Palestine, the situation of the Gaza Strip, the right of Palestinian resistance and normalization issues. I have also published 450 articles and seven books such as "Palestine is our Central Cause," "Kuwaiti Against Normalization", "Zionists", "Terror Establishes a State" and "A Brief History of Palestine".

KT: How does social media help you to raise awareness of the Palestinian cause?

Mosawi: Because of the importance of social media nowadays, and especially since the current generation has no time for lengthy and detailed speeches, I started to present a series of videos on Instagram under the title 'Palestinian Minute' four years ago during the month of Ramadan. Each episode covers an aspect of the Palestinian cause in less than one minute. The goal of this program is to provide focused information to the public, especially the youth, about Palestine and the justice of its cause.

The reach through social media is far better than traditional media. When I present "Palestinian Minute", it spreads to countries around the world in no time, and interaction is greater. On the other hand, let's accept the American-backed Zionist media has huge ability. However, we believe in the justice of the Palestinian cause - injustice was done to the Palestinian people, and international law is partial. Therefore, these pillars must be highlighted on social media, and it is important to present them in an attractive manner to the audience.

KT: What are the most dangerous types of normalizations with the Zionist entity from your point of view?

Mosawi: Recently, there are increasing attempts locally to market normalization with the Zionist entity, and I am afraid of normalization that is being marketed from a religious standpoint and wrapped in a religious cover. There is marketing for academics, sports and scientific normalizations and many other reasons for normalization. However, despite the Kuwaiti community rejecting all forms of normalization and most people being religiously committed and conservative, we must fight this kind of normalization. I hope people will not be deceived by the religious cover of normalization.

KT: As an educational researcher, what is your role in educating the new generation about the importance of the Palestinian cause?

Mosawi: I have many participations, whether in schools or youth centers of both sexes, and I am surprised that there is severe ignorance among the new generation towards the Palestinian cause, especially about historical rights. I have a book project that will address young people in their own way to comprehend and understand the justice of the Palestinian cause. It is our duty as media professionals and edu-



Abdullah Al-Mosawi

cators to clarify the facts in an attractive manner for our generations, which is our minimum duty.

KT: Do you think Kuwait should locally develop laws and legislation that support the Palestinian cause?

Mosawi: Kuwait is distinct from most regional countries in supporting the Palestinian cause, whether at the level of the political leadership or the popular level. I always tell political forces when we meet that we differ on all matters, but when it comes to the Palestinian cause, we find there is Kuwaiti agreement and consensus. In Kuwait, a group of members of the National Assembly presented a law that criminalizes all forms of normalization with the Zionist entity to the legislative committee, and I call through Kuwait Times for the next National Assembly to adopt this law.

KT: What is your next step regarding the Palestinian cause?

Mosawi: I am currently tackling the issue of normalization in all its details. My next step will be focusing on it and clarifying the reasons why we should reject all kinds of normalization with the Zionist entity, as well as the danger of normalization to the Palestinian cause. Because when normalization takes place, the Palestinian cause will end, which means giving up most of the historical and legal rights and grievances of the Palestinian people and opening a new page for a monstrous entity that has no origin.

Study to regulate expats' ownership of real estate

KUWAIT: A government team began an executive study to prepare a proposal that will allow expats living in the country to own real estate, expected to be presented to the new government that will be formed following National Assembly elections. The study includes granting non-Kuwaitis the right to own a residential flat in an investment building, provided the applicant has a permanent residency permit and has not been convicted for any honor or trust crime during their entire stay in Kuwait. The flat must be used for private residence for the applicant or their family, and should not be more than 350 sq m. The person must not own another apartment in Kuwait.

The current law allows an Arab expat to own only one flat in Kuwait following approval by the Cabinet and a decree in this regard. The new proposal aims at expanding this issue to include all expats, Arabs or otherwise. Title deeds will be issued by a decision from the justice minister, and not a decree by the Cabinet. The study says allowing expats to own property may lead to investment in Kuwait instead of transferring it to their countries, especially since remittances exceed \$20 billion annually, which is a huge amount, depriving Kuwait from benefiting from this money.

The study shows that by allowing expats to own flats in Kuwait, the government can develop the mortgage market like other GCC markets. The study does not see any risk from ownership, as it is expected only 1,000 flats will be sold to expats annually, which is a small percentage out of the 400,000 flats in investment areas. The study shows Kuwait created an investment authority to attract and encourage direct foreign investments in Kuwait, and one of the incentives to attract these investments is to grant investors the right to own flats. This will bring social benefits as expats will find a form of stability in Kuwait, so they will increase their investments in the country.

Local

Sheep prices up significantly ahead of Eid Al-Adha holiday

Prices up 30 percent, expected to increase further due to demand



KUWAIT: Merchants wait with their flocks for customers at a sheep market in Kuwait on July 4, 2022, as Muslims prepare for the Eid Al-Adha festival and holiday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: The prices of sacrificial animals in Kuwait have increased significantly, reaching 30 percent, while livestock breeders expect a greater increase in prices with the advent of Eid Al-Adha. Ali Abu Musleh, a livestock breeder, told Kuwait Times sheep prices have increased for Eid, which is normal due to the increasing demand for sacrifices.

He added prices of Nuaimi sheep (Kuwaiti and Saudi) start from KD 160, reaching up to KD 220 for some animals, while prices were around KD 115

to KD 120 previously. Meanwhile, Shafali sheep prices have increased to around KD 115 to KD 120 from KD 75 previously. "Prices of local Nuaimi sheep younger than six months old start from KD 125 to KD 135," he added.

Zahid, another livestock breeder, said the rise in sheep prices is a result of a rise in the cost of feed, pointing out prices have doubled to KD 6 for an 18 kg bag from KD 3.5. "Sacrificial animals are available and there is no shortage," he assured. But some other livestock breeders said the price rises is due to a shortage of sheep, especially local animals.

Doctor warns of 'increasing obesity rates' among children, youth in Kuwait

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Many scientific studies in Kuwait revealed an increase in obesity rates among children and youth of up to 35 percent in males and 28 percent in females, a doctor said Wednesday. The rate in adults is 70 percent for males and 75 percent for females, Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) Executive Committee Member Dr Mariam Al-Otaibi said. "This affirms the need to spread awareness of correct eating habits and the importance of physical activities for children, and enroll them in sports activities at an early age, because sports are among the best means to maintain health and resist chronic diseases, including cancer," she said.

Otaibi was speaking on the sidelines of a swimming competition CAN launched in cooperation with Haido CAN under the theme "Swimming is Health and Prevention" for children aged 6 to 15 years. The competition was held in cooperation with Kazma Sports Club with the participation of more than 60 swimmers. Dr Otaibi thanked the families of participating swimmers for encouraging them to join such activities.

Director of Haido CAN Abdullah Khalid said organizing such sports activities encourages all groups to participate and allows for practicing well-liked sports that aims to make the youth aware of the importance of sports as a way to stay free of psychological pressure, and its relation to improv-

ing physical and mental health.

He said Haido CAN organizes several sports activities throughout the year and invites everyone to participate and register in these activities to gain health and develop skills in a suitable atmosphere. He thanked Kazma Sports Club for its successful cooperation with the campaign and Haido in holding swimming competitions for all society groups.

Meanwhile, Chairman of CAN Khalid Al-Saleh said CAN's initiatives have a vision and message as well as goals, followed by feedback to gauge the success of such initiatives. He said as obesity is among the major risk factors for getting chronic diseases headed by cancer, CAN has held many programs to face them.

Saleh said all international recommendations call for containing obesity during the youth period, because it is an active period with maximum energy during which metabolism rates increase, so CAN cooperated with many partners such as the education ministry to implement obesity fighting programs in schools, which brought positive results. He hoped they continue following a forced halt due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Saleh said all this is in the interest of an important group in our society, the youth, and is an invitation to all government and private entities to support such initiatives. CAN is ready for cooperation with all to carry out sports activities to maintain our children's and society's health, he added.



KUWAIT: Participants in the swimming competition pose with their awards.

On the occasion of the

60th
1961-2021
ANNIVERSARY



Subscribe or renew your subscription
KD 20 instead of KD 30 for 1 year

For individuals only

Tel: 24833199 ext: 353-355-356



kuwaittimes.net

Local

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian GulfTHE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYANEditor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYANEDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 353/3561
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125
COMMERCIAL : 24835618P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.com

News in brief

Kuwait to turn Failaka into tourist destination

KUWAIT: Minister of State for Municipality Affairs Dr Rana Al-Fares has allocated the Failaka Park project to the Finance Ministry. The project is part of Kuwait's efforts to turn the island into a tourist destination.

Authority to renew FTZ investors' contracts

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Industry began renewal of investors' contracts in Shuwaikh Free Zone, after a halt that started in 2017. The authority began handing contracts to investors who meet the conditions, including paying all financial dues to concerned authorities in exchange of benefiting from the property, sources told Kuwait Times, adding that the authority will continue renewal for all 117 contracts in the area. The sources added that the start of renewing contracts of investors in the area that will be renamed 'Future Zone' is considered a "large investment transformation" in the area.

National Guard to release prisoners on Eid

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Guard Undersecretary Lieutenant General Hashim Al-Rifai on Wednesday ordered release of imprisoned guards who have been held for disciplinary offenses, on the occasion of the upcoming Eid Al-Adha. In a statement, the National Guard said that the order came in line with instructions by the National Guard Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah. His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah offered his congratulations to His Highness the Amir, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the leaders and forces of the National Guard on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, praying to God to bring it back to everyone with goodness, and blessings.

Kuwait in solidarity with Italy after avalanche

KUWAIT: Kuwait sent a message of solidarity to Italy, expressing its sympathy, after several people were killed and injured while others remain missing after an avalanche struck the Alps on Tuesday. "The State of Kuwait extends its sincere condolences and sympathy to the Italian Republic's leadership, government and people, and to the families of the victims, expressing its wishes for a speedy recovery for the injured, and for the relevant authorities to succeed in finding the missing as soon as possible," read a Foreign Ministry statement.

Kuwait condemns armed attacks

KUWAIT: Kuwait underlines its condemnation and denunciation of two armed attacks that took place in northern Burkina Faso, which led to dozens of deaths and injuries, the Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday. The ministry outlined Kuwait's "principled and firm stance against violence and terrorism." In a statement, it also extended the Gulf Arab country's condolences and sympathy to Burkina Faso's leadership, government, people and the families of the victims as it wished a speedy recovery for those wounded.

Kuwait oil price up to \$117.16 pb

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by \$2.60 to \$117.16 per barrel on Tuesday, compared with \$114.56 pb a day earlier, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said on Wednesday. The price of the Brent crude at the global market plummeted by \$10.73 to \$102.77 per barrel, the same with the West Texas Intermediate, which fell by \$8.93 to \$99.50 pb.

World Cup pushes Qatar's economic development

DOHA: Qatar's hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup as well as rising prices of gas would contribute to economic development in many sectors, says a report released jointly by Qatar News Agency (QNA) and Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Wednesday. Despite skeptic global economic outlook, the International Development Fund (IMF) had recently projected economic growth to be at 4.9 percent in Qatar driven by the World Cup and gas prices. Official government statements estimated direct financial income resulted from World Cup at eight billion Riyals (\$2.2 billion) while 2022-35 long-term economic benefit projected at 9.9 billion Riyals (\$2.7 billion).

Kuwait Falcon Hospital Pure, int'l destination for treating wild birds



KUWAIT: A worker at the hospital performs a telescope diagnostic test on a bird.



A falcon undergoes anesthesia ahead of x-rays. —KUNA photos



A lab technician works at the hospital.



Hospital workers tend to a falcon at a telescope testing room.



X-ray of a falcon taken at the hospital.



Different types of falcons' feathers.

KUWAIT: Established especially for wild birds, Kuwait Falcon Hospital Pure is an international destination for treating, caring for and preparing falcons for the hunting season in October. In a press statement Wednesday, Director of Kuwait Falcon Hospital Pure Nasser Al-Ajmi said that wild birds need extreme care and attention to be able to adapt to captivity as it is a free bird and likes to fly freely.

Ajmi explained that one of the aspects of caring for falcons in the Arab Gulf countries is to give them rest during hot summer, in a phase known as 'tying bird', which extends between February and October. This phase is very important as falcons change their feather and need to be kept in a cooled, sunny place with shades and far from the movement of people in order to maintain the process of emerging new feathers, which appear very slowly.

The hospital, which receives hundreds of cases from all over the world, includes a group of qualified and experienced specialists and experts, and provides care for other species of rare birds in order to preserve them, added Ajmi. He noted that falcons and birds receive medical supervision since their admission to the hospital until they are handed back to their owners at the end of the bird's tie phase.

The hospital is affiliated to the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources and includes the latest international equipment and technologies of diagnosis and treatment, said Ajmi, and provides falcons with vaccines approved by international laboratories. Ajmi pointed out that the hospital offers service of repairing and replacing broken feathers, as falcons are always exposed to accidents during hunting or training. The hospital pharmacy

includes special medicines provided by the local market or through the Ministry of Health and the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources.

Regarding their market value, Ajmi said that the prices of falcons vary according to their different types, including Al-Shaheen, Al-Wakri, Al-Jir and others, as well as their different sizes and colors, as each has special features, so "there is no fixed price for them". Stressing the importance of falcon passports, Ajmi said: "This procedure, organized by the Environment Public Authority in cooperation with Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources, facilitates the process of falcons entering the hospital, preserves their data and their owners through an information ring or chip, and limits smuggling operations across countries." —KUNA

AUK signs deal with LOYAC Academy of Performing Arts

KUWAIT: The American University of Kuwait (AUK) signed a memorandum of understanding with LOYAC Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA) which permits AUK communication and media students to enroll in LAPA's Al-Jawhar program and earn up to nine credit hours towards their degree.

Al-Jawhar program is divided into three levels—level one consists of five media workshops; level two consists of practical training such as vocal coaching and the development of Arabic skills in which the student will be supervised by a well-known media figure for evaluation; and level three is a special topics course for selected students who passed the preceding levels, consisting of a field training program in CNN Arabic headquarters in Dubai for 30 days, a two-month podcast workshop in LOYAC/LAPA, and reporter trainee work in LOYAC/LAPA for a minimum of three months. It is through completing the third level that students earn an official certificate from LAPA stating the completion of a total of nine credit hours.

The signing ceremony took place with AUK executive vice president, Amal Al-Binali; the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr Ali Charara; the managing director and chairperson of LOYAC and LAPA, Fareah Al-Saqqaf; and TV producer and presenter, Rania Barghout, who serves as one of the industry experts supervising the students.

Dr Ali Charara highlighted the importance of



this collaboration for students' experience at AUK, "Communication and media students can now expand their knowledge beyond the parameters of their course material. Through this memorandum, students will have the invaluable opportunity of learning from industry professionals and exploring different branches within their field. Not only will this enhance their media literacy proficiency, but it will also contribute to increasing their level of expertise and experience—making them assets within Kuwait's job market."

Commenting on the agreement, Saqqaf stated, "Our relationship with the American University of

Kuwait is old and solid, based on cooperation and mutual respect since its foundation. With this agreement, the Al-Jawhar program becomes a practical project for the communications and media department at AUK, providing young people with more than 400 hours of practical training, which can be completed within one year or 18 months, thus turning students into qualified media personnel capable of managing their own program."

This agreement is a testament to AUK's distinguished integration of liberal arts principles that allow its students to engage with their chosen fields both in theory and practice.



India's 'bulldozer justice' flattens Muslim dissent

French PM to face baptism of fire in divided parliament

Page 6

Page 7

UK PM Johnson vows to plough on

Rishi Sunak resigns as finance minister, Sajid Javid quits as health secretary

LONDON, United Kingdom: Boris Johnson on Wednesday refused to quit as British prime minister, despite a slew of resignations from his scandal-hit government, piling on pressure as he faced a grilling from angry MPs. The 58-year-old leader promised to "deliver" on his "mandate" but his grip on power appears to be slipping following 10 short minutes on Tuesday night, when Rishi Sunak resigned as finance minister and Sajid Javid quit as health secretary.

Both said they could no longer tolerate the culture of scandal that has stalked Johnson for months, including lockdown lawbreaking in Downing Street that enraged the public who followed the rules. At the weekly session of Prime Minister's Questions in parliament, MPs from all sides rounded on Johnson.

But brushing off calls to resign, he told MPs: "Frankly, the job of a prime minister in difficult circumstances when you have been handed a colossal mandate is to keep going and that's what I'm going to do." Johnson has suffered an exodus of ministers in just 24 hours and later faced an hours-long grilling from the chairs of the House of Commons' most powerful committees, including some of his most virulent critics in the Tory ranks.

Sunak and Javid's departures came just minutes after Johnson apologised for appointing a senior Conservative, who quit his post last week after he was accused of drunkenly groping two men. Former education secretary Nadhim Zahawi was immediately handed the finance brief. "You don't go into this job to have an easy life," Zahawi told Sky News.

Challenge

Days of shifting explanations had followed the resignation of deputy chief whip Chris Pincher. Downing Street at first denied Johnson knew of prior allegations against Pincher when appointing him in February.

But by Tuesday, that defence had collapsed after a former top civil servant said Johnson, as foreign minister, was told in 2019 about another incident involving his ally. Minister for children and families Will Quince quit early Wednesday, saying he was given the inaccurate information before having to defend the government in a round of media interviews on Monday.

That triggered a new wave of more than a dozen resignations, and the withdrawal of support from previ-

ously loyal MPs. The Pincher affair was the "icing on the cake" for Sunak and Javid, Tory MP Andrew Bridgen, a strident Johnson critic, told Sky News.

"I and a lot of the party now are determined that he will be gone by the summer recess (starting on July 22): the sooner the better." The resignations dominated the British media, with even some of Johnson's staunchest newspaper backers doubting whether he could survive the fall-out. Other senior cabinet ministers, including Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, still back Johnson but many were wondering how long that may last.

Johnson only narrowly survived a no-confidence vote among Conservative MPs a month ago, which ordinarily would mean he could not be challenged again for another year. But the influential "1922 Committee" of non-ministerial Tory MPs is reportedly seeking to change the rules.

'Local difficulties'

Jacob Rees-Mogg, a doggedly loyal cabinet ally and Johnson's "minister for Brexit opportunities" dismissed the resignations as "little local difficulties". "Losing chancellors is something that happens," he said on Sky News, pointing to past Tory leaders-although Margaret Thatcher was ultimately felled by a cabinet revolt by top allies. Sunak's departure in particular, in the middle of policy differences over a cost-of-living crisis sweeping Britain, is dismal news for Johnson. Johnson, who received a police fine for the so-called "Partygate" affair, faces a parliamentary probe into whether he lied to MPs about the revelations.

Pincher's departure from the whips' office-charged with enforcing party discipline and standards-marked yet another allegation of sexual misconduct by Tories in recent months, recalling the "sleaze" that dogged John Major's government in the 1990s.

Conservative MP Neil Parish resigned in April after he was caught watching pornography on his mobile phone in the House of Commons. That prompted a by-election in his previously safe seat, which the party went on to lose in a historic victory for the opposition Liberal Democrats. Labour, the main opposition party, defeated the Conservatives in another by-election in northern England on the same day, prompted by the conviction of its Tory MP for sexual assault. — AFP



LONDON, United Kingdom: Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson (R) leaves from 10 Downing Street in central London. — AFP

Barkindo dies at 63 in 'shock' to OPEC

VIENNA: OPEC's secretary general, Nigeria's Mohammad Barkindo, has died at the age of 63, leaving the oil cartel in "shock" on Wednesday at a tumultuous time for the markets. Barkindo had headed the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries since 2016 and was scheduled to be replaced by Kuwait's Haitham Al-Ghais next month.

Under his stewardship, the cartel forged ties with Russia and nine other oil-producing countries to form a wider group known as OPEC+ in a bid to better stabilise oil markets. After OPEC+ slashed output during the pandemic to boost prices, the 23-member group's moves have not calmed markets-with record high prices-in recent months amid the war in Ukraine.

Barkindo died late Tuesday and will be buried on

Wednesday in his home town of Yola, according to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation's chief executive Mele Kyari. "Certainly a great loss to his immediate family, the NNPC, our country Nigeria, the OPEC and the global energy community," Kyari wrote, without providing any further details about the circumstances of Barkindo's death. "This tragedy is a shock to the OPEC Family." Vienna-based OPEC tweeted. "We express our sorrow and deep gratitude for the over 40 years of selfless service that... Barkindo gave to OPEC. His dedication and leadership will inspire OPEC for many years to come." In a statement, OPEC described Barkindo as "a trailblazer widely admired and respected throughout the globe. A dear friend to many."—AFP



Mohammad Barkindo



MAKKAH: Handout picture released by the Qatar News Agency (QNA) on July 5, 2022 shows Qatari pilgrims arriving to the Saudi Holy City of Makkah, ahead of the annual Muslim Hajj pilgrimage. — AFP

After blockade, Qataris end long wait for hajj

DOHA: After years of a regional blockade and the pandemic, this hajj will be "completely different" for Masoud al-Ali as he and other Qataris are finally able to rejoin the hallowed Muslim pilgrimage. "This is not the first time that I perform the hajj, however it is completely different," he told AFP. "My feeling cannot be described... returning to perform hajj rituals after five full years."

Qataris have been unable to take part in the pilgrimage to Islam's holiest city of Makkah since 2017, when Saudi Arabia led a diplomatic, trade and transport shut-out of their small, wealthy Gulf archipelago.

When the blockade was finally lifted in January last year, the coronavirus pandemic ruled overseas visitors out of the annual event, one of the five pillars of Islam. "We were looking at the Holy Lands and regretting those days. We had a deep longing to visit," Ali said ahead of this year's hajj, which starts on Wednesday.

Qatar shares a land border with Saudi Arabia, but for the people of the gas-rich emirate, Islam's holiest sites had remained tantalisingly out of reach. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt cut ties with Doha over allegations it supported extremists and was too close to arch-rival Iran-allegations Doha denied. Qatar, host of this year's World Cup, is again on friendly terms with its neighbours after diplomatic rapprochement replaced the rancour of recent times.

Now thousands of Qataris are among the 850,000 foreigners allowed to perform this year's hajj. The number of pilgrims is capped at one million-still much lower than the 2.5 million in 2019 — for COVID reasons.

Between Saturday afternoon and Monday morning, the Qatari pilgrims left Doha on flights bound for Jeddah, the Red Sea city which is the gateway to Makkah, the official Qatar News Agency said. "It is a different and exceptional hajj season" after the five-year hiatus, said Hatem al-Mansoori, who is leading one of the nine Qatari groups authorised to take worshippers.

"All the pilgrims are happy, relaxed and all is well. Everyone was looking forward to this moment when they would return to perform the hajj rituals," Mohamed Gohar, who is leading another Qatari group, said the initial quota of 1,080 people was raised to about 3,000 after it was five times oversubscribed.—AFP

Long-eared kid goat takes Pakistan by storm

KARACHI: A kid goat with extraordinarily long ears has become something of a media star in Pakistan, with its owner claiming a world record that may or may not exist. Simba is now living a pampered existence in Karachi, where he was born last month with ears that were strikingly long-and have grown further to reach 54 centimetres (21 inches).


Breeder Mohammad Hasan Narejo says he has approached Guinness World Records to see if his charge can be included as the Greatest Of All Time, although a category for "longest-eared goat" does not currently appear on the organisation's website.

"Within 10 to 12 days of his birth he was already appearing in all the national and international media-and won a beauty contest," a proud Narejo says. "Within 30 days he became so popular that even a famous personality might take 25 to 30 years to achieve this level of fame." Simba's ears are so long that Narejo has to fold them over his back to stop the little bleater from standing on them. He has also designed a harness so that Simba can carry the lengthy lug-holes around his neck.


Narejo is wary of the attention Simba has attracted—including from rival breeders—and has resorted to prayer and tradition to try to fend off any ill will. "We recite Koranic verses and blow on him to cast away the evil eye," Narejo said. "Following a long tradition we inherited from our elders, we have fastened a black thread around him that is fortified with Koranic verses." Narejo plans to raise Simba as a stud to promote the image of Pakistan as a top goat breeding nation. "Simba's Pakistan name must roam the whole world," he said. — AFP



KARACHI: Breeder Mohammad Hasan Narejo displays the ears of his kid goat Simba, in Karachi. — AFP



SHOP AT KALYAN JEWELLERS & WIN YOUR TICKET BACK HOME!



FREE RAFFLE COUPON
FOR EVERY
KWD 150
PURCHASE*


25 CUSTOMERS
CAN WIN A
BACK HOME
TICKET*

• GET •
100% EXCHANGE
VALUE
ON 22KT GOLD JEWELLERY BOUGHT FROM ANYWHERE

• EARN & BURN •
YOUR REWARD
POINTS

MONTHLY
INSTALMENT PLANS
FROM TOP BANKS IN KUWAIT

OFFER VALID AT ALL KALYAN JEWELLERS STORES ACROSS KUWAIT TILL 21ST AUGUST 2022

WWW.KALYANJEWELLERS.NET | FOLLOW US ON:  KALYANJEWELLERSMIDDLEEAST

*Conditions Apply

International

French PM to face baptism of fire in divided parliament

‘Democracy is not something to be taken lightly in our country’

PARIS: French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne will on Wednesday lay out the government's policy priorities in her first speech in front of what promises to be a stormy parliament.

The 61-year-old will make the customary “general political declaration” to kick off the legislative session, which is being scrutinised closely given Borne's weak position at the head of a minority government.



Holding a vote would be too risky

Centrist President Emmanuel Macron suffered a setback in parliamentary elections last month that saw his allies fall short of a majority by 39 seats. He and Borne have since failed to tempt opposition parties into a coalition.

“The prime minister is working round the clock,” a cabinet minister told AFP this week. “She's meeting everyone, she's calling everyone. She's really committed to listening, so we'll manage.” Without formal allies in the 577-seat national assembly, Borne has decided not to call a confidence vote on her policy speech—something almost all past prime ministers have done after their first appearances in the lower house.

Holding a vote would be “too risky” for Borne, who would have been forced to step down if she lost, explained Bruno Cautres, a researcher at the Cevipof political studies unit at Sciences Po univer-

sity in Paris. “She made the right decision, but she didn't really have a choice.”

But the hard-left France Unbowed (LFI) party, one of the big gainers in June's parliamentary polls, announced that it would immediately call for a no-confidence motion, which could also topple Borne. “It probably won't pass but it's important to make ourselves heard,” top LFI MP Mathilde Panot told BFM television after criticising the premier for failing to call a vote on Wednesday.

“Democracy is not something to be taken lightly in our country,” she added. The far-right National Rally, which has 89 MPs in the new parliament, a 10-fold increase, said it would not support the motion.

‘Outstretched hand’

Borne's immediate priorities are expected to be pushing through laws with wide support, such as one to help low-income families cope with the cost-of-living crisis and another to release extra funding for the struggling health service.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin was hopeful the government could count on support from the right-wing Republicans party for bills to tackle immigration and crime, saying the cabinet's hand was “outstretched”.

“If we put forward bills filled with common sense and with the spirit of compromise we have today, will this outstretched hand be taken by our adversaries?” he told BFM television on Tuesday. “Nobody would understand” if opposition parties systematically blocked the government, he said.

Without a formal coalition, intense negotiations with opposition parties will be required each time the government wants to pass legislation. Borne, a low-key former civil servant, will also be constantly vulnerable to a no-confidence motion called by opponents, making French politics unpredictable and unstable for the foreseeable future.

Only two months since he was re-elected to a



SAINT-DENIS, France: French National Assembly President Yael Braun-Pivet (C) and Seine-Saint-Denis deputy Stephane Peu visit la Maison des Femmes (Women's house) in Saint-Denis north of Paris. — AFP

historic second term, Macron finds his hands partly tied and has capacity to push through reforms diminished.

Exhausted?

The French media has speculated in recent days about his state of mind, with some reports suggesting he is yet to mentally rebound from the parliamentary setback. Le Point, a right-wing weekly, said he had lost his “energy, his nerve and his lucidity”, while the left-wing l'Obs reported he was suffering from “physical exhaustion”.

Rumours that Macron is burned out have fre-

quently surfaced during his five years in office, fed by reports that he survives on a few hours' sleep a night and often texts ministers in the early hours of the morning. A cabinet reshuffle announced on Tuesday did little to inject new momentum into his government as he failed to attract any new heavy-hitters.

It kept most senior figures in their jobs and brought in only junior new faces with little political experience. “Emmanuel Macron is no longer attractive,” senior rightwing Republicans figure Bruno Retailleau told the CNews channel on Tuesday. — AFP

S Africa honours 21 teens killed in tavern tragedy

EAST LONDON, South Africa: South Africa bade an emotional farewell on Wednesday to 21 people, mostly teens, who died in unclear circumstances at a township tavern last month, in an incident that deeply shook the nation.

President Cyril Ramaphosa joined more than a thousand people at a memorial service at a stadium in Scenery Park, a township in the coastal city of East London, where empty coffins were laid out to symbolise the loss. Eleven days after the bodies were discovered in the Enyobeni tavern, the cause of the deaths remains a riddle.

The police are yet to wrap up their investigation, although officials have ruled out a

stampede, and autopsy results are still to be made public. “Somebody, somewhere must answer” for the tragedy, Police Minister Bheki Cele declared at the memorial service

Scores of mourners filled a large marquee where 19 coffins were laid out, and hundreds more people gathered outside to follow the ceremony. Some broke down in tears, while others chanted prayers as a police band played the national anthem.

Undertakers said the caskets were empty. One family expected to bury their child after the service and the others would be buried later this week. Two of the victims had already been laid to rest, according to local media.

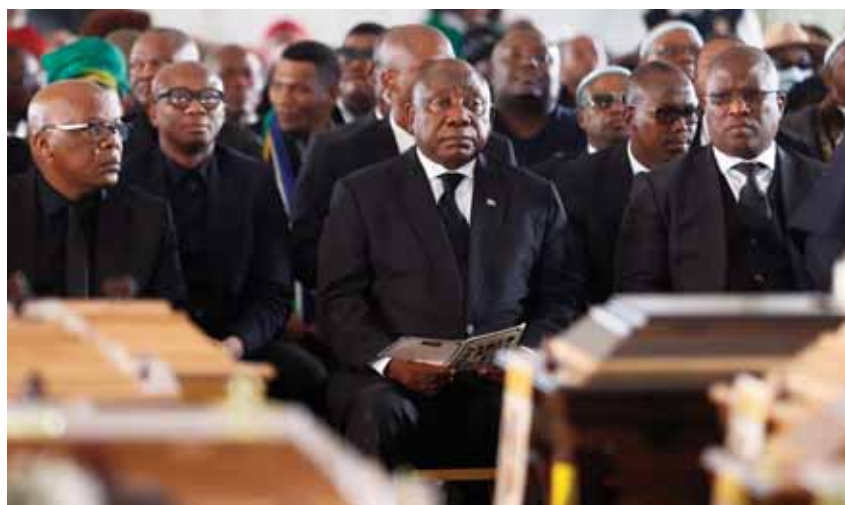
The youngsters died in what survivors have described as a battle to escape the jam-packed venue, with one reporting a suffocating smell. The grim discovery of their bodies was made on June 26. The youngest was just 14 years and the oldest 20, according to birthdates listed on the memorial official programme distributed on Wednesday. Cele had

previously said the youngest was 13 and the oldest 17. The fatalities bore no visible signs of injury and officials have ruled out a stampede as the cause of death.

“As a nation we are hurt by what happened,” Oscar Mabuyane, the head of the Eastern Cape province where East London is located, said in an address. “(The) young people we are here to bury were the hope of their families and by extension the hope of our nation.”

Drinking in South Africa is permitted for over-18s. But in township taverns, which are often located close to family homes, safety regulations and drinking-age laws are not always enforced. The tragedy has sparked calls for change.

“Alcohol... should never be a form of entertainment for our kids,” Lucky Ntimane, national convener of the National Liquor Traders Association told the memorial service. Nolutha Tsangani, a Scenery Park resident who lives near the Enyobeni tavern, said blame for the tragedy should be shared. —AFP



EAST LONDON, South Africa: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa (C) looks on during a symbolic mass memorial service in East London on July 6, 2022, after 21 people, mostly teens, died in unclear circumstances at a township tavern last month, in an incident that shocked South Africa. — AFP

Gunman charged with seven counts of murder

HIGHLAND PARK: A 21-year-old man who allegedly opened fire on a July 4 parade in a Chicago suburb while disguised in women's clothing was charged with seven counts of first-degree murder on Tuesday, prosecutors said.

Robert Crimo, 21, was arrested Monday, hours after the attack on an Independence Day crowd. “There will be more charges,” Lake County State's Attorney Eric Rinehart told reporters. “We anticipate dozens of more charges centered around each of the victims.”

Police spokesman Christopher Covelli said the death toll rose to seven on Tuesday after one of the victims died in hospital. More than 35 people were wounded. Among the dead were Kevin McCarthy, 37, and his wife, Irina, 35 — the parents of a two-year-old boy who was found wandering alone after the shooting, according to CBS News. Covelli said no motive had been established for the attack, which sent panicked parade-goers fleeing for their lives.

“We do believe Crimo pre-planned this attack for several weeks,” and that he acted alone, he said. “We have no information to suggest at this point it was racially motivated, motivated by religion or any other protected status,” he added.

He said Crimo has a history of mental health issues and threatening behavior. Police had been called to Crimo's home twice in 2019: Once to investigate a suicide attempt and the second time because a relative said he had threatened to “kill everyone” in the family, he said.

Police removed 16 knives, a dagger and a sword from the home but did not make any arrests, he said. Covelli said Crimo used a fire escape to access the roof of a building overlooking the parade route and fired more than 70 rounds from a rifle “similar to an AR-15” — one of several guns he had purchased legally.

“Crimo was dressed in women's clothing and investigators believe he did this to conceal his facial tattoos and his identity and help him during the escape with the other people who were fleeing the chaos,” he said. — AFP

Copenhagen holds memorial for mall shooting victims

COPENHAGEN, Denmark: Thousands gathered in Copenhagen on Tuesday to pay tribute to the victims of a weekend mall shooting that left three people dead, including two teenagers. “Three lives were taken from us. A man and two young people. Several were injured, the attack has many victims,” Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen told the massive crowd outside the Fields shopping complex located between the city centre and the capital's airport, where the attack occurred.

“Cruel, unjust and senseless. Tonight, we all mourn,” Frederiksen added, as she called for unity in face of the tragedy. The late afternoon shooting on Sunday shook the city which had just hosted the opening stages of the Tour de France cycling competition and seen the return of the Roskilde music festival after cancellations for COVID-19.

“It's not hard to imagine ‘what if it was my child?’, I'm the mother of two

teenagers,” Sophie Andersen, mayor of Copenhagen said during an address which was followed by a moment of silence. “Children and young people should not die. They should be immortal,” Andersen added.

Denmark's Crown Prince Frederik was also in attendance at the service where speeches were interspersed with musical performances.

The mood was sombre, with some crying among the many families and young people that had gathered. “I'm quite ambivalent. Of course it's nice to see all these people who are here to support the people who have been hurt by this action, but I'm also a little scared,” Oliver Stoltz, who works in a sporting goods store at the mall, told AFP.

The 24-year-old was at the mall-located between the city centre and the capital's airport-when the shooting started and heard the first shots ring out. “This used to be a place



COPENHAGEN, Denmark: People attend a memorial service in front of the Field's shopping center, two days after a shooting, in Copenhagen, Denmark, on July 5, 2022. — AFP

where I can go work, be happy and have a good time. Now I dread even coming out here to this part of town.

The alleged perpetrator of the attack, a 22-year-old Danish man who authorities say was known to

mental health services, was remanded in custody in a “closed psychiatric ward” on Monday on murder charges. Police said Tuesday they had no new information to release about the investigation. — AFP

Jihadists raid Nigeria prison, free hundreds

ABUJA: Suspected jihadists using guns and explosives smashed their way into a prison near the Nigerian capital, freeing hundreds of inmates in an operation to release jailed comrades, the government said on Wednesday.

The brazen attack on the outskirts of Abuja came hours after an ambush on a presidential security convoy in the northwest, in a fresh illustration of Nigeria's security crisis. Residents reported loud explosions and gunfire late Tuesday near

the Kuje medium-security prison just outside the capital.

Security forces cordoned off streets in the area early Wednesday. Outside the jail, the burned-out wreckage of a bus and cars marked the scene of the attack, and yellow police tape was stretched across a destroyed part of the prison perimeter.

“We understand they are Boko Haram, they came specifically for their co-conspirators,” senior interior ministry official Shuaibu Belgore told

reporters on a visit to the prison. “Right now we have retrieved about 300 out of about 600 who got out of the jail cells.”

One security official was killed when the gunmen breached the jail using high-grade explosives. “We heard shooting on my street. We thought it was armed robbers,” a local resident said. “The first explosion came after the shooting. Then a second one sounded and then a third.”

Belgore said some jihadists were housed in the general prison population and hundreds of criminal inmates escaped when the gunmen broke in. Some prisoners surrendered while others were recaptured with military roadblocks set up around the penitentiary.

Security forces sent back around 19 recaptured inmates in a black van on Wednesday morning, an AFP correspondent at the site said. Former top police commander Abba Kyari, who was being held in Kuje awaiting trial in a high-profile drug smuggling case, was still in custody, corrections service spokesman Abubakar Umar said.

Nigeria's security forces are battling Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) jihadists in the country's northeast, where a 13-year conflict has killed 40,000 people and displaced 2.2 million more. Nigerian officials sometimes use Boko Haram as a general phrase to refer to jihadists or other armed groups. — AFP

International

India's 'bulldozer justice' flattens Muslim dissent

Battle against illegal construction and a firm response to criminal activity

ALLAHABAD, India: After two nights in police custody, Indian teenager Somaia Fatima was released in time to watch live footage of an excavator claw smashing into the walls of her childhood home.

The residence is among scores of dwellings and businesses flattened by wrecking crews this year, in a campaign authorities have promoted by turns as a battle against illegal construction and a firm response to criminal activity.

But rights groups have condemned "bulldozer justice" as an unlawful exercise in collective punishment by India's Hindu nationalist government, and many of the campaign's victims have one thing in common. "We are Muslims and that's why we are being targeted," Fatima told AFP.

The 19-year-old was arrested along with her family after her father was accused of masterminding a large public protest in the northern city of Allahabad last month.

It was one of several rallies across India last month condemning a ruling party spokeswoman whose provocative comments about the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during a televised debate sparked anger across the Muslim world.

The day Fatima was released, she was sitting in a relative's living room when she came across footage of her home's destruction on her phone.

She said the demolition was a lesson for Muslims tempted to "speak up" against the government. "They've instilled fear in an entire community," she said. "Everyone now looks at their home and thinks that if it happened to us, it can happen to them also."



'No empathy'
Fatima's home state of Uttar Pradesh is governed by Yogi Adityanath, a saffron-robed Hindu monk seen as a potential successor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In office he has championed the bulldozer as a symbol of his commitment to law and order and as a potential tool to use against "trouble-makers".

Adityanath's acolytes celebrated his successful campaign for re-election as chief minister earlier this year by riding on top of excavators, while bulldozer tattoos became a minor craze among supporters of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

'They've instilled fear in entire community'

Since then "bulldozer politics" have spread elsewhere in the country and demolition campaigns have begun quickly following on the heels of outbreaks of religious unrest.

After a violent confrontation in April between Hindus trailing a religious procession and Muslims holding Ramadan prayers, authorities in Delhi knocked down nearly two dozen Muslim shopfronts and the facade of a mosque,

defying a court order to stop.

Officials say the spate of demolitions are lawful as they only target buildings constructed without legal approval. But victims of the campaign deny that their dwellings are illegal, and say they are not given the legally required notice period to dispute demolition orders.

Fatima's house was demolished "in the presence of hundreds of police and hundreds of cameras, with no empathy," KK Rai, a lawyer for Fatima's father, told AFP.

"There is no comparison for this ruthlessness." Critics of the government say the campaign is the latest manifestation of the BJP's discriminatory policies towards India's



ALLAHABAD: File photo shows, a bulldozer demolishes the house of Javed Mohammad, a local leader who was allegedly involved in the recent violent protests against Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) former spokeswoman Nupur Sharma's incendiary remarks about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), in Allahabad. —AFP

200 million-strong Muslim minority community.

"They have an ideological commitment that in India they have to make Muslims a second-class citizen, socially humiliate them and destroy their property," Rai said.

Amnesty International said last month that the demolitions were part of a selective and "vicious" crackdown on Indian Muslims who dared to speak up against the discrimination they faced.

'Sleepless nights'

Many Muslims living in Uttar Pradesh now fear their own homes are being earmarked for destruction after their family members participated in last month's protests.

"Now we have sleepless nights and restless days," said Mohd Javed, a resident of Saharanpur, who received an order to vacate his house soon after his brother was arrested for joining a demonstration in that city.

One week after Fatima's arrest, a bulldozer remained parked outside the police station near where her home once stood.

The pile of bricks and concrete in its stead has heightened her own sense of belonging to a pariah community. She recalled watching her home being torn down on a news channel's YouTube livestream, as her phone screen filled up with a flood of comments from the public praising the demolition. —AFP

Malaysian to be hanged in Singapore

SINGAPORE: A Singapore court on Wednesday dismissed a last-ditch appeal by a convicted Malaysian drug trafficker, clearing the way for him to be hanged within hours. Kalwant Singh, 32, is due to be put to death early Thursday, two months after the execution of a mentally disabled man in Singapore sparked international outrage.

Kalwant, who was convicted in 2016 of trafficking heroin into the city-state, had lodged a last-gasp attempt with the Court of Appeal to delay his sentence. His lawyer, Too Xing Ji, sought a review of the case, arguing on Wednesday that his client had provided information that helped authorities arrest a key suspected drug trafficker.

While the death penalty is mandatory in Singapore for trafficking certain volumes of drugs, a judge can commute the sentence to life in prison if the offender acted only as a courier and cooperated with authorities.

One of the co-accused in Kalwant's case had his sentence commuted after he cooperated substantively with investigators. But a three-judge panel dismissed Kalwant's appeal, citing an affidavit from Singapore's Central Narcotics Bureau stating its officers did not use any information he provided to arrest a suspect.

"We dismiss the application for the stay," Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon said during a hearing. In April, the execution in Singapore of a mentally disabled Malaysian drug trafficker, Nagaenthran K. Dharmalingam, triggered widespread anger.

Critics including the United Nations and European Union said that hanging someone with an intellectual disability breached international law. But in a recent BBC interview, Home Affairs and Law Minister K. Shanmugam disputed that Nagaenthran was mentally disabled despite him having an IQ of 69, a level medical experts said represents an intellectual disability.

He said the courts "found that he had the working of a criminal mind, and he made a deliberate, purposeful, calibrated, calculated decision to make money, to bring the drugs in". Shanmugam said Singapore maintained the death penalty because "there's clear evidence that it is a serious deterrent for would-be drug traffickers".

But Kirsten Han, a prominent Singaporean rights activist, said research had shown it was not an effective deterrent and called the executions "horrifying". Campaigners fear that Singapore is gearing up for more executions in the coming months.

This year so far, eight death row convicts have been informed they are to be executed, with two already hanged, Han said. Another drug trafficker, Singaporean Norasharee Gous, 48, is also due to be hanged Thursday, she added. —AFP

Monsoon rains kill 77 in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan: At least 77 people have died in monsoon rains lashing Pakistan, the country's climate change minister said Wednesday, warning more heavier-than-usual downpours lay ahead. "For me, it's a national tragedy," Sherry Rehman told a news conference in the capital, adding the toll was taken from June 14, when the monsoon started.

"When people die like that, it's not a small thing... It is just the beginning. We have to prepare for it." Most of the deaths were in the southwestern province of Balochistan, where 39 people drowned

or were electrocuted by downed power lines.

The monsoon, which usually lasts from June to September, is essential for irrigating crops and replenishing lakes and dams across the Indian sub-continent, but each year also brings a wave of destruction.

Poorly built homes across Pakistan—particularly in rural areas—are prone to collapse in floods, which also destroy huge tracts of prime farmland. The worst floods of recent times were in 2010 — covering almost a fifth of the country's landmass—killing nearly 2,000 people and displacing 20 million.

Pakistan is the eighth most vulnerable country to extreme weather caused by climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index compiled by environmental NGO Germanwatch.

"One day you have drought and next morning you are expecting flash flood... so you can see how serious the situation is in Pakistan", Rehman said. —AFP



QUETTA, Pakistan: Children carrying household items wade through a flooded area after a monsoon rainfall in Quetta. —AFP

Iran still seeking diplomats missing in Lebanon since 1982

TEHRAN: Tehran said Wednesday it is "still looking" for four Iranian nationals with diplomatic status who disappeared during Zionist entity 1982 invasion of Lebanon. "We are continuing serious efforts to determine the fate of the four abducted diplomats," Iran's foreign ministry said in a statement issued on

the 40th anniversary of their disappearance.

The ministry criticised "the lack of cooperation on the part of the international community and human rights organisations to determine the fate of the abductees". Three diplomats and a photographer from the official Iranian news agency IRNA were arrested in northern Lebanon on July 4, 1982, at a checkpoint of the Lebanese Forces, a Christian militia, and have not been seen since.

They were Ahmad Motevasselian, the military attaché of the Iranian embassy in Beirut, Mohsen Moussavi, charge d'affaires, Taghi Rastegar-Moghadam, an employee of the embassy, and photojournalist Kazem Akhavan.

Motevasselian was also a commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the country's ideological army, which established itself in Lebanon in 1982 and was crucial to the formation of the militant group Hezbollah. Iran blames Zionist entity for the disappearance, describing those responsible as "agents of the Zionist regime". In 1982, the Lebanese Forces were armed by Zionist entity.

The Iranian ministry "renewed its calls to the United Nations and relevant human rights agencies to pursue the cases of the four Iranian diplomats and punish the perpetrators of this crime". Iran also called for the formation of a commission of inquiry between the two countries. —AFP





YOUR SUCCESS IS IN YOUR CHOICE

CHOOSE AU





Apply Now
www.au.edu.kw



THURSDAY, JULY 7, 2022

Business

Bader Al-Kharafi leads Kuwait's CEOs on Forbes Middle East list

KUWAIT: Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi has been named by Forbes Middle East among the top 100 CEOs in the Middle East for 2022. Kharafi, Zain Group CEO, leads Kuwait-based CEOs featured on the list. The list features seven CEOs from Kuwait. It also includes Alshaya Group CEO John Hadden, KIPCO Group CEO Sheikha Dana Al-Sabah, National Bank of Kuwait Group CEO Essam Al-Sager, Agility CEO Tareq Al-Sultan, Commercial Bank of Kuwait CEO Elham Mahfouz, Boursa Kuwait CEO Mohammad Al-Osaimi and VI Markets CEO Talal Al-Ajmi.

Bader Al-Kharafi became Zain Group's vice chairman in 2014, and group CEO in 2017. He is also the chairman of the board for the executive committee of Boursa Kuwait and a member of the board of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). He is also a founder of BNK Holding, a privately held shareholding company. John Hadden became CEO of Alshaya Group in 2019, before which he was the company's COO.



Bader Al-Kharafi



John Hadden



Sheikha Dana Al-Sabah



Essam Al-Sager



Tareq Al-Sultan



Elham Mahfouz



Mohammad Al-Osaimi



Talal Al-Ajmi



Sheikha Dana Al-Sabah was appointed as KIPCO's Group CEO in early 2022, having been a board member since 2020. She is also the founder and chair of the board of trustees of the American University of Kuwait and the chairperson of the United Education Company. She sits on the boards of the Gulf Insurance Group, OSN, and Kamco Invest. She was previously the CEO of the Al Futtooh Holding Company.

Essam Al-Sager is the Vice-Chairman and Group CEO of NBK. He also serves as the chairman of NBK (International) and sits on the boards of Watani Wealth Management, NBK Properties, and NBK Trustees. Tareq Al-Sultan became CEO of Agility in 1997. He is also a member of the Board of Stewards of the World Economic

Forum's Platform for Shaping the Future of Advanced Manufacturing and Production and serves as a trustee for the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation.

Elham Mahfouz became CEO of Al Tijari in 2014, having previously been the general manager of international banking since December 2010. Mahfouz is also a member of the legal bankers institute in London. Mohammad Al-Osaimi first joined Boursa Kuwait in 2015 as a member of the board. He became CEO in 2019, before which he was head of markets. Talal Al-Ajmi founded VI Markets in 2010. He is also a board member at One Financial Market.

The region's top 100 CEOs represent 26 nationalities, Forbes Middle East wrote on its website. Emiratis dominate with 19 entries, followed by Egyptians with 16, and Saudis with 15. Combined they managed revenues of over \$1 trillion in 2021. Their companies are currently collectively worth more than \$5 trillion. Banking and financial services is the most represented sector on the list with 27 CEOs, followed by eight telecom CEOs, and seven that each head energy and logistics companies.

"Irrespective of the economic environment, market conditions, and other factors, it is the CEO who bears most of the responsibility for the success or failure of the company they lead," Forbes Middle East wrote. "This is becoming more apparent in the Middle East, where corporate governance has been improving for several years. There is now a clear

stem from innovation, technology, and ESG initiatives."

When Forbes Middle East released its first Top CEOs ranking in 2021, the mood among the Middle East's CEOs was focused on safety and the protection of business, the magazine wrote. "This year has seen a reversal in fortunes, with record profits, new investments, large IPOs, and

- public, with Borouge's \$2 billion IPO becoming Abu Dhabi's largest-ever IPO."

The CEOs were ranked based on the impact that they have had on the region, their country, and the markets that they serve, the CEO's overall experience and time in their current role, the size of the company in terms of revenues, assets, and market cap, the achievements and per-

- Region's top 100 CEOs represent 26 nationalities
- They managed revenues of over \$1tn in 2021
- Their companies are collectively worth more than \$5tn

separation between ownership and management in companies throughout the region. This trend is particularly strong in government-owned businesses, with even sectors such as defense and utilities now being incorporated and even being listed on stock exchanges. This has made CEOs focus more on long-term benefits that

mega deals taking center stage," it indicated. "For example, so far in 2022, Amin H Nasser has led Saudi Aramco to become the world's most valuable company by market value again, usurping Apple. Meanwhile, Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber led ADNOC as it took three of its subsidiaries - ADNOC Drilling, Fertiglabe, and Borouge

formance of the CEO in the last year, as well as the innovations and initiatives that the CEO has implemented. Forbes Middle East had sent out questionnaires and collected information from stock market disclosures, industry reports, annual reports and financial statements, and other primary sources to create the ranking.

Boursa Kuwait recognized by Pan Finance for sustainability efforts

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait was awarded Sustainable Stock Exchange of the Year in the Middle East by Pan Finance Magazine, a print and online journal providing worldwide intelligence on finance, economics, and global commerce. The Pan Finance team announced the nomination on their website, commending Boursa Kuwait's commitment to corporate sustainability for the company itself as well as the wider Kuwaiti capital market and its participants. The magazine also hailed the company as a model issuer and a company with sustainable operations and practices, one that is a key cog in the sustainability and resilience of the Kuwaiti capital market.

The Pan Finance awards program was established to be a true indicator of excellence. Identifying organizations and individuals that have excelled in their respective fields allows Pan Finance to shine a spotlight on and applaud leading examples of best practice. The magazine's awards not only recognize the largest international corporations but companies operating on a more modest scale, who might otherwise go unnoticed in the global arena, as well. Shortlists of nominees are curated by the editorial team to put emphasis on relevant and time sensitive topics that the editorial team would like to showcase and recognize as an industry leader.

In 2021, Boursa Kuwait published an ESG disclosure guide that aims to support listed companies to report on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) issues, and to meet the growing needs of various stakeholders, including investors, customers, suppliers, and regulators for transparent and regular information, late last year.

The company has worked diligently on its Corporate Sustainability strategy. In April, on the heels of the disclosure guide, the company published its first standalone Sustainability Report, which detailed its strategy, partnerships, and initiatives in the field of ESG reporting and implementation for the year 2021. Aside from these guides and reports, the company recently partnered

with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on a workshop to help raise awareness of the best standards and practices for the reporting and implementation of ESG metrics, ensuring that they are aligned with the company's overarching strategy as well as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Boursa Kuwait aims to be responsible and committed to its sustainable development as well as the community in which it operates, by ensuring a positive contribution to its Corporate Sustainability strategy and its three pillars, which consist of Education, Community, and Environment. The company also seeks to promote the adoption of socially impactful and accountable practices in its surrounding communities.

With a view to creating long-term value for the company's stakeholders in the economic, social and environmental dimensions and ensuring that its corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are aligned with its sustainability objectives, Boursa Kuwait has put in place a three-phased strategy to align, create and integrate.

This strategy stipulates ensuring initiatives apply and fall in line with the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR), industry best practice standards and investor expectations, creating strong and sustainable partnerships that ultimately achieve success and allow Boursa Kuwait to leverage the capabilities and strengths of other companies or organizations that have experience in different fields, and integrating sustainability efforts with the company culture, in order to achieve longevity and an ongoing impact that is carried on and instilled in the day-to-day operations of the stock exchange.

As part of its 'Education' pillar, which envisions a robust capital market ecosystem where all stakeholders are fully equipped with the knowledge and skill required to be an active player in the nation's exchange and capital markets and in an effort to further its commitment to contributing to the development and education of all market participants through sharing the



latest updates of financial instruments and products implemented across the world, Boursa Kuwait partnered with the International Capital Markets Association (ICMA) last month to provide training courses for both brokers and asset management firms.

Boursa Kuwait's Corporate Sustainability strategy stipulates ensuring initiatives apply and fall in line with the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR), industry best practice standards and investor expectations, creating strong and sustainable partnerships that ultimately achieve success and allow Boursa Kuwait to leverage the capabilities and strengths of other companies or organizations that have experience in different fields, and integrating sustainability efforts with the company culture, in order to achieve longevity and an ongoing impact that is carried on and instilled in the day-to-day operations of the stock exchange.

Since its inception, Boursa Kuwait, a self-listed company and one of the government entities to successfully undergo privatization, has implemented many steps in accordance with international practices and standards to enhance the position of the exchange regionally and globally, as well as transform Kuwait into a regional and global investment destination, by focusing on creating an attractive issuer base and broadening its investor base, increasing the depth and breadth of its products, as well as upgrading its infrastructure and business environment to international standards.

KFH raises AUB offer to \$11.6bn

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House agreed to buy Bahrain's Ahli United Bank for about \$11.6 billion, a deal almost four years in the making and one that ranks among the banking sector's biggest this year. The combination, a rare cross-border deal in the Middle East, will create the Gulf's seventh-largest lender with \$115 billion in assets. Under the revised terms, Kuwait Finance House will offer one share for every 2,695 shares of Ahli United, the Bahraini lender said. That implies an offer price of \$1.04 per share - a 13 percent premium to the stock's Wednesday close.

Kuwait's Central Bank, which in 2020 asked KFH to reassess the deal as the pandemic spread, approved the combination earlier on Wednesday. The initial offer in 2019 was valued at \$8.8 billion, with KFH offering 1 share for every 2,32558 shares in Ahli United. Since then, KFH shares have risen 66 percent, valuing the lender at \$25.8 billion. Ahli United is up 27 percent in the same period, giving the bank a market value of \$10.3 billion.

Ahli United said its board has resolved to accept the revised share swap ratio. "The acceptance of the above mentioned share exchange ratio does not imply that an official acquisition offer has been made by KFH," it said in a statement. The deal will help optimize costs in an increasingly competitive industry, Junaid Ansari, head of investment strategy and research at Kamco Invest said in emailed comments. "The combined entity is expected to provide significant geographic diversification to KFH as well as a higher participation in state projects." Lenders in the oil-rich region started to combine locally after the twin shocks of lower energy revenues and the pandemic over the past two years, and a spate of large transactions has helped consolidate a fragmented industry.

Masraf Al Rayan QSC and Al Khalij Commercial Bank PQSC agreed to combine last year, creating one of Qatar's largest lenders, while Saudi Arabia's National Commercial Bank bought Samba Financial Group in one of the biggest banking takeovers of 2020. HSBC Holdings Plc and Credit Suisse Group AG have been the advisers on the KFH deal. — Bloomberg

Business

EU focuses on energy supply under Czech presidency

European Parliament backs green label for gas, nuclear

STRASBOURG, France: The EU on Wednesday set out a harder focus on energy amid Russia's war in Ukraine, as the Czech Republic presented its priorities upon taking over the bloc's presidency. "We need to prepare for further disruptions of gas supply, even a complete cut-off from Russia," European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen told the European Parliament. Her commission is set to unveil an emergency plan on energy supply security on July 20 that would help redirect gas flows within the EU to "where it is most needed".

"We have to provide for European solidarity. And we need to protect the (EU) single market as well as industry's supply chains," von der Leyen said. The Czech EU presidency tweeted that it had called an extraordinary meeting of EU energy ministers for July 26, following the commission plan. Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala told the MEPs that the plan should mirror the EU solidarity shown during the height of the Covid crisis. "The path that the Czech presidency

wants to take is primarily to work on common European projects that free us from our dependence on Russia," he said.

Von der Leyen and Fiala both emphasized that the restructuring of the EU's energy market must keep climate-friendly policies at its core, even at a time of sky-high inflation and short-term risks to supply. The European Union has launched a €300-billion (\$310-billion) plan to wean itself off Russian fossil fuel supplies, and is also investing heavily to transform the market toward renewable sources.

The two leaders also said steps toward Ukraine's post-war reconstruction would be made under the Czech presidency of the EU, which runs to the end of the year. Von der Leyen said she would convene a high-level conference on that issue after September, together with Germany as current head of the G7. "Never before have we mastered such a colossal reconstruction challenge. So we need all hands on deck," she said. Ukraine has said the cost to build its

war-ravaged country is at least \$750 billion. France's EU presidency in the first half of this year was dominated by the war in Ukraine, which began with Russia's invasion on Feb 24.

Meanwhile, the European Parliament approved on Wednesday an EU proposal to give a sustainable finance label to investments in gas and nuclear power, following a contentious vote. MEPs in the eastern French city of Strasbourg declined to oppose the measure, which was backed by France and Germany. There were 278 votes to stop it while 328 voted for a green light. There were 33 abstentions.

"I ask you not to reject this fragile, carefully negotiated compromise," Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala, whose country has just taken over the rotating EU presidency from France, pleaded ahead of the vote. The green label, known in EU parlance as the "taxonomy", "caters to a number of countries that will only be able to meet their climate targets as a result of these criteria," he warned.

A small but influential group of member states and activists had lobbied hard for MEPs to reject the green label, in a coalition of opponents to nuclear and gas energy. Critics of gas point to the war in Ukraine as the latest reason to reject the green label, saying that encouraging investment would only increase dependence on Russian supply. "How can we ask other countries to reduce their use of fossil fuels if we classify them as green? This will undermine the Paris agreement," said Dutch Green MEP Bas Eickhout.

Critics of nuclear energy point to the threat posed by accidents and nuclear waste and believe solar and wind energy is the best way forward. But the EU executive, under pressure from nuclear-powered France and gas-reliant Germany, argues that both have a role to play as cleaner power sources during the transition to a net-zero carbon future. The EU hopes that its label will steer huge sums of private capital into activities that support climate goals. — AFP



Ali Alghanim Sons holds first AGM post listing

KUWAIT: Ali Alghanim Sons Automotive Company KSCC (Ali Alghanim Sons) held its first Ordinary and Extraordinary General Assembly meetings on Wednesday, July 6, 2022, with a complete quorum. The assembly approved all items of the agenda, granting the Board of Directors authorization to buy or sell the company's shares (treasury shares), in accordance with the provisions of Law No 7 of 2010 and its executive regulations and amendments.

Earlier in June, Ali Alghanim Sons was listed on Kuwait's official stock exchange, Boursa Kuwait, in the 'Premier Market' under the ticker symbol 'ALG', recording a historic moment for the company as the first of its kind family company in the automotive sector to be listed on an exchange in the GCC.

With its mission driven strategy, Ali Alghanim Sons aims to strengthen its market share in Kuwait and further its market share and presence in Egypt and the Middle East's automotive sector, by sharpening its focus on the affordable segment and entry-level luxury vehicles. The company will continue to push ahead with its expansion plans in the region, specifically in Egypt, by the last quarter of 2022, which will reflect positively and ultimately on the company's turnover. The company is also exploring opportunities to enrich the services it provides for its customers by bringing in added value through new solutions, and furthering its digital transformation journey to enhance the cus-

tomers experience.

Ali Alghanim Sons is targeting growth in the affordable segment through Geely, Haval and Great Wall Motors. The demand for these three fast-growing brands in Egypt is expected to catch up to their global market share due to continued improvement in affordable technology, customer acceptance and change in customer preferences. The company is also looking to increase the market share of existing luxury brands by offering a broader model mix to include lower-priced entry models. This is expected to convert potential customers to customers early in the customer lifecycle, thus, leading to higher total lifetime revenue per customer as well as higher demand for after-sales service and parts.

Working closely with its partners, Ali Alghanim Sons will continue to increase its regional footprint building on the success of the company's recent expansion into Egypt, and Iraq, in which the company's operations was launched a few years ago. It is also keen on exploring new opportunities in synergistic segments to offer a holistic service to customers. Rolling out more satellite service centers and quick-service shops and enhancing the online experience through e-retailing, virtual showrooms, and interconnected services are among the company's plans. In line with its strong focus on digitization, Ali Alghanim Sons will invest in tech-related projects to expand its portfolio and in IT infrastructure to improve the overall customer experience.

Ali Alghanim Sons Automotive is the official agent for eight leading brands including BMW, Land Rover, Rolls-Royce, McLaren, Geely and Great Wall Motors in Kuwait, in addition to owning renowned international agencies in the fields of oil, batteries, and tires. The company is also a key shareholder in both BMW and Mini in Iraq and Egypt.



LONDON: Britain's newly appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer Nadhim Zahawi poses as he arrives at the HM Treasury to start his new job on July 6, 2022. — AFP

UK finance chief Zahawi inherits economic crisis

LONDON: Britain's new finance minister, Iraqi-born Nadhim Zahawi, has inherited a cost-of-living crisis that risks pushing the UK economy into recession. The former education minister was parachuted into the Treasury late Tuesday after predecessor Rishi Sunak's shock resignation over the culture of scandal plaguing Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Johnson also lost his health minister, Sajid Javid.

Zahawi takes charge with UK inflation at a 40-year peak of 9.1 percent, a level set to hit double figures this year on soaring energy and food prices according to the Bank of England (BoE). "I've got to make sure we get through... (this) inflation, which can be a really painful thing if we let it get out of control," the 55-year-old told Sky News Wednesday. The self-made millionaire co-founded the prominent polling company YouGov and was active in local Conservative politics in London before becoming an MP in 2010.

The BoE on Tuesday warned that the global economic outlook had "deteriorated markedly" owing to runaway prices fueled by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The central bank has hiked British interest rates five times since December in a bid to tame inflation. The UK government has meanwhile sought to ease the financial pain with a raft of measures, including a slight reduction on fuel tax. However, critics said the moves fall well short of what is needed to help cash-strapped households and businesses.

'Tough decisions'

"You don't go into this job to have an easy life," Zahawi added Wednesday. "You make some tough decisions every day. And sometimes it's easy to walk away but actually, it's much tougher to deliver for the

country." Zahawi denied threatening to quit the government if not given the top Treasury job. "I want to make sure that not only do we rebuild the economy, we've got to grow the economy," added the new chancellor of the exchequer. Zahawi refused to comment to reporters as he left a meeting in 10 Downing Street Tuesday, including on whether he would uphold Sunak's pleas for fiscal discipline against Johnson's free-spending instincts. In early London trading Wednesday, the benchmark FTSE 100 stocks index jumped 1.6 percent and the pound steadied against the dollar. The FTSE had tumbled almost three percent and sterling slumped nearly two percent against the dollar Tuesday on growing fears of a global recession.

"Political risks do not seem to be having a major impact on UK assets," noted Markets.com analyst Neil Wilson. "There are far too many bigger things on our minds right now - inflation, the economy slowing down, strikes." Britain is in the midst of nationwide strikes - affecting in particular the transport sector-as wages are eroded by the rocketing inflation. Teachers and workers in the state-run National Health Service are mulling whether to join aviation, legal, postal and railway staff in walking out. Zahawi won widespread praise for over-seeing Britain's pandemic vaccines rollout. But like Sunak, his private wealth has drawn adverse attention, including when he claimed parliamentary expenses for heating his horse stables in 2013. —AFP

Spain's labor market buoyed by key reform

MADRID: Six months after Spain pushed through a key reform aimed at reducing labor market insecurity, the number of temporary contracts has fallen sharply, giving the government some welcome breathing space in a difficult economic context. Long one of the European nations with the highest number of temporary contracts, Spain saw its unemployment figures fall for the sixth consecutive month in June, with the Labor Minister Yolanda Diaz hailing "historic" data on Monday as evidence of "a paradigm shift".

By the end of June, the number of jobseekers in Spain stood at 2.88 million down from 2.92 million a month earlier and the lowest monthly figure since the start of the financial crisis in 2008. The drop was due to a significant increase in jobs, with 783,595 permanent contracts signed in June, the highest monthly figure ever recorded. "This is a record number of permanent contracts, representing more than 44 percent" of the total number of new jobs, she said.

At this time of the year, when there is a surge of tem-

porary positions in tourism and agriculture, permanent contracts usually only account for 10 percent of new jobs. "We have 740,000 more people... with permanent contracts than before the pandemic," said Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said this week. Writing on Twitter, Diaz said the increase "clearly shows the effect of the labor reform." But she cautioned: "There is still a lot to do, but we are showing that there is an alternative model to job insecurity: decent work with rights."

Addressing a key weakness

The reform, which took effect on Jan 1 following a hard-fought deal negotiated between the government, employers' groups and unions, limits the back-to-back use of temporary contracts and makes permanent contracts the rule rather than the exception. This reform "was requested by Brussels", explained Carlos Victoria, a researcher at the Esade business school, after many Spanish companies got into a habit of "filling existing positions with temporary contracts".

According to Eurostat, nearly 22 percent of Spanish employees had a temporary contract before the pandemic, compared to an EU average of 14.4 percent. For many economists, this phenomenon - brought about by a 2012 law by a conservative government to boost employment after the financial crisis - has been one of the main weaknesses of the Spanish labor market. But observers are divided whether the reform can cure the fragility in the Spanish labor market. —AFP

Eid Mubarak

[f](#)
[t](#)
[i](#)
[y](#)
[KIBpage](#)

kib.com.kw | 1 866 866

Business

Bankrupt Sri Lanka asks Putin for fuel, tourists

Lankans return to cooking with firewood as economy burns

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka has asked Russia to provide fuel and resume tourist flights to help the country weather its unprecedented economic crisis, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said Wednesday. The island nation has suffered months of foodouts, rampant inflation and critical shortages of food and petrol after running out of foreign currency to finance imports.

Rajapaksa said he had spoken with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin to ask for supplies of urgently needed fuel on loan and to “humbly” request the resumption of flights between Moscow and Colombo. “We unanimously agreed that strengthening bilateral relations in sectors such as tourism, trade & culture was paramount in reinforcing the friendship our two nations share.”

Aeroflot suspended flights last month after a Sri Lankan court briefly detained an Airbus belonging to the state-owned airline's fleet over a payment dispute. The United States and European Union have both imposed embargoes on Russian oil in response to the country's February invasion of Ukraine. Sri Lanka had bought around 90,000 tons of Siberian crude in May through an intermediary in Dubai, but ran out of dollars to purchase more.

Russia and Ukraine were among the top sources of tourists for Sri Lanka before February's conflict began. Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic downturn since it gained independence from Britain in 1948. The government defaulted on its \$51 billion foreign debt in April and is in bailout talks with the International Monetary Fund. European nations, Australia and the United States have asked their citizens to avoid travelling to Sri Lanka because of the deepening crisis. The country has almost entirely run out of petrol and diesel, with non-essential government offices and schools ordered shut in an effort to conserve limited supplies of fuel.

Meanwhile, as once relatively wealthy Sri Lanka suffers a dire economic crisis with shortages of everything from medicines to gas, people are returning to cooking with firewood. The switch began at the beginning of the year when more than 1,000 kitchens exploded across the country, killing at least seven people and injuring hundreds more.

The reason was suppliers looking to cut costs and increasing the proportion of propane, which raised the pressure to dangerous levels.

But now, along with much else in the country of 22 million people, gas is either unavailable or too expensive for most. Some tried to shift to kerosene oil cookers, but the government did not have dollars to import it along with petrol and diesel, which are also in short supply. And those who bought electric cookers were in for a rude shock when the government imposed lengthy power blackouts as it ran out of dollars to import fuel for generators.

Niluka Hapuarachchi, 41, was miraculously unharmed when her gas range exploded soon after cooking Sunday lunch in August. “Fortunately, no one was there at the time. There were pieces of glass all over the floor. The glass-top stove had exploded. I will never use gas for cooking. It is not safe. We are now on firewood,” she said, despite moves to address the propane problem.

Roadside eatery owner M G Karunawathi, 67, also switched to wood and said it was a choice between closing her business or putting up with smoke and soot. “We suffer (smoke inhalation) when cooking with firewood, but we have no choice,” Karunawathi told AFP. “It is also difficult to find firewood and it is also becoming very expensive.”

Pain into 2023

Sri Lanka used to be a middle-income country, with GDP per head comparable to the Philippines and living standards the envy of neighboring India. But with economic mismanagement and the crucial tourism industry hammered by COVID-19, the nation has run out of dollars needed to pay for most imports. And the pain will likely continue for some time, with Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe in parliament on Tuesday saying: “We will have to face difficulties in 2023 as well. ‘This is the truth. This is the reality.’”

Unofficial inflation is now second only to Zimbabwe, and the United Nations estimates about 80 percent of people skip meals because they cannot afford food. Before the crisis, almost all households in Colombo could afford to use gas, but now woodcutter Selliah Raja, 60, is doing a roaring



COLOMBO: In this picture taken on March 15, 2022, a man uses firewood to cook food at a restaurant. —AFP

trade. “Earlier we had just one customer - a restaurant that had a wood-fired oven - but we now have so many, we can't meet the demand,” Raja told AFP.

He says his timber suppliers in the provinces have doubled their prices because of the sharp rise in demand and skyrocketing transport costs. “Earlier, landowners paid us to uproot rubber trees that are no longer productive,” lumberjack Sampath Thushara told AFP in the tea-and-rubber-growing southern village of Nehinna. “Today, we have to pay to get these trees.”

Foraging for wood can also be dangerous in the snake- and insect-infested forests. Last week, a father of three died from wasp stings in central Sri Lanka and four others were hospitalized. Demand is also surging for alternative energy, and entrepre-

neur Riyad Ismail, 51, has seen sales light up for the hi-tech firewood stove he invented in 2008. He has attached a small battery-powered electric fan to blow air into the barrel-shaped stove to ensure better burning, thus reducing smoke and soot associated with traditional firewood burners.

His upmarket “Ezstove” and the mass-market “Janalipa”, which uses coconut charcoal, promises a minimum 60 percent savings compared with cooking with gas. Both his stoves - which cost around \$20 and \$50, respectively - have become big sellers with buyers having to go on a waiting list. It has been so successful, Ismail says, there are several copies on the market. “You will see many renditions of my design... other people are piggybacking (on the design),” Ismail said while making chicken satay. —AFP

SpiceJet pulled up after run of air safety incidents

MUMBAI: Budget carrier SpiceJet may face legal action after India's aviation authority asked the airline to explain why it had reported more than half a dozen air safety incidents in the past two months. The airline reported two separate incidents on Tuesday, with one Dubai-bound aircraft making an emergency landing in Pakistan after a malfunctioning cockpit light. Another aircraft was forced to make a priority landing in Mumbai on the same day after its outer windshield developed a crack.

And a week earlier, another flight made an emergency landing in New Delhi when a SpiceJet plane's cabin filled with smoke soon after take-off. The airline said passengers were safely disembarked after all three incidents. But SpiceJet, which holds nearly 10 percent of India's domestic market, had “failed to establish a safe, efficient and reliable” service, said a Tuesday notice issued by the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

The notice gave the airline three weeks to show cause as to why it should not face legal action, which under Indian regulations could include fines or the grounding of aircraft. The regulator said SpiceJet had also failed to pay vendors and suppliers on time, which had led to shortages of spare parts at the airline. “SpiceJet is in receipt of the DGCA notice and will be responding within the specified time period,” a spokesperson for the company told AFP on Wednesday. “All our aircraft were audited a month ago by the regulator and found to be safe,” he added.

SpiceJet has reported at least eight operational incidents since May. Hundreds of passengers were stranded in planes for hours that month after an “attempted ransomware attack” forced the delay and cancellation of flights. A New Delhi-bound flight made an emergency landing in the Indian city of Patna in June after a bird struck an engine, which then caught fire.

In another incident, 17 people were injured when a flight from Mumbai struck turbulence, with three passengers treated in hospital. SpiceJet operates a fleet of about 80 narrow-body aircraft, more than half of which are Boeing 737 variants. Shares in the carrier closed two percent higher in Mumbai on Wednesday despite news of the regulator's show-cause notice. —AFP

Twitter challenges Indian orders to block content

NEW DELHI: Twitter is challenging the Indian government's orders to block content on its social media site in court, local media reported Wednesday citing

Deliveroo presents its rider safety kit for summer season

KUWAIT: As part of Deliveroo's commitment to riders' safety and satisfaction, Deliveroo is taking further steps to advance its 2022 Summer Rider kits. Deliveroo is supporting riders by providing specialized rider kits, cooling vests & long-sleeve tees, bar muffs, phone mounts, windshield visors, and more. “We are constantly working to implement even more initiatives and resources to ensure rider safety and protection year-round,” said Seham AlHusaini, Deliveroo's General Manager. “We understand the challenges of the summer season and our teams have been launching various initiatives in support of our riders to honor their wishes to continue their work during the season - all while ensuring their safety and satisfaction remain a top priority.”

Cooling Vests & Long-Sleeve Tees

Deliveroo provides its riders with specialized rider kits made from highly breathable materials and protected with a UV-blocking, perspiration-wicking fab-

ric. The kits assist riders in staying cool in the heat while also saving them from the sun with long sleeves and a high collar. Riders are also provided with cooling vests that lower body temperatures by up to 10 degrees Celsius.

Bar Muffs, Phone Mounts & Windshield Visors

Deliveroo has also distributed bar muffs to all riders to protect their arms from the sun while driving, with special windshield visors that reduce rider exposure to the sun. The windshield visors also provide additional protection from direct sunlight; in bright conditions, the visors help riders maintain ample visibility on the road. To protect riders' mobile devices from overheating, Deliveroo has also provided phone mounts with a protective UV film.

Rider Satisfaction First

A recent riders satisfaction survey indicated that Deliveroo riders continue to express high levels of satisfaction, with overall rider satisfaction scores at 88 percent, in line with global benchmarks. AlHusaini also revealed that Deliveroo riders continue to express a strong desire to work and earn during the summer.

The award-winning food delivery service has previously added additional components to the riders' support scheme, aiming to expand their efforts in various areas, including regular communications on safety. At



Deliveroo, riders are constantly reminded of the safety protocol to keep themselves and others on the road safe from potential hazards and accidents.

Deliveroo recently celebrated its third year of business in the Kuwaiti market, delivering hundreds of thousands of meals to hungry customers around the country. Since its launch, Deliveroo has set itself apart with its unbeatable customer service, and was recently named the “Best Delivery App” by Service Hero, which provides the region's only consumer-powered customer satisfaction index. With exclusive restaurant partners, special offers and meal deals, Deliveroo is always here to deliver.

Meet HUAWEI's latest entry-level phone with longest battery life

KUWAIT: Years ago, when smartphones were still in their evolving phase, entry-level smartphones used to get a bad rap for being mediocre. But things have changed for the better. Entry-level phones, like the HUAWEI nova Y series, now often offer some solid features that are mostly seen on flagship devices. That's why the release of HUAWEI nova Y70 got us seriously excited. The phone comes with a 6000mAh battery with 22.5W HUAWEI SuperCharge, a stunning display, a great set of cameras and ample 128GB storage space. The best part is that the HUAWEI nova Y70 lets you have all of these for a very attractive price.

1 Reliable battery for uninterrupted performance

The HUAWEI nova Y70 comes with a large 6000mAh battery that can power the phone for 3 days on a single full charge. Moreover, the 22.5W HUAWEI SuperCharge allows for fast, reliable charging. As a result, you can get three hours of continuous video playback on a ten-minute charge. This means you won't have to stop gaming or pause your shows for long every time you charge up the phone.

2 Captivating 6.75-inch HUAWEI FullView Display

The large 6.75-inch HUAWEI FullView Display on the HUAWEI nova Y70 is great for displaying content in its full glory. The high screen to body ratio of 90.26

percent takes the visual experience up a notch. It makes everything feel captivating and helps you focus on the content. Moreover, the design of the display itself is sleek and simple, with a narrow notch, to make the most of your mobile screen.

3 Perfect phone for social media-worthy pictures

The cameras on the HUAWEI nova Y70 let to snap the perfect selfies and excellent group pictures. The AI Triple Camera on the phone is equipped with a 48MP High-res Main Camera, a 120° 5MP Ultra-Wide Angle Camera and a 2MP Depth Camera. The Main Camera brings in more light when taking pictures, which results in better quality photos. The Ultra-Wide Angle Camera allows you to fit more content into the frame so that you can easily fit your entire group of friends or a wide landscape in a single shot. The Depth Camera helps create the bokeh effect, which blurs the background to keep the focus on the subject of the photo.

Even the 8MP front camera uses the bokeh effect when taking selfies. Huawei's self-developed AI Beauty algorithm can apply a natural beautifying effect to selfies to make them more stylish. The algorithm tailors the 3D beautification effect according to your age and gender to help make your skin look flawless. It also helps improve the quality of the photo by sharpening the image and reducing digital noise. All of these features allow you to produce great selfies to post and share on social platforms and keep those memories of your adventures alive.

4 128GB of storage for loads of entertainment

In addition to the stable performance and immersive visuals, HUAWEI nova Y70 users can rely on the



device to store all of their games and shows, thanks to the 128GB of storage space. You won't have to sacrifice any of your content to free up space. In case 128GB just doesn't cover what you need, you can use a MicroSD card to increase the storage capacity up to 512GB. That way, you won't have to worry about deleting old content and can keep downloading new ones.

As icing on the cake, the trusted, innovative, user-friendly and secure AppGallery is available on the HUAWEI nova Y70, where users can easily navigate, explore, find and download a wide range of high-quality apps. If you are looking for a smartphone that checks all the boxes but doesn't break the bank in 2022, then go for the HUAWEI nova Y70. The phone combines so many attractive features in a single device: super long battery life with fast charging, large and immersive display, impressive camera, and a boatload of storage space.

legal documents. The suit is the latest showdown between Twitter and Indian authorities, which have been accused of muzzling criticism both on and offline. In the case filed with a court in Bangalore, the social media giant alleged that the basis on which multiple accounts and content flagged by the government was either “overbroad and arbitrary” and “disproportionate”, the Indian Express daily reported.

The social media giant submitted to the Karnataka state high court that the ministry had failed to prove how some of the content it wanted

taken down violated IT rules, the newspaper quoted sources as saying. Last week Twitter confirmed that India had directed it to locally censor accounts and dozens of posts, including some talking about declining internet freedom in the world's biggest democracy.

Others were accounts operated by the Pakistani government, sparking an angry response from Islamabad. Twitter and the Indian government declined to comment on the court case. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist govern-

ment has sought in recent years to have more control over content on social media in India, where Twitter has over 20 million users.

Last year as India saw massive anti-government protests by farmers, Twitter was ordered to take down dozens of accounts for supporting the demonstrations. But the US firm reinstated them, angering the government. An Indian climate activist was also arrested in Feb 2021 on seditious charges for helping to edit a protest “tool kit” that was tweeted by Greta Thunberg. —AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Actors perform during the dress rehearsal of the play *Le Moine noir* (The Black Monk of Anton Chekhov) by Russian director Kirill Serebrennikov prior to the beginning of the 76th edition of the International Festival of Avignon Theatre in Avignon, southern France on July 5, 2022.



France festivalgoers stunned as work recreates mass grave

Spectators at an opera festival in France this week watched in disbelief as experts pulled dozens of corpses one after the other from a pile of mud on stage. The scene, reminiscent of mass graves in war-torn Ukraine, was too much for some to bear, and at least one woman had to be carried away. Italian theatre director Romeo Castellucci was both applauded and booed for his latest performance at the Aix-en-Provence Festival of Lyrical Art on Monday. The artist, who is known to be experimental, says he had planned "Resurrection" long before Russia invaded its pro-Western neighbor in late February.

But it "has the singular misfortune of containing images that seem to directly evoke the mass graves of Bucha, the mass graves of Mariupol," he said, referring to the Kyiv suburb and southern Ukrainian city ravaged by Russian forces. At the start of his latest work, a real white horse wanders onto stage, sniffing at its muddy surface, oblivious to the some 1,500 people watching. When his owner turns up to find him, he makes the grim

discovery of the remains of a human body. Vans soon pull up off stage, bearing the sign of the UN refugee agency.

Dressed in white overalls, masks and gloves, experts for more than an hour then work to pull out more than a hundred fake corpses, including those of children and fetuses, as well as shreds of clothing. Audience members can smell the earth as an orchestra performs Romantic composer Gustav Mahler's Symphony Number 2, also known as his "Resurrection Symphony", in the background. The only action comes towards the end, when one of the experts, visibly shaken, frantically continues to dig at the earth-even after all the bodies have been taken away. — AFP

People prepare the stage of the new theatre (La Scala Provence) prior to the beginning of the 76th edition of the International Festival of Avignon Theatre in Avignon, southern France on July 5, 2022. — AFP photos



New US study helps de-mystify COVID brain fog

A small new study published Tuesday by scientists at the US National Institutes of Health suggests that the immune response triggered by coronavirus infections damages the brain's blood vessels and could be responsible for long COVID symptoms. The paper, published in the journal *Brain*, was based on brain autopsies from nine people who died suddenly after contracting the virus.

Rather than detecting evidence of COVID in the brain, the team found it was

the people's own antibodies that attacked the cells lining the brain's blood vessels, causing inflammation and damage. This discovery could explain why some people have lingering effects from infection including headache, fatigue, loss of taste and smell, and inability to sleep as well as "brain fog" - and may also help devise new treatments for long COVID.

NIH scientist Avindra Nath, the paper's senior author, said in a statement: "Patients often develop neurological complications with COVID-19, but the underlying pathophysiological process is not well understood." "We had previously shown blood vessel damage and inflammation in patients' brains at autopsy, but we didn't understand the cause of the damage. I think in this paper we've gained important insight into the cascade of events."

The nine individuals, aged 24 to 73,

were selected from the team's prior study because they showed evidence of blood vessel damage in their brains based on scans. Their brains were compared to those from 10 controls, with the team examining neuroinflammation and immune responses using a technique called immunohistochemistry. The scientists discovered that antibodies produced against COVID-19 mistakenly targeted cells that form the "blood-brain barrier" - a structure designed to keep harmful invaders out of the brain while allowing necessary substances to pass.

Damage to these cells can cause leakage of proteins, bleeding and clots, which elevates the risk of stroke. The leaks also trigger immune cells called macrophages to rush to the site to repair damage, causing inflammation. The team found that normal cellular processes in the areas tar-

geted by the attack were severely disrupted, which had implications for things such as their ability to de-toxify and to regulate metabolism.

The findings offer clues about the biology at play in patients with long-term neurological symptoms, and can inform new treatments - for example, a drug that targets the build-up of antibodies on the blood-brain barrier. "It is quite possible that this same immune response persists in Long COVID patients resulting in neuronal injury," said Nath. This would mean that a drug that dials down that immune response could help those patients, he added. "So these findings have very important therapeutic implications." — AFP

Viva! Spain bull-running fiesta returns after pandemic pause

A red-and-white sea of revelers erupted in celebration Wednesday, dousing each other with wine in a packed Pamplona square as Spain's most famous bull-running festival returned after a two-year absence due to the pandemic. The launch of a firecracker known as the "chupinazo" from the balcony of the northern city's town hall at noon marked the official start of the nine-day San Fermin fiesta, kicking off the bedlam. Thousands of party-goers from around the world-most dressed in the traditional all-white outfit with a red scarf-responded ecstatically, screaming "Viva San Fermin!" and spraying each other with wine.

Despite a light rain falling, the throng cheered wildly as they waved their red scarves in the air and passed giant yellow inflatable balls over their heads as scores looked on from crowded apartment balconies. "The rain doesn't matter. Seeing the square full again is terrific," said Saioa Guembe Pena, 54-year-old civil servant whose white shirt was stained pink with wine.

The annual festival, made famous by Ernest Hemingway's 1926 novel "The Sun Also Rises", was last held in 2019. Local officials called off the hugely popular event in 2020 and the following year because of the COVID-19 pandemic-the first time the festival was cancelled since Spain's civil war in the 1930s. Many revelers started drinking early, sitting at outdoor patios or wandering Pamplona's narrow, cobbled streets with large bottles of sangria hours before the "chupinazo".

The festival, which dates back to medieval times, features concerts, religious processions, folk dancing and round-the-clock drinking. But the highlight is the bracing daily test of courage against a thundering pack of half-tonne, sharp-horned bulls. Every day at 8:00 am, hundreds of daredevils race with six fighting bulls along an 850-metre (2,800-foot) course from a holding pen to Pamplona's bull ring, which this year marks its 100th anniversary. The bravest-or most foolhardy-run as close as possible to the bulls' horns, preferably without being gored. The first bull run, which traditionally draws the largest number of participants, is on Thursday. — AFP



A shepherd leads a flock of sheep in Sadpera village, some 30 Km from Skardu of Gilgit-Baltistan region in northern Pakistan.

Pakistan climbing season reaches new heights

Pakistan is enjoying a bumper climbing season with around 1,400 foreign mountaineers bidding to scale its lofty peaks - including hundreds on the 8,611-metre (28,251-feet) K2, the world's second highest. "It is a record number," Raja Nasir

Ali Khan, tourism minister of Gilgit-Baltistan region, told AFP. The country is home to five of the world's 14 mountains higher than 8,000 metres, and climbing them all is considered the ultimate achievement of any mountaineer.

Karrar Haidri, secretary of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, told AFP there were 57 expeditions planned for 23 Pakistan peaks this season - with 370 climbers having a crack at K2, known as "the savage mountain". Besides being far more technically difficult to climb than Everest, weather conditions are notoriously fickle on K2, which has only being scaled by 425 people since 1954. More than 6,000 people have



Villagers gather in Sadpera village, some 30 Km from Skardu of Gilgit-Baltistan region in northern Pakistan. — AFP photos

climbed Everest since Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay first reached the top in 1953 - some of them multiple times.

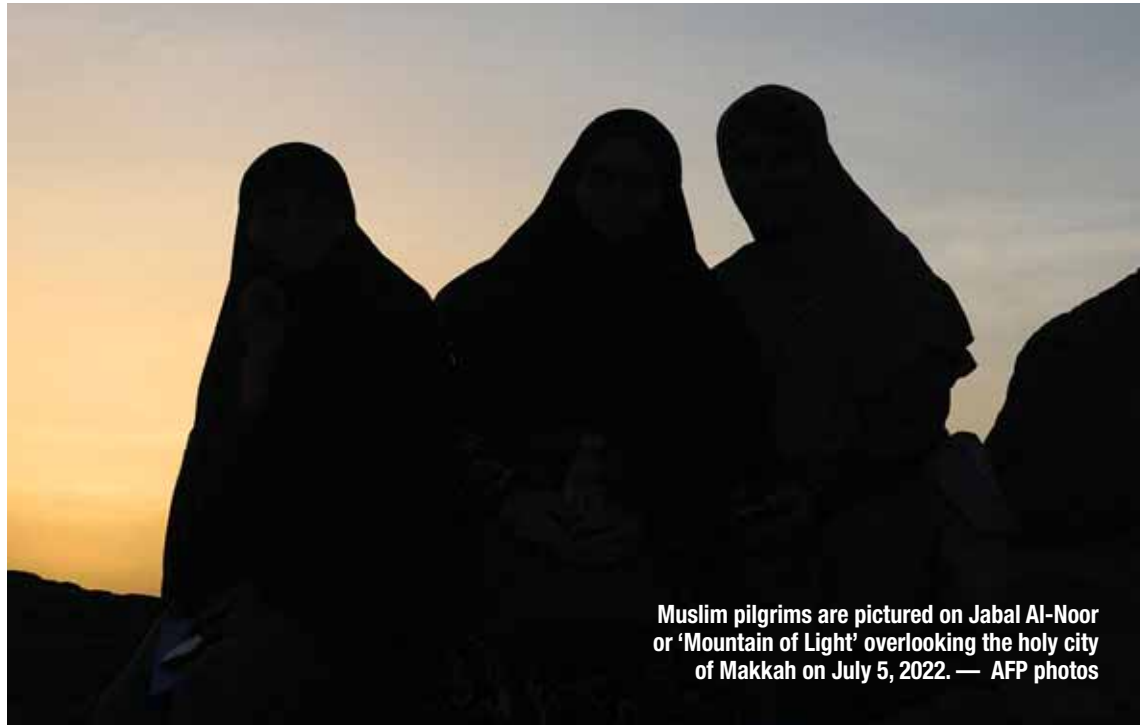
Haidri said climbers this year include 90 women - including at least two Pakistanis aiming to become the country's first to scale K2. Russian Oxana Morneva is leading a team on the mountain, having failed in her own attempt in 2012 when she was forced back after injuring her knee. "My rope was broken by falling rocks," she told AFP. She said she had no apprehension about returning. "When we go to the mountain we have to be peaceful inside, and we have to know what we are doing," she added.

Around 200 climbers will attempt to scale

the 8,051-metre Broad Peak, while similar numbers will try Gasherbrum-I (8,080 metres) and Gasherbrum-II (8,035 metres). A 36-year-old Norwegian climber, Kristin Harila, is also aiming to reach the world's 14 highest mountain summits in record time. Having already climbed seven peaks of over 8,000 metres, Harila hopes to match, if not beat, Nepali adventurer Nirmal Purja's ambitious six months and six days record. The summer climbing season that started in early June lasts until late August. — AFP



Muslim worshippers pray around the Kaaba at the Grand Mosque in Saudi Arabia's holy city of Makkah.



Muslim pilgrims are pictured on Jabal Al-Noor or 'Mountain of Light' overlooking the holy city of Makkah on July 5, 2022. — AFP photos

'UNBELIEVABLE FEELING': OVERSEAS HAJJ PILGRIMS REJOICE AFTER COVID ABSENCE

Of the hundreds of thousands of Muslims arriving in Makkah this week for the annual hajj pilgrimage, perhaps none had a more arduous journey than Adam Mohammed, a 53-year-old electrical engineer from the United Kingdom. Mohammed, who is of Iraqi-Kurdish origin, decided last year to travel on foot to Saudi Arabia, a journey of more than 7,000 kilometers (4,350 miles) that took him through nine countries before he crossed over from Jordan into the north-western Saudi town of Tabuk.

The trip was made all the more dramatic by the fact that when he started his trek 11 months ago, pushing a cart in front of him that contained his food and other supplies, he had no idea whether he would be able to access the holy mosques in Makkah and Medina.

It was only in April that Saudi Arabia, which barred overseas pilgrims in 2020 and 2021 as part of efforts to mitigate the coronavirus pandemic, announced that one million Muslims, including 850,000 from abroad, would be able to participate this year. Now safely in Makkah, some 15 kilograms (33 pounds) lighter than when he started, Mohammed has no regrets. "I cried when I first arrived. It's an unbelievable feeling," he told AFP.

"My trip was exhausting. I stopped in many places for rest. But I was focused on one thing: I am 53 years old, so what if I spare 11 months on the road to reach the house of God? It's doable." Mohammed said Saudi authorities granted him and his

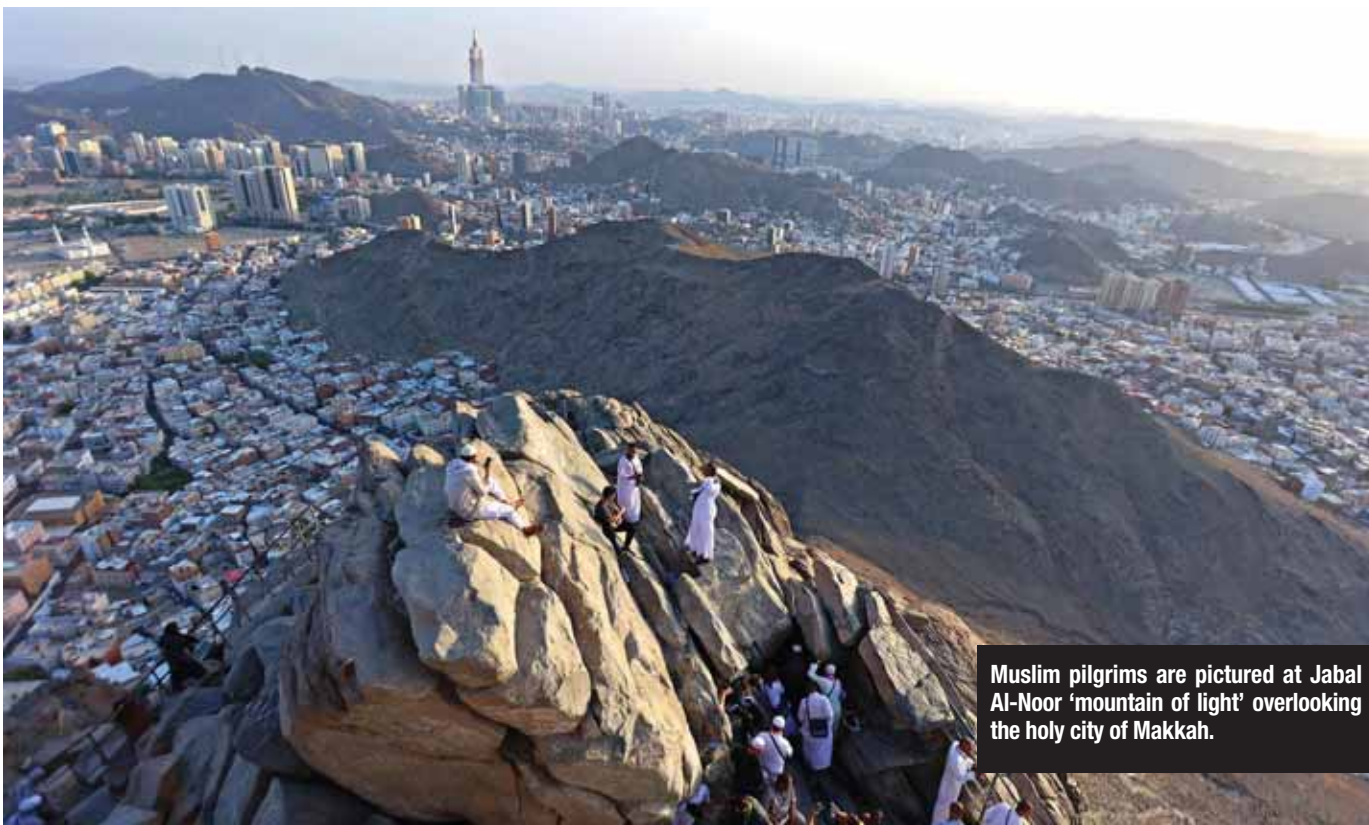
wife and two daughters, who have flown from the UK to the Gulf kingdom, a permit to participate in the hajj, which consists of a series of religious rites completed in Makkah and surrounding areas of western Saudi Arabia. Most of the other foreigners performing the rite have been selected via a lottery system.

'It is my dream'

One of the five pillars of Islam, the hajj must be undertaken by all able-bodied Muslims who have the means at least once in their lives. But pandemic restrictions forced countless would-be pilgrims based outside Saudi Arabia to put their plans on hold. Usually one of the world's largest religious gatherings, about 2.5 million people participated in 2019, before the pandemic began.

The following year, foreigners were blocked and the total number of worshippers was capped at 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. Hosting the hajj is a matter of prestige and a powerful source of legitimacy for Saudi rulers. The ban on overseas pilgrims caused deep disappointment among Muslims worldwide, who typically save for years to take part.

Though the number is much higher this year, there are still some restrictions: participants must be Muslims aged under 65 who are fully vaccinated and can submit a negative COVID-19 PCR result from a test



Muslim pilgrims are pictured at Jabal Al-Noor 'mountain of light' overlooking the holy city of Makkah.

taken within 72 hours of travel. The hajj officially begins Wednesday, and Makkah is already overrun with worshippers who, like Mohammed, are relieved to have finally reached their destination after long, stressful waits.

A 30-year-old Russian pilgrim who

gave her name as Halima said she had been imagining her stay in Makkah for more than a decade. The hajj costs at least \$5,000 per person, and Halima said she shared her story with friends to drum up funds for both her and her father to come. "Yesterday was the first time I saw

the Kaaba," she said, referring to the large black cubic structure at the centre of the Grand Mosque. "It is my dream to be here, and now I am living it." — AFP



Samoan tenor Pene Pati poses ahead of the International Festival of Lyric Art of Aix-en-Provence, in Aix-en-Provence, southern France. — AFP

Pene Pati: The Samoan Pavarotti

Pene Pati remembers his teachers at university telling him: "Don't be ashamed if you don't make it because a lot of Pacific singers won't." In fact, they added, no one from Samoa had ever become an opera star. Pati's reaction? "Well, I'll be the first and I'll prove you wrong." Now, at 34, he has released his first album on Warner Classics, and is about to star in Rossini's "Moise et Pharaon" at the prestigious Aix-en-Provence festival, after already wowing audiences from Bordeaux to San Francisco.

There is one comparison that keeps coming up and not just because of his commanding physical presence. "Nearly every critic I've had at every single opera has said the same thing: 'You truly do sound like Pavarotti,'" he told AFP with a laugh.

The comparison is well-earned, since Pati spent hours watching Luciano Pavarotti—one of the legendary Three Tenors and widely regarded as one of the greatest singers of the 20th century—trying to figure out his secrets. "I couldn't afford singing lessons so I ended up teaching myself on YouTube," he said. "They were the only people I knew. I would watch videos of Pavarotti and zoom in on his face and try to figure out what he was doing and how he could make it look so easy."

Pati was born on the Samoan archipelago but grew up in Auckland, New Zealand. He credits a smart initiative by his teachers for discovering his voice: they only allowed boys to play rugby if they also joined the choir to make sure singing was embraced by sporty kids. "The experiment worked." — AFP

How a new technique could help conservation: Freeze-dried mice

Japanese scientists have successfully produced cloned mice using freeze-dried cells in a technique they believe could one day help conserve species and overcome challenges with current biobanking methods. The United Nations has warned that extinctions are accelerating worldwide and at least a million species could disappear because of human-induced impacts like climate change.

Facilities have sprung up globally to preserve samples from endangered species with the goal of preventing their extinction by future cloning. These samples are generally cryopreserved using liquid nitrogen or kept at extremely low temperatures, which can be costly and vulnerable to power outages. They also usually involve sperm and egg cells, which can be difficult or impossible to harvest from old or infertile animals.

Scientists at Japan's University of Yamanashi wanted to see whether they could solve those problems by freeze-drying somatic cells—any cell that isn't a sperm or egg cell—and attempting to produce clones. They experimented with two types of mice cells, and found that, while freeze-drying killed them and caused significant DNA damage, they could still produce cloned blastocysts—a ball of cells that develops into an embryo.

From these, the scientists extracted stem cell lines that they used to create 75 cloned mice. One of the mice survived a year and nine months, and the team also successfully mated female and male cloned mice with natural-born partners and produced normal pups. The cloned mice produced fewer offspring than would have been expected from natural-born mice, and one of the stem cell lines developed from male cells produced only female mice clones.

"Improvement should not be difficult," said Teruhiko Wakayama, a professor at the University of Yamanashi's Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences, who helped lead the study published in the journal Nature Communications this month. "We believe that in the future we will be able to reduce abnormalities and

increase the birth rate by searching for freeze-drying protectant agents and improving drying methods," he told AFP.

'Very exciting advance'

There are some other drawbacks—the success rate of cloning mice from cells stored in liquid nitrogen or at ultra-low temperatures is between two and five percent, while the freeze-dried method is just 0.02 percent. But Wakayama says the technique is still in its early stages, comparing it to the study that produced "Dolly" the famous sheep clone—a single success after more than 200 tries.

"We believe the most important thing is that cloned mice have been produced from freeze-dried somatic cells, and that we have achieved a breakthrough in this field," he said. While the method is unlikely to entirely replace cryopreservation, it represents a "very exciting advance for scientists interested in biobanking threatened global biodiversity", said Simon Clulow, senior research fellow at the University of Canberra's Centre for Conservation Ecology and Genomics.

"It can be difficult and costly to work up cryopreservation protocols and so alternatives, especially those that are cheaper and robust, are extremely welcome," added Clulow, who was not involved in the research. The study stored the freeze-dried cells at minus 30 degrees Celsius, but the team has previously showed freeze-dried mouse sperm can survive at least a year at room temperature and believes somatic cells would do too.

The technique could eventually "allow genetic resources from around the world to be stored cheaply and safely", Wakayama said. The work is an extension of years of research on cloning and freeze-drying techniques by Wakayama and his partners. One of their recent projects involved freeze-drying mouse sperm that was sent to the International Space Station. Even after six years in space the cells were successfully rehydrated back on Earth and produced healthy mice pups. — AFP

Keepers of Ukraine keys ... and secrets

Yevgen Yelptiforov counts out the keys of the homes he has been given to look after by friends who have fled Ukraine since Russia invaded. "There's 19 in all," he said, cradling the bunch in his hands. Since the war began the 37-year-old biologist, who works as a gardener to make ends meet, has added another notch to his crowded CV—as a key-keeper. For the last few months he has been criss-crossing the devastated Kyiv suburbs of Bucha and Irpin looking after homes and houseplants abandoned when their owners fled for their lives.

"After the liberation, many of my acquaintances asked me to come and see if their houses were still intact, if they had windows or doors," he told AFP. Yevgen would go around and turn on a light to ward off looters, clear up the broken glass, send items on to their owners, or do a bit of gardening.

Soon-as word got around—the keys began accumulating. They would be "sent by mail, or I would take them from a neighbor, or from under the doormat." Some keys came with coffee or chocolates, as tokens of gratitude, as Yevgen had been doing it all from the goodness of his heart. Returning friends would often find a little present from him, a bouquet of flowers or fruit to make them feel "happy". "If it was me, they would have helped me too," he insisted. "These are my friends, all the keys I have are from the people I know."



Biologist and gardener Yevgen Yelptiforov, 37 years old, shows the keys of houses and apartments entrusted to him by people who fled the war, in Irpin, Kyiv region. — AFP

Gas mask for the fridge

But sometimes the job stank, literally. "The hardest part" was clearing out rotten food from fridges and freezers left for weeks without electricity. "The smell is so bad you could pass out," he said. Which is why he is so grateful that someone gave him a Soviet-era gas mask. Even after a thorough cleanup, apartments still need to be aired out a few more times because "the smell remains for a week or two".

In Bucha, which has become a symbol of crimes carried out by Russian troops, Yevgen parked his car in front of a brand new apartment complex, most of whose windows were blown out. Nothing but a pile of metal remained of one car parked outside while another was riddled with shrapnel. Yevgen stayed just long enough in a small apartment to water some plants. The only sign of the war was a note on the wall left by Russian soldiers, "Excuse us for breaking in." The front door, like most others on this floor, had to be replaced.

A television voice actor before the war, Oleksandr Furman spent April as a key-keeper, looking after six Kyiv apartments abandoned by his friends. His most unusual mission was tidying away the sex toys his ex-girlfriend and her new partner left behind after fleeing the city just after the invasion began in the early hours of February 24. "She told me, 'I can't ask my mother to do it,'" Oleksandr said, bursting out laughing. "I hid them well... 'I was lucky. I wasn't shot at, missiles didn't fall near me,'" he said. And by helping the actor felt he was "doing my duty by those who suffered". — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Workers package finished chalk into boxes at the Jordan Chalk company in Karak, around 120 kilometers (70 miles) south of the capital Amman.

JORDAN CHALKS UP BUSINESS SUCCESS FROM LIMESTONE RICHES

Long before whiteboards, beamers and laptops entered modern school classrooms, teachers relied on the humble, dusty, sometimes screechy blackboard chalk—a material that has created a Jordanian business success story. Chemical engineer Salah Aloqbi remembers sitting on a bus in Amman in 1995 when he hit on the idea that would lead him to create his company. More than two decades later it boasts 150 staff, with exports to more than 100 countries.

Chalk, a white, soft limestone, was formed aeons ago when the shells of tiny marine creatures were compressed on the sea floor—and the landlocked Middle Eastern desert country of Jordan is blessed with vast deposits. “It was a game-changing idea,” recalled Aloqbi, now 49, who founded the Jordan Chalk Manufacturing Company.

“I was returning from work at the Jordan Carbonate Company when I heard a radio interview saying that the calcium carbonate produced by the company is used in various industries in Jordan—except the chalk industry,” Aloqbi pondered how to make blackboard chalk, which was until then wholly imported, to gain extra value from the calcium carbonate that is also used to produce white cement, make soils less acidic, and toothpaste more abrasive.

Seven years later, he launched a small factory in Karak governorate south of Amman, with two rooms and just five



Workers package finished chalk into boxes at the Jordan Chalk company in Karak, around 120 kilometres (70 miles) south of the capital Amman.

workers, and started experimenting—initially by pulverising the porous material with a meat mincer. “But the chalk that we produced at that time was no longer used around the world, so we moved to produce dustless medical chalk,” he said, referring to a carbonate-based type with larger particles.

The right stuff

Some 2,149 attempts later, the businessman said proudly, he hit the right formula for dustless chalk, creating a “very strong export opportunity” that now sees

his company produce 10 billion pieces a year. Jordan has a near endless supply of the raw material, with the ministry of energy and mineral resources estimating the country’s “assets of limestone exceed 1.3 billion metric tons”.

Limestone is the common form of calcium carbonate CaCO_3 , the main ingredient for chalk. “It comes to mind that this is an outdated product, but the truth is that we are struggling to meet the great demand,” Aloqbi said as he inspected hundreds of cartons heading to Britain and Germany, Mali and Morocco.



A worker puts colored chalk through a machine at the Jordan Chalk company in Karak, around 120 kilometers south of the capital Amman. —AFP photos

The chalk pieces come in a wide palette of colors and are used for art and play around the world. The firm has also branched out into colored crayons and modeling clay, and is the country’s only producer of chalk sticks. Today, the company sits on a 7,500 square meter plot and offers sought-after jobs in a country where the unemployment rate soared to 25 percent last year, about the same as the poverty rate.

“Most of us are from villages in Karak governorate,” said one employee, 28-

year-old Sundus Majali. “More than half of the workers are women.” At first, she said, “it was difficult for parents to allow females to work ... But today they have no problem with that, especially because the factory is safe, not like other workplaces.” Another colleague, Alaa Aloqbi, 33, said “the factory has provided job opportunities at a time when life became difficult”. — AFP

‘Like a dream’: Japanese grandpa draws in following as art YouTuber

Harumichi Shibasaki was nearly 70 when he began making YouTube art tutorials from his quiet home in the Japanese countryside. Five years on, he has 1.4 million subscribers. Unlike the attention-grabbing antics of most top YouTubers, the grandfather has won hearts with his calm, soothing manner, which fans say makes them feel “warm and peaceful”.

He has also built a global following thanks to the English subtitles on his videos demonstrating painting and sketch techniques, which sometimes feature his grandchildren and two cats. “Hello. Shibasaki here. How’s everyone doing?” the grey-haired art instructor with glasses and a moustache says in Japanese, pausing to smile and wave.

The 74-year-old films everything himself for his channel “Watercolor by Shibasaki” using tripods, lighting and a smartphone or DSLR camera. He is also

active on Instagram, TikTok and Twitter, and says being directly connected to the world is “like a dream”. “We didn’t even have a TV at home when I was a child,” Shibasaki told AFP near his home in a rural part of Chiba, outside Tokyo, where birdsong fills the air. “As someone from my generation, I didn’t expect there would ever be a time like this.”

His videos range from how to paint cherry blossoms to snapshots of daily life, such as cooking bamboo shoots dug up from his garden. Like many successful YouTubers, his clips are peppered with banner and video ads, while big fans can send cash during livestreams or pay to access members-only footage. It was Shibasaki’s son who first encouraged him to post on the site—a chance for the instructor with decades of experience to reach a global audience. “I like teaching, I like chatting with everyone. I can talk for five, six hours!” Shibasaki said.

‘Kind’ voice

During the darkest days of the pandemic, Shibasaki’s subscriber count soared. In one April 2020 video he showed viewers how to sketch a smudgy, fluffy cat, saying he hoped drawing together would help them feel better while stuck at home. A flood of comments in different languages called the video “calm and relaxing” and said Shibasaki’s “kind” voice had left a “warm and peaceful” impression. “Viewers say I have a really good voice, but I have no idea why,” he laughed. People tell him that his slow, relaxed delivery reassures them, and some even see Shibasaki—who has undergone heart surgery six times—as an agony uncle.

Because of his health scares, “death has become a concrete mental image,” he said, meaning he can “truly understand” the problems people confide in him. Shibasaki loved painting from a young age, but as the only son of a farming family in Chiba, he expected his parents to ask

him to take over their land. However, overcome with the desire to move to Tokyo and study art aged 18, he rushed to ask his parents’ permission while they were hard at work. “They looked back at me in the rice field and said I should go. I’m so grateful for that.”

Shibasaki later became an art teacher and strived to make his advice easy to understand, just like in his videos. “Painting is fun,” he said. “It’s a battle with myself to achieve perfection. It’s interesting, and there’s a sense of achievement.” Shibasaki wants to continue painting as long as possible. When artists get older, “their eyesight gets worse, their hands shake,” he said. “I’m going to turn 75, so I’ll only be able to draw properly for another five years or so. But in the meantime, if I can make paintings to leave behind, that’s what I want to do.” — AFP



Japanese art instructor Harumichi Shibasaki paints with watercolours at a shrine in Isumi, Chiba prefecture. Harumichi Shibasaki was nearly 70 when he began making YouTube art tutorials from his quiet home in the Japanese countryside. Five years on, he has 1.4 million subscribers. — AFP photos



Japanese art instructor Harumichi Shibasaki poses with one of his pet cats at his atelier in Isumi, Chiba prefecture.

Picky eaters: Japan penguins piqued by penny-pinching zoo

Picky penguins and ornery otters at a Japanese aquarium are facing the effects of inflation, refusing the new bargain bites their keepers are now offering after a jump in prices. As part of a belt-tightening effort, the Hakone-en aquarium in central Japan’s Kanagawa region has scrapped some of its traditional and more expensive horse mackerel in favor of cheaper mackerel.

But the menu change has not been received with universal approval, with some penguins resolutely turning their beaks up when the mackerel is proffered. “They take it into their mouths at first, but then they decide they don’t like it and drop it,” aquarium head Hiroki Shimamoto told AFP.

He speculates that the uncompromising penguins may have taken issue with the size of their new meals, which are bigger than their standard fare. “They sense something is off,” he said.

The problem is even more acute among the aquarium’s otters, who have uniformly rejected the cheaper fish, Shimamoto added. The facility said it made the switch after horse mackerel prices rocketed up about 20-30 percent from last year, in part because of low catches. The aquarium is still purchasing some horse mackerel for its feed, but has no plans to revert back entirely until prices fall, Shimamoto said. “It all depends on when things get back to normal.” — AFP

Sports

What happened to Shazball? India and Kohli blasted after Test defeat

India's media slam star cricketers

NEW DELHI: India's media came down heavily on their star cricketers on Wednesday after England romped to a seven-wicket victory in the fifth Test, calling the bowlers too wayward and questioning Virat Kohli's place in the side. After being in control, India were bowled out for 245 in their second innings, setting England a record target of 378 runs that the hosts reached with ease.

Joe Root smashed an unbeaten 142 and Jonny Bairstow hit 114 not out as England cruised to their highest Test run-chase with two sessions to spare at Edgbaston. When play began on Tuesday, England needed 119 runs and early strikes could have swung the momentum in India's favor. "But the visitors were simply too flat, and their bowlers too wayward," wrote the Times of India in a report headlined "New England break new ground".

The paper noted that in the last two away Tests against South Africa, Indian seamers, billed as the "best ever", had failed to bowl with intensity or accuracy in the fourth innings. Former captain Kohli, 33, has been going through a prolonged lean patch and has not hit a century since 2019 and the Hindu daily said it was time India addressed the elephant in the room.

"Their next Test is in December, but will Kohli do what a Cheteshwar Pujara did and play enough first-class cricket in the meantime to rediscover

his touch and form?" the paper asked. The English-language daily was all praise for England, hailing them as "magnificent". "Joe Root's century must rate as one of the finest, full of grace and power and mischief. And with Jonny Bairstow in such stunning form, they deserved to win," it said.

The daily said India suffered in the absence of "Shazball", the previous combination of Ravi Shastri as coach and Kohli as captain, a spinoff on "Bazball"—the nickname for the aggressive brand of cricket played under England's new coach Brendon McCullum and skipper Ben Stokes. India were led by seamer Jasprit Bumrah in the Test for the first time in the absence of Rohit Sharma, who tested positive for COVID-19. "Yet one can't shake off the feeling that India reneged on Shazball, and a captain leading for the first time was placed in a difficult position," the Hindu said.

"Gone was the aggression and command of the Virat Kohli years—although the then captain did go over the top often—and the team is left with more questions than answers." The Indian Express heaped special praise on Root. "In touch, in the divinest touch of his career, he flows as smoothly and serenely as a river. "If Bumrah cannot stop him, perhaps no one could. That the Indian seam-maestro came not even remotely close to troubling him, let alone dismissing him, captures the story of Root's incredible mastery." —AFP



BIRMINGHAM: India's Virat Kohli sets off for a run during play on Day 3 of the fifth cricket Test match between England and India at Edgbaston, Birmingham in central England. —AFP

'Brave' new England try to shake up Test cricket

BIRMINGHAM: Well that might be the conclusion of some fans who watched a resurgent England make light of a chase of 378 in the COVID-delayed fifth Test against India. It was the latest example of 'Bazball' in action, with a seven-wicket win in Birmingham England's fourth successful chase in as many Tests under a new leadership duo of coach Brendon McCullum and captain Ben Stokes following a 3-0 whitewash of Test world champions New Zealand.

That series saw England chase down seemingly stiff targets of 277, 299 and 296. No England side, however, had previously made more to win in the fourth innings of a Test than 359, when Stokes' brilliant century secured a thrilling victory over Australia at Headingley three years ago.

But with Joe Root (142 not out) and Jonny Bairstow (114 not out) sharing an unbroken partnership of 269, that mark was overhauled with ease at Edgbaston as England ended a five-match series all square at 2-2. Yet as well as former England captain Root and Bairstow batted, they are in-form and experienced internationals. Arguably the greatest revelation about England's latest run-chase was how they attacked it from the start, with Alex Lees and Zak Crawley, both of whom had been struggling for runs, sharing a century opening stand in 19.5 overs – the fastest in England Test history.

'Real clarity'

Stokes said England's approach was down to a change in attitude from a team that had won just one of its 17 previous Tests prior to the New Zealand series. "When you've got real clarity in what you want to achieve as a team and how you want to play it makes things a lot easier," said Stokes.

"We know what we were going to do – we knew we were always going to go out and try and chase that down from the get-go. "A great way to explain is that teams are perhaps better than us, but teams won't be braver than us. " (England spinner) Jack Leach said that to me and it is a great way to sum things up at the moment," the all-rounder added.

Scoring runs quickly in Test cricket is nothing new. A celebrated West Indies team once chased down a target of 342 inside a day to beat England by nine wickets at Lord's, with opener Gordon Greenidge making an unbeaten double century. And the successful Australia teams of the late 1990s and early 2000s looked to score at a rate of four per over in order to give their bowlers as much time as possible to take the 20 wickets needed to win a Test.

But on Tuesday, England were scoring at a rate of nearly five an over, with the way Root reverse scooped medium-pacer Shardul Thakur for six a sign of how T20 shot-making, unknown to previous generations, is influencing the longer game. Former New Zealand captain McCullum was credited for being the inspiration behind England's rise from white-ball no-hopers to 2019 50-over World Cup winners and England clearly hope he will have a similar effect now he is directly involved with the Test side.

Four matches is a small sample size, however, and had Rishabh Pant stayed in for just a little longer in India's second innings, Stokes may have been granted a wish where he "almost wanted them to get 450 (ahead), to see what we did." India coach Rahul Dravid, one of the best batsmen of his era, was impressed by England but said the way Pant had scored a typically dynamic 146, in a first innings where Ravindra Jadeja also made a hundred, proved Stokes' side did not have a copyright on attacking play.

"When your players are doing well, are in good form, then you can play really positively, can take the game forward," said Dravid. "We also showed when Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja were playing in the first innings – we played pretty positive cricket. "But when two positive players or attacking players are in good form, and can play such a big innings, and that happens in three to four matches continuously it looks good for cricket and also for them." —AFP

Root happy to be an England 'rock star'

BIRMINGHAM: Joe Root said England captain Ben Stokes had urged the side to play like "rock stars" following a record-breaking win over India. Set 378 for victory in the Covid-delayed fifth Test, more than any other England team have managed and the eighth highest chase in the 145-year-old's format history, the hosts' made a mockery of the challenge during a seven-wicket win achieved with more than two sessions to spare at Edgbaston on Tuesday.

Root finished on a commanding 142 not out, with Yorkshire team-mate Jonny Bairstow's unbeaten 114 his second hundred of the match and fourth in his last five Test innings. Root, after compiling his 28th Test century, wiggled his little finger at the England changing room in a reference to a scene from the recently-released Baz

Luhrmann movie 'Elvis', about the legendary rock 'n roll star Elvis Presley.

Stokes succeeded Root as captain after the star batsman stood down following a run of just one win from 17 Tests. But England have struck few bum notes since the appointment of a new leadership pair in Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum, with this their fourth win from four matches under the duo following a 3-0 whitewash of Test world champions New Zealand.

"It's about trying to have fun and really relishing every opportunity you get to showcase what you're about and put on a show for everyone," said Root. "It's like being a kid again." The 31-year-old, a veteran of 121 Tests, added: "I don't think I'll ever be able to feel or look like a rock star but for 10 seconds out there I might have done. "That's what the little pinkie celebration was about. Ben watched the Elvis film the other day and he's been doing that all week. It was a little tribute to him."

Root, while essentially an orthodox batsman, said all-rounder Stokes had encouraged him to broaden his repertoire, with a reverse ramp for six off India medium-pacer Shardul Thakur



England's Joe Root

on Tuesday evidence of a growing range of strokes. "The Yorkshireman inside me is still saying 'dig in, play straight and get behind it,'" said Root, mimicking a forward defensive shot. "Then there's the captain on my shoulder saying 'be a rock star'. So you're fighting between the two of them, sometimes."

Stokes suggested he would have been happy with an even larger chase. "There was a bit of me that almost wanted them (India) to get 450 (ahead), to see what we did," he said. "Chasing 378 seven weeks ago would have been a scary thing for us to look at but we knew what we were going to try and do. —AFP

Sri Lanka spin reinforcements ahead of Australia showdown

GALLE: Dimuth Karunaratne's Sri Lanka are looking to level the Test series with spin reinforcements for the second match starting Friday against an upbeat Australia. The tourists batted and bowled with control on a turning Galle track in a crushing opening win, forcing the hosts to turn to their one-day heroes who helped beat Australia 3-2.

Spinners Maheesh Theekshana, Dinuth Wellalage and Prabath Jayasuriya have been added to the Sri Lankan squad along with all-rounder Lakshita Manasinghe who bowls off-spin. "I was very surprised with the selections for the first Test, because I thought there were a couple of names that should have been there after the one-day series performances," former captain Aravinda de Silva told AFP.

Theekshana, a mystery spinner, claimed four wickets and kept down the runs in the ODIs while 19-year-old Wellalage remained the leading bowler with nine wickets from his left-arm spin. Both players are looking for their first Test cap in the absence of Praveen Jayawickrama, who had been expected to play the second match but tested COVID positive on Monday.

Australian spinner Nathan Lyon took a match haul of nine wickets to lead his team's domination in the opener as they bundled out Sri Lanka twice for

212 and 113. But Aravinda remains confident in the talent that Sri Lanka has. "All the guys are very, very talented lot. You saw them play in the one-dayers. It's just that they need to understand that it's a mind game," said the World Cup winner.

"Because they have the ability and just need to be selective in shot-making and to understand their roles. Having Angelo (Mathews) and Dimuth really helps with their enormous experience in the conditions that they are used to." Mathews has rejoined the Sri Lankan team after he tested COVID positive on the third morning of the first Test. Australia, led by Pat Cummins, beat the odds against the hosts they suffered a 3-0 whitewash in 2016 to come up with a clinical show in the first match.

Batting 'courage'

If the bowlers got wickets, the batsmen scored runs at a quick pace to manage a crucial lead of 109 in the first innings. Cameron Green batted with maturity to rebuild the innings after an early stutter and took the attack to the opposition with sweeps and reverse sweeps in his match-winning 77.

Steve Smith lauded the courage shown by the touring batsmen and said each one brought something different to the table. "It's good we all play a little bit differently," Smith said. "There's not the same continuity, so bowlers have to change their lengths a bit more and when you're in a partnership, you can cruise along quite freely. Just a really good balance, and guys sticking to their plans for long periods." The 23-year-old Green said they must have done some things right to force midway changes in the opposition squad.



GALLE: Sri Lanka's captain Dimuth Karunaratne attends a practice session at the Galle International Cricket Stadium in Galle on July 6, 2022. —AFP

"Three days away and we don't know what team they are going to pick," said Green, who has played 13 Tests since his debut in 2020. "So I guess if you change opposition teams, you must be doing something right but you have to wait and watch who you come up against." With Lyon and fellow spinner Mitchell Swepson forming a potent spin combo in the big win and Travis Head adding to the slow bowling force with his 4-10, it's unlikely the tourists will make changes. —AFP

Bagnaia's victory celebrations take a wrong turn

PARIS: Francesco Bagnaia apologized for a "serious misjudgment" after the normally abstemious Italian MotoGP rider was found to have been drink driving on the Spanish holiday island of Ibiza. No one else was involved in the accident early on Tuesday but police sources told AFP that the results of Bagnaia's breathalyser test showed "he was three times over the limit of what is authorized (0.25mg per litre of air exhaled)" under Spanish law.

Bagnaia should face trial as anyone found to be returning a level over 0.60mg is considered to have committed a misdemeanour. If found guilty he could be

compelled to carry out community service and be fined – he could also be banned from driving from between one to four years. A police source discounted the possibility of Bagnaia going to jail – the offence carries a possible prison term of three to six months – as "the damage is very light and there is no one else involved."

The 25-year-old Ducati star spun off the road in his car after leaving a night club where he had been celebrating his victory in the Dutch Grand Prix on June 26. It was his third victory of the campaign and came after he failed to finish in the previous two races – last season's championship runner-up trails defending champion and series leader Fabio Quartararo by 66 points.

"On leaving a nightclub at 03h00 in the morning (Tuesday) I was approaching a roundabout when I finished with



MONTMELO: Honda LCR Japanese rider Takaaki Nakagami (center) falls provoking the fall of Suzuki Spanish rider Alex Rins (right) and Ducati Italian rider Francesco Bagnaia (left) during the Moto Grand Prix de Catalunya at the Circuit de Catalunya in Montmelo. —AFP

my front wheels in a ditch without involving other vehicles or people," he wrote on social media. "The alcohol level taken by the police was above that

authorized by Spanish law." Bagnaia added he was "sorry" for this "serious misjudgement which should not have happened." —AFP

Sports

‘Hypocrites and liars’: Horschel slams Saudi-backed LIV players

Controversy continues to swirl around LIV Golf

LONDON: World number 15 Billy Horschel has urged the “hypocrites and liars” on the Saudi-backed LIV Golf series to stay away from the established tours. With controversy continuing to swirl around LIV Golf, Horschel launched a strong defense of the PGA Tour and DP World Tour ahead of this week’s Scottish Open.

The tournament, sanctioned by both tours, will feature a number of LIV players after their suspensions for appearing in the inaugural event of the breakaway series was temporarily dropped on appeal. Following a hearing before Sport Resolutions (UK) on Monday, the bans imposed on Ian Poulter, Adrian Otaegui and Justin Harding were lifted and they were added to the field at Renaissance Club, with more set to follow.

But Horschel made his feelings on the controversial LIV events abundantly clear as the 35-year-old American showed no sympathy for the players’ punishment. “I believe they made their bed. They decided to go play on that tour and they should go play there. They shouldn’t be coming back over to the DP World Tour or the PGA Tour,” he told reporters on Tuesday. “To say that they wanted to also support this tour, whether DP or PGA Tour going forward, while playing LIV tour, is completely asinine. They say that’s what they want to do. So just leave us alone.

“They keep talking about how the PGA Tour doesn’t listen. I’ve been really frustrated by it because there’s a lot of guys that are hypocrites,



Billy Horschel of the United States

that aren’t telling the truth and that are lying about some things. “I just can’t stand to sit here anymore and be diplomatic about it. “I am one of the 200

plus members of the PGA Tour, so when you take shots at the PGA Tour you’re not just taking shots at them. You’re taking shots at us.” —AFP

Kuwait Disabled Fencing team in Poland



KUWAIT: Kuwait Disabled Fencing team left for Poland to participate in the World Fencing Championship to be held from July 6th until July 11th. 50 fencers from several countries including Kuwait, Iraq, Thailand, Hong Kong, France, Italy, Russia,

Georgia, USA, and host country Poland will participate in the event.

The team is headed by Ahmad Al-Mutawaa with five players: Abdallah Al-Haddad, Abdallah Al-Khaldi, Sulaiman Al-Tamimi, Fahad Bastaki and



Kholood Al-Mutairi. Meanwhile, Al- Irada Disabled Sports Club and the Chairman Duaij Al-Hajiri signed a contract with coach Khalid Abdelnabi to supervise the Fencing teams. Abdelnabi had previously coached Arabi Club and the national Fencing team.

Wout Van Aert in soaring Tour de France triumph

CALAIS: Belgian Wout van Aert produced a solo break for the ages to win stage four of the Tour de France and extend his overall lead in swashbuckling style on Tuesday. After coming second on each of the first three stages in Denmark, the Jumbo-Visma man finally tasted victory when he crossed the finish line in Calais eight seconds ahead of the fast-closing peloton.

Van Aert’s feat was a rare act of brilliance that will live long in the

memory, and makes up for the disappointment of his three narrow misses. “It seems almost impossible, the jersey gave me wings,” said Van Aert. “But we planned it, both for the GC and the green jersey, there were 50 points today,” said the overall leader who also tops the sprint standings. “They say third time lucky, but for me it was the fourth.”

There was nothing lucky about it. After 160km dominated by two escapees, Van Aert’s Jumbo team and Adam Yates’ Ineos launched a blistering attack on a short, steep climb around 10km from home. Dressed in his luminous yellow outfit as race leader, Van Aert crossed the summit first and alone after a relentless

scrap up the incline. He then powered over the final 8km at speeds up to 55km/h, waving his arms in mock flight at the finish. “This is an exceptional, a really special moment,” said Van Aert.

Philipsen red-faced

Behind him, Alpecin rider Jasper Philipsen won a bunch sprint for second and briefly celebrated believing he had won the stage. “It’s a shame for Philipsen, we shouldn’t laugh at him,” said Van Aert. Philipsen soon found out the painful truth. “I thought I’d won for about five seconds. It’ll look funny watching replays in years to come,” he said. “We were quite a way behind on the hill and I didn’t see them get away,”

he explained. “I celebrated and now I feel ashamed.” Van Aert leads stage one winner Yves Lampaert by 25sec in the overall standings, while defending champion Tadej Pogacar is third at 32sec.

He also retained the best young rider’s white jersey. “If I could take the yellow tomorrow I wouldn’t say no,” said the 23-year-old Slovenian who races for Team UAE Emirates. Jumbo pair Jonas Vingegaard and Primoz Roglic are sixth and seventh at 38sec and 40sec respectively. “I’m looking forwards to helping Primoz and Jonas tomorrow on the cobbles,” Van Aert said of stage five. Ineos trio Yates, Tom Pidcock and Geraint Thomas lurk just a few seconds behind the Jumbo men. —AFP

Rivals must gang up on Pogacar: Hinault

CALAIS: Five-time Tour de France winner Bernard Hinault believes defending champion Tadej Pogacar will be difficult, but not impossible to beat. Hinault won the Tour in 1978, 1979, 1981, 1982 and 1985, and told AFP in an interview in Dunkirk on Tuesday that Pogacar is a very

strong favorite indeed. Twenty kilometers of cobbles on Wednesday is the Tour’s first real challenge, and the last Frenchman to win the Tour de France insists Pogacar will have no problems there despite his slender frame.

“It could be the start of the real Tour de France, quite simply because you can have falls, punctures, all kinds of race incidents meaning the Tour could be lost or won here,” said the 67-year-old. “So normally you’d have to be really vigilant even if it looks like there won’t be any wind or rain,” he said of stage five between Lille and Arenberg.

This stage features 11 sections of cobbles along the old mining roads used in the one-day classic Paris-Roubaix race known as “The Hell of the North”. “Pogacar has already shown he can deal perfectly well on cobbles after his performance on the Tour of Flanders, where he came fourth,” Hinault explained of the nail-biting Belgian cobbled classic in April that Pogacar almost won. “He’s a guy who rolls well on the cobbles and is capable of pulling something off,” he said of the Slovenian all-rounder who won the Tour in 2020 and 2021. —AFP

Galtier the man for PSG’s change of approach

PARIS: Christophe Galtier’s appointment as Paris Saint-Germain coach confirms a change in approach from the Qatar-owned club as they continue their search for elusive Champions League glory, but there will be huge pressure on Mauricio Pochettino’s successor. Galtier, 55, becomes PSG’s seventh different manager since the Qatari takeover of 2011 as he arrives on a two-year deal.

The new man in the dugout has developed a reputation as an outstanding coach over the last decade in France, enjoying eight years at Saint-Etienne and four years at Lille crowned with the Ligue 1 title in 2021. However, he lacks the international profile of Pochettino and other predecessors like Thomas Tuchel and Carlo Ancelotti, or indeed Zinedine Zidane, who had also been linked with the job.

Despite that, Galtier appeared unfazed about the prospect of managing PSG’s squad of superstars as he spoke on Tuesday. “It is a privilege to have a dressing room full of world-class players,” said Galtier, who took Nice to fifth in Ligue 1 and the French Cup final last season. Galtier said there would “not be a revolution”, but his appointment comes after PSG president Nasser al-Khelaifi outlined the new approach in a recent interview with newspaper Le Parisien.

“We don’t want to be flashy anymore. No more bling-bling. No more of the shiny stuff,” he said, after last year’s recruitment of Lionel Messi and other star names including Sergio Ramos and Gianluigi Donnarumma did not have the desired impact. Galtier, who played briefly in China, based his success at Lille on a 4-4-2 system that depended first and foremost on a solid defence, even if his side still played exciting football going forward.

A similar approach at Nice produced often turgid football, and he knows the expectations will be very different with Kylian Mbappe, Messi and Neymar at PSG. “I will adapt to the players we have here,” he insisted. “First things first we need to win, but with the squad we have and the international reputation of the club we also need to play good football.” Galtier’s arrival follows that of Luis Campos, appointed last month to replace sacked sporting director Leonardo.

Ready to work with Neymar

Campos, from Portugal, built the Monaco team that won the league in 2017 and the Lille side that Galtier led to the title last year. Campos already knew Mbappe from their time at Monaco and the latter’s decision to snub Real Madrid and sign a new three-year contract is still easily the most important deal that PSG will do this summer.

Galtier has little Champions League experience but he will be expected to build a team around Mbappe that can win that competition after some near misses and embarrassing failures over the last 11 years. “He is one of the best players in the world right now. We need all the brilliant individuals to pull together. If that happens then PSG will be a great team and will have a great season,” said Galtier. PSG have already made one summer signing in the shape of Portuguese midfielder Vitorinha from Porto, while Angel di Maria has left.

Then there is Messi and Neymar, who reported for pre-season training on Tuesday. The Brazilian—who embodies the era of “bling-bling” more than anyone else—has been linked with a move away, but Galtier indicated he would like the former Barcelona man to stay. “What coach wouldn’t want him in their team? I have a clear idea of what I want from him. I have it stays because it is better to have him with us than against us.”

However, Neymar’s presence is a reminder of what happened the last time PSG announced a similar shift in approach. In 2016 the departure of Zlatan Ibrahimovic was followed by a series of modest signings and the appointment of Unai Emery as coach to replace Laurent Blanc. But in the season that followed PSG were humbled in the Champions League by Barcelona and responded to that by buying Neymar and Mbappe for the two biggest transfer fees in the history of the game. —AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300

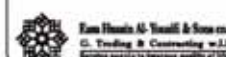
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9
Clinics	
Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075

Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265

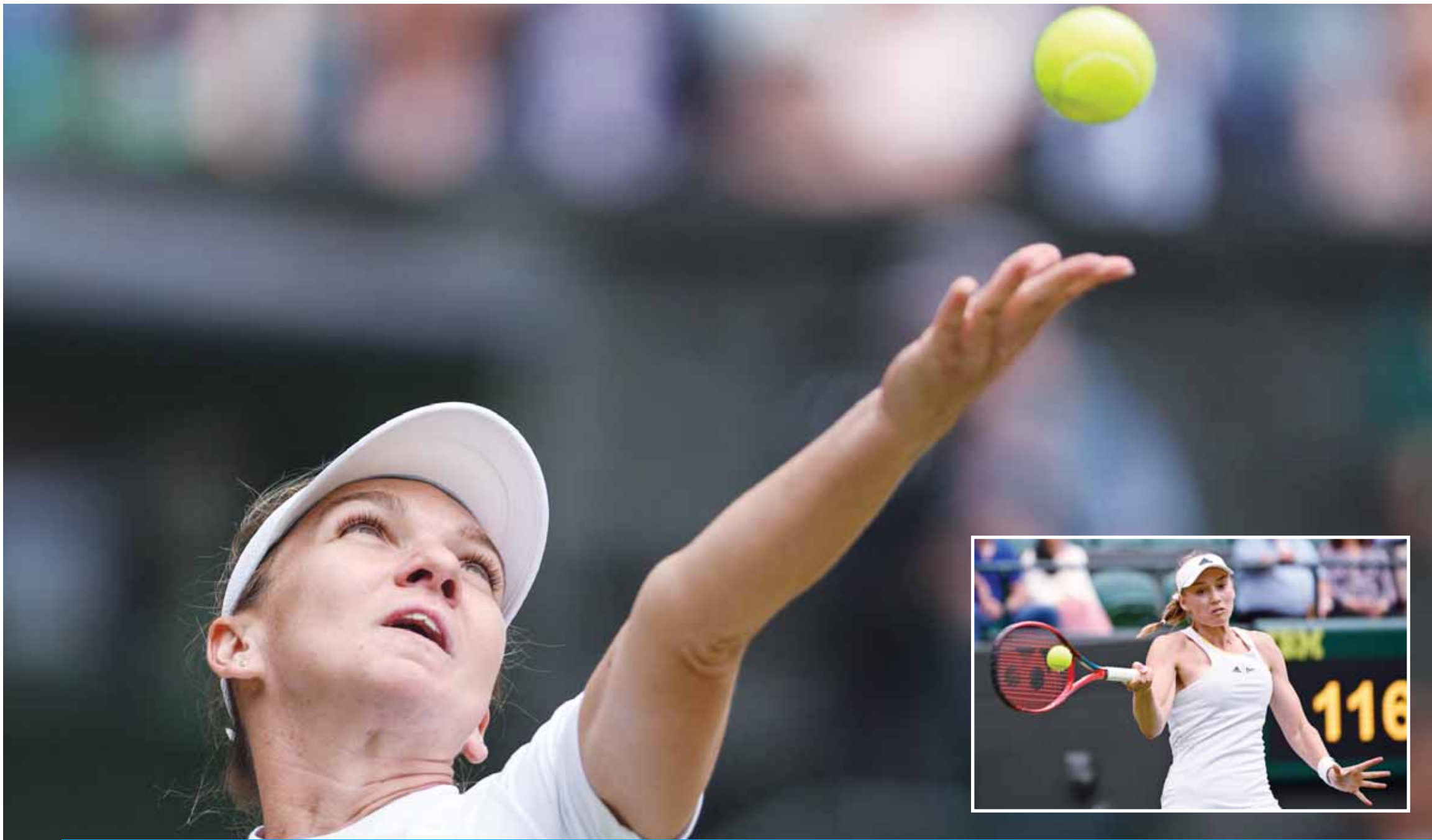
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Announcement

Easa Husain Al-Yousifi & Sons for General Trading & Contracting Co. would like to attract the attention of its customers who have given their devices for repair at the Al-Yousifi Service Center located in Ardiya Industrial Area until **30/4/2022**, and did not yet come and collect their devices till this date, to urgently contact Al-Yousifi Service Center on **1809809** in order to collect their devices within a period of only 2 weeks from the date of this Ad. The company will not be responsible under any matter in the future for these devices after the mentioned grace period is over.



Al-Yousifi Service Center
1809809



WIMBLEDON: Romania's Simona Halep serves the ball to US player Amanda Anisimova during their women's singles quarter final tennis match on the tenth day of the 2022 Wimbledon Championships on July 6, 2022. (Inset) Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina returns the ball to Australia's Ajla Tomljanovic during their women's singles quarter final tennis match on July 6, 2022. —AFP

Halep, Rybakina face off in Wimbledon semifinal

Rybakina beats Tomljanovic, Halep overpower Anisimova

LONDON: Former champion Simona Halep said she is playing her "best tennis" as she set up a Wimbledon semi-final clash with Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina on Wednesday. Halep, the 2019 winner, comfortably reached her third semi-final at the All England Club with a 6-2, 6-4 victory over Amanda Anisimova of the United States.

Russian-born Rybakina became the first player representing Kazakhstan to reach a Grand Slam semi-final when she defeated Ajla Tomljanovic of Australia, 4-6, 6-2, 6-3. "Definitely this is my best tennis," said Halep, who missed last year's Wimbledon with a calf injury. "I am trying to build my confidence back, and it's good." The Romanian 16th seed, who was also French Open champion in 2018, broke Anisimova's serve four times in

the match, wrapping up victory in just over an hour. "It's great to be back in the semi-finals," said the former world number one. "I'm very emotional right now. It means a lot." The 30-year-old took charge early in the match on Centre Court, racing into a 5-1 lead and taking the set 6-2.

It was a similar story in the second set, with Halep again dominating and going 5-1 up with a double break. Anisimova dug deep, earning her own break of serve when Halep served for the match but the Romanian stayed calm to serve out for the win. "I had to stay strong on my legs - they helped me today," said Halep, who has not dropped a set at Wimbledon this year. "I also needed my serve - everything was good, and it finished well."

Rybakina fight back

Rybakina came from behind to reach her first Grand Slam semi-final, firing 15 aces past Tomljanovic, who had also made the last-eight in 2021. "It is amazing. I am really happy to be into the semi-final. It was a really tough match," said the 23-year-old Moscow-born player. "I started a bit slow, I didn't serve that well. 'Maybe I was nervous. She played really well and was defending really good but I just tried to focus on my serve and try to find my way and in the end I found it.'"

Rybakina switched nationality in 2018. This year Russian and Belarusian players are banned from Wimbledon following the invasion of Ukraine. Rybakina fired five aces in the first set but her 10 winners were cancelled out

by her 10 unforced errors. The steadier Tomljanovic did not concede a break point while a single break in the third game was enough to hand her the opener. Back came Moscow-born Rybakina with a triple break in the second set to level the tie.

She swept through the decider and despite being broken when serving for the match in the seventh game, she made no mistake in the ninth with another ace sealing the win. Halep and Rybakina have met three times so far, with the Romanian holding a 2-1 edge. Their most recent clash came at the 2021 US Open, when Halep came out on top in three sets in the third round. "It is a big challenge for me. We have already played a few times and it was a tough battle," said Rybakina. —AFP



Mike Grier

Grier becomes first black NHL 'general manager' in history

SAN FRANCISCO: The San Jose Sharks named Mike Grier general manager on Tuesday, an historic appointment that makes the former Sharks player the first Black GM in the NHL. "I am extremely proud and grateful to be given the opportunity to be the general manager of the San Jose Sharks," Grier said in a statement, adding that he looked forward to "building a fast, competitive, and hardworking team that Sharks fans will enjoy watching and be proud of." Grier, 47, played for the Sharks from 2006-09. "I know there's been lots of ups and downs but I'm ready to work hard and get at it and get this thing back on the tracks," Grier said in comments to fans, who have seen the Sharks miss the Stanley Cup playoffs for three straight seasons after making the post-season in 14 of the prior 15 campaigns. "We're going to start winning some games in the 'Shark Tank' and get it going again," he promised.

Doug Wilson stepped down as Sharks GM on April 7 after 19 seasons to focus on his health. Assistant GM Joe Will had filled the position since then as the Sharks searched for a permanent replacement. Coach Bob Boughner was sacked on July 1, and Grier said there was no timetable to hire a replacement even though the NHL draft will be held this week and free agency begins on July 13. The Sharks have the 11th selection in the upcoming draft, while eight of their players can become restricted free agents. Grier said the club are not looking to "tear down" the team and rebuild.

"For us, there might be a few bumps in the road ahead and we might have to step back a little bit to go forward, but we're going to try and get better and try to make the roster better," he said. Grier worked last season as hockey operations adviser for the New York Rangers, assisting them with hockey-related decisions and off-ice player and prospect development. He played 14 NHL seasons after he was selected by the St Louis Blues in the ninth round of the 1993 draft. —AFP

Tunisia's 'Federer': How Ons Jabeur became a star

HAMMAM SOUSSE: Fifteen years ago, Ons Jabeur's young tennis sparring partner could see the Tunisian was destined for glory-even if he suffered a broken arm in the process. Omar Laabidi remembers being repeatedly beaten by a 12-year-old Jabeur, who will Thursday become the first Arab to play in a Grand Slam semi-final, at Wimbledon. "We used to call her 'Roger Federer'," Laabidi said. He was talking at the tennis club where it all began, in the North African country's coastal town of Hammam Sousse.

"One time during a training match she hit a drop shot that I tried so hard to return that I broke my arm," he said. Jabeur had started by playing on courts belonging to local hotels but she soon joined the Tennis Club Hammam Sousse, which now bears a huge portrait of its most famous graduate. Coach Nabil Mlika recalls training a talented girl "determined to stand out" against both female and male peers.

It is a determination that has taken her all the way to the world number two spot-one place behind Poland's Iga Swiatek. But Mlika, who trained a young Jabeur for 10 years, said there was a moment where she almost quit the sport. "She had great ball control, to the point where other coaches tried to attract her to handball," said the 55-year-old. "Ons thought

seriously about switching sports-but decided to stick to tennis."

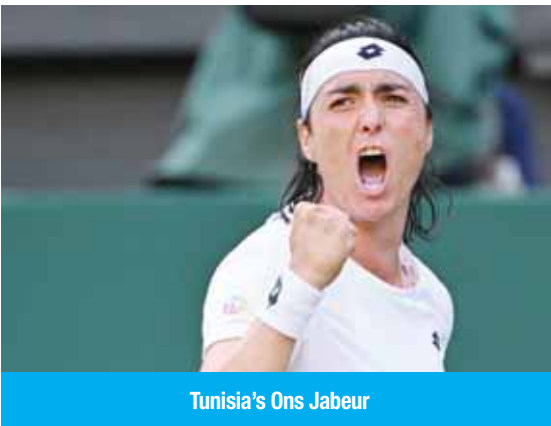
'Queen of the drop shot'

The 27-year-old Tunisian's fighting spirit has been on show throughout her career. Despite crashing out in the first round of the French Open in May, she surged back to win the Berlin WTA singles title a few weeks later. Her appearance in the Wimbledon semis-against close friend and "barbecue buddy" Tatjana Maria-comes just two weeks after she was forced to withdraw from the Eastbourne tournament, where she was partnering Serena Williams in the doubles, with a knee injury. Jabeur, known to many Tunisians as "the minister for happiness", was born in the southern coastal town of Ksar Hellal, one of four siblings.

She moved to the capital, Tunis, at the age of 12 to train at a highly rated state-backed sports club. She has been married to her physical trainer, and former fencer, Karim Kamoun, since 2015. The right-hander is known for her stamina and the variety of her play. "She hates playing at one pace," said Mlika. "She's always trying to create a spectacle by switching up the game with shots that surprise her opponents, especially with drop shots. "She's really the queen of the drop shot."

'An example of hope'

Jabeur made a splash on the global scene in 2011, winning the girls' singles at the French Open at the age of 16. Laabidi also moved to Tunis around the same time as the adolescent Jabeur and joined the same academy, where they continued sparring. "She was always fun and quickly got to know strangers," he said. "But she



Tunisia's Ons Jabeur

was always provocative and competitively debating on all subjects."

Those who knew her as a teenager say she has changed little despite her growing fame. "She still runs around gathering up all the balls during training, which she's been doing since she started playing," said Mlika. Unsurprisingly, as her fame has spiraled membership levels have skyrocketed at her home club, from 320 in 2018 to more than 700 today.

For Yousra Koubaa, the mother of eight-year-old student Yasmine, Jabeur is "an example of hope, one we're always showing to our children". Mlika says he uses photos of a young Jabeur to inspire his students today. "She was a spark of enthusiasm, always moving and wanting to show that she was the best," he said. "She always put me in a difficult position because I had to balance between taking the training up a level, or waiting for her peers to catch up with her level and her pace." —AFP