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Jleeb residents relocate amid security raids, investment plans

Publishing of suspects photos 'a violation of local, international laws'

KUWAIT: Official numbers showed a drop in the number of people living in Jleeb area due to closures during the coronavirus pandemic and the security raids that are taking place at the present time. The drop by the end of 2021 reached 271,000. In 2019, there were around 328,000 people living in that area. 56,779 people have relocated to different areas.

Official sources said the numbers will drop further, as more security raids will be carried out in

search of Iqama violators and wanted individuals. The area is also waiting for government discussions that may end in re-claiming it totally and transforming it into an investment area with hotels and malls.

Jleeb is considered the second most crowded area in Kuwait following Salmiya where around 282,541 (mostly expatriates) live. Salmiya residents are mostly qualified professionals with few residency violators - compared to other areas such as Jleeb, Mahboula and Bneid Al-Qar. Sources said the

government is planning to reduce the number of residency violators by 50 percent this year.

In another development, Social Work Society has issued a statement about the publishing of pictures of suspects in various media when they are arrested stating that it is a flagrant violation of local and international laws as well as Kuwait constitution. Such publications would create a negative impression about Kuwait's international status and its human rights and humanitarian history with regards

to the rights of residents. This could also create a bad image of the country at the international level, the statement added.

The society said Kuwait guaranteed the dignity of any resident living in the country irrespective of their nationality and it will not keep silent towards any violation. The statement also urged security operatives to stop all these wrong practices. In addition, it said, those who violate the rule will be held responsible.

Indian rupee hits new record low

MUMBAI: The Indian rupee fell to more than 80 per US dollar for the first time on record Tuesday, as the greenback extended its rally and foreign capital outflows intensified. The rupee hit 80.0600 against the US dollar in early trade, Bloomberg data showed, before paring losses on suspected central bank intervention to close at 79.9487.

High inflation and rising interest rates in the United States coupled with fears of an impending recession in the world's biggest economy have fuelled a broad dollar rally in recent weeks as investors become increasingly risk-averse. Tighter US monetary policy has exacerbated outflows from emerging markets such as India, where foreign investors have withdrawn a net \$31 billion in debt and equity this year.

Data released last week showed that US consumer price inflation hit a fresh four-decade high in June, exceeding market forecasts and stoking expectations of another large Federal Reserve rate hike next week. In a written statement to the Indian parliament on Monday, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman attributed the rupee's sharp fall to external reasons.



MUMBAI: A fruit vendor counts a wad of Indian Rupee currency notes for payment at his roadside stall in Mumbai on July 19, 2022. — AFP

"Global factors such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, soaring crude oil prices and tightening of global financial conditions are the major reasons for the weakening of the Indian Rupee against the US dollar," she said. At the same time, the Indian currency has strengthened against the British pound, the Japanese yen and the euro in 2022 so far, Sitharaman added. But higher crude prices have resulted in a deteriorating trade balance in a country that imports 80 percent of its oil.

India's merchandise trade deficit widened to a record \$26.18 billion in June, official data showed last week, largely because of higher crude and coal import prices. In its monthly economic review, the finance ministry said costlier imports could widen the current account deficit and cause the rupee to depreciate further. Consumer price inflation in India, the world's sixth-largest economy, cooled slightly to 7.01 percent in June after hitting an eight-year high of 7.79 percent in April. But price rises have persisted well above the central bank's two-to-six percent target range despite consecutive interest rate hikes in May and June. The central bank has also sold more than \$34 billion of its foreign currency reserves in an effort to stabilize the rupee.—AFP

UAE pushes for a 'just' clean energy transition

PARIS: The world's transition to clean energy sources must be "just" and financed by the hydrocarbon trade, the climate change minister of oil-rich United Arab Emirates told AFP. Mariam Almheiri was interviewed in France where a fierce heatwave set record temperatures as western Europe wilted under a scorching sun and wildfires that devoured forests.

Experts are blaming climate change and predict more frequent extreme weather to come. "It's not a switch. We're not ready yet. And oil and gas will still be part of the energy mix for some time", she said in an interview Monday as UAE President Sheikh

Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan visited Paris for energy talks.

"We need... a just transition because every country is not at the same level," the minister of climate change and the environment added, stressing the UAE was using its oil and gas wealth to ramp up renewable sources. "You need to build your equipment from what energy you got to do that," she said. "Clean and renewable energy costs money."

The international community largely agrees that climate change poses an existential threat to the planet and future of mankind. But action to cut

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First 'dormant' stellar black hole spotted

PARIS: A team of astrophysicists known for debunking previous supposed black holes announced a discovery of their own on Monday: the first "dormant" stellar-mass black hole spotted orbiting a star in a nearby galaxy. While these black holes are thought to be common throughout the universe, they have proved difficult to find, and they have themselves rejected several possible candidates in recent years.

Now the international team has found a "needle in a haystack," said Tomer Shenar, an astrophysicist at the University of Amsterdam and lead author of a new study in the Nature Astronomy journal. The team was searching the skies for something that could eventually become a binary black hole, in which two black holes orbit each other after swallowing their stars in a supernovae explosion. "We found a quite massive star, that weighs 25 times the mass of our Sun, that is orbiting around something that we do not see," Shenar told AFP.

They believe the blue star, which is in the Large

Magellanic Cloud galaxy that neighbors our Milky Way, is locked in a death dance with a black hole that has nine times the mass of our Sun. These kinds of black holes are normally detected by the X-ray radiation they emit as they collect material from their companion star. But this binary system, known as VFTS 243, is called dormant because it does not emit X-rays - it is not close enough to suck matter from its star.

'Black hole destroyer'

Hugues Sana, astrophysicist at the KU Leuven University in Belgium, said the Milky Way alone is thought to have around 100 million stellar-mass black holes, which are far smaller than their supermassive big brothers. However only 10 have been found, said Sana, a co-author of the study. This could be because many are laying dormant, biding their time to eventually swallow their companion star. Sana said observing them was like watching two people dance in a dark room, one dressed in white and the other in black. You might only see one dancer, but you know the other one is there. "We've never really detected such systems before," Shenar told AFP. "There have been a few claims in the last years, but they have all more or less been refuted," Shenar told AFP.

Indeed, members of his team were among those rejecting previous discoveries, by laying out alternatives for what the data could indicate. Because of this, Shenar said they expected extra scrutiny. So they

went about meticulously eliminating all the other possibilities, Shenar said, until they were satisfied that "it's either a fat, invisible alien - or a black hole". Then they called the most famous black hole debunker they knew.



IN SPACE: This handout artist's impression shows the binary system VFTS 243 composed of a blue star with 25 times the Sun's mass and a black hole. — AFP

Kareem El-Badry of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics has been "debunking black holes one after another" over the last couple of years, Tomer said, dubbing him the "black hole destroyer". "I sent him the data and I told him, listen, we found this object - prove me wrong," Tomer said.—AFP

UK breaks all-time record; heatwave batters Europe

LONDON: A fierce heatwave left much of western Europe sweltering on Tuesday, fuelling ferocious wildfires and stretching emergency services, as it pushed north and took temperatures to record levels. After Britain's warmest night on record, the country's Met Office said 39.1 Celsius (102.4 Fahrenheit) was provisionally recorded in Charlwood, near Gatwick Airport, south of London.

"If confirmed, this will be the highest temperature ever recorded in the UK," the Met Office meteorological agency said. "Temperatures are likely to rise further through today," it added, with pre-

dictions that Britain would breach the 40C mark for the first time. Experts blame climate change for the latest heatwave and note the more frequent extreme weather will only worsen in years to come.

The high temperatures have triggered an unprecedented red alert for extreme heat in much of England and Wales, where some rail lines were closed as a precaution and schools shuttered in some areas. "A lot of our infrastructure is just not built for this temperature," Transport Secretary Grant Shapps told Sky News. In France,

Continued on Page 7



GIRONDE: A tactical firefighter set fires to burn a plot of land as firefighters attempt to prevent the wild fire from spreading due to wind change, as they fight a forest fire near Louchats in Gironde, southwestern France.— AFP

Local

Kuwait's Amir offers condolences over Egypt bus crash victims

Kuwait's Foreign Ministry expresses sorrow over tragic incident

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah extended his deepest condolences on Tuesday over the victims of a bus crash near the Egyptian city of Minya, which left scores of people either dead or injured. His Highness the Amir expressed his commiserations in a cable he sent to Egyptian President Abdelattah Al-Sisi, in which he wished a swift recovery for those wounded in the tragic incident. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-



MINYA: A picture shows the remains of a bus after it crashed into a truck on a road in Al-Minya Governorate south of the Egyptian capital Cairo on July 19, 2022. —AFP

Crown Prince receives Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad

Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the Egyptian president.

The State of Kuwait expressed sorrow over the bus accident, which resulted in the death of several people in Minya Province in southern Egypt, said the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry in a statement Tuesday. In the statement, the ministry expressed deepest condolences to the Egyptian leadership, government, people and to the victims' families, wishing speedy recovery to the injured.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh

Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to Bahrain King Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa and Sheikh Ali bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa. His Highness the Amir expressed deep condolences over the passing of Sheikh Mithayil bint Ali bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa. His Highness the

Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables. In other news, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Tuesday at Bayan Palace His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. —KUNA

Kuwait Army Chief of Staff meets US Central Command

KUWAIT: Kuwait Armed Forces Chief of the General Staff Lieutenant General Sheikh Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah met on Tuesday the Commander of United States Central Command Michael Kurilla, and his accompanying delegation at the Kuwaiti Army General Staff headquarters. They discussed joint military cooperation and other matters of mutual interest, the Army General Staff said in a press statement. Several senior army officers attended the meeting. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Armed Forces Chief of the General Staff Lieutenant General Sheikh Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah meets the Commander of United States Central Command Michael Kurilla. —Defense Ministry photos



Kuwaiti and US army officials hold discussions on joint military cooperation.

Algeria, Kuwait eye greater judicial, legal cooperation

ALGIERS: The justice ministers of Algeria and Kuwait approved on Tuesday a joint implementation program aiming to propel judicial and legal ties to greater levels, agreeing during talks on the need to bolster bilateral cooperation. "The rapid changes and existential circumstances in today's world behoove us to further cooperate," Kuwait's Justice Minister Jamal Al-Jalawi said amid a signing ceremony with his Algerian counterpart Abdulrashid Tabbi, citing the spread of organized crime and corruption as the biggest challenges to the justice system. The Kuwaiti minister, who started a five-day official visit to the North African nation on Sunday, underlined the mutual desire between the two countries' political leaders for an improvement in bilateral relations, saying the talks yielded a trio of deals, including an extradition accord.

On the implementation program, the Algerian justice minister described the initiative as an effort to



ALGIERS: Kuwait's Justice Minister Jamal Al-Jalawi and his Algerian counterpart Abdulrashid Tabbi are seen during the signing ceremony.

cope with the meteoric advancements in technology, as evident by the COVID-19 pandemic, which served as a catalyst for a digital revolution. The program will

also facilitate the greater "exchange of knowhow" and boost interactions between the two countries' respective justice systems, added the minister. — KUNA

Kuwait Fire Force controls blaze at Rai tent market

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) said on Tuesday that it controlled a blaze erupted in the tent market located in Al-Rai area. In a statement, the Department of Public Relations and Media at KFF revealed that the force notified fire stations in Industrial Shuwaikh, Al-Ardiya, Al-Shuhada and Salmiya of the fire with units rushing to the scene to contain the blaze. The area of the blaze was at approximately 3,000 square meters with damage mostly affecting tents' materials. —KUNA



Common commitment to combating corruption

By Yasmeen Abalqoloub

In June 2021, the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-second special session adopted a political declaration entitled: "Our common commitment to effectively addressing challenges and implementing measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation."

This political declaration represents an important momentum for the fight against corruption. It further supports the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), which is the only anti-corruption universal legally binding instrument. In fact, the political declaration mirrors the UNCAC, and they share similar focus areas such as: preventative measures, criminalization and law enforcement, asset recovery, technical assistance and information exchange.

As for preventative measures, UN Member States demonstrate in the political declaration their commitment to adopt preventive measures and anticorruption policies in line with Chapter II of the UNCAC. This entails intensifying efforts to raise awareness of the dangers of corruption and to educate society about the importance of preventing and combating corruption.

Another area is criminalization and law enforcement which reflects Chapter III of the UNCAC. Member States are committed as per the declaration to criminalize corruption, investigate its crimes, and prosecute its perpetrators in both the public and private sectors. They are also committed to building capacity of law enforcement and judicial authorities, imposing deterrent penalties against natural and legal persons, and enacting anticorruption legislations.

With regards to international cooperation, UN Member States stressed on the importance of cooperating with each other to combat corruption through several mechanisms such as technical assistance, mutual legal assistance, and exchange of information. These commitments compliment Chapter IV of the UNCAC.

The declaration also mentions asset recovery, in line with Chapter V of the UNCAC. Member States declared that they seek to strengthen the capabilities of the competent authorities to trace, freeze, seize and confiscate the proceeds of crime, showing their commitment to recover the proceeds of corruption crimes.

A further focus area is technical assistance and the exchange of information (Chapter VI of the UNCAC). In the declaration, Member States reaffirm their commitment to provide full support to other countries, particularly developing countries, and benefit from the assistance by the United Nations bodies, specifically the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in capacity building and training.

Furthermore, Member States realize that corruption is an obstacle to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN Agenda 2030. For this reason, a specific section of the political declaration was entitled "Anti-corruption as an enabler for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." It was emphasized in that section that anticorruption and transparency are pillars for implementing the SDGs, specifically SDG 16: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

Finally, the political declaration concludes with the commitment to advancing a forward-looking anti-corruption agenda and framework. Member States reiterate in this conclusion the importance of the UNCAC and its role in building the capacity of countries in combating corruption.

—Yasmeen Abalqoloub is an officer at International Cooperation Department, Kuwait Anticorruption Authority (Nazaha)

Local

Kuwaiti writer highlights children's rights in new book

'A child is not owned': Khateeb stresses children deserve basic human rights

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Children's rights cover their developmental and age-appropriate needs that change over time as a child grows up. According to Abdul Aziz Taher Al-Khateeb, one of the Kuwaiti lawyer forerunners, Children's rights are human rights they have to be treated with equality, respect, and dignity. Kuwait Times spoke with Al-Khateeb to learn more about his book that discussed children's rights in Kuwait.

"Children must enjoy the same human rights like everybody else - from the right to freedom of expression to the right to privacy. They are the foundation and future of the nation, so they must be at the center of developmental programs," Khateeb said. "The Kuwait society distinguishes the interest of children at the beginning of the legislative renaissance in the late 1950s. Lawmakers have been legislating on issues pertaining kids since the issuance of the constitution in 1963. In the beginning, there were some legal texts, but in 2015, Kuwait issued the Kuwaiti Child Law to confirm their rights in health, education, family life, play and recreation, ade-

quate standard of living and to be protected from abuse and harm," he added.

Khateeb said that his book discusses the most prominent laws and rights of a child - noting that the culture of the child must be built on freedom of speech as a human. "The child is not owned; he/she is a future entity and deserves full legal protection. Kuwait should seek help from foreign experts on better ways of protecting children," he added.

'Women must be judges in Juvenile courts'



"Kuwaiti law is good, but it lacks proper application. Procedures are still bounded by the old classic thought that the child is safer in a family environment, despite the abuse he/she goes through. It is unfortunate that even in case of domestic violence, if a child tries to complain to the police station, they will bring him home and tell him that 'the beatings are for his or her own sake.' Domestic violence poses long-term risks to the education and the psyche of the child," Al-Khateeb said.

Two types

He explained that children's cases fall into two types: (1) Civil cases, which includes personal status such as

child support. (2) Juvenile cases, which are concerned with crimes committed by children. In the Juvenile Court, the child will not be punished, but reformed.

Khateeb suggests that women must be the judges in Juvenile courts, because they understand children and their psychological dimensions better than men. "It is difficult for a man to appreciate these matters. I suggest that Juvenile courts should have women judges. Unfortunately, our society still suffers from the remnants of slavery. Kuwait has passed the initial stages, but there is a long way to go in terms of good laws and basic human rights."

He indicated that Islamic sharia has presented many texts that preserve children's rights. Other countries have applied it, but not the Arabs - pointing out that these rights must be researched, applied, and integrated with the current modern situation. In Khateeb's book, he raised the issue of children's rights in Islam from the point of view of the Holy Quran, Sunnah, and Islamic jurisprudence. He also discussed Kuwait's role in promoting children's rights and the concerns of the Kuwaiti legislators in this regard.



Lawyer Abdul Aziz Taher Al-Khateeb



CAIT, Dell Technologies launch program to develop girls' talents in AI programming

KUWAIT: The Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) announced the launch of the training program to develop the talents of girls in the field of programming artificial intelligence applications, as part of a special initiative launched by the authority in cooperation with Dell Technologies to empower girls digitally through a month-long training program.



Haya Al-Wadani

Director General of the Central Agency for Information Technology Haya Al-Wadani stressed that early investment in girls in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics is the cornerstone of their digital empowerment and support to be an influential element in the digital economy system that encourages remote work where gender is not an obstacle to the same extent that it is to the physical economy.

Wadani stressed the importance of training and qualifying girls to make the most of the new tech-

nology environment, noting that by 2025 the digital economy is expected to reshape the job landscape for the division of labor in the world, and create new business models in which women can work, including electronic commerce and the economy.

In a statement on the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony of the training program to develop the skills of girls in the field of programming artificial intelligence applications, Wadani indicated that the political leadership in Kuwait has realized the importance of the role of women as a major driver in the process of digital transformation and upgrading the business system in all sectors in the country as the difficult and influential figure in the achievement equation to achieve the vision New Kuwait 2035, explaining the convergence of the directions of the Central Agency for Information Technology, international organizations and the regional and global civil society to work to bridge the gender gap in the digital economy to achieve the goal of sustainable development.

Wadani pointed out that the training program for CAIT and Dell Technologies contributes to achieving gender parity in the field of information and communication technology and the digitization of business, which enhances the opening of new

horizons for developing economies, entrepreneurship and self-employment, which positively reflects on improving social and economic conditions, stressing that women are an essential part of this strategy.

Meanwhile, Haver Haddad, General Manager of Dell Technologies in the Gulf region, said: "There is no doubt that our future will be driven by technology," predicting that 85 percent of the jobs that will be created in 2030 have not yet been discovered. He explained that the rapid pace of development of all technological and digital fields on the global level will contribute to activating the mechanisms of deep understanding of artificial intelligence and human and robotic systems and will promote the discovery of new capabilities and skills. Haddad added, "I am pleased to cooperate with the Central Agency for Information Technology in the initiative to develop girls' skills with artificial intelligence applications, which will develop the participants' capabilities and enable them to contribute to Kuwait's digital economy." He concluded by revealing the organization of a subsequent competition for the training program in which the trainees will participate according to the rules and conditions and qualify for the valuable prizes.

Indian embassy launches familiarization visit program for students

KUWAIT: The Embassy of India, Kuwait launched the 'Embassy Familiarization Visit Program' for Indian students in Kuwait on July 19, 2022, as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav - Celebrating 75 Years of India's Independence with a focus on imbuing the Spirit of India's Civilizational Ethos among the Indian students in Kuwait.



Sibi George

Ambassador of India to Kuwait Sibi George in his remarks spoke about the importance of the 75th anniversary of India's independence and connecting the Indian youth in Kuwait with their mother land's glorious history, freedom struggle and achievements. Ambassador highlighted that Embassy of India is a Home Away from Home for all Indians in Kuwait especially the Indian students who are forebearers of India's interests in Kuwait and are the connecting bridge between India and Kuwait.

During the event, a specially prepared video documentary was shown focusing on the working of the Embassy of India including functions of various wings - political, commercial, labor and consular wings and others, giving an overview of the services provided by Embassy in Kuwait. It also provided glimpses of the architectural beauty of the iconic sandstone building of Embassy of India, Kuwait. Indian Students got to know about the roles, responsibilities and duties of the Officers and Staff of the Embassy of India in Kuwait.

A presentation- 'Introduction to Indian Civil Services' was made by Young Indian Diplomats during the event, followed by an interactive Question/Answer session with students. Participants were shown around the Embassy including Ambassador's Office and the India House to bring to them the day to day working of the Embassy. Indian students along with their parents also visited Indian Naval Ship-INS TEG as part of the Embassy Familiarization Visit and interacted with the Officers of the Indian Navy. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of over 300 students (from different Indian Schools in Kuwait), parents and teachers. Embassy invites all the Indian students to be a part of this initiative. The date for the next visit to the Embassy will be announced shortly. Keep following Embassy's social media pages to know about the latest updates.



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah decorated 17 brigadier generals with their new ranks as major generals, during a ceremony held at the Interior Ministry's headquarters.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society launched a volunteer program for children aged 7-12 years. The 'Young Volunteer Club' program runs through August 15 featuring 85 children and includes training first aid and various volunteering activities. —KUNA photos

In my view

Re-engineering administrative operations (3)

By Yousuf Awadh Al-Azmi

local@kuwaittimes.com

"Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity" (George Patton). There are those who believe that the seat of the higher management must be isolated and be only to read press reports and correspondence - or followed up electronically. The truth is that the ideal situation is the opposite. In fact, the closer the manager or the president is to the workplaces, the better is the planning, decision-making, implementation and understanding.

The Institutional Rehabilitation Administrations get their adaptive capacity with the flow of the administrative depth that is required to be completed for quality dealings. There should be proper guidelines on what to do and implemented according to the agreed procedures. Focus must be on the accuracy of work and its implementation.

There are different administrative methods and nomenclatures. Some companies use various names like employees, partners and managers. It is better to have realistic nomenclatures that illustrate the meaning and importance of the job title. We should concentrate more on realism and implement our plans so as to achieve our success as we think wisely on how to improve grow positively.

Preparing internal policies must be according to the capacities or with the possibility of administrative and financial intervention and the details, but otherwise it will be like scratch and win offers in major retail stores. The combination of vision, realistic and sustainable plans, honesty is the inspiring roadmap to a better future.

Local

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News in brief

Minister approves promotions' list

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewed Energy Engineer Ali Al-Mousa signed the selective promotions lists for employees at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewed Energy for this year. The lists include the promotion of 894 employees of various titles and grades at all ministry departments.

Kuwait oil price up \$4.26 to \$108.79 pb

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by \$4.26 to \$108.79 per barrel as opposed to \$104.53 pb the day before, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Tuesday. Globally, the Brent crude went up by \$5.11 to \$106.27 pb, the same occurred with the West Texas Intermediate, which went up by \$5.01 to \$102.60 pb.

Markaz renews support for LOYAC's Al-Jawhar program

KUWAIT: Furthering its support to developing local youth's talent, Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" announced the renewal of its sponsorship as a strategic partner of Al Jawhar program's new season for 2022-2023, organized by LOYAC Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA). Markaz's support falls in line with 'human capacity building'; a key pillar in its CSR strategy.

Al-Jawhar program trains youth to help them acquire media interview management skills to enable them to conduct and manage fruitful dialogues, through a series of workshops conducted by prominent media figures from across the Arab world, and is concluded with a discussion panel with one of these figures. The workshops also offer training in relation to key skills necessary for any successful media representative, including body language, voice training and Arabic language skills. The program also seeks to recognize iconic media symbols of previous generations that contributed to the formation of the Arab culture and are considered a source of inspiration for the new generation, with the aim of building cultural bridges between Arab generations.

Bassam Al-Othman, Managing Director of MENA Real Estate attended the closing ceremony of the 2021/2022 season of the Al-Jawhar program held at the Four Point Hotel in June on behalf of Markaz, and was presented with an honorary plaque from Fareah Al-Saqqa, Chairperson of LOYAC and Managing Director of LOYAC Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA), in recognition of the company's continuous support to the Al-Jawhar program and LOYAC's initiatives.

While speaking at the closing ceremony, Othman commended the exemplary efforts and commitment of LOYAC toward promoting and facilitating the professional development and stated that Markaz is proud to partner with such a non-profit Kuwaiti organization that is keen on growing the skills of Kuwaiti youth across all cultural, professional, sports and scientific fields.

He said: "Markaz believes that human capabilities are key for sustainable communities. Therefore, we are always keen on collaborating with organizations on initiatives that reveal the youths' potentials and enable them to compete efficiently in the job market, which in turn enriches the private sector. We are proud of being part of this constructive program that has contributed to training more than 60 trainees on media dialogue skills and offered these young participants the opportunity to benefit from the rich experiences of prominent media figures from the Arab world, who shared their past experiences in Al-Jawhar program.

Saqqa said: "The Arab youth represent the driving force for the advancement of Arab societies, and the experiences of Arab pioneers represent the essence of Arab culture and the secret of its continuity. We are proud of the Al-Jawhar program that has achieved remarkable success amongst all participants, including trainers, beneficiaries and guests, which prompts us to seriously consider transforming the program into a media academy. We would like to thank Markaz for its continuous support for LOYAC's and LAPA's programs targeted at Arab youth, which reaffirms the importance of the private sector's role in societal and cultural development."

It is worth mentioning that LOYAC Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA) launched its activities in the arts and media field in 2003 and was officially established as an independent institution in 2010. Since then, it has been offering various programs and workshops in the fields of theatre, dance and music.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: Vehicles drive along the Arabian Gulf Road in this file photo. —Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Zain kicks-off H&S Store Summer Internship Program

Allows students to develop various business and technical skills



KUWAIT: Zain and H&S Store officials with the students.

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the launch of the third edition of the H&S Store Summer Internship Program. The initiative allows 35 students to develop various valuable business and technical skills for a month and a half during the summer season.

Zain extends its partnership with this unique program in line with its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility Strategy, which closely focuses on the development of the education and youth sectors. The program achieved great success in its past two editions, with many students signing up to develop their skills and add to their knowledge by experiencing a hands-on approach in a real workplace environment.

The H&S Store Summer Internship Program comes in partnership with Zain's Future University

Network (FUN) program and aims at developing students' skills within various administrative and technical areas, including product marketing, customer service, smartphone maintenance, and more. The program prepares students for the job market after completing their studies by working in a paid part-time job throughout a month and a half during their summer vacation.

FUN is a youth-tailored social program for students that bridges the gap between studying and a unique work experience at Zain by recruiting youth as the brand's main ambassadors. FUN is considered one of the largest sustainable projects that Zain has been developing over the years since its first edition in 2008. It offers university students a valuable opportunity to benefit from an actual work experience to develop many skills and gain

expertise for the job market on both professional and personal levels.

Zain is committed to exerting more efforts into offering similar programs that enrich human resources development in all areas. The company spares no efforts in making its capabilities and resources available as well as reinforce its collaboration with entities and organizations that provide such initiatives and actively develop Kuwaiti talents.

H&S Store was established in 2011 with the aim of offering its customers a wide range of high-quality tech products with a hassle-free shopping experience to ensure their satisfaction in Kuwait and throughout the GCC region, as well as providing specialized maintenance and repair workshops for smart devices.

Deliveroo surprises locals with free ice cream at Assima Mall

KUWAIT: As part of its commitment to delivering joyful moments to food lovers in Kuwait, and on the occasion of the international ice cream day, Deliveroo surprised mall-goers with free ice cream at the Assima Mall. On Friday July 15th, members of the Deliveroo team surprised around 250 mall-goers with a variety of treats from popular dessert partner Urban Creamery. Mall visitors enjoyed their favorite Urban Creamery ice cream flavors, including Cornflakes, Chocolate Cookie Dough, and Chai Haleeb. It is worth noting that Urban Creamery has been a partner with Deliveroo since its launch in Kuwait 3 years ago.

"We were delighted to partner with the Assima Mall and the Urban Creamery to surprise everyone with a cold treat on a hot summer day," said Seham Al-Husaini, General Manager of Deliveroo Kuwait. "We would like to thank the Assima Mall and our loyal partner, the Urban Creamery for helping us to deliver on even more exciting food moments in Kuwait, and we are looking forward to surprising our customers with even more of these initiatives in the future."

The Assima Mall is one of the country's premiere shopping destinations. Located within the heart of Kuwait City, the new mall sets the perfect backdrop for Deliveroo to surprise locals with their beloved ice

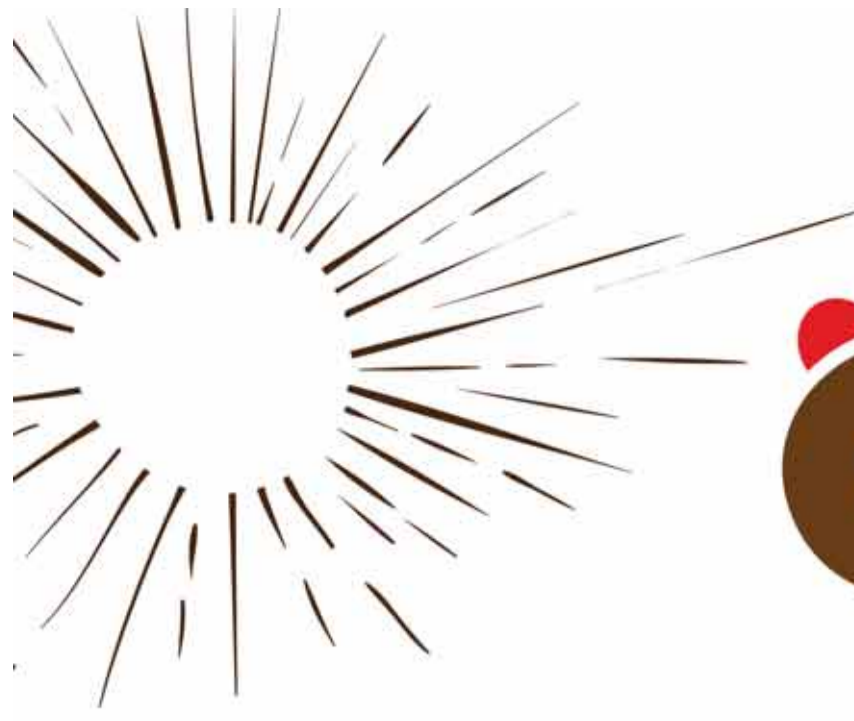


cream treats. Deliveroo is constantly working to create joyful moments centered around food for its customers in Kuwait. Earlier this month, Deliveroo surprised movie lovers with branded merchandise & free Deliveroo Plus memberships during a movie screening at Cinescape. It is also worth noting that earlier this year, 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).



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International

Iran warns Erdogan off Syria operation ahead of trilateral summit with Putin

‘We should fight against terrorist organisations in solidarity and alliance’

TEHRAN: Iran warned Turkey that any offensive in Syria would be “detrimental”, ahead of a trilateral summit on Tuesday with Russia that has been overshadowed by fallout from Russia’s war on Ukraine. The summit is the first hosted by Iran’s ultra-conservative President Ebrahim Raisi since he took office last year, and it will see his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin travel abroad for only the second time since he ordered the invasion of Ukraine.

It comes days after US President Joe Biden visited the Middle East for the first time since taking office, with stops in Iran’s regional foes Zionist entity and Saudi Arabia. But the trilateral summit is ostensibly centred on Syria, as part of the “Astana peace process” to end more than 11 years of conflict in the Arab country.

All three are involved in Syria, with Iran and Russia supporting President Bashar al-Assad and Turkey backing rebels. The gathering comes after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened to launch a new offensive in northern Syria against Kurdish militants.

Erdogan, who arrived in Tehran on Monday night, was received by Raisi on Tuesday at the Saadabad palace complex before holding talks with Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. In their meeting, Khamenei told Erdogan an offensive in Syria would be “detrimental” for the region and called for the issue to be resolved through dialogue between Ankara, Damascus, Moscow and Tehran.

Erdogan addressed the issue later at a joint news conference with his Iranian counterpart, saying Kurdish militias caused “great trouble” for both Iran and Turkey. “We should fight against

these terrorist organisations in solidarity and alliance,” he added. The presidents also oversaw the signing of a number of agreements in different fields, including in trade and economy.

Ukraine grain

Erdogan has for months been offering to meet Putin in a bid to help resolve heightened global tensions. “The timing of this summit is not a coincidence,” Russian analyst Vladimir Sotnikov said. “Turkey wants to conduct a ‘special operation’ in Syria just as Russia is implementing a ‘special operation’ in Ukraine.”

Turkey has launched waves of attacks on Syria since 2016, targeting Kurdish militias as well as Islamic State group jihadists and Assad loyalists. In their talks, Putin and Erdogan would discuss mechanisms to export grain from Ukraine, a Kremlin source said.

Russia’s war on Ukraine has massively hampered shipments from one of the world’s biggest exporters of wheat and other grain, sparking fears of global food shortages. Turkey — a NATO member on speaking terms with both Russia and Ukraine — has spearheaded efforts to resume the grain deliveries.

Ultimately, Erdogan is hoping to get “the green light” from Putin and Raisi for Turkey’s military operation in Syria, said Sinan Ulgen, a visiting scholar at Carnegie Europe. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned on Monday that Russia’s blockade of Ukrainian ports threatens supplies to countless thousands vulnerable to starvation. Borrell dubbed the issue “one of life and death for many human beings”.

Resume of grain deliveries



TEHRAN, Iran: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi (C-R) with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Tehran on July 19, 2022. —AFP

‘Iran-phobia’

On Sunday, a day after Biden ended his tour of the Middle East, Iran accused the United States of provoking crises in the region. Biden had vowed the US would not “tolerate efforts by any country to dominate another in the region through military buildups, incursions, and/or threats”, in reference to Iran.

In a speech at a Saudi summit of Gulf Arab states as well as Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, Biden assured those gathered that the US 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,” he said.

Following the meeting, a joint statement committed the leaders to “preserve regional security and stability”. It also underscored diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon, a goal the Islamic republic has always denied seeking.

On Sunday, Iran accused the US of having “once again resorted to the failed policy of Iran-phobia, trying to create tensions and crises in the region”. The US last week alleged Iran plans to deliver “hundreds of drones” to Russia to aid its war on Ukraine, an accusation the Islamic republic dismissed as “baseless”. —AFP

News in brief

Egypt bus crash

CAIRO: At least 25 people were killed and more than 35 injured in Egypt on Tuesday when the bus they were travelling in smashed into a parked truck, official media reported. The bus carrying around 45 passengers crashed into the stationary truck near the village of al-Barsha, some 300 kilometres (185 miles) south of the capital Dhaka in al-Minya governorate. “The truck was parked on the side of the road to change a tyre when it was hit from behind by the bus travelling from Sohag governorate to Cairo,” a statement from the governorate said. Egypt’s Ministry of Social Solidarity said it would offer “emergency benefits” of 10,000 Egyptian pounds (around \$530) to the families of those killed, state media said. Crashes are relatively common in Egypt, where many roads are in disrepair and traffic regulations frequently ignored.

Fake COVID test reports

DHAKA: A Bangladesh court on Tuesday jailed eight people for 11 years each for issuing thousands of false negative coronavirus test reports, a prosecutor said. Private medical firm JKG Healthcare collected samples and issued fake results to about 16,000 people, a court in the capital Dhaka said. The firm’s high-profile owners Ariful Haque Chowdhury and his wife Sabrina, along with six of their staff, were each jailed for 11 years for fraud and forgery, said public prosecutor Azad Rahman. “They have betrayed the nation,” he told reporters. “This is a well-deserved punishment for them.” Nearly two million people have tested positive for coronavirus in Bangladesh, where at least 29,241 have died since the virus was first detected in March 2020, according to government data. Health authorities contracted the firm to provide patients with free testing services, but allegations emerged that JKG was issuing false negative reports to patients in return for a fee.

13 inmates killed

QUITO: Thirteen inmates were killed and two others injured on Monday in yet another bloody fight in a notorious Ecuadorian prison, law enforcement officials said. “Unfortunately, central command reports 13 (inmates) dead and two injured,” the South American country’s prison authority SNAI said on Twitter. The incident took place at the same Bellavista prison in the town of Santo Domingo de los Colorados, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) from Quito, where 44 inmates were killed in a bloody brawl in May. Prison officials, aided by the military and the police, were able to regain control of the facility, SNAI said. Interior Minister Patricio Carrillo later told a press conference that current information indicated “most” of the victims were Venezuelan.

Myanmar rebels claim killings

YANGON: A Myanmar ethnic rebel group said Tuesday it had captured 14 junta troops and killed an unspecified number, in the latest blow to a fragile peace in the only region to have seen no post-coup crackdown. Days after its putsch last year, the junta reaffirmed a ceasefire with the Arakan Army (AA), which has for years fought a war for autonomy for Rakhine state’s ethnic Rakhine population. Thanks to the truce, the western state was a rare spot of respite, in a country that has seen the majority of its population push back against military rule as the junta cracks down violently against dissent. But the ceasefire has frayed, with small, sporadic clashes reported since last November and both sides accusing the other of infringing on territory and harassing supporters. Following two clashes in Maungdaw, near the Bangladesh border, on Monday “13 soldiers and an officer were captured” and a number of weapons seized, AA spokesman Khaing Thukha told. —From AFP

Ukrainian lawmakers vote to sack prosecutor general, security chief

KYIV: Ukrainian lawmakers on Tuesday endorsed the president’s decision to sack the country’s top prosecutor and security chief, rubber stamping Ukraine’s largest political shake-up since Russia invaded.

The overhaul was confirmed as Russian President Vladimir Putin was in Tehran with his Turkish counterpart to discuss a possible agreement to unblock Black Sea exports of Ukrainian grain. Several Ukrainian deputies writing on social media at the parliamentary session in Kyiv said lawmakers had overwhelmingly backed President Volodymyr Zelensky’s shock call to remove the officials.

“Parliament voted to dismiss Iryna Venediktova as prosecutor general,” said David Arakhamia, a lawmaker affiliated to Zelensky. Other deputies said the plea to remove security chief Ivan Bakanov secured the necessary 226 votes.

Zelensky asked parliament to approve the dismissals less than 48 hours after announcing late Sunday that he was suspending the senior law enforcement officials and that 650 cases of suspected treason were under investigation. He replaced Bakanov on Monday and described the shake up in the security services as an “audit” and

said that 28 security officials were facing dismissal.

“Different levels, different directions. But the grounds are similar-unsatisfactory job performance,” Zelensky said. Venediktova, who met regularly with counterparts from EU countries and the United States wrote on social media on Monday that she had “things to be proud of in her post and showed good results”.

Tehran summit

Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who arrived in Tehran on Monday, were due to meet in the Iranian capital on Tuesday to discuss mechanisms to export grain from Ukraine. On Wednesday, Russian and Ukrainian delegations are due to meet in Istanbul alongside Turkish and UN representatives, with hopes rising for an announced accord.

The EU’s foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned this week that the grain impasse was “an issue of life and death for many human beings.” NATO member Turkey has been using its good relations with both the Kremlin and Kyiv to try to broker an agreement on a safe way to deliver the grain.

Along the Black Sea coast, Kyiv said Tuesday that Russian forces had rocked the southern and coastal region of Odessa with a barrage of seven cruise missiles, wounding at least six people including a child. “One (missile) was shot down by air defences. Six hit a village. As a result, several residential buildings and other facilities were destroyed and caught fire,” the Ukraine presidency said. The



KYIV, Ukraine: Mayor of Mariupol Vadym Boichenko speaks during a press conference at the Ukrinform media centre in Kyiv, on July 19, 2022. —AFP

Russian defence ministry claimed that strikes on Odessa had destroyed a stockpile of Western-supplied weapons.

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu ordered Russian troops earlier this week to prioritise the destruction of long-range artillery supplied by the United States and Ukraine’s other Western allies. Observers credit the weapons with altering battlefield dynamics, giving Ukraine the capacity to hit Russian arms depots and command posts deep inside territory controlled by Moscow. —AFP

Tunisia opposition chief faces anti-terror probe ahead of vote

TUNIS: The leader of Tunisia’s Islamist-inspired opposition party Ennahdha arrived Tuesday for questioning by an investigating judge at an anti-terror centre, just days before a hotly contested constitutional referendum.

More than 20 security vans were stationed in front of the headquarters of the anti-terror centre where about 200 Ennahdha activists were gathered in support of their leader Rached Ghannouchi, AFP correspondents said.

Supporters chanted Ghannouchi’s name as he entered the building, making a V-sign with their fingers for victory and waving placards. “Stop political trials”, one read, written in both English and Arabic.

Ghannouchi, 81, has been under investigation since June amid allegations of corruption and money laundering linked to transfers from abroad

to the charity Namaa Tunisia, affiliated with Ennahdha. As part of the same investigation, Tunisian authorities last month arrested former prime minister and one-time Ennahdha leader Hamadi Jebali for alleged money-laundering.

Jebali was later released, but is due to face questioning on the allegations on Wednesday. Earlier this month, a court ordered the freezing of the bank accounts of Ghannouchi and a dozen members of his family and his party-including Jebali-as part of this investigation.

In June, Ghannouchi was also handed a ban from travelling abroad as part of a separate investigation into high-profile political assassinations that rocked the country in 2013. Ennahdha and Ghannouchi deny all charges against them.

Tunisia’s long-running political crisis took a dramatic turn last July when



TUNIS, Tunisia: Supporters of Rached Ghannouchi, head of Tunisia’s Islamist Ennahdha party, protest outside the office of Tunisia’s counter-terrorism prosecutor in Tunis on July 19, 2022. —AFP

President Kais Saied sacked the government, froze the Ennahdha-dominated parliament headed by Ghannouchi, and seized far-reaching powers.

Saied has put forward a draft constitution set for referendum on

July 25, the anniversary of his power grab. Opponents accuse him of waging political vendettas and dragging the country back to dictatorship, over a decade since its pro-democracy revolt sparked the Arab Spring uprisings. —AFP

Initial blood tests inconclusive in S Africa pub deaths

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa: The deaths of 21 young people at a South African tavern more than three weeks ago remains a mystery as a preliminary toxicology report was inconclusive, provincial authorities said Tuesday.

Tests conducted by a Cape Town lab found alcohol and carbon monoxide in the victims’ blood but not at deadly levels, said Dr. Litha Mawane from the Eastern Cape provincial department of health. The lab also found methanol in the blood of all the victims, and further testing is underway to determine the levels, Mawane said.

“What we found was for blood alcohol levels, levels ranged from 0.05 grams to 0.26 grams per 100 millilitres, which itself is not conclusive for lethal toxicology,” Mawane told a televised media briefing from East London. As for carbon monoxide, levels of the saturation of haemoglobin in the blood ranged from 3.3 to 21 percent, well below the lethal marker of 50 percent.

Twenty-one people aged between 14 and 20 were found

dead on June 26 at the Enyobeni tavern in Scenery Park, a township in the coastal city of East London. Survivors described a mad dash to escape the jam-packed premises and at least one person reported a suffocating smell. Thirty-one people were hospitalised with symptoms ranging from backache and tight chests to vomiting and headache. A stampede has been ruled out as the cause of death.

Additional toxicology tests are underway for other substances, but Mawane said it was unclear when those results will be released as the lab is responsible for tests from across South Africa. Eastern Cape provincial leader Oscar Mabuyane said the government was working with families of the victims to ensure they had every support, and insisted the cause of the tragedy would be found. —AFP

International

Outsider seeks to break dynastic hold on Sri Lankan politics

‘We must get the country out of this mess’

COLOMBO: Former journalist and rights activist Dullas Alahapperuma is an unlikely contender to be Sri Lanka's leader, but is the main challenger to the current acting president in a parliamentary vote Wednesday. The 63-year-old former media minister secured the support of the main political opposition on Tuesday, after promising to unite a fractured, crisis-hit nation following Gotabaya Rajapaksa's resignation last week.

That propelled him to a provincial council seat in 1993, and a year later he became a member of parliament. He worked closely at the time with Mahinda Rajapaksa, who was campaigning against rights abuses by the government of then-president Ranasinghe Premadasa.

Rajapaksa and his family went on to dominate Sri Lankan politics for years—the recently ousted president is his younger brother—and several members of the clan were themselves accused of rights abuses in the country's fight against a Tamil rebellion.

In an illustration of the dynastic nature of Sri Lankan politics, it was Premadasa's son Sajith, now the leader of the opposition in parliament, who nominated Alahapperuma for the presidency on Tuesday.

‘Deceitful political culture’

Alahapperuma left politics in 2001 to pursue higher education at the University of Iowa, but re-entered parliament in 2005 when his ally Mahinda became president. Most recently, he held three different positions in Gotabaya's cabinet.

On his first day as energy minister, there was a nationwide blackout. As media minister, he maintained close ties with journalists and was seen as an unabrasive spokesman for the cabinet—unlike several of his predecessors.

As public anger grew against the Rajapaksa clan over the country's worsening economic crisis, Alahapperuma publicly urged the president to form a unity government earlier this year.

He accused the Rajapaksa administration of unleashing attacks against dissident journalists and



COLOMBO, Sri Lanka: Demonstrators burn an effigy of interim Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe during a protest in front of Presidential Secretariat in Colombo on July 19, 2022. — AFP

activists, and admitted that he was powerless to contain the oppression. He was seen as an outspoken critic within the cabinet, a record that may have helped him secure the opposition's support for his candidacy for president.

A father of two sons aged 27 and 26, Alahapperuma is married to a popular film actress, Pradeepa

Dharmadasa. If he wins on Wednesday he has promised to make opposition leader Premadasa his prime minister in what he calls the country's first “consensual government”.

The former cabinet minister wants to “put an end to the deceitful political culture, that clouded our nation for ages”, he tweeted on Saturday. — AFP



Worsening economic crisis

“It is a crime not to do anything while the country is rapidly going down,” Alahapperuma told AFP while Rajapaksa was still in office. “We must get the country out of this mess. Otherwise we won't have a country very soon.”

Sri Lankan politics has been dominated for decades by a series of family dynasties, but Alahapperuma's family never had those connections. Both his parents were schoolteachers, and he began his career as a reporter for Lakmina, a local newspaper in Colombo. Moving into leftist activism, he published his own political tabloid, the “Dullas News”.

Thousands of Sudan's Hausa protest after deadly clashes

KHARTOUM, Sudan: Thousands of Sudan's Hausa people protested in multiple cities Tuesday, demanding justice for dozens of comrades killed in a deadly land dispute with a rival ethnic group in the country's south.

The protests sparked by anger at the recent violence is the latest unrest to hit the northeast African nation, already reeling from months of mass demonstrations demanding the restoration of a transition to civilian rule following a military coup last year.

At least 79 people have been killed and 199 wounded since heavy fighting broke out last week between the Berti and Hausa groups in Blue Nile state, the health ministry says. While the army has been deployed in Blue Nile and the fighting there quashed, protests have since erupted in other states, with marches on the streets of the capital Khartoum, as well as in the key eastern cities of Gedaref, Kassala and Port Sudan.

On Tuesday, Hausa protesters in Khartoum held up signs demanding “justice for the Blue Nile martyrs” and “no to the murder of Hausas”. Fighting reportedly broke out on July 11 after Bertis rejected a Hausa request to create a “civil authority to supervise access to land”, a prominent Hausa member told AFP on condition of anonymity.

But a senior Berti leader said the group was responding to a “violation” of their land by the Hausas. In Sudan, deadly clashes regularly erupt over land, livestock, access to water and grazing, especially in areas awash with weapons still struggling from the impact of decades of civil war.

‘Revenge’

Experts however say an October coup led by army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan has stroked a resurgence in ethnic violence. In Gedaref, some 4,000 people

marched chanting “Hausa are citizens too” and “revenge for the martyrs of the Blue Nile”.

Some 500 people also “blocked the highway” in the town of Al-Showak in Gedaref state, eyewitness Saleh Abbas told AFP. In El Obeid, capital of North Kordofan state, some 3,000 marched on the streets chanting “the Hausa will win”, while in Port Sudan, on the Red Sea, thousands of Hausa gathered outside local government offices calling for “justice for the martyrs”.

In Kassala, authorities have banned public gatherings after thousands of Hausa demonstrators “set government buildings and shops on fire”, said Hussein Saleh, another witness. Sudan, one of the world's poorest countries and mired in an economic crisis that has deepened since Burhan seized power last year, has



AL-UBAYYID, Sudan: Sudan's Hausa people protest in El-Obeid, capital of North Kordofan state, on July 19, 2022 demanding justice for comrades killed in a deadly land dispute with a rival ethnic group in the country's south.—AFP

seen only rare interludes of civilian rule since independence.

Blue Nile, where the fighting erupted last week, was a key battleground of rebels trying to topple former president Omar al-Bashir during Sudan's 1983-2005 civil war, with fighting resuming again in 2011.

After enormous protests against his rule, the army ousted Bashir in 2019. The following year, a civilian-military power-sharing government reached a peace deal with key rebel groups, including from Blue Nile as well as the war-ravaged western Darfur region.

Darfur has also seen a renewed spike in deadly violence in recent months. Pro-democracy activists have accused Sudan's military and ex-rebel leaders who signed that peace deal of exacerbating ethnic tensions for political gain, claims they reject. — AFP

Myanmar marks 75th 'versary of death of independence hero

YANGON, Myanmar: The 75th anniversary of the assassination of Myanmar's independence hero and father of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi was a muted affair Tuesday, with soldiers patrolling Yangon's streets and anti-junta demonstrators staging small protests in other parts of the country.

Known affectionately as “Bogyoke” (General), Aung San led Myanmar's battle for independence from Britain but was gunned down in July 1947, just months before his dream was finally realised. His daughter Aung San Suu Kyi—who was two at the time of his death—became a democracy figurehead, Nobel laureate, and nemesis of the military.

Detained since the military's latest power grab in February last year, she is now battling a raft of charges in a junta court and could be jailed for more than 150 years if found guilty on all counts. Martyrs' Day—commemorating Aung San's killing—normally sees hundreds queuing to pay their respects at the Secretariat, a sprawling colonial-era complex in downtown Yangon where local rivals shot dead the general and eight other prominent leaders. But on Tuesday the roads were largely deserted, with soldiers on watch at the compound, some ordering passersby trying to take selfies near the buildings of red and yellow brick to move along. Others patrolled in jeeps and extra roadblocks had been set up in the usually bustling district. Across the country, demonstrators staged small protests against the junta, with local media reporting gatherings in southern Tanintharyi region, eastern Karen state and in the northern Sagaing region.

Meanwhile, state media footage showed junta number two Soe Win placing a wreath at the Martyrs' Mausoleum in Yangon—another spot usually bustling with those wishing to pay their respects, but on Tuesday limited to invitees only.—AFP

UAE pushes for a 'just' clean...

Continued from Page 1

carbon pollution and prepare for the accelerating impact is lagging, as is support for vulnerable countries confronting the ravages of a changing climate.

‘We will provide’

Adding to the pressure has been Russia's invasion of Ukraine that has sent food and energy prices spiraling. Western sanctions aimed at crippling major energy producer Russia have resulted in sharply higher fuel costs in Europe and the United States, with inflation soaring as a result. This has pushed the United States and Europe to try to persuade oil-rich countries like the UAE to increase energy supplies to bring prices back under control.

“Look at what we're going through right now. Months ago, people were pointing their fingers at us going: ‘Why are you still producing?’ Now they're coming to say: ‘Please produce, please produce.’” A top oil producer in OPEC, the UAE's rapid growth since the 1970s has been driven by its energy wealth. But having diversified its economy over the decades, the desert country of one million locals and nine million foreigners relies less and less on petrol, with revenues now making up only 30 percent of GDP.

At the same time, it forecasts that the oil and gas industry would need to invest over \$600 billion every year until 2030 just to keep up with expected demand.

“We are a country that has oil and gas as a natural resource. We don't have water... so as long as the world needs oil and gas we will provide,” said Almhairi. The country was built on oil, but is spending billions to develop enough renewable energy to cover half of its needs by 2050. It is building two of the world's largest solar power plants in the capital Abu Dhabi and Dubai. It has also joined the nuclear club, with its Barakah nuclear power station, the first in the Arab world. And last year, it launched a “strategic initiative” targeting carbon neutrality by 2050.

Two-pronged approach

Meteorologists are predicting more frequent and intense episodes of extreme weather in coming years. “The increase in the frequency, duration, and intensity of these events over recent decades is clearly linked to the observed warming of the planet and can be attributed to human activity,” the World Meteorological Organization said.

Heatwaves of the future will depend largely on how rapidly the global economy can decarbonise. While several towns and cities in France recorded their highest ever temperatures on Monday, the Gulf region is also at risk. In the region, summer means suffering for anyone working outside, along with risks of dehydration, heat stroke and heart failure. Countries of the energy-rich Gulf have banned working outdoors in the hottest hours of the day. A study in the journal Nature Climate Change found that within this century, parts of the Gulf region could be hit by “unprecedented events of deadly heat as a result of climate change”. Almhairi said her country, which next year is hosting the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP28, has adopted a “two-pronged approach” while advocating further investments in oil and gas. — AFP

UK breaks all-time record; heatwave...

Continued from Page 1

various towns and cities in the country's west registered their highest-ever temperatures on Monday, the national weather office said.

Wildfires

The western region of Brittany—normally cool and often wet in summer—set new record highs above 40C. As the heatwave moves northeast Tuesday, replaced by cooler air from the Atlantic offering some respite, weather authorities lifted their top red alert level in 15 departments. But dozens of departments remained on orange alert, with temperatures still expected to top 40C in the east and south and violent thunderstorms forecast locally.

The heatwave—the second to engulf parts of Europe in recent weeks—has contributed to deadly wildfires in France, Greece, Portugal and Spain, destroying vast tracts of land. Firefighters in France's southwest were still struggling to contain two massive fires that have caused widespread destruction and forced tens of thousands of people to leave their homes. Nearly 1,700 firefighters from all over the country, supported by significant air resources, are battling the two blazes that have so far burned nearly 17,000 hectares (42,000 acres) of forest.

“It's heartbreaking,” said Patrick Davet, mayor of La Teste-de-Buch, the site of one inferno which has prompted mass evacuations. “Economically, it's going to be very difficult for them and very difficult for the town

because we are a tourist town, and we need the (tourist) season.” In Brittany, a region not typically impacted by forest fires, hundreds of firefighters, specialised vehicles and waterbombing aircraft were tackling blazes in the Finistere region. Several smaller fires were reported across the region.

Deaths

Prosecutors in the southwest city of Bordeaux said late Monday a man suspected of having started one of the fires had been taken into custody. In Spain—nearly 10 days into the latest heatwave—more than a dozen fires continued to rage Tuesday, including in the northwest province of Zamora, which already experienced a huge fire last month. Known as one of the largest wolf reserves in Europe, it saw nearly 30,000 hectares of land reduced to ashes during the June blaze.

Nearly 6,000 people had to be evacuated from there this week after flames destroyed several thousand hectares of meadows and forests, regional authorities said. Train traffic between Madrid and Galicia, in the northwest of the country, remained suspended after fires on either side of the track. Several people have died in recent days due to the blazes while separately, an office worker in his 50s died from heatstroke in Madrid.

In Portugal, more than 1,400 firefighters were fighting fires in the centre and north of the country, despite a clear drop in temperatures in recent days. A couple in their 70s died Monday after they ran off the road while trying to escape the flames in their car. Almost the entire country has been on high alert for wildfires despite a slight drop in temperatures, which last Thursday hit 47C—a record for July. The fires have already killed two other people, injured around 60 and destroyed between 12,000 and 15,000 hectares of land there.—AFP

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2022

Business

Inflation situation in Kuwait has not improved yet: KES official

'Price spiral hits quality of life of citizens and residents

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: The Economist Intelligence Unit reported that inflation rates in the GCC countries will be among the lowest in the Middle East and North Africa region in 2022-2023. The report pointed out that the average inflation will remain under control at the level of 3.7 percent this year, with a decrease to 2.4 percent next year.

Despite the positive impact of pegging the currencies of the GCC states to the dollar in countering the threat of imported inflation, this effect remains limited because the Gulf countries will be exposed to the impact of the global rise in commodity prices represented by a rapid rise in grain prices and the disruption of the agricultural supply chain resulting from the Russian-Ukrainian war. Kuwait Times spoke with Mohammad Bader Al-Jouan, a member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Economic Society (KES) and discussed the impact of inflation on Kuwait.

Al-Jouan, while explaining the impact of the economic crises on human life, said, "The economy is an interconnected chain that affects human life at all levels whether economically or socially. Therefore, anything that affects this chain will therefore affect everything in turn." "The rise in oil prices affected supply chains negatively because it caused a rise in imports, shipping lines and the value of imported materials from abroad. As a result, prices of foodstuffs also soared," he pointed out.

"With the passage of the price fixing law and the weakness of government oversight from the Ministry of Commerce, it had a very negative role in curbing this huge rise in increasing prices," he pointed out.

Al-Jouan said that all central banks tried to raise interest rates to curb inflation, and so far no central bank has succeeded in checking the spiraling inflation. "The inflation situation in Kuwait may be relatively better than Europe and America, but we are in Kuwait still suffering from a sharp rise in the prices of food, construction, education and school prices that directly affect the life of the citizen," he said.

As for the social impact of inflation, Al-Jouan mentioned that the concept of a decent life in Kuwait no longer exists, saying "A citizen who receives a monthly income of KD 1,500 used to spend KD 1,000 to secure his needs of food, drink, rent and other expenses. But today, he may need to spend more than KD 1,500 per month to cover family requirements," he said, adding that "inflation is affecting the quality of life of citizens and residents in Kuwait."

"The economic problems not only affect the economic situation. In fact, it has social and legal aspects



KUWAIT: Shoppers are pictured in The Avenues Mall. The Economist Intelligence Unit reported that inflation rates in the GCC countries will be among the lowest in the Middle East and North Africa region in 2022-2023.

in many cases, such as what happened with small businesses during the pandemic. Their economic problems began when the government neglected the owners of these businesses when they faced social and legal problems leading many of them to imprisonment or family destruction, or losing their jobs. The government should intervene effectively to solve the inflation problem as soon as possible," he said.

Regarding the impact of the inflation on Kuwait, Al-Jouan said "What we suffer most in the Gulf countries is the lack of numbers of statistics and the weakness of the process of monitoring and analyzing the economic situation. However, general indicators show that the inflation situation is normal or slightly above normal. "But, this is contrary to reality because, in reality we see a significant increase in the prices of building materials, food and education. Even the rise includes the Internet tariffs as well," he said.

"In emergency situations, governments take quick intervention when there is an economic stagnation, as happened during the pandemic, by increasing subsidies and issuing economic packages. The US government announced a huge pandemic stimulus plan amounting to \$1.9 trillion. These economic packages

were in the interest of the economy to ease the impact of inflation, unemployment rate and others. But in Kuwait, nothing of the similar measures or incentives were announced," he said.

"The state should have intervened in these emergency situations, but that has not happened in more than 60 years," he mentioned.

"To confront inflation locally, the first solution must be to increase government subsidies on products. The Kuwait Supply Company must also do its work for it and the role it plays is not very good as the Kuwait Supply Company is established under the Ministry of Trade and is concerned with food security for the country," he pointed out.

The annual inflation rate in Kuwait eased to 4.52 percent in May of 2022 from 4.71 percent in the previous month, according to Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau. Prices eased for food & beverages (8.23 percent vs 9.13 percent); furnishing and household maintenance (2.27 percent vs 2.35 percent); clothing and footwear (6.37 percent vs 6.38 percent).

In contrast, inflation remained steady for housing (at 2.26 percent) while rose faster for transport (4.90 percent vs 4.82 percent). On a monthly basis, con-

sumer price inflation remained unchanged at 0.16 percent, the Bureau said. In Kuwait, the main components of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) are: housing (33.2 percent); food and beverages (16.7 percent); furnishing and household equipment (11.4 percent); clothing and footwear (8 percent) and transport (7.5 percent). The index also includes miscellaneous goods and services (5.8 percent); education (4.2 percent); communication (4 percent); recreation and culture (3.9 percent); restaurants and hotels (3.4 percent); health (1.5 percent) and tobacco (0.3 percent).

Kuwait's energy sector has performed well so far this year, with oil output up around 14 percent in the first four months thanks to reduced OPEC+ curbs. In the non-oil sector, growth momentum was likely restricted in early 2022 by a surge in COVID-19 cases and some ensuing curbs. However, since mid-February cases have fallen and these restrictions have been eased, supporting domestic consumption and visitor arrivals. According to reports, both business and consumer lending improved during the first quarter, with the latter growing at a double-digit annual rate. A multi-year high in the price of oil is expected to boost government spending, the reports suggested.

Eni, Occidental, Total sign \$4bn Algeria oil contract

ALGIERS: Italy's Eni, US major Occidental, France's Total and the Algerian group Sonatrach signed a \$4 billion oil and gas production-sharing contract Tuesday for the Berkine field in the country's south-east. Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, hosting his Italian counterpart Mario Draghi on Monday with whom he sealed a clutch of deals, said the 25-year accord would provide Rome with "significant volumes of natural gas", as Europe seeks alternatives to Russian supplies.

The accord aims to produce one billion of oil equivalent barrels, Sonatrach said in a statement.

The partners will "develop additional liquid hydrocarbon resources, while reducing these fields carbon intensity through a dedicated carbon reduction program", Total said in a separate statement. The deal was signed under Algeria's 2019 hydrocarbon law that allows for production sharing with foreign partners. It drew heavy criticism from the Algerian opposition and street protests over an alleged sell-out of national resources.

According to an Algerian government source, the North African country will increase gas exports to Italy by four billion cubic meters in the coming days.

Italy buys the majority of its natural gas from abroad, with some 45 percent of its imports historically coming from Russia.—AFP



ALGIERS: Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi (left) and Algeria's Prime Minister Aïmene Benabderrahmane shake hands in Algiers. Algeria is Africa's biggest gas exporter and supplies around 11 percent of the natural gas consumed in Europe.—AFP



VERSAILLES, France: This handout image provided by the UAE Ministry Of Presidential Affairs shows UAE's President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (fourth right), UAE's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Presidential Court Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (third right), UAE's Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan (second right), meeting with France's Prime Minister (unseen) at the Prime Minister's Office in the capital Paris on July 19, 2022.—AFP

UAE inks energy deal with France as Macron hosts MBZ

PARIS: France secured promises of new energy supplies from the United Arab Emirates on Monday after talks between President Emmanuel Macron and UAE leader Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan in Paris. The UAE has emerged as a key partner for Western countries as they scramble for energy deals worldwide to replace imports from sanctions-hit Russia.

Sheikh Mohamed, also known as MBZ, was on his first overseas state visit since taking office in May following the death of his half-brother. After lunch between the two heads of state, a deal between French energy giant Total Energies and UAE state oil company ADNOC was signed "for cooperation in the area of energy supplies".

Macron's aides had said before the meeting that France was eager to secure diesel from the strategic Middle Eastern nation. "The UAE is keen to support energy security in the world in general and in France in particular," Sheikh Mohamed told

Macron, according to Emirati state news agency WAM.

Before the trip, his diplomatic advisor Anwar Gargash had stressed how the UAE was looking to reorient its supplies towards Europe. "We have sold our oil to the far east for 40 years and now we are directing it toward Europe in this time of crisis," he told reporters.

The UAE president's visit to France came after Joe Biden's first Middle East tour as president, which included a visit to Saudi Arabia for energy talks. Macron and Biden were overheard talking about energy supplies from the Middle East at a G7 summit at the end of June in Germany.

Macron told Biden that he had spoken to Sheikh Mohammed who had said he was at his "maximum" in terms of oil production, but that the Saudis had some spare capacity. After his lunch with Macron, Sheikh Mohamed is set to be guest of honor at a dinner at the former royal palace in Versailles outside Paris. Human Rights Watch said Macron's "search for alternative supplies seems likely to reinforce France and the UAE's already close ties".

Western sanctions against the Russian energy sector following President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine mean many countries face shortfalls. Analysts warn about possible shortages later this year, particularly if Russia further reduces its gas exports to Europe.—AFP

UAE e-commerce firm CNNB Solutions expands to Kuwait

KUWAIT: CNNB Solutions, the e-commerce and direct-to-consumer specialist, has announced its regional expansion into Kuwait. The company has established a new office in Kuwait City, as it grows its operations and team. CNNB Solutions already has regional offices in UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Speaking about the expansion, CNNB Solutions co-founder and chief visionary officer Nicolas Bruylants said, "We're delighted to be setting up office in Kuwait to support our existing regional operations and expand our GCC capabilities. Kuwait has a young vibrant population, with high disposable income and high rates of mobile and internet penetration. These factors make it a desirable e-commerce market and there is increasing demand from the big brands that we support to grasp the strong online retail opportunity in the country."

CNNB Solutions supports major brands such as L'Oréal, Estée Lauder and Swiss Arabian Perfumes with their e-commerce and direct-to-consumer strategies, to help them reach more customers and effectively sell more online. The business manages and optimizes online processes for brands, including: distribution, stock planning and inventory management, web development and management, order management, global fulfillment and support, payment solutions, and customer experience support. Meanwhile, more than 90 per cent of the population in Kuwait are now regular mobile internet users and half of those are e-commerce buyers, with around 2.4m people shopping online. Figures from Statista suggest annual e-commerce revenue in Kuwait will top \$4 billion by the end of the year.

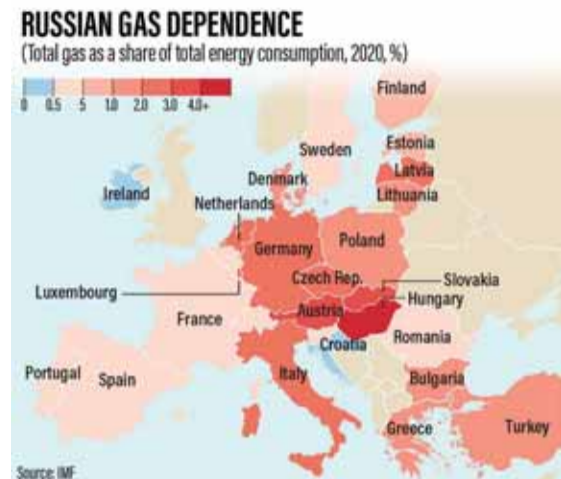
The business manages and optimizes online processes for brands, including distribution, stock planning and inventory management; web development and management; order management; global fulfillment and support; payment solutions; and customer experience support. Through managed e-commerce solutions, such as tailored brand.com websites and managed online marketplaces, brands can enhance customer experience, boost sales conversions, increase customer lifetime value and reduce average return rates to less than one percent (compared to typical eCommerce returns of up to 30 percent). —Agencies

Business

European economies to shrink by up to 6% in 2022 if starved of Russian gas: IMF

Eastern European countries to be most-affected

WASHINGTON: European countries face a power crunch if there is a complete shutdown of Russian gas supplies, with their economies facing the threat of contraction, although the impact varies widely by country, according to the International Monetary Fund.



The most-affected countries in central and eastern Europe - Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic - could register a gross domestic product decline of up to 6 per cent amid gas shortages of up to 40 per cent of normal consumption, the IMF said in a working paper released on Tuesday. The effect on Austria, Germany and Italy will also be "significant" but would depend on policy responses, the remaining bottlenecks at the time of the shutdown and the market's ability to adjust.

Other European countries are not expected to face such constraints and the impact on gross domestic product would be moderate - possibly under 1 per cent. "The impacts, however, could be mitigated by securing alternative supplies and energy sources, easing infrastructure bottlenecks, encouraging energy savings while protecting vulnerable households, and expanding solidarity agreements to share gas across countries," the authors said in a blog post.

Halting Russian gas supplies to the EU could potentially reduce the bloc's GDP by as much as 1.5 per cent

if the next winter is severe and the region fails to take preventive measures to save energy, Bloomberg reported, quoting a draft EU document. The EU's GDP would fall by 0.6 per cent to 1 per cent if the winter is ordinary, the news wire reported. Europe is locked in a stand-off with Moscow, its biggest gas supplier, over its military intervention in Ukraine.

The EU has voiced its growing concerns that Russia will completely shut off supplies to the bloc in response to several rounds of sanctions. Russian state-owned energy company Gazprom declared force majeure on gas supplies to at least one major customer in Europe, Reuters reported on Monday.

This adds to concerns that Russia, which shut down its main Nord Stream 1 pipeline for 10 days starting from July 11 for planned maintenance, will use the opportunity to close it permanently.

If Russian gas flows from Nord Stream 1, a 1,224-kilometre pipeline under the Baltic Sea, do not resume, there will be an "intensification of energy-saving measures, higher prices and reduced production in some industries, especially in late autumn and during winter", across Europe, rating agency Fitch Ratings said last week.

European infrastructure and global supply have coped so far, with a 60 per cent drop in Russian gas deliveries since June 2021. Total gas consumption in the first quarter was down 9 per cent from a year earlier, and alternative supplies are being tapped into, especially liquefied natural gas from global markets.

A reduction of up to 70 per cent in Russian gas could be managed in the short term by securing access to alternative supplies and energy sources, given reduced demand as a result of previously high prices, and this explains why some countries could unilaterally halt Russian supplies, said the IMF working paper. However, diversification would be much harder in the event of a total shutdown, the Washington-based fund said.

"Bottlenecks could reduce the ability to reroute gas within Europe because of insufficient import capacity or transmission constraints," it said. These factors could lead to shortages equal to 15 per cent to 40 per cent of annual consumption in some countries in central and eastern Europe. — Agencies

open up the taps further, with a plea by US President Joe Biden seeming to have fallen on deaf ears.

Traders were keeping a nervous eye on Europe, where a 10-day maintenance shutdown of the Nord Stream 1 pipeline from Russia is due to end this week.

Many fear Vladimir Putin will keep it shut in retaliation for sanctions imposed on Moscow for invading Ukraine. That would deal another blow to the already creaking eurozone economy and could send crude prices soaring.

Supply fears are trumping worries about a demand hit in China from another possible lockdown in Shanghai as officials struggle to contain another COVID-19 outbreak. — AFP

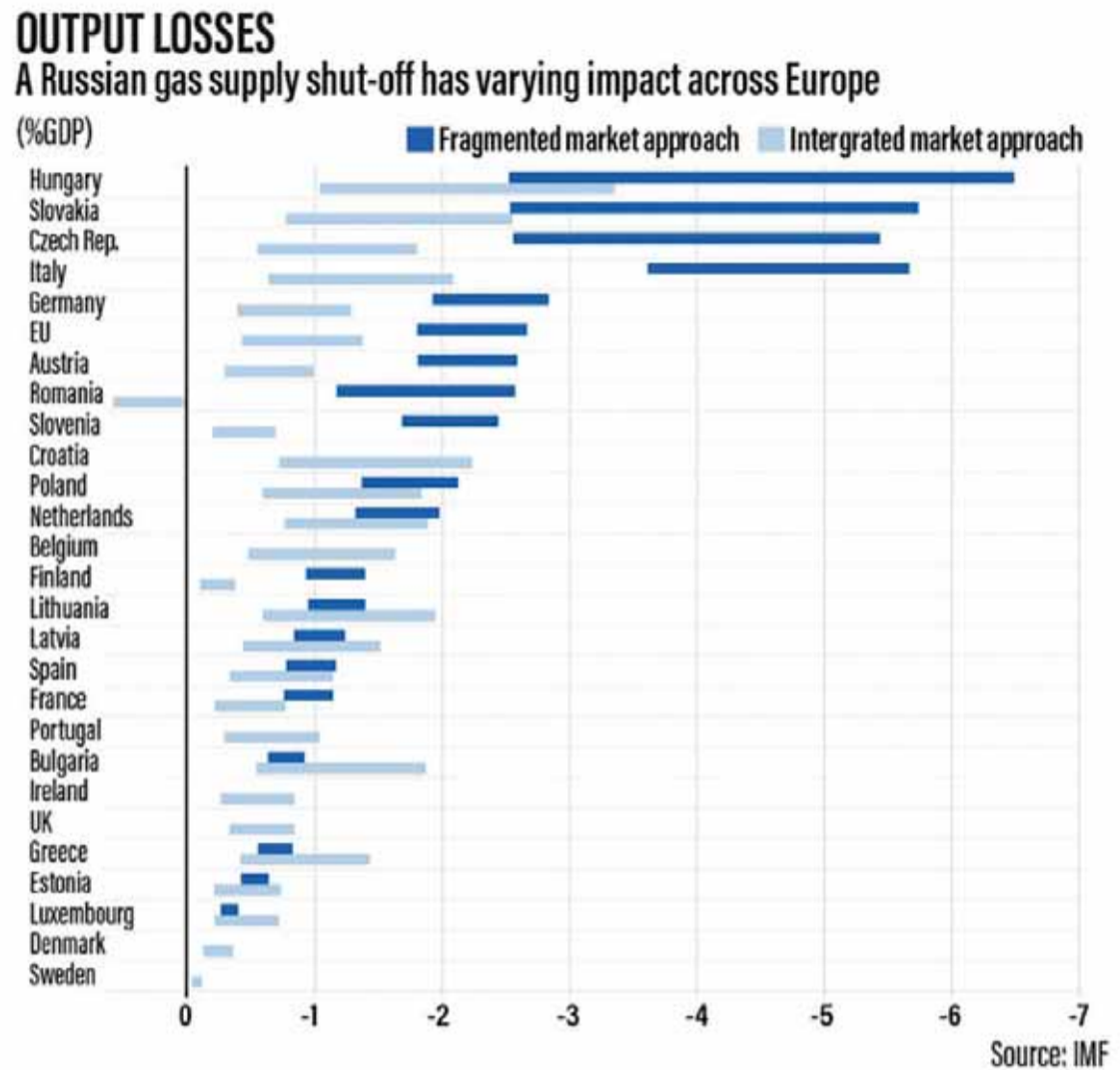
UK unemployment steady as wages erode at record pace

LONDON: Britain's unemployment rate remains close to a 50-year low, but decades-high inflation is causing the value of wages to fall at a record pace, official data showed on Tuesday. Unemployment stood at 3.8 per cent in the three months to the end of May, unchanged from the previous quarter, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement. Job vacancies remain close to record-high levels. Meanwhile, New UK Finance Minister Nadhim Zahawi was scheduled to outline his plans to control inflation and "seize the opportunities of Brexit", despite fears London is going too far in deregulation.

Zahawi, who replaced Rishi Sunak as Chancellor of the Exchequer after his resignation earlier this month, will set out his vision in his first speech in the role at London's Mansion House amid a tumultuous political period in Britain. Sunak's departure alongside other government figures led to Prime Minister Boris Johnson's resignation and now a bitter fight is playing out to become the next leader. Zahawi will hope to push that all aside when he addresses London's business representatives, promising to "control inflation, boost private sector recovery and deliver a post-Brexit vision for financial services", the finance ministry said.

The minister committed to "repeal hundreds of pieces of retained EU law and replacing them with a coherent and agile approach to financial regulation that is right for us" in Britain, the ministry added in a statement. Zahawi subscribes to the same view as his predecessor, Sunak—a candidate running to take over from Johnson — who had promised a new "Big Bang" in the finance sector after the deregulation of the 1980s.

The statements will fuel fears of a showdown with the Bank of England, while some media reports say the government will seek to reduce regulators' powers. Bank of England officials including governor Andrew Bailey have defended the institution's independence after criticism over being too timid in the fight against inflation. UK inflation spiked in May to a 40-year peak of 9.1 per cent, a level set to hit double figures this year. A parliamentary report in June warned against "any inappropriate weakening of the UK's strong regulatory standards", which could "reduce the financial resilience of the UK's financial system and undermine international confidence in that system". ONS head of labor market statistics David Freeman noted that demand for workers was "clearly still very high" after the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. — AFP



Heathrow set for more disruption as refuellers strike

LONDON: London's Heathrow airport, which is suffering from flight delays and caps on passengers owing to staff shortages, faces further disruption as refuellers strike later this week, a union announced Tuesday. Workers employed by Aviation Fuel Services plan to strike from early Thursday through to early Sunday, trade union Unite said in a statement.

Unite said AFS was responsible for refuelling half of the non-British Airways traffic at Heathrow.

Affected airlines included Air France, American, Delta, Emirates, KLM, Singapore, United and Virgin Atlantic, it added. "AFS is wholly owned by incredibly wealthy energy companies who are entirely able to provide our members with a decent pay increase," said Unite general secretary Sharon Graham.

"This is yet another example of energy companies boosting profits at the expense of workers."

News of the strike comes as official data Tuesday showed UK wages being eroded at a record pace because of decades-high inflation. Unite said AFS staff had rejected a pay increase of 10 percent, with British annual inflation set to top that amount this year on soaring energy and food prices.

Following news of the stoppages, Heathrow said it was in discussions with airlines over "contingency plans they can implement, including using other fuel suppliers already operating at the airport".

It comes as airlines and airports struggle to recruit staff having sacked thousands of workers as the world entered COVID pandemic lockdowns. Britain is experiencing a summer of strike action as workers endure a cost-of-living crisis. While some walkouts have been called off at the last minute, including by postal workers, as improved pay deals are finally agreed, others are likely to go ahead.

Later this month, telecoms giant BT is set to face its first strike by workers since 1987.

It comes as railway staff prepare for further stoppages having last month carried out their biggest walkout in decades. State-employed lawyers are also striking, while teachers and workers for the National Health Service are mulling action. — AFP

Stocks advance despite Apple report concerns

LONDON: Stock markets mostly advanced on Tuesday despite fresh recession worries on a report tech titan Apple may scale back hiring and investment. Meanwhile, the euro rallied against the dollar as traders looked ahead to a key European Central Bank meeting later this week, while oil gave up some of its strong gains on Monday.

European stocks were higher in afternoon trading, with London up 0.5 per cent and both Frankfurt and Paris climbing 0.7 per cent. Wall Street opened higher, with the blue-chip Dow adding 0.7 per cent, and the broader S&P 500 and tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite rising more than one percent.

Asian equities indices closed mixed after an overnight sell-off on Wall Street fuelled by fresh recession worries on the Bloomberg report on Apple's plans.



"Apple put the cat among the pigeons following a media report that it plans to pull back hiring and growth spending next year in anticipation of the possible economic downturn," noted Richard Hunter, head of markets at Interactive Investor. Apple's shares were 0.4 per cent up shortly after trading began.

The euro meanwhile jumped around one percent against the dollar, as traders mulled whether the European Central Bank could hike interest rates more than expected to fight runaway inflation.

The ECB has signalled it would raise eurozone interest rates on Thursday for the first time in more than a decade but is under pressure to do more to tackle spiraling prices. It intends to raise borrowing costs by a quarter point, the first such move since 2011. "In all likelihood, the ECB will raise interest rates by 25 basis points this week and follow this up with a 50-basis-point move in September," noted Matthew Ryan, head of market strategy at financial firm Ebury.

"That said, we do not rule out a 50-basis-point rate hike at this week's meeting. "We have already seen most major central banks deliver bumper rate increases in recent weeks in an attempt to control rampant price growth," Ryan added.

The Federal Reserve's aggressive rate tightening this year has sent the dollar soaring against most other currencies in recent weeks. Last week, the euro fell below parity with the dollar for the first time in nearly 20 years, also on growing fears of a eurozone recession as high inflation hampers growth.

On Tuesday, the dollar briefly hit a record high above 80 rupees, with the Indian unit hammered by massive outflows of capital as the economy struggles.

While some are predicting inflation may have reached its peak, oil prices—the key driver of soaring costs—remain elevated. Both main contracts fell Tuesday after rocketing more than five percent Monday on expectations that Saudi Arabia would not



LONDON: London's Heathrow airport faces further disruption as refuellers strike later this week, a union announced Tuesday.

EasyJet to trial hydrogen-powered engine in UK deal

LONDON: EasyJet has sealed a deal with Rolls-Royce to test a hydrogen-powered engine on its aircraft. The H2Zero partnership will involve the budget airline and the British manufacturer working together to take the eco-friendly technology into the skies.

They hope the agreement will pave the way for a wide range of aircraft to be powered solely by hydrogen by the mid-2030s. The pact announced on Tuesday, the second day of the Farnborough International Airshow, comes a day after Rolls-Royce said it would hold ground tests of its UK-made AE2100 engine in Britain and the US. The trials in the UK will begin this year, while those scheduled to take place across the Atlantic have not been given a specified date. The program will build on initial hydrogen combustion and fuel system rig tests that Rolls-Royce is undertaking with both Cranfield University in Bedfordshire and

Loughborough University in Leicestershire. H2Zero is inspired by the global, UN-backed Race to Zero campaign that EasyJet and Rolls-Royce have signed up to, committing to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Johan Lundgren, chief executive of EasyJet, said "radical action" is essential to reach the mid-century goal.

He said the technology being trialled "has the potential to power EasyJet-size aircraft, which is why we will also be making a multi-million-pound investment into this program." "In order to achieve decarbonization at scale, progress on the development of zero-emission technology for narrow-body aircraft is crucial," he added. "Together with Rolls-Royce, we look forward to leading the industry to tackle this challenge head-on."

Grazia Vittadini, chief technology and strategy officer at Rolls-Royce, said the partnership with the carrier is "a big step forward" for the engine manufacturer. He said "we are excited to be working with a partner that shares a desire to innovate and find new answers to aviation's biggest challenges." "We at Rolls-Royce want to be ready to pioneer sustainability with whatever the future requires, be it hydrogen, electric power, sustainable aviation fuel, or gas turbine efficiency," she added. "This agreement further inspires us to move forward." — Agencies

Business

Ghana IMF loan outcry pressures government over economy

'Ghana Beyond Aid' policy falters as country struggles with rising living costs

ACCRA: Ghanaian trader Mohammed Biney was already struggling when the government passed a new tax on electronic money transactions this year to try to revive the economy. With Ghana now buckling under nearly 30 percent inflation, the Accra shoe seller was shocked when the government announced in July it would have to seek help from the IMF.

President Nana Akufo-Addo once promised "Ghana Beyond Aid" to keep his West African country off foreign aid dependency. But a sudden U-turn over an IMF credit has sparked fierce debate over his economic management as Ghana struggles with the highest costs of living in two decades.

"You can't impose taxes on us under the guise of saving the economy and then overnight come and tell us you're going to the IMF," trader Biney told AFP.

"I think they ran out of ideas."

Hit by the global pandemic and fallout from the Russian war in Ukraine on fuel and food prices, Ghana is in talks with International Monetary Fund to help stabilise its public finances. But the decision prompted fears IMF-imposed austerity measures will force the end to Akufo-Addo's social programs and hurt Ghanaians already struggling with soaring costs.

A new opposition-led protest movement and unions threatening strikes over hardships have added pressure on the government just as an IMF team begins initial talks. Saddled with heavy debt, limited access to fresh funds and few revenue options, the government says the IMF offers short-term help.

Ghana's Deputy Finance Minister Abena Osei-Asare said after the pandemic eroded economic gains, the IMF deal would help with balance of payments and open the door to new financing while protecting social programs. "People don't have an understanding of the sort of engagement we're going to have with the IMF that's why they are a bit apprehensive," she told AFP.

Soaring inflation

Ghana's economic data is not rosy. Growth slowed

this year while inflation broke two decade highs at 29.8 percent in June, driven by transport and food costs. Ghana's debt to GDP ratio—a measure of what it owes against what it produces—rose from 65 percent to 80 percent during the pandemic, the IMF says.

Moody's credit agency in February downgraded its outlook on Ghana's bonds, citing the government's liquidity and debt challenges. "Ghana's fiscal and debt vulnerabilities are worsening fast amid an increasingly difficult external environment," the IMF said after the team's visit this month.

"An IMF-supported program aims to provide space for Ghana to implement policies." This deal will be the 18th time Ghana has gone to the IMF after completing a three-year accord in 2019 which saw \$918 million in support. Just in May, Finance Minister Ken Ofori-Atta said an IMF deal was not an option, with the government preferring "home-grown" solutions.

One of those, Ghana's new electronic transaction tax or E-levy, was meant to help raise \$900 million in much-needed revenue along with spending cuts. But the tax was widely criticized and as people curtailed electronic payments, the E-levy has also fallen far short of revenue estimates.

Gabby Otchere-Darko, a leading ruling party member, tweeted in June the tax had only generated 10 percent of estimated revenues. "Given the situation that we find ourselves... we have no option," John Kwakye, the director of research at the Accra-based IEA think tank, said of the IMF deal.

"Going to the IMF was to build on our credibility."

Electoral fallout?

But even with elections still two years away, an IMF deal will likely have political fallout. Teaching unions went on strike earlier this month until the government agreed to cost of living allowances. Other public sector workers are threatening action.

A "Fix the Country" movement, which holds regular if small protests, has been joined by another group

ing costs following several Federal Reserve interest rate hikes and persistent supply chain problems. But banks still haven't seen a significant rise in charge-offs from bad loans. They say many households still have a buffer of savings after conserving funds during the height of the pandemic when the federal government had generous relief programs.

Citigroup Chief Financial Officer Jane Fraser noted "sharply lower" consumer confidence compared with earlier in the year. "That said, while sentiment has shifted, little of the data I see tells me the US is on the cusp of a recession," Fraser said Friday, adding that households savings provided "a cushion for future stress" amid a tight job market.

Fraser contrasted the backdrop in the United States with Europe, where vulnerability to Russian energy could make for a "difficult winter." Executives acknowledged that the rising price of fuel and other essential goods poses burden to low-income households who are cutting back.

But most of the bank's clients are not in this situation now. "US consumers remain quite resilient," Bank of America Chief Executive Brian Moynihan said Monday. "Consumers continue to spend at a healthy pace even as some time has passed since the receipt of any stimulus." JPMorgan Chase Chief Executive described the consumer as "in great shape," which means that even if there is a recession, they're entering it in "far better shape" compared with 2008 or 2009.

Muted tone

On Monday Bank of America reported \$6.2 billion in second-quarter profits, a 34 percent drop compared with the year-ago period when results were lifted by a large reserve release amid a strengthening macroeconomic backdrop. In spite of weakness in some parts of the business, results were boosted by higher net interest income following Fed rate hikes.

Bank of America also enjoyed growth in overall loans and pointed to "improvement" in overall asset quality. At Goldman Sachs—the final of the US banking giants to report—profits fell 48 percent to \$2.8 billion, again due in part to its decision to set aside \$667 million in provisions for credit losses.

Operations were mixed, with a big jump in revenues tied to trading amid volatile markets offsetting the hit from a drop in revenues connected to mergers and acquisition advising and loan underwriting.

The reports came on the heels of similar releases last week from JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, Morgan Stanley and Wells Fargo. Stuart Plesser, a senior director at S&P Global Ratings described the industry's overall tone as muted.

"They're not saying anything's disastrous, they're not optimistic, either," Plesser said.

"If you read the news, you got this possibility with inflation, the higher rate increases and all the other issues, but you can't point to anything in the results," he added. —AFP

Queensland. "We know there will rightly be questions from government and regulators about the competition aspects of this transaction," Elliott said in a statement.

"As the smallest of the major banks, we believe a stronger ANZ will be able to compete more effectively in Queensland offering better outcomes for customers," he added.

Rival Queensland lender Heritage Bank's chief executive Peter Lock warned that the takeover of Suncorp Bank would "simply increase the power of the major banks in Australia." ANZ said it planned to raise Aus\$3.5 billion to pay for the deal by offering extra stock to existing shareholders. The balance would be financed with existing capital.

The bank said trading in its shares in Australia and New Zealand had been suspended until Thursday to give institutional investors time to act on its offer.

The takeover, which is subject to approval by the Australian federal treasurer and competition regulators, was expected to be wrapped up in the second half of 2023, it said.—AFP

US bank results highlight risk and resiliency

WASHINGTON: Despite mounting worries over inflation, just-released bank earnings painted a resilient picture of the US economy and consumer, generating talk that any recession might be milder than earlier downturns. Reports from six US banking giants showed a significant drop in profits from the heady year-ago period, with most of the group establishing fresh provisions in case of defaults.

Executives expressed caution about what's to come in light of the growing hit from higher gasoline and food prices, along with the burden of increased lend-



VERSAILLES, France: In this file photo, France's President Emmanuel Macron (right) reacts next to CEO of Citigroup Jane Fraser (left) during a plenary session as part of the 5th edition of the "Choose France" Business Summit, in Versailles, southwest of Paris. — AFP

ANZ announces major banking takeover

LONDON: Australian banking giant ANZ announced Monday a Aus\$4.9 billion (US\$3.3 billion) deal to swallow regional lender Suncorp Bank — one of the biggest takeovers in the sector for more than a decade.

The takeover of the Queensland-based lender would push ANZ up one spot to make it the nation's third-largest mortgage provider.

But critics warned the deal — reportedly the largest in Australian banking since 2008 — would cut competition and concentrate the power of Australia's big four banks, if regulators allow it to go ahead.

ANZ chief executive Shayne Elliott described it as a "cornerstone investment" and a show of confidence in



ACCRA, Ghana: In this file photo, a protester carries a bowl of salt on the second day of a demonstration over soaring living costs in Accra, Ghana. Many Ghanaians were already unhappy with government moves to impose a new tax on electronic money transfers, a measure officials hoped would help revive the economy. —AFP

"Arise Ghana". Last month its rally over economic hardships led to clashes with the police.

"The solution to Ghana's problems doesn't lie in Washington," Yaw Baah, Secretary General of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) said. "This is a tragic mistake by the government." Eurasia Group's Africa head Amaka Anku told clients the IMF program will make it harder for Akufo-Addo's New Patriotic Party to argue they are better economic managers.

That may weaken the position of likely NPP candidate for 2024 Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia

though his probably opponent National Democratic Congress or NDC leader and ex-president John Mahama also faces challenges. "Bottom-line, this makes for a very close election in 2024," Anku said.

Already the opposition has hit out. "President Akufo-Addo and Dr Mahamudu Bawumia should take full responsibility for incompetently managing the economy," said NDC lawmaker Haruna Iddrisu. "The government must come clean and tell us what the people of Ghana should expect instead of blaming Ukraine and Russia." —AFP

Fresh roadblocks as Panama protesters reject deal

SANTIAGO: Fresh roadblocks went up in Panama on Monday as social groups turned their backs on a deal signed with the government to clear the highways in exchange for a fuel price cut. After union leaders consulted grassroots supporters on the deal announced Sunday, it was decided to continue the protest, said Luis Sanchez, a leader of the Anadepo civic grouping.

"We had warned the executive that we still have to consult the rank and file," he told the TVN-2 channel. The agreement, he added, "was signed under pressure" and members have opted to continue the mobilization that had seen trucks and banner-waving demonstrators paralyze the strategic Pan-American Highway. "In the meantime, there is no agreement," said Sanchez as he tore up a sheet of paper.

On Sunday, the government and some protest leaders announced a deal to end more than two weeks of demonstrations over high fuel prices and rising living costs in the country of 4.4 million people. The biggest protest Monday was in the capital Panama City, with members of the Suntracs construction union closing access roads with burning tire barricades, causing massive traffic backups. There were also new blockades of the Pan-American Highway that connects

Panama with the rest of Central America and is the main transport route for goods through the country.

The protests have led to shortages of fuel and food in some areas. "We are in a bad way; no food, no buses. I wanted to buy rice and... what little can be found is very expensive. The vegetables are bad," said Angelica Ruiz, a resident of Pacora, east of Panama City, who also had trouble getting to work.

'We will not weaken'

The government agreed Sunday to cut the price of petrol to \$3.25 per gallon and pursue talks on lowering food and medicine costs that were key among protesters' concerns.

Last week, it had already reduced the petrol price to \$3.95 from \$5.20 per gallon in June, but this was not enough to appease the demonstrators. After Sunday's announcement, several unions said the agreement was inadequate and had left out many groups. "We will stay on in the street," said protester Juan Morales, a farmer from Capira, west of Panama City.

"We will not weaken. We need strong and positive answers," he told AFP. Suntracs general secretary Saul Mendez called for negotiations that included all groups to discuss "the most pressing issues" in Panama. Those issues include reducing the costs of fuel, food, medicine and electricity, he said, as well as a general increase in salaries and greater public investment in education. The protests come as Panama faces difficult economic conditions, with inflation of 4.2 percent recorded in May, along with an unemployment rate of about 10 percent and fuel price hikes of nearly 50 percent since January. —AFP



PANAMA CITY, Panama: Union workers block a highway in Panama City, on July 18, 2022. — AFP

KFH announces winners of Al-Rabeh draw

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the Al-Rabeh draw with 10 customers winning cash prizes worth KD 1,500 each for the first week of July 2022, additionally, KFH announced Noura Al-Sawagh as the monthly winner of 1 kilo gram of KFH gold and Mohammed Al-Anezi the winner of the second quarterly draw of KD 25,000. The winners of KD 1,500 are: Mohammed Al-Kandari, Salem Al-Huwailah, Fahad Al-Sinafy, Wafaa Jarragh, Noura Al-Abdali, Adnan Al-Zoubi, Mashaal Shaiban, Falah Al-Mutairi, Daa Mutar, Ali Al-Kandari. The newly-designed Al-Rabeh campaign launched by KFH in 2022, provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns 536 winners throughout the year.

The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional products and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the Bank's lead-

ership in the local and global markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per the highest quality standards.

The Al-Rabeh account is a salary account available to customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Customers can open Al-Rabeh account in any of KFH branches in Kuwait, or through the Bank's online channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Salary transfer is a prerequisite for customers to enter the draw provided that the transfer of salary to Al-Rabeh account is constant. Regarding the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer is able to deposit 3 salaries during the three months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the 3 months prior to the draw. Ten draws take place on a weekly basis for amount of KD 1,500 for 10 winners each, 1 KG of KFH gold will be drawn monthly for one winner and KD 25,000 for one winner every quarter, reaching a total number of 536 winners during the year. KFH is keen to further meet customers' requirements and aspirations and their increasing needs as well as offer innovative and modern services, therefore achieving customer satisfaction, which is one of the fundamentals at KFH. The bank has achieved a qualitative shift in the level of financial services by utilizing technology.

Business

KAMCO Invest Projects Market Update

Total projects awarded in Kuwait reached \$521 million in Q2 2022

GCC project awards rise in Q2 2022 thanks to Saudi Arabia

KUWAIT: GCC project awards improved during the second quarter of the year despite global economic challenges that was caused by supply chain problems and higher oil prices primarily driven by the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Higher crude oil price was the biggest contributor to inflation numbers across countries, including in the US where it contributed to around 200 bps to the 9.1 percent inflation during June-2022. Total value of GCC contracts awarded increased by 11.7 percent y-o-y during Q2-2022 to \$22.8 billion against \$20.4 billion in Q2-2021.

Saudi Arabia and Oman reported higher contract awards during the quarter that more than offset a dip in awards in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE. Saudi Arabia, the GCC's largest projects market, recorded the biggest y-o-y increase in value of contracts awarded during Q2-2022 that reached \$16.5 billion in 2022 as compared to \$9.3 billion in Q2-2021. Contracts awarded as part of the \$500 billion Neom project boosted the kingdom's project awards during the quarter. According to MEED, three out of the ten biggest contracts awarded in the Kingdom during Q2-2022 were from the Neom project. Comparatively, the UAE recorded a 46.4 percent fall in y-o-y projects awarded in Q2-2022 which reached \$3.1 billion.

Saudi Arabia represented 77.2 percent of GCC contract awards in Q2-2022. Total projects awarded in Kuwait during Q2-2022 declined by 67.9 percent to \$521 million down from \$1.6 billion for Q2-2021. Oman witnessed Q2-2022 new projects awards jump almost three times to reach \$1.1 billion rising from \$390 million in value of contracts awarded in Q2-2021. On the other hand, the value of contracts awarded in Bahrain during Q2-2022 witnessed a steep decline of 83.9 percent to reach \$228 million as compared with \$1.4 billion during Q2-2021. In terms of sector classification, the Transportation sector witnessed the biggest increase in terms of absolute value during the quarter with an increase of \$4.8 billion in new contracts to reach a total of \$7.7 billion during Q2-2022. Similarly, value of new contracts in the GCC Oil Sector increased almost three folds to reach \$4.5 billion during Q2-2022 rising from \$1.6 billion during Q2-2021. On the other hand, the Gas, Construction and Power sectors witnessed y-o-y decline in awards. Project awards in the Construction sector contracted 36 percent y-o-y to \$4.3 billion during the year.

Kuwait

Total projects awarded in Kuwait reached \$521 million in Q2-2022 witnessing a 67.9 percent decrease from \$1.6 billion in Q2-2021. Kuwait's Transportation sector recorded the biggest increase during the quarter with projects worth \$377 million up from \$18 million in Q2-2021. On the other hand, new projects awarded in the Construction sector fell 94 percent to \$78 million during the quarter down from \$1.2 billion during Q2-2021 dragging down the projects markets total value of projects awarded during the quarter. Similarly, new projects awarded in the Power Sector fell 73 percent y-o-y to \$55 million during Q2-2022 down from \$207 million in Q2-2021. In terms of significant contracts awarded during the

quarter, Kuwaiti Public Authority for Industry has begun the development of Shadadiya Industrial Zone in Shadadiya, Kuwait. The Shadadiya contract includes the construction of 41km roads, waste treatment plant, sewage facilities and storage rooms. Moreover, Spetco which has won the JPF-4 project during last quarter of 2021 has signed a \$295 million financing deal with four banks to finance the \$398 million Jurassic production facilities 4 (JPF4).

Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) has signed a \$398 million deal with Spetco for the JPF-4 project and the \$426 million JPF-5 project with Jereh during Q4-2021. Despite the decline in the total value of new projects awarded in Kuwait during the quarter, the pipeline of project remains strong in the country. Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) is currently planning the tender of \$700 million contract to improve the efficiency of four gathering centers in East Kuwait, according to MEED Projects. KOC is also under the process of planning the tender of \$650 million project to expand two effluent water disposal plants (EWD-1 and EWD-2).

Moreover, according to MEED, KOC is also planning to award its planned Project Management Consultancy contract to three companies namely KBR, Wood Group and Worley. Rest of the GCC Total Q2-2022 contracts awarded in Qatar fell by 27.3 percent to reach \$1.3 billion as compared to \$1.8 billion during Q2-2021. Despite the fall in total contracts during the quarter, Qatar has managed to award notable contracts such as the \$850 million contract to build four LNG carriers to South Korea's Daewoo. The LNG carrier vessels which are expected to be delivered by the first quarter of 2025 will carry LNG from Qatar's North Field expansion scheme. In Oman, total projects awarded during the quarter jumped almost three times to reach \$1.1 billion up from \$390 million during Q2-2021. One notable project awarded in the Sultanate during Q2-2022 is the \$195 million project to construct plaza, commercial and residential buildings as parts of the \$1.6 billion Yiti Sustainable City project. Project awards in Bahrain also showed a decline during the quarter to reach \$228 million down from \$1.4 billion in Q2-2021.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has enjoyed the best Q2 contract awards since 2014 mainly reflecting elevated oil prices, although the Kingdom has clearly stated that it wants to separate project awards and oil market performance. Total Saudi project awards in Q2-2022 stood \$19.5 billion as compared to \$16.5 billion during Q2-2021. The value of contracts awarded in the Kingdom during Q2-2022 witnessed a q-o-q increase of 106.7 percent or 8.5 billion from \$8.0 billion in Q1-2022.

In terms of sectors, the Transportation sector leapt into the lead as the largest sector by value of awarded projects among the sectors accounting 36.1 percent of the total projects awarded in the Kingdom during Q2-2022 mainly due to Neom awards of transport and utility infrastructure during the quarter. The \$500 billion Neom project has awarded two key contracts to build two 28 KM long tunnels for high-speed transport and freight services. Moreover, in



another major transportation contract DP World and the Saudi Ports Authority (Mawani) have agreed to a 30-year \$133 million deal to build a large-scale logistic park at the Jeddah Islamic Port.

UAE

The UAE maintained its position as the second largest projects market in the GCC after Saudi Arabia during Q2-2022 despite witnessing a q-o-q decline of 25.4 percent to reach \$3.1 billion in awards during the quarter. In terms of y-o-y performance, the decline was steeper at 46.4 percent. As a result, the Emirate represented 13.8 percent of the total contracts awarded in the GCC during the quarter as compared to 25.2 percent during Q1-2022. In terms of sectors, the Construction Sector once again topped the biggest pie of new project awards in the UAE representing 64.3 percent of total projects in Q2-2022.

However, new projects awarded in the sector decreased 22.5 percent y-o-y to reach \$2.0 billion during the quarter down from \$2.6 billion in Q2-2021. On the other hand, the Transport sector witnessed the largest percentage growth in awards during the quarter. The sector recorded \$423 million in new contracts during Q2-2022 as compared to \$106 million it registered in Q2-2021. Some notable projects that were awarded during Q2-2022 in the Emirate included the \$173

million contract awarded by Adnoc Onshore to Greece's Archirodon Construction to open further production capacity at the Asab oil field. The project is expected to improve the handling capacity of the Asab central degassing station. This improvement is expected to boost Abu Dhabi's premium-grade Murban crude from the Asab oil field by 12 percent. Another notable project in the Emirate was the two contracts under the Masara project awarded by Arada valued at \$125 million to build its first residential district. The two packages were awarded to Kuwait's Mohamed Abdulmohsen Al-Kharafi & Sons (\$62 million) and UAE's Intermax Engineering and Contracting (\$63 million).

Project pipeline

Despite varying trends during Q2-2022, the projects pipeline in the GCC region continues to remain strong. Data from MEED Project showed around \$2.65 trillion worth of projects planned or underway in the GCC as of the end of June-2022 as compared to \$2.59 trillion at the end of March-2022. Data showed that around \$77 billion worth of construction and transport projects are at the tender stage and an additional \$352 billion at the design and study stage and these are mainly in the infrastructure schemes funded/initiated by the government including railways, highways, bridges, airports and sewerage systems.

Putin vows to overcome 'colossal' high-tech problems

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday vowed to overcome the "colossal" high-tech problems his country is facing due to the onset of unprecedented Western sanctions over Ukraine.

The Kremlin chief said the West had deployed sanctions to cut off Russia from high-tech products in order to contain the country's development. He said that Russia would overcome "any difficulties" if it makes high tech a major focus of its development.

"This is a huge challenge for our country," he told a meeting on the country's strategic development.

"Realizing the colossal amount of difficulties we are facing, we will look for new solutions in an energetic and competent manner." He said Russia would also use "sovereign" technology and products of domestic innovative companies. Many top tech companies including Apple, Microsoft and Intel suspended their operations in Russia, or left the country altogether, after Putin sent troops to Ukraine on February 24, leaving Russia without any domestic alternatives.

Putin said that many fast-growing Russian companies such as online retailer

Ozon or technology company Yandex have been cut off from Western financing because of the sanctions.

He said Russia must quickly create alternatives so that such companies can attract the necessary financing at home and continue their development. "I very much look forward to detailed proposals from both the finance ministry and the Bank of Russia," Putin added.

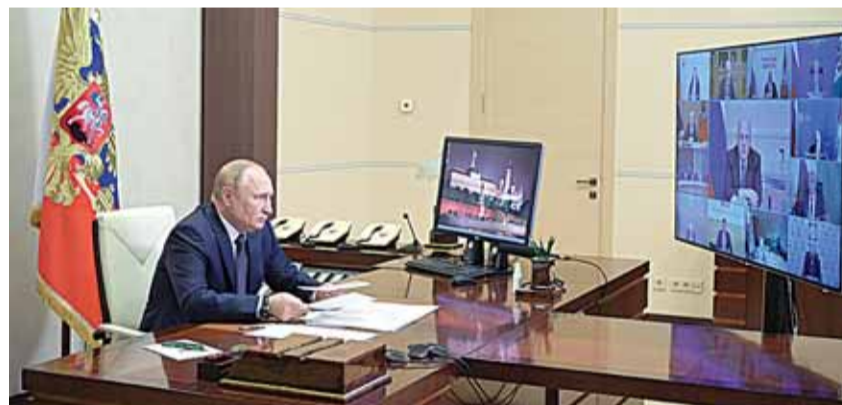
Putin has been defiant in the face of Western sanctions, insisting that the Russian economy will emerge stronger, and pointing to "chaotic measures" in Europe that have boosted global energy prices.

But Russia has been heavily reliant on imports of everything from manufacturing equipment to consumer goods, and economists believe the worst effects of the sanctions are still to come.

Largest ever fine

At the meeting Putin stressed that major state corporations which he said do not know what to do with "billions of dollars" in accumulated resources should invest in domestic high-tech firms.

He also used the occasion to criticize industrial conglomerate Rostec, saying that



MOSCOW, Russia: Russian President Vladimir Putin chairs a meeting of the Presidential Council for Strategic Development and National Projects via a video link at the Novo-Ogaryovo state residence, outside Moscow, on July 18, 2022. —AFP

until now it has demonstrated "modest results". "A project to develop the micro-electronic industry had to be completely rebooted last year," he said, also mentioning 5G networks as another problematic area.

At the same meeting, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko said that the Russian IT sector would overcome the adverse consequences of the sanctions in about three to five years.

Kirill Dmitriev, head of the Russian Direct Investment Fund, for his part proposed the creation of funds involving state companies such as oil pipeline monopoly Transneft that could invest in the high-tech

sector. In 2021, Putin complained of the growing influence of foreign tech companies, which he said were competing with sovereign states.

Russia has for months been tightening controls over US-based tech companies, accusing them of interfering in the country's internal affairs and supporting the opposition.

On Monday, a Moscow court fined Google 21 billion rubles (\$360 million) for failing to remove content concerning Russia's military intervention in Ukraine. It is the largest fine ever imposed on an IT company in Russia, experts said. —AFP

Bangladesh rolls out power curbs as price hike slams economy

DHAKA: Bangladesh rolled out energy restrictions and shut down power plants Tuesday as a spike in global fuel prices slammed the South Asian economy, officials said. Power ministry spokesman Aslam Uddin said international fuel prices had surged since Russia invaded Ukraine, prompting Bangladesh to shut down diesel-powered plants and keep some gas-fired power factories idle.

Bangladesh has also ordered scheduled blackouts of up to two hours daily and a shutdown of shops after 8 pm, officials said. "Electricity connections to shops and malls will be cut if they violate the order," Uddin said. The country's tens of thousands of mosques have been asked to only run air-conditioners during the five daily prayers, he said. Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, the prime minister's energy adviser, on Monday urged people to save power and said officials may start carpooling, shortening office hours and holding meetings online.

Former senior IMF official Ahsan H Mansur said



power rationing was not the right solution to the economic problem, which has been worsened by the sliding value of the taka against the dollar.

"It is a balance of payment problem. It is manageable. But the government should hike energy

prices instead of rationing it," he said. The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party said the power rations show that "the country is in the grip of an economic crisis", and blamed government spending. —AFP

IMF greenlights \$1 billion loan to Tanzania

WASHINGTON: The International Monetary Fund said Monday it has granted Tanzania a \$1.046-billion loan over 40 months, primarily to help the country cope with the consequences of the war in Ukraine.

"Spillovers from the war in Ukraine are stalling the Tanzanian economy's gradual recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbating the country's development and reform challenges to unleash its economic potential," the IMF said in a statement. As a result, the fund's experts believe that the African country will need help to carry out reforms and "unleash its economic potential."

Tanzania is to immediately receive the equivalent of \$151.7 million. It had already received a loan of \$567 million at the end of 2021 to meet its most urgent needs, when the COVID-19 pandemic had severely hampered its economic development, particularly in the tourism sector.

The war in Ukraine has caused food and fuel prices to soar worldwide, and the rise in wheat prices is "particularly worrying," said the IMF in a recent report entitled "A new shock and little room for maneuver," because sub-Saharan Africa imports 85 percent of its cereal consumption, with particularly high amounts going to Tanzania, Ivory Coast, Senegal and Mozambique.

The project that was announced on Monday, which is part of the Extended Credit Facility (ECF), should help finance reforms to improve Tanzania's financial stability, carry out public investments and support the private sector. "Recognizing Tanzania's strong track record in reform implementation, directors supported the authorities' requests for an ECF arrangement to meet pressing financing needs," said Bo Li, an IMF official quoted in the statement. Among other objectives, he also mentioned the importance of continuing vaccination campaigns on a larger scale. —AFP

Brad Pitt says retirement still a long way off

Brad Pitt scotched talk of imminent retirement as he travelled to Paris for the premiere of his Jackie Chan-inspired action caper "Bullet Train". The 58-year-old had worried fans that his acting days may be numbered after a GQ interview last month in which he said he was in the "last semester" of his career. But Pitt told AFP: "I'm not getting out by any means. It seems that might have been taken as a statement of retirement. That's not what I was saying," he said. "I'm over that hump of middle age and so I'm looking at that last leg... how do I want to spend that time? At my age, you've made enough mistakes... now there's a comfort in applying that kind of wisdom."

"Bullet Train", which is being released around the world over the next two weeks, sees Pitt trying something new in an action comedy from the director of "John Wick", David Leitch. Pitt plays a reluctant hit-man fighting off rivals on a Japanese train. "It's much more fun than the regular punch-up. It's infused with humor and character," he said. "I can't say enough about Jackie Chan and what he's done, and to be in that



US actor Brad Pitt reacts during a preview of the film (Bullet Train) in Paris.

arena, even close to that, is something I hadn't done before." Pitt will next be seen in "Babylon" about Hollywood's golden age, directed by Damien Chazelle ("La La Land").

That will partner him again with Margot Robbie-the pair starred in Quentin Tarantino's "Once upon a Time in Hollywood", which won Pitt an Oscar in 2020. But Pitt said he takes particular

enjoyment from production duties with his company Plan B. The company has three best picture Oscar winners to its name—"The Departed", "Twelve Years a Slave" and "Moonlight"—and will soon release the hotly tipped "Blonde" about Marilyn Monroe. "I really like what we've been able to do on the producing end. You get to be part of stories, foster new talent," he said.

Unlike other major movie stars such as Tom Cruise, Pitt is not as wedded to the nostalgia of movie theatres. "I like the dichotomy, the streamer as well as the theatre experience, because films were getting so expensive to do and to market that it was either big tent-pole movies or very small intimate movies and there was no room for anything in-between. Streamers have opened it up for more voices," he said. Nonetheless, Pitt said he had recently loved going to watch "Elvis" in a cinema. "I'm a big fan of Austin Butler, I think he's going to do great work," said Pitt of the film's star. "It was so much fun to be there again. There's a place for both." — AFP



(From left to right) US actor Brad Pitt, US actresses Joey King, British actor Aaron Taylor-Johnson, US actor Brian Tyree Henry, US Director David Leitch and US Executive producer Kelly McCormick pose for a photo during a preview of the film (Bullet Train) in Paris. — AFP photos



Rare twin giraffes born in Kenya

Rare twins have been born to a Maasai giraffe in Nairobi's national park, the Kenyan wildlife minister said Tuesday. "This is an extremely rare occurrence," Najib Balala said on Twitter in a post accompanied by a picture of the mother watching over her offspring. The world's tallest species was listed as "vulnerable to extinction" on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's 2016 Red List of threatened wildlife.

Only about 117,000 giraffe remain in the wild, according to the Giraffe Conservation Foundation. It said the numbers of the gentle long-necked giant in Africa have plummeted by 30 percent over the last 30 years, describing it as a "silent extinction". Kenya is home to three

subspecies of giraffe, the Maasai, the reticulated and the Rothschild.

Nairobi National Park lies just seven kilometers (four miles) from the heart of the Kenyan capital, and is a tourist magnet for its wildlife including lions, leopards, rhinos and buffalos which graze against a backdrop of distant skyscrapers. At 15 months, giraffes have one of the longest gestation periods for mammals. They give birth standing up, which means their calves drop just under two meters (six feet) to the ground.

This startling introduction to life gets them up and running around in less than an hour. A newborn calf is bigger than the average adult human. Only a handful of twin births have been documented worldwide with most often not surviving. In the wild, giraffes can live up to 25 years, while in captivity they can survive more than 35 years. — AFP



Dozens of sea turtles stabbed to death off Japan island

A frustrated fisherman has confessed that he stabbed to death dozens of protected sea turtles on a southern Japanese island after they got caught in his fishing nets, local officials say. Between 30 to 50 green sea turtles were found dead or dying last Thursday, with stab wounds on their necks and elsewhere, on a beach in remote Kumejima island, some 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) southwest of Tokyo. It was "an extremely grisly scene", according to Yoshimitsu Tsukakoshi, a senior staff member at Kumejima Umigame-kan, a local sea turtle conservation body.

"Sea turtles are gentle creatures and they move away when humans approach them," Tsukakoshi told AFP on Tuesday. "I couldn't believe it could happen in this day and age." Yuji Tabata, the head of the local fishermen's cooperative, told AFP that the man responsible has confessed to stabbing the animals after dozens become tangled in his gillnet.

The fisherman, whose name has not been released, told the cooperative that he released many of the tangled-up turtles, but after struggling with the animals, he began stabbing them to try and weaken them. "He said he has never seen so many turtles on his nets. He regrets it now," Tabata said. "He said he felt in physical danger."

The local town government and police are investigating the deaths, a municipal official told AFP, declining to say whether the fisherman could face penalties over the incident. An editorial in the local Okinawa Times newspaper on Tuesday condemned the deaths and the manner in which the protected animals were left to perish on the beach.

It also urged local officials to consider claims by fishermen that turtles are causing economic damage. Local reports said some fishermen in the area believe the turtle population is increasing. The creatures can collide with fishing boats, injuring themselves and damaging the crafts' propellers.

Tabata said the community is also concerned that turtles are eating the seaweed that is home to the fish they depend on for their livelihood. He stressed that the incident was rare and fishermen regularly untangle turtles caught in their lines. "We are in the process of coming up with ideas so that this doesn't happen again," he added. — AFP

Jafar Panahi: Jailed Iranian director who won hearts in Europe

Acclaimed Iranian director Jafar Panahi, jailed as part of a crackdown on the country's filmmakers, for years defied a ban on his work to carry on making deeply human tales of Iran's social and cultural struggles that won a loyal following abroad. The ingenuity he demonstrated in getting his films made and smuggled out of Iran to foreign distributors and film festivals became the stuff of legend.

A year after being handed a 20-year ban on filmmaking he dispatched a documentary with the cheeky title "This is Not a Film" to the Cannes festival on a flash drive stashed in a cake. "Why should it be a crime to make a movie?" he told AFP in 2010. "When a filmmaker does not make films, it is as if he is jailed."

Panahi, 62, was banned from making movies and leaving the country in 2010 after supporting mass anti-government protests a year earlier and making a series of films that critiqued the state of modern Iran. Convicted of "propaganda against the system", he was sentenced to six years in jail but served only two months behind bars before being released on bail.

In the years that followed, Iranian authorities appeared content to turn a blind eye to his failure to toe the line, as long as his films did not appear overtly political. That tolerance ended on July 11 with his arrest in connection with protests by a group of filmmakers and subsequent order to serve out the sentence that had been hanging over him since 2010 in Tehran's notorious Evin prison.

"Panahi had been sentenced in 2010 to a total of six years in prison... and therefore he was entered into Evin detention centre to serve his sentence there," judiciary spokesman Massoud Setayeshi said Tuesday. He is the third Iranian director to be detained this month, alongside Mostafa Aleahmad and Mohammad Rasoulof, who won the Golden Bear in Berlin in 2020 with his film "There Is No Evil".

Their arrests triggered an outcry in Europe, where the organizers of the Berlin and Cannes festivals condemned the clampdown on free speech and demanded the directors' release. Panahi was arrested after going to the prosecutor's office to inquire about Rasoulof's situation. He and Rasoulof had in May denounced the arrests of several colleagues in their homeland in an open letter.

Rasoulof had also led a group of Iranian filmmakers in giving voice to pub-

lic outrage over what they called the "corruption, theft, inefficiency and repression" underpinning the collapse of a 10-storey building in southwestern Khuzestan province on May 23 in which 43 people were killed.

Camera on the dashboard

A child of the Tehran slums, Panahi is a leading exponent of Iranian New Wave cinema, alongside Abbas Kiarostami, whom he served as an assistant early in



In this file photo Iranian director Mohammad Rasoulof shows his green scarf during a photocall after the screening of his film "The White Meadows", during the second day of the 57th San Sebastian International Film Festival in San Sebastian.

his career. In keeping with the movement, his films focus on the social realities of his homeland and give pride of place to non-professional actors. His first feature film, "The White Balloon", won the Camera d'Or in 1995 at Cannes, which also rewarded him in 2003 with the Jury Prize for "Blood and Gold" and Best Screenplay in 2018 for his roadmovie "3 Faces" about three generations of Iranian actresses.

One of his most popular films, "Taxi", which won the top prize at the Berlin film festival in 2015, was secretly filmed with a camera mounted on the dashboard of a cab he drove around Tehran. His conversations with the small cross-section of Iranians that come aboard his aspiring filmmaker niece, a couple of old women with a fishbowl, a lawyer barred from practicing her trade, a badly-injured man who is making his will on the backseat—provide rich insights into everyday life in the Islamic republic.

Despite being barred from travelling to collect awards or attend premieres of his films, Panahi has always maintained he has no desire to leave Iran. "I am in love with my country, and despite all its limitations I would never want to live elsewhere," he has said. — AFP



In this file photo German actress Anke Engelke (left) speaks near a giant portrait of Iranian dissident director Jafar Panahi as the President of the Berlinale International Jury Darren Aronofsky (center) holds the Golden Bear for Best Film going to Panahi for his film Taxi during the closing ceremony of the 65th International Film Festival Berlinale in Berlin. — AFP photos

Iran film-maker Panahi must serve six-year sentence

Award-winning dissident Iranian film-maker Jafar Panahi, arrested last week in Tehran, must serve a six-year sentence previously handed to him in 2010, the judicial authority announced Tuesday. Panahi, 62, has won a number of awards at international festivals for films that have critiqued modern Iran, including the top prize in Berlin for "Taxi" in 2015, and best screenplay at Cannes for his film "Three Faces" in 2018.

He is the third director to be detained this month, alongside Mostafa Aleahmad and Mohammad Rasoulof, who won the Golden Bear in Berlin in 2020 with his film "There Is No Evil". "Panahi had been sentenced in 2010 to a total of six years in prison... and therefore he was entered into Evin detention centre to serve his sentence there", judiciary spokesman Massoud Setayeshi told reporters. He was arrested in 2010, following his support for anti-government demonstrations. He was convicted of "propaganda against the system", sentenced to six years in jail, banned from directing or writing films and blocked from leaving the country.

But he served only two months in jail in 2010, and was subsequently living on conditional release that could be revoked at any time. Panahi was arrested again on July 11 after he went to the prosecutor's office to follow up on the situation of Rasoulof. The arrests come after Panahi and Rasoulof denounced in May the arrests of several colleagues in their homeland in an open letter.

Series of arrests

Despite the political pressures, Iran has a thriving film industry and the country's products regularly win awards at major international festivals. Panahi's detention has sparked condemnation from fellow filmmakers. Cannes film festival organizers said they "strongly condemn" the arrests as well as "the wave of repression evidently under way in Iran against its artists".

The Venice film festival called for the "immediate release" of the directors, while the Berlin film festival said it was "dismayed and outraged" at the arrest. France's foreign ministry on Friday expressed concern at the "arbitrary" arrests of the filmmakers, citing a "worrying deterioration in the situation of artists in Iran".

Iran has in recent weeks arrested several leading figures, including reformist politician Mostafa Tajzadeh who was detained on July 8. Tajzadeh "is currently in pre-trial detention in Evin" prison and "his accusation is gathering and collusion with the intention of acting against the country's security and propaganda against the system," Setayeshi said on Tuesday. The politician, who last year made an unsuccessful bid for the presidency, was arrested in 2009 during protests disputing the re-election of former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Tajzadeh, who had long campaigned for democratic and "structural changes" in the Islamic republic was convicted in 2010 on charges of harming national security and propaganda against the state before being released in 2016 after serving his sentence. — AFP



In this file photo Cosplayers portraying characters from "Mortal Kombat" attend the 2019 Comic-Con International in San Diego, California. — AFP photos



In this file photo from left, Rebecca Eusey plays the character Claire from the Outlander novels, Eirania Cosplay plays Mother of Dragon from Game of Thrones television series and Marina Howell plays Super Mario from a video game during Comic-Con International 2016 in San Diego.

'Thrones' and 'Rings' fans ready for battle as Comic-Con returns

Comic-Con finally returns to San Diego this week, where new "Lord of the Rings" and "Game of Thrones" TV series will compete before tens of thousands of cosplaying geeks and nerds at the world's most famous pop culture gathering. Disney and its Marvel superheroes will also preview their upcoming films and shows to adoring fans at the sprawling convention, which has not taken place in full for three years due to the pandemic.

"I think it'll look like Comic-Con from 2019," said the event's communications chief David Glanzer, even if guests — whether dressed as hobbits, dragons or princesses — will be required to wear face masks. "We weathered it. And now coming back, maybe we're gonna have tears of joy... it's very emotional," he told AFP.

In addition to 135,000 screaming fans, the comic book, science fiction and fantasy extravaganza draws Hollywood's biggest studios and their A-list stars to show off upcoming titles-kicking off this year with Paramount's "Dungeons and Dragons: Honor Among Thieves." Marking the first time the world's most popular role-playing game has received a mega-budget silver-screen adaptation, the movie out next March stars Chris Pine, Hugh Grant and former "Bridgerton" heartthrob Rege-Jean Page.

But the week's headlines are set to be dominated by two huge fantasy series



In this file photo Cosplayer Crystal Moffatt, dressed as "Lord of the Rings" character Lady Galadriel, tries on an animated dragon doll for sale at the Imaginarium Galleries booth in the exhibition hall on the third day of Comic Con International in San Diego, California.

coming to television screens soon: Amazon Prime's "Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power" and HBO's "House of the Dragon." "The Rings of Power" is Amazon's enormously ambitious saga taking place in the world of J.R.R. Tolkien's books, set long before the events of Peter Jackson's Oscar-winning trilogy of films.

The series-playing out across five seasons, the first of which launches September 2 — is reported to have cost Amazon well over \$1 billion, and is said to be a personal obsession of founder Jeff

Bezos. Much of that cost went into buying the Tolkien universe rights and on lavish production values, with a healthy sum set aside for "activations," or immersive fan experiences, at Comic-Con. Amazon on Friday will bring its cast of hobbits, elves and dwarves to the venue's cavernous Hall H, where fans who line up for hours or even days anticipate seeing the first detailed look at the series.

Rings v Thrones

The following day, "House of the Dragon"—the first spin-off to "Game of Thrones" set in George RR Martin's fictional world of Westeros, out August 21 — will be unveiled by HBO. Martin has played down talk of a rivalry between the two mega-franchises, insisting, "I want both shows to find an appreciative audience, and give them great television. Great fantasy." "The more fantasy hits we have, the more great fantasy we are likely to get," he wrote in a blog post.

But HBO hopes its prequel can match the wild popularity of the original "Thrones," which over eight seasons became appointment viewing, spawned countless imitations and delivered 59 Emmys—a record for a drama at television's equivalent of the Oscars. Starring Matt Smith, Rhys Ifans and Emma D'Arcy, "House of the Dragon" tells the story of the murderous, dragon-breeding Targaryen family, some 300 years before the events of "Thrones."



In this file photo The alien Ferengi from Star Trek (center) stands with two other Star Trek characters during Comic-Con International 2016 in San Diego, California.

Its stars will appear in Hall H immediately after a movie presentation from HBO's sister company Warner Bros Pictures, which is set to feature Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, who is promoting his upcoming superhero flick "Black Adam." Elsewhere, Disney is keeping its own Hall H presentation under wraps, but rumors abound that it will finally show off its much-anticipated "Black Panther 2" sequel.

The week will also feature a send-off for AMC's "The Walking Dead," as the juggernaut zombie TV series bows out with

its final season—and launches a new spin-off, the anthology-style "Tales of the Walking Dead." But for Glanzer, the blockbuster studio showcases are secondary to what Comic-Con is all about: a community for its fans. "To be able to see people have a good time, enjoying comics and popular art is a gift that I look forward to. I really, really do... We get to come home," he said. "What better thing to be able to do than that—and share it with your friends." — AFP

Pop art sculptor Claes Oldenburg dies aged 93

US-based pop art sculptor Claes Oldenburg, known for his giant work depicting everyday objects such as hamburgers, lipstick and electric plugs, has died aged 93. Oldenburg's sculpture was critically acclaimed and widely popular over his long career, often striking a lighthearted tone and seen by millions in open-air sites such as public squares. Oldenburg was born in 1929 in Stockholm and moved to New York in 1956.

The Pace Gallery, which represented him, confirmed his death, hailing him as "one of the most radical artists of the 20th century (for) his inextricable role in the development of pop art." It said he had been recovering from a fall and passed away at his home and studio in New York.

Other monumental objects that Oldenburg sculpted include ice cream cones in New York, a clothespin in

Philadelphia that marked the 1976 bicentennial of the US Declaration of Independence, and a cherry balanced on a spoon in Minneapolis. "My intention is to make an everyday object that eludes definition," he was quoted as saying in The New York Times. — AFP



Mexico resumes building president's tourist train

Mexico has resumed building part of President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's flagship tourist train project, an official said Monday, despite a judge suspending construction on that section on environmental grounds. A judge indefinitely suspended construction of part of the Mayan Train in the Yucatan peninsula in late May.

The ruling followed a legal challenge brought by opponents, including scuba divers, who are concerned about the effect of the train on wildlife, caves and water-filled sinkholes known as cenotes. But construction resumed on July 13 under a measure implemented in November that deemed the government's major infrastructure works "national security."

Under that ordinance, Lopez Obrador intends to shield the train and other projects from lawsuits that have delayed construction, as well as to expedite obtaining permits and licenses. The Mayan Train "is a work of national security because of the railroads," said Javier May, head of the National Fund for the Promotion of Tourism, the government agency overseeing the project, on Monday.

The public security and interior departments are determined to resume construction of the 60-kilometer (37-mile) section between the resorts of Playa del Carmen and Tulum, May said. Lopez Obrador hopes to inaugurate the roughly 1,500-kilometer rail loop linking popular Caribbean beach resorts and archeological ruins by the end of 2023.

In the May ruling, the federal judge cited the "imminent danger" of causing "irreversible damage" to ecosystems, according to one of the plaintiffs, the non-governmental group Defending the Right to a Healthy Environment. Authorities were found to have failed to carry out the necessary environmental impact studies before starting construction of the section, one of several being built by the military, the NGO said in a statement.



Sports

'No sadness' as skating great calls time on storied career

Two-time Olympic skating champion Hanyu retires at 27

TOKYO: Japan's two-time Olympic figure skating champion Yuzuru Hanyu said he felt "no sadness" after retiring from competition aged 27 on Tuesday, bringing the curtain down on one of the sport's most glittering careers. The soft-spoken "Ice Prince" became the first man to win back-to-back Olympic titles in 66 years and is a national icon who is followed around the world by adoring fans.

But he said the time was right to bow out after finishing fourth at this year's Beijing Games - where he struggled with injury - saying he was "not needed any more" in competitive skating. "As far as competitions and results go, I think I have been able to take all the things I wanted to take," Hanyu, dressed in a dark suit and bowing deeply as he took to the stage, told a packed press conference in Tokyo.

"I think I have grown in such a way that I don't seek that kind of evaluation anymore," he added. Hanyu said he intends to keep his legion of "Fanyu" supporters happy by skating in exhibition shows, and made clear his discomfort with the idea of being considered retired.

He will no longer compete on the stage that made him one of figure skating's all-time greats, however, adding that he would "never miss the tension of competition". "I'll no longer be compared with other skaters as a competitor," he said. "I have no sadness. I want to continue to do my best." With his graceful skating style and delicate, boyish looks, Hanyu is an icon for his fans, who shower the ice with Winnie the Pooh toys after his routines.

He won his first Olympic singles title at the 2014 Sochi Games and overcame injury to retain his crown four years later in Pyeongchang. He also won the world championships in 2014 and 2017 but he has been dogged by injury in recent years, including an ankle ligament problem that he had to overcome to win his second Olympic gold. He was dethroned as Olympic champion in February in Beijing by rival Nathan Chen of the United States, tumbling during his routine and missing the podium.

'Heavy burden'

Hanyu said he had considered retiring after the Pyeongchang Olympics in 2018 but finally made up his mind after returning from Beijing. "I thought about a lot of things at that time, and I thought I wasn't needed anymore on this stage," he said.

Hanyu will concentrate on skating in ice shows, where he will attempt to land the fabled quadruple axel jump that eluded him throughout his competitive career. He said he would "work harder" so he could one day "land it successfully in front of everyone". Although his plans for the future are still "vague", he said he wanted to "figure out ways to show people my skating in a way that's more befitting of today's age".

"Ice shows tend to be considered something elegant and fun, but I want to remain more of an athlete," he said. "I want people to see me as I continue to fight." Hanyu is a national hero in Japan, where he became the youngest recipient of his country's prestigious People's Honor Award in



Japan's Yuzuru Hanyu

2018, and his every move is headline news. But he still remains something of an enigma despite the huge attention, rarely granting interviews and hav-

ing no social media presence. He said he wanted to "continue learning", adding that "being Yuzuru Hanyu is a heavy burden". —AFP

News in brief

New Zealand beat Ireland

BELFAST: Glenn Phillips' quick-fire 69 and four wickets from Lockie Ferguson inspired New Zealand's 31-run win over Ireland in their opening Twenty20 international on Monday. Phillips was unbeaten in his 52-ball innings as he smashed seven boundaries in New Zealand's total of 173 for eight. Jimmy Neesham kept the runs flowing for New Zealand with a rapid 29 which included a towering six into the sightscreen. Ferguson turned the screw on Ireland in their chase with impressive figures of 4-14 as the hosts were bowled out for 142 in 18.2 overs. Ireland, who just missed out on a first ever victory over New Zealand when they lost the final ODI by one run last week, elected to field first in Dublin. It had looked a solid call when New Zealand opener Finn Allen fell for one in the third over off Joshua Little, who finished with four wickets. Martin Gupthill (24) soon followed after he holed out at long off and Dane Cleaver (five) lasted only seven deliveries on his debut, nicking a length ball from Little behind.

Spurs sign defender Spence

LONDON: Tottenham signed Middlesbrough defender Djed Spence on Tuesday in a deal that could rise to a reported £20 million (\$24 million). Spence agreed a five-year contract with Tottenham after impressing during a loan spell with Championship side Nottingham Forest last season. The 21-year-old right-back's initial price is believed to be £12.5 million but that could rise to £20 million if add-on clauses are reached. Spence shot to prominence as Forest won promotion to the Premier League via the second tier play-offs last term. He made 46 appearances, scoring three goals in a season that culminated with victory over Huddersfield in the play-off final at Wembley. Tottenham boss Antonio Conte has been on a major recruitment drive since leading his team to Champions League qualification via a top four finish in the Premier League.

Norway women's coach axed

OSLO: Norwegian women's football head coach Martin Sjogren has been axed after the team's humiliating European Championship group stage defeat to England, the national federation announced on Tuesday. England recorded the biggest win in European Championship history with an 8-0 demolition of Norway on July 11. "We're all disappointed with the performances at the European Championship this summer," said federation president Lise Klaveness in a statement. The Scandinavians had nourished medal ambitions after the return of top scorer Ada Hegerberg following five years of self-imposed exile in protest at the inequality of treatment given to men's and women's teams by the Norwegian federation. Swede Sjogren, 45, and his assistant Anders Jacobson took charge in January 2017, but are leaving by mutual consent with one year left on their contracts, the federation said.

Rins to join Honda-RCR

PARIS: Spaniard Alex Rins will join Honda-RCR next season after Suzuki announced their departure from MotoGP, his future outfit said on Tuesday. Rins, 26, had been left without a team as Suzuki are pulling out of their deal with the sport four years early. He will ride for Lucio Cecchinello's outfit replacing Alex Marquez, who has signed for Ducati-Gresini. "I am very happy to be joining the LCR Honda Team. Changing team and bike is a challenge but I am ready to give my 100% and to put into practice everything that I've learnt during my years in the MotoGP class," Rins said in a LCR Honda statement. "Lucio and Honda's trust have been crucial for me in deciding to take on this challenge with this factory. I would like to thank them for this opportunity." Rins' Suzuki team-mate and 2020 world champion Joan Mir has been linked with a move to Honda's factory team. —From AFP

Washington's Soto wins MLB Home Run Derby

LOS ANGELES: Washington Nationals outfielder Juan Soto, who turned down a record contract offer, won Major League Baseball's annual Home Run Derby contest on Monday, defeating Seattle outfielder Julio Rodriguez 19-18. The annual event was staged at Dodger Stadium ahead of Tuesday's MLB All-Star Game. In a championship showdown of Dominican sluggers, Rodriguez set the mark to beat off 18 homers, and Soto followed with 19 blasts over the outfield wall to claim the crown, the deciding homer flying 415 feet.

"It feels amazing," Soto said. "It feels tiring first of all, for all the hard work you put in, then it feels amazing." At 23, Soto was the second-youngest winner in Home Run Derby history after 1993 champion Juan Gonzalez of the Texas Rangers. "I just tried to square up and hit the ball

because I knew I had the power to get it done," Soto said. Soto has reportedly turned down a 15-year offer worth \$440 million from Washington that would have made him the highest-paid player in MLB history.

That has pushed the Nationals, an MLB-worst 31-63, to seek trade deals for the star outfielder before the league deadline just two weeks away. "Right now, I'm not even thinking about it," Soto said of his uncertain future. "I'm a champion and I won a championship for the Nationals." Soto, mobbed by Nationals teammates after his victory, is making \$17.1 million this season, while Rodriguez, 21, is on a one-year deal worth \$700,000 with the Mariners.

"Being on this stage is surreal, honestly," Rodriguez said. "I just went out there to have fun." In the semi-finals, Rodriguez ousted two-time defending champion Pete Alonso 31-23, and Soto downed St. Louis slugger Albert Pujols 16-15. New York Mets first baseman Alonso, who ousted Atlanta's Ronald Acuna Jr. 20-19 in the first round, was trying to become the first



LOS ANGELES: National League All-Star Juan Soto #22 of the Washington Nationals poses with the 2022 T-Mobile Home Run Derby trophy after winning the event at Dodger Stadium on July 18, 2022. —AFP

player to win the homer contest three consecutive years.

Rodriguez received a standing ovation after a sensational long-hitting display to eliminate Corey Seager of Texas 32-24 in the first round. Soto defeated Cleveland's Jose Ramirez 18-17 in a first-round matchup of

Dominican batters. Dominican slugger Pujols of the St. Louis Cardinals, MLB's oldest player at 42, was saluted by the other sluggers. "That was pretty awesome," Pujols said. Pujols beat Kyle Schwarber of Philadelphia 20-19 after winning an extra-swings tie-breaker 7-6. —AFP

Stokes announces shock retirement from ODI cricket

LONDON: England's Ben Stokes will retire from one-day international cricket after Tuesday's series opener against South Africa on his Durham home ground, citing an "unsustainable" schedule as the motivation for his shock decision. Stokes, who became England Test captain in April, made his ODI debut in 2011 and his standout performance in the format came in the 2019 World Cup final against New Zealand.

The charismatic all-rounder scored an unbeaten 84 in the Lord's final to force a super over that ended with England becoming 50-over world champions for the first time by the slenderest of margins. But in the three years since that triumphant moment, the 31-year-old has played just nine more ODIs due to injuries, a mental health break and workload management. He will turn out one last time at Chester-le-Street against South Africa on Tuesday before focusing on his Test captaincy and Twenty20 career.

Stokes, who has scored 2,919 runs and taken 74 wickets with his lively fast-medium bowling in 104 ODIs, said in a social media post on Monday that it had been an "incredibly tough decision to make". "As hard as a decision as this was to come to, it's not as hard (as) dealing with the fact I can't give my teammates 100 percent of myself in this format any more," he said. "The England shirt deserves nothing

less from anyone who wears it. Three formats are just unsustainable for me now.

Punishing schedule

"Not only do I feel that my body is letting me down because of the schedule and what is expected of us, but I also feel that I am taking the place of another player who can give (captain) Jos (Buttler) and the rest of the team their all. "I will give everything I have to Test cricket, and now, with this decision, I feel I can also give my total commitment to the T20 format."

Stokes's decision to quit ODIs follows the retirement last month of World Cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan, who helped shape England into a formidable force in the white-ball game. Clare Connor, interim CEO at the England and Wales Cricket Board, described Stokes as a "superstar in every format of our game". "Ben is not only one of the world's best players, but an inspirational figure too so our ODI team will miss him," she said. "But having taken on the Test captaincy and with today's busy calendar of cricket, we completely understand and respect his decision."

Stokes's decision to step down comes after England's 2-1 series defeat against India, in which he scored 48 runs in three innings but only bowled three overs. He has been rested from the three T20 games against South Africa that will follow the three-match ODI series against the Proteas. England have committed seven Tests and 12 limited overs internationals into their home season following a punishing touring program. Former England captain Nasser Hussain criticised the "joke" schedule, lamenting Stokes's retirement.



England's captain Ben Stokes

"If the ICC (International Cricket Council) just keeps putting on ICC events, and the individual boards just keep filling in the gaps with as much cricket as possible, then eventually these cricketers will say 'I'm done'," he told Sky Sports. Stokes and new red-ball head coach Brendon McCullum have been widely praised for reviving England's Test fortunes with an aggressive approach that has led to spectacular wins against New Zealand and India in recent weeks. A three-Test series against South Africa starts at Lord's on August 17. —AFP

Old-style scoreboard charm as Zimbabwe blast into T20 WCup

BULAWAYO: Under the gaze of an enormous, old-fashioned manually-operated scoreboard, Zimbabwe came up with all the right numbers at the weekend as they qualified for the Twenty20 World Cup for the first time since 2016. Craig Ervine's team clinched their ticket to Australia in October when they beat Papua New Guinea in their semi-final last Friday in the country's second largest and southern city of Bulawayo.

They then iced the cake with a 37-run win over

the Netherlands, who also qualified, in the final at the city's Queens Sports Club, a throwback to another age when cricket did not rely so heavily on the bells and whistles of modern technology. Established in 1890 when Zimbabwe was still the British colony of Rhodesia, the ground was inevitably named after Queen Victoria. It became a regular venue for many touring sides and hosted its first Test match in 1994.

In spite of the colored clothes and frenetic pace of a T20 match, there is still an old-world charm about Queens. The stately pavilion stands proud and the ground is ringed by trees that create a panoramic umbrella for spectators sitting on the grass out of the sun, making it one of the most picturesque venues in the world. But one key feature stands out: the scoreboard which reaches back into the 20th century, perhaps even earlier, for its display and methods of delivering information to the public.

A team of shadowy figures ghost their way around inside the great box, all black and yellow, manually changing names and numbers. Adding up scores on the aged scoreboard, energetic young men, including aspiring cricketers and passionate fans, operate seamlessly in coordination with scorers waving papers from behind a glass screen in the media box some 200 metres away on the other side of the ground. Hand gesture communication is sometimes overridden by radio communication to verify and clarify figures.

Most international scoreboards around the world are now fully digital but the old-school scoreboard at Queen's adds to the atmosphere, occasionally churning out unintended humour for fans, with reverse or misspelt names and upside-down numbers, just some of the errors associated with manual operations at fast turnaround. —AFP

Sports

USA win CONCACAF title, book 2024 Olympic berth

United States beat Canada 1-0 in final

MONTERREY: The United States qualified for the 2024 Paris Olympics on Monday by defeating Tokyo Olympic champions Canada 1-0 in the CONCACAF W Championship final. Alex Morgan scored from the penalty spot in the 78th minute to seal victory as the reigning world champions avenged their upset loss to the Canadians in last year's Olympic semi-finals. Morgan rifled a left-footed spot-kick into the bottom right corner of the goal after Canadian goalkeeper Kailen Sheridan, Morgan's club teammate on the San Diego Wave, dove the opposite way.

It was Morgan's 118th career goal for the US national squad. The US won the penalty when Canada's Allysha Chapman fouled American Rose Lavelle in the area. "It always feels good to be called a champion," Morgan said afterwards. "So this game means a lot to us. It's always going to mean a lot. Canada gave us a run for our money. But we prevailed and feel good about the performance."

Morgan's winner continued the veteran striker's recent run of good form. Morgan is leading the NWSL scoring charts with 11 goals for the

Wave. Morgan only returned to international duty last month after an eight-month hiatus that she says helped her "mentally and physically." "I feel like I'm in form, and some of the younger players are able to look up to the older players," she said. "Especially in a big tournament like this - you just can't replicate that in friendlies."

The Americans captured a third consecutive CONCACAF crown and ninth overall to secure their ticket to France while Canada was denied a bid for a third North American regional title after 1998 and 2010. Despite the defeat, the Canadians can still earn a 2024 berth in Paris. They will meet Jamaica next year in a playoff to determine another Paris slot.

Earlier, Kalyssa van Zanten scored in the 102nd minute to give the "Reggae Girlz" a 1-0 extra-time triumph over Costa Rica in the third-place match to advance to that Olympic playoff. The eight-team North American regional tournament also served as a qualifier for the 2023 Women's World Cup, with the four semi-finalists - the United States, Costa Rica, Canada and Jamaica - all securing berths at next year's showdown in Australia and New Zealand. —AFP



MONTERREY: USA's players celebrate with the trophy after winning the 2022 CONCACAF women's championship final football match against Canada, at the BBVA Bancomer stadium in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon State, Mexico on July 18, 2022. —AFP

Mountains and mentality should settle Tour tussle

CARCASSONNE: When current leader Jonas Vingegaard and defending champion Tadej Pogacar roll up the Champs-Elysees next Sunday, the cyclist in the yellow jersey will have endured an epic 21-day struggle for supremacy. Two-time defending champion Pogacar of the UAE Emirates was billed as the nailed-on certainty in the run up, but for now the Slovenian sits second trailing 2min 22sec behind the Dane. Here AFP looks at the factors most likely to settle the enthralling struggle that has attracted blockbuster crowds on the roadside and record television audiences.

Mentality

Pogacar was dancing around playfully pouring water on stage winner Jasper Philipsen at the finish line on Sunday like some teenager at a pool with his pals. On

the same day Vingegaard lost two teammates to injury, he also had to survive not only an early long range attack from his rival, but also a late fall, after which he threw his bike to the ground. The Dane had so far been a picture of calm, collected perseverance. Appearances can be deceptive, especially in this most machiavellian of sports, but mental strength will be crucial.

The pressure is off Pogacar, he has won twice, and now he is chasing, is less likely to be ganged up on by alliances of fortune between rival teams trying to topple him. Vingegaard conversely has had astonishing levels of service from the now departed pair Primoz Roglic and Steven Kruijswijk. These two did most of the damage in the series of searing attacks that saw Pogacar flounder so awfully on the Col du Granon where he was knocked off his perch by the Jumbo collective effort and alliances.

Mountains

The next three stages will see the peloton roll into the high mountains. After witnessing such a turn of fortunes in the Alps, there is every reason to expect attempts to effect another revolution in the Pyrenean climbs to Peyragudes and Hautacam and also at the first installation that ends in a 25km largely downhill run to Foix where Simon Yates raced to a daring tri-

umph in 2019. Asked why he had attacked at Megeve this week Pogacar seemed offended. "It's a race, that's racing, expect me to keep trying," said the champion.

Before Pogacar's bad day on the Col du Granon, where he dug deep within himself to limit his damages, the pair had appeared evenly matched. With the willowy Vingegaard skipping up into Pogacar's slipstream on every attack. The first of the three Pyrenean challenges ends with a daredevil descent. Pogacar's sense of fun, mastery of his vehicle and taste for an attack bode well for a thrilling finale at Foix.

The second one climbs to Peyragudes where French climber Romain Bardet once won, will serve as a reminder neither of the top two is guaranteed anything. But the third day has been designed to provide the sporting challenge and a panorama worthy of a legendary hero, simply put, the Tour de France should be decided on the climb to Hautacam on stage 18, with a total of 45km at a steep average 8 percent gradient awaits.

If the defending champion is still trailing going into the final day he might be heartened to recall his first Tour de France triumph in 2020 when he overhauled the leader Roglic, who went into the last real day of racing over 90sec ahead. Stage 20 is a 40km individual time-trial where on paper Pogacar could pulverise Vingegaard in a similar manner. —AFP

Prosecutors mull appeal in Blatter and Platini case

GENEVA: Swiss state prosecutors confirmed on Tuesday they have started the appeal process against the acquittal of former football chiefs Sepp Blatter and Michel Platini over a suspected fraudulent payment. Blatter and Platini, once the chiefs of world and European football respectively, were cleared on July 8 by the Federal Criminal Court in a trial following a mammoth investigation that began in 2015.

The Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland (OAG) confirmed to AFP it had taken the first step in appealing against the verdict. "The OAG has... filed an appeal," it said in a brief statement. The Federal Criminal Court, based in the southern city of Bellinzona, must now provide a written explanation of its verdict, a process that can take some time.

This will then be considered by the OAG, which will then decide whether to maintain the appeal or withdraw it. "This is not a preliminary decision. The judgment, to be justified in writing by the court as a result of the appeal application, will form the basis for further examination by the OAG," the office said. Former FIFA president Blatter, 86, and Platini, 67, were cleared of the allegations that shook world football and torpedoed their time at the top.

The Federal Criminal Court rejected the prosecution's request for a suspended prison sentence of a year and eight months. The trial revolved around payment for Platini's work as an adviser to Blatter between 1998 and 2002. Platini was accused of having submitted to FIFA in 2011 an allegedly fictitious invoice for a claimed debt still outstanding for his advisory work. They signed a contract in 1999 for an annual remuneration of 300,000 Swiss francs, which was paid in full by FIFA.

But the pair were tried over a two million Swiss franc (\$2.06 million) payment in 2011 to Platini, who was then in charge of European football's governing body UEFA. Blatter told the court the pair had actually struck a "gentleman's agreement" for Platini to be paid a million Swiss francs a year. Both were accused of fraud and forgery of a document. Blatter was accused of misappropriation and criminal mismanagement, while Platini was accused of participating in those offences. The court concluded that fraud was "not established with a likelihood bordering on certainty", and therefore applied the general principle of criminal law according to which "the doubt must benefit the accused". —AFP

United beat Palace 3-1 in Melbourne

MELBOURNE: Anthony Martial scored his third goal in three games as a slick Manchester United beat Crystal Palace 3-1 in Melbourne to ensure new coach Erik ten Hag's unbeaten streak remained intact Tuesday. In front of 76,500 fans at Melbourne Cricket Ground, French forward Martial struck in the first half while Marcus Rashford and Jadon Sancho both collected their second goals of the pre-season tour after the restart.

Joel Ward pulled one back for Palace, but they were always chasing a game that saw United reduced to 10 men in the dying minutes after Will Fish was sent off for a deliberate foul. The friendly victory was Ten Hag's third since taking over after their 4-0 thumping of Liverpool in Bangkok and a 4-1 win over Melbourne Victory. In contrast, it was a second straight defeat for Patrick Vieira's young Palace side, who crashed 2-0 to Liverpool in Singapore on Friday.

Dutchman Ten Hag is beginning to stamp his mark on the Old Trafford side, with his team who finished a disappointing sixth last season in the Premier League - producing some fluid, one-touch football. Goalkeeper David de Gea returned after missing the Victory game with a niggler. New left-back Tyrell Malacia began ahead of Luke Shaw, while Rashford was back in the starting line-up after scoring as a substitute against Victory, partnering a rejuvenated Martial and Sancho in Cristiano Ronaldo's absence.

Christian Eriksen and Lisandro Martinez, Ten Hag's other new signings, are not in Australia. Vieira has a youthful squad in Australia, with a number of senior players not making the trip. United made a confident start, dominating early possession, with Palace goalkeeper Jack Butland making a fine stop from Martial after Brazilian



MELBOURNE: A pitch invader is tackled by security during the pre-season football match between English Premier League teams Manchester United and Crystal Palace at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on July 19, 2022. —AFP

Fred's pass spilt the defense. But the save ended Butland's game, forced to leave the pitch after treatment on his hand.

The 26-year-old Martial - whose career at United looked over after spending the end of last season on loan at Sevilla - got the breakthrough seven minutes later. He chested down a wonderful floating delivery from Diogo Dalot to fire past Palace's third-choice keeper Remi Matthews after a well-worked build-up. United were hungry for goals, creating plenty of opportunities with Harry Maguire and Rashford both going close.

Against Liverpool and Victory, Ten Hag made wholesale changes at half-time, but this time he made just one, with Donny van de Beek on for Scott McTominay. Van de Beek was involved in the second goal, with a sublime team move finished by Rashford tapping into an empty net. Sancho got the third soon after on a counter-attack with Martial providing the through ball. United head to Perth next to play Steven Gerrard's Aston Villa, who beat Leeds 1-0 to kickstart their pre-season. Palace also travel to Perth, to face Leeds. —AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300	Adaliya	22517144
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Al-Razi Hospital	24846000	Khaldiya	24848075
Maternity Hospital	24843100	Physiotherapy Hospital		Kaifan	24849807
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital		24874330/9		Shamiya	24848913
	25312700			Shuwaikh	24814507
Chest Hospital	24849400			Abdullah Salem	22549134
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010			Nuzha	22526804
Adan Hospital	23940620			Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ranjit Khiva S/o Nachhatar Khiva R/o Mohalla Kesari Bagh, Kapurthala, Punjab, India. That I am holding an Indian Passport No. L1435090. That Nachhatar Khiva and Nachhattar Singh both names are belong to one and the same per-

son i.e. my Father. (C# 2020) 20-07-2022

I, Dalvir Singh S/O Mohinder Singh, holder of Indian Passport No. L1094061 having a permanent address of VPO Surapur SBS Nagar Pin 144506, Punjab, India residing in Kuwait at present and the company name is Ahmadiyah Contracting and trade. The address is Jleeb Al-

Shuyoukh Block 3 street no. 170 house number 476. My civil ID number is 273051517134. I hereby declare that hereafter my name will be read as under Dalbir Singh. (C# 2017) 19-07-2022

I, Boodevi, W.O late Ananda Kharvi, residing at Pithrachaya House, Bailurkar compound, Bunder road,

Gangolli, Kundapura Taluk, Udipi district have changed my name as Boodevi Kharvi for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 14.03.2022 sworn before notary H.Vasanth Kumar Shetty, Udipi, India. I have a Kuwait residency permit no. 266071903504 valid upto 10.05.2023. (C# 2018) 19-07-2022



OREGON: Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim competes in the men's high jump final during the World Athletics Championships at Hayward Field in Eugene, Oregon on July 18, 2022. —AFP

Qatar's Barshim claims 3rd world title in high jump

Rojas leads familiar cast to world golds

EUGENE: Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim won his third world high jump gold in Eugene, Oregon, on Monday. Barshim, who shared gold at the Tokyo Olympics with Italian friend and rival Gianmarco Tamberi, delivered a faultless display of jumping for a winning 2.37m in front of a baying crowd at Hayward Field. South Korea's Woo Sanghyeok claimed silver with a best of 2.35m, while Andriy Protsenko claimed Ukraine's first medal of these champs with bronze (2.33m). Tamberi had to be happy with fourth place.

Untouchable Venezuelan

Meanwhile, untouchable Venezuelan Yulimar Rojas led a raft of familiar faces to glory when she claimed her third straight triple jump title at the World Athletics Championships on Monday. Day four of action at Hayward Field in Oregon saw experience count as multiple gold medalists from the Tokyo Olympics followed up on their efforts in the Japanese capital with more podium-topping.

"This is my third consecutive world (outdoor) title, it still hasn't sunk in yet," said Rojas, who had been hoping to better her world record but was frustrated by wind affecting her run-up. "I wanted a longer jump, but I am happy to return to this beautiful stadium, to see the crowd," Rojas added.

Rojas was among three female two-time Olympic champions to strike gold in Eugene. Belgium's Nafi Thiam earlier claimed a last-gasp victory in the heptathlon over Dutch rival Anouk Vetter, while imperious Faith Kipyegon of Kenya won her second 1500m title. Not to be

left out, there were two male champions from the Tokyo Games who triumphed. Mutaz Essa Barshim of Qatar won a thriller of a high jump competition for his third world title.

"Winning for the third time has never been done before," he said. "For me that's a great stat. 'I always say to myself, 'How do you want to be remembered?' I want to do great things, I want to be the high jumper that does stuff that sticks in history. 'I've done that today so I'm really happy about it.' There was more gold for the Arab world in the shape of Morocco's Soufiane El-Bakkali, the Olympic champion producing a tactical masterclass as he brought an end to Kenya's 15-year dominance of the 3000m steeplechase.

The evening session kicked off, however, with all eyes on the track as Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, fresh from winning a record fifth world 100m title on Sunday, went in round one of the 200m. "Oh man, it was hard!" said Fraser-Pryce, who coasted into Tuesday's semi-finals. "It was a late night and I needed to come back and try to qualify as easy as I can to preserve my strength for tomorrow. 'I am feeling OK so far. Just have to go home and get some recovery done and see how it goes tomorrow. I need to eat some food, get a massage, some compression, and just rest, get some sleep."

New Kerley strikeforce

Joining the 35-year-old, a world 200m champion in 2013, in Tuesday's semi-finals will be her two teammates who helped snatch an unprecedented cleansweep of the 100m podium for Jamaica on Sunday. Shericka Jackson, who has the quickest



OREGON: Athletes compete in the men's 3000m steeplechase final during the World Athletics Championships at Hayward Field in Eugene. —AFP

time this season of 21.55sec, and four-time Olympic sprint champion Elaine Thompson-Herah, a world silver medallist over 200m in 2015, are still both seeking their first individual world titles.

The Jamaican women's cleansweep came sharp on the heels of that by the US men. And newly crowned world 100m champion Fred Kerley led a fresh strikeforce of US sprinters into the semi-finals of the men's 200m, also on Tuesday. Kerley won his heat in 20.17 seconds to raise the prospect of another US cleansweep, after the sprint all-rounder led Marvin Bracy and Trayvon Bromell home in the blue riband event.

In the absence of that duo, it was the turn of the Americans who finished second, third and fourth in the 200m at last year's Tokyo Olympics—Kenneth Bednarek, world champion Noah Lyles

and 18-year-old Erriyon Knighton—to take to the track. A hyped-up Lyles celebrated his 25th birthday on Monday by setting the fastest qualifying time of 19.98 seconds, the sole sprinter to go sub-20. Lyles, who complained of feeling isolated at the Tokyo Games held in strict Covid-19 regulations, said Eugene was much "more fun".

"It feels like you're running for something, you're excited and energetic. At the end of the day I'm a performer. I like to go out there and have fun and get people excited," he said. Canada's reigning Olympic champion Andre de Grasse, who failed to make the 100m final, was a non-starter in his heat. The Canadian struggled in the 100m, having only just returned from a second dose of Covid-19, but is holding out hope of being involved in the 4x100m relay. —AFP

Morocco's El-Bakkali ends Kenya's reign

EUGENE: Olympic champion Soufiane El-Bakkali of Morocco produced a tactical masterclass to end Kenya's 15-year reign in the 3000m steeplechase at the World Athletics Championships in Oregon on Monday. El-Bakkali took his time before surging into the lead with just under 200m to go at Eugene's Hayward Field, with a lethal late kick after the final water jump powering him to gold in a time of 8min 25.13sec.

Ethiopia's Lamecha Girma—silver medallist behind El-Bakkali at last year's Tokyo Olympics—was second

in 8:26.01. Kenya's reigning world champion Consensus Kipruto took bronze in 8:27.92. El-Bakkali's masterpiece was almost a carbon copy of last year's Olympic final, when the Moroccan again conjured a devastating late kick in the final 200m to surge to gold. El-Bakkali's victory brought an end to Kenya's 15-year dominance of the steeplechase at the world championships.

Kenyan runners had won gold in the event in every edition of the championships since Brimin Kipruto's gold in Osaka in 2007. It was a happy return to Eugene for El-Bakkali, who got his first taste of international competition at Hayward Field in 2014 when he competed in the World Under-20 Championships. "That was my first international experience. I return eight years later as a champion," El-Bakkali said. "The course was very tactical, slow," he added. "I positioned well in the last lap. I am very strong in the 400m and it worked out for me." —AFP



OREGON: Morocco's Soufiane El-Bakkali celebrates winning the men's 3000m steeplechase final during the World Athletics Championships at Hayward Field in Eugene on July 18, 2022. —AFP

China to host 2022 Asian Games in 2023

KUWAIT: China will host the 2022 Asian Games in autumn 2023, organizers said on Tuesday, after postponing the event in Hangzhou because of COVID-19. The Games were originally scheduled for September this year, but organizers postponed them in May as China tried to stamp out a large Covid resurgence in several parts of the country.

The event will now be held in Hangzhou from September 23 to October 8 2023, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) said. Hangzhou lies less than 200 kilometers from the country's biggest city Shanghai, which endured a months-long lockdown earlier this year as part of the ruling Communist Party's zero-tolerance approach to the virus.

The OCA said on Tuesday that the new dates were chosen to avoid "conflict with other major international sporting events". The Hangzhou organizing committee vowed to "present a wonderful and marvelous sports and cultural event with Chinese characteristics", in a statement confirming the new dates. China is the last major economy committed to stamping out domestic spread of the virus through harsh lockdowns, mass testing and strict controls on international travel.

But that has hurt the country's international sporting ambitions, with the world's most populous nation cancelling or postponing almost all events since the start of the pandemic, with the exception of this year's Winter Olympics in Beijing. The World University Games, scheduled to begin in June in Chengdu and already delayed from last year, have also been postponed again, until 2023. The Asian Games typically attract over 10,000 athletes from across the region.

Sports under zero-COVID

Organisers said in April that Hangzhou, a city of 12 million in eastern China, had finished constructing 56 competition venues for the Asian Games and Asian Para Games. Hangzhou will be the third city in China to host the continental competition after Beijing in 1990 and Guangzhou in 2010.

Some events are also expected to be held in other provincial cities including Ningbo, Wenzhou, Huzhou, Shaoxing and Jinhua. Almost all international sport has ground to a halt in China since COVID emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019. The Beijing Olympics was an exception but was held in a "closed loop" with everyone inside it - including athletes, staff, volunteers and media - taking daily COVID tests and not allowed to venture into the wider city or have contact with the public.

The Chinese government has touted the zero-COVID strategy as proof that it values human life above material concerns and can avert the public health crises seen in many Western countries. COVID restrictions around the country eased slightly this summer as case numbers from the earlier Omicron-driven outbreak dwindled. But a rising wave of fresh infections this month have led to new restrictions in parts of the country, with millions of people receiving orders to stay home over the weekend. —AFP