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Govt targets insurance firms; 3,000 expats to be replaced

Kuwaitization policy extends to non-government sectors

Zain Group net profit reach \$165 million

KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading telecommunications innovator operating in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the six months to June 30, 2022. Zain served 51.7 million customers at the end of the period, a 7.1 percent increase year-on-year (Y-o-Y).

In the second quarter of 2022 (Q2), Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 421 million (\$1.4 billion), up 14 percent Y-o-Y. EBITDA for the quarter reached KD 166 million (\$544 million), up 9 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 40 percent. Net income for the quarter amounted to KD 50 million (\$165 million), up 22 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting earnings per share of 12 fils (\$0.04).

For the first six months of 2022 (H1), Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 829 million (\$2.7 billion), an increase of 10 percent Y-o-Y. EBITDA for the period reached KD 320 million (\$1.1 billion), up 3 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 39 percent. Net income amounted to KD 98 million (\$321 million), up 14 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting earnings per share of 23 fils (\$0.07). — (See Page 9)



Zain Vice-Chairman & Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi

KUWAIT: It is almost certain that the government will start increasing the number of Kuwaitis in the private sector jobs, after receiving a special study that was prepared by the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) in this regard. The actual implementation is waiting for the national designation of the country's economic activities by Commerce and Industry Ministry, so that the minimum percentage of the number of Kuwaitis in each sector can be decided, and each entity must commit to employing citizens at the required percentages.

Official sources said the economic committee at the Council of Ministers gave a special importance for increasing the number of Kuwaitis in the non-government sectors. The aim is to implement the replacement policies in the private sector and to reduce the number of expats. The government has succeeded in the Kuwaitization policy in the banking and communication sectors - replacing 80 percent with Kuwaitis.

Meanwhile, it is looking at increasing the number of Kuwaitis in the insurance sector. The government plans to replace the foreign workers and employ at least 3,000 Kuwaitis in the next two years. Sources said the increase of Kuwaitis employment in the insurance sector, in particular, was discussed by Commerce and Industry ministry and insurance companies union. The ministry expressed disappointment for the small number of Kuwaiti employees. The union approved the decision, provided the Kuwaitis are qualified for the jobs.

Sources said "the decision to amend percentage of employing Kuwaitis in the private sector will be issued before the end of the year and may create hundreds of job opportunities for Kuwaitis. It is worth mentioning that the manpower in the public and private sectors in Kuwait currently has more than two million Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis - and 33 percent of these staff is in the government sector.



Artist Hashem Behbehani is joining the Kuwait Times and Kuwait News family to share his works that reflect various social topics in Kuwait.

Date palms: Rescuing a Iraq's icon

KARBALA: Thousands of young date palms, Iraq's national symbol, form lines that extend from the edge of the desert near the central city of Karbala and into the horizon. Iraq's prized trees are central to a push aimed to preserve a long-threatened ancestral culture, whose fruit historically presented prosperity across the Arab world. "The date palm is the symbol and pride of Iraq," says Mohamed Abul-Maali, commercial director at the Fadak date plantation.

Once known as the "country of 30

million palm trees", and home to 600 varieties of the fruit, Iraq's date production has been blighted by decades of conflict and environmental challenges, including drought, desertification and Stalinization. The Fadak plantation, taking its name from a date-filled oasis central to Islam's origins, is a 500-hectare farm operated by the Imam Hussein Shrine in the nearby holy city of Karbala.

Abul-Maali hopes the project, launched in 2016, will "restore this culture to what it used to be". The grove is a repository for "more than 90 date varieties, Iraqi but also Arab species", from the Gulf and North Africa, he adds. The Iraqi varieties are among "the rarest and best" and were collected from across the country. — AFP (See Page 11)



KARBALA: This picture shows bunch of dates growing on a palm tree in Iraq's central city of Karbala. — AFP

Tehran accuses US of provoking Mideast 'crises'

TEHRAN: Tehran on Sunday accused Washington of provoking tensions in the Middle East, a day after US President Joe Biden ended a tour to Iran's rival Saudi Arabia and arch-foe (Zionist entity). Washington "has once again resorted to the failed policy of Iran-phobia, trying to create tensions and crises in the region," Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said in a statement.

The comments come after Biden on Saturday vowed that the United States would not "tolerate efforts by any country to dominate another in the region through military buildups, incursions, and/or threats", in a transparent reference to Iran. Biden's first Middle East visit came just a few days before Russian President Vladimir Putin is due to visit Tehran on July 19.

Biden, in a speech in the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah at a summit that brought together the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council as well as Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, assured Arab leaders that Washington would remain fully engaged in the Middle East. "We will not walk away and leave a vacuum to be filled by China, Russia or Iran," Biden said. Following the meeting, a joint statement committed the leaders to "preserve regional security and stability".

Continued on Page 6

8 crew killed in Ukrainian plane crash

KAVALA: All eight crew members were killed when a Ukrainian-operated cargo plane crashed in Greece en route from Serbia to Bangladesh carrying military goods, the Serbian defense minister said Sunday. According to a briefing by the Greek Fire Brigade Sunday afternoon two bodies were found.

"One body was retrieved while another one was located", Fire Brigade spokesman, Ioannis Artopoulos said. He also stressed that the experts haven't found any "dangerous materials". "Sadly,

according to the information we have received, the eight members of the crew died in the crash," Serbian Defence Minister Nebojsa Stefanovic told a news conference.

The Antonov An-12 took off from Nis airport in southern Serbia at 8:40 pm (1840 GMT) on Saturday, carrying "around 11 tonnes of military industry goods" namely mines from Valir, a private Serbian company, to the Bangladeshi defence ministry, Stefanovic said. Ukraine's foreign ministry said the eight crew were Ukrainian citizens. "The preliminary cause of the accident is the failure of one of the engines," said spokesman Oleg Nikolenko on Facebook.

Denys Bogdanovych, general director of Meridian, the Ukrainian airline

Continued on Page 6



KAVALA: Photo shows debris on the crash site of an Antonov An-12 cargo aircraft a few kilometers away from the city of Kavala in Greece. — AFP

Saudi warns against 'unrealistic' policies to curb emissions

JEDDAH: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has warned that "unrealistic policies" to curb emissions could fuel inflation, as he chaired a summit bringing together Arab leaders and US President Joe Biden. The kingdom is the world's largest crude exporter, but Prince

Mohammed, the de facto ruler, has tried to make environmentally friendly policies a centerpiece of his reform agenda.

Last year, Saudi Arabia pledged ahead of the COP26 climate change summit to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2060, sparking scepticism from environmental campaigners. "Adopting unrealistic policies to reduce emissions by excluding major sources of energy will lead in the coming years to unprecedented inflation and a rise in energy prices, while increasing unemployment and exacerbating serious social and security problems," Prince Mohammed said.

Energy policy has been a key component of

Biden's first Middle East tour as president. Washington wants Riyadh to open the oil floodgates to bring down soaring gasoline prices, which threaten Democratic chances in November mid-term elections in the United States. After meeting with Saudi leaders Friday, Biden said he was "doing all I can" to increase the oil supply but added that concrete results would not be seen "for another couple weeks". Prince Mohammed said Saturday the kingdom would "play its role in this field", reiterating a pledge made in May to ramp up daily oil production capacity by more than one million barrels to exceed 13 million barrels by 2027. — AFP

Local

Kuwait Amir's Representative thanks Saudi King, hails Jeddah summit outcome

GCC+3, US affirm commitment to strengthening strategic partnership

KUWAIT: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Saturday a cable to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to thank him on the warm reception and hospitality offered to His Highness the Amir Representative and his accompanying delegation during their visit to Saudi Arabia to partake in the Security and Development Summit which was held in Jeddah earlier Saturday. In his cable, His Highness Sheikh Mishal commended the summit's resolutions which would bolster joint action to serve interests of all the participating countries. He also wished King Salman everlasting wellbeing as well as further progress and welfare for the Kingdom under his wise leadership.

His Highness the Crown Prince also sent a cable to Saudi Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to thank him on the warm reception and hospitality extended



Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

to him and his accompanying delegation during their visit to the Saudi Kingdom to partake in the Security and Development Summit which was held in Jeddah. In his cable, His Highness Sheikh Mishal com-

mended the summit's resolutions which would cement joint action to serve interests of all the participating countries. He also wished the Kingdom and its people more progress and welfare under his wise leadership of King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman.

Leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council states, Egypt, Iraq and Jordan (GCC+3) have reiterated commitment to expanding strategic partnerships in all domains and envisaged a common vision for a region where peace and prosperity prevail. In a joint statement issued following the Security and Development Summit in Jeddah on Saturday, the leaders underlined the need to take all necessary measures to confront the challenges the region faces. They urged all

countries to adhere to the rules of good neighborliness and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. "The leaders reiterated their condemnation of terrorism.. and reaffirmed their keenness to strengthen efforts to combat terrorism and extremism, prevent the armament and financing of terror groups and confront all activities that threaten the region's security and stability," the statement added.

They called on Iran to fully cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and with the region's countries to keep the Gulf free of mass destruction weapons and preserve regional and international stability and security. The GCC leaders commended US commitment to the security

of its partners and its recognition of the region's central role in connecting the Indo-Pacific with Europe, Africa, and the Americas. On the Middle East conflict, Biden reiterated the US' commitment to work toward achieving a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the two-state solution. They also voiced the importance of supporting the Palestinian economy and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

The leaders voiced determination to strengthen regional cooperation and develop joint projects to achieve sustainable development and confront climate change. They welcomed the Saudi Green Initiative and the Middle East Green Initiative, which Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had announced, and said they look forward to climate conferences - such as the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) - which will be hosted later by Egypt, the UAE and Qatar. — KUNA



Crown Prince sends gratitude to Saudi counterpart

Sheikh Mubarak praises Kuwait's Ambassador to UK

LONDON: Sheikh Mubarak Abdallah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah expressed appreciation for the role of Kuwait's Ambassador to the UK Khaled Al-Duwaisan in boosting and caring for Kuwait-Britain relations over three decades, during which he served with dedication and added to it a humanitarian touch that gave it more strength at the official and popular levels.

Sheikh Mubarak, during his visit along with his sons Abdallah and Ahmad to Ambassador Duwaisan at the Embassy in London on the occasion of the end of his tenure after 30

years of hard work as Kuwait Ambassador in London, said, "Ambassador Duwaisan's contribution gave Kuwait-Britain bilateral relations a distinguished nature and it was difficult to speak about these relations without mentioning him."

He said Duwaisan has a prestigious political experience and he dedicated it for the service of Kuwait in various field. He lauded the ambassador's care for Sheikh Abdallah Mubarak Al-Sabah award for the English books about the Arabian Gulf and Middle East, as the Ambassador is keen to attend the annual ceremony that is held in London to distribute the awards.

It is worth mentioning that this award's age is nearly 25 years, as when the Kuwait-Britain friendship society was founded in April 1996, Dr Suad Al-Sabah was chosen as an honorary president of the society for Kuwait, and

Britain's Heir Apparent Prince Charles as honorary president of the society for Britain.

Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak foundation announced the reward in 1998 in cooperation with the society to honor the best authors of books in English about the Arabian Gulf in Britain. It was then expanded to include the best books in English about Middle East studies in an effort to strengthen understanding with the Middle East and the Arab world, especially in English speaking countries.

The foundation is used to hold an annual ceremony in cooperation with the friendship society under the patronage of Kuwait embassy, in which a large number of academics both Arab and foreign countries participate. The reward discussed more than 1,200 books since its establishment, most of which are related to the Middle East, and hundreds of researchers and specialists participated.



LONDON: Kuwait's Ambassador to the UK Khaled Al-Duwaisan welcomes Sheikh Mubarak Abdallah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and his sons Abdallah and Ahmad.

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CAN celebrates Eid with children in hospitals

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Board of Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) campaign Dr Khalid Ahmad Al-Saleh said "our Eid is better with CAN" initiative continues in greeting children cancer patients on Eid Al-Adha, especially after the positive effects it showed on previous occasions, and on children whose treatment is a lengthy one.

Saleh said campaign members and volunteers who made field visits to hospitals during Eid attempted to support the children psychologically through the campaign's goals, especially

those who had to stay hospitalized for lengthy periods due to the treatment protocols which may take several months.

Committee members lauded the role of doctors and nurses who are carrying out their great role in treating children, especially that their treatment starts with the psychological aspect and the attempt to make them happy. Saleh thanked all participants in this campaign, adding that there are partners in success led by Director of National Bank of Kuwait children hospital Dr Ali Al-Mulla Ali and volunteers, who are supporting CAN's efforts at all times.



Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

KRCS partners KFAED in aid projects for Rohingya refugees



KUWAIT: Secretary General of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Maha Al-Barjas said Sunday the Society, in collaboration with Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), carries out humanitarian aid projects to alleviate the suffering of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. During her visit to Sadar hospital in Cox's Bazar town, southeast Bangladesh, Barjas thanked the Fund for its robust contribution to the humanitarian aid projects, including the medical

projects, meant to improve the living conditions of the Rohingya people. Fund offered funding for the casualty and outdoor patient departments at the hospital through partnership with KRCS and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), she noted. The Fund has also donated \$5 million to projects aiming to meet the urgent needs of nearly one million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, including logistic, healthcare and medical services, Barjas added. — KUNA

Local

Raising legal, social awareness needed to tackle rise in cyberbullying: Psychology Professor

Bullies hide behind fake identities to harass people online

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: There are many ways to bully and hurt someone online. While cyberbullying has many forms and types, it has the same destructive effect on the victim. Bullying varies between harassment, defamation, identity impersonation, cyberstalking, electronic ostracism, hacking, as well as electronic bullying through photography, spying, and deception.



Amthal Al-Huwailah

To learn more about this topic, Kuwait Times spoke with Amthal Al-Huwailah, a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at Kuwait University and discussed with her various issues related to cyberbullying and its impact on the bullied victims.

"Bullying is the umbrella term of violence that starts with the bully from a young age as we can see in schools on a daily basis," Huwailah said. "Meanwhile, cyberbullying is one of the different forms of bullying which can be psychological or physical."

She mentioned that there are many reasons behind bullying. "The bully takes that kind of attitude for several reasons," she said. "The reasons include feeling strong and powerful when they verbally attack their victims, taking out their frustration and anger from their social environment, not investing their free time with useful things, feeling stressed, or due to low self-confidence."

"Social media helps increase the bullying behavior because the identity of the bully is unclear, which ensures him that he will not be held accountable,

while sometimes the bully is from the same community as the victim, and they use a fake social media account to reach their purpose," she stressed.

Celebrities targeted

"Celebrities are most affected by bullying because bullies think it is easier for them to attack the celebrity who shares his detailed life on social media," she said. "In addition to that, the bully sometimes feels jealous of the celebrity's life, thinking it is better than their own, which encourages



Bullying can affect victims' families too

them to bully. Unfortunately, celebrities misuse social media platforms by showing off their lifestyle in a provocative way, which pushes their followers to react harshly or bully them."

Meanwhile, Huwailah pointed out that bullies "show off their skills in hurting others" because according to her, they feel high and powerful "when they think that they can hurt anyone without being held accountable." She added, "The family, educational institutions and ministries have to work on raising awareness among this generation on how to use social media correctly, especially that teenagers are also affected by both behaviors as being a bully or becoming a victim."



"Legal awareness is also an important step that should be taken in order to decrease bullying among social media users, and to alert them that there are strict consequences and laws against anyone who hurts or bullies others, even if they use fake accounts," she explained. "Bullying has increased with the spread of social media platforms, and it increased as a result that some bullies don't understand the law. Everyone can write anything at any time on any account on a social media platform. Bullying has affected men, women and children."

Psychological effects

"Psychological effects of cyberbullying are countless," she warned. "Some victims retire from social media if they are subjected to bullying, while this act could also affect their families. Others may lose their business if it depends on social media. However, the psychological effects may lead the

victims to isolate themselves from others, law self-confidence, become pessimistic, and not feel safe even if the victim is at home due to the existence of cyber bullies. Sometimes the effects of bullying may extend to harm a person's reputation, which is a serious social issue especially for women."

Huwailah also mentioned some theoretical psychological studies which indicate that the victim of bullying may turn into a bully due to the harm they have been exposed to, while in other cases it may lead them to suicide. Regarding the steps that should be taken to tackle the problem of cyberbullying, Huwailah said, "Spreading the culture of how to use the social media platforms is the main thing that should be done in society, in addition, learning the importance of respecting others and differences of views at all levels. Also, parents should raise their children on the Islamic principles that urge us not to harm others."

Lawyer warns of alarming increase in drug crimes in Kuwait

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Crime rates in Kuwait have witnessed a dramatic surge recently. Most significantly, murder rates have witnessed an alarming increase according to the latest statistics issued by Central Statistical Bureau for 2020. Meanwhile, official statistics show that more than around 75 percent of murders committed recently had a close relationship with drug abuse. Lawyers say drug abusers commit crimes to pay for their drugs, or while they are under the influence of the drug.

According to the 2020 statistics, 1,886 people were arrested for possession of narcotic substances. Lawyer Ahmad Al-Turki told Kuwait Times that while those are the official numbers, the actual figures are probably more than triple. "We receive many cases related to addiction," he said. "In many fighting cases, the people involved would be under the influence of drugs."

Turki further warned of the spread of aggressive



behavior among some young people, noting that the danger lies among those who carry knives 'as a show of force'. "The Kuwaiti law does not criminalize the possession of such white arms unless the attack has happened," he pointed out.

"Studies have shown that 90 percent of crimes were caused by a person who used narcotics or psychotropic substances before the crime happens," the lawyer argued. "The increase in drug abuse and addiction is caused by the large supply, diversity, and cheapness of drugs. Most of the murders in the world are directly related to drug possession, trafficking or use."

Turki praised the role of the Ministry of Interior

and the Drug Control General Department in taking all measures to combat drug crimes. "Drug crime is one of the central pillars of Kuwaiti Penal Code," he indicated. "This was made clear since the issuance of the Kuwaiti Penal Code No 16 of 1960, which included many penalties to face this crime. But the penalties were not enough, so more laws were issued to combat and regulate drug use and trafficking, which increased the penalty on those who imported or trafficked drug, leading to the capital punishment."

He pointed out that according to Article No 31, drug abusers or dealers will be punished by death or life imprisonment, noting that this law applied to whoever imports, brings, or exports narcotic substances. "The person who assists drug dealers is also a crime partner," he added. "Even if they tried to plant the forbidden plants, they will be considered criminals."

The statistics showed that perpetrators of felony offenses in drugs reached 2,349 males (1,409 of them are Kuwaitis) and 97 females (69 Kuwaitis), while drug abusers among juveniles reached 200 teenagers during the years from 2016 to 2020. Many studies found that drug dealers lure the newer generation and make them fall into the traps of abuse. In Kuwait, 650 people died of drug overdoses in a span of nine years (2012-2020), and most of them were Kuwaiti citizens (400).

Legalese

Transfer of visa



By Fajer Ahmed

fajer@kuwaittimes.net

Kuwait's beauty is in its diversity, and gratitude should be shown to those who travel to Kuwait leaving their families behind to become a part of our community. Today I chose questions by a foreign nurse because I personally have a lot of appreciation for foreign nurses and what they offer to the Kuwaiti community.

Question: I am a registered nurse working in a private medical center. I've been with the current company for eight months and as per Kuwait's labor law, I was told I have to work in the current company for three years to get a release. I just want to inquire and get some clarifications regarding getting a new job with another company.

Fajer: Asking you to stay three years before transferring is not according to Kuwait labor law, but might be according to your agreement with the company and Public Authority of Manpower regulations at that time.

Question: Can the new company buy out the remaining contract on my current job prior to the three years? Do I have the option to transfer to another employer without going back to my country of origin even if the two- or three-year contract has not been fulfilled yet?

Fajer: I am not sure what you mean by buyout, but your new company could convince your current company to release you from your contract, especially if you have completed one year, without going back to your country of origin.

Questions: What are my options if my current company is violating Kuwaiti laws? For example, unpaid overtime (during regular work days and Ramadan), degrading comments like accusations of being incompetent with my job (instead of treating us like a family, we are treated as insignificant people), racism, salary cut threats, living under the same accommodation as our female manager, no pay slips and no payroll bank account opened for us (we only get our salary in cash and even the receipts of our salary, they say it is not allowed to take a picture for our reference).

Fajer: I am really sorry you are dealing with this, which seem like a lot of violations. You should be receiving your salary through a bank transfer. If you are receiving your salary through cash, you should be able to get a receipt. Honestly this is not to their benefit, as you can sue them for not being paid.

I would highly suggest if you are in a company who is violating Kuwait Labor Law to go to shoon (manpower authority) and file a complaint.



KUWAIT: Firemen closed 35 stores for lack of safety and fire prevention conditions during recent tours in various locations around Kuwait, Kuwait Fire Force said.

Local

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News in brief



Khaled Al-Mikrad



Sheikh Ahmad Al-Sabah

Fire Force chief thanks minister

KUWAIT: Chief of Kuwait Fire Force Lt Gen Khaled Al-Mikrad thanked First Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for approving the treatment abroad regulations for firemen and their families. "The decision comes out of Sheikh Ahmad's interest in firemen and their sacrifice as they suffer injuries while on duty to protect lives and property," Mikrad said in a statement.

Kuwait weather hot and dusty

KUWAIT: Kuwait's weather was affected by northwesterly wind which resulted in humidity in areas near the coast and dust in some other parts. Yasser Al-Boloushi, an official at Kuwait Meteorological Center, said the temperature reached around 50 C degrees while the wind's speed reached between 8-32km/h.

Japan embassy receives condolences

KUWAIT: The Embassy of Japan in Kuwait said it will open a book of condolences to honor the former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. It will open on Monday, July 18, 2022 to Tuesday, July 19, 2022, at 09:30-12:00 and 13:00-15:00 at the Embassy of Japan (at multi-purpose hall) Mishref, Block 7A (Diplomatic Area), Plot 57.

Bloc welcomes summit outcomes

RIYADH: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) welcomed on Sunday the outcomes of Jeddah Security and Development Summit, saying it backed the efforts to ensure the region's security and development. The speeches given by Arab leaders during the talks were an accurate assessment of the status quo in the region, the Jeddah-based bloc said in a statement. The leaders of Arabian Gulf states, in addition to Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and the US gathered for talks in Jeddah on Saturday, vowing to ratchet up cooperation in a bid to preserve regional security and development.

Deliveroo celebrates Eid with movie lovers in partnership with Cinescape

KUWAIT: In keeping with their promise to consistently deliver joyful moments to food lovers around the country, and in celebration of the Eid holiday, Deliveroo surprised moviegoers with goodie bags filled with a variety of treats. In partnership with Cinescape, Deliveroo distributed goodie bags to movie patrons at a Cinescape Dolby theater at 360 Mall. In addition to Deliveroo-branded merchandise and coffee cups, the moviegoers were treated to three-month Deliveroo Plus memberships.

"We are incredibly excited to have pulled off an Eid surprise to remember," said Seham Al-Husaini, Deliveroo's General Manager. "Our customers mean the world to us, and we love seizing every opportunity to give back to them! We are happy to have been able to treat our customers with the food and snacks they know and love and are looking forward to surprising our customers with more of these initiatives in the future."

In celebration of the Eid holiday, Deliveroo is also launching an exclusive offer on all Cinescape treats ordered through the Deliveroo app. From July 18-24, Deliveroo customers will



HB.COMICS | 2022

Kuwait University begins accepting online applications

KUWAIT: Acting Dean of Admissions and Registration at Kuwait University Dr Mishal Al-Gharabally announced that the university began accepting online applications Sunday to join the first semester for the year (2022 - 2023) and until July 27. Dr Gharabally added in press statement, that those qualified to apply online are Kuwaiti students, children of Kuwaiti women, citizens of gulf countries and stateless residents born to non-Kuwaiti mothers who meet the acceptance conditions. Dr Gharabally noted that this applies to graduates from singular system schools and religious academies as well American and English schools' graduates and eligible expected graduates.

He further clarified that some are able to apply in the Admission and Registration hall located in Shuwaikh July 19-27, including Kuwaiti students and children born to Kuwaiti mothers with high school degrees from abroad. This also includes non-Kuwaiti students, children of martyrs, children and spouses of diplomats, outstanding students' scholarships, in addition to children and spouses of faculty members. He added that applications will be sorted following the application deadline and results will be made available on the university's social media accounts, its website or via text messages sent to the provided phone number. —KUNA

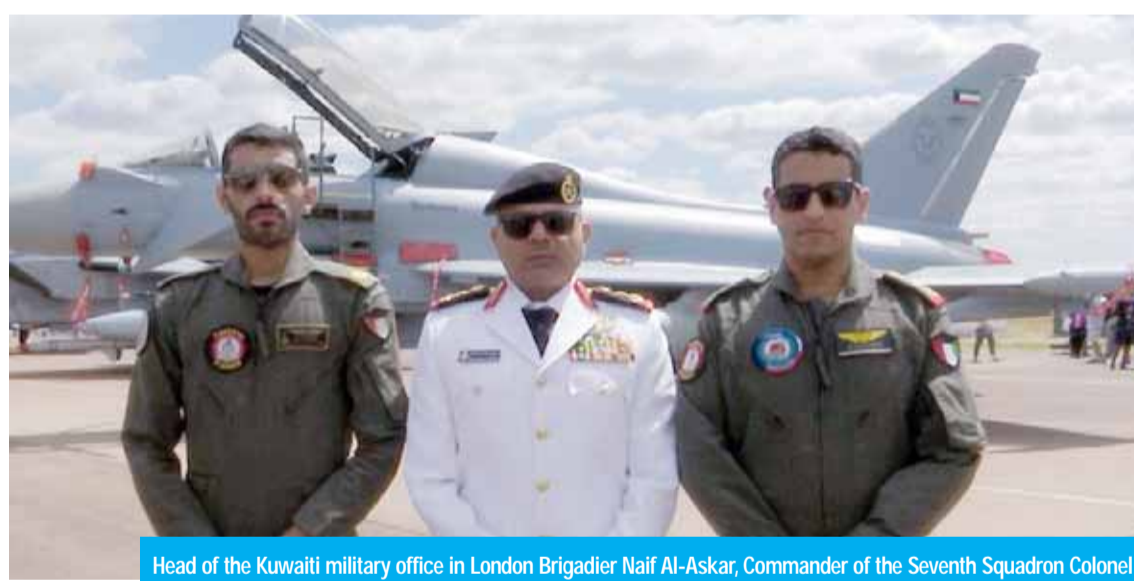
Kuwait air force partakes in UK RAF Fairford airshow



LONDON: The Kuwaiti delegation with a group of participating teams. —KUNA photos

LONDON: Members of the Kuwait air force reflected their professionalism and dedication while participating in the Royal International Air Tattoo at the RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire, England, held on July 15-17, said a Kuwaiti official on Sunday. Speaking to KUNA and Kuwait Television (KTV), head of the Kuwaiti military office in London Brigadier Naif Al-Askar indicated that Kuwaiti pilots were amongst 56 teams taking part in the airshow.

The Kuwaiti air force is keen on developing its capabilities and combat readiness during such events, he affirmed. On his part, Commander of the Seventh Squadron Colonel Issa Al-Rashidi revealed that this was the second Kuwaiti participation in the airshow, adding that the first was in 1993. The Kuwaiti air force pilots were using the latest version of Eurofighter equipped with the most advanced systems of aviation and combat. The Royal International Air Tattoo is usually held in July each year and attracts over 15,000 spectators. —KUNA



Head of the Kuwaiti military office in London Brigadier Naif Al-Askar, Commander of the Seventh Squadron Colonel Issa Al-Rashidi, and Eurofighter pilot Abdulaziz Al-Dhafiri.



be able to enjoy a 50 percent discount on their favorite Cinescape snacks, including popcorn, soda, nachos, and more. Deliveroo is constantly working to create joyful moments centered around food for their customers in Kuwait. Earlier this year and for the second year in a row, Deliveroo was named the "Best Delivery App" in Kuwait by Service Hero, the company providing the region's only consumer-powered customer satisfaction index.



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. With

exclusive restaurant partners, special offers and meal deals, Deliveroo is always here to deliver. To keep up with the latest restaurant offers in Kuwait, download the Deliveroo application from the App Store (for iOS devices) and Google Play (for Android devices).



Nigeria's oppn party wins key southwest state

Firefighters in France, Portugal, Spain and Greece battling forest blazes

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NEW DELHI, India: Demonstrators hold placards as they shout slogans during a protest in solidarity with the people of Sri Lanka on the 100th day, in New Delhi on July 17, 2022. —AFP

S Lanka protest movement reaches 100 days

'We want our president to represent the country, not somebody who robs the public'

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka's protest movement reached its 100th day Sunday, having forced one president from office and now turning its sights on his successor as the country's economic crisis continues. Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled his palace shortly before demonstrators invaded it last weekend and on Thursday resigned from the presidency.

His mismanagement is blamed for Sri Lanka's financial turmoil, which has forced its 22 million people to endure shortages of food, fuel and medicines since late last year. The campaign to oust Rajapaksa, organised mainly through posts on Facebook, Twitter and TikTok, drew people from across Sri Lanka's often unbridgeable ethnic divides.

United by economic hardships, minority Tamils and Muslims joined the majority Sinhalese to demand the ouster of the once-powerful Rajapaksa clan. It began as a two-day protest on April 9, when tens of thousands of people set up camp in front of Rajapaksa's office—a crowd so much larger than the organisers' expectations

that they decided to stay on.

"When I heard the news and saw what was happening here, I decided that I should come and help them," Nilu, a teacher from a beach town on Sri Lanka's southern coast, told AFP. The 26-year-old took up residence in the camp last month and is among dozens of volunteers working in the patchwork of tents now lining a section of the seafront boulevard.

A communal kitchen serves food for needy crowds visiting the site in the evenings, who queue next to signboards detailing the numerous accusations of graft and violence directed at Rajapaksa's family.

"We need a change and we are the change," said Nilu, who declined to give her surname. "We want our president to represent the whole country. Not somebody who

robs the public." Under Sri Lanka's constitution, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was automatically installed as acting president following Rajapaksa's resignation.

He is now the leading candidate to succeed him permanently in a parliamentary vote next week. But the veteran politician is despised by the protesters as an ally of the Rajapaksa clan—four brothers who have dominated the island's politics for years.

Minority Tamils and Muslims unite



'Far from any change'

Social media activist and protest campaign supporter Prasad Welikumbura said Wickremesinghe too should go. "It's been 100 days since it started," Welikumbura said on Twitter. "But, it's still far from any concrete change in the system. #GoHomeRanil, #NotMyPresident."

Rajapaksa's elder brother Mahinda resigned as premier in May and he appointed Wickremesinghe to replace him—his sixth term in the post—despite his being an opposition MP representing a party with only one seat in parliament.

The move did little to assuage the protesters' anger, and when they stormed Rajapaksa's tightly guarded 200-year-old Presidential Palace they also set Wickremesinghe's private home ablaze. Now the Rajapaksa's SLPP party—which has more than 100 MPs in the 225-member parliament—is backing Wickremesinghe in the vote due Wednesday.

A spokesman for the protesters told AFP: "We are now discussing with groups involved in the 'Aragalaya' (struggle) on turning the campaign against Ranil Wickremesinghe." Numbers at the protest site have diminished since Rajapaksa's exit, and the demonstrators have vacated three key state buildings they occupied—the Presidential Palace, the Prime Minister's official Temple Trees residence, and his office. —AFP



REDCAR, United Kingdom: Conservative MP and Britain's former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak (C) stands with Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen (R) and activists during a visit to Teesside Freeport in Redcar. —AFP

UK climate chief may quit as Tory race heats up

LONDON: Britain's climate minister has indicated he may resign as some Conservative leadership contenders equivocate on the government's net zero target, ahead of a crunch TV debate Sunday and the final rounds of voting by MPs this week.

The intervention by COP26 president Alok Sharma came as a poll of Tory rank-and-file members, who will have the final say out of the two finalists, gave a surprise double-digit lead to outsider Kemi Badenoch.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss was second, narrowly ahead of former grassroots favourite Penny Mordaunt and ex-finance minister Rishi Sunak, according to the unscientific poll by the ConservativeHome website. Badenoch, a former junior minister with no cabinet experience, is running on an "anti-woke", right-wing platform and has said net zero amounts to "unilateral economic disarmament" by Britain. "Green levies", backed by Sunak to help pay for the legally enshrined aim of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, have also been questioned by Truss and Mordaunt as Britons struggle with a cost-of-living crisis. But with Britain facing record-breaking temperatures this week, Sharma told Sunday's Observer newspaper that the target was "absolutely a leadership issue", as the candidates wage an acrimonious battle to succeed scandal-tainted Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

"Anyone aspiring to lead our country needs to demonstrate that they take this issue incredibly seriously, that they're willing to continue to lead and take up the mantle

that Boris Johnson started off," the minister said.

Asked if he could resign if candidates showed weakness on net zero, Sharma said: "Let's see, shall we? I think we need to see where the candidates are. And we need to see who actually ends up in Number 10 (Downing Street)."

'Back-burner' amid heatwave

Under Sharma's chairmanship, nearly 200 countries pledged at a UN summit in Glasgow last November to speed up the fight against rising temperatures, after two weeks of marathon negotiations. But India and China weakened the language of the final text to retain high-polluting coal, forcing tears and an exasperated apology from Sharma as he brought down the gavel.

Asked about Sharma's threat, Truss supporter and former Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith told Sky News: "I'm sorry he feels that." Truss still backs the principle of net zero but "we have to just put that slightly on the back-burner whilst we make sure people don't suffer" from surging inflation, he said. Asked whether she also still backed net zero, Mordaunt said on BBC television: "Yes, but it has to not clobber people." However, campaigners note that the green taxes make up a small fraction of overall energy bills in Britain, which have shot up on the back of Russia's war in Ukraine. And they say the current heatwave gripping Europe is a reminder that climate change is an existential threat.

The debate has ripped open Conservative tensions about the direction of economic and environmental policy under whoever succeeds Johnson when the winner is announced on September 5. International environment minister Zac Goldsmith tweeted that with wildfires hitting Europe and temperature records being smashed, "it's worth reflecting that there are still politicians being elected who think protecting our planet isn't cost effective". —AFP

EU mulls sanctions as Russia accused of shelling Ukraine

KYIV: The European Union will discuss tightening sanctions against Russia on Monday, as Moscow is accused of using the continent's largest nuclear power plant to store weapons and launch missiles on the surrounding regions of southern Ukraine.

The situation at the captured Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant is "extremely tense", Ukraine's atomic energy agency chief Petro Kotin said, adding that the Russians had installed missile launchers and used the facility to shell the Dnipro region.

Describing "a deluge of fire", regional governor Valentyn Reznichenko on Saturday said Grad missiles had pounded residential areas. "Rescuers found two dead people under the ruins" in the riverside city of Nikopol, he said.

With the conflict grinding on and increasingly spilling out into global energy and food crises, the EU's foreign ministers are considering banning gold purchases from Russia, which would align with sanctions already imposed by G7 partners.

More Russian figures could also be placed on the EU's blacklist. "Moscow must continue to pay a high price for its aggression," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said after forwarding the proposed measures. Brussels is expected to hold initial sanctions discussions Monday, but not make a same-day decision, according to a senior EU official.

Stepping up attacks

More than 20 weeks since Russia invaded its neighbour, killing thousands and displacing millions of Ukrainians, Moscow announced on Saturday that it would step up its military operations. Minister Sergei Shoigu "gave the necessary instructions to further increase" military pressure, according to the Russian Defense Ministry.

The war-ravaged nation's President Volodymyr Zelensky has already accused Russia of seeking to inflict maximum damage, but pledged that Ukraine would "endure". In his Saturday evening address, Zelensky said Ukraine has "withstood Russia's brutal blows" and managed to take back some of the territory it lost since the start of the war, and will eventually recapture more occupied land. "We will endure. We will win," he said, and "rebuild our lives". While the heaviest fighting has continued to focus on the industrial Donbas region in the east, in the northeast near Ukraine's second-largest city Kharkiv, the bombardments have been fast and hard



CHUGUIV, Ukraine: A Ukrainian rescue worker removes debris with a bulldozer from a damaged building partially destroyed after a shelling in the city of Chuguiv, east of Kharkiv. —AFP

in recent days. A Russian missile attack killed three in the town of Chuguiv over the weekend and destroyed a residential house and a local school. "Why me? Just because I was born in Ukraine?" asked resident Raiysa Kuval as she sat on the rubble.

"We were leaving peacefully, and they tore apart mother from father, child from mother, brother from sister... It's unbearable."

Russia participation at G20 'absurd'

A two-day meeting of finance ministers from the Group of 20 major economies looked for solutions to the food and energy crises caused by the war but the gathering ended Saturday in Indonesia without a joint communique after the conflict divided the global forum.

The failure to issue a joint statement is expected to hinder coordinated efforts to address rising inflation and food shortages threatening to leave millions in developing nations at risk of hunger. The failure to secure a joint communique came a week after Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov walked out of G20 talks in Bali over criticism of Moscow.

Canada blasted Moscow's participation in the meeting at all as "absurd," with Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland saying from Bali that Russia's presence "was like inviting an arsonist to a meeting of firefighters."

In the embattled Donbas region, grinding trench battles and artillery duels have morphed into a war of attrition. Moscow-backed separatists said Friday they were closing in on their next target, Siversk, after wresting control of sister cities Lysychansk and Severodonetsk about 30 kilometres (18 miles) to its east.

Donetsk separatist official Daniil Versonov said rebel fighters were "clearing" eastern districts of Siversk in small groups. Hundreds of kilometres from the frontline, missile strikes caused heavy civilian casualties in the central city Vinnytsia, with the death toll raised to 24 on Saturday. —AFP

International

Firefighters in France, Portugal, Spain and Greece battling forest blazes

Second heatwave engulfing parts of southwest Europe

LA TESTE-DE-BUCH, France: A summer heatwave that has triggered devastating forest fires across southwest Europe showed no signs of abating Sunday, as parts of the continent readied for new temperature records early next week.

Firefighters in France, Portugal, Spain and Greece are battling forest blazes that have ravaged thousands of hectares of land and killed several personnel since the start of the week. It is the second heatwave engulfing parts of southwest Europe in weeks as scientists blame climate change and predict more frequent and intense episodes of extreme weather.

Firefighters in the coastal town of Arcachon in France's southwestern Gironde region were fighting to control two forest blazes that have devoured more than 10,000 hectares (24,700 acres) since Tuesday.

"It's a Herculean job," said Lieutenant-Colonel Olivier Chavatte from the fire and rescue service, which has 1,200 firefighters and five planes in action. Further evacuation orders were given on Saturday for a few hundred residents, firefighter spokesman Arnaud Mendousse told AFP.

"Several fires are still active in France," interior minister Gerald Darmanin said in a tweet. "Our firefighters are fighting the flames with remarkable courage," he added. Since Tuesday, more than 14,000 people-residents and tourists combined have been forced to decamp with seven emergency shelters set up in order to receive evacuees.

Meteo France forecast temperatures of up to 41 degrees Celsius (105 degrees Fahrenheit) in parts of southern France on Sunday, as well as up to 35 in the northwest, with new heat records expected on Monday. France late on Saturday placed 22 more departments, mainly down its Atlantic seaboard, on high orange alert, taking the current total to 38.

Authorities in the French Alps urged climbers bound for Mont Blanc, Europe's highest mountain, to postpone their trip due to repeated rock falls caused by "exceptional climatic conditions" and "drought".

The call comes after a section of Italy's biggest Alpine glacier gave way at the start of the month, killing 11 people, in a disaster officials blamed on climate change. In Portugal, the meteorological institute forecast temperatures of up to 42C with no respite before next week.

The civil defence, however, took advantage of a slight drop in temperatures after a July record of 47C on Thursday to try to stamp out one remaining major fire in Portugal's north. "The risk of fires remains very high," civil defence chief Andre Fernandes warned, although media reports said mainland fires still active were down to 11 from 20 earlier.

"This is a weekend of extreme vigilance," he added after a week which saw two people killed and more than 60 injured, and up to 15,000 hectares of forest and brushwood incinerated. The Lisbon government was to decide on Sunday whether to extend a week-long state of contingency. In Spain, the national meteorological agency maintained various levels of alert across the nation, warning of up to 44C in some regions. Dozens of forest fires were raging on Saturday in different parts of the country from the sweltering south to Galicia in the far northwest, which saw blazes lay waste to some 3,500 hectares, the regional government said.

The fight against the flames has claimed the lives of a number of personnel, from a pilot killed when his plane crashed in northern Portugal to two who died in Greece when their helicopter fell into the sea. "So sad to see part of our natural heritage



LA TESTE-DE-BUCH: Members of the public observe a fire from La Teste-de-Buch, southwestern France. — AFP

ablaze," tweeted Spain's Economy Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Nadia Calvino. One blaze in the south caused the authorities to cordon off for more than 12 hours a section of a key highway connecting Madrid to the Portuguese capital Lisbon, before the road reopened.

The fires have scorched thousands of hectares in the Spanish region of Extremadura, while one near the southern city of Malaga forced the preventive evacuation of more than 3,000 people, rescue services said.

In Greece, the civil defence rushed to douse flames raging on the Mediterranean island of Crete, while Morocco was battling a forest fire in its north-

ern mountains that killed at least one person and forced the evacuation of more than 1,000 families.

In the United Kingdom, government ministers were to hold crisis talks after the state meteorological agency issued a first-ever "red" warning for extreme heat, cautioning there is a "risk to life". The Met Office said in southern England temperatures could exceed 40C on Monday or Tuesday for the first time, leading some schools to say they will stay closed next week.

Mayor Sadiq Khan advised Londoners to use public transport only if "absolutely necessary". National train operators also warned passengers to avoid travel. — AFP

Shooting kills 4 in Johannesburg

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa: Gunmen opened fire on a group of men playing dice on a street corner in a Johannesburg suburb, killing four of them and injuring two others, police said Sunday. The attack on Saturday evening in Lenasia came a week after two separate shootings killed 20 people — 16 at a bar in nearby Soweto and four others at a tavern in South Africa's eastern city of Pietermaritzburg.

"Preliminary investigation suggests that a group of men were playing dice at a street corner at approximately 7:30 pm (1730 GMT) when they were attacked by unknown assailants who shot at them," police said.

"Four people were certified dead on the scene, while two people were taken to the nearest medical care centre after sustaining gunshot wounds." Regional police chief Elias Mawela called the crime scene "horrific" in the southern suburb of South Africa's economic capital. "They were seated. They were attacked for no apparent reason," he said. — AFP

Iran arrests many after protests at drying lake

TEHRAN, Iran: Iranian police have arrested several people for disturbing security after they protested the drying up of a lake once regarded as the Middle East's largest, official media said Sunday. Lake Urmia, in the mountains of north-west Iran, began shrinking in 1995 due to a combination of prolonged drought, and the extraction of water for farming and dams, according to the UN Environment Programme.

Urmia, one of the largest "hypersaline" — or super salty — lakes in the world, is located between the cities of Tabriz and Urmia, with more than six million people dependent on agriculture around its shores.

On Sunday, Rahim Jahanbakhsh, the police chief of Iran's West Azerbaijan province, report-

ed the arrests. He described the suspects as "many evil and hostile elements, who had no other objective than to destroy public property and disturb the security of the population," according to state news agency IRNA.

On Saturday, the Fars news agency reported that "dozens of people in the cities of Naghadeh and Urmia had protested against the authorities' lack of attention to the drying up of Lake Urmia".

Fars said protesters had shouted slogans in the provincial capital of Urmia warning the lake was shrinking. "Lake Urmia is dying, parliament orders its killing", some shouted, Fars reported, with others calling out that "Lake Urmia is thirsty".

Largely arid Iran, like other nearby countries, has suffered chronic dry spells and heat waves for years, which are expected to worsen with the impacts of climate change. In the last few months, thousands of people have demonstrated against the drying up of rivers, particularly in central and southwestern Iran.

Lake Urmia is an important ecosystems, a

key stopping point for migratory birds, and home to an endemic shrimp as well as other underwater species.

Meanwhile, Iran's supreme leader has pardoned or commuted the sentences of more than 2,200 prisoners, including some on death row, to mark two important Muslim feasts, official sources said Sunday.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei "granted pardons or commuted the sentences of 2,272 convicts" for the Eid al-Adha and Ghadir religious holidays, which both fall this month, a statement on his website said.

The supreme leader routinely grants collective pardons on major religious occasions, in coordination with the head of the judiciary.

The judiciary's website, Mizan Online, said 43 of the prisoners had been sentenced to death. Last week, Muslims across the world celebrated Eid al-Adha, which marks the end of the hajj pilgrimage.

Some 900,000 pilgrims visited holy sites in Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia for this year's hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam. — AFP

Tehran accuses US of provoking...

Continued from Page 1

It also underscored diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon, and notably called for enhanced joint deterrence capabilities "against the increasing threat" posed by unmanned aerial vehicles — a likely reference to Tehran, which on Friday unveiled ships and submarines capable of carrying armed drones.

Tehran, which denies seeking to build a nuclear bomb, on Sunday dismissed the comments made in Jeddah. "These false allegations are in line with Washington's seditious policy... in the region," Kanani said. Biden began his regional

tour on Wednesday in Zionist entity, before visiting the Palestinian Territories and then flying to Saudi Arabia.

In the Jewish state, Biden signed a security pact reinforcing a common front against Iran, where the president vowed to use "all" US power to stop Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Kanani said the pact was a "great sign of the deception and hypocrisy" of the United States, because "they turn a blind eye to the Zionist regime as... the greatest holder of the arsenal of nuclear weapons in the region".

Zionist entity is widely believed to hold the Middle East's sole but undeclared nuclear arsenal. A landmark deal that imposed curbs on Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief was undermined in 2018 by former US president Donald Trump's withdrawal, which led Iran to begin reneging on its commitments. Efforts to revive the accord have stalled since March. — AFP

military's public relations office. "There was no weapon in the shipment and the shipment was covered by insurance," it added. Biological and chemical weapons experts from the Greek army combed the crash site on Sunday, giving the "all clear" to rescue teams, according to Artopoios who added that they opened safe passages for the rescuers to recover the bodies.

Two firemen were taken to hospital early on Sunday with breathing difficulties because of toxic fumes. Villagers were forbidden from going into the nearby fields until authorities could remove the wreckage and unexploded munitions. People living within a two-kilometer radius of the crash site were asked to stay inside and wear face masks late Saturday.

'Engine on fire'

ANA said an investigation would be launched into the cause of the accident. Local resident Giorgos Archontopoulos told Greek state broadcaster ERT he sensed something was wrong as soon as he heard the aircraft overhead. "I went outside and saw the engine on fire," he said. "If it had crashed some seconds earlier, it would have hit our house," 80-year-old Michalis Emmanouilidis, visibly shaken, told ANA.

Ukraine's consul in Thessaloniki, Vadim Sabluk, visited the area on Sunday and the Greek foreign ministry expressed its "sincere condolences" to the victims' families. ANA said Sabluk confirmed the identities of the crew and the plane's destination. Serbia's defense minister said the weapons shipment was not linked to Russia's war in Ukraine. "Unfortunately, some media have speculated that the plane was carrying weapons destined for Ukraine but that is completely untrue," he said. — AFP

Breakthroughs elude Biden on fraught ME tour

JEDDAH: US President Joe Biden sought to use his first Middle East (ME) tour in office to reassert Washington's influence but emerged without a single diplomatic breakthrough, an outcome analysts said was no surprise. On issues ranging from energy prices to human rights and Zionists' role in the region, Biden could point only to small-if any-gains after four whirlwind days of meetings and speeches.

Driving the point home, as Air Force One flew back to Washington Saturday evening, Biden's Saudi hosts downplayed one of the trip's few concrete announcements: their lifting of airspace restrictions on flights to and from Zionist entity, which Biden himself had earlier hailed as "a big deal".

There's little question the moves announced during Biden's trip were "modest", as Brian Katulis of the Middle East Institute in Washington put it, though he added that some represent "positive signs of perhaps something bigger to come". "They won't remake the region overnight, and there is so much more work ahead by actors in the region to achieve the full potential of these first steps," Katulis said.

Saudi Arabia was always going to be the most fraught piece of the itinerary, but Biden came under intense pressure to court Riyadh after Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent energy costs soaring. Washington has been eager for the kingdom, the world's biggest crude exporter, to help bring down rising petrol prices that threaten Democratic chances in November US mid-term elections.

After his bilateral meetings with Saudi leaders, Biden said he was "doing all I can" to increase the oil supply but added that concrete results would not be seen "for another couple weeks"—and it was unclear what those might be. His national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, also tamped down expectations, telling reporters that any action "will be done in the context of OPEC+", the exporting bloc.

The following day, at a summit of the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council plus Egypt, Iraq and Jordan, oil "wasn't really a subject", Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan told a press conference. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's pledge to boost production capacity to 13 million barrels per day was actually first announced in May, and is not meant



JEDDAH: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (right) receiving UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan in the Red Sea coastal city of Jeddah— AFP

to become reality until 2027.

On the issue of boosting ties between Zionists and Arab countries, Riyadh appeared to hand Biden a victory—at least at first. Despite growing behind-the-scenes business and security contacts, the kingdom has never recognized Zionist entity and refused to join the US-brokered Abraham Accords in 2020 that allowed Zionists to normalize relations with neighboring Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

But early Friday, the Saudi aviation authority announced it was lifting overflight restrictions on "all carriers", paving the way for Zionist planes to use Saudi airspace. Yair Lapid, Zionist Prime Minister, claimed it was "the first official step in normalization with Saudi Arabia".

Prince Faisal, however, dismissed that idea out of hand Saturday, saying the move had "nothing to do" with Zionist entity and was "not in any way a precursor to any further steps". During Biden's earlier stop in Zionist entity and the Palestinian Territories, there was no progress at all when it came to long-moribund peace negotiations, leaving Biden to focus instead on economic measures including 4G internet for Palestinians. — AFP

8 crew killed in Ukrainian...

Continued from Page 1

operating the plane, also told German broadcaster Deutsche Welle that the crew were all Ukrainian. Witnesses said they saw the privately operated Antonov on fire and heard explosions. Videos shared on social media showed the plane engulfed by a giant fireball as it hit the ground late Saturday.

Debris was scattered across a wide area and the crash site, surrounded by fields, was visible from the air, an AFP photographer said. "We heard a deafening noise (and saw) a fireball approaching the ground. Then came the explosion," Sofia, a mother of three from the nearby village of Antifilipi told Athens News Agency (ANA). The Greek fire brigade said the plane crashed at around 1100 pm near Paleochori village around 23 kilometers northwest of the city of Kavala in northern Greece.

Toxic fumes

Greek air control said the plane requested clearance to make an emergency landing at the airport in Kavala but did not make it. The Bangladesh military confirmed that they had been the intended recipients of the cargo.

The aircraft had been carrying "training mortar shells procured from Serbia for the Bangladesh Army" and border guard before it crashed in Greece, said the

International

Nigeria's opposition party wins key southwest state

Major upset to President Muhammadu Buhari's ruling All Progressives Congress

OSOGBO, Nigeria: Nigeria's main opposition party has won the governorship election in southwest Osun state, the electoral commission said on Sunday, in a major upset to President Muhammadu Buhari's ruling All Progressives Congress.

Osun is one of eight of Nigeria's 36 states where governorship elections are not being held at the same time as the rest of the country because of legal challenges to previous results. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) said Senator Ademola Adeleke of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) polled 403,371 votes to unseat incumbent APC governor Gboyega Oyetola, who scored 375,027 in Saturday's ballot.

"I declare ... that Ademola Jackson Nurudeen Adeleke of the PDP, having satisfied the requirements of the law, is hereby returned elected," INEC returning officer Oluwatoyin Temitayo Ogunipe said. Adeleke, 62, won 17 of the state's 30 local government areas while Oyetola won in 13.

The announcement sparked spontaneous celebrations on the streets of Osogbo, the state capital. PDP supporters sang and danced and motorists blared their horns. Buhari on Sunday congratulated Adeleke, who became the 10th governor since the creation of the state in 1991.

"With the election over, the president expresses conviction that the people of Osun have expressed their will through the ballot, and the will of the people must always matter and be respected in a democracy," Buhari's office said in a statement.

"The president reassures the nation that the commitment of this administration towards having credible elections remains unshaken," it added. Election observers said the polls, which opened early with a large turnout, was peaceful but cases of vote-buying were rampant.

Political test

Of the 15 parties that vied for the seat, only four candidates were frontrunners. They were the APC's Oyetola, who was seeking a second term, Adeleke of the PDP, Akin Ogunbiyi of the Accord Party and the Labour Party's Yusuf Lasun.

However, it was a straight race between old political foes Oyetola and Adeleke, who lost by fewer than 500 votes after a run-off four years ago. Described locally as a "dancing senator" because of his penchant for partying, Adeleke is the uncle of Nigerian superstar singer Davido, who joined him on the campaign.

The PDP flagbearer comes from a wealthy political family. His father was a senator in the 1980s, while his late brother, Isiaka, was the state governor from 1992 to 1993. Another brother, Deji, is a billionaire oil and shipping mogul and Davido's father.

Davido was in the state to drum up support for his uncle among young people, including his supporters and fans. The ballot was seen as a battleground for Nigeria's leading parties to test backing for their presidential hopefuls ahead of the February 2023 election, when Buhari steps down following eight years in office.



IDO OSHUN, Nigeria: Supporters dance to drumming to celebrate the victory of the candidate of the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Ademola Adeleke, following the conclusion of the gubernatorial election at Ido Oshun, Osun State in southwest Nigeria. —AFP

The APC has chosen former state governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu as its presidential candidate. The APC's loss in Osun is a blow to Tinubu's regional influence. Tinubu, a Muslim from the southwest, faces a tough challenge in the presidential election from PDP candidate Atiku Abubakar, a northern Muslim.

Another frontrunner is the Labour Party's Peter Obi, who has been enjoying growing support among younger people and is seeking to break the APC and PDP dominance. Last month, the APC won a governorship vote in nearby Ekiti state with a landslide. —AFP

No US agents present during Mexico drug lord arrest: Envoy

MEXICO CITY, Mexico: No Americans participated in the tactical operation by Mexican marines that saw notorious drug kingpin Rafael Caro Quintero taken into custody, the US ambassador to Mexico said Saturday.

Ken Salazar's clarification followed some confusion over the extent of US involvement in the Friday operation, in which 14 servicemen of the Mexican Navy (SEMAR) died when their helicopter crashed. Washington accuses Caro Quintero, 69, of ordering the kidnap, torture and murder of Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) special agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena in 1985.

He was detained by Mexican marines in the town of Choix in the northwestern state of Sinaloa, for "the purpose of extradition," SEMAR said in a statement. A statement Friday by DEA chief Anne Milgram lauded her agency's "team in Mexico" for working "in partnership with Mexican authorities to capture and arrest Rafael Caro Quintero," leading some to believe American personnel had taken part in the operation.

Ambassador Salazar clarified on Saturday that "no United States personnel participated in the tactical operation that resulted in Caro Quintero's arrest." "We laud SEMAR for executing the operation, and lament the loss of 14 brave Mexican marines," he added.

It was not initially known whether the helicopter carrying the marines had been taking part in operations against Caro Quintero, but Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador confirmed on Twitter late Friday that they were "supporting those who executed the arrest warrant."

Caro Quintero had already been arrested in 1985, tried in Mexico and sentenced to 40 years in prison for Camarena's murder. But in 2013 a Mexican court ordered his release on a legal technicality after he served 28 years, a move that angered US authorities.

By the time Mexico's Supreme Court overturned the decision, Caro Quintero had already gone into hiding. The case plunged US-Mexican relations into a crisis, and it took decades for anti-drug



GUADALAJARA, Mexico: File handout picture shows Mexican Federal Preventive Police (PFP) escort drug trafficker Rafael Caro Quintero, at the Puente Grande prison in Guadalajara, Jalisco State, Mexico. —AFP

agencies on both sides of the border to rebuild trust.

Caro Quintero, alias "Rafa," has a \$20 million bounty on his head and is described by the FBI—which put him on its list of 10 most-wanted fugitives—as "extremely dangerous." He is accused of co-founding the now-defunct Guadalajara drug cartel and currently runs an arm of the infamous Sinaloa car-

tel, according to US authorities.

The US Department of Justice expressed gratitude Friday to Mexican authorities over Caro Quintero's arrest, confirming the US plans to seek his extradition. "There is no hiding place for anyone who kidnaps, tortures, and murders American law enforcement," Attorney General Merrick Garland said. —AFP

Macau extends COVID shutdown

HONG KONG: Macau is set to begin another working week of partial lockdown, after the city extended the closure of its casinos and non-essential businesses to try and eradicate its worst coronavirus outbreak yet. Authorities had announced a week of "static management" starting June 11 after recording more than 1,500 infections in the previous three weeks despite multiple rounds of compulsory mass testing of the city's population.

The restrictions had been due to lift

on Monday, but cases have continued to climb, with the Macau government saying Sunday there had been 1,733 cases recorded since the start of the outbreak. Daily case numbers are comparatively small by global standards, but authorities have moved quickly to stamp out transmission as they adhere to mainland China's strict zero-COVID policy.

On Saturday the government announced that the "static management" period would be extended through Friday. All residents have to stay home except to go shopping for daily necessities and to get tested for the virus, with rule-breakers facing up to two years in jail. —AFP

Fifth day of protests in Budapest against government

BUDAPEST, Hungary: Thousands protested on Saturday in Budapest for a fifth day against Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government as anger deepens over tax changes that critics say will hurt small businesses.

Hungarians have taken to the streets since the parliament approved a law change on Tuesday that will affect hundreds of thousands of small-sized business owners. The protests are the first since Orban won a consecutive fourth term by a landslide in April.

Several thousand people marched through downtown Budapest on Saturday, chanting "Orban get lost." "It's crazy what they (the government) have done. This will not lead to more income for the budget," one protester, 37-year-old lawyer Ilona Pusztai, told AFP. "The government is currently planning such austerity measures (but) people cannot tolerate them anymore," said another protester, Zoltan Gemesi, a 68-year-old teacher. Addressing the rally, Peter Marki-Zay, who headed a united opposition but lost against Orban in April, said the nationalist premier's campaign promises had been "proven to be lies".

In his regular radio address on Friday, Orban defended the tax law change as "good and necessary". Despite price caps on essentials, the central European country faces soaring inflation and a plunging local currency amid talks



BUDAPEST: People take part in a rally under the motto 'Stand for victims of Orban's government' against the new taxation rules near the Margaret Bridge in Budapest. —AFP

with Brussels over held-up EU funding, Hungary, which largely depends on Russian oil and gas, declared a "state of danger" on Wednesday over the energy crisis sparked by the war in Ukraine.

Among the measures to tackle the problem, people who consume more than the average amount of energy will have to pay for it at the market price rather than the heavily subsidised state rate. —AFP

Victims welcome death sentence for Gambian ex-spies

BANJUL, Gambia: When Muhammed Sandeng first learned that his father, political activist Ebrima Solo Sandeng, had been tortured to death at the Gambian national spy agency's headquarters, he felt one emotion above all else.

"It was all fear-fear, fear, fear—you had to be wise for your life because you didn't know what would happen," the student, 19 at the time, told AFP. On Wednesday, Sandeng felt something new, "fulfilment and relief", after the High Court of Banjul found five ex-intelligence officials guilty of the 2016 murder.

His father's violent death was one of the most high-profile abuses committed under ex-president Yahya Jammeh's brutal 22-year regime and galvanised a political movement that eventually ousted the dictator.

The former head of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Yankuba Badjie, its former operations chief, Sheikh Omar Jeng, and former officials Babucarr Sallah, Lamin Darboe and Tamba Mansary were all handed death sentences. They will be converted to life sentences because The Gambia has a moratorium on executions.

"We were always there, during the preliminaries, and listening to all of those (hearings) was not easy—it was painful and made us relive most of the trauma," said Sandeng, now 25. "The persistence has paid off."

'Beginning of the end'

Solo Sandeng, a key member of the opposition United Democratic Party (UDP), was arrested at an April 2016 anti-Jammeh protest and died in custody two days later. According to Abdoulie Fatty, a Gambia lawyer, that was "the beginning of the end" for the dictator, who is accused of committing a litany of crimes, including rape, witch hunts and forcing bogus cures on AIDS patients.

The killing encouraged the political opposition to unite behind Adama Barrow, who beat Jammeh in the December 2016 presidential election. Launched in 2017, the trial was fraught with tension, reflected by brawls outside the court.

The accused blamed Solo Sandeng's murder on Jammeh's private death squad despite it taking place on the intelligence agency's grounds. Witnesses recounted how men took turns beating him in custody "until his whole body was bleeding and blood was coming out from his head".

"These were people who symbolised Jammeh's dictatorship—the NIA symbolised Jammeh's dictatorship," said Fatty. Badjie, the agency's director, was "probably the second most powerful individual in the country", he added.

On Wednesday, security guards had to remove several members of the public when shouting broke out after the guilty verdicts were pronounced. The ruling offers some hope to other Jammeh-era victims. "For me, personally, as a victim, it means a lot," said Isatou Jammeh, whose own father—Yahya Jammeh's brother—disappeared and was later killed after challenging the ex-president.

"Seeing them sentenced means that there is rule of law, and it serves as an example to all those who have committed gruesome crimes," she said. But the Solo Sandeng case was an outlier—one of only two domestic trials tried to Jammeh-era crimes. After it began, the justice ministry opted to wait for a Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) to conclude before launching other investigations. "The TRRC was not a judicial body and it's the state's responsibility to conduct prompt and impartial investigations in parallel," said Nana-Jo N'dow, a campaigner whose father disappeared in 2013. —AFP

MONDAY, JULY 18, 2022

Business

Boeing expects 82% growth in commercial fleet through 2041

Pandemic has not altered long-term outlook for commercial aviation

WASHINGTON: The pandemic has not fundamentally altered the long-term growth outlook for commercial aviation, with an 82 percent increase in jets seen through 2041, according to a Boeing forecast released Saturday.

The company projected a total global fleet of 47,080 over the next two decades, compared with 25,900 in 2019, with half of deliveries replacing jets that will be retired, Boeing said in its annual commercial market outlook. The forecast comes a few days after a similar outlook from archrival Airbus and ahead of the big Farnborough airshow.

That's a bit below the 49,405-jet fleet in Boeing's prior long-term outlook, reflecting a slight trim to the company's global annual GDP growth forecast to 2.6 percent. But the long-term fundamentals "remain intact," with demand for passenger and cargo traffic outpacing global gross domestic product (GDP), Boeing said in its powerpoint. "In 2022, demand is not the key constraint anymore, as people are able to travel," said Darren Hulst, Boeing vice president for commercial marketing.

Today's market is dominated by a "tremendous amount of pent-up demand," he said. "The key constraint is supply." The global fleet of single-aisle jets, which are used for domestic flights, has returned to 98 percent of its pre-pandemic level, while multi-aisle planes, which are used for international flights, stands at 78 percent.

The initial trend of the aviation industry's comeback from the COVID-19 downturn favored domestic trips. But Boeing pointed to a shift that is underway. Domestic trips in China have fallen with multiple rounds of COVID-19 restrictions, while growth in Europe and the United States has been affected by capacity constraints. Meanwhile, the international recovery is "currently outpacing expectations led by transatlantic" flights, said the Boeing PowerPoint. Boeing also said the growth in e-commerce will fuel more demand for cargo planes, expected to see an 80 percent jump in 2041. Hulst said the plane maker was also adding more capacity to meet stricter low-carbon standards. —AFP



Boeing sees 82% growth in commercial air fleet through 2041.



Financial Results - H1 2022



What's next for euro after slump against dollar?

FRANKFURT: The euro's plunge against the dollar, triggered by the Ukraine war and mounting risks to the EU economy, has driven the two currencies to parity for the first time in two decades.

The European single currency sank to \$0.9952 on Thursday—a level not seen since the end of 2002, the year it was officially introduced. But traders believe the euro could recover, provided it clears several hurdles in the coming months. The first to get over is to avoid the risk of a halt in Russian gas supplies to Europe, which would cause electricity prices to soar and force eurozone countries to limit some industrial activity. "If gas flows from Russia normalize, or at least stop falling, following the end of the Nord Stream 1 maintenance shut-down next week, this should somewhat decrease market fears of an imminent gas crisis in Europe," Esther Reichelt, an analyst at Commerzbank, told AFP.

With Russian gas giant Gazprom having warned it cannot guarantee that the pipeline will function properly, European countries fear that Moscow will use a technical reason to permanently halt deliveries and put pressure on them. French President Emmanuel Macron even said on Thursday that Russia was using energy "as a weapon of war". If Nord Stream 1 "doesn't turn back on, the euro falls as the economic shock waves will be felt worldwide as the European energy crisis could very well trigger a recession," warned Stephen Innes, an analyst at SPI Asset Management.

ECB wake-up call

"Recession would inevitably mean that the market becomes even more concerned about fragmentation risks in the eurozone," added Jane Foley, a foreign exchange specialist at Rabobank.

Like other central banks, the European Central Bank (ECB) is seeking to avoid stifling the economy by raising rates too sharply. But it also has to worry about a possible fragmentation of the debt market, with large differences in borrowing rates across the eurozone.

The ECB has so far maintained an ultra-loose monetary policy to support the economy, while the US Federal Reserve has instead raised rates and promises to continue to do so to counter inflation.—AFP

The Board of Directors declared an interim dividends of 10 fils per share for the first half of 2022.

The Corporate Action Time Schedule:

Cum Date*	4/9/2022
Ex Date	5/9/2022
Record Date	7/9/2022
Payment Date	14/9/2022

* Cum-Dividend Date:

The last day on which the share must be purchased so that the shareholder is registered in the company's register on the record date and therefore is entitled to receive dividends.

Business

Zain Group Q2 2022 net profit soars 22% to reach \$165 million

Board declares interim dividend of 10 fils per share

KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading telecommunications innovator operating in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the six months to June 30, 2022. Zain served 51.7 million customers at the end of the period, a 7.1 percent increase year-on-year (Y-o-Y).

In the second quarter of 2022 (Q2), Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 421 million (\$1.4 billion), up 14 percent Y-o-Y. EBITDA for the quarter reached KD 166 million (\$544 million), up 9 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 40 percent. Net income for the quarter amounted to KD 50 million (\$165 million), up 22 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting earnings per share of 12 fils (\$0.04).

For the first six months of 2022 (H1), Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 829 million (\$2.7 billion), an increase of 10 percent Y-o-Y. EBITDA for the period reached KD 320 million (\$1.1 billion), up 3



Zain Group Chairman Ahmed Al-Tahous

Board focused on driving sustainable shareholder value through strong ESG practices, diligent investments in network and new lucrative business verticals



Zain Vice-Chairman & Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi

Robust financial and operational performance across key markets reassures Board to declare a half-year dividend of 10 fils per share

in 4G and 5G network upgrades expansion, and seeking new lucrative business verticals to drive growth. We thank all the government authorities across our markets for their proactivity in supporting the telecom sector as we strive to provide meaningful connectivity to the communities we serve."

forward to launching 5G services in those markets in the future, upon receipt of regulatory approvals."

"We have recently applied for a digital banking license in Kuwait with Boubyan Bank and other investors, as we are keen of becoming the leading telco-led challenger

Boursa Kuwait. Accordingly, it was a gratifying achievement to be recognized as possessing the 'Best Corporate Governance' practice in Kuwait for two years in a row by World Finance Publishing House. This milestone justly rewards our Investor Relations, Corporate Governance, and Sustainability

Saudi Arabia: Revenue grew 14 percent Y-o-Y to reach \$1.2 billion, with EBITDA amounting to \$398 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 34 percent. Net income grew 159 percent for the six-month period reaching \$57 million. The operator's 5G network covering over 50 cities saw data revenue represent 44 percent of total revenue and customers served stood at 8.9 million, a 21 percent increase.

Iraq: Revenue grew 4 percent to \$390 million, and EBITDA grew by 16 percent to \$168 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 43 percent, with net profit reaching \$5 million for the period. The operator's customer base increased by 12 percent to reach 18 million customers maintaining its market leading position.

Sudan: Revenue soared 30 percent to reach \$208 million, with strong EBITDA growth of 38 percent reaching \$106 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 51 percent. Net income for the period grew 168 percent reaching \$111 million. Data revenue grew by 44 percent representing 31 percent of total revenue, customer base stood at 16.3 million, maintaining its market leadership position.

Jordan: Revenue grew 2 percent Y-o-Y to reach \$250 million, EBITDA reached \$111 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 44 percent, with net income reaching \$41 million. With the ongoing expansion of FTTH and 4G services across the country, data revenue grew 4 percent representing

Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for the second quarter (Q2) of 2022	
Total Managed Active Customers	51.7 million
Revenue	KD 421 million (\$1.4 billion)
EBITDA	KD 166 million (\$544 million)
EBITDA Margin	40%
Net Income	KD 50 million (\$165 million)
EPS	12 fils (\$0.04)

Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for first six months (H1) of 2022	
Revenue	KD 829 million (\$2.7 billion)
EBITDA	KD 320 million (\$1.1 billion)
EBITDA Margin	39%
Net Income	KD 98 million (\$321 million)
EPS	23 fils (\$0.07)

percent Y-o-Y, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 39 percent. Net income amounted to KD 98 million (\$321 million), up 14 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting earnings per share of 23 fils (\$0.07).

Key operational notes for H1, 2022

- Board declares second consecutive interim dividend of 10 fils per share for first six months of 2022.
- Data revenue reaches \$1.1 billion, representing 40 percent of Group revenue.
- Over the six months, CAPEX investments focused predominantly on expansion of Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) infrastructure; spectrum fees; 4G upgrades; and new network sites across its markets, as well as 5G roll-outs in Kuwait, KSA, and Bahrain.
- Zain Kuwait becomes the first telecom operator globally to launch Vo5G with nationwide coverage; also completes first live trial in region for 4G / 5G Open and Cloud Native Radio Access Network (cRAN).
- ZainTech, the Zain Group enterprise (B2B) arm, witnesses strong growth across markets landing key regional clients and new partnerships, with B2B

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, commented, "We are delighted by the company's robust financial and operational performance for the first six months of the year, which reassured the Board to declare a second consecutive half-year dividend of 10 fils per share. Our solid balance-sheet and financial solvency is a result of the company's success in the execution of its '4Sight' corporate strategy, which is driving growth, digital transformation, and optimal efficiencies across all operations."

Al-Kharafi continued, "The healthy revenue and net income growth across multiple key markets vindicates the strategic investments we have made over recent years in network upgrades and cutting-edge digital platforms. By offering our individual and enterprise customers state-of-the-art technologies and services, we are enhancing our customer and revenue share across our markets." "The 5G network of our flagship operation in Kuwait is the driving force of the 9 percent increase in customers and generation of multiple streams of profitable government and enterprise revenue, resulting in an 11 percent increase for all key financial indicators - revenue, EBITDA and net income."

"Similarly, the 5G network and appealing data monetization initiatives in both Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are driving growth on multiple levels. In Iraq, Jordan and Sudan, the operations are monetizing their 4G networks profitably and we look

bank in Kuwait. We are focused on fostering innovation and building on our success in the fintech space, given the exceptional accomplishments of Tamam in Saudi Arabia, Zain Cash in Iraq and Jordan, as well as MGurush in South Sudan."

"Our all-digital-only operators 'Yaqoot' in KSA and 'oodi' in Iraq both continue to deliver healthy growth, offering a simple mobile experience for customers all through an app."

"Moreover, our enterprise solutions arm

teams' high ethical standards, transparency and professionalism towards all our stakeholders."

Financial KPIs of key markets for six-month period (H1) ended June 30, 2022

Kuwait: Maintaining its market leadership, the flagship operation of Zain Group saw its customer base grow by 9 percent Y-o-Y, now to serve 2.6 million customers. The Group's most profitable operation saw its H1 2022 revenue grow by 11 percent to

- Data Revenue grew 3 percent to represent 40 percent of Group Revenue for H1 2022
- Kuwait, KSA and Sudan record double-digit growth in revenue and net profit
- 21 percent revenue growth in Enterprise business, ZainTech enters many strategic partnerships
- Zain applies to launch a digital bank in Kuwait with Boubyan Bank and other investors
- Focus on FinTech, Digital Operator entities, API platform and esports initiatives paying off

ZainTech has gained enormous traction to date, establishing the groundwork for exponential profitable growth. We aim to be the digital partner of choice for governments and enterprises across our markets."

Al-Kharafi concluded, "As a leading entity listed on the Premier Market in Kuwait, Zain seeks to exceed the regulations issued by all financial regulatory bodies including the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Capital Markets Authority and

reach KD 173 million (\$567 million), with EBITDA increasing by 11 percent to KD 65 million (\$214 million), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 38 percent. The operator's net income grew by 11 percent to KD 41 million (\$135 million). Data revenue grew by 5 percent Y-o-Y and represented 38 percent of total revenue. The operator continues to grow its 5G mobile and broadband customers, capturing the largest 5G customer and revenue market share in the country.

50 percent of total revenue. Zain Jordan served 3.7 million customers (up 4 percent) maintaining its market leadership.

Bahrain: Revenue grew 3 percent Y-o-Y reaching \$89 million. EBITDA for the period increased by 2 percent to \$29 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 33 percent. Net income increased 3 percent to \$7.6 million, with data revenue growing 5 percent to represent 46 percent of total revenue.

Impressive revenue growth of 14% for Q2 2022, reaching \$1.4 billion

- revenues growing 21 percent Y-o-Y.
- Dizlee, the Zain Group Application Program Interface (API) platform, grows exponentially with 26 digital partnerships, offering 51 live services, resulting in an impressive 5.5 million transactions per month and a 34 percent Y-o-Y increase in revenue.
- Zain Esports in cooperation with Zain KSA launches PLAYHERA MENA gaming tournament platform targeting region's lucrative gaming market of an estimated 100 million gamers.
- Zain's pure digital operator 'Yaqoot' in KSA and 'oodi' in Iraq witness robust growth.
- Zain Group publishes thought leadership report entitled 'The Climate Crisis - Achieving Net-Zero for a Sustainable Future'.
- Zain Group awarded 'Best Telco Operator' and ZainTech awarded 'Best Digital Service' at the 2022 Telecom World Middle East Awards.
- Zain recognized with World Finance Best Corporate Governance Award 2022 for Kuwait.

Commenting on Q2 and H1 2022 results, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group Ahmed Al-Tahous said, "The Board and management are focused on driving sustainable shareholder value through strong environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices, diligent investments



Zain headquarters building

Business

South Africa's business owners fume as power cuts hit profits

Country's blackouts reach new extremes

JOHANNESBURG: South Africans' annoyance at power cuts has given way to worry, with business owners complaining that the prolonged energy crisis for which no end is in sight is eating into profits and hobbling economic activity. At Native Rebels, a colorful second-floor bar flanked with a large balcony in the Johannesburg township of Soweto, the cost of running a generator to keep lights on for weeks has been a huge burden, co-owner Masechaba Nonyane told AFP.

"We thought COVID was bad... now that has been replaced with eight hours of no power," the 33-year-old entrepreneur said. "It's been really, really crippling," she added. Scheduled blackouts, known locally as load shedding, have burdened the country for years but recently reached new extremes. This month, the country has endured almost two weeks of stage-6 load shedding, which entails multiple power cuts a day, each lasting between two and four hours.

Each of the up to eight stages of load shedding costs the country's economy an additional R500 million (US\$29 million) a day in lost activity, according to government estimates. The crisis was exacerbated by a labor dispute at monopoly power provider Eskom's coal plants. The dispute was resolved earlier this month as Eskom agreed to a pay raise for its striking workers-but power cuts have yet to significantly abate.

Load shedding = job shedding
"Load shedding will lead to further job losses, which will lead to lower production. It will affect spending. It will further affect economic growth," said Ismail Fasanya, senior lecturer of economics at the University of the Witwatersrand. Firms have had to spend money on generators, raising the cost of running a business-something that risks dissuading local entrepreneurs looking to start new ventures as well as foreign investors, said Fasanya.

The impact on jobs is particularly worrying in a country grappling with 34.5 percent unemployment in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, he said. Addressing the South African Communist Party congress on Friday, President Cyril Ramaphosa, who has been under pressure to resolve the issue, said he would soon be announcing measures to tackle the crisis. While details remain unclear, the president said one solution might entail setting up other state-owned power utility firms to compete with Eskom, which currently generates more than 90 percent of the country's energy. "We have to use every available means and remove every regulatory obstacle to bring extra electricity onto the grid as soon as possible," Ramaphosa said. Energy experts and even debt-ridden Eskom have called for rapid government investment in renewables, particularly solar, as the best option to quickly boost energy production. —AFP



EMALAHLENI, South Africa: A general view of absorbers at the Kusile Power Station, a coal-fired power plant located on the Hartbeesfontein Farm in eMalahleni. — AFP



CAPIRA, Panama: Vehicles block the Pan-American highway in Capira, Panama. Protests continue against rising inflation and corruption in Panama. — AFP

Highway blocked as Panama protests persist

SANTIAGO: Large trucks and banner-waving demonstrators blocked the Panamerican Highway and other roads in Panama on Friday as two weeks of revolt against high prices and corruption showed no signs of abating. As protesters ignored government calls for negotiations to end the angry mobilization, dozens of blockades were maintained on the critical highway that connects the country of 4.4 million people to the rest of Central America.

At one roadblock, outside the city of Aguadulce, protester Nelly Jaen, a 63-year-old homemaker, told AFP: "We are desperate. Panama cannot take any more of this."

"Lower the price of food, fuel and medicine, because we can't stand it in this country any longer," added truck driver Arnulfo Sarmiento, 53. Its economy hurt by the coronavirus pandemic and Russia's war on Ukraine, Panama is experiencing one of its most difficult periods since the military dictatorship

of General Manuel Antonio Noriega fell in 1989. Year-on-year inflation of 4.2 percent was recorded in May, along with an unemployment rate of about 10 percent and fuel price hikes of nearly 50 percent since January. Despite its dollarized economy and high growth figures, the country has a high rate of social inequality. Economic woes have led to a shortage of fuel in some parts of the country, and stalls at food markets in the capital have run out of products to sell. "Politicians are the biggest thieves," said another of the Aguadulce protesters, 41-year-old homemaker Mitzila Chanis.

"But it is also partly the fault of the people who keep electing swindlers, scoundrels and liars... That's what they are. While they are eating ham, the people have nothing." In a bid to calm the mood, President Laurentino Cortizo has announced reductions on the price of fuel and some foods, but unions rejected the measure as insufficient and refused to take part in negotiations scheduled for Thursday with mediation by the Catholic Church. "The social explosion we are experiencing is not the product of an isolated event or of short-term increases in fuel and food," ex-president Martin Torrijos said on Friday.

"It is the accumulation of neglected demands... and an evident deterioration in the quality of life of Panamanians," he added. —AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 14 JUL 2022

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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	34,230	8,184.84	-0.5%	-0.7%	7.1%	74,170,337	40,508,844	7,200	27.7	2.6	78.3%
Main Market	9,478	5,655.24	-0.4%	-0.4%	-3.9%	48,847,021	5,420,580	2,741	13.8	1.3	21.7%
All Share	43,708	7,360.30	-0.5%	-0.7%	4.5%	123,017,358	45,929,423	9,941	24.7	2.3	100%

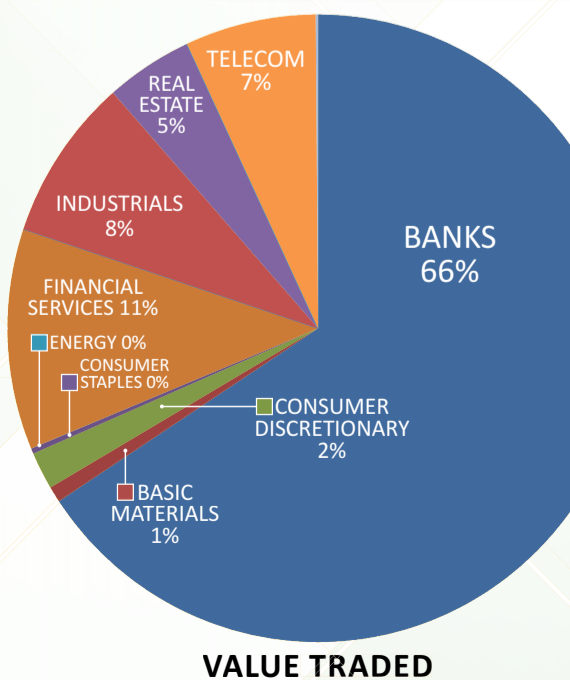
Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
BANKS	26,506	1,774.74	-0.7%	-0.3%	9.4%	53,713,056	30,181,177	4,436	27.8	2.5	60.26%
BASIC MATERIALS	901	1,010.23	0.5%	-0.3%	-1.4%	769,075	376,993	153	12.6	1.3	2.05%
CONSUMER DISCRETIONARY	760	1,487.40	-0.1%	-0.1%	11.3%	3,812,866	886,101	327	19.1	9.0	1.73%
CONSUMER STAPLES	159	520.88	1.3%	-1.2%	-28.8%	307,667	126,902	44	16.5	1.1	0.36%
ENERGY	233	1,118.47	-0.1%	-4.3%	-21.7%	142,483	3,576	10	14.8	1.2	0.53%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	4,049	1,371.09	0.0%	0.0%	-3.7%	39,525,176	5,224,377	2,102	17.0	2.0	9.21%
HEALTH CARE	237	478.19	0.0%	0.4%	-40.0%	0	0	0	13.7	3.2	0.54%
INDUSTRIALS	3,988	1,120.35	-0.5%	-3.8%	-1.9%	5,376,535	3,855,948	1,266	39.3	1.4	9.07%
INSURANCE	644	1,543.82	0.0%	0.1%	0.7%	13,358	542	12	7.4	1.0	1.46%
REAL ESTATE	2,613	1,214.45	0.3%	0.8%	-8.4%	13,801,077	2,087,694	824	13.3	1.2	5.94%
TECHNOLOGY	9	691.12	0.0%	-1.0%	1.1%	0	0	0	-	0.8	0.02%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	3,662	1,194.10	-0.6%	-1.3%	9.6%	5,275,655	3,128,774	728	14.8	2.2	8.33%
UTILITIES	225	539.47	0.0%	-1.0%	-10.1%	280,410	57,340	39	15.8	2.6	0.51%

Top Gainers					
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
PAPCO	51.4	20.66	253	13	2
WETHAQ	39	13.04	13,103	473	8
UN I CAP	59	9.46	50	3	1
INOVEST	152	7.04	2,221,139	327,586	144
AREEC	300	6.76	400	0	1

Top Losers					
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
WARBACAP	77.1	-13.37	7,683	618	10
MARAKEZ	55.5	-13.15	7,910	445	8
OSOS	104	-8.77	266,568	28,030	22
EKTITAB	11.5	-7.26	5,333,744	60,580	175
CLEANING	38.5	-5.64	124,075	4,771	9

Top Volume					
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
AUB	280	-1.06	20,795,950	5,832,753	587
KFH	832	-1.54	15,233,550	12,656,305	1,783
KINV	148.0	3.50	8,690,096	1,275,089	322
NBK	1,060	-0.09	7,575,890	7,981,289	891
GFH	84.1	-2.10	6,261,356	528,752	258

Top Value					
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	832	-1.54	15,233,550	12,656,305	1,783
NBK	1,060	-0.09	7,575,890	7,981,289	891
AUB	280	-1.06	20,795,950	5,832,753	587
ZAIN	592	0.17	5,071,909	2,998,778	653
AGLTY	767	-0.90	3,430,707	2,617,207	666



Market Summary:

- Premier market M. Cap reached 34.2 billion KD (%78.3), while the Main marker is 9.8 billion KD (%21.7).
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 7360, with support levels at 7318, 7286, and 7249, while resistance at 7461.
- Premier index closed at 8184, support levels at 8116, 8007, and 7979, while resistance at 8335. The Main index closed at 5655, with support levels at 5641, 5636, and 5616, while resistance at 5696.

Iraq's date palms: Rescuing a national icon



This picture shows a view of a palm field in Iraq's central city of Karbala.

Thousands of young date palms, Iraq's national symbol, form lines that extend from the edge of the desert near the central city of Karbala and into the horizon. Iraq's prized trees are central to a push aimed to preserve a long-threatened ancestral culture, whose fruit historically presented prosperity across the Arab world. "The date palm is the symbol and pride of Iraq," says Mohamed Abul-Maali, commercial director at the Fadak date plantation.

Once known as the "country of 30 million palm trees", and home to 600 varieties of the fruit, Iraq's date production has been blighted by decades of conflict and environmental challenges, including drought, desertification and Stalinization. The Fadak plantation, taking its name from a date-filled oasis central to Islam's origins, is a 500-hectare (1,235 acres) farm operated by the Imam Hussein Shrine in the nearby holy city of Karbala. Abul-Maali hopes the project, launched in 2016, will "restore this culture to what it

used to be". The grove is a repository for "more than 90 date varieties, Iraqi but also Arab species", from the Gulf and North Africa, he adds.

The Iraqi varieties are among "the rarest and best" and were collected from across the country. Of the 30,000 trees planted at Fadak, more than 6,000 are already producing fruit, according to Abul-Maali. He expects this year's harvest to reach 60 tons, a threefold increase on 2021. The rows of new trees at the Fadak farm stand in stark contrast to the state of plantations in other parts of the country.

'Like a cemetery'

The scene at Fadak with well-watered trees is far removed from the Basra region, once a centre of date production in southern Iraq. Here the landscape is scarred with the slender trunks of decapitated palm trees. In the Shatt al-Arab area, where the Euphrates and Tigris rivers meet, Baghdad razed entire tracts during its 1980-88 war with Iran. Often the



This aerial view shows a healthy palm tree grove near the Shatt Al-Arab in the southern Iraqi city of Basra. — AFP photos

trunks of felled date palms were used to fill and bury irrigation canals that had dried up and become unused.

"It looks like a cemetery," says agricultural engineer Alaa Al-Badran. According to him, the number of palm trees in the area has fallen from six million, before the Iraq-Iran war, to less than three million today. Now "the Stalinization of the waters of the Shatt al-Arab and of the land" poses an even greater challenge, Badran says. "The solution would be drip irrigation and desalination systems. But that can be expensive," says Ahmed Al-Awad, whose family once owned 200 date palms in the area but only have 50 trees remaining.

Iraq's agriculture ministry claims some progress in addressing declining date palm production. "In the last 10 years we have gone from 11 million palm trees to 17 million," says Hadi Al-Yasseri, a spokesman for the minister. A government program to rescue the date palms was launched in 2010, but eight years later it was shelved due to a lack of funds, says Yasseri. But he expects it to be relaunched, as new funds are due to be included in the next government budget.

Upstream diversions

According to official figures, Iraq exported almost 600,000 tons of dates in 2021. The fruit is the country's second largest export commodity after oil, according to the World Bank. "As global demand

is increasing, the ongoing initiatives in Iraq on improving quality should be continued," a recent World Bank report stated. While exports earn the national economy \$120 million annually, the organization laments that much of Iraq's crop is sold to the United Arab Emirates, where dates are repackaged and re-exported for higher prices.

In the town of Badra, on Iraq's eastern border with Iran, grievances are commonplace. The scars of war are evident among groves of decapitated palm trees.

For more than a decade, officials have complained of scarce water supplies, and have accused Iran of upstream diversions of the Mirzabad River, known locally as Al-Kalal. "The date of Badra is incomparable," says Mussa Mohsen who owns around 800 date palm trees. "Before, we had water from Al-Kalal which came from Iran," he recalls. "Badra was like a sea but now to irrigate we rely on wells." — AFP



A damaged palm grove is pictured in the town of Badra.



Palm trees stand at sunset near the Shatt al-Arab waterway in the southern Iraqi city of Basra.



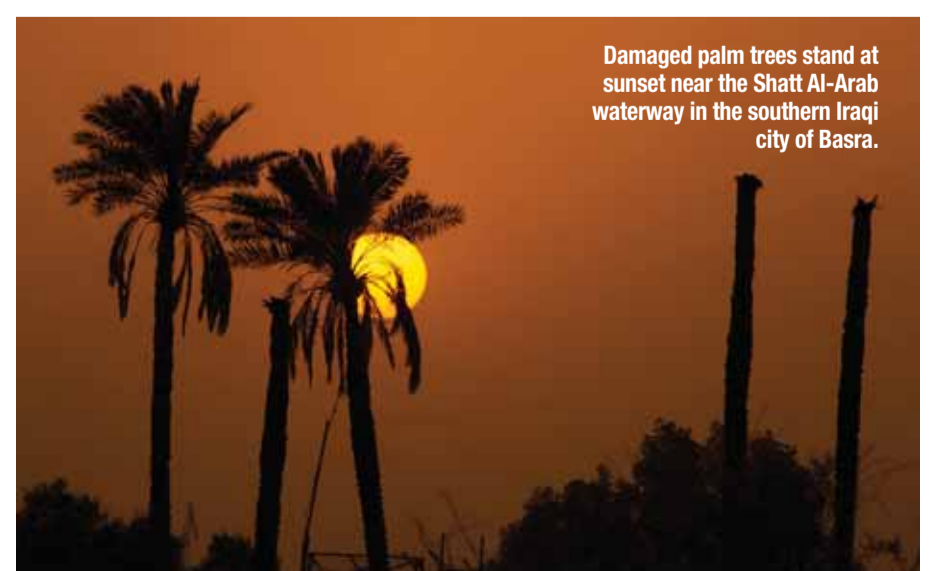
A man climbs a palm tree to harvest dates.



Ahmad Al-Awad harvests dates from one of his palm trees in the southern Iraqi city of Basra.



Damaged palm trees stand near the Shatt Al-Arab waterway in the southern Iraqi city of Basra.



Damaged palm trees stand at sunset near the Shatt Al-Arab waterway in the southern Iraqi city of Basra.



Spectators watch Portuguese-style bloodless bullfight.

California's Portuguese community keeps bullfighting alive without bloodshed

Just like any other Portuguese bullfight, the elegant rider deftly guides his horse around the charging bull's horns, before bending down to plant a bandarilha in its spine. Except that no blood is spilled—the small spear is velcro-padded, and sticks to a cushion attached to the bull's back—and most of the spectators' cheers are in English.

The scene takes place in Turlock, a small town in the heart of rural California, where tens of thousands of Portuguese-Americans have lived for decades, keeping the traditions of their ancestral homeland alive, not least bullfighting. But due to Californian law, there can be no bloodshed. "The first time I came here in California, 15 years ago, it was like 'woah, amazing' because they have everything like Portugal," said Joao Soller Garcia, a "cavaleiro" or horse rider, who travelled from Lisbon to take part in the bullfight.

"Go to a bullfight in Portugal and it's the same thing," he said shortly before entering the arena to be applauded by some 4,000 spectators. The majority of the crowd are of Portuguese descent—mainly immigrants from the Azores islands, who began to settle this agricultural area in the early 20th century. The community has been growing ever since, with its own



A team of Forcados attempt to grab the bull's head with bare hands during the Portuguese-style bloodless bullfights hosted by the Turlock Pentecost Association at the Stanislaus County Fairgrounds in Turlock, California. — AFP photos

newspapers, radio stations and associations.

'Our lifestyle'

Some 350,000 Californians proudly claim Portuguese heritage, and often remain fiercely attached to their culture and language. This is the case for Jose, 30, who came to watch the bullfight with

friends. Born in California, he switches from English to Portuguese seemingly without noticing. "It comes naturally to me. A lot of people here speak Portuguese in their daily life, even the younger ones," he said.

"Sometimes it is easier for me to express my feelings or to joke in Portuguese. Portuguese is a very emotional language," he added. Above the arena, the Portuguese flag flies alongside the American flag, and the Portuguese national anthem strikes up before its US counterpart. The bullfight itself is organized by a religious group, led by Antonio Mendes, a cattle breeder in his 70s who revived the tradition in 1993. "We're Portuguese and that's part of our lifestyle, especially the island that I'm from—it's just rooted," he said.

Grab by the horns

Portuguese bullfights differ from the Spanish style, in that the animal is never killed in the arena. But in traditional Portuguese events, the bull has been



Cavaleiro from Portugal, Joao Soller Garcia, places the velcro-tipped bandarilha on the velcro pad on the back of the bull during the Portuguese-style bloodless bullfights.

weakened by several bandarilha strikes by the time the "forcados"—eight men with no horses or protection—enter the arena to tackle the animal with their bare hands. Because the bulls in Turlock are not hurt, breeders like Mendes have created a bloodline which is just as combative, but less heavy.

"Here the bulls weigh about 900 to 1000 pounds, because it's bloodless. In Portugal, they are 1300, 1400 pounds. Big bulls," said George Martins, a "forcado" captain. Teams like Martins' are often dubbed "suicide squads" for a reason—one of them literally has the task of grabbing the bull by the horns, suffering powerful headbutts to the stomach as his companions wrestle with the animal. "It's not just brute strength... it takes a lot of technique," he said.

'It sucks!'

Joao Soller Garcia, the "cavaleiro," enjoys both the classic Portuguese style and its Californian adaptation. "Compared to Portugal, it is a little bit more danger

because the bull is not hurt," he said. "It's completely bloodless and we have to be more careful... the bull is at full strength."

But for Maxine Sousa-Correia, from a family of cattle breeders who have produced bulls for Californian fights since the 1970s, the use of velcro bandarilhas diminishes the spectacle. "Unfortunately, this is a mere imitation... We invented the velcro pad and the Velcro on the end of the stick just so that it would at least add some color and some pageantry," she said.

"But at the same time, we're not doing justice to this animal, because this is what this breed is all for. Her husband Frank Correia added: "I think it sucks!" "It should be done the way it is in Portugal. But we can't because we're in the United States of America and, you know, they don't appreciate the art." — AFP



Cavaleiro Joao Soller Garcia tips his hat to acknowledge the crowd during the Portuguese-style bloodless bullfights.



Forcados, one seen here from a team of eight, tackles the bull in his effort to grab the bull's head during the Portuguese-style bloodless bullfights.



A Cavaleiro places a velcro-tipped bandarilha on to a velcro pad on the bull during the Portuguese-style bloodless bullfights.



The flag of Portugal is displayed on horseback among United States flags during a ceremony at the start of the Portuguese-style bloodless bullfights.

Stars return to Tunisia music fest after COVID break

British reggae singer Alpha Blondy, Nigeria's CKay and K-pop band B.I.G are among the stars lined up for Tunisia's Carthage music festival which

opens Thursday, after a two-year COVID-imposed recess. The 56th Festival International de Carthage, one of North Africa's most prestigious music events, is returning under the slogan "we're coming back to life, we're breathing art".

The 2020 and 2021 editions were cancelled as the pandemic ravaged Tunisia, but the festival is back with 33 shows at the Roman amphitheatre in Carthage, capable of holding 12,000 spectators. The festival kicks off Thursday night with a musical comedy by Tunisian film director Abdelhamid Bouchnak, and is also to fea-



Nigeria's CKay

ture renowned Iraqi oud player Naseer Shamma, Tunisian singers Saber Rebai and Balti, and Egyptian pop star Shirine.

"Festivals returning means energy returning to our lives," said Youssef Lachkhem, the head of Tunisia's government culture agency. The festival will pause for two days for the July 25 referendum on a constitution promoted by President Kais Saied, a year after he staged a dramatic power grab in the birthplace of the Arab Spring uprisings, in what opponents label a coup. — AFP



Iraqi oud player Naseer Shamma

Lifestyle | Features



Chinese Ambassador to Syria Feng Biao (center) poses for a picture with the cast and crew in the Hajar Al-Aswad neighborhood of the Syrian capital Damascus, during the filming of a scene in a film titled "Home Operation", a Chinese-Emirati joint venture produced by actor Jackie Chan and inspired by real events of the emergency evacuation of Chinese and foreign nationals and diplomats during the early days of a civil war in Yemen in 2015.



Actors are pictured in the Hajar Al-Aswad neighborhood of the Syrian capital Damascus. — AFP photos



IS EX-BASTION IN SYRIA HOSTS JACKIE CHAN FILM SHOOT

A ghost town since a 2018 operation to flush out jihadists, Hajar Al-Aswad near the Syrian capital has come back to life as the location of a Jackie Chan-produced action movie. "Home Operation" is inspired by China's 2015 evacuation of Chinese and other foreign citizens from the war in Yemen, an operation that was seen as a landmark for Beijing. Yemen was deemed too dangerous a venue to shoot and some scenes of the film, which is also backed by an Emirati production company, are being shot in Syria, although the script only mentions a fictional country called "Poman". The ruins of Hajar Al-Aswad on Thursday filled with a motley crew of actors in Yemeni tribal attire, Syrian extras in uniform and polo-wearing Chinese film crew members.

Jackie Chan is the main producer, although there are no plans for him to visit Syria. The film pitches itself as a blockbuster that will glorify the role of the Chinese authorities in a heroic evacuation. Speaking to reporters as his crew installed their equipment and tanks in hastily altered livery moved into position, director Yinxi Song confirmed the film's propaganda credentials. "It takes the perspective of diplomats who are Communist Party members, who braved a hail of bullets in a war-torn country and safely brought all Chinese compatriots onto the country's warship unscathed," he said.

The ambassador of China, one of few countries to have maintained good diplo-



Actors are pictured in the Hajar Al-Aswad neighborhood of the Syrian capital Damascus.



matic relations with the regime of Syria President Bashar Al-Assad, was present to launch the Syria shoot, which is expected to last several days. A red banner in three languages was unfurled for the small ceremony and another that read "Peace & Love" was propped up on the front of a tank.

'Low-cost studio'

Hajar Al-Aswad, which means "black rock" in Arabic, was once a densely populated Damascus suburb that lies next to the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmuk. Both areas became major hotspots in the

Syrian civil conflict that erupted in 2011 and were at least partially controlled at one point by the Islamic State group. The reconquest of both neighborhoods by Syrian pro-government forces in May 2018 marked the moment the regime brought the entire capital Damascus back under its control. Swathes of Hajar Al-Aswad were completely leveled, however, turning the neighborhood into a sinister sprawl of grey, gutted buildings.

A few residents have returned to the least damaged parts of Hajar Al-Aswad, leaving the rest completely uninhabited. "The war-ravaged areas in Syria have

turned into a movie studio. These areas attract film producers," said director Rawad Shahin, who is part of Home Operation's Syria crew. "Building studios similar to these areas is very expensive, so these areas are considered as low-cost studios," he said.

The production team says it plans to use several other locations to film in Syria, where productions from Iran and Russia, both allies of Assad, have also been shot. Syria is targeted by a raft of international sanctions and is also littered with unexploded ordnance which last year made it the world's most lethal coun-

try for landmine kills.

Chinese navy vessels carrying out anti-piracy patrols were diverted to Yemen in 2015 to evacuate what officials at the time said were hundreds of people from 10 different countries stranded by the escalating conflict. The successful operation was touted by Beijing at the time as a proud moment for its navy, evidence of its humanitarian principles and of its growing global reach.—AFP

'Fire of Love' charts romance and death of volcano-chasing scientists

French scientists Maurice and Katia Krafft were brought together, and eventually killed, by their shared love of volcanoes. Now the married couple are the subject of "Fire of Love," a new film constructed from hours of dazzling, terrifying and occasionally quirky footage they shot close to-and even inside-erupting craters.

Playing in a limited number of US theaters, the documentary from National Geographic and prestigious indie distributor Neon ("Parasite") is earning rave reviews and generating early awards buzz. Director Sara Dosa first stumbled upon the pair's "spectacular imagery" while researching another documentary about Icelandic volcanoes-but was drawn more to the "love that just radiates behind the lens, unlike anything else."



In this file photo director Sara Dosa attends the Los Angeles premiere of National Geographic Documentary Films' "Fire of Love" at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles, California.

For 25 years, the Kraffts had traveled the world together in search of active volcanoes, writing some 20 books and making five feature films, plus countless television programs and lectures. But they are perhaps best remembered today for their deaths side-by-side on Japan's Mount Unzen volcano, which erupted in 1991 after

nearly two centuries dormant, sending a fatal cloud of gas and ash surging down its eastern flank.

"Fire of Love" begins and ends with this tragic information-yet it spends the bulk of its running time on the "love triangle" between the couple and their lifelong obsession. "Once we really learned about them as people... and the fact that they were married and also seemed to be in love with volcanoes-that's when we thought, 'okay, we want to make a film of these people,'" Dosa told AFP.

"We wanted to tell kind of a mythic love story that was told through the language of volcanoes," she added. "That's what drew them together in the first place, and that was the propulsive material, the fuel of their relationship."

'Reckless love'

While Maurice was the more extroverted and ostensibly thrill-seeking of the pair-he paddles in an acid lake and plots to kayak down an active lava stream-Katia was similarly courageous in the face of peril. Their gung-ho approach drew criticism from some of their scientific peers, but "I don't think that we ever found them reckless, quite



This file photo illustration taken on March 02, 2005, shows books written by Maurice and Katia Krafft, as well as objects that belonged to them, taken in Ludres, France.—AFP photos

honestly," said Dosa. "They ultimately did lead a deeply meaningful life and die a meaningful death. And so much of that was this pursuit of love," she added.

"I'm sure many people will say perhaps it was a reckless love, but for us, it was the way for them to live." After witnessing the staggering 1980 eruption of Mount St Helens in the northwestern United States, and the Nevado del Ruiz disaster that killed up to 25,000 Colombians five years later, the pair reoriented their work to lobby governments for better evacuation planning. "Since they were some of the only people really capturing those images, they were uniquely suited to do that advocacy work," said Dosa. "And that is literally what they were trying to do as they died on mountains in 1991."

'Salve'

Aside from informing modern audiences about the pair's work, Dosa hopes the film can remind viewers that the planet is not simply "a resource to be capitalized upon." "These kinds of stories about the aliveness, the sentience of the Earth, are all the more important to counteract the exploita-

tion," she said. Making the film during the pandemic and "having these guides, Katia and Maurice, teaching you how to navigate the unknown, and who knew how to reconcile fear-that was such a salve and a refuge for us."

And then there is the aesthetic beauty of the footage itself, full of glowing red lava and alien-looking volcanic landscapes, all captured in a distinctive style with "the hallmarks of the French New Wave." "For example, in the cinematography, there was a lot of playful snap zooms, which reminded us of films in France from the 60s and 70s," she said. "And their own writing-they authored nearly 20 books-almost recalled the bombastic and playful spirit of narration in Truffaut films."

Dosa herself drew on that style, including the documentary's own, breathy narration. "One of the great narrative devices of the French New Wave was love triangle stories," said Dosa. "And for us, that was something that felt appropriate. Katia and Maurice truly did seem to have a third in their relationship-volcanoes."—AFP



In this file photo taken on June 8, 1991, an ash cloud rises from Mount Unzen near Shimabara, Japan.

Sports

Springboks outmuscle Wales to win series as Kolisi scores

South Africa win seal 2-1 series victory

News in brief

Bangladesh sweep past Windies

PROVIDENCE: Taijul Islam made a triumphant return to One-Day International cricket with his first five-wicket haul as Bangladesh completed another series sweep of the West Indies, winning the third and final fixture by four wickets at the Guyana National Stadium on Saturday. Playing his first ODI for more than two years, Taijul had a dream start with a wicket off his first delivery to set the stage for an outstanding effort. He finished with impressive figures of five for 28 as the home side were dismissed for 178 off 48.4 overs batting first. Bangladesh stumbled along the way in pursuit of the modest target with Gudakesh Motie claiming career-best figures of four for 23. However, the left-arm spinner could not prevent the tourists reaching the target with nine balls to spare. Liton Das set the Bangladeshis on the way to an 11th consecutive ODI win over the West Indies with an even 50 while captain Tamim Iqbal played his part with 34.

Court upholds Russian bans

PARIS: The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has upheld the ban on Russian clubs from European competitions for the coming season and Russia's exclusion from international tournaments, as a result of the war in Ukraine. CAS rejected appeals by four Russian clubs against their banishment by UEFA from European competitions in 2022-2023 and another by the Russian Football Federation which contested its exclusion from all competitions organized by FIFA and UEFA. "The escalation of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and the public and government responses worldwide, created unforeseen and unprecedented circumstances to which FIFA and UEFA had to respond," the Lausanne-based CAS said in its press release. "In determining that Russian teams and clubs should not participate in competitions under their aegis while such circumstances persisted, the panel (of judges) held that both parties acted within the scope of the discretion granted to them under their respective statutes and regulations."

Olympic champ Jacobs withdraws

EUGENE: Olympic champion Marcell Jacobs withdrew from the 100m semi-finals at the World Athletics Championships due to a thigh injury, the Italian Athletics Federation (FIDAL) confirmed on Saturday. Italian team doctor Andrea Billi said in a statement released just hours before Jacobs was due to race that the sprinter would not compete after being diagnosed with tightness in his right thigh. Evaluation of the contraction had found a "clinical picture that can put muscle integrity at risk and lead to injury", Billi said. Jacobs tweeted that it had been a "painful choice, I am forced to stop". "I am a fighter and this is why I decided to be in Eugene," he said. "Now, in order not to compromise the rest of the season by risking a more serious injury, I have to postpone the challenge. 'I promise I will do my best to make you dream!' Jacobs' withdrawal marks another disappointment in a season disrupted by injury. The 27-year-old pulled off one of the shocks of the Tokyo Olympics last year after storming to victory in the 100m in a time of 9.80secs.

Hogg, Russell set for return

SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO: Scotland head coach Gregor Townsend said on Saturday captain Stuart Hogg and fly-half Finn Russell will return for the end of year Tests after being rested for the 2-1 series defeat in Argentina. Townsend's men lost 34-31 to the Pumas in Santiago del Estero in the deciding game, without two of their leading players, who had also featured for the British and Irish Lions last season. "Yes we will see the likes of them," Townsend told Sky Sports. "We know we have players who have played for us a number of times before, played for the Lions. 'We play Argentina, the All Blacks, Australia and Fiji, some real tough matches for us and we know we have to be better than this tour,'" he added. In northern Argentina, Emiliano Boffelli scored an 81st minute try after the Pumas had trailed by 15 points with half an hour remaining. The hosts claimed the decider after losing seven days ago in Salta but won the opening game in San Salvador de Jujuy on July 2.

Vingegaard loses key ally Roglic

RODEZ: Tour de France leader Jonas Vingegaard took a body blow as his co-captain Primož Roglic pulled out of the 21-day bike race ahead of stage 15 run to Carcassonne. Vingegaard is locked in a desperate struggle with defending champion Tadej Pogacar after wrestling the lead from him in spectacular manner in the Alps. Roglic was injured in a fall on the cobbles of the northern French mining roads on stage five, but was fundamental in causing Pogacar's meltdown on the Col du Granon on the second of three Alpine stages this week. Vingegaard and Roglic started the Tour as co-captains of Jumbo-Visma, but the older of the two now trails by over 30 minutes. On Saturday's stage Roglic actually joked that he was now preparing for the Vuelta a Espana, of which he is three-time defending champion. But Sunday's announcement not only comes as a surprise, it also weakens Vingegaard, who leads Pogacar by 2min 22sec thanks to the collective efforts of his team. —From AFP

CAPE TOWN: Recalled captain Siya Kolisi was among the try scorers as South Africa outmuscled Wales to win the third Test 30-14 in Cape Town on Saturday and seal a 2-1 series victory. All three Springbok tries stemmed from physical strength and after Wales came within three points early in the second half the hosts pulled away for an ultimately convincing triumph. Fly-half Handre Pollard, who scored 20 points including three conversions and three penalties, and hooker Bongani Mbonambi were the other try scorers for South Africa, who led 17-8 at half-time.

Despite the series loss, gutsy Wales will leave the republic with a greatly enhanced reputation after putting behind them a humiliating home loss to Italy in the Six Nations in March. Success for South Africa halted a run of series victories by northern hemisphere teams with France winning in Japan last weekend, and Ireland in New Zealand and England in Australia earlier on Saturday.

"It has been a tough series, exactly what we needed to start our season," said Kolisi, after the Cape Town victory followed a 32-29 first Test win and a 13-12 second Test defeat. "The coaching staff had a plan from the beginning and they stuck to it. A lot of players had opportunities and that is important. 'Today we were playing in a final and the players pitched up. We really appreciate the people who have supported us.'"

Wales fly-half and captain Dan Biggar said: "I'm massively proud. It has been the easiest job in the world with this group. 'Congratulations to South Africa in the last 20-25 minutes they just squeezed us and we could not get our hands on the ball. 'We have shown on this tour that we are good enough to compete. Hopefully we will enjoy our off-season and come back strong.' Wales suffered a severe blow just before the kick-off when No. 8 Taulupe Faletau was injured while warming up and had to be replaced by Josh Navidi with Taine Basham promoted to the bench.

Etzebeth cheered

The biggest pre-match cheers were reserved for Springbok lock Eben Etzebeth, who ran onto the field ahead of his teammates in recognition of him winning his 100th cap. After the match, Etzebeth said: "It is unreal, a special day. We approached it as a final, the guys were awesome."

South Africa started superbly, dominating possession as they camped in the Wales half and Pollard slotted a fifth-minute penalty from close range to open the scoring. Intense pressure from the home team close to the tourists' tryline followed and they stretched the lead to 10 points by the 16th minute as Pollard dived over close to the posts and converted his try. Almost immediately, veteran Alun Wyn Jones extended his world record number of caps for Wales to 153 when he came on for injured flanker Dan Lydiate.

The visitors got back into the match at the end of the first quarter when patient handling culminated in flanker Tommy Reffell taking a pass

from winger Josh Adams and scoring an unconverted try. Star Springboks winger Cheslin Kolbe then had to leave the field injured with veteran Willie le Roux coming on and forcing a backline reshuffle that included full-back Damian de Allende moving to centre. English referee Matthew Carley warned Wales several times to cut out infringements that led to eight penalties being awarded against them by the 25th minute.

South Africa got a second try three minutes before half-time as Mbonambi celebrated his 50th cap by scoring a pushover try off a line-out and Pollard converted for a 17-8 half-time advantage. Two successful Biggar penalties reduced the gap to three points before Kolisi, one of 10 changes to the team beaten in Bloemfontein last weekend, barged over for a third try. Pollard converted and slotted two late penalties to boost morale ahead of two home Rugby Championship matches against arch rivals New Zealand next month. —AFP



Sheikh Ahmad Al-Sabah elected President of ATF

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The Arab Tennis Federation General Assembly elected Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Sabah as President of ATF for its next term 2022-2026 during its meeting held in Kuwait. Also Kuwait's candidate for Secretary General Faleh Al-Otaibi was also elected. Dr Salma Mouelhi (from Tunisia) was picked as Vice-President for Africa and Ayman Azmi Vice-President from Egypt. Raymond Salem (Lebanon) was elected Vice President for Asia.

Five candidates for ATF board were elected: Ishaq Ismail (Algeria), Khalid Naffaa (Jordan), Dr Maha Jarad

(Palestine), Khalid Talaat (Sudan) and Nasser Al-Marzouqi (UAE). The General Assembly meeting had a record attendance from 18 Arab countries. They include: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Palestine, in addition to host country Kuwait.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber welcomed the attendees. He said ATF is making a new move with the support of all member federations, and insisted that Arab Tennis sport requires more attention and keenness on its development. He asked members to focus on the basic of the game and organize more tournaments, in addition to preparing programs for the development of the sports through coordination with the international and continental federation.

Al-Jaber was proud and pleased with the achievement of Tunisian play-



er Ons Jabeur, who reached the rank of World Number 2 and was the runner up at Wimbledon. This was the first and most important Arab achievement in history. "Here comes your role to support and exert more efforts so that we can see our Arab players

achieve what Ons had achieved," Al-Jaber said. He hoped for more cooperation to exchange "wildcards" to participate in tournaments organized in the Arab world - adding that "our goal is to see more Arab players of both genders on the world ranking lists."

Kuwait Disabled Table Tennis team in Thailand

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Disabled Table Tennis team left for Thailand to participate in Thailand Open International Championship to be held July 18th until 21st, with more than 12 countries and more than 45 players of both genders participating. Kuwait is participating in the team, singles and doubles competitions. Head of the delegation Saad Al-Ajmi said the disabled table tennis team seeks to get the best results in the competitions which will be strong due to highly ranked players. He said "we are used to our champions getting good results and hope Thailand Championship will not be an exception."



Kupcho, Salas win LPGA pairs event

WASHINGTON: Jennifer Kupcho and Lizette Salas combined for a nine-under par 61 on Saturday to win the LPGA Great Lakes Bay Invitational team event by five strokes. The US duo started the day with a four-shot lead and didn't put a foot wrong in the four-ball (best ball) final round at Midland Country Club in Michigan. Their 26-under par total put them five in front of Finland's Matilda Castren and Malaysian Kelly Tan-who grabbed solo second on 21-under par with Castren's birdie at the 18th to cap an eight-under par 62.

That saw them edge ahead of American Stacy Lewis and Mexico's Maria Fassi, who roared up the leader-

board with an 11-under par 59 but settled for third on 20-under 260. Kupcho and Salas, who took a win and a tie for the US in last year's Solheim Cup loss to Europe, said the confidence of that partnership carried them this week. "I think we were clicking all week," said 25-year-old Kupcho, who won her first major title in April at the Chevron Championship and earned her second LPGA victory at the Meijer Classic last month. "I think we just have a lot of faith in each other. We make each other comfortable. We just know if we mess up, the other person's got us and that has worked really well for us." For Salas, it was the end of a long dry spell since she won her only prior LPGA title at the Kingsmill Championship in 2014.

"Just a magical week," Salas said. Castren and Tan were also a team of good friends, with Castren poised to be maid of honor at Tan's wedding next December. They seized solo second with a birdie at the par-three finishing hole, where



MIDLAND: Jennifer Kupcho of the United States and Lizette Salas of the United States embrace on the 18th green after winning the Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational at Midland Country Club on July 16, 2022 in Midland, Michigan. —AFP

Castren's tee shot settled inches from the cup. "I was just trying to hit good shots," Castren said of their steady climb up the leaderboard, which featured birdies at five straight holes from the 10th through the

14th. "I saw that we were second so I told my caddie I didn't want to share the second spot and he said stick it close on 18. 'I happened to hit a great shot and it almost went in.'" —AFP

Sports

Spain beat Denmark to set up Euro 2022 quarter-final against England

Germany maintain their 100 percent record, thrash Finland 3-0

LONDON: Spain set up a quarter-final meeting with England at Euro 2022 after Marta Cardona's late goal secured a 1-0 win over Denmark on Saturday. A first defeat since 2019 to Germany in their second group game meant Jorge Vilda's side needed a point to avoid an early exit. La Roja were made to endure a nervous night at the Brentford Community Stadium until Cadona's 89th minute looping header made sure of their place in the last eight.

Spain's status as favorites was rocked by the loss of Ballon d'Or winner Alexia Putellas and all-time top goalscorer Jennifer Hermoso before the tournament began. And they will need to improve markedly if they are to upset an England side that scored 14 goals without reply in the group stages on Wednesday.

Denmark's 4-0 thrashing at the hands of Germany in their opening game meant the Euro 2017 finalists needed to win due to their inferior goal difference. Despite Spain's dominance of possession, the Danes had their chance to spring an upset nine minutes from time when substitute Nadia Nadim's fierce shot was turned over by Sandra Panos. Vilda was growing increasingly frus-

trated on the sidelines as nerves appeared to be getting to his side as the final whistle approached with uncharacteristic sloppy passes offering Denmark hope.

But Spain finally got the breathing space they desired when Olga Carmona's cross was met by her Real Madrid teammate Cardona. "That goal is for everyone," said Cardona, who dedicated her goal to Virginia Torrecilla, who is also absent from the tournament after recovering from a brain tumor. "It is for Virginia, for Jenni, for Alexia and those that weren't able to come. "The group stage is very difficult and now we can really go for it."

Germany were already guaranteed to win Group B, but kept their 100 percent record intact with a 3-0 win over Finland in Milton Keynes. Sophia Kleinherne broke the Finns' resistance five minutes before half-time when the Eintracht Frankfurt midfielder headed home Giulia Gwinn's cross. Alexandra Popp then grabbed her third goal in as many games after the break before Nicole Anyomi's precise finish rounded off the scoring. The eight-time winners will face Austria in the last eight in London on Thursday. —AFP



LONDON: Denmark's striker Pernille Harder (left) is challenged by Spain's defender Maria Leon during the UEFA Women's Euro 2022 Group B football match between Denmark and Spain at Brentford Community Stadium in west London on July 16, 2022. —AFP

Jesus strikes early as Arsenal pound Everton 2-0

WASHINGTON: Recent acquisition Gabriel Jesus wasted little time in making his presence felt in his first start for Arsenal, opening the scoring in a 2-0 friendly win over Everton in Baltimore, Maryland, on Saturday. Brazil forward Jesus, signed from Manchester City for a fee of around 45 million pounds (\$54 million) earlier this month, had already set a tone for his Arsenal

tenure with two goals as a substitute in a friendly against German outfit Nuremberg.

But the match between English Premier League rivals before 39,245 at M&T Bank Stadium, home of the NFL's Baltimore Ravens, was his first start since the move to Arsenal saw him reunited with manager Mikel Arteta, who was Pep Guardiola's assistant at City before he took charge at the Emirates Stadium. He opened the scoring in the 33rd minute when Martin Odegaard's corner sailed over a sea of bodies to find him.

After one controlling touch Jesus punched it into the roof of the net over a clutch of Everton players. Three minutes later, Bukayo Saka doubled the score, converting at the far post. Halftime saw wholesale

changes from both teams—including an entire new 11 for Frank Lampard's Everton. The changes failed to produce any spark however, and the Toffees rarely threatened Arsenal goalkeeper Matt Turner, a recent arrival from Major League Soccer's New England Revolution.

His best stop came on a long-distance attempt from Salomon Rondon, whose bid to catch Turner out of goal was thwarted as the American managed to scramble back and deflect the ball. Both team's early preparation for the August 5 start of the Premier League season continues Stateside, with Everton next facing MLS's Minnesota United in Minneapolis. Arsenal will take on MLS's Orlando City and Premiership rivals Chelsea in Florida. —AFP

Chile stun US 31-29 to qualify for 2023 Rugby World Cup

LOS ANGELES: Chile advanced to the Rugby World Cup for the first time on Saturday with a stunning 31-29 victory over the host United States to win a two-leg aggregate qualifier. Santiago Videla's penalty in the 75th minute put Los Condores ahead for the first time and produced the final margin at Glendale, Colorado. That was enough to give Chile a shocking 52-51 overall aggregate victory despite the Americans' 22-21 triumph last weekend in Santiago and send the South American squad into next year's global rugby showdown in France.

"It really means so much... the sacrifices that this team has done. There were times when it seemed like it was uphill," Chile captain Martin Sigren said. "I want to thank all the family who came here. They were the ones who kept us pushing." Chile secured a spot in Pool D at the 2023 World Cup alongside England, Argentina, Japan and Samoa. Despite the defeat, the Eagles can still make it to France in 2023 through a final qualification tournament in November against Portugal, Kenya and the Asia/Pacific playoff loser.

"It's heart-breaking," US captain AJ MacGinty said. "We worked hard for our scores, especially in first half. "But credit to Chile. We really had our foot on their throat in the first half. I saw them under their posts, and they had a lost look in their eyes, but they battled back and fair play to them." The United States, confirmed in May as the host nation for the 2031 Rugby World Cup, has missed the event only once, failing to qualify for the 1995 edition in South Africa. It was a shocking reversal of fortune for a Chilean side humbled for years by the Eagles in the Tournament of the Americas.

The United States had beaten Chile in that round-robin event by scores of 71-8 in 2019, 45-13 in 2018, 57-9 in 2017 and 64-0 in 2016. The Eagles had seized a 20-point aggregate edge before Chile rallied. The US men took a 7-0 lead in the 11th minute when Martin Iosefo chipped the ball forward and Ruben de Haas tapped it back to Iosefo for the try with MacGinty converting. Iosefo dove into the corner over the try line in the 24th minute with MacGinty making it 14-0 and MacGinty added another try in the 31st minute making it 19-0.

Condors soar to win

But Eagles lock Nick Civetta was sent to the sin bin in the 32nd minute and Chile capitalized on tries by Marcelo Torrealba in the 35th minute and Matias Garafalic in the 39th with conversions by Videla to pull within 19-14 at half-time. Joe Taufete'e peeled off a maul to score a try in the 48th minute and MacGinty added a conversion to lift the Eagles ahead 26-14. Los Condores answered in the 51st minute on Videla's try and conversion, climbing within 26-21. MacGinty added a penalty in the 58th but Chile answered with a try from replacement prop Matias Dittus in the 65th minute and Videla's conversion lifted the visitors within 29-28. When Videla kicked a penalty in the 75th minute, it was enough to send Los Condores flying to France and the Eagles plunging to the ground. —AFP

Kane on target as Tottenham draw 1-1 with Sevilla

SUWON: Harry Kane scored from Son Heung-min's pass as Tottenham Hotspur drew 1-1 against Sevilla on Saturday, to the delight of 43,000-plus fans at the Suwon World Cup Stadium. Spurs faced a much tougher test against the Spanish side in the final game of their pre-season trip to South Korea than on Wednesday, when Son and Kane both scored twice in front of 64,000 adoring fans in a 6-3 win over a K-League "all star" team.

Son and Kane, whose every move has been followed avidly since English Premier League side Tottenham's arrival in Korea last Sunday, both started against the La Liga side. They only played the second half on Wednesday, but they played for 70 minutes at Suwon World Cup Stadium, near Seoul, before departing to an ovation. Despite this being a friendly, there was little love between the teams, even with Sevilla fielding Spurs old boy Erik Lamela, as some fierce challenges flew in during a bad-tempered first half.

Richardson played his second game since joining Spurs in a £60 million move from Everton and was on the receiving end of several reckless tackles. Just before half-time Son's elbow struck Gonzalo Montiel, leaving the Argentine bloodied and the pair exchanged heated words before other players intervened. "While it is a pre-season match, no footballer would want to lose it," said Son, explaining why tempers appeared to run high.

"There was some aggressive play on the pitch but it was something that inevitably plays out in football." Spurs opened the scoring five minutes into the second half when Son turned and found Kane, despite tumbling over, with



SUWON: Tottenham Hotspur's Troy Parrott (right) fights for the ball with Sevilla's Munir (left) during the exhibition football match between Tottenham Hotspur FC and Sevilla FC at Suwon World Cup Stadium in Suwon on July 16, 2022. —AFP

the England captain making no mistake. "I was lucky I still had command of the ball while falling down," said Son Ivan Rakitic leveled for the Spanish club in the 64th minute with a superb, rasping right-foot shot from outside the box.

South Korea's fanatical football fans have closely followed Tottenham's tour, with thousands greeting them at the airport and thousands more attending open training sessions despite hot and humid summer weather. "Just

from Leeds' young French keeper Iilan Meslier.

There was plenty of niggles and tough tackling during the pre-season tour match in front of nearly 41,000 fans at Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium, which boiled over when Scottish midfielder John McGinn flattened Gray. The nephew of Leeds legend Eddie Gray and son of former Elland Road striker Andy Gray had only been on a few minutes when he went down clutching his ankle, with a leg brace fitted before he was carried away on a stretcher.

"Really good workout, a win and a clean sheet and a lot of positivity to take away," said former Liverpool and England midfielder Gerrard. "I was really happy with large parts of the first half, parts of the second half were a bit scrappy. "There was

saying 'thank you' isn't enough to express how grateful I am," Premier League Golden Boot winner Son said of the welcome given by his home country for his teammates. Tottenham will fly home Sunday with their next pre-season match against Rangers at Glasgow's Ibrox stadium a week later. The English Premier League season starts on August 5, with Tottenham's first game against Southampton a day later. —AFP

a few spicy challenges, it's a contact game," he added when asked about Gray. "Hopefully the damage isn't too bad and he's back." Villa finished 14th in the Premier League last season, only 10 points clear of the drop zone, and Gerrard has made it clear he believes they belong in the top 10.

"Spirited and physical"

The former Rangers boss has made some marquee signings, making Coutinho's loan deal from Barcelona permanent and bringing in Boubacar Kamara from Marseille and Diego Carlos from Sevilla. Both Kamara and Carlos made their debuts Sunday in the second successive win for Villa, after they beat Walsall 4-0 to start their pre-season program last weekend. —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
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EUGENE: Pawel Fajdek of Team Poland competes in the Men's Hammer Throw Final on day two of the World Athletics Championships Oregon22 at Hayward Field in Eugene, Oregon. —AFP

Gidey wins women's 10,000m title

Ethiopia's Gidey trumps Hassan; Fajdek claims fifth hammer title

EUGENE: Ethiopia's Letesenbet Gidey upstaged Dutch star Sifan Hassan to win the women's 10,000m at the World Championships in Oregon on Saturday while Poland's Pawel Fajdek claimed his fifth world title in the men's hammer throw. All eyes in the 10,000m were on Hassan, who produced a stunning 1500m-10,000m double at the 2019 world championships in Doha before winning 5000m and 10,000m gold and 1500m bronze at last year's Olympics in Tokyo.

But the Ethiopian-born Dutch runner left herself with too much to do with 200 metres to go and world record holder Gidey held her nerve for an impressive win. Kenya's Hellen Obiri and teammate Margaret Chelimo Kipkemboi claimed silver and bronze, Hassan finishing just off the pace in fourth. The victory left Gidey dreaming of more success at Eugene's Hayward Field. "I have the next dream now - to win the gold at 5000m... I am very confident now," she said.

Hassan insisted she was happy with the result, saying she had taken an eight-month lay-off from running in the wake of three years of non-stop training around Doha and Tokyo. "I couldn't get a medal, but still I'm really happy with the result," she said. In the field, it was business as usual as Fajdek claimed his fifth world title, stretching his remarkable record with a winning throw of 81.98 metres on this third effort.

That was 95cm ahead of compatriot and great rival Wojciech Nowicki, the reigning Olympic champion, while Norway's Eivind Henriksen took bronze. "This was the competition which matters the most this year so I am glad that the major gold is in my hand for the fifth time," said Fajdek. "Now, we have to get

back to do the next hard job towards the next championships" in Budapest next year.

Warholm advances

In a packed morning of qualifiers featuring a bevy of stars, most negotiated their way through to further rounds. Most eyes were on Norway's Karsten Warholm, who produced one of the greatest Olympic track performances of all time last year when he smashed the 29-year-old world record to win the 400m hurdles at the Tokyo Games in a time of 45.94sec. But the 26-year-old pulled up injured at the Diamond League meet in Rabat in early June with a "muscle fibre tear" in a hamstring, something he dubbed a "personal disaster".

Doubts had been raised over his true fitness level, but the Norwegian vowed this week he was at 100% and looked comfortable as he coasted through his heat in his bid to bag a third consecutive world title. "I felt things were under control, had a steady race. No pain so that's a good sign. I feel I did everything I wanted," said Warholm. Joining him in Sunday's semi-finals will be American Rai Benjamin and Brazil's Alison Dos Santos, the silver and bronze medalists in Tokyo.

Venezuelan Yulimar Rojas, the Olympic champion seeking a third consecutive world title, made short work of triple jump qualification, soaring to 14.72m on her first attempt to guarantee herself an automatic place in Monday's final. Americans Grant Holloway, the reigning world champion, and Devon Allen, who will join up with the Philadelphia Eagles as a wide receiver after the worlds, qualified for Sunday's 100m hurdles semi-finals with ease.

US champion Daniel Roberts, however,



EUGENE: Gold medalist Ethiopia's Letesenbet Gidey poses on the podium during the medal ceremony for the women's 10,000m during the World Athletics Championships at Hayward Field in Eugene. —AFP

Japan world athletics team rocked by COVID outbreak

EUGENE: Seven members of Japan's team at the World Athletics Championships, including two marathon runners, have tested positive for COVID-19, organizers said Saturday. A joint statement from World Athletics, the Japan Association of Athletics Federations and local organizers said the outbreak had hit endurance athletes and staff at the championships in Oregon. Two marathon runners, four support staff and the head coach of the team had returned positive tests.

The identities of the individuals involved were not disclosed. The statement said the seven individuals had already been isolated and will remain in isolation for five days. "Steps are being taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 both within the Japanese delegation as well as amongst all the teams present for the Championships," the statement said. "All athletes have been fully vaccinated as a requirement for participation in these Championships."

As a precaution, all remaining members of the Japanese delegation would be required not to share common spaces with other delegations. It said Japanese team members would "as much as possible, be housed independently to prevent the spread of contamination within the Japanese delegation." The outbreak comes amid a surge of infections across the United States as new variants of COVID-19 take hold. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said this week that 21 of Oregon's 36 counties were now deemed to be at "high" risk of the virus. Earlier Saturday, British athlete Morgan Lake announced she had been forced to withdraw from the World Championships after testing positive for COVID-19. Lake said she had spent five days in isolation without showing any symptoms but was still testing positive for the virus. —AFP

crashed out. Also sailing through qualifying was outspoken Ukrainian high jumper Yaroslava Mahuchikh, who justified the absence of three-time defending champion Mariya Lasitskne by claiming athletics had no place for "Russian killers" in light of Moscow's invasion of her homeland. Saturday's evening session at Hayward Field see the semi-finals and final (0250 GMT) of the men's 100m, as well as finals in the men's long jump and women's shot put. —AFP

Kerley wins world 100m gold in US cleansweep

EUGENE: American Fred Kerley led a US cleansweep as he stormed to victory in the men's 100m at the World Championships in Oregon on Saturday. Kerley, in lane four, trailed Marvin Bracy for 95 metres of the tight race, but managed to outdip his teammate for victory in 9.86 seconds at Eugene's Hayward Field. Bracy took silver in 9.88sec, Trayvon Bromell claiming bronze in the same time for a third-ever 100m world championship cleansweep for the United States after 1983 and 1991.

The fourth of the strong US quartet, Christian Coleman, the reigning world champion from Doha in 2019 who was banned from the Tokyo Olympics for missing three doping tests, finished sixth (10.01) despite an electric start. "We said we were going to do it and we did! USA, baby!" Olympic silver medalist Kerley said to roars of approval and applause from a partisan home crowd. "I didn't know until I looked up and saw the clock with my name 'Fred Kerley' on it," added Kerley, whose path to gold was made easier by the withdrawal of Italy's Olympic champion Marcell Jacobs earlier Saturday.

"It means a lot and I've done something not many 400m runners have done," Kerley said, adding: "I know today opened up many doors for me. The future is bright for me." The last US cleansweep featured Carl Lewis, Leroy Burrell and Dennis Mitchell, something not lost on the modest Kerley or silver medalist Bracy. "It's amazing to be among the great, they did it

in 1991, we did in 2022," Bracy said. "This is history, to be part of something that has only happened three times ever just means the world to me."

Bracy meanwhile paid tribute to Kerley's remarkable versatility. The 27-year-old started his career as a 400m specialist before switching down to the shorter 100m. "The guy's special, he's a rare talent to be able to do all three events, his range is limitless. He might do 800m next year, we don't know! "He's a special cat, amongst an elite group of people like the (Usain) Bolts the Wayde van Niekerks." Kerley has now set his sights on the 200m starting Monday, and is also not ruling out runs in the 4x100m and 4x400m relays. "If the coach allows me!" Kerley told reporters.

Late-charging Kerley

It was far from plain sailing for the in-form Kerley, who set out his stall with a heat-winning 9.79sec on Friday, as all the sprinters got off to a good start. Bracy and Coleman looked like they might deprive Kerley of a gold many had predicted he would win. But they hadn't counted on his savage finishing skills, the former 400m runner showing all his strength at the line. Bromell also left it late to sneak onto the podium from lane eight.

As the crowd realized it was a US cleansweep, chants of "U-S-A" rang out and flags brandished. Jamaica's Oblique Seville finished fourth in 9.97sec, just ahead of South African Akani Simbine, who was clocked at 10.01



EUGENE: Akani Simbine of Team South Africa, Fred Kerley of Team United States, and Marvin Bracy of Team United States compete in the Men's 100 Meter Final on day two of the World Athletics Championships Oregon22 at Hayward Field. —AFP

like Coleman in sixth. Japan's Abdul Hakim Sani Brown and Canada's Aaron Brown were seventh and eighth, in 10.06 and 10.07sec respectively.

Failing to advance from the semi-finals to the final were Canada's Olympic 200m champion Andre de Grasse, also a two-time 100m bronze medalist, and 2011 world champion Yohan Blake of Jamaica. The build-up to the final was rocked by the decision of Olympic champion Jacobs to withdraw just hours before the semi-finals with tightness in his right thigh.

Italian team doctor Andrea Billi said that evaluation of the contraction had found a "clinical picture that can put muscle integrity at risk and lead to injury". Jacobs, who pulled off one of the shocks of the Tokyo Olympics last year when he stormed to victory in the 100m in 9.80sec, was crowned world indoor 60m champion in Belgrade in March but has struggled with injury since. "I am a fighter and this is why I decided to be in Eugene," he tweeted, saying it had been a "painful choice, I am forced to stop". —AFP